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Business travellers' needs at airport services

Case Airpro Tampere

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Julkaisun nimi Liikematkustajien tarpeet lentoaseman palveluissa Case Airpro Tampere		
Tutkinto-ohjelma Matkailu		
Tiivistelmä <p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia liikematkustajien tarpeita Tampere-Pirkkalan lentoasemalla. Toimeksiantajana tälle opinnäytetyölle toimi Airpro Oy. Airpro Oy toimii lentopalveluiden tuottajana 12 eri lentoasemalle Suomessa. Tässä opinnäytetyössä keskityttiin Airpro Oy:n tuottamiin lentoaseman palveluihin ja maahuolintapalveluihin, mutta myös muihin liikematkustajia koskeviin palveluihin. Tarkoituksena oli tutkia mitä tarpeita liikematkustajilla on lentoaseman palveluihin liittyen.</p> <p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tutkimusmenetelmänä oli kvalitatiivinen tutkimus ja tutkimus toteutettiin teemahaastatteluina. Teemahaastatteluissa haastateltiin yhteensä kolmea henkilöä ja haastattelut tehtiin kesällä 2021. Haastatteluissa haastateltiin sekä liikematkustajia että liikematkoja järjestäviä henkilöitä. Teemahaastattelussa oli ennalta määritetty viisi eri teemaa, jotka liittyivät lentoaseman palveluihin ja liikematkailuun.</p> <p>Haastatteluissa selvisi, että liikematkustajille tärkeintä palveluissa on nopeus ja sujuvuus, ja tämän takia he suosivat liikematkalle lähdössä pienempiä ja lähellä olevia lentoasemia. Tutkimus toi ilmi, että liikematkustajilla ei ole suuria odotuksia ja tarpeita palveluihin pienellä lentoasemalla, ja nykyiset Airpro Oy:n tarjoamat palvelut Tampere-Pirkkalan lentoasemalla sujuvat moitteetta.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että Tampere-Pirkkalan lentoasemaa halutaan käyttää liikematkustukseen tulevaisuudessa, mutta lentokohteiden toivottiin lisääntyvän. Pääasiassa lentoaseman palveluihin oltiin tyytyväisiä, mutta myös ongelmakohtia tuli ilmi tutkimuksen myötä. Tutkimustulosten pohjalta toimeksiantajalle tehtiin suosituksia, miten palveluita voitaisiin parantaa liikematkustajien tarpeisiin perustuen.</p>		
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Abstract <p>The objective of this thesis was to research business travellers' needs at Tampere-Pirkkala airport. The commissioner for this thesis was Airpro Oy. Airpro Oy is an aviation service provider for 12 different airports in Finland. In this thesis the focus was on airport services and ground handling services provided by Airpro Oy, but also on other services concerning business travellers. Aim was to find out what needs do business travellers have in for airports services.</p> <p>This thesis' research method was qualitative research and research was executed as themed interviews. Interviews consisted of interviewing total of three persons and interviews were done in summer 2021. Interviewees were business travellers but also persons organizing business travels. Interviews had five different themes planned beforehand, that were connected to airport's services and business travel.</p> <p>In the interviews it was found out that for business travellers the most important factor in services is quickness and fluency, and therefore they prefer smaller and airports that are close-by when departing for business travel. The research showed that business travellers do not have big expectations and needs on services in small airport, and the current services provided by Airpro Oy in Tampere-Pirkkala airport work immaculately.</p> <p>What was found in the research was that Tampere-Pirkkala airport is desired to be used for business traveling in the future but increase in flight destinations was hoped. Airport's services were mainly seen content, but also development targets were found. Based on the research results the commissioner was given recommendations, how services could be improved based on business travellers' needs.</p>		
Key words Business travel, services, quality, needs		

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1 INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism business is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO website 2018). Traveling and flying used to be considered as a luxurious thing for the wealthy, but because of the popularity and development of the aviation business, flying has become more popular and an essential way to transport around the world (Hakola 2007, 7). The pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 was a stop to travel business' consistent growth. It has affected both international and domestic travel, and it is still unsure when the travel industry will recover from this pandemic. (Skift research 2020, 9–10.)

Traveling for business always requires a reason. The questions where, why, when and for what reason have clear answers in business travel, and it is easy to assume business travel is just a holiday someone else pays for. The truth is nothing but that since business travel can be incredibly challenging. On average, in business travel the workers have just hours per day to themselves, and often time apart from family and comfortable living environment can be very tiring. That is why the key to business travel and wellbeing is preparation and well executed planning. (Schmall 2018.)

This thesis will focus on studying the needs of business travellers in small airports such as Tampere-Pirkkala airport so that business travellers are offered exactly the kind of service they require and need. It is important to study the behaviour of business travellers so that understanding of the travellers and their needs can be achieved in every way possible. For airport facilities this will help to maximise their customer satisfaction numbers and learn to prioritise travellers' needs. When business travellers are more satisfied to the service they receive, it affects their work, and they tend to become more productive. The improvements can be even reached without additional costs. (FCM travel website 2019.)

2 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Purpose and objectives

The style of research of this thesis was qualitative research. This research was executed by interviewing between three to six persons, who work as a travel manager or employees who do business travel and use Tampere-Pirkkala as their starting point for their business travel. Business travellers are the segment that this research focused on, and the objective was to understand their needs when travelling from small airport such as Tampere-Pirkkala. The purpose of this thesis was to answer the main question; what needs do business travellers have for airport services? Besides the main question the researcher wanted an answer to sub questions; what services are necessary for their needs to be fulfilled? How can the current services be improved?

When choosing the interviewees, researcher's plan was to ask VisitTampere if they had any information about travel secretaries within the Pirkanmaa region. Unfortunately, VisitFinland had no information about companies with travel secretaries, but they suggested researcher would ask Sihteeriyhdistys, which is the secretary union in Finland, and Tampere Chamber of commerce and industry. Sihteeriyhdistys was unable to give researcher any information, but Tampere Chamber of commerce and industry suggested asking from bigger international companies, such as Sandvik, Valmet and Acgo (Sjölund personal statement 02.06.2021).

Objective of this thesis was to find out if the business travellers are happy with the current situation and services Airpro in Tampere-Pirkkala airport has to offer. The main purpose was to improve Tampere-Pirkkala airport's services to customers traveling with business purpose. This thesis focused on five different themes and all themes were approached from a business travel's point of view. The research focused on business traveling in general, so that this thesis could be useful to other airports as well, but the focus was mainly in the services that business travellers experience in Tampere-Pirkkala airport.

2.2 Commissioner

The commissioner for this thesis is Airpro, which is also this thesis' writer's employer. Airpro is a specialist in aviation services, and they provide different services in 12 different airports in Finland. They have over 100 company clients and they employ approximately 900 persons. Airpro offers four types of services, and these services are airport logistics, airport services, cabin crew services and ground handling services. (Airpro website 2021.) This thesis researched business travellers and their needs, so the focus was on airport services and ground handling services in Tampere-Pirkkala airport.

Airpro has a future plan that consists of three parts, which is based on mission, vision and objective. Their mission is to provide airport quality and customer need-based services for different operators in air traffic. They also want to develop new solutions that are eco-friendly for air traffic. Their vision is to be a pioneer in aviation industry and that their professional personnel can create travellers fluent travel experience. Last is their objective, which is to grow and develop as a company because they want to be Finland's airports leading service provider. (Airpro website 2021.)

Tampere is the third biggest city in Finland with a population of 238 140 residents (Tampere City's website 2019). Tampere-Pirkkala airport is located approximately 17 kilometres from the city centre of Tampere. Tampere-Pirkkala airport offers direct flights to Helsinki, Stockholm, Riga, and Budapest. (VisitTampere website n.d.) In 2018, a total of 228 096 travellers flew from Tampere-Pirkkala airport, which was little less than in the previous year, but this is believed to be caused by the runway construction that lasted a month in the summer season (Business Tampere 2019). Unfortunately, in the end of March 2020, the airport was shut down from all public air traffic due to the ongoing pandemic. Before the shutdown traveller numbers were decreasing majorly. From January 2020 to March 2020 there were only 33 826 travellers, which was 39,9% less than the previous year (Kerola 2020).

