

Food tourism in Tampere region during the summer 2020

Karoliina Luoma



Author(s) Karoliina Luoma	
Degree programme Degree Programme in Hospitality, Tourism and Experience Management	
Report/thesis title Food tourism in Tampere region during the summer 2020	Number of pages and appendix pages 70 + 5
<p>This research aims to determine what kind of experiences food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region faced concerning their business due to worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, during the summer 2020.</p> <p>The commissioning party of this research is Hungry for Finland – food tourism project. The objective is to give information to Hungry for Finland – food tourism project, by sharing food tourism entrepreneurs' experiences. The information obtained will enable tourism organizations to better guide entrepreneurs in similar exceptional situations in the future.</p> <p>The main research question is: What kind of impacts the COVID-19-pandemic had on the food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region in the summer 2020? The sub-questions are: How the pandemic affected the customer base? How the pandemic affected companies' product ranges and services? And what kind of possible innovations were made?</p> <p>The thesis is research-oriented and done with qualitative methods. The research has been conducted with the help of a qualitative thematic interview. Six companies were involved in the research. The interviews took place between the 24th of February and the 2nd of March, 2021. The entrepreneurs represented a different kind of food tourism companies; such as restaurant, winery, agritourism company and program service companies.</p> <p>Summer 2020 was very lucrative for many entrepreneurs, although the worst was feared. Customer numbers, the sales of food and beverage increased, and many entrepreneurs developed a new product. Many of the entrepreneurs would have liked to have received more financial support. The results show that financial support should be more easily available to small businesses and pandemic restrictions should be fairer between different industries. The hard work, perseverance, and resourcefulness of the entrepreneurs helped them compensate for the lost income.</p>	
Keywords Food tourism, COVID-19, pandemic, Tampere region, food traveller, food tourism product, innovation	

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Tourism and food tourism.....	4
2.1	Tourism and food tourism products and services	5
2.2	Finnish food tourism and Hungry for Finland -project	6
2.3	Tampere region and its food culture.....	8
2.4	The customer base and food travellers	10
3	Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on tourism.....	12
3.1	COVID-19-pandemic restrictions on food tourism in Finland	14
3.2	Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on Finland's travelling statistics.....	16
3.3	Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on customer behaviour	18
4	Innovation as a tool for development.....	20
4.1	Sources of innovations.....	20
4.2	The development of innovations	21
4.3	Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on innovations	22
5	The research work and its implementation	24
5.1	Research question and sub-questions	25
5.2	Choice of the research method: qualitative thematic interview	26
5.3	Thematic interview framework and interview design	26
5.4	Criteria and justification for selecting interviewees and conducting interviews.....	28
5.5	Companies involved in the study.....	31
5.6	Thematic analysis of the research material	32
6	Results.....	34
6.1	Food tourism in Tampere region	34
6.2	Summer 2020 and the impacts of the restrictions.....	36
6.3	Challenges and successes	38
6.4	Changes in the customer segments and behavior in summer 2020	39
6.5	Sales, marketing and financial support.....	42
6.6	Development and possible innovations	45
6.7	Feedback to the Parliament of Finland and Business Finland	48
7	Discussion.....	51
7.1	The results reflected with the theoretical part	51
7.1.1	Changes in the number of foreign tourists	51
7.1.2	Customer description	52
7.1.3	Changes in the sales.....	53
7.1.4	Business development	54
7.1.5	Entrepreneurs' thoughts	55

7.2	Development ideas and suggestions.....	56
7.3	The reliability of the research and proposals for further research.....	57
7.4	Evaluating the thesis process and one's own learning	59
	References	62
	Appendices.....	71
	Appendix 1. Thematic interview framework	71
	Appendix 2. E-mail invitation to the entrepreneurs	75

1 Introduction

This research aims to determine what kind of experiences food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region faced concerning their business due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, during summer 2020. The work is the first in its scope in Tampere region, as Tampere region has not faced a similar pandemic that has so radically affected the economy and the tourism industry.

The author does the research for Hungry for Finland - food tourism project. Since 2012, the Hungry for Finland - food tourism project has developed and coordinated national food tourism in Finland together with Visit Finland, various ministries, regional and local tourism food operators. The Hungry for Finland – food tourism project has formed a food tourism strategy for 2020-2028 following Finland's latest tourism strategy for 2019-2028. This food tourism strategy is the updated version of Finland's first food tourism strategy 2015-2020. The newest food tourism strategy defines a common national goal for food tourism for 2020-2028 and operations for 2020-2023. The food tourism strategy aims to develop Finnish food tourism and encourage combined products and food routes. It also promotes cooperation between food tourism actors and the competitiveness of the tourism and food industry as well as supports quality improvement. (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 7-15.)

Hungry for Finland has also accomplished other projects; the ongoing food tourism productization project is continuing till February 2022. The productization project provides actors with unified tools such as product recommendations, an updated strategy and incentives. The project aims to increase the operators' market and customer knowledge, internationalization and export experience, and sustainable domestic tourism in food tourism. The project aims to increase the operators' products to the international market. The project aims to create a more significant role for food tourism in Finland. Hungry for Finland 2020.)

The objective of the author's work is to give information to Hungry for Finland – food tourism project, by sharing food tourism entrepreneurs' experiences. The information obtained will enable tourism organizations to better guide entrepreneurs in similar situations in the future. Also, by doing this sort of research, entrepreneurs might feel that they are heard and appreciated during these challenging times. The main research question of this research is the following:

- What kind of impacts the COVID-19-pandemic had on the food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region in the summer 2020?

The sub-questions are:

- How the pandemic affected the customer base?
- How the pandemic affected companies' product ranges and services?
- What kind of possible innovations were made?

According to the main question and the research sub-questions, the theoretical part of the work is divided into three chapters with sub-chapters. The tourism and food tourism chapter discusses tourism and food tourism in general. "Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes" (UNWTO 2021). Food tourism combines different eating and drinking experiences with local culture, residents and food and beverage production in the area (Culinary Tourism Alliance 2020). Sub-chapters explain tourism and food tourism products and services, Finnish food tourism, Tampere region and its food culture, and customer base and food travelers.

The second main chapter discusses the effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on tourism, since a pandemic can have significant economic implications, especially to tourism, national security, and society's basic functioning (Bradley 2009,1). The sub-chapters discuss COVID-19-pandemic restrictions on food tourism in Finland and the effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on Finland's travelling statistics and customer behavior. The third main chapter discusses innovation as a tool for development. Innovation is an idea that has been developed forward and ultimately put into practice (Inno-Vointi 2021). The sub-chapters discuss sources of innovations, the development of innovations and the effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on innovations.

The empirical part of the thesis explains how the research was done and what methods; and the companies that took part in the study are presented. This thesis is research-oriented and was done with qualitative methods. "This thesis aims to describe, understand and interpret phenomena and to answer questions such as what, why and how" (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences 2019, 21). The data collection was done with theme interviews via phone and Microsoft Teams video calls, and they were recorded. Due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19-virus, the author preferred not to do interviews face-to-face. The author aimed to find 7-10 entrepreneurs who would be interested in taking part in the study. In the end six companies were involved in the research. The entrepreneurs represented a different kind of food tourism companies; restaurant, winery, agritourism company, program service companies, etc. The interviews were conducted during February and March 2021.

Recorded interviews were listened and written down first to paper. After that, the text was transcribed to the computer and translated to English, and there was a total of 26 pages. After writing the material to the computer it was analyzed by thematic design. Thematic design is a basic method of qualitative analysis, in which research material outlines key topics, i.e., themes (University of Jyväskylä 2016). This more precisely means that each interview section where the topic in question is discussed is grouped together when the research material is organized according to themes (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a).

In the discussion chapter researcher discusses the key results of the study. In the sub-chapters the researcher compares the results to the previous literature and research and makes notes how much those support and differ from each other. The researcher forms conclusions based on the results and present development ideas and suggestions. The reliability of the research is examined and further research proposals mentioned. In the end of the discussion researcher will evaluate thesis process and her own learning.

2 Tourism and food tourism

The theoretical part discusses the previous literature and research made of the main concepts of this research. This chapter and its subchapters focus on tourism and food tourism, products and services of tourism and food tourism, Finnish food tourism, Tampere region and its food culture as well as to the customer base and food travelers. Food tourism is the main topic of the thesis and Tampere region is the area where this research focuses. Tampere region was selected as the research area, as the researcher herself is from the region and wants to use the research also to bring visibility to the region's food tourism.

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon that entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business purposes and staying for no more than one consecutive year (UNWTO 2021; OECD 2002). Tourism can be domestic, inbound and outbound (figure 1). Domestic tourism is defined as residents visiting their own country. Inbound tourism means non-residents travelling in a given country, and outbound tourism is defined as residents travelling in another country. (Theobald 2005, 18.) Tourism provides an exceptionally concentrated and significant occasion for intercultural communication and potential mixing of different social groupings (Jack & Phipps 2005, 6).

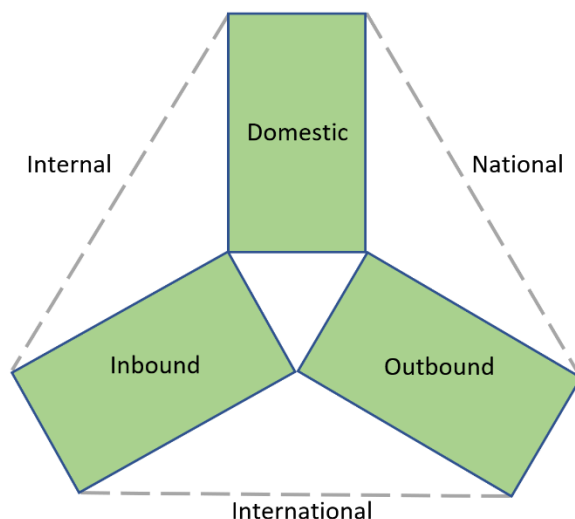


Figure 1. Forms of tourism (adapted from Theobald 2005)

Food tourism combines different eating and drinking experiences with local culture, residents and food and beverage production in the area (Culinary Tourism Alliance 2020).

Food tourism has gained more visibility, and its popularity has grown exponentially over the last decade around the world for two reasons. The first reason is a desire to discover where their food comes from, and the second to find new foods and food preparations (Stanley & Stanley 2015, 3). Hall & Mitchell (2001, in Sthapit, Piramanayagam & Björk 2020) points out that food tourism can be widely defined as tourists' participation in food-related activities during their trips, such as purchasing local foods and consuming local cuisine. Horng & Tsai (2012, in Sthapit & al. 2020) points out that food and beverages might be either a primary or secondary motivation for traveling.

Modern tourists often search for food-related experiences such as enjoying delicious food, eating special meals, and experiencing food-related cultural traditions (Horng & Tsai 2012). Chen & Huang (2018, in Sthapit et al. 2020) points out that food tourism involves tourists obtaining memorable and unique cultural experiences through food experiences, unlike general tourism. Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen (2019, in Sthapit et al. 2020) points out that “tourist food experiences frequently focus on local, original, and authentic foods representing the local food culture.” Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen & Berbel-Pinedaa, Palacios-Florencia, Ramirez-Hurtado & Santos-Roldan (2019; 2019, in Sthapit & al. 2020) points out that local food has been discovered to be a significant supporter of the tourism experience, as a component of the cultural heritage of the areas visited by tourists. By enjoying local food, visitors are connected to the region they are visiting (Chang et al. 2010).

2.1 Tourism and food tourism products and services

“A tourism product is a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and human-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers. A tourism product is priced and sold through distribution channels, and it has a life cycle.” (UNWTO 2021.) The products of tourism are not easily standardized since they are created for varied interests and demands (Tutorialspoint 2021).

There are different types of tourism products. For example, tourism-oriented products are created primarily for the tourists and the locals, such as accommodations, transportation, tour operators, cinema theatres, souvenir outlets, theme parks. Also, residents-oriented products are created mainly for the residents staying at a particular tourist destination, such as hospitals, banks and ATMs, and petrol pumps. There are also intangible products

of tourism include, for example, bookings of accommodations, theatres; visiting a destination, eating at a restaurant, performing an activity; tourists' memories which are created by storing the details of events and experience on tour; and transportation of tourists from one place to another. (Tutorialspoint 2021.)

There are various food tourism products and services, from eating local food and drinking local beverages to more adventurous experiences. A tourist might want to experience food tourism products and services such as cooking with locals and in a workshop; eating at locals' homes, at local restaurants, or trying street food; food and drink tasting sessions of cheeses, wines, beers and many other options. Also, a tourist might want to go on food and drink tours and trails; collect ingredients or maybe participate in the harvesting time; visit farms, orchards, wineries, distilleries, food markets, fairs or festivals. (CBI 2018.) "Finnish food tourism products and services can be a tasty restaurant dining based on locality and stories, guided cooking, in nature and dining in a cultural setting, food tourism routes and events, markets, market halls, specialty stores, and small breweries and the program derived from them." (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 4).

2.2 Finnish food tourism and Hungry for Finland -project

Finland's northern location and position between East and West cultures have influenced Finnish food culture, and Finnish food culture is based on 34 raw materials and traditions. Due to globalism and consumer consumption habits, Finland's food culture has been changing and will change with time. Food culture is seen as necessary to construct national and regional identities (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 34).

The food tourism offer in Finland is broad; it can be tasty restaurant meals based on locality and stories, home-cooked meals, street food, guided cooking of Finnish food, food meals related to natural gifts and collecting, dinners in nature and cultural environment. Also, food tourism offer can be unique food malls, various food tourism routes, events, markets, market halls, specialized shops, for example, cheese dairies, wineries and small breweries and the program built around them. Creating an excellent food tourism product requires involvement and doing from which the food tourist learns something new, and stories, locality, and purity. (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 8.)

The food tourism experience is based on locality, which is high-quality, authentic and unique in the customer's eyes. The imaginative and innovative food utilization in all tourism activities is a functional and relatively cost-effective tool for a travel company to

delight customers. Food can be used to communicate Finnish culture and lifestyles to identify customers with it. "Local experiences increase the quality experienced all the way." Residents, stories are written about the locality, and communication about them are pillars of success in the food tourism industry. Finland's food culture and diet are based on Nordic raw materials, which are one of the world's growing food trends, and this can be utilized in Finland's marketing (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 21-34). According to Viljanen (2021), local food is at the heart of food tourism, and the union of food and tourism is strengthening all the time. This strengthening creates with time well-being for society as a whole. Strengthening the image of Finland can be done through food tourism.

The Hungry for Finland food tourism project has been developing and coordinating national food tourism in Finland together with Visit Finland and various ministries, as well as regional and local tourism food operators, since 2012. The food tourism strategy defines a common national goal for food tourism for 2020-2028 and measures for 2020-2023. The Hungry for Finland – food tourism project has formed a food tourism strategy for 2020-2028 following Finland's latest tourism strategy for 2019-2028. This food tourism strategy is the updated version of Finland's first food tourism strategy 2015-2020. (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 7-14.) The Hungry for Finland -food tourism productization project complements regional and local projects nationwide by providing actors with unified tools (product recommendations and updated strategy) and sparring (Hungry for Finland 2020).

Being the most sustainable growing tourist destination in the Nordic countries is one of Finland's goals. All-year-round and responsible tourism is being developed to create well-being and employment throughout Finland. "The food tourism strategy acts as a common leader, especially for the operators in the accommodation, catering, food and tourism sectors. It defines the objectives to be pursued, the actors and responsibilities, the target groups of food tourism and the actual measures by theme. The strategy is a concrete tool for entrepreneurs and developers." (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 13-14.).

Nature, experiencing the local way of life and culture ("live like locals" spirit) are the basis of Finnish food tourism. Food tourism enables the development of year-round tourism in Finland without significant investments, and food tourism is intelligent, sustainable and supports the activities of residents, businesses and communities. Tourists are interested in attractive areas and have a well-functioning service network and a broad range of experiential food tourism products. Therefore, food tourism companies need to do co-operation and support each other. (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 2.)

2.3 Tampere region and its food culture

This chapter discusses the Tampere region, which is also known as Pirkanmaa county, and its food culture. Tampere region (figure 2) of Finland consists of 23 municipalities, half of which are cities (Pirkanmaan liitto 2021). The province covers only 4.1% of Finland's land area, but the population of more than half a million makes it the second most populous in Finland (Oksman 2017).



Figure 2. Map of Tampere region (© Maanmittauslaitos 2021, with permission by Pirkanmaan liitto)

Tampere region is divided into five sub-regions. The Tampere city area includes the cities of Tampere, Orivesi, Nokia and Ylöjärvi, as well as the municipalities of Kangasala, Pälkäne, Kuhmoinen, which joined to Tampere region in 2021, Lempäälä, Pirkkala, Vesilahti and Hämeenkyrö (Oksman 2017; Pirkanmaan liitto 2021). In northern Tampere region there are located cities of Virrat, Mänttä-Vilppula, Ikaalinen as well as the

municipalities of Ruovesi and Juupajoki. In southern Tampere region there are located cities of Valkeakoski and Akaa as well as the municipality of Urjala (Oksman 2017).

In the southwest Tampere region, there are located the city of Sastamala and the municipality of Punkalaidun. The cities of Ikaalinen and Parkano are situated in the northwestern Tampere region, as well as the municipality of Kihniö (Oksman 2017). The provincial center and capital of Tampere region is Tampere (Mapnall 2021). The city of Tampere is Finland's most attractive tourist, residential and study city, and it is Finland's third-largest city (Visit Tampere 2018b). The central part of Tampere city is the most densely populated area in Tampere region, and in the northern Tampere region are the most sparsely populated areas (Oksman 2017).

In Tampere region, natural peace, culture and activities in the wilderness are located just five minutes from the world's leading technology companies. The living countryside invites travelers to adventures, e.g., a local food safari. The region's clean lakes and steep forests enchant all year around. Local entrepreneurs give a face to Finnishness and make the trip being an experience. (Visit Pirkanmaa 2018.) Tampere region is a mix of culture and wilderness. For example, in the Seitsemien National Park, there is a possibility to hike in the 400-year-old evergreen forest; in Helvetinjärvi National Park, there is a chance to admire the scenery that inspired artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela (Helin 2021). Water bodies are an essential part of the Tampere region, as there are more than 2500 lakes in its area. "The largest lakes in Tampere region are Näsijärvi, Vanajavesi, Längelmävesi and Pyhäjärvi." In Näsijärvi travellers can take cruises from Tampere to Virrat, and in Pyhäjärvi from Tampere to Hämeenlinna. The paddle boat sailing between Mänttä and Keuruu in Keuruselkä offers memorable experiences. (Oksman 2017.)

It is easy to travel to the Tampere region since the transport connections are good. Tampere is known as one of the hubs in Finland's rail traffic since the main railway line from Helsinki to Oulu and the railway connection from Turku to Jyväskylä run through the Tampere region (Oksman 2017). In Tampere region there are 13 train stations such as in Toijala, Lempäälä, Nokia, Sastamala and Orivesi (Rakastu raiteisiin 2021). Also, the road traffic is heavy in Tampere region because of the motorway from Helsinki to Ylöjärvi (Oksman 2017). The turnover of the accommodation and restaurant sector in Tampere region was 758 M€ in 2019. From the 1st of January to the 30th of June 2020, the turnover had changed by -28% compared to 2019 (Pirkanmaan Talous 2020).

Tampere region combines the food traditions of many provinces (K-Ruoka 2021). Häme region's food culture has had a notable impact on the traditions of the Tampere region (Visit Tampere 2018a). In Tampere region, residents have always eaten a lot of pork.

Typical dishes include lard, aladobi, pork soup seasoned with potato dumplings, and various stewed dishes such as “kyrönkäristys” (K-Ruoka 2021; Ruokatieto 2021). The well-known pork food in Tampere region is black sausage. “Black sausage is made from meat, blood, and grits or flour, and is often cooked in a pan, and the traditional way is to enjoy the sausage with lingonberry jam and a glass of cold milk.” (K-Ruoka 2021.) Sausage is an essential part of the Tampere region’s food tradition (Ruokatieto 2021).

Barley is a typical grain for Tampere region residents (Kuisma 2020, 4). “Round yeast bread (rievä) is baked from barley and wheat flour and perforated with a fork. The bread is eaten oven fresh with butter” (K-Ruoka 2021). Talkkuna powder has been the old power food. Talkkuna is made of ground peas or beans, oats, barley and buttermilk, or some other salty liquid (Kuisma 2020). Rye-based dishes include, e.g., malted rye known as mämmi and traditional sour rye bread (Kuisma 2020). Sweet porridge or sweet milk jelly are typical Tampere region delicacies to be enjoyed with jam or juice (Ruokatieto 2021). Many people in Tampere region still know how to make a “Hämäläinen sahti” for celebrations. (Kuisma 2020).

2.4 The customer base and food travellers

Customer base is defined by the people who buy or use a particular product or service (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). Customer base is often an addressed demographic or group of people with comparable interests, which make their interest in a product or service more expected. Repeat purchasers in a customer base regularly get back to an organization that has effectively filled their necessities (Rouse 2020). This chapter focuses on customer base and food travelers since the research studies what happened during summer on the customer base and food travelers.

World Food Travel Association points out that 80% of travelers research food and drink options while travelling to a new destination. The organization states that 53% of these travelers consider themselves “culinary travelers” (UCF 2021). Technavio points out that the growth rate of food tourism is expected to grow by almost 10% during 2019-2023. (UCF 2021). Food travelers as known as foodies, look for experiences that go beyond the palate. Foodies seek knowledge and entertainment through food and beverages activities. The interest in food tourism is very relevant for most travelers, even if gastronomy is not the main deciding factor. (Food and Road 2020).

A food traveler travels primarily because of food and food-related activities, and a food trip can be made near or further away. World Food Travel Association’s survey points out that

49% of tourists classified themselves as food tourists in 2016. In a similar study in 2020, 86% of tourists said their destination choice is highly influenced by its food and beverage offerings. Due to that, tourists interested in food are a significant target group. "Most of the time, a traveler does more things at his or her expense, and one of the most popular is food-related program numbers." (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 6.)

Jonhston & Baumann (2015, in Hungry for Finland 2019) points out that food travelers have much information about food, cooking and raw materials. They are passionate about food, willing to find and try different foods. They are discerning consumers and they often also cultivate, collect or produce food by themselves. Foodies value authenticity, exoticism, distinguishing experiences, restaurants and worth-to-try-food. They need to share information and experiences about food. Wolf (2016, in Hungry for Finland 2019) points out that advertising for foodies is getting more exact, as advertisers find out about foodie behaviors.

Food travelers' motivations for travelling, among many other things, affects cultural and socio-demographic background. There are many different kinds of segments of foodies with different behaviors and motives. Foodies need to find and learn, and they are curious about food and everything related to that and the environmental and ecological side of it. Food travelers want to experience different kind of food experiences which differ from popular and mass products. There are many types of food travelers. There are those who are travelling on a budget, those who want to find high-end gastronomic experiences, those who prefer eating local and organic good, and those trying to find innovations, trends, authenticity and social interactions with locals, and many other.

Finnish food tourism is mainly targeted at domestic tourists who are interested in food and food experiences. International customer segments that are important to Finland are city breakers, authenticity seekers and nature lovers, hunters of natural wonders, active adventurers and Finnish luxury seekers. City breakers, authenticity seekers and nature lovers are most interested in local food, food-related activities and food culture. (Havas & Adamsson 2020,16.)

3 Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on tourism

“COVID-19 virus is a global pandemic on a scale we have never seen in our lifetimes.” Coronavirus has affected everyone’s life and is rewriting the rules of how we live in the present and changing how we might live in the future. In many ways, the world will never be quite the same after defeating the virus. (Commbox 2021). Coronavirus (COVID-19, also known as SARS-CoV-2) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. The virus causing COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that has spread worldwide. COVID-19-symptoms can range from no symptoms to severe illness (CDC 2020).

A pandemic is characterized as a plague worldwide or over a vast region, crossing worldwide limits and usually influencing countless individuals (Kelly 2011). A pandemic happens when a novel strain of flu infection can contaminate and be passed between people. Since people have little resistance to the new disease, an overall pestilence or pandemic can result (Bradley 2009). A pandemic can have significant implications for the economy, national security, and society's basic functioning. "Absenteeism across multiple sectors related to personal illness, illness in family members, fear of contagion, or public health measures to limit contact with others could threaten the functioning of critical infrastructure, the movement of goods and services, and operation of institutions such as schools and universities." (Bradley 2009,1.)

Travel is essential for tourism; hence, any factor that impedes travelling may significantly affect the travel industry. (Yeh 2020, 1). Jiang & Ritchie (2017, in Yeh 2020) points out that an international issue, such as the COVID-19-pandemic, is a typical example. The devastation of such an event reemphasizes the fragility of the tourism industry. The tourism industry is vulnerable to many things, such as natural disasters, pandemic, terrorism and uprising. That is why tourism-related organizations need to be well prepared in countering and recovery strategies. It is necessary to cumulate past experiences of crisis management in the tourism sector for the future (Yeh 2020, 2).

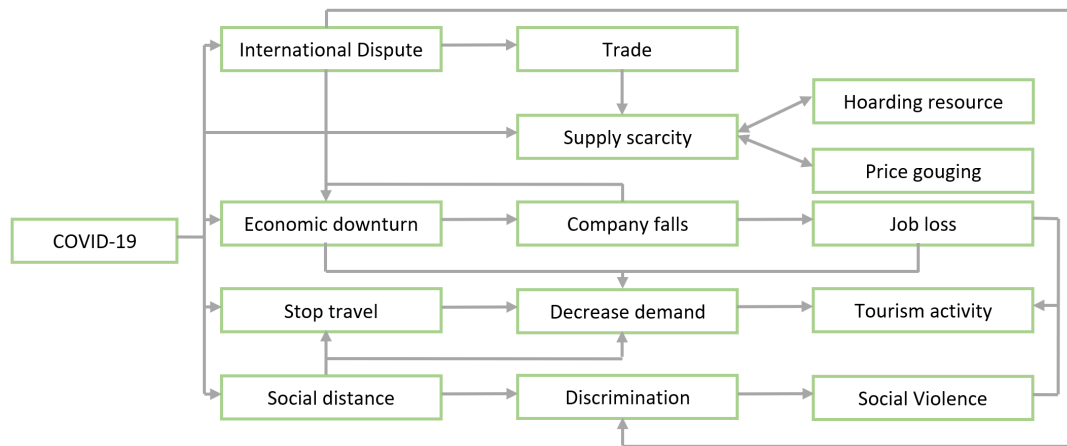
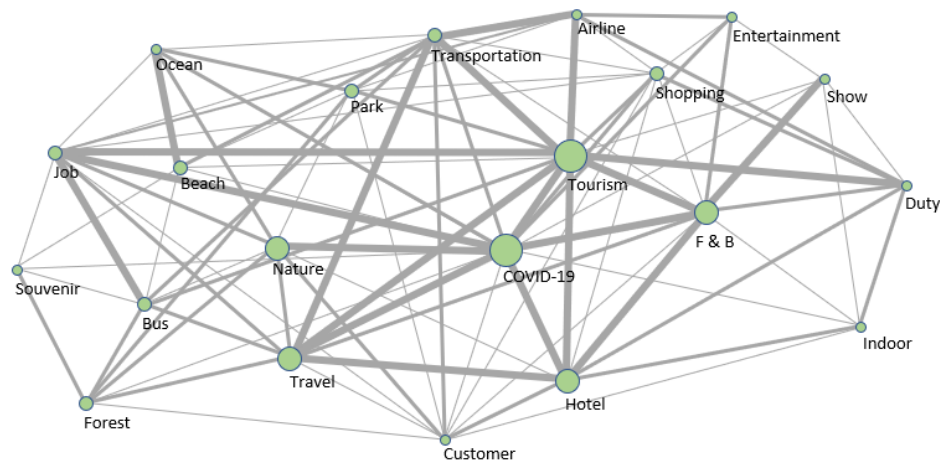


Figure 3. Causality chart of the impact of COVID-19-pandemic on tourism industry (adapted from Yeh 2020, 4)

The COVID-19-pandemic drove numerous nations' legislatures to force limitations on superfluous travel to nations influenced by the coronavirus, suspending tourism travel, work visas, and migrant visas. Some countries placed a complete travel ban on all forms of domestic, inbound and outbound travel, shutting down all airports in the country. In 2020 when the COVID-19-pandemic situation was at its worst several airplanes flew almost empty due to passenger cancellations. Some airlines had to temporarily suspend all of their operations since governments imposed travel restrictions. "Such travel restrictions cost the tourism industry alone a loss of over \$200 billion globally, excluding other loss of revenue for tourism travel, and were forecast to cost the aviation industry a total loss of \$113billion." (Ozili & Arun 2020, 6.) Tourism-related companies suffer because pandemic restrictions have led to stagnation, implementation of unpaid vacation, social distancing and social violence and many extreme outright downsizings (figure 3). Business collapse and unemployment are exacerbating the economy by reducing tourism demand, leading to a vicious circle that affects the whole economy and has a tremendous impact on tourism and nature and infrastructure (figure 4). (Yeh 2020, 5.)



The size of the circle represents the frequencies of each term.



The thickness of the lines represents the relationship between terms.

Figure 4. The affected area of the tourism industry by the COVID-19-pandemic (adapted from Yeh 2020, 4)

3.1 COVID-19-pandemic restrictions on food tourism in Finland

On the 13th of March 2020, the Government of Finland stated that Finland was in exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19-pandemic situation and decided to introduce crisis legislation 1552/2011, and this meant problems for transport, culture, restaurants and accommodation (Eduskunta 2021; Finlex 2011; Lehtinen 29 January 2021). The Parliament of Finland decided to close the restaurants to customers from the 4th of April to the 31st of May 2020 (MaRa ry 2020,1). Only the sale of take away food from restaurants and the operation of staff and institutional canteens were permitted (Marski 2021, 13). The decisions were based on the Act of Communicable Diseases 1227/2006 (Finlex 2016). The closure decision was well received by some entrepreneurs and very critical by some, but mostly the entrepreneurs' reactions were calm. Food tourism entrepreneurs felt that the world and society were facing a new, unknown threat and wanted to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. At that time, companies thought that the COVID-19-crisis would end soon (MaRa ry 2020, 1).

"Entrepreneurs' attitude to the restrictive measure was acceptable, even though it was known to lead to deep distress for companies and workers in the sector." Due to the closure decision, restaurants and food tourism companies' funds began to run out. Parliament was aware that such a thing could happen during the two months of closure,

so the Parliament decided to compensate the loss and damage the closure caused by the companies' closure (MaRa ry 2020, 1). The Parliament decided that Business Finland and Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) would act as distributors of corona subsidies. Those organizations had the decision-making power over who receives the subsidies (Valkama 2020). Sadly, the money that restaurant companies received was not enough to cover all the costs, such as fixed costs (MaRa ry 2020, 1).

It is expected that the COVID-19-crisis will last for at least few years, impacting the catering business until the year 2020 (MaRa ry 2020, 2). According to MaRa ry (2020,2) the Parliament of Finland needs to make fair and justified decisions that support the catering industry (restaurants, cafeterias etc.) during these challenging times. The decisions that would help the food tourism industry get through these times would prevent bankruptcies and closing-down companies. Food tourism companies should be able to offer their services to their customers as freely as possible, with of course taking into account the safety of customers and staff.

The restaurants, cafeterias and other catering companies were allowed to open their doors on Monday 1st of June 2020, with the requirement that the impacts of the lifting of restrictions and a subsequent general epidemiological assessment supported it. "The opening of restaurants required an amendment to the law so that restrictions could be imposed on restaurant operations, for example, in terms of customer numbers and drinking times" (Kontinen 2020). Restrictions were made to protect customers and companies' staff from COVID-19-infection and the spread of infections (Heinonen 2020).

On Monday 13th of July 2020, the restrictions on the opening hours, dispensing times, and the number of customers in the restaurants, cafeterias and food tourism companies ended (Heinonen 2020). That meant that the opening hours and the number of customers in the catering establishments were no longer under the Communicable Diseases Act 1227/2006 (Valtioneuvosto 2020; Finlex 2016). The dispensing time for alcoholic beverages was then determined following the Alcohol Act (Heinonen 2020). The changes had to put into practice gradually so that from Monday the 22nd of June 2020, the permitted opening hours were from 4 a.m. to 2 a.m. Also, the legitimate dispensing time for alcoholic beverages was from 9 a.m. to 1 a.m. (Valtioneuvosto 2020; Heinonen 2020.)

In the restaurants, the allowed number of customer seats was three-quarters of the original amount. The restriction started on Monday 22nd of June and ended Sunday 12th of July 2020. Also, customers of catering establishments had to have their own seat from Monday 13th of July until Friday 31st of August 2020 (Valtioneuvosto 2020; Heinonen 2020). Dosing of food and drink itself was allowed, e.g., from buffet tables, on Monday

22nd of June 2020. “The restrictions were laid down in a new temporary Government decree temporarily restricting the activities of catering establishments to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The regulation entered into force on Monday 22nd of June 2020 and was in force until Monday 31st of August 2020.” (Valtioneuvosto 2020.)

Catering establishments had to give on Monday 31st of August 2020 guidelines for their customers on how to prevent infectious diseases. Customers had to be able to wash their hands, and the premises and surfaces of the catering companies had to be kept clean. The catering companies were also responsible for maintaining a sufficient distance between customers. Customers had to see the catering company’s plan how the business would implement the restrictions and obligations. (Heinonen 2020.)

3.2 Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on Finland’s travelling statistics

Tourism is a significant industry in Finland and the second largest sector in service exports (Business Finland 2020, 1). The year 2019 was successful in the Finnish tourism industry, and it was also the fourth consecutive year of growth in Finnish tourism (TEM 2020, 1). In 2019 Finns made 26 million different leisure trips in Finland. More than 8 million leisure trips were made abroad. (Statistics Finland 2020b, 1).

Twenty-three million overnight stays were recorded in Finland, of which domestic tourists did 16 million in 2019. Domestic tourists are a significant target group for the tourism industry in Finland. 70% of Finnish tourism demand is domestic tourism (TEM 2019, 11-29). The summer months were the most popular time to travel in Finland in 2019. The tremendous growth potential in domestic tourism is seen in the summer season. The most visited counties during summer were Helsinki region, Tampere region and Northern Ostrobothnia in summer 2019. The most popular cities were Helsinki, Tampere and Turku in 2019. (Statistics Finland 2019a.)