This thesis focused on customer path and service quality. The customer path is different for each business traveller based on the services they will use, but since the

thesis commissioner is Airpro, this thesis took focus on the customer path parts that Airpro is responsible for in Tampere-Pirkkala airport. These parts are check-in, boarding, arrival services and general customer service. Services in Tampere-Pirkkala airport provided by Finavia are parking services, security control, free Wi-Fi, and meeting rooms available for rent. Finavia also has a service where they store winter clothing in the info desk during the traveller's travel. Besides the services provided by Airpro and Finavia, Tampere-Pirkkala airport also has a café that serves near the check-in area but also in the gate area, possibility to rent a car from variety of car rental companies, ATM, and post box. (Finavia website 2021.)

Recommendations were created based on the research results, and these recommendations are created so that they can help the commissioner to reach their mission, vision, and objective. This thesis is available for public use, and it does not use any corporation information. The results of this thesis' research and its recommendations will be discussed with Jaana Kulju, who is the Ground Handling Supervisor of Airpro in Tampere-Pirkkala airport.

3 BUSINESS TRAVEL

3.1 Aviation in business travel

The concept of "traveling" itself is so wide and multifunctional, that it is impossible to explain the whole meaning of traveling in few sentences. Traveling is a verb, not a physical product. Oxford dictionary defines the word "travel" as "make a journey, typically of some length" (Oxford Dictionary website). Travel is everything from the drive to work to an airplane flight to another side of the world. Simply said, traveling is getting from point A to point B. This is where aviation steps in, with its purpose to make it easier for people to get from that A to B, domestically or internationally. (Edelheim & Ilola 2017, 20–24.)

Using air transportation in business travel has become quite frequent following the economic globalisation (Vuoristo 2003, 18). Development of the world economic recently has become a benefit for companies around the world. Multinational companies can now create more easily co-operating webs and the personnel in these companies travel for business purposes a lot. Taking participation to own field's conferences, congresses, business deals and meetings about the company's development is important so that the same company in different countries has the same line of approach. The business travel now is all around the world, destination depending on what kind of benefits the company is trying to achieve in that moment. Business travel can be seen the most in the core area of world economics and politics, but recently business travel has spread to middle-income and newly industrialized economic regions. (Vuoristo 2003, 25–26.)

Approximately 12% of airlines' passengers are business travellers. This number might seem low, but the truth is that sometimes, business travellers can be responsible for 75% of the profits. Business travellers often appreciate time efficiency, which means they choose the more expensive but direct flight instead of the flight that is cheaper and has one or more stops. Business travellers also often purchase last-minute flights, which can be expensive. Even though business travellers might be responsible for most of the profits of the flight, only 60% of airlines' revenue comes directly from the passengers. The rest, 40%, comes from travel partners, such as hotels or transportation rental companies, and selling frequent flyer miles to credit card companies. (Investopedia website 2021.)

Managing and organising business travels can be challenging and time consuming. Some companies have either a travel manager or someone who is responsible for organising these travels, but some companies also outsource the travel planning to travel agencies. In some companies the organising of the travel is transferred to the employee themselves, even though travel organising might not be part of their job description. (Whatman 2021.) The company will decide which of these options is most suitable for them, since each one has their benefits and disadvantages. Travel management often prefers traditional practices to reach maximum savings, but the most effective philosophy for business travel and business travellers to increase trip productivity and compliance is traveller centricity. (ACTE Global website 2016.)

For travel management and traveller centricity with business travellers the key is communication. Association of corporate travel executives, also known as ACTE Global, conducted a study in collaboration with Turkish airlines about the role of the business traveller's centricity. One part of this study was about what business travel areas travel managers gain most feedback from their business travellers. These areas were ranked by which gets most feedback, whether it is positive or negative feedback. (ACTE Global website 2016.)

The top three areas are the quality of the booking experience, the carrier's punctuality record, and the quality of the in-flight experience. These three areas stand higher than other areas in the scale, which strengthens the information that these three areas matter quite a lot to business travellers. From the top three areas, flight punctuality is the only area that can be in some ways connected to airport employees, but not always. After the top three areas comes for example airport check-in and security, pre-tip information and arrivals experience. These four areas are areas which are connected to airport customer service and airport staff. In Tampere-Pirkkala airport, Airpro is responsible for check-in, boarding, arrival services and general customer service.

When it comes to business travel, companies usually have travel policies and rules which the travel manager follows while planning the travel. Travel managers choose which airlines or accommodation types are used in the business travel while controlling and optimising spending. These choices are made within the business travel policies, but without compromising in the traveller's safety and comfort. Business travellers' preferences also matter to travel managers. (Captio website 2015.)

The main difference between business and leisure travel is that in business travel the costs are covered by company, but the company also makes the rules and decisions. This means that the company decides who travels and where and on what budget. (Verhelä 2000, 13–14.) When the destination of the business travel is decided, travel managers start to plan the trip. When organising transport, especially air transport, there are few factors that the travel managers take into consideration. They search

for the availability of routes, since it is more time efficient to use one direct flight instead of three with lay overs that take time. Travel managers listen to their traveller's feedback as well as their preferences in the carrier, but also factors like carrier punctuality, check-in experience and the quality of lounges is something they weight when making the decisions. The closeness of the airline's home or hub airport also matters. (ACTE Global website 2016.)

3.2 Business travellers

As customers, business travellers are often demanding and official. For them, the traveling is mandatory, something that just must be done, so they want everything to happen as fast and efficient as possible. In business travel the traveling is not the main point, but what is gained from that travel. For example, when business travellers are in the airport, they do not spend the time before the flight shopping goods or enjoying alcoholic beverages at a bar, since they are working. They sit at the gate, lounge or somewhere comfortable working with a computer or conversing with a colleague about work business. (Verhelä 2000, 14–15.)

According to Davidson and Cope (2003, 6–7), in business travel it is always the employer that pays for the trip. Because the employer pays the trip, they have the power when it comes to making decisions about the travel. They choose the travel destination based on where work needs to be done or if there is a work-related event happening in there. These events also determine the timing of the business travel and with timing it is also important to take to notice that business travel happens in working time. In business travel the ones that travel are adults, often in managerial level in a company and have special skills or knowledge that cannot be found from local residents or companies. These types of travels often happen alone or with colleagues from the same company.

Because business travel's costs are covered by the company, most business travellers are less price sensitive. What matters to business travellers is the status. Business travellers are motivated to execute their business travel goal as efficiently and effectively as possible with the given time they have. If the travel goal is reached

early, business traveller might consider taking an earlier flight back home to spend more quality time with their family. This is also why most business travels are arranged to happen during weekdays, so that the business traveller has weekends off. (Marin-Pantelescu 2011, 74.)

Business travellers can also be divided into different categories. According to the survey made by Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) there are five different categories when it comes to business travellers. GBTA executed a survey for over 800 travellers who had taken minimum of four trips that required travel of at least 50 miles (80 kilometres). As a result of this 15-minute online survey, they discovered that business travellers can be divided into five types of business travellers: the veterans, the road-weary travellers, the wide-eyed and anxious, the passionate high-tech and lastly, the new recruits. (Business Travel News website 2021.)

Veterans present the most experienced group of business travellers. These travellers often tend to be on the older side, and that is why they appreciate staying in touch with their family while on the business trip. More than this, they appreciate having all the needed equipment and good connection. The road-weary traveller group is the least travel-appreciating group of these. These travellers see travelling more as an annoying thing than joy and benefit to their work. This travel group mostly travels domestically, and more by car than airplane. (Business Travel News website 2021.)

The wide-eyed and anxious and new recruits are both usually young people. The feeling of safety while traveling is the most important factor for the wide-eyed and anxious, but they also travel less than other categories. For the new recruits, they often take longer trips than other business travellers, and they specifically try to find reasons to travel more because of their eagerness. These travellers are also often environmentally considerate. There is also the high-tech category, who appreciate the latest technology and new inventions. These travellers want to combine the business travel to their lifestyle, by being productive but also feeling at home and being entertained. (Business Travel News website 2021.)

3.3 The needs of business traveller

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory about the basic needs of a human. These basic needs are presented often as a form of pyramid, based on the knowledge that if the bottom of the pyramid is not reached, neither can be the top. The bottom of the pyramid starts with physiological needs, then safety needs, need of belonging and love, need of esteem and in the top of the pyramid sits self-actualisation. (Maslow 2017, 5–7.) This pyramid and its needs can be used to determine what the needs of business travellers are, and this is exactly what Haski (2017) has done in Figure 1.