During March-April 2020, tourism collapsed due to COVID-19-pandemic. During the crisis, the number of people laid off and unemployed in the tourism sector has increased significantly. Many companies have got financial support, but that has not helped enough to their financial difficulties. (TEM 2020, 1.) Due to restrictions, restaurant food consumption, alcohol and accommodation services collapsed during the spring and autumn of 2020. Still, the increase in domestic tourism and cottage rental in the summer of 2020 increased the consumption of these services. (Lehtinen 29 January 2021)

2020 was a very exceptional year for accommodation services due to the pandemic. The year started with a positive increase of about 8% in overnight stays during January-February. "However, the pandemic that began in March began to reduce tourist numbers significantly. Overnight stays by domestic tourists fell by 86 per cent in April and by foreigners by about 95 per cent." (Statistics Finland 2021.) During July, August and September 2020, the pandemic situation changed a lot. In July and August, the infection rates were low, but in September, the infection rates were high, which meant the second pandemic wave had started. During July, travel restrictions were relaxed, and the remaining restrictions on catering companies ended. During September, the restrictions had to be re-imposed again to prevent infections. (Statistics Finland 2020c.)

The popularity of staying in own and rented cottages was clearly shown from the statistics since overnight stays increased almost one and a half times in 2020 comparing to 2019. (Honkanen, Sammalkangas & Satokangas 2021, 9). COVID-19-pandemic had a significant impact on domestic tourism demand since the demand contracted by about 21% in 2020, which means a substantial decrease of nearly 2 billion euros in tourism in Finland (Valtioneuvosto 2020).

A total of 14.3 million overnight stays were made in Finnish accommodation establishments in 2020, and the number was nearly 40% less than in 2019. Domestic tourists had 12 million overnight stays, and foreign tourists had 2.3 million overnight stays in 2020. In 2020 the number of overnight stays decreased radically; domestic tourists had 25% less overnight stays, and foreign tourists had 67.5% fewer overnight stays than in 2019. (Statistics Finland 2020a.) Total overnights in summer season 2020 was 5 352 000, which had decreased 33% from summer season 2019. Foreign overnights in summer season 2020 were in Tampere region 8% (share % of the total in Finland) (Business Finland 2021, 3-7.)

In 2019 the largest group of foreigners in Finland were Russians with 637 000 overnight stays. The second-largest were Germans with 545 000 overnight stays, and the third were Swedes with 464 000 overnight stays. The fourth were British with 327 000 overnight stays, and Chinese were ranked the fifth with 299 000 nights. The sixth were French with 267 000 nights, the seventh were American with 250 000 nights, and Dutch were the 8th with 218 000 nights. (Statistics Finland 2019b.)

COVID-19-pandemic especially had a significant impact in the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists from central tourist countries in Finland in 2020. The number decreased significantly. The most significant decrease occurred in Russian overnight stays, which fell

by 379 000 nights (Statistics Finland 2020a). In the summer of 2020, the total foreign overnights numbers were 85% less than in 2019 summer (2020: 336 000 overnights) (Business Finland 2021, 5). In 2020 the largest group of foreign tourists were still Russians, with 258 000 overnight stays, which was less than a year before. The second-largest were Germans with 246 000 overnight stays. The British were third with 168 000 overnight stays, and the French fourth with 157 000 overnight stays. Estonians were 5th with 152 000 nights; Dutch were 6th with 130 000 nights; Swedes were 7th with 102 000 nights, and 8th were Americans with 82 000 nights. (Statistics Finland 2021.)

It will take at least few years for the tourism industry to return to pre-crisis levels. It is estimated that in 2023 Finnish tourism will have the same number of tourists as there were in 2019. Domestic target groups are during pandemic the most critical groups since Finnish tourism demand will depend on domestic tourism. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences studied the effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on Finns' travel plans in 2020. The study revealed that the majority of respondents see Finland as a potential travel destination. Finns were most interested in relaxation, cottage and nature holidays. The most important things when planning a vacation were rest and peace and being with loved ones. The pandemic might also increase peoples' desire to travel nearby, positively impacting the small towns tourism industry (Havas & Adamsson 2020, 16-36).

3.3 Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on customer behaviour

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed consumer behavior, attitudes, and consumption patterns, and many of these new habits and changes are likely to remain permanent even after the pandemic ends. The pandemic has changed shopping behavior so that many buy only necessities such as food and medicine. People are also buying more consciously and more local products and appreciating digital marketing tools and channels. Due to social distancing and lock downs, consumers use digital services to communicate, learn and also play to manage isolation. The use of digital services will likely continue and increase. (Accenture 2020.)

Consumers are concerned about the impact of COVID-19, both from a health and economic perspective. Some are worried and anxious, buying food, medicine, and hygiene products more than necessary. On the other hand, some have continued their lives quite normal despite the government and health authorities' recommendations. In addition to fear, people think about the change caused by a pandemic in their own and

loved ones' lives and societal level. In addition to this, people need to get used to the new normal. (Accenture 2020.)

COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown have caused an economic crisis, and consumers' income and consumption have declined accordingly (Ozili & Arun 2020). Consumers spend less and choose more affordable options during economic downturns if they earn less (Bohlen, B., Carlotti, S. & Mihos, L. 2009). Fast-food restaurants offer cheaper meal options than full-service restaurants and may thus be preferred during economic crises (Ozili & Arun 2020). Lee and Ha (2014, in Yang, Liu, & Chen 2020, 27) point out that in such situations, customers are more likely to avoid delicate gourmet dishes in favour of cheaper options such as fast food.

4 Innovation as a tool for development

Innovation is an idea that has been developed forward and ultimately put into practice (Inno-Vointi 2021). It can be concluded that innovation results from the manufacturer's conscious development, and the object are the production and product sales. Innovation can be a new or improved product or service, a new way of working, an improvement in the level of service or a new way of working. When a person or company has developed a product for its use, it can be called a user-centric innovation. Usually, it is created when there is a lack of a suitable product. This type of innovation is more responsive to need than by the manufacturer (Nestori 2018). Innovation can have many different effects; among other things, it can inspire to create something new and replicate it (Inno-Vointi 2021).

Businesses have always had various challenges to meet consumers' demand. In the early years of industrialization, the aim was to make products more affordable, as price played a significant role in consumers' purchasing behaviour. In the 1970s and 1980s, the importance of quality was emphasized, and it became an important factor in consumer purchasing behaviour in addition to the price. In the 1990s and 2000s, customization of services and products became popular with consumers. Price has always been an important factor in consumers' purchasing behaviour and short transport times for products. New developments have replaced old ones, and at the same time, products are being developed to meet the needs of consumers, which were not known to exist. (Apilo & Taskinen 2006, 9-11.)

Today, companies' competitive advantage is understanding customers even more, such as their values, and developing innovations. Companies must establish innovations to secure their future and ensure their competitiveness. Business innovation can be a significant factor in a cost-competitive market. Small companies must constantly develop innovations themselves, but large companies can outsource innovations through acquisitions. Innovations have different effects and, based on the impact, can be classified into a company's business idea or technological leap. "However, generating radical innovations requires an organization to be more risk-taking and tolerant of failures and uncertainties than continuous innovation in small steps". (Apilo & Taskinen 2006, 9-11.)

4.1 Sources of innovations

There are many sources of innovation, and a group or individual implements them in response to a failure that has already occurred or sometimes only accidentally. Often,

innovations follow changes that may occur in the way and patterns of industry, market forces, local or global demographics, the way people perceive their environment, or the development of science. Also, innovative solutions might be born because of changes in private individuals' lives. (Nestori 2018.)

Innovations can originate for many reasons. The most popular reasons are increasing quality, conquering new market areas, expanding product ranges, and a better production process that reduces material and labor costs. Reducing environmental damage can also be the reason for innovations. The same goals work for companies operating in entirely different industries. Innovations related to companies' operations and processes often originate from companies' broader goals and increased competitiveness. Larger companies' innovations are often driven by increased production at a stage when simply reducing costs and modifying physical production methods do not increase it. (Nestori 2018.)

4.2 The development of innovations

According to Clayton Christensen (2005), innovations are created due to the process (Knight 2005, 17). The development of innovation usually involves three stages, and the process starts when an idea comes to mind (Nestori 2018; Knight 2005,17). Its development is anticipated by the need for a product, service or process. Once the innovator has identified this need, development requires knowledgeable people with the necessary technology and appropriate financial support. The amount of know-how, technology, and financial support required will vary depending on the innovation. (Nestori 2018.)

Once the financing is in place, the product will be further developed to suit the market. The producer often spends much time researching the market before an innovation is deliberately created. After entering the market, conclusions can be drawn from the sales revenue about the product's success. The product should be attractive to those customer groups who have money and resources. The potential behavior of consumers is studied through focus groups and other proven research methods. "Technical developments often occur in the production of several products of the same type on a trial basis, and in the analysis of results, and sometimes the products are made available at an early stage to a small reliable group of consumers." The idea must be in line with the company's business model to achieve positive results. (Nestori 2018.)

4.3 Effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on innovations

Many things changed overnight when the COVID-19-pandemic struck worldwide (GiftAMeal 2021). The pandemic has shaken the tourism and restaurant industry (Hook 2021). In the food business, catering companies had to close and adjust their plans of action to fit lockdown limitations, social distancing rules, and wellbeing measures (GiftAMeal 2021). Travelling is one of the primary reasons the COVID-19-pandemic has spread across the world. Consequently, government restrictions on movement and tourist traffic became a general trend, and it is why international tourism took a severe hit. In response to the safety threat that COVID-19-pandemic is causing, tourism brands will have to move forward with bold, innovative ideas. Imaginative arrangements regarding security and cleanliness measures and access to medical facilities will be vital to meeting the public's expectations. (Andjela 2021.)

As a result of the pandemic, tourism companies have had to adapt their business. Companies have adjusted variable costs to operating volume, and fixed costs have been minimized. Some tourism companies have relied on domestic tourism demand, and some companies have developed a business that replaces tourism revenue. (Marski 2021, 46.) Companies have been forced to think about how to survive (Hook 2021). Many have developed innovations to sell services or otherwise developed their business, such as virtually, and the pandemic has especially tested restaurants' ability to innovate and find new business models (Hook 2021; Plumlee 2020).

It is time to focus on ways to step outside the box and offer something unique and exciting to customers as they navigate this challenging situation (Brady 2020). While significant hotel brands already made considerable progress, others industries will have to follow as well. It is for sure that the future of tourism will rely on digital and technological discoveries such as chatbots to make reservations, mobility patterns to manage visitor flows, artificial intelligence, the IoT, 5G, service-oriented robotic, gamification methods for emotional monitoring, and so on (Andjela 2021). Digital services have been in increasing use during pandemic (Hook 2021). These innovations and reforms are going to rewrite the new tourist experience (Andjela 2021).

Innovations and reforms in the front desk experience bring a new way of welcoming guests with contact-free receptions (Andjela 2021). Due to teleworking, the number of customers in staff restaurants is decreasing. During the crisis, new services were developed to bring lunch directly to the office (Kansikas 2020). Package deals or family-style meal deals are an easy way to drive sales since cost-conscious customers

feel like they are getting a better deal. There is a prime opportunity for upselling drinks, desserts and appetizers, too, if ordering is made easy (Brady 2020).

Some restaurants updated and structured their menus for online ordering and became more engaged with their guests on social media. Some restaurants relied on third-party delivery, and some started their food delivery service. Many restaurants started selling their ingredients in bulk, either to other businesses or directly to the consumers. Several restaurants created wine or cocktail subscriptions, and some created grocery or food box subscriptions. (van Moessner 2020.)" Examples of tourism companies' innovation strategies to overcome the corona crisis have been in the restaurant business takeaway meals to local customers, the utilization of local food, accommodation in corona insulation or other temporary accommodation, e.g., for medical staff "(Rural Finland II 2021).

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries, and a lot of work is needed to get tourism back to its former proportions. During a pandemic, it is crucial to develop the tourism sector already so that as many jobs as possible are maintained and the tourism sector does not suffer. Many of the reforms remain in place even after the pandemic. People likely have a need to travel after a pandemic, and that is why it is essential to develop food travel products that are easy to buy and attractive (Hook 2021). Furthermore, these businesses know that post-covid tourists will not be the same as pre-covid ones. They are making changes in their companies to ensure their attractiveness even after a pandemic (Andjela 2021).

5 The research work and its implementation

This chapter discusses the research work and its implementation. The subchapters define research questions that will be addressed in more detail later using selected data collection and analysis methods. The subchapters also present the credibility of the interviewees used for data collection in terms of research work. The research material is intended to utilize the experiences and perspectives of food tourism companies in the future in a similar exceptional situation. The research results are presented from a business perspective. The work is the first in its scope in Tampere region, as Tampere region has not faced a similar pandemic that has so radically affected the tourism industry.

The search for the thesis topic started in September 2020, and in October, the subject was selected. The subject was selected from the thesis topic list created by Hungry for Finland. The planning of the thesis outline began in November 2020, and the writing of the theoretical part started in January 2021. The theoretical part was time to time updated during the process. In January 2021, the search for interviewees began and took one month. The design of the interview framework started in February 2021 and was completed in mid-February 2021. The interviews took place between the 24th of February and the 2nd of March, 2021. After the interviews, the transcription and translation began, which took two weeks. The thematic analysis took about three weeks and the discussion part approximately 2 weeks (figure 5).

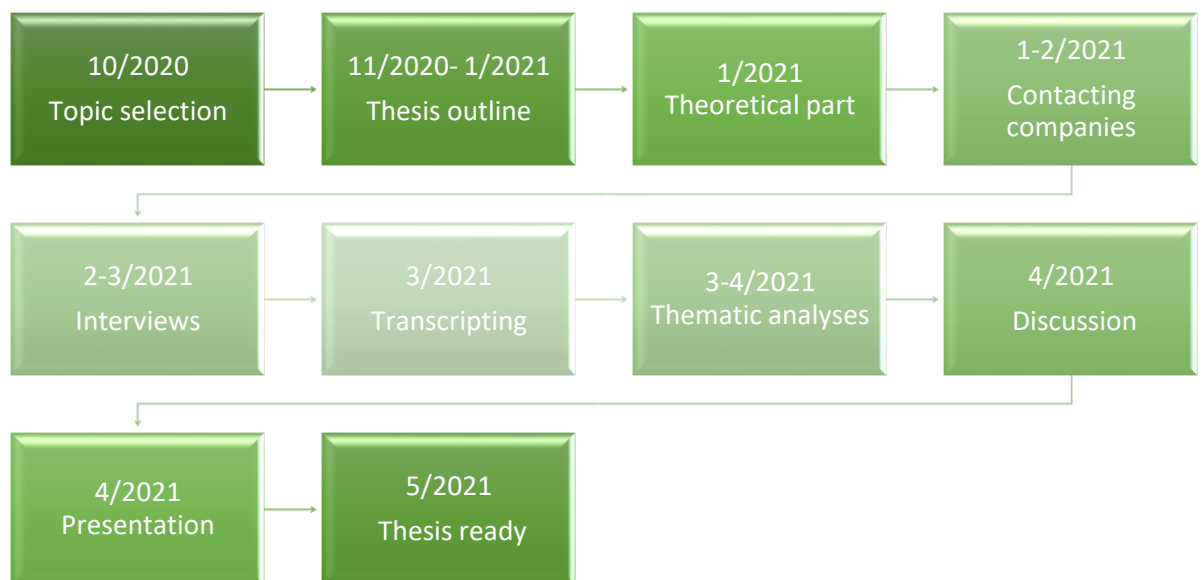


Figure 5. Thesis timeline

5.1 Research question and sub-questions

According to Bradley (2009), a pandemic can have significant implications for the economy, national security, and society's basic functioning, so the thesis research topic is very topical. With the help of getting acquainted with the research and sub-questions, the objective of the thesis was achieved to give information to the Hungry for Finland -project by sharing food tourism entrepreneurs' experiences. The information obtained will enable tourism organizations to better guide entrepreneurs in similar situations in the future. Also, by doing this sort of research, entrepreneurs might feel that they are heard and appreciated during these challenging times.

The main question of the research is divided into three specific sub-questions. With sub-questions, it is easy to start looking for information needed for research, and they also help build a clear framework for the thesis. The main and sub-questions are the basis of the thesis, and they help structure the work clearly and consistently. (Kananen 2008, 51-53.) The research questions of the work, i.e., the main question and sub-questions, are presented below.

The main question of the study was the following:

- What kind of impacts the COVID-19-pandemic had on the food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region during the summer 2020?

The sub-questions of the study were:

- How the pandemic affected the customer base?
- How the pandemic affected companies' product ranges and services?
- What kind of possible innovations were made?

The empirical part is intended to delve into the experiences of food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region in their business operations in the summer of 2020 and their views on the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19-pandemic restrictions. The first sub-question supports the resolution of the main question by providing more detailed information on the impact of the pandemic restrictions on the companies' customer bases. The second sub-question examines how the pandemic affected the companies' product and service ranges. In addition to these, the third sub-question examines what kind of possible innovations, reforms and developments companies developed during the pandemic year, particularly during the summer of 2020.

5.2 Choice of the research method: qualitative thematic interview

The thesis is research-oriented done with qualitative methods. “This thesis aims to describe, understand and interpret phenomena and to answer questions such as what, why and how” (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences 2019, 21). Qualitative research seeks to understand the phenomenon under consideration from the subjects' perspective and aims to produce rich and detailed information about a phenomenon (Juuti & Puusa 2020). The material of the study was collected through expert interviews to obtain reliable and comprehensive information on the experiences of food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region in the summer 2020.