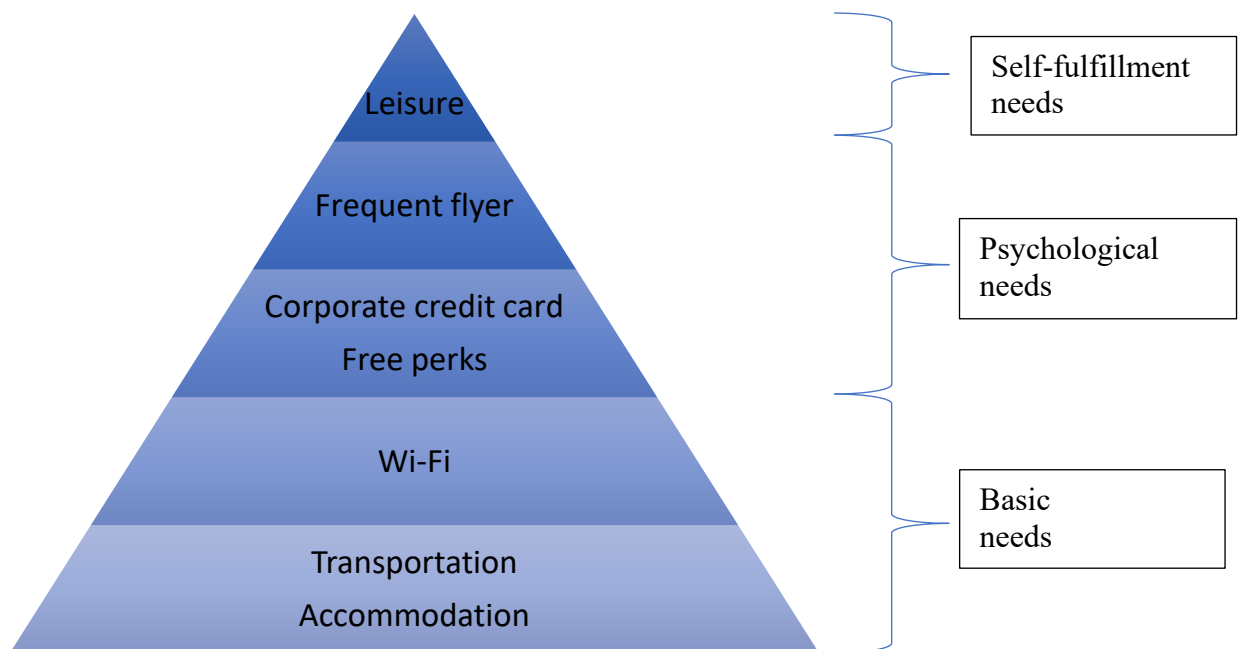


Figure 1. Business traveller's hierarchy of needs (Haski 2017).

As shown in Figure 1, the two bottom needs of the pyramid are basic needs, which for business traveller are transportation and accommodation and Wi-Fi. Different kinds of transportation and accommodation services are the crucial services in business travel (Verhelä 2000, 57). With transportation, there are options to choose from. Business travel can happen by airplane, train, boat, bus or with own or rented car. The biggest area of business travel is airline tickets, where most of the costs come from. The second biggest cost comes from accommodation services, which usually is hotels. (Verhelä 2000, 12.) Wi-Fi and technology have a big role in today's business travel. Regardless of the business traveller's age, the importance of staying connected with family and

friends while travelling is high. Business travellers also want to be connected with many different forms of technology, so it is important that they have access to Wi-Fi during their travel. (Business travel news website 2021.)

After the basic needs comes physiological needs. The physiological needs are all about relationships, which in business traveller's world means relationship with the company they work for and the relationship with the companies they use while in travel. Successful and effective business travel requires respect and trust between the employee and the company. Having the access to corporate credit card or receiving benefits gives the business traveller impression that they are being trusted and gives them confidence in their work. (Business travel news website 2021.)

Frequent flyer member-programmes are programs created by internationally flown airlines. The meaning of these programmes is to gain regular customers, but to also reward the regular customer for their loyalty. The way the system works is that when a customer purchases a flight from the airline, they gain points or miles. The amount of points or miles is determined by the length of the flight, but also the travel class. From business class tickets the customer receives more points than from tourist class. Airlines can also be part of an alliance, which means that when the customer purchases a flight from a different airline, but that airline is part of the same alliance, they gain points or miles from those flights too. (Verhelä 2000, 71.) For example, Finnair is part of Oneworld alliance, and if a customer belongs to the Finnair plus member-programme, they receive points from other 13 airlines that belong to Oneworld alliance. (Oneworld website n.d.).

These member-programmes usually have few different tiers, and the higher the tier is more benefits there are. Higher-tier customers may have benefits such as access to airport's lounge areas, separate check-in and security check lines, and travel insurance services. Airlines also co-operate with different tourism business regarding the member-programme. Airline's member-programme customer can receive points or miles by staying in certain hotel-groups, or by renting a car from a car rental service that co-operates with the airline. This gives the customer a chance to earn points or miles by other ways than purchasing flights, but also the businesses to network and

work together. After all, most of incoming travellers need a place to stay in a country that they visit, so why not earn points at the same time. (Verhelä 2000, 71–72.)

In the top of the pyramid in business traveller's hierarchy of needs is self-fulfilment needs. Self-fulfilment is in some ways like a reward of the job well done. For example, access to the hotel's pool or gym is not a necessity for the business traveller to get the job done, but if they do have this access, it is often highly appreciated. Different business travellers appreciate different things, but regardless of the benefit, it gives the employee the impression that the company trusts the employee to get the job done well while being able to enjoy their time in the destination. (Haski 2017.)

3.4 Future of business travel

The ongoing pandemic of the virus COVID-19 has had a tremendous effect on the tourism business around the world. This virus spread around the world so easily, that many governments decided to create restrictions to travel. This led to air traffic cut down, and in 2020 as a response to the virus, the international travel was cut to zero. The virus has affected on the whole tourism industry, as well as other industries, but airlines and cruises have suffered the biggest impact. (Skift research 2020, 9–11.)

In 2020, airline industry's revenue was 328 US dollars, which is approximately 60% less than in the year 2019 (Bouwer, Saxon & Wittkamp 2021). It has been predicted that airline industry will not gain full financial recovery from this pandemic until the year 2025 (GTBA website 2021). And even though it is presumed that recovery can be made, it has also been predicted that business travel will not return as much as it was before COVID-19. Working from home has now become a norm, and technology tools such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom have been extremely useful with sharing information. A study made by IdeaWorks stated there will be a decrease in air traffic, which will be somewhere between 19% and 36%. (Baldanza 2020.)

Because of the pandemic, companies have started to understand the benefits of using technology and that remote working can be good for the business. Employees have adapted to working from home and understood how using video calls and online

collaboration can be more productive. Work is effective since there is no time needed to recover from jetlag or long travel. Employees who previously have used quite a lot of time in business travel also now have more time for their families, which means there is a better balance between work and personal life. There is also benefits financially since business' save all the money that previously would have been spent in the business travel. (Morel 2020.)

Although remote working has its benefits, it is important to remember that human contact matters and in some business cases is essential. When businesses are trying to create new relationships with companies, building trust is important. If the companies' representatives meet for the first time online, the conversation can be stiff and not flow naturally, which can cause trust issues. Meeting face to face is important, because this way the employees can fully understand and respect the cultural differences and sensitivities. According to Morel (2020) the future of business travel will be a mix of both, business travel and virtual meetings. Companies will take on a more strategic approach and save expenses by cutting meetings that can be executed virtually but face to face-meetings will still have a role in networking and creating new relationships. (Morel 2020.)

4 SERVICE QUALITY

4.1 Technical and functional quality

Airports for travellers are not anymore just points of departure and arrival. Travellers have become more demanding, and they require higher level of service. This has affected airports to become more multi-dimensional centre of travel, where you can find different kinds of services. Airports are now competing against each other and try constantly to improve their services, but also the quality of service. (Airports council international website 2021.) Competition is important because it forces businesses to

be creative and improve their services or product. Businesses can also learn a lot from their competitors. (Drevets 2014.)

Quality in products and service is an important subject to study. If businesses start to create projects concerning quality and its improvement, it is important first to understand what the quality is to the client. When the business has a full understanding of how the clients experience and see the quality, they can start developing the product or service to the right direction. This creates product or service that is directly aimed for the client and meet their expectational value, but also prevent waste of money, time, and effort for the business. It should be remembered that quality can be anything the client wants it to be for themselves. (Grönroos 2009, 103–105.)

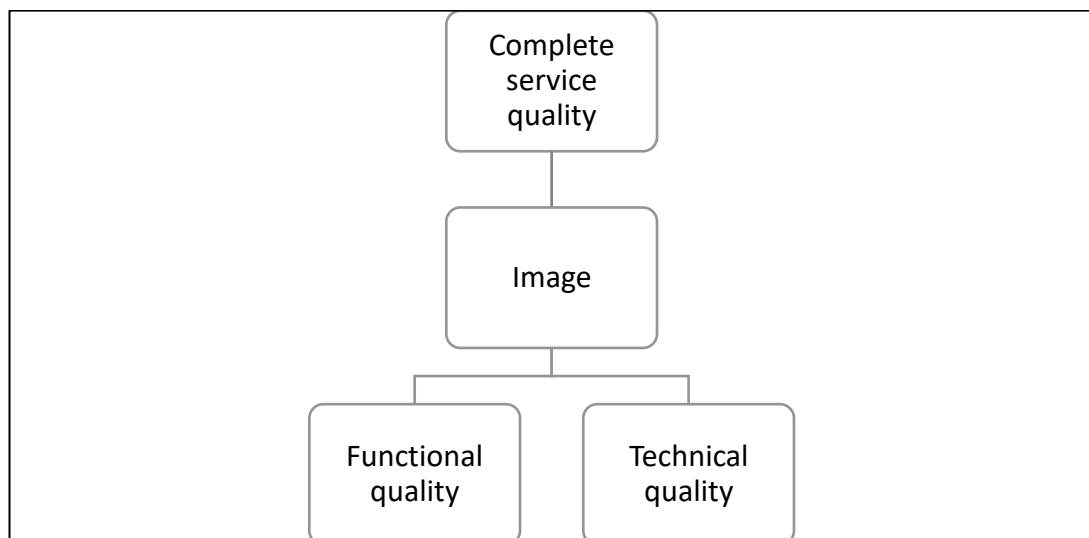


Figure 2. Two dimensions of service quality (Grönroos 2009).

Service quality that client experience has two dimensions: technical and functional (Figure 2). Technical quality also can be known as the end result, which states what service the client receives at the end. For example, in air traffic this would be the service that airlines sell, which is the flight itself. Businesses often think that this is all client needs and requires to become a satisfied client, but this is not the case. This might be enough for some clients, and fulfil their essential needs, but the true service quality comes from interaction that happens on the way. Functional quality focuses on the interaction that happens to the client before and after the actual service. For example, in air traffic this means airport service officers, flight attendants and even

sometimes the travel organiser's essence and demeanour. Simply said, the technical quality answers the question what the client receives, and the functional quality answers how they receive it. (Grönroos 2009, 106–107.)

Client's service quality can also be affected by other clients using same or similar kind of service at the same time. For example, if there is a long line in airport check-in desk, this means the client must wait longer to be served, and this can cause irritation. This also works the other way, that other clients can have a positive effect on the client and the service atmosphere.

When the client is evaluating service quality, they will evaluate both technical and functional quality, but also processes, resources and procedures. If the client experiences mistakes caused by service provider, image has a large role in defining how the client feels about mistakes. If the business image is positive and good in the eyes of the client, the client can accept smaller mistakes more easily and move on from them, but if the business image is bad, the client feels the mistake is bigger than it would be if the image of the business was good. When the client experiences good functional and technical quality, and they have a positive image of the business, that is when the service quality is complete. (Grönroos 2009, 107.)

Sometimes there are routines and tasks, where it is expected of the client to take part in providing the service. More likely when the client is willing to accept the self-servicing, then more likely they see the service quality as good. (Grönroos 2009, 107.) Due to the growth of travel, many airports and airlines have started to invest in self-service technologies (SSTs), such as check-in automats, self-bag drops and online ticket purchasing. These self-service technologies can make service transactions faster but add convenience and accuracy. They can also have cost efficient benefits, but they can also be intimidating to travellers, and some might see them complicated to use. One of the hindrances from a traveller's point of view is that using the SSTs transfers the control and responsibility to the traveller, instead of airline or service provider. (Seda Otieno & Govender 2016.)

4.2 Airport Service Quality Awards

Airport service quality (ASQ) awards reward the best airports around the world based on two types of surveys: Airport council international airport service quality departure and arrival survey. Receiving this award is a high compliment to airport but also works as motivation to either keep up the good service quality or to improve the service quality. ASQ is the only global survey executed at airports that focuses on measuring the travellers' satisfaction. (Airports council international website 2021.)

ASQ has 95 participant countries, including Finland and over 400 airports. Every year, 670 000 travellers are interviewed at airports and asked to rate their satisfactory level in the airport services. ASQ awards have different categories where airports receive credit in. Until 2018, there were 5 different categories, but in 2018 and 2019 they separated departure and arrival categories. Departure survey has five categories, and then there is also a separate award given to the best arrival airport. In 2019, the departure survey categories were best airport by size and region, most improved airports by region, best environmental and ambiance by size, best customer service by size and best infrastructure and facilitation by size. (Airports council international website 2021.)

In 2020, the ongoing pandemic affected so majorly to the air traffic industry, that they decided to only have two competing categories: best airport by size and region which has been a category in the previous years, and a new category called best hygiene measures by region. In 2020, the best hygiene measures by region category had 33 inaugural winners, and Helsinki-Vantaa airport was one of them. They also won in the other category. (Airports council international website 2021.)

5 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Qualitative research, reliability, and validity

Qualitative research' meaning is to gather information, that describes the subject instead of measuring it. Point-of views and opinions are good information to research, and there is no one and only way in qualitative research. The basic principle is to gather for example opinions and then deeply analyse them so that it can be understood, what are the motives, attitudes and thinking ways behind those opinions. (Survey Monkey website 2021.)

Qualitative research can be executed by different ways, for example observing or interviewing the subject's specialists. For this thesis researcher chose to do an in-depth interview, either online or in person. The goal was to interview three to six persons, the ideal situation would be three travel secretaries and three business travellers. The point of interview was to gather deep information and the gathered information would help in understanding the subject and possible problems better. The interviews are not just about asking questions, but also observing the body language of the interviewee. (Survey Monkey website 2021.)

Discussion about qualitative research's reliability brings out questions about objective information and the truth. Objective information are facts that are not based on emotion or opinion. When studying people, especially their needs, the information almost always is based on opinion or emotion. Truth correspondence theory tells us that the statement is only true if it matches the reality. In truth correspondence theory the real knowledge comes from observations from the world. With reliability it is important to separate observations' reliability and impartiality. The research can be seen impartial only if the researcher aims to listens and understands the examinee and their views. If the researcher filters the given information, based on for example religion, age, gender or political views, the research is no longer impartial. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2004, 131–133.)

There are a lot of different opinions about when it comes to evaluating research reliability. The research will be evaluated as a whole, which means all the parts of the research need to be connected to others, one way or another. For example, the research results become more understandable for the reader if the researcher has explained what has been done and how it has been done. To gain reliable results, it requires that the researcher has had enough time to execute the research. Reliable research requires lots of time and effort, to focus on the theory behind the research but also to execute the research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2004, 135–139.)

Validity is about the research studying the subject that has been said that will be studied. Reliability and validity often go together, so if the research is reliable, it most likely is also valid. Research can be seen to be valid, when the results of the research correspond to what has been said to be studied. So in this research what has been said to be studied is business travellers' needs, and the research is valid if the results show this has been studied. (Middleton 2021.)

5.2 Semi-structured interview

The main point in using this research method is to get answers to questions “what” but also “why” (QuestionPro website n.d.). In airport services it is important to understand what it is that business travellers need, but also why do they need these services. For this thesis the researcher chose to execute the interviews as semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interview, the interviewer has chosen certain themes before the interview, which are based on the theoretical framework of the subject. Semi-structured interview highlights human's interpretation and meaning of the handled subject. This interview method also studies how these meanings are built in interaction. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2004, 77–78.)

In semi-structured interview the interviewees have a free say, but the interviewer leads the interview based on the themes they have chosen. Semi-structured interview is more of a discussion than interview, because even though the themes have been chosen beforehand, they can be discussed in any order the interviewer sees appropriate. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006.) In the interview situation, all pre-chosen

themes must be discussed with each interviewee, but the order and length of the themes may vary. Like in this thesis, the interviewees are persons working in different job fields, which means that the emphasis of the themes can differ from each other quite a lot. (Eskola, Lätti & Vastamäki 2018, 4.)