The research has been carried out using a qualitative thematic interview (appendix 1). A thematic interview is suitable when the researcher wants to find information about lesser-known phenomena and things, and the research design has not been precisely defined but will be specified as the project progresses (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a; KAMK 2021). The theme interview aims to find out about people's thoughts and perspectives. The thematic interview falls between the form interview and the open interview, which means that the interview does not proceed according to pre-planned questions, but rather the discussion progresses through the themes. The thematic interview is more structured than the open interview, as the themes have been designed with the help of previous research data and familiarization with the research topic, and they are the same for all interviewees. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a.)

Before the thematic interview, it is essential to get acquainted with the research topic, such as previous research on the topic, and find out the interviewees' background information in advance. By getting acquainted with these, the interview can focus on specific topics. Care should be taken in the selection of interviewees and interview questions. In the case of interviewees, it must be ensured that the interviewees are selected based on who knows the topic under study. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a.)

5.3 Thematic interview framework and interview design

For this research, a thematic interview framework and its main support questions were developed to conduct the research (appendix 1). The interview framework allowed for the creation of a discussion through questions and clarified the interview.

All the interviews were individual as it was easier to focus on one interviewee at a time, and the entrepreneurs' schedules had not allowed for group interviews. All interviews were conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams or by telephone. Also, due to the worsening pandemic situation, it was decided by the researcher to hold the interviews remotely. The interview framework was built using the theoretical knowledge, and the support questions created the interview framework (appendix 1). The content of the interview framework was designed so that the interview would proceed smoothly. The following themes were chosen for the interview framework: (1) background information of the interviewee and the company, (2) food tourism and food tourism in Tampere region during the pandemic, (3) customers during the pandemic, (4) food tourism products and services during the pandemic, (5) challenges, (6) successes, (7) development and possible innovations, and (8) suggestions (figure 6).



Figure 6. The interview framework's themes

The purpose of the first (1) theme in the interview framework was to find out the background of the interviewed entrepreneurs and companies so that the interviewee can be considered a reliable source for research work. The purpose of the following theme (2) was to find out entrepreneurs' knowledge of the Tampere region's food tourism during the pandemic and especially during June, July and August 2020, and food tourism in general. The theme explored what entrepreneurs think are strengths in food tourism and the top food tourism products in Tampere region. The same theme also studied their knowledge of the Hungry for Finland project; and the company's situation such as the financial situation in 2020 compared to 2019. The questions often repeated the comparison between 2019 and 2020, as the change was easier to understand and more clearly visible when there is some basis for comparison.

This theme tentatively addressed future themes, such as the impact of pandemic restrictions on business in the summer months. The third (3) theme was about customers during the pandemic, which was designed to find out the company's customer base before and during the pandemic, specifically during summer 2020, and customer behavior and attitudes towards the pandemic. The third theme was one of the most important and broadest in terms of research. The third theme responded well to the first sub-question: How the pandemic affected the customer base?

The fourth (4) theme was about food tourism products and services during the pandemic and compared the impact of the pandemic on companies' product and service offerings, such as whether the pandemic affected the sales of products and services. This theme addressed one of the sub-questions: How the pandemic affected companies' product ranges and services? For example, did the pandemic increase the sales of some products and services? The fifth (5) theme was about challenges, which asked entrepreneurs about summer 2020 challenges such as possible layoffs. The sixth (6) theme asked about what kind of successes companies had in the summer of 2020 and asked what enabled the achievements.

The fifth (5) and sixth (6) themes were added to the interview framework to bring more depth to the interview and support other themes. The seventh (7) theme addressed development and potential innovations, such as how entrepreneurs developed their operations during a pandemic and whether innovations or reforms emerged. This theme corresponded to the third sub-question of the thesis: What kind of possible innovations were made? This theme was broad and gave a picture of how companies have developed their practices and their future plans. The eighth (8) and the final theme was suggestions, asking entrepreneurs how they thought things could have been better handled during a pandemic, such as by the government. One of the goals of the thesis was to share the experiences of entrepreneurs so that they felt heard, so the eighth theme helped with that.

5.4 Criteria and justification for selecting interviewees and conducting interviews

The companies interviewed were searched through the Visit Tampere website. The goal was to find food tourism companies from all over the Tampere region and different food tourism companies, small, medium-sized, and large companies. The original plan was to interview 7-10 entrepreneurs. The selection criteria for the interviewees were the following: they had to work as either an entrepreneur of a food tourism company and be able to be the response for the company's operations in the summer of 2020. Another

criterion for company's participation for the research was that the company is located in Tampere region. All but two interviewees met all of these criteria.

In the end six companies participated in the research. Companies who participated to the research were: Haukkamaa Adventures from Ruovesi, Ilolan Maatilamatkailu (Farm & B&B) from Valkeakoski, Rönnavikin viinitila (winery) from Pälkäne, Tyrvään Pappila (Parsonage) from Sastamala, Villisti Luova from Valkeakoski and Villipihlaja (Wild rowan) from Tampere (table 1).

Table 1. Interviewees' background information and interviews' information

Food tourism companies	Interview method	Time
Haukkamaa Adventures	Microsoft Teams	1 h 55 min
Ilolan Maatilamatkailu	Microsoft Teams	1 h 2 min
Rönnavikin Viinitila	Microsoft Teams	1 h 10 min
Tyrvään Pappila	Microsoft Teams	55 min
Villisti Luova	Phone	1 h 25 min
Villipihlaja	Microsoft Teams	1 h 9 min

Interviewees were asked for permission to record and utilize interview material as part of this thesis. The interviewees were aware that the material received from them studies the experiences of food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region in summer months 2020 (more precisely June, July and August 2020) and that the objective of the author's work is to give information to the Hungry for Finland -project, by sharing food tourism entrepreneurs' experiences. The interviewees are aware that the work is the assignment of the Hungry for Finland food tourism project.

Invitations to interview for the thesis research were sent on Thursday 21st of January 2021 by e-mail (appendix 2) to 24 companies. The e-mails explained the topic of the work and what the research material was used for, and the interview topics so that the interviewees were aware in advance of what topics would be discussed in the interview. Five responses were received in which two companies indicated their willingness to participate in the study. More interview invitations were sent on Wednesday, 28th of January 2021, to about 30 companies. The e-mail was not the most effective way to reach entrepreneurs so researcher started to call entrepreneurs which was more successful.

Contacting companies via phone started on Monday 8th of February 2021. During phone calls the interviewees were given the same information about the thesis topic as there was in the e-mails. Five companies were contacted, and three companies immediately indicated their willingness to participate in the investigation, and two companies told they are going to think about it, and contacting later in case they want to participate. A couple of days later, the other one of the entrepreneurs contacted and told that she wants to take a part in the research. After much deliberation, one company's participation in the research had to be cancelled because their corporate form did not fully fit the research concept. Two more entrepreneurs were contacted on the 18th and 19th of February 2021, asking if they wanted to participate in the study, and they expressed their willingness to participate.

The 1st version of the interview framework was completed on the 5th of February 2021 and the final version was completed on the 21st of February 2021 (appendix 1). The first thematic interview was on Wednesday 24th of February 2021. The day before a message was sent to the entrepreneur reminding her about the interview since it was asked to do. The next day, Thursday 25th of February 2021, there were two interviews, and on Friday 26th of February 2021 was the fourth interview. On Monday 1st of March 2021, there was the fifth interview, and the last interview was on Tuesday 2nd of March 2021. The seventh interview was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 3rd of March 2021, but the interview was canceled, and the number of interviews remained at six.

The interviews were mainly conducted using Microsoft Teams video calls, with the exception of one, which was conducted by telephone call. The interviews were conducted in Finnish. During the interviews there was one occasion when Microsoft Teams video call did not work, so it was decided to have a phone interview and record it with computer's recorder. An hour was reserved for the interviews, but most of the interviews lasted longer. Interviews lasted an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes.

The discussion with the interviewees was natural and the questions of the interview framework were applied as appropriate. The last interviews went better than the first ones because the first interviews revealed if there was something to change in the body of the interview framework and the interviewer's style became more natural time and time again. It was not necessary to ask all the questions if the interviewee had already answered to them earlier in the discussion. Sometimes a very similar question had to be asked again for the sake of certainty if it was not sure whether the question had been answered.

5.5 Companies involved in the study

Haukkamaa Adventures is located in Ruovesi, and the company was founded in 2017. The company is open all year round. The company's services include various nature trips around Finland, such as fishing trips, catering services and camping equipment rental services. Also, the company provides transportation services and teaches their clients various skills, such as fish handling skills. The company cooperates with Bussi Manninen company. (Haukkamaa Adventures 2021.)

Ilolan Maatilamatkailu (Ilola Farm and B&B) is located in Valkeakoski, and it was founded in 1983. The company is open all year round. The company's services include accommodation and food services, equestrian services such as horse-riding school activities. The company also has basic agricultural activities and rental activities such as renting sauna facilities, baths and huts. Customers can get to know farm life and animals when visiting the company. They have a convenience store on their premises where they sell their own and other local products, most of which are organic. The company also organizes various parties and meeting days for corporate customers. (Ilolan Maatila s.a.)

Rönnvikin viinitila (Rönnvik winery) is located in Pälkäne, and the company was founded at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. In 1995 the company started to make wine. The company is open all year round. The company's services include food and beverage services, such as cheese and wine tastings, and they produce wines, beers, liqueurs, pontika, and Kamrer VSOP apple distillate. The company also organizes on its premises, e.g., parties and meetings. They have a wine shop where customers can buy farm products such as wines and beers. During summer times in the premises of the company, there is a different kind of exhibitions. (Rönnvik 2020.)

Tyrvään Pappila (Tyrvää Parsonage) is located in Sastamala, and the company has been in its current operations since 2017. The company usually is open all year round, but COVID-19-pandemic has affected opening hours. The company's services include versatile food and beverage services, exhibitions and events. The company also organizes parties, such as private parties, meetings and recreation days. (Tyrvään Pappila 2021.)

Villisti Luova is located in Valkeakoski, and the company was founded in 2016. The company is open all year round, but food services are mainly during summer. The company provides nature-based wellness services, such as wild herb, vegetable program

services, wellness program services in nature, custom meals, for example, for parties, and wellness treatments. (Villisti Luova s.a.)

Villipihlaja (Wild rowan) is located in Tampere, and the company was founded in 2019. The company is open all year round. The company offers various experience programs such as dance and wild vegetable courses and forest and steamboat experiences. Programs are organized for both groups, such as companies and friends, as well as for individuals. (Villipihlaja 2021.)

5.6 Thematic analysis of the research material

Recorded interviews were listened and written down first to paper. After that, the text was transcribed to the computer and translated to English, and there was a total of 26 pages. A total of three (3) pages of material was collected from the backgrounds of the interviewees and companies; seven (7) pages on food tourism and food tourism in Tampere region during the pandemic; six (6) pages of customers during the pandemic; three (3) pages on food tourism products and services during a pandemic; one (1) page of challenges; successes of one (1) page; four (4) pages on development and possible innovations; suggestions section became two (2) pages.

After transcription, the material analyzed by thematic design. Thematic design is a basic method of qualitative analysis, in which research material outlines key topics, i.e., themes (University of Jyväskylä 2016). This more precisely means that each interview section where the topic in question is discussed is grouped together when the research material is organized according to themes (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a).

Thematic design allows interviews to be dismantled and condensed into a more manageable and understandable format (Kananen 2008, 91). In this research thematic analysis was done with a computer by using copy-paste function. This research report presents interviewees citations, i.e., samples, in connection with the discussion of the themes. The purpose of the citations is to provide the reader with evidence that the researcher has had material on which to base the analysis (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006a). The citations were chosen so that the interviewees could not be identified from them.

In this research, the results in the paragraphs are sought to be written that way that the more respondents had said the same thing then it was mentioned in the results first, and the next most mentioned thing next, and the rest in the same way. Almost all paragraphs

have added a quote from the interview material to confirm the most mentioned things. If any of the interviewees said a different point/opinion, it was added to the end of the paragraph.

6 Results

This chapter discusses the results of the study. Sub-chapters are themes that have been found from the analyzed research material. A total of eight themes were found, the first of which was background information on entrepreneurs and companies. This section discusses about seven themes which are: Food tourism in Tampere region, Summer 2020 and the impacts of the restrictions, Challenges and successes, Changes in the customer segments and behavior in 2020, Sales, marketing and financial support, Development and possible innovations, and Feedback to the Parliament of Finland and Business Finland (figure 7).

To protect the anonymity of the interviewees the ideas presented in the interviews cannot be identified or linked to the individual outcome. Anonymous identification codes 1,2,3,4,5 and 6 are used for the respondents' citations. The identification codes do not follow the order in the table 1. In thesis all the respondents are referred to as an entrepreneur, an interviewee or as a company. Most often to entrepreneur (number).



Figure 7. Themes of results

6.1 Food tourism in Tampere region

This sub-chapter discusses entrepreneurs' definitions of food tourism, and their thoughts about the strengths and top products of food tourism in Tampere region. The definition of food tourism was, in principle, somehow familiar to everyone. Many defined it as finding food experiences during a trip and the main reason for the travelling is food and experiencing different food related experiences. Many entrepreneurs emphasized that local ingredients are used and food is made according to the local custom. According to

entrepreneur (4) “food tourism is involved in almost with everything, such as cottage rental, accommodation, theater trips. Everyone must eat. Finding different kind of food experiences in different places is enjoyable. Also, it is nice to discover different ways of making food. When travelling in Finland a traveler can notice cultural differences in the way of making food.”

Entrepreneurs mentioned the good location, lakes, the production and processing of many / diverse raw materials, small-scale industry and various and diverse food services, as well as local cooking methods as the strengths of Tampere region in food tourism (figure 8). A few entrepreneurs cited agri-tourism as a strength, combining accommodation, activity and food and beverage services with raw materials from the farm, as well as the sale of products from a farm tourism shop. According to entrepreneur (5) the strengths of Tampere region food tourism are” Very widely available local products, producing and cultivating a wide variety of domestic delicacies. Then there are local names and local cooking methods. Also, the strength is good small-scale industry, local meats and cheeses, and whatever you need.” A couple of entrepreneurs hoped that food tourism in Tampere region would become even better known, although food tourism in Tampere region has been highlighted more in recent years, as they think there are a lot of diverse food tourism companies in Tampere region.



Figure 8. Tampere region’s strengths in food tourism according to interviewees

Entrepreneurs mentioned what they think are the top products of food tourism in Tampere region (figure 9). Most of the entrepreneurs mentioned that meat, fish, game, black sausage, organic products, local bakery products and specialties such as yeast bread (rievä) are top products. Entrepreneur (1) mentioned “products from her own residential village such as breweries, dairy products and berry farms, as well as local bakeries as top products.” A couple of entrepreneurs would like some other products to be better known in Tampere region instead of black sausage.



Figure 9. Tampere region's top food products according to the interviewees

6.2 Summer 2020 and the impacts of the restrictions

In March 2020, many entrepreneurs were confused and afraid when COVID-19 spread rapidly in Finland and the restrictions were imposed. Most group orders and courses were canceled and entrepreneurs wondered how their company would cope with the financial catastrophe. Entrepreneurs did not know how long the restrictions would last. For many entrepreneurs, group orders were canceled first in June and then in July and August. An entrepreneur (6) mentioned that she “had worked for years to attract international tourists” and “was annoyed and felt that the work had been wasted.” Many of the entrepreneurs were confused and had no expectations for the summer.

In the spring, however, many canceled groups wanted to re-book food and program services and then those courses were moved to fall or summer under certain conditions. Entrepreneurs with a wide range of products and services were not as concerned as those with either a new business or a narrower range of products and services, and according to entrepreneur (4) “when there are a wide range of products and services, there are more cash flows covering fixed costs.” There were also those entrepreneurs who had anticipated and started making plans in good time to save the business.

Then, when June 2020 began, entrepreneurs were still on their toes, as the situation lived on all the time. Entrepreneurs lived week by week and day by day. Few entrepreneurs mentioned it was weird to restart the food and beverage service after few months of silent spring season. Entrepreneur (5) said “there were strange feelings when on 1st of June 2020 we re-opened the business and the instructions of the interest organization Mara for the summer season were ready on the last day of May. We suddenly were in a hurry to get everything done, as such as familiarize staff with the corona pandemic restrictions.”

Some of the interviewees said that it was relatively calm and quiet until Midsummer, but after Midsummer the number of customers increased radically, noting the importance of

solo travelers and the huge popularity of domestic tourism. For many entrepreneurs the July 2020 was very busy, and entrepreneur (5) said “July 2020 was the busiest month in the company’s history.” Also, entrepreneur (3) described summer 2020 as “a funny time, because at first the situation in the spring looked hopeless”, but was “surprised at how successful the summer was then.”

The constraints of the pandemic period were mainly reflected in group sizes and gatherings, in the few that entrepreneurs had. Restrictions also affected facilities and transportations such as buses, which had to be larger to maintain safety distances. For some entrepreneurs, the restrictions brought additional costs, e.g., masks and disinfectants. Opening hours restrictions affected the business of only one entrepreneur by affecting concert schedules so that the last call was earlier than normal. The pandemic restrictions did not, as a rule, change the companies’ product and service range.