Semi-structured interview requires knowledge about the subject and its current situation. The interviewees should not be randomly chosen because then the subject might be unknown to the interviewee, and this will not be useful for the results. The semi-structured interviews are usually executed by creating the themes and possible sub questions, and it can be recorded, either by videoing or voice recorder, if permission is granted by the interviewee. The video or voice material can then be transcribed, so it is easier to compare the results, transcribe and analyse them. (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006.)

Within the years, the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee has changed. The interviewer can behave actively and react to interviewee's answers, because this can help to create the interview situation more comfortable for the interviewee. The interviewer must keep in mind, that the control of the interview situation is in the hands of the interviewer. Since in semi-structured interview the questions are not pre-planned, this can cause the interview situation to lead off track, and it is the interviewer's job to guide the interview back to the right path. (Eskola, Lätti & Vastamäki 2018, 2–3.)

Questions where the answer options are “yes” or “no” should be avoided in qualitative research. It is important to create the questions in a form where extensive answers can be received, for example starting the questions with “what”, “why” and “what kind”. The interviewer can also ask the interviewee to describe or give practical example. This helps the interviewer to understand the interviewees point of view better. The form of the question matters, because it is better to have few questions where the answer received is detailed and extensive, instead of many questions where the answers are short, and the interviewee's points are not fully understood. (Vilkka 2021, 6–8.)

Reliability in qualitative research happens when the subject and theory that has been researched matches with interpret material. The factors that matter in reliability in qualitative research are the researchers' choices, solutions, and achievements. Simply said the reliability comes from the researcher and the researcher is the only criteria in qualitative research. The reliability is evaluated through theory, analysis, solutions, and recommendations that the researcher brings out. The researcher should be able to explain how the researcher has come to those conclusions and to evaluate how effective or meaningful the recommendations are to the research. (Vilkka 2021, 9–11.)

5.3 Interviewees

In the semi-structured interview, the themes are pre-planned, and the researcher can create questions beforehand. These questions are not mandatory, but they might help if the interview is not flowing, or it is difficult to understand the interviewees points. Knowledge of the interviewees can help with creating the questions. In semi-structured interview there is a possible problem that the interviewee answers based on what they think the interviewer wants to be answered, and not what is their point of view of the subject. The result of this is that the research material does not answer the research question extensively and the research goal is not reached. (Vilkka 2021, 6.)

When choosing the interviewees, it is important to remember the subject of the research. The interviewees should be chosen based on their experience or expertise of the subject. The interviewees can also be in crossroads, which means that the interviewee does not have personal experience on the subject, but their opinion is based on the information gained from others' opinions. These different points of views make the research interesting, because these opinions are what create, change, and maintain the culture. (Vilkka 2021, 14–15.) In this thesis, the goal was to receive interviewees that have the expertise but also interviewees that are in the crossroads situation. Half of the interviewees were hoped to be business travellers, whose opinions and answers are based on their own experience but also expertise of the subject. The other half would be individuals who do not business travel for work, but part of their work is to organise these business travels and their opinions and answers are based on what they hear from others.

Email for Sandvik, Valmet and Acgo was sent asking for possible interviewees. Researcher's goal was to have six interviewees, so it was clear more emails needed to be sent to companies. Investments to Tampere region has had their focus on digitalisation and product development, and international companies have invested in production in the region of Tampere (Business Tampere website 2019.) Harri Ojala (Business Tampere website 2019) thinks that the investments in 2019 have shown that big international companies see Tampere region as the best place to develop their products and improve their competitiveness globally.

Local newspaper Aamulehti had written an article about 40 most successful companies in Pirkanmaa region (Huotilainen 2017), so researcher decided to use this article as my advantage, and most of the companies in the article were sent an email asking for interviewees. Unfortunately, not so many companies answered, and the few that answered declined due to bad timing, since it was summer and most of their employees were on summer holiday. Lastly, researcher saw that Aamulehti made an article about Finnair replacing their flights from Tampere to Helsinki with bus transportation (Pesonen 2021, 15). In this article a representative from Molok Oy was interviewed, and it was decided to send them an email asking if they have interest to be part of this thesis. So eventually researcher had found three interviewees, one from Kalmar Global, one from Valmet and one from Molok Oy.

5.4 Interviews

In this thesis the method for the interview was chosen to be semi-structured interview. The researcher had chosen five themes beforehand that would be discussed in the interviews. These themes were airport services, services provided by Airpro, interaction, safety, and the future of business travel. A theme map was created to help the interviewees understand the themes. This theme map was created in Finnish (APPENDIX 1) and English (APPENDIX 2).

The interviews were executed between July and September in 2021. All interviews were executed by using Windows Teams-program, because the researcher saw that

this was the best option in the current Covid-19-virus situation. The interviews were recorded with the permission on the interviewee. Later these records were transcribed. All interviews were executed in Finnish language because the researcher and the interviewees first languages are Finnish. The average length of the interviews was 46 minutes.

Table 1. List of the interviewees

Interview date and length	Interviewed person	Interviewees company	Interviewees work title
09.07.2021 48 minutes	Minna Helin	Valmet Technologies Oy	Corporate travel manager
03.08.2021 40 minutes	Minna Haavisto	Kalmar	Executive assistant
27.09.2021 50 minutes	Saritta Duhamel	Molok Oy	Human resources manager

As seen in Table 1, first interview was with Minna Helin, who works as a corporate travel manager in Valmet Technologies. Her connection with business travel is that part of her job description as corporate travel manager is to organise business travels. She co-operates with travel agencies, airlines, hotels, car companies and everything else required for these travels. She also prepares travel policies and is in communication with business travellers about trip details and guidance. She also has experience in travel safety since part of her job is risk managing. She has experience from the past 10 years of this role.

Second interview was with Minna Haavisto, who works as an executive assistant for Kalmar, which is part of public company Cargotec. She has been organising business travels since 1995 and has been doing this for different companies. Within these years she has seen both the increase and recession of travel.

My third and final interview was with Saritta Duhamel, who works as a human resources manager but also as a customer service manager for Molok Oy. Her role in

this research is to be the business traveller because she has been doing business travel for 30 years. She estimates that before the Covid-19 pandemic, she did approximately 10 business trips per year from Tampere-Pirkkala airport.

The interviews all started similarly, with the researcher asking few background questions. These background questions were for example if recording was permitted and if the researcher could use the interviewees name in the research. The researcher also asked about their job description to understand that the interviewees had the right connection to the research subject, business' traveller's needs. All the interviewees seemed to be interested in the subject, and both Helin and Haavisto had visited Tampere-Pirkkala airport beforehand even though business travel is not part of their job. Conversation was easily flowing and only with three interviews the researcher could see that all three interviews resulted in similar results.

5.5 Transcription

When the interview material for the research has been received, the material needs to be transcribed. In qualitative research the material that has been recorded has to be transcribed to text or pictures for analysis. Transcription creates interaction between the researcher and the research, but also helps the researcher to determine what amount of material is enough for the research. Transcription helps the researcher to not only understand the material better, but to organise and group the material. (Vilkka 2021, 1.) In this research the researcher decided that the best way to approach the interviews' recordings was to transcribe them in to text.

Transcription can be done partly or to the whole research material. In some research there is a possibility to create conclusions directly from the recorded material, but this is only the case where there are few interviews and they have been short-handed. What is important in transcription is that the interviewees words and statements are not changed, because this affects the reliability of the research. Using transcription symbols help the researcher to understand the interviews, but also with reliability. For example, if the recording has words left unclear, it is better for the researcher to leave

the information unclear than to guess the interviewees word of choice. (Vilkka 2021, 1–5.)

6 RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 Image of Tampere-Pirkkala Airport

Between the three interviews, it came quite quickly clear to the researcher how business travel from Tampere-Pirkkala airport works. Business travellers in most cases depart with an early morning flight and return with the last possible flight, which is around midnight. The interviewees saw that Tampere-Pirkkala's benefits were that it is a small, fast, and compact airport, where the travellers do not have to wait for long periods of time. All interviewees used the word "small" when describing Tampere-Pirkkala airport, but this was more seen as a good thing than as a disadvantage. In small airports there are no long walking distances, and it is unlikely for the traveller to get lost.

The interviewees all thought that departing from the airport was convenient since it is close by, and the travellers do not have to be in the airport two hours prior like they would in bigger airports. Even though the airport is close by, the biggest problem that came clear in all interviews was the reachability of the airport. Public transportation and taxi traffic seemed to be the problems, especially when the business travellers return from their travels. One of the interviewees stated that the airport's parking lot is convenient because it always has room for a car.

6.2 Airport services

With Tampere-Pirkkala airport services, the disadvantages laid in the reachability and transportation services. One interviewee stated that even though the airport is nearby to the city of Tampere and Pirkkala, does not mean that the airport serves all people

who live in Pirkanmaa region. Another brings out that it has become a trend among younger employees to be more environmentally considerate and that many do not own a car and are used to moving to places with public transportation, and the public transportation to the airport is quite limited. The same problem comes up with arriving travellers. The public transportation is limited and there are not enough taxis to take everyone home or to the places they are staying at. One of the interviewees said that this was the issue where she is given most feedback from. What also was found was that more information is needed for foreign arriving travellers.

The advantages again were in the smallness and how easy the airport is for business traveller. The service is quick and efficient, and the business traveller does not need to arrive two hours prior the flight like in bigger airports. Check-in and security control were given extra credit in how well they work, but one of the interviewees saw that since Tampere-Pirkkala airport is only the starting point of the business travel, the expectations are low. The gate area is small and tight, but the good point is that the traveller can safely leave their carry-on bag next to their seat while purchasing food or beverages from the airport's café, stated one of the interviewees. The airport was also said to be clean and to have good lavatories.

When it comes to services missing from Tampere-Pirkkala airport that other, bigger airports have, such as lounge services or souvenir shops, these were not seen to be needed to Tampere-Pirkkala. According to one of the interviewees, lounge is not needed since business travellers arrive so close to the departure time to the airport and have no extra time to use in the lounge. Tampere-Pirkkala's flights also fly to bigger airports, such as Stockholm-Arlanda airport or Helsinki-Vantaa airport, so the interviewees saw that if the traveller has a need for these extra services, they will do it during the lay-over. It was seen that cancellation of flights in Tampere-Pirkkala airport affected to the choice-making when choosing the departure airport. One interviewee believed that Tampere-Pirkkala would have so much more potential, because of the new, bigger runway. The new runway allows bigger aircrafts to land to Tampere-Pirkkala, and what was found negative was that the airport is not using its' full potential since most of the commercial flights from Tampere-Pirkkala are with smaller aircrafts.

6.3 Services provided by Airpro

Before discussing about Airpro's services, the researcher clarified to the interviewees that in Tampere-Pirkkala airport Airpro's services are check-in, boarding, arrival services and general customer service. Airpro also does baggage handling, such as loading and unloading aircrafts, but researcher counted these out from the interviews, since they are not directly related to customer service.

The customer satisfaction to check-in and boarding was good according to the interviewees. According to one of the interviewees, the customer service has developed quite a lot within the thirty years she has been doing business travel, and she herself seemed quite happy with the quality of the customer service. She thinks the check-in and boarding situations work well, and another interviewee agreed with this statement and adds how convenient the services are for business travellers because they are fast paced. Another interviewee said that for business traveller number one deciding factor is fluency, because business travellers prefer to have as little time waiting as possible. She also brought out that there would be room for improvement with the opening time of the check-in desks, and that they could be opened a bit sooner, but thinks that they still work fine.

When bringing up self-service technologies in airport, such as self-service check-in and baggage drop, the interviewees opinions differ quite a lot. One said that she prefers to use the customer service desks, because she is an extrovert and likes to talk to customer service staff. Another interviewee again sees that self-service is the modern time and thinks that most business travellers choose self-service because usually they travel with only carry-on luggage. The reason for business travellers only having carry-on luggage on their travels lays in the fact that this minimises the waiting time but also that a lot of check-in luggage gets left behind during travels.

One interviewee then states that if the business traveller is travelling with check-in luggage, she sees that the decision between self-service bag drop, and customer service desks depends on the amount of line the traveller would have to face. Another interviewee's opinion matches a little with previous opinion, and she thinks that a

business traveller travelling with only carry-on luggage will choose self-service, when a business traveller with check-in luggage will choose customer service desk. She thinks that especially a Finnish business traveller is more likely to choose the self-service option, and that self-service technologies will become more popular in the future.

Even though business travellers seem to preference the self-service technologies, one interviewee thinks that airports still will require customer service staff. Especially among leisure and unexperienced travellers, the help is much more needed. What also was brought up was that Finnish business travellers are generally satisfied with arrival services; check-in luggage arrives to the luggage belt fast and the exit from the airport is quick. The bigger problem lies within the foreign business travellers arriving to Tampere-Pirkkala airport. Two of the interviewees saw that improvement can be made and foreign travellers should be taken into consideration more. During the last arriving flights of the day at midnight, there is no customer service staff working at the airport anymore. They both hoped that airport would have customer service or more clear information at arrival for the foreign travellers. One interviewee says that foreign travellers need more practical information and options to choose from, especially about transportation from the airport to the city centre.

6.4 Interaction

With interaction between the business traveller and customer service staff it became clear that there are quite a lot of differences, depending on the individual. One of the interviewees personally likes to talk to the customer service staff and enjoys it, even though it might be an early morning. When comparing Tampere-Pirkkala and Helsinki-Vantaa airport's security control, she stated that security control in Helsinki-Vantaa airport is not as great as in smaller airports, because of the rush and sometimes you might not even get greeted. According to her, one of the great things about departing Tampere-Pirkkala airport is the security control, not only because it is efficient and quick, but also because the staff remembers the business travellers that travel from there often and you can always have small talk with them.

Two of the interviewees saw that business travellers often know their worth and that they are important customers to airports and airlines, and they also expect to be treated well. Great customer service is wanted and expected throughout the travels. Business travellers have given feedback about having to wait for check-in desks to open in Helsinki-Vantaa airport, but according to one of the interviewees. Finnish business traveller does not usually give feedback. No feedback has come from interviewees' companies' business travellers about customer service or interaction in Tampere-Pirkkala airport, but one interviewee said that the customer service staff at the airport is easily approachable, when necessary.

6.5 Safety

With safety in airport the discussions revolved around how safe the travellers feel in the airport but also about safety of health, since health issues have become a popular topic due to Covid-19-virus. Most business travellers felt safe in Tampere-Pirkkala airport, and one of the factors that affected to this was the size of the airport. A good view was brought up in one of the interviews that the size of the airport can also mean that the travellers are more likely to leave luggage and personal belonging unattended. One interviewee said that each time when she has left a car to the airport's parking lot, she always trusted that the car would still be there when coming back the business travels.

Restrictions in carry-on luggage was seen to be a bother especially to women, since business travellers prefer to use only carry-on luggage but limitations in liquids can cause headache while preparing for the travel. Generally, the opinions about the restrictions and limitations are something that can be very easily adapted to, and none of the interviewees saw that restrictions in carry-on luggage are too tight and unnecessary.

One of the interviewees believed that one of the biggest safety issues in Tampere-Pirkkala airport was again arriving from the last flights of the day. The airport has low lighting during those late hours, and no customer service is available to the travellers. She believed that travellers might experience feeling of unsafety, since there is no

customer service staff to contact, for example in a case of an emergency. Even if there is airport staff remotely supervising the incoming travellers, the travellers cannot see the staff and they might feel alone in the airport.

Health safety is a subject that was not so much focused on before the global pandemic hit in 2019. Since Tampere-Pirkkala airport has been closed from March 2020, it can be hard to predict the feelings of health safety travelling from there can cause. What came through with all interviewees was that each of them respected the rules that applied with health. Mandatory use of facemask was supported, and the use of hand sanitiser was appreciated. Since the gate-area in Tampere-Pirkkala airport is so small, a solution should be found so that travellers can keep safety distances and not to feel that they are risking their own health safety according to one of the interviewees. Another interviewee believed that business travellers are responsible for their own actions, but the airport should always have hand sanitiser and facemasks available for travellers.

6.6 Future of business travel

Discussion about business travel's future brought up some differences in opinion. These opinions can be different because of different job descriptions, what they have discussed with other people or just what the person thinks might and should happen. Some similarities were found out as well. One interviewee believed that the business travel will return almost or to its normal state as it was before the pandemic, because people and especially business travellers are tired of using technologic ways such as teams or zoom to meet people. Another interviewee had a different view, and she thought that business travel will decrease radically, because in her opinion companies and their employees have understood that meeting people does not always require face-to-face meeting. She also believed that traveling has lost its exoticness because the pricing has dropped and that before pandemic traveling was considered quite common thing to do. In her belief the loss of exoticness has led to the decrease in interest when it comes to business travel.