Entrepreneurs were asked what group sizes were allowed in the summer of 2019 and 2020. In 2019, entrepreneur (2) “had a maximum group size of 20 and in 2020, due to restrictions, a maximum of 10 people”. Two entrepreneurs did not have group size restrictions in 2019, but in 2020 the group size restriction was a maximum of 10 people. One entrepreneur organized two memorial services at the company’s premises in the summer of 2020 and the memorial services were allowed to have about twenty guests. Entrepreneurs were asked how much customer seats were reduced from the normal number of dining spaces. Two entrepreneurs reported that customer seats were halved from the original, one with 700 and the other with 150. Entrepreneur (5) stated that “75% of the capacity could had been used and the initial number of seats in their restaurant is 200.”

Entrepreneurs said the summer of 2019 was smoother, pre-planned and programmed events actualized while the summer of 2020 was lived day by day and week by week. Although the summer of 2019 was more stable, the summer of 2020 was more profitable for most of the interviewees. Even though summer 2020 was busy for most entrepreneurs making the business profitable demanded more work, for example more marketing, since the lucrative group travelers and bookings were absent.

Entrepreneurs were asked if they had heard or talked to other entrepreneurs in Tampere region about how they experienced June, July, and August 2020. All entrepreneurs had talked to other entrepreneurs and had heard a wide range of answers. Many had talked to entrepreneurs in their own city or municipality. For some of the entrepreneurs they had talked to, the summer had been really lucrative and for others a financial disaster. The

restrictions had hampered the business of many entrepreneurs. Many other entrepreneurs had also noticed the popularity of domestic tourism.

6.3 Challenges and successes

During the summer 2020, the entrepreneurs listed challenges what they had faced. They mentioned the absence of groups and foreign customers, the stress of whether customers remember to take care of hygiene and where in Finland and the world customers come from, that there will be no infections, and the uncertainty because they did not know how the disease situation would progress as (figure 10). Some were concerned about financial interests, such as declining incomes and being able to pay for themselves and their employees. The biggest challenge was the uncertainty for everyone and the summer was largely lived one day at the time. Challenges were due to, among other things, from restrictions such as group size restrictions; many older people avoided traveling; uncertainty and fear of getting a COVID-19-virus among customers. No entrepreneur had to lay off anyone during the summer. Many companies used masks, disinfectants and other protective equipment to make customers and staff to feel safe. Those with groups had been canceled and thus income was threatened to fall so they went to work for other companies and / or billed their company for work they did for others, or developed new innovation and reforms.



Figure 10. The challenges experienced by the interviewees during the summer 2020

Many of the entrepreneurs said the increase in food and beverage sales and increased customer numbers were successes (figure 11). Other successes what entrepreneurs mentioned were the popularity of an exhibition and certain program services, successful marketing, successful innovations and developments/ reforms, new customers like couples, and customers who had not visited before and increased customer knowledge of agriculture and the origin of food, as well as building relationships with other company owners. Many see the increase in the number of tourists as reasons for successes, as Finns traveled domestically and used the money saved for abroad in Finland. Entrepreneur (3) described that “domestic tourism became out of control.” One entrepreneur did not have any successes in the summer 2020.



Figure 11. The successes experienced by the interviewees during the summer 2020

6.4 Changes in the customer segments and behavior in summer 2020

This chapter discusses how the COVID-19-pandemic affected the customer base. A comparison was made between 2019 and 2020 to make the change in customers (segment, etc.) more clearly significant. First, entrepreneurs were asked about their regular customers. In an average year, for example, in 2019, most of the entrepreneurs said that the group customers were the most important. Mostly those groups are companies and organizations. Only for one entrepreneur, independent leisure travelers are the most important client group.

Most entrepreneurs mentioned that in 2019, the majority of domestic tourists came mainly from Tampere region, Kanta-Häme and southern Finland in general. In 2020, the trend was largely the same, with other entrepreneurs varying slightly. In 2019 some had customers only from the Tampere region and in 2020 more from the rest of Finland. Other entrepreneurs, on the other hand, changed so that in 2019 there were still customers from other parts of Finland and in 2020 the customers came only from Tampere region.

In 2019 foreign customers came from Central Europe, Germany, Baltic countries, Sweden, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Russia and China. In 2020 only one entrepreneur (3) “had foreign customers, and they were from Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Baltic countries and Russia.” Other entrepreneurs had foreign customers who were permanently residing in Finland. For the most part, in 2020, the customers were Finns.

In 2019, most customers were generally over the age of 50; many of the international tourists were young adults. In 2020, the share of 20–40-year-olds increased, and the share of older +50-year-olds decreased. Next, the variations in the number of male and female customers from 2019 to 2020 were examined. Most entrepreneurs said there were equal numbers of women and men and did not see a difference in women and men compared to 2019.

Customers in 2019 were primarily women in their 40's and 50's in some companies. For few entrepreneurs, the number of male clients increased from the previous year because the threshold for attending courses was lower. Entrepreneur (6) was "happy that there were more men customers than usually" and hopes "that trend will continue". The number of couples as customers increased for all entrepreneurs compared to 2019. Entrepreneur (6) thought that "there were more couples due to teleworking." For four entrepreneurs, the number of families increased in 2020 compared to 2019, while for two entrepreneurs, the number of families decreased in 2020 compared to 2019. In 2019, there were many group customers for all entrepreneurs, but in 2020, only two entrepreneurs had group reservations.

Interviewees were asked how they would explain the term food traveler or "foodie", and many entrepreneurs had similar definitions for that term. Most entrepreneurs described the food traveler as a person who is interested in food, the origin of food, and combining food and experiences. Some described the food traveler as a gourmet who wants to try local dishes and learn how to make local traditional dishes. Some entrepreneurs described that a food traveler's focus is on food when traveling and when deciding where to travel. In addition to food, the place, company, landscape, nature, additional services and experiences are essential for the food traveler. According to entrepreneur (1), "a food traveler is interested in food, wants to see different things, taste different foods, is a bit of a gourmet."

The companies were asked whether the pandemic affected the change in the number of food tourists (figure 12). It was difficult for many entrepreneurs to say whether the number of food tourists increased or decreased, as it is less common to ask customers if they are food tourists, but most entrepreneurs nevertheless, although not sure whether a particular customer was a food tourist, suspected that their food tourist numbers had fallen. Entrepreneur (1) felt that their number increased as they asked for certain product

tastings.



Figure 12. Changes in the customer segments

Entrepreneurs were asked about the change in the number of customers between 2019 and 2020. Half of the entrepreneurs said that the amount increased in 2020 comparing to the year 2019, and half of them said the amount had decreased compared to the year 2019. The share of leisure travelers increased significantly for all but one entrepreneur in 2020 compared to 2019. Entrepreneurs were also asked about their customers in the summer of 2020 and how they would describe them. The majority of entrepreneurs reported that families with children, couples, leisure groups such as groups of friends and groups of young adults (20-40), and middle-aged male and female groups were their largest customer groups, and there were many more solo travelers because most groups (work, organizations) had withdrawn their reservations. The customers were mainly from the Tampere region. Many customers were characterized by the fact that they work remote and thus had easier access to the services.

Changes to 2019 included a radical reduction in groups. The groups that were missing were, for example, workgroups, unions, organizations, as well as some leisure groups such as groups of tour operators, and parties such as family parties were canceled by many entrepreneurs. Important TYKY and TYHY groups were missing from many entrepreneurs in the summer of 2020. The tour operators' group travelers are usually older people, so the absence of groups meant less of an older clientele. The proportion of men as customers of companies providing program services increased as the threshold for many men to participate had dropped. Customer numbers were higher than a year

earlier for many companies, although important and lucrative groups excelled in their absence.

Entrepreneurs felt that most customers knew how to behave within the constraints. Many were very calm and matter-of-fact. Many customers were more careful, kept their distance, looked at where other people were and used disinfectant and masks.

Entrepreneur (1) said that “some customers did not want to go inside the company premises but paid for the products outdoors.” Those entrepreneurs who had outdoor activities felt that it was easy to comply with restrictions and take care of hygiene with small groups. Entrepreneurs thought that it was easier to exercise caution in outdoor activities as there was enough space.

Many entrepreneurs noticed customers were annoyed by the pandemic but did not notice anxiety among customers. Most entrepreneurs felt that most customers were in a good and relaxed mood in the summer despite the pandemic. Few entrepreneurs said they noticed a wide range of attitudes and perspectives on the pandemic among customers. Some took the pandemic lightly, and some took it very seriously. Entrepreneur (4) mentioned that “there was a discussion about the COVID-19-pandemic with customers. Felt it as an easy small talk and a unifying topic of conversation with clients but that there were also a lot of know-it-alls in the customers.”

Entrepreneurs who had courses organized during summer had a condition for the course to be organized that all participants follow the hygiene guidelines exactly. Entrepreneur (3) noticed that “during the day, people tangled together and could take off their masks and forgot to be careful, but then when customers left home, they put the masks back on their faces.” Also, he noticed that many clients wanted calm and detachment from the COVID-19-pandemic, especially those working in nursing.

6.5 Sales, marketing and financial support

The main product of many of the companies surveyed is food and beverage services. For a couple of companies, courses combined with food services are the most important product. Custom meals and group meals are the most important and lucrative product/service for most companies. After food and beverage services, the most important thing for a couple of entrepreneurs were program services.

The content of products and services remained largely the same. The range of products and services increased slightly for the entrepreneurs, e.g., an exhibition, an online course,

and an increase in food services such as salmon planking. Few entrepreneurs had to reduce their food product range such as a la carte list, a buffet table, and also courses from sales from some companies' websites.

Entrepreneurs were asked which products and services sales increased during the summer of 2020 compared to summer 2019. For many entrepreneurs, sales of food, sales of food and beverage increased radically (figure 13). In few companies, the sales of program services had increased instead of food and beverages. One entrepreneur said that sales of their company's product or service did not increase at all. In those companies where sales increased, the reason was an increase in demand and an increase in the number of customers. Turnover increased for almost all entrepreneurs in summer 2020 compared to summer 2019. If one product or service of a company sold worse than before but another product or service sold better, it often compensated for less sold products. For a couple of companies, net sales decreased compared to the summer of 2019.

Entrepreneurs were asked which products or services sales decreased during summer 2020 compared to summer 2019. Many entrepreneurs reported a decrease in sales of program services, some mentioned decrease in the sales of food and beverages. Entrepreneur (6) noticed in her own company that "sales of program services had declined radically." The main reasons for the decrease in sales were the absence of groups, the lack of international customers and the inability to carry out some activities, taking into account safety restrictions such as gaps.



Figure 13. Changes in sales

The effects of the pandemic restrictions on sales of products and services affected the business of the three entrepreneurs the most. For entrepreneur (4), it was reflected in the fact that “not all products and services could be sold due to restrictions, although there was much more demand than before.” For three entrepreneurs, the size restrictions of the groups were affected, as the groups were smaller, so the money had to be obtained in another way. Otherwise, the restrictions on opening hours did not affect other entrepreneurs or the sale of products and services, as for most entrepreneurs the company is not open at night anyway.

Entrepreneurs were asked what kind of services their customers had hoped they would increase or decrease. Most of the entrepreneurs received requests from customers. Entrepreneur (1) said “customers wanted more wine and cheese tastings”, one other entrepreneur (4) said, “customers wanted more local and organic products”. Entrepreneur (6) had heard the wish “for smaller group sizes in the activities.” Many of these aspirations were being pursued by entrepreneurs. Two entrepreneurs did not hear wishes from customers.

All entrepreneurs received good feedback on their products and services. Entrepreneur (1) said she had “received such feedback from customers that it is nice to stay in quiet and more relaxed places. Entrepreneur (6) said she “had received requests as to whether courses could be organized in smaller groups” and she “received good feedback that the rules were followed” and also praised “clients for following the instructions given”. She also said “that clients were grateful that the courses were organized.” She had noticed indifference while working with clients in another company.

Entrepreneurs were asked how they promoted their sales during the pandemic. Each company advertised itself on social media as it was the easiest, cheapest, and most useful way for all businesses to advertise (figure 14). For entrepreneurs, it was also important to advertise that the potential customers know the company exists even during the pandemic time. Companies advertised in local newspapers, and two entrepreneurs also advertised in Aamulehti, and one in addition to these magazines mentioned above in Helsingin Sanomat, Hämeen Sanomat and other newspapers. Entrepreneur (1) said that “in addition to newspapers, they advertised twice on regional radio stations, such as Yle's regional radio station. They also had an exhibition, a press campaign, and a press day to celebrate an anniversary of the company.” All the entrepreneurs said that marketing was beneficial, as customers often said they noticed the ad on social media, in the newspapers, or heard on the radio, and therefore decided to deviate.



Figure 14. Companies' ways of marketing

Few entrepreneurs applied for and received financial support from Business Finland or from the residential city where the company is located, such as development support, support for salary costs and for example for an exhibition. Those who did not get financial support found it unfair, but they still made it through summer 2020. One entrepreneur was grateful for the support even though it did not cover all the financial losses. Few entrepreneurs mentioned they would have needed money for the development ideas but could not get it because of technical legal reasons that Business Finland had made a condition for receiving financial support.

Many of the innovations and reforms did not require investors and background support forces. Some entrepreneurs got help and funding from their family members, friends, business partners, as well as from the companies where they are working as well. One company got support and funds from a project where the company had participated. Few entrepreneurs wanted to get financial support for the innovations

6.6 Development and possible innovations

This chapter discusses developments and possible innovations. Entrepreneurs were asked how they would define the term innovation and possible innovations and reforms they made during pandemic (especially June, July and August). The concept of innovation was a familiar term to all entrepreneurs. Interviewees were asked to explain the term innovation. The entrepreneurs generally explained the term in the same way, but for some, innovation only meant an idea that has remained on the level of an idea and has not yet been developed or put into practice.

Interviewees told how they developed their activities during the pandemic, especially summer time and what innovations they developed (figure 15). Innovations created by the entrepreneurs included a mild carbonated rhubarb beverage, an online course, an experiential food tourism product which was created with a collaboration with another entrepreneur and a third sector, a breakfast and lunch basket, take-away food, giving up the buffet and selling food in portions instead, reducing the wide range of products in the menu and renting cottages where the entrepreneur would do food and food related

program services for customers.

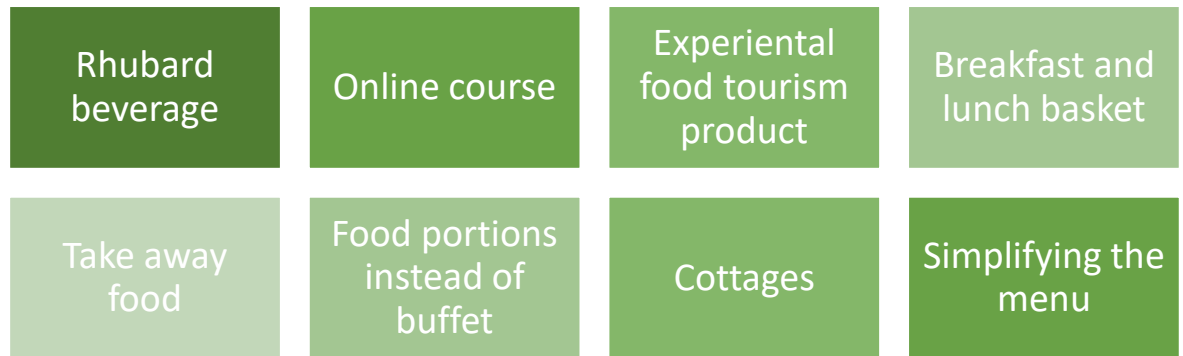


Figure 15. Innovations developed by the entrepreneurs

Most of the innovations developed by entrepreneurs are new products and services that the customers can purchase. In addition, some innovations had also been developed to improve the company's efficiency, i.e., for the company's own use, and for one entrepreneur, the innovation was also had a new way of working. A mildly carbonated rhubarb beverage developed was created as an experiment. The company had made similar kinds of product with other ingredients in the past, but then it turned out that rhubarb is a hit in Europe, so they decided to make it from rhubarb.

Most of the innovations were born out of compulsion since the COVID-19-restrictions prevented regular business, and something had to be invented. Also, some entrepreneurs mentioned the innovations were born due to a matter that happened in their own private lives, and one innovation was due to a previous failure. Innovations were developed mainly for the need of the expansion of the product range for most entrepreneurs (figure 16). Other reasons included conquering markets, facilitating service provision, a better production process that reduces material and labor costs, reducing environmental damage, improving quality, and filling a gap in business operations. A couple of entrepreneurs had had an idea for innovation for a couple of years, but under the influence of the COVID-19-pandemic, they put the ideas into practice.



Figure 16. Reasons for developing innovations

Once the idea came to mind about the mildly carbonated beverage, they started making the product themselves, then sent it to be carbonated and packaged elsewhere. When the product arrived back at the company, they still experimented with it and decided to sell it themselves, even though, at first, they had the idea that grocery stores would have sold it in addition to them. The online course progressed from the concept in that the entrepreneur asked her spouse to help with IT and other practical work such as making videos. When the idea of renting cottages and using them for food and program services arose, the company, together with a business partner, contacted the cottage owners and set out to plan the idea forward.