Third interviewee's opinion was laid in the middle of these two opinions, and she believed that her company will still have a need for business travel, but that employees have learned new ways to work and adapted to those already. So, she does not see that her company's' business travel will return to the same, but it will also not be completely cut. She sees that there are business travellers who are eager to get back out there and are excitedly waiting for business travels in the future, but that there are also those business travellers who have realized the benefits of having time at home to spend with family or doing hobbies and prefer not to return to the same amount of travelling that they did for business before the pandemic.

One interviewee sees that companies will be smarter with business travel planning, and she thinks shorter day-long business travels will be erased. Another interviewee agrees with this and adds that business travellers might now have pressure of meeting and charming people, but also how to have good, worthy conversations. One interviewee believes that traveling for business purposes can be extremely tiring and exhausting, which can be caused by that pressure. She also thinks that business travellers' wellbeing has a large role in companies, and this can lead to decrease in business travels. In the recent years, many companies have become more environmentally friendly, and sustainability has been a key word in their future decisions. The interviewee sees that this can be a reason for why companies will cut down business travels, even though she believes that once the world is back to its normal state, Covid-19 will be forgotten quickly.

Since the global pandemic has decreased air traffic, it has also affected on other ways of transportation. Tampere is quite close to Helsinki, which means that the business travellers that use Tampere-Pirkkala airport have an option to use Helsinki-Vantaa airport. The bus and train traffic to the Helsinki-Vantaa airport have decreased, which is why Tampere-Pirkkala airport seems a lot more seducing departure airport. Business travellers also save time when traveling from Tampere-Pirkkala airport, because they save time in the transportation to the airport but also because in Helsinki-Vantaa more time is required for check-in and security control. One of the interviewees states that morning flight from Tampere-Pirkkala airport is still the greatest option available for business travellers, but what would really bring the company benefit is a direct flight

from Tampere-Pirkkala to somewhere in Central Europe, and that for example the flight to Copenhagen in the past was useful for their company. Another interviewee agrees, that a stop-over in Helsinki-Vantaa airport is technically useless and that their company also would gain great benefit from a direct flight to Central and South Europe.

7 SUMMARY AND DELIBERATION

7.1 Conclusion

This thesis brought out what business travellers appreciate and want from a small region airport, such as Tampere-Pirkkala. Interviewees brought out easily what are the areas that Tampere-Pirkkala has been successful in, but also what areas require improvement and change. Researcher was glad that interviewee's opinions were not always same, because this shows that there are differences between different individuals experiences. The importance in communication between business traveller and travel manager was seen quite quickly. Both travel managers brought out points where they get most feedback from, but what also was found out was that Finnish business travellers do not leave much feedback, and if they do it is usually something they wish to be improved.

Picture 1 showed results of survey made by ACTE Global and Turkish airlines, about top 10 factors travel managers gain most feedback from. This survey was executed by receiving responses from 175 ACTE members from around the world (ACTE Global website 2016). It is unaware if any of these responses came from Finnish travel managers, but differences between this survey and this thesis' research can be seen. The number one feedback in the interviews with travel managers was clear, the transportation from the airport, and this was also confirmed with the interview with business traveller. Transportation from the airport got a lot of criticism in the interviews and was shown to be a real issue that needs to be solved. Improvement in

transportation to the airport was also hoped, but what was interesting is that these two, transportation from and to airport were in placed 8th and 10th in the survey. This could be because transportation to bigger airports is usually well executed and the travellers have many options to choose from, but to a smaller airport the transportation is very limited.

In ACTE's survey flight punctuality was the number one thing travel managers gain most feedback from. This was confirmed in the interviews, and what was found was that the use of Scandinavian airlines as a carrier had been decreased due to their cancellation and irregularities in flights by the request of the business travellers. In the survey feedback was given from check-in and security control, but this research showed that check-in and security control in Tampere-Pirkkala airport was highly appreciated for its efficiency. In this case the feedback given to the travel managers in the survey is based on larger airport's check-in and security control, since bigger airports have more travellers which means more queues, and in the interviews, it came out that feedback from Helsinki-Vantaa airport's check-in was given, where business travellers had to wait for the check-in to open for some time.

When it comes to business travellers as a customer segment, the research supports the theory very well. Business travellers are self-aware how important customers they are, and they also expect to be treated as if they are important. They appreciate efficiency and fluency, and that a small airport such as Tampere-Pirkkala is only a place for them to start their travels, and therefore they also show up to the airport at the very last minute. They appreciate good customer service, but do not require lot of help or different kind of services. For business travellers it is all about the quality than quantity.

Comparing Maslow's hierarchy of needs and business traveller's hierarchy of needs to the research results do not show many surprises. Basic needs for business travellers, such as Wi-Fi is provided by Tampere-Pirkkala airport. Transportation is part of the basic needs, and as already found out, it is an issue in the airport. Then again, business travellers that travel from Tampere-Pirkkala airport are already used to the unreliability of the transportation ways, so they find other, more reliable ways to and

from transport to the airport. In the interview with Duhamel, who does business traveling, she brought out that she either uses her own car to arrive to the airport, and if not, she has a regular taxi driver who she contacts when in need of transportation.

When it comes to physiological needs, such as frequent flier miles, this is something that has very little power when choosing the carrier. What matters more to the business travellers is how quickly and easily they arrive to the destination. Since most flights from Tampere-Pirkkala airport only fly to near destinations, such as Helsinki or Stockholm, the business travellers usually have a connecting flight from those destinations. If Tampere-Pirkkala airport would have more direct flights to destinations further away, the choice of carrier would be taken more in the consideration. According to one interviewee, business travellers are intrigued to using Ryanair in business travels, even though they do not have any loyalty programs. The interest comes from the fact that Ryanair flies with bigger airplanes to further destinations, and even though Ryanair uses smaller airports, sometimes they might be closer to the original destination for the business traveller. And let's not forget the benefits of small airports, the time efficiency and small walking distances.

The future of business travel is still unsure, and the research showed difference in opinions. What all the interviewee's agreed on was that companies have learned new ways to use technology and that working from home is now considered normal. What came quite clear in theory and in the interviews was that some business travellers have realised the benefits of not having to travel and do not want to return to the same amount of traveling from business than before the pandemic, when others are waiting for the world to open and eager to get back to business traveling.

7.2 Deliberation

Original plan for this thesis was to use quantitative research and study business travellers by online questionnaire-form. Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic of the virus COVID-19 caused all air traffic from Tampere-Pirkkala airport to shut down, which also meant that there were no business travellers from Tampere-Pirkkala airport.

Changing the research style to qualitative research opened more opportunities and gave better chances of receiving useful research results.

Unfortunately, the summer holiday season affected on the number of interviewees, and the researcher was able to collect the minimum number of interviews. Researcher's preference would have been to have the same number of interviews with travel managers and business travellers. So, in this case one more interview with business traveller would have been preferred. The researcher also saw that if one of the interviewees would have been foreign, the discussion would have had more difference in point of view.

In the researcher's point of view, no new and surprising information was gained from the customer segment, business travellers. Theory strengthened the knowledge that already existed. What surprised the researcher was that the biggest issues and feedback about business traveling was given about arrival to the airport than departure. What also surprised the researcher was how little business travellers expect and require from a small airport and its services.

7.3 Reliability

In qualitative research the criterion for reliability is the researcher themselves, and their honesty in the research, because evaluation's targets are the choices and solutions the researcher has created in the research. In the research's reliability examination, it is also important to take into consideration the researcher's impartiality, because often the researcher is somehow connected to the subject they are researching. (Vilkka 2021, 9–11.) This was in the beginning the biggest issue this thesis' researcher had, because the commissioner was also researcher's employer, but the researcher was not able to use any of the information gained from the job in the research.

The researcher sees that they were successfully impartial in the research process because the research and themes were created based on the theoretical framework instead of the knowledge that already existed. The researcher only used truthful information, the interviewees opinions and statements were brought out in this thesis

as they were in the interviews, because all the interview materials were transcribed and not changed when written. Only reliability question in the interviews was that if the interviewees meant the information differently than how the researcher understood it, but the researcher tried to be thorough and asked clarification if the interviewees statement was unclear.

In the researcher's opinion biggest reliability question in this thesis is shown in the sources. For the researcher it was found difficult to find recent and relevant literary sources for the theoretical framework, and some of the sources in this thesis are quite old. Quite a lot of blogs and articles were used, because travel and tourism business is constantly developing and the researcher wanted to use information that was as recent as possible.

7.4 Recommendations for commissioner

Airpro's mission, vision and objective were all related to customer service and how to provide customers best possible airport quality and fluent travel experience. This is what mostly this thesis focused on, business traveller's needs. In a small airport business travellers do not need many services, and what this research showed was that business travellers were generally happy with customer service quality in Tampere-Pirkkala airport. Airpro's services in Tampere-Pirkkala were check-in boarding, arrival services and general customer service.

When it comes to customer service to business travellers, Airpro should focus on serving these customers with quick, efficient service without losing the great quality. Basic manners are highly appreciated, such as greeting and wishing the customer they have a good flight. In the morning flights, which are mostly used by business travellers, it is recommended by the researcher that the airport opens the check-ins earlier, which would cut the queue waiting time for business travellers but also serve the travellers who have arrived at the airport early.

What was found in the research was that in most cases a Finnish traveller will not give negative feedback if they are unhappy, they will just mutter. The researcher

recommends that Tampere-Pirkkala airport would add more feed-back options to different parts of the airport, such as gate-area and arrivals-area. Since business travellers do not have much time, the feedback-giving should be as quick as possible. For this the researcher recommends using technologies such as HappyOrNot Smiley Terminal-device. This gets feedback quickly, although it does not explain why the travellers presses the chosen button. But if these technology devices are spread around the airport, it is easier to see which area of service causes unhappiness and later these areas can be researched more precisely.

When it comes to security and safety factors, biggest problem in the airport was seen to be the lack of customer service in the night-time. The researcher suggests that customer staff is hired to work during those hours of the time, because this would make the travellers feel safer. If and when the air traffic starts from Tampere-Pirkkala airport, the researcher recommends having focus on health safety factors. As long as there are restrictions in travel, it is recommended by the researcher that the airport would have facemasks and hand sanitisers available for the travellers. One idea is that the airport would have individually packed sanitising towels for the travellers, so that the travellers could wipe a table or seat clean before using it.

What also is recommended, for the airport in general is to create an info-package that has all the relevant and practical information about Tampere, but also about the airport. This info-package could include information about transportation options to and from the airport, information about city centre accommodation, shopping, tourist locations etc. This could be created together for example with VisitTampere, because they have a better view of foreign travellers' needs in Tampere. This could be executed as a brochure which the travellers could take with them but also as an information board at the airport.

The researcher sees that airport should do something about the taxi-situation during night-time. Local taxi companies that drive from Tampere-Pirkkala airport should be informed about the situation, and if it is not possible to get more taxis to the airport during night-time, it would be convenient from the travellers' point of view to have information about where and how a taxi can be ordered. This could be added to the

information brochure and board, so that the information is easily accessible to the travellers.

Lastly, the researcher recommends that the airport management starts to take into consideration about bringing new flight routes directly from Tampere-Pirkkala airport to Centre- or South-Europe. This was highly hoped from the travellers, and would not only bring visibility to Tampere, but also more incoming business and leisure travellers. These routes could be flown using a larger aircraft, so in the beginning one departing flight few times a week would be enough. Based on the demand of the flights the number of flights departing could be decreased or increased. In the research it came out that destinations such as Copenhagen, Frankfurt or Paris would be useful from business traveller's point of view.

7.5 Commissioner's feedback

Thesis' writer had a final meeting with commissioner's representative on 29th of October in 2021. Nearly finished thesis, research results and recommendations were presented to Tampere-Pirkkala airport's ground handling supervisor, Jaana Kulju. At this point, Tampere-Pirkkala airport had opened to civil aviation again, and these recommendations were presented just at the right time. The recommendations were first presented to Kulju, and afterwards these recommendations were discussed individually which could be taken into use. According to Kulju, most of the recommended created by this thesis' writer were already known problems to Airpro, and solutions for these problems have been started to create (Kulju personal statement 29.10 2021).

For example, check-in desks open earlier for morning flights, because more time is needed to go through all the needed travel documentaries. The airport also had mandatory mask-policy and hand sanitisers are available to travellers all around the airport. Thesis' writer recommended that airport would have customer service staff in the airport with the flights arriving at midnight, so that the travellers would feel themselves safer in case of emergency or in need of help. According to Kulju, from Airpro's point of view it is not possible to arrange customer service staff to the airport

during these hours, but this problem has already been solved by Finavia, who now have staff in the info desk during the night-time arrival flights. (Kulju personal statement 29.20.2021.)

Recommendations about feedback technology machines, info-package and problems about taxi and bus traffic are not Airpro's responsibilities in Tampere-Pirkkala airport, so Kulju stated that she would have a discussion with Finavia about these recommendations and make sure Finavia is aware of the current problems and have this thesis' recommendations for these problems. According to Kulju, this thesis is on the right tracks when it comes to the problems brought out in the research. In her opinion the recommendations sounded well planned and most of them would be easily executed. (Kulju personal statement 29.20.2021.)

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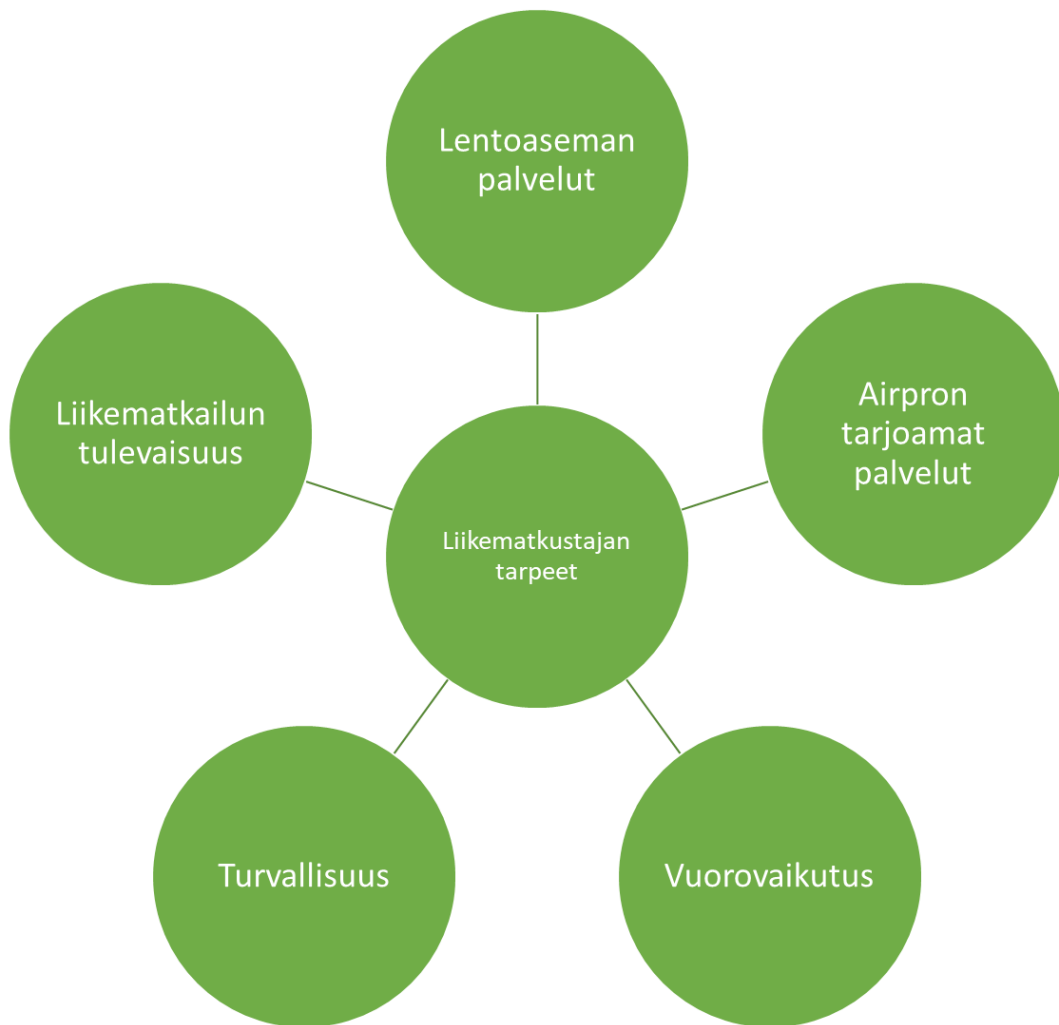
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APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