The idea of a snack and breakfast basket started to move forward by adding it to the product range, but the company removed it because there was no demand. That same company decided to replace the buffet with food portions, and that was easy to conduct; they had to think which food are generally popular, and then they executed the idea and made a menu. The collaborative idea of an experiential food tourism product progressed so that together they, two entrepreneurs and a third sector, began to design the idea in more detail and they tested the product with volunteers. The sale of the take away food proceeded in such a way that they first tried out the sale and proceeded on that basis.

All entrepreneurs felt that innovations benefitted and will benefit in the future their business financially, at least in terms of being able to cover fixed costs. The entrepreneur (2) felt that when she had made the product for the first time, she “could do more of the same kind of in the future. The product brings visibility and scope to the company, as well as gives new dimensions and opportunities.” Entrepreneur (4) mentioned that “thanks to the reform, there is enough time for other work.”

All entrepreneurs intend to develop their operations in the future, and many have new plans for the year 2021. Entrepreneur (4) has “plans for the development of routes and

outdoor areas". Many entrepreneurs have new products and services for summer 2021, such as new beverages, new online courses, herb courses in co-operation. Some of the entrepreneur plan to reduce some services to make the business more flowing, for example, that the company is not open every day, but only by reservation. Some entrepreneurs have plans for innovations in the food and beverage section, but they are waiting to have permission from Finnish food authorities.

Entrepreneurs were also asked if they had heard about the ideas or innovations of other food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere region. Many had talked to other entrepreneurs and had heard that entrepreneurs had developed online courses. One entrepreneur had set up a YouTube channel to teach viewers how to make traditional Finnish dishes. Several entrepreneurs had also heard of many entrepreneurs who have started take away business in the institutional kitchen. Many had set out to make salads and food portions with various trade groups. Only one entrepreneur had not heard about the ideas or innovations of other entrepreneurs.

6.7 Feedback to the Parliament of Finland and Business Finland

At the end of the interview, entrepreneurs were asked how they thought things could have been handled better in the interests of companies, e.g., from the government. There were many different answers to this question. Most entrepreneurs said that unclear and ever-changing guidelines and restrictions caused stress and uncertainty about the future (figure 17). Entrepreneur (5) complained that "the government has had a year time to make communication clearer, but they have not, and I wish that government would make a clear line between a recommendation and a restriction."

Entrepreneurs' attitudes towards summer pandemic restrictions, such as opening hours restrictions and group size restrictions, were generally relatively problem-free. As a rule, they did not like but accepted the restrictions, took them seriously, and hoped that customers would also take them seriously. Some companies found some restrictions unfair. Entrepreneur (6) considered "that there should not have been such strict restrictions on outdoor activities" and entrepreneur (5) found it unfair "that the restrictions applied only to the restaurant sector and that there could be as many customers as possible in the shop and elsewhere but not in the restaurants."

Another problem mentioned by many was obtaining financial support, e.g., from their own municipality and Business Finland, as many did not receive subsidies because the criteria for receiving subsidies changed all the time, and especially those who work under a

business name, as a light entrepreneur or as a part-time entrepreneur did not receive subsidies from Business Finland. Entrepreneur (3) “found it unfair that the subsidies were municipality-specific, i.e., in another municipality a part-time entrepreneur receives subsidies but in another they do not.” It was considered unfair by some entrepreneurs to develop an innovation in order to receive subsidies, as it was challenging to create a new product when own resources are scarce. It was considered by few entrepreneurs unfair that very successful companies had received COVID-19-pandemic subsidies. Many entrepreneurs also noted that it is difficult for women and small entrepreneurs to get support, and it seems unfair to them because they still employ themselves. Another problem that some entrepreneurs faced was being intervener when full-time work and the amount of part-time reduced, and they would have needed some financial support for that situation.

Entrepreneurs thought that food tourism did not receive enough help from the Parliament of Finland and Business Finland. Entrepreneur (1) felt “that restaurants, in particular, had not been sufficiently helped and taken into account” and was appalled by the number of layoffs. Few entrepreneurs noted that food tourism entrepreneurs got way more responsibility, such as documenting all possible scenarios of how to act if COVID-19-virus spreads in their premises and everything related to coronavirus. Entrepreneur (4) felt that “food tourism entrepreneurs are being blackmailed at every level when it comes to planning things in advance and documenting all possible scenarios of how to act in that and that situation. And if someone gets sick, it’s automatically the fault of the entrepreneur.” Entrepreneurs thought that the government would have realized that it is relatively safe to have outdoor activities even with a big group when they made the restrictions for the group sizes.



Figure 17. Suggestions by the entrepreneurs for the Parliament of Finland and Business Finland

Many of the entrepreneurs realized that making quick decisions at the governmental level is challenging. They praised the government, even though the decisions may not have been in their favor, since they noticed that being healthy is more important than business. Many were also pleased that information about COVID-19-pandemic restrictions came

from several different sources. While all entrepreneurs feared the worst of summer 2020, it surprised most by being the most lucrative summer ever for them.

7 Discussion

In the discussion chapter, the researcher discusses the key results of the study. The researcher compares the results to the previous literature and research in the sub-chapters and makes notes how much those support and differ from each other. The researcher forms conclusions based on the results and present development ideas and suggestions for the Parliament of Finland, Business Finland, Ely, municipalities, Finnish food authority, tourism organizations and food tourism companies. The reliability of the research is examined and further research proposals mentioned. At the end of the discussion researcher will evaluate the thesis process and her learning.

7.1 The results reflected with the theoretical part

The researcher discusses the key results in the following sub-chapters and compares them to the previous literature and research. Changes in the number of foreign tourists is discussed and reflected with the theoretical part in the sub-chapter 7.1.1. Customer description is discussed and reflected with the theoretical part, and previous studies is in sub-chapter 7.1.2. In sub-chapter 7.1.3, changes in the sales are discussed and reflected with the theoretical part. Business developments are discussed and reflected with the theoretical part in sub-chapter 7.1.4. In sub-chapter 7.1.5, entrepreneurs' thoughts are discussed as well as reflected with the theoretical part.

7.1.1 Changes in the number of foreign tourists

Entrepreneurs reported that in 2019 they had foreign customers, but in summer 2020, only one entrepreneur had foreign customers. The pandemic had a significant impact on the number of foreign customers of the companies interviewed. Also, Statistics Finland (2020) noted that "COVID-19-Pandemic especially had a big impact in the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists from main tourist countries in Finland in 2020. The number decreased significantly." Entrepreneurs also noticed that even though there were fewer foreign customers, the popularity of domestic tourism radically increased, which helped to compensate for the loss of foreign customers. Also, Havas and Adamsson (2020) noted that Finnish tourism demand would depend on domestic tourists for a while. A study conducted in 2020 by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (2020) proved that most Finns saw Finland as a potential travel destination.

Entrepreneurs said that in 2019, their customers were Central European, German, Baltic, Swedish, British, Dutch, Russian and Chinese. According to Statistics Finland (2019b), in 2019, the largest group of foreigners in Finland were Russians, with 637,000 overnight stays. The second-largest were Germans with 545,000 overnight stays, and the third were Swedes with 464,000 overnight stays. The fourth were British with 327,000 overnight stays and Chinese were ranked the fifth with 299,000 nights. The sixth were French with 267,000 nights, the seventh were American with 250,000 nights and Dutch were the 8th with 218,000 nights. The countries of origin of foreign customers of entrepreneurs were primarily the same as Statistics Finland (2019b), except entrepreneurs did not have Americans and Statistics Finland did not have Baltics on their list. This might be explained by that there were six companies involved in the study, which is a small group of companies which makes it impossible to make an overall picture of whole Finland's statistics. And when looking at the statistics of foreign tourists in Finland as a whole, small countries such as the Baltic countries may not show up well in the statistics because there are fewer people in those countries for example comparing to Germany.

In the summer of 2020, only one entrepreneur had foreign customers, and they were from Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the Baltic countries and Russia. According to Statistics Finland (2021), in 2020, the most significant foreign tourists were Russians, with 258,000 overnight stays. The second-largest were Germans with 246,000 overnight stays. The British were third with 168,000 overnight stays and the French fourth with 157,000 overnight stays. Estonians were fifth (152,000 nights), Dutch were sixth (130,000 nights), Swedes were seventh (102,000 nights), and eighth were American (82,000 nights). According to Statistics Finland's (2021), the countries of origin of the entrepreneur's foreign customers were primarily the same as statistics, except the British, French, Dutch and American. It should also be noted that Statistics Finland's (2021) took into account overnight stays, while many of the entrepreneurs included in the research do not have accommodation activities, but their customers are primarily day visitors.

7.1.2 Customer description

In 2020 the customer segments of the companies changed radically comparing to previous years. The share of 20-40-years-olds customers increased and the share of +50-years-olds customers decreased. For few entrepreneurs, the number of male clients increased from the previous year. The number of couples as customers increased for all entrepreneurs compared to 2019. For most entrepreneurs, the number of families increased in 2020 compared to 2019. In 2019, there were many group customers for all entrepreneurs, but in 2020, only a few entrepreneurs had group reservations. Most

entrepreneurs, suspected that their food tourist numbers decreased comparing to 2019. The share of leisure travelers increased significantly for most of the entrepreneurs. According to Finnish institute for health and welfare (2020) especially elderly people should avoid any risks to get a coronavirus, because the age is a significant risk factor. Finnish institute for health and welfare (2020) also noted that keeping two meters distance between people and especially with elderly people is necessary. These reasons listed by Finnish institute for health and welfare (2020) might have been reasons why elderly people travelled less in 2020.

Entrepreneurs felt that most customers knew how to behave within the constraints. Many customers were more careful, kept their distance, looked at where other people were and used disinfectant and masks. Most entrepreneurs felt that most customers were in a good and relaxed mood in the summer despite the pandemic. Accenture (2020) mentions that consumers are concerned about the impact of COVID-19, both from a health and economic perspective. Some are worried and anxious, buying food, medicine, and hygiene products more than necessary. On the other hand, some have continued their lives quite normal despite the government and health authorities' recommendations. From this, it can be concluded that the Finns complied with the restrictions better than many might have expected.

7.1.3 Changes in the sales

Entrepreneurs mentioned that the content of products and services remained largely the same. The range of products and services increased slightly for few entrepreneurs, e.g., an exhibition, an online course, and an increase in food services such as salmon planking. Few entrepreneurs had to reduce their food product range such as a la carte list, a buffet table, and some courses from sales from companies' websites. Also, Marski (2021) mentions that as a result of the pandemic, tourism companies have had to adapt their businesses; for example, companies have adjusted variable costs to operating volume, and fixed costs have been minimized, and some companies have developed a business that replaces tourism revenue.

Many entrepreneurs reported that sales of food and beverage increased radically during the summer, and in few companies, sales of program services had increased. Entrepreneurs said the reason for the increase in sales was an increase in demand and an increase in the number of customers. Turnover increased for almost all entrepreneurs in the summer of 2020 compared to the summer of 2019. If one product or service of a company sold worse than before but another product or service sold better, it often

compensated for less sold products. For a couple of companies, net sales decreased compared to the summer of 2019. While all entrepreneurs feared the worst of summer 2020, it surprised most by being the most lucrative summer ever for them. Also, Lehtinen (29 January 2021) noted that due to restrictions, restaurant food consumption, alcohol and accommodation services collapsed in the spring and autumn of 2020. Still, the increase in domestic tourism and cottage rental in the summer of 2020 increased the consumption of these services.

Many entrepreneurs reported a decrease in sales of program services, and few cited a reduction in food and beverage sales in the summer. The reasons for those decreases were, in their opinion, the absence of groups, the lack of international customers and the inability to carry out some activities due to safety restrictions. Pandemic restrictions affected sales of companies' products and services, but less than expected. With a group size of a maximum of 10, entrepreneurs earned less than before. Accommodation facilities could not be sold as much as before, and not all customer seats could be used in restaurants due to restrictions, even if there had been demand. According to Valtioneuvosto (2020), in the restaurants, the allowed number of customer seats was three-quarters of the original amount. Opening hours restrictions did not affect the company of more than just one entrepreneur.

7.1.4 Business development

All the entrepreneurs created innovations in 2020. Some innovations were new products, some were improved product or service, and one was a new way of working. Customers can purchase most of the innovations developed by entrepreneurs. Most of the innovations and reforms were born out of compulsion since the COVID-19-restrictions prevented regular business, and something had to be invented. According to Hook (2021) and Plumlee (2020), companies have been forced to think about how to survive, and many have developed innovations to sell services or otherwise developed their business during the COVID-19-pandemic.

Innovations were primarily developed for the need of the expansion of the product range. Other reasons included conquering markets, facilitating service provision, a better production process that reduces material and labor costs, reducing environmental damage, improving quality, and filling a gap in business operations. Also, according to Nestori (2018), innovations can originate for many reasons, and the most popular reasons are increasing quality, conquering new market areas, expanding product ranges, and a better production process that reduces material and labor costs. Reducing environmental

damage can also be the reason for innovations. The reasons for entrepreneurs mainly were the same as what Nestori (2018) mentioned but with the addition of filling a gap in business operations.

7.1.5 Entrepreneurs' thoughts

Most entrepreneurs said that unclear and ever-changing guidelines and restrictions caused stress and uncertainty about the future. Few entrepreneurs noted that food tourism entrepreneurs got way more responsibility, such as documenting all possible scenarios of how to act if COVID-19-virus would spread in their premises and everything related to coronavirus, and some found the restrictions too strict and unfair. Another problem mentioned by many was obtaining financial support, e.g., from their own municipality and Business Finland, as many did not receive subsidies because the criteria for receiving subsidies changed all the time, and especially those who work under a business name, as a light entrepreneur or as a part-time entrepreneur did not receive subsidies from Business Finland.

It was also considered unfair that successful companies got financial support even if it was not needed. Entrepreneurs thought that food tourism did not receive enough help from the government and Business Finland. Valkama (2020) mentioned that the government decided that Business Finland and the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) would act as distributors of corona subsidies. Those organizations had the decision-making power over who receives the subsidies.

MaRa ry (2020) noted that the money companies received was not enough to cover all the costs, such as fixed costs. Also, Valkama (2020) indicated that Business Finland has not been fair when granting financial support. Many of the entrepreneurs realized that making quick decisions at the governmental level is challenging. Although the decisions may not have been in their favor, they praised the government since they noticed that being healthy is more important than business. Many were pleased that information about COVID-19-pandemic restrictions came from several different sources, even if they were unclear and ever-changing.

Summer 2020 was very lucrative for many entrepreneurs, although the worst was feared. Customer numbers, the sales of food and beverage increased, and many entrepreneurs developed a new product. The popularity of domestic tourism surprised many entrepreneurs. Many of the entrepreneurs complained about unclear pandemic restrictions and the difficulty in obtaining subsidies. Pandemic restrictions affected sales of

companies' products and services, but less than expected. The hard work, perseverance, and resourcefulness of the entrepreneurs helped them compensate for the lost income, mainly due to the cancellation of group bookings.

7.2 Development ideas and suggestions

The researcher has developed development ideas and suggestions from the obtained research results (Figure 18). These proposals can be utilized by Parliament, Business Finland, Ely, municipalities, tourism organizations and food tourism companies if similar exceptional situations occur in the future. The first development idea for Parliament is to share more precise information for companies on pandemic restrictions such as opening hours restrictions and the number of customer seats. The information given to companies should be more proactive when a business has to be temporarily closed down and when it can be reopened. The enormous responsibilities of companies over the prevention of a corona pandemic should be narrowed, as they make it more difficult for companies to conduct their business. As well as less prosecution towards companies if an infection is found in any of the customers.

Results showed that the pandemic restrictions should be equitable between different industries. And on the other hand, restrictions should also be targeted on a business-by-business basis; for example, if an activity program is held outdoors, there could be more participants than in an activity that is held indoors. Financial support should be more readily available to small businesses and different forms of businesses. It should not be required that every company needs to develop innovation to get financial support from Business Finland. Companies that do well during the corona crisis would not get financial aid. Municipalities all over Finland should also have the same criteria when granting money to companies. Food tourism companies would need more financial aid, when the Parliament has restricted their businesses. Preparing food and beverages and allowing it to be sold even to those who do not have an industrial kitchen would be a great improvement for many entrepreneurs. This change would be made possible by the Finnish food authority.

Visit Pirkanmaa and other tourism organizations in Tampere region should advertise more food tourism companies. Also, those organizations should be more supporting and advising companies in difficult situations like pandemic, since there was no mention in the research material about organizations supporting the food tourism companies during pandemic. Companies should from now on make a survival plan in case this kind of exceptional situation would occur again in the future. Companies should expand their

product range and services to ensure they have enough sources of income. Also, what would benefit the companies are doing even more co-operation between each other to increase the visibility of companies.

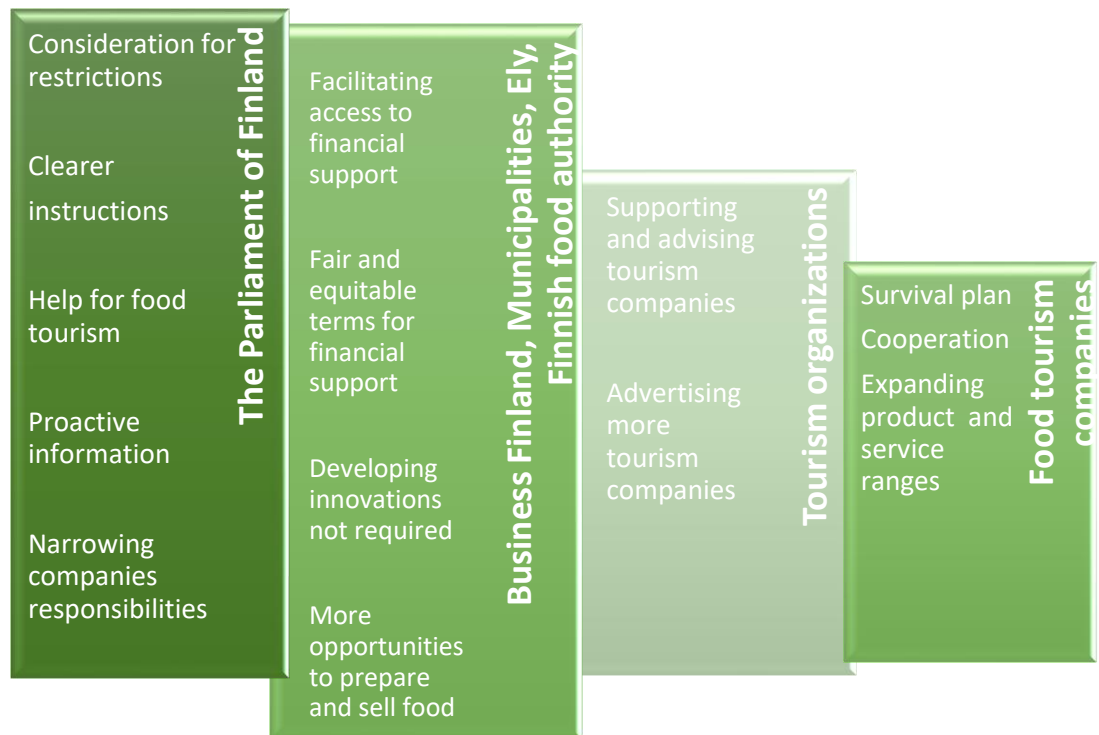


Figure 18. Development actions

7.3 The reliability of the research and proposals for further research

Qualitative research involves assessing the reliability of research. In qualitative research, reliability can be evaluated in many ways. One aspect related to the reliability of qualitative research is transferability: whether the study results can be generalized or transferred to other objects or situations. (University of Jyväskylä 2010). The nature and the subject of the research may influence how the participants in the research respond. Therefore, the reliability must be considered carefully (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006b).

The researcher had selected for interviews individuals with strong knowledge and expertise on the impact of 2020 on their business. The interview invitations (appendix 2) sent via email informed about the topic of the thesis and to whom the work is done. Interview invitations made over the phone contained the same information as in the e-

mail. The interviewees were aware they could ask for more information about the topic if they wanted to. The original plan was to interview 7-10 entrepreneurs, but in the end six entrepreneurs were interviewed, and this lower number of interviews might have affected negatively in the reliability of the results.

The researcher reminded the interviewees in the beginning of the interview what they were participating to; and that the conversations would be recorded, and after transcription the recordings would be deleted. The researcher informed that the anonymity of the interviewees would be protected in the results. All the interviews were individual interviews, so there was less of a risk that someone would not say his/her opinions due to shyness or peer pressure, and every interviewee got enough time to answer to questions.

Even though there was plenty of time given to the interviews, some hurried to get it done since they had some other plans after the interview. Also, what could have negatively affected the research was the time passed (6 months) from summer so interviewees might not have remembered the summer so well. The researcher felt that too similar questions were asked too many times, and that might have confused the interviewees. The researcher asked identical questions to make sure that the research questions were answered. At the beginning of one interview came IT problems, and the beginning of the interview was poorly recorded on a computer, but it did not have a huge impact on the study. Few times researcher felt that she was guiding the course of the interview too much.

Some of the websites what the researcher used as sources for the thesis did not have a date of the publication or the author mentioned, but there were only few of those. Most of the sources were reliable and scientific, but sometimes the researcher could not find very scientific and dependable sources and had to settle for less scientific sources. This was partly due to COVID-19 which is quite knew phenomenon so there has not been many researches done about it, so finding scientific and reliable sources was very difficult. In the end, the researcher finds the study reliable. In her work, the researcher thoroughly explained how the research was carried out, and she used the theoretical part to develop a detailed interview framework. Most importantly, she researched what needed to be studied. The researcher received answers to the main and sub-questions.

The researcher thinks the further research topics could include the recovery of food tourism businesses from pandemic times; food tourism companies' faith in the future; Finns 'attitudes towards neighborhood and food tourism after the pandemic period, and

whether retirement group travel will return to the same level as it was before the pandemic.

7.4 Evaluating the thesis process and one's own learning

The topic of thesis was chosen because the researcher herself is from an entrepreneurial family and feels that it is important to be aware of the perspectives and experiences of small and medium-sized enterprises at the societal level. The researcher did not have much pre-expectations for the results of the study and some of the results therefore surprised the researcher. When searching for interviewees, the researcher was surprised at how many food tourism companies there are in Tampere region.

The thesis process largely followed a pre-prepared plan. There were few adjustments on the schedule. One of the toughest parts of the researcher of the thesis was the beginning; how to get everything started. The idea of the topic was clear since the beginning, but figuring out the main question and the sub-questions took time. With the help of the supervisor, the whole process became clearer and the supervisor gave good advices during the process. The communication with the supervisor was active throughout the project.

Making the thesis outline was time-consuming, but it was worth making since it helped during the process. Writing the theoretical part was a long process, but most of it was done in three weeks, but it had to be updated during the process. Finding reliable and scientific research was challenging since there was not much about effects of COVID-19-pandemic available in January and February 2021. Especially finding updated statistics was difficult.

Contacting companies was active, but it took a long time to get answers, so tactics had to be changed. Initially, companies were contacted by e-mail and when its inefficiency was noticed, emailing was replaced by phone calls, which were the most efficient of all. One of the interviews had to be canceled as the company's business form did not fully meet the requirements. The researcher should have better understood the company's business form before sending the interview request. The making of the interview framework was fast, and it became very comprehensive, which was helpful during the interview. On the other hand, similar questions in the framework would have been worth reducing. It would have been worthwhile to practice the interview several times before the actual interviews.

The interviews were successfully scheduled for two weeks, which greatly speeded up the process. The interviews were the most interesting and exciting part of the study. There were two interviews on one day, one of which could have been scheduled for another day. There were seven interviewees initially, but one of the interviewees canceled the interview in the last meters, and therefore the researcher should have looked for more interviewees for the study. The interviews went largely without problems, but at the beginning of one interview, there were IT problems with Microsoft Teams, which led to the interview being conducted over the phone. The researcher had been able to prepare for a problem of this nature with spare equipment. The interviews surprised the researcher how innovative, hard-working, persistent and resourceful all the entrepreneurs had been during the challenging period.

The transcription of the interviews was time-consuming, but first, doing transcription by hand and then writing the same text with the computer helped the researcher to remember the interviews better and especially what each one said. Writing the results section took a long time because at first the researcher was not entirely sure how and in what order the results should be reported. Writing the discussion section was interesting, but the most challenging since it felt like the same things were mentioned repeatedly. Although the results and development ideas had been thought through during the process, expressing them on paper was challenging. The creation of table and figures was pleasant, and the researcher was able to use her creative side.

Overall, the researcher feels that the work has been done well, and the process proceeded largely according to plan. The researcher would have liked more close guidance and group support, but due to COVID-19, it was not possible to execute. The work progressed well even though these things did not actualize. The researcher was surprised at how much time it takes to complete the thesis, and occasionally during the process, it felt like the red thread of the work was lost. The interviews and studying of the research results reminded the researcher of the purpose of this work.

The researcher feels she has improved her time management, organization skills and IT skills during the process. The researcher is grateful for the excellent and seamless cooperation with the Hungry for Finland -project and the exciting and rewarding discussions with the interviewees. The research revealed that food tourism entrepreneurs want to be more heard and appreciated. They insist on being taken more into account when decisions are made concerning their businesses. As a result of the study the researcher would like to bring out more the views and experiences of small and medium-

sized tourism companies. In the future, the researcher would like to help the progress of the small and medium-sized companies' influence and vitality in Finland.

References

- Accenture 2020. COVID-19: How consumer behavior will be changed. URL: <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/consumer-goods-services/coronavirus-consumer-behavior-research>. Accessed: 20 January 2020.
- Andjela 2021. Innovation Cloud, Post-COVID19 innovations in the Tourism industry. URL: <https://innovationcloud.com/blog/postcovid19-innovations-in-the-tourism-industry.html>. Accessed: 17 January 2021.
- Apilo, T. & Taskinen, T. 2006. Innovaatioiden johtaminen. Voitto. VTT tiedotteita. Espoo. URL: <https://www.vttresearch.com/sites/default/files/pdf/tiedotteet/2006/T2330.pdf>. Accessed: 1 February 2021.
- Bohlen, B., Carlotti, S. & Mihas, L. 2009. How the recession has changed US consumer behaviour. McKinsey & Company. URL: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/how-the-recession-has-changed-us-consumer-behavior>. Accessed: 28 March 2021.
- Bradley, N. 2009. National strategy for Influenza Pandemic. Nova Science Publishers, Inc. New York.
- Brady, C. 2020. Innovative Ways Restaurants Can Drive Sales During COVID-19. Outside insights. QSR. URL: <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/outside-insights/5-innovative-ways-restaurants-can-drive-sales-during-COVID-19>. Accessed: 17 January 2021.
- Business Finland 2020. Matkailu on suomessa kasvava vientiala ja merkittävä työllistäjä. URL: <https://www.businessfinland.fi/494339/globalassets/julkaisut/visit-finland/tutkimukset/2020/2019-matkailu-vientialana-infograafi.pdf>. Accessed: 27 March 2021.
- Business Finland 2021. Travel in Finland, summer season 2020. Visit Finland. URL: <https://www.businessfinland.fi/4a9e85/contentassets/6518a681474e404bbdeddd4412592876/summer-2020-review.pdf>. Accessed: 30 January 2021.
- Cambridge Dictionary 2020. Customer Base. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/customer-base>. Accessed: 16 December 2020.

CBI 2018. What are the opportunities for culinary tourism from Europe? URL: <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/culinary-tourism>. Accessed: 4 January 2021.

CDC 2020. What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>. Accessed: 15 December 2020.

Commbox 2021. The Global Pandemic Is Rewriting the Rules of customer Service – Here Are 6 Ways to Prepare. URL: <https://www.commbox.io/the-global-pandemic-is-rewriting-the-rules-of-customer-service-here-are-6-ways-to-prepare/>. Accessed: 20 January 2021.

Culinary Tourism Alliance 2020. What is food tourism? URL: <https://www.culinarytourismalliance.com/food-tourism-101>. Accessed: 15 December 2020.

Eduskunta 2021. Valmiuslain käyttöönottoaminen korona-aikana. URL: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/naineduskuntatoimii/kirjasto/aineistot/kotimainen_oikeus/LATI/Sivut/valmiuslain-kayttoonottaminen-koronavirustilanteessa.aspx. Accessed: 18 April 2021.

Finnish institute for health and welfare 2020. Ikääntyneen on syytä välttää koronavirustartuntaa – hyvinvointiin ja toimintakykyyn kannattaa kiinnittää huomiota. URL: <https://thl.fi/fi/-/ikaantyneen-on-syyta-valttaa-koronavirustartuntaa-hyvinvointiin-ja-toimintakykyyn-kannattaa-kiinnittaa-huomiota?redirect=%2Ffi%2Fweb%2Finfektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset%2Fajankohtaista%2Fajankohtaista-koronaviruksesta-COVID-19%2Ftilannekatsaus-koronaviruksesta>. Accessed: 18 April 2021.

Finlex 2011. Valmiuslaki 1552/2011. URL: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2011/20111552>. Accessed: 18 April 2021.

Finlex 2016. Tartuntatautilaki 1227/2016. URL: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2016/20161227>. Accessed: 8 April 2021.

Food and road 2020. Who are the Food Travellers. URL: <https://foodandroad.com/pro/food-travellers/>. Accessed: 17 January 2021

GiftAMeal 2021. Restaurant innovation During COVID-19. URL: <https://www.giftameal.com/single-post/restaurant-innovation-during-COVID-19>. Accessed: 19 January 2020.

Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulu 2020. Koronaepidemian vaikutus suomalaisten matkailuun. URL: https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/344306/koronaepidemian_vaikutus_suomalaisten_matkailuun_5_2020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed: 1 May 2020.

Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakoulu 2021. Hungry for Finland -valtakunnallinen ruokamatkailukilpailu 2021: Suomen ruokamatkailun kärkituotteet ja innovatiiviset ratkaisut esiin. Uutinen. URL: <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/hungry-finland-valtakunnallinen-ruokamatkailukilpailu-2021-suomen>. Accessed: 1 February 2021.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences 2019. Writing reports and theses at Haaga-Helia. Intranet. Accessed: 24 November 2020.

Haukkamaa Adventures 2021. Ohjelmopalvelut Haukkamaa Adventures – Herkullisia elämyksiä luonnosta. URL: <https://www.haukkamaa-adventures.fi/>. Accessed: 20 April 2021.

Havas, K. & Adamsson, K. 2020. Suomen ruokamatkailustrategia 2020-2028. Hungry for Finland. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Helsinki. URL: <http://www.hungryforfinland.fi/sites/hungryforfinland.fi/files/Ruokamatkailustrategia-2020-2028.pdf>. Accessed: 15 January 2021.

Heinonen, O. 2020. Tietoa ravintoloiden toimintaa 22.6. jälkeen koskevista koronarajoituksista. Kespro. URL: <https://www.kespro.com/ideat-ja-inspiraatiot/artikkelit/tietoa-ravintoloiden-toimintaa-22-6-jalkeen-koronarajoituksista>. Accessed: 21 January 2021.

Helin, A. 2021. Kerran elämässä - Matkaopas maailmaan. Pirkanmaan nähtävyydet – koe ainakin nämä kohteet Tampereen lähellä! URL: <https://kerranelamassa.fi/kotimaan-matkailu/pirkanmaa/>. Accessed: 23 January 2021.

Honkanen, A., Sammalkangas J., Satokangas, P. 2021. Kotimaanmatkailun nykytila ja potentiaali – selvitys kohderyhmistä ja kehittämistoimista. TEM. URL: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162882/TEM_2021_14.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

Hook, T. 2021. Development Manager. Business Finland / Visit Finland. Hungry for Finland - valtakunnallinen ruokamatkailukilpailu 2021. Hungry for Finland. URL: <http://www.hungryforfinland.fi/hungry-finland-kutsuu-valtakunnallinen-ruokamatkailukilpailu-k%C3%A4ynnistyy-1812021>. Accessed: 15 January 2021.

Hungry for Finland 2019. Ruokamatkailun tuotteistaminen. URL: https://visittampere.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Kristiinat-Havas-ja-Adamsson_Ruokamatkailu-ja-ty%C3%B6paja.pdf. Accessed: 28 March 2021.

Hungry for Finland 2020. Hungry for Finland - Ruokamatkailun tuotteistaminen Pohjois-Pohjamaalla ja Kainuussa. URL: <http://www.hungryforfinland.fi/ruokamatkailu-kutsuu-422020-ruokamatkailun-tuotteistamispaiv%20iv%20oulussa>. Accessed: 23 November 2020.

Ilolan maatila s.a. Ilola. URL: <https://www.ilolanmaatila.fi/>. Accessed: 20 April 2021.

Inno-Vointi 2021. Mitä ovat innovaatiot ja innovointi. URL: <http://www.innovointi.fi/innovoinnin-periaatteet/innovaatio-ja-innovointi-myos-julkisella-sektorilla>. Accessed: 1 February 2021.

Jack, G. & Phipps, A. 2005. Tourism and Intercultural Exchange: Why tourism matters. In *Tourism and Cultural Change 4*. Channel View Publications. Clevedon.

Juuti, P. & Puusa, A. 2020. Laadullisen tutkimuksen näkökulmat ja menetelmät. Gaudeamus.

KAMK 2021. Haastattelu. KAMK University of Applied Sciences. URL: <https://www.kamk.fi/fi/opari/Opinnaytetyopakki/Teoreettinen-materiaali/Tukimateriaali/Aineiston-keruumenetelmät/Haastattelu>. Accessed: 22.3.2021.

Kananen, J. 2008. Kvali. Kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen teoria ja käytänteet. Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisuja -sarja. Jyväskylä

Kansikas, J. 2020. Työpäivän lounasruokailu: mitä koronan jälkeen? Menuimat. URL: <https://www.menuimat.fi/menuimat-yrityksena/blogi/tyopaivan-lounasruokailu-mita-koronan-jalkeen>. Accessed: 1 February 2021.

Kelly, H. 2011. The classical definition of a pandemic is not elusive. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 89, 7, pp. 469-544. World Health Organization.

Kontinen, M. 2020. Näiden rajoitusten purkamisesta ja jatkamisesta hallitus päätti – katso koko lista tästä. Yle uutiset. URL: <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11334594->. Accessed: 20 January 2021.

Knight, D. 2005. Three tips around the innovation track: an interview with Clayton Christensen. In Randall R. Strategy & Leadership, 33, 4. pp. 1. Emerald Group publishing Limited.

K-Ruoka 2021. Maakuntien parhaat: Pirkanmaa. Kesko. URL: <https://www.k-ruoka.fi/artikkelit/maakuntienparhaat/maakuntien-parhaat-pirkanmaa>. Accessed: 29 January 2021.

Kuisma, J. 2020. Pirkanmaa kulttuurialueena. Parasta Pirkanmaalta -hankkeen toimeksianto. Pirkan kylät. URL: <https://www.pirkankylat.fi/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Pirkanmaa-kulttuurialueena-Juha-Kuisma-2020.pdf>. sivu 4-5. Accessed: 29 January 2021.

Lehtinen, I. 29 January 2021. Pelko ja indeksi – koronainflaatiosta tuli odotusten mukainen. Tieto ja trendit. Statistics Finland blog. URL: <https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/tietotrendit/blogit/2021/pelko-ja-indeksi-koronainflaatiosta-tuli-odotusten-mukainen/>. Accessed: 17 April 2021.

Mapnall 2021. Kartta – Pirkanmaa maakunta (Pirkanmaa). URL: http://www.mapnall.com/fi/Kartta-Pirkanmaan-maakunta_627510.html. Accessed: 23 January 2021.

MaRa ry 2020. Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laiksi tartuntatautilain väliaikaisesta muuttamisesta. Lausunto Eduskunnan talousvaliokunnalle. <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/JulkaisuMetatieto/Documents/EDK-2020-AK-320057.pdf>. Accessed: 20 January 2021.

Marski, L. 2021. Matkailun suuntana kestävä ja turvallinen tulevaisuus. TEM toimialaraportit 2021:1. Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö. Helsinki. URL: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162841/TEM_2021_01_t.pdf?sequence=1. Accessed: 17 April 2021.

Nestori 2018. Innovaation synty ja kehitys. Innobus. URL: <https://innobus.fi/innovaation-synty-ja-kehitys/>. Accessed: 1 February 2021.

OECD 2002. Glossary of Statistical Terms. Tourism. URL: <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2725>. Accessed: 16 January 2021.

Oksman E. 2017. Suomi 100 Pirkanmaa. Matkailu Kotimaassa. URL: https://www.kotimaassa.fi/index.php?article_id=4751&__from_id__=888. Accessed: 23 January 2021.

- Ozili & Arun 2020. Spillover of COVID-19: Impact on the Global Economy. URL: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3562570. Accessed: 27 March 2021.
- Pirkanmaan liitto 2021. Pirkanmaan karttoja. URL: <https://www.pirkanmaa.fi/tietoa-pirkanmaasta/pirkanmaan-karttoja/>. Accessed: 13 April 2021.
- Pirkanmaan Talous 2020. Majoitus- ja ravintola-ala 2020. Palvelut ja Kauppa. URL: <https://pirkanmaantalous.fi/palvelut-ja-kauppa/majoitus-ja-ravintola-ala-2020>. Accessed: 5 January 2021.
- Plumlee, M. 2020. 10 Top Takeout Innovations During Coronavirus. Outside insights. QSR. URL: <https://www.qsrmagazine.com/outside-insights/10-top-takeout-innovations-during-coronavirus>. Accessed: 2 February 2021.
- Rakastu raiteisiin 2021. Asemat ja aikataulut. <https://rakasturaiteisiin.fi/asetat-ja-aikataulut/>. Accessed: 7 April 2021.
- Rouse, M. 2020. Customer base. WhatIs.com. URL: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/customer-base>. Accessed: 16 December 2020.
- Ruokatieto 2021. Pirkanmaa. URL: <https://www.ruokatieto.fi/ruokakulttuuri/paikallista-kulttuuria/maakunnat/pirkanmaa>. Accessed: 29 January 2021.
- Rural Finland II, 2021. COVID-19 pandemian vaikutukset matkailualalla. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ggN4BKt96Q8fn-qy8U9G_tZKx49Lq0Kd/view. Accessed: 17 January 2021.
- Rönnvik 2020. Tuotteet. URL: <http://ronnvik.com/palvelut-ja-tuotteet/tuotteet/>. Accessed: 3 April 2021.
- Saaranen-Kauppinen, A. & Puusniekka, A. 2006a. Teemahaastattelu. KvaliMOTV-Menetelmäopetuksen tietovaranto. Tampere. URL: https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/menetelmaopetus/kvali/L6_3_2.html. Accessed: 22 March 2021.
- Saaranen-Kauppinen, A. & Puusniekka, A. 2006b. KvaliMOTV - Menetelmäopetuksen tietovaranto Tampere: Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoarkisto. URL: <https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/menetelmaopetus/>. Accessed: 23 April 2021.
- Stanley, J. & Stanley, L. 2015. Food Tourism: A Practical Marketing Guide. CABI. Croydon.

Statistics Finland 2019a. Suomalaisten matkailu Etelä-Eurooppaan kasvoi vuonna 2018. URL: https://www.stat.fi/til/smat/2018/smat_2018_2019-03-28_tie_001_fi.html. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

Statistics Finland 2019b. Ulkomaisten matkailijoiden yöpymiset lisääntyivät 9 prosenttia syyskuussa 2019. URL: https://tilastokeskus.fi/til/matk/2019/09/matk_2019_09_2019-10-31_tie_001_fi.html. Accessed: 12 April 2021.

Statistics Finland 2020a. Kotimaisten matkailijoiden yöpymiset vähenivät 12 prosenttia syyskuussa 2020. URL: https://www.stat.fi/til/matk/2020/09/matk_2020_09_2020-10-28_tie_001_fi.html. Accessed: 29 March 2021.

Statistics Finland 2020b. Suomalaisten matkailu 2019. URL: https://www.stat.fi/til/smat/2019/smat_2019_2020-06-11_fi.pdf. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

Statistics Finland 2020c. Majoituspalveluiden kysyntä kasvoi 3,9 prosenttia vuonna 2019. URL: https://www.stat.fi/til/matk/2019/matk_2019_2020-04-08_tie_001_fi.html. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

Statistics Finland 2021. Koronakriisi supisti majoituspalvelujen kysynnän 1990-luvun tasolle. URL: https://tilastokeskus.fi/til/matk/2020/matk_2020_2021-04-08_tie_001_fi.html. Accessed: 11 April 2021.

Sthapit, Piramanayagam, Björk 2020. Tourists' Motivations, Emotions, And Memorable Local Food Experiences. Article in *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism*, 5, 1, pp. 17–32. Cognizant Communication Corporation. USA.

TEM 2019. Selvitys kotimaanmatkailun kehittämistarpeista. URL: <https://tem.fi/documents/1410877/2735818/Selvitys+kotimaanmatkailun+kehitt%C3%A4mistarpeista.pdf/a7f14c34-5092-0599-5b77-e4181a4688e6/Selvitys+kotimaanmatkailun+kehitt%C3%A4mistarpeista.pdf?t=1612177603763>. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

TEM 2020. Elpymisen koronapandemiasta voi käynnistyä pian, mutta kriisin vaikutukset näkyvät vielä pitkään. URL: https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/162277/Matkailualan_nakymat_kevät_2020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y. Accessed: 27 March 2021.

Theobald, W. 2005. *The Meaning, Scope, and Measurement of Travel and Tourism*. Global Tourism. 3rd ed. Routledge. London.

Tutorialspoint 2021. Products and Services. URL: https://www.tutorialspoint.com/tourism_management/tourism_management_products_and_services.htm. Accessed: 29 March 2021.

Tyrvään Pappila 2021. Tervetuloa tapahtumataloon! Herkullista ruokaa, taidetta ja tunnelmaa. URL: <https://www.tyrvaanpappila.fi/fi/>. Accessed: 20 April 2021.

UCF 2021. Food tourism: the impact of Food TV Shows on Local Industries. University of central Florida. URL: <https://www.ucf.edu/online/hospitality/news/food-tourism/>. Accessed: 28 March 2021.

University of Jyväskylä 2010. Tutkimuksen toteuttaminen. Koppa. URL: <https://koppa.jyu.fi/avoimet/hum/menetelmapolkuja/tutkimusprosessi/tutkimuksen-toteuttaminen#tutkimustulosten-luotettavuus>. Accessed: 23 April 2021.

University of Jyväskylä 2016. Teemoittelu. Koppa. URL: https://koppa.jyu.fi/avoimet/hum/menetelmapolkuja/menetelmapolku/aineiston-analyysimenetelmat/teemoittelu?set_language=en&cl=en. Accessed: 25 November 2020.

UNWTO 2020. Glossary of tourism terms. URL: <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>. Accessed: 14 December 2020.

UNWTO 2021. Product development. URL: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-development-products>. Accessed: 3 January 2021.

Valkama, H. 2020. Analyysi: Miksi Business Finlandin koronarahoituksesta nousi niin suuri kohu? Tämä sinunkin on hyvä ymmärtää tästä kaikesta. Yle uutiset. URL: <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11319616>. Accessed: 18 April 2021.

Valtioneuvosto 2020. Osa ravintoloiden ja kahviloiden rajoituksista lakkaa 13. heinäkuuta – osa säilyy 31.8. saakka. Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön tiedote 163/2020. URL: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1271139/osa-ravintoloiden-ja-kahviloiden-rajoituksista-lakkaa-13-heinakuuta-osa-sailyy-31-8-saakka>. Accessed: 17 January 2021.

van Moessner, A. 2020. How Restaurants have been affected by Covid-19. Survey. Upserve. URL: <https://upserve.com/restaurant-insider/how-restaurants-have-been-affected-by-COVID-19/>. Accessed: 20 January 2021.

Villisti Luova s.a. Villiyrttihakemapaaluita tarjolla. URL: <https://www.villistiluova.fi/446139483>. Accessed: 20 April 2021.

Villipihlaja 2021. Villipihlajan elämys- ja ohjelmapalvelut. URL: <https://www.villipihlaja.fi/>. Accessed: 20 April 2021.

Viljanen, K. 2021. Chairman of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland. Hungry for Finland –valtakunnallinen ruokamatkailukilpailu 2021: Suomen ruokamatkailun kärkituotteet ja innovatiiviset ratkaisut esiin. Haaga-Helia Applied Sciences. URL: <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/hungry-finland-valtakunnallinen-ruokamatkailukilpailu-2021-suomen>. Accessed: 28 March 2021.

Visit Pirkanmaa 2018. Pirkanmaalla on mini-Suomi. URL: <https://visitpirkanmaa.fi/>. Accessed: 22 January 2021.

Visit Tampere 2018a. Paikallisia herkkuja. URL: <https://visittampere.fi/hungry-for-tampere/paikallisia-herkkuja/>. Accessed: 29 January 2021.

Visit Tampere 2018b. Tampereen tarina. URL: <https://visittampere.fi/info/tampereen-tarina/>. Accessed: 23 January 2021.

Yang, Y., Liu, H. & Chen, X., 2020. COVID-19 and restaurant demand: Early effects of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. Article in International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32, 12, pp.3809-3834.

Yeh, S. 2020. Tourism recovery strategy against COVID-19 pandemic. Article in Tourism Recreation Research, 46, 1, pp. 1-8.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Thematic interview framework

Thank you for coming to the interview.

This research examines the experiences of food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere Region in summer of 2020.

Me and Hungry for Finland-project are interested about entrepreneurs' experiences of the effects of the COVID-19-pandemic on businesses.

We are interested in what kind of experiences you have had in your business and what do you think of June, July and August 2020?

We have an hour set aside so you can think of answers with time.

I record our conversation on the phone/computer. For research the speech is extracted from the tape verbatim into text. Interviewees retain anonymity

1. BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVIEWEE AND THE COMPANY

- What is your role in your company?
- How would you describe your company? What do you want to say about your company?
- When was your company established?
- How many people do you employ, including yourself?
- What kind of products and services does your company sell?
- What else would you like to say about your company?

2. FOOD TOURISM AND FOOD TOURISM IN TAMPERE REGION DURING THE PANDEMIC

- What do you think Finnish food tourism is, how would you describe it?
- What do you think are the strengths of Tampere Region in food tourism?
- What do you think are the Top Products of Tampere Region Food Tourism?
- What do you know about the Hungry for Finland project?
- What was the situation of your business before the pandemic?
- How did you feel that the restrictions of the pandemic period (June-August 2020) affected your business?
 - How did you measure, and on what basis? What is the change based on?
- How do you feel that food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere Region experienced a pandemic period (June-August 2020)?
 - Conversations with other entrepreneurs?
- How did you feel about the restrictions? Like opening hours restrictions?
- Did you get national subsidies during the pandemic? And if you did, what subsidies did you get?

- How did you feel about summer 2020?
- How did you experience the pandemic period (June-August 2020)?
- How did your company do overall in the summer season 2020? Did the turnover increase or decrease? How much?

3. CUSTOMERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Who are your most important customers in general? What are they like?
- What were the changes in the customer base during the summer (June-August 2020) compared to the pre-pandemic period?
 - Baseline: What kind of customers did you have before the pandemic? How would you describe them?
 - Eg regular customers, groups, leisure customers, demographic factors
 - Who were your customers at the time of June-August 2020? How would you describe them?
- What size group sizes were allowed in summer 2020?
- How many customer seats decreased? How many customer seats were there before the summer of 2020?
- Food travelers: Any changes in their numbers and customer profiles? (Explain if they don't know what a food traveler is)
- What areas did the customers come from?
- What countries did the customers come from?
- What changes took place in the number of customers during the summer?
- What were the changes in group customers?
- What were the changes in leisure travelers?
- How did the number of male and female customers change? Were there any families?
- What age were customers?

Customer behavior, attitude

- How did customer behavior change due to the corona, due to the pandemic? Did it change?
- How did customers react to the pandemic?
- What products / services were they interested in, did there be any changes due to pandemic, different hopes, etc.?
- Were customers able to behave in accordance with the restrictions, objectively? How?
- What kind of feedback did you receive?

4. FOOD TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC

- What is usually your hit product? Your main products?
- How did the summer pandemic change your company's product and / or service range?
 - If not, why not? If so, why?
- What kind of restrictions had to be put on the sale of products / services due to the pandemic restrictions?
- How did opening restrictions affect sales of products and services?

- How did you change your products / services?
- How did you change / modify the content of the service packages?
- Why did you change / modify the products / services?
- On what basis did you reduce sales of products / services? (Eg restrictions, falling demand)
- On what basis did you increase sales of your products / services? (Eg growth in demand)
- Which services / products increased? Why
- Which products / services increased sales?
- Which services / products decreased?
- Which products / services decreased sales?
- What kind of services did your customers want to increase / decrease?
- How did you promote your sales during the summer? Eg some, magazines, etc. What was the use of it/ Did you benefit from it?

5. CHALLENGES

- What kind of challenges did you have in June, July and August 2020?
- Where did the challenges come from?
- Could you describe the potential challenges?
 - Employees - did you have to lay off, etc.
- How did you deal with them?
- What kind of help did you get? Or would you have liked to have?

6. SUCCESSES

- What successes did your company have in June, July and August?
- Could you describe them more?
- What do you think the success / successes are due to?

7. DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE INNOVATIONS

- How did you develop your company's activities during the pandemic?
- How did the hotel, restaurant and tourism industry develop in Tampere Region? Were new ideas, openings, etc. born?
- What does the term innovation mean to you? (How do interviewees explain the term innovation - is it unified among the interviewees?)
- What kind of possible innovations or reforms did you develop?
- Will the reform or innovation come for own or customer use? (Find out if the interviewee does not understand the question, i.e.)
 - On the production line? for example, to improve the company's efficiency?
 - A new customer service enhancer?
 - A new way of working?
 - Or a new product / service to be purchased by the customer?
- How did the innovation or reform come about in your company?
 - Help for interviewees ->
 - By a group or an solo?
 - In response to a failure that has already occurred?
 - Accidentally? Forced?

- What were the reasons for the emergence of reform or innovation(s)? What other reasons were there for the emergence of innovation? What led to innovation?
Help for interviewees ->
 - Improving quality
 - Conquering new markets
 - Expanding the product range
 - Better production process that reduces material and labor costs
 - To reduce environmental damage
- How did you move forward with possible reform / innovation?
- How did you manage to attract investors and background support forces?
- How do you feel that innovation benefits business?
 - If you did not develop new innovations, did you come up with new ideas during the summer? What kind of?
- How do you plan to develop your business in the future, what kind of plans?

8 SUGGESTIONS

- How do they think things could have been handled during the pandemic?
Government, AVI, Entrepreneurs' Organizations, etc.

Appendix 2. E-mail invitation to the entrepreneurs

Hey,

I am a student of Hospitality Management in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and

I am contacting you, as I am doing my thesis for Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and the Hungry for Finland -project, and I would be interested in interviewing your company for that research.

The topic of my research is to find out the experiences of food tourism entrepreneurs in Tampere Region from the summer of 2020.

The purpose of my research would be to answer the following questions:

What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on food tourism entrepreneurs in the summer of 2020?

Did the pandemic affect the customer base?

Did the pandemic affect the company's products and services?

Did the pandemic affect the emergence of new innovations? If so, what kind of innovations were born?

The purpose of the study is to share the experiences of entrepreneurs and to utilize the information obtained. With the information obtained, tourism organizations will be better able to support food tourism companies in the event of a similar exceptional situation. In addition, the study aims to send a message to entrepreneurs that they will be consulted and valued in these challenging times.

I aim to conduct interviews during February 2021. The interview can be done face to face, by phone, Skype or similar.

If you were interested in participating in the study, please feel free to contact us.

Regards,

Karoliina Luoma

<http://www.hungryforfinland.fi/> <https://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi>

