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Preliminary Needs Survey for the

Tourism Strategy of Lestijärvi Municipality



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Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis was to collect data for a tourism strategy for the municipality of Lestijärvi, who acted as the commissioning party for this thesis. A strategy sets out the common goals for the whole organization and provides guidelines on how to achieve those goals. To set those goals and guidelines for a tourism strategy, a strategy development process must be followed, the current tourism trends researched, traveller needs mapped, and the question of what actions must be taken to fulfill those needs answered.

The theory includes concept definitions, the tourism strategy development process, current tourism trends in Finland, of which nature, wellbeing and sustainable tourism were researched more carefully, and finding out what the current situation is regionally and in Lestijärvi. A qualitative method was used to research what services the travellers require while visiting Lestijärvi and how the services should be developed to the expected levels. The research was conducted by organizing a brainstorming session based on which a SWOT analysis was created and two questionnaires: one for the travellers, who have previously visited Lestijärvi and one for the local entrepreneurs.

As a result of the research, a tourist profile for Lestijärvi was created. The key themes that rose from the research were the importance of nature tourism and sustainability for Lestijärvi, the need for more up-to-date information and visibility on tourism and the importance of regional, municipal and entrepreneur co-operation in order to develop these themes. In addition, the seasonality of travel should be developed by productization and co-operation to achieve year-round travel.

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Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli kerätä tietoa matkailustrategiaa varten Lestijärven kunnalle, joka toimi opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana. Strategian tehtävä on asettaa tavoitteet organisaatiolle ja antaa ohjeellista tukea tavoitteiden saavuttamiseen. Jotta tavoitteet ja suuntaviivat voidaan luoda matkailustrategiaan, strategian kehittämisprosessia tulee seurata, matkailun trendejä täytyy tutkia, matkailijoiden tarpeet täytyy kartoittaa ja selvittää, mitä toimenpiteitä tarvitaan tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi.

Teoriaosa sisältää käsitteiden määrittelyä, matkailustrategian luomisprosessin tutkintaa, Suomen matkailun trendejä, joista luonto-, hyvinvointi- ja kestävämatkailu tutkittiin tarkemmin ja selvityksen matkailun nykytilanteesta maakunnassa ja Lestijärvellä. Kvalitatiivisella tutkimuksella selvitettiin mitä palveluja matkailijat kaipaavat vieraillessaan Lestijärvellä ja miten palvelut tulisi kehittää halutulle tasolle. Tutkimus toteutettiin ideariihen, jonka perusteella SWOT analyysi tehtiin, ja kahden kyselyn avulla. Toinen kyselyistä lähetettiin matkailijoille, jotka ovat aikaisemmin vierailleet Lestijärvellä ja toinen paikallisille yrittäjille.

Tulosten perusteella selvisi Lestijärven matkailijaprofiili. Pääteemoina tuloksista nousi luontomatkailun ja kestävä kehityksen tärkeys Lestijärvelle, tarve päivitetylle tiedolle ja näkyvyydelle sekä alueellisen, kunnallisen ja yrittäjien yhteistyön tarve matkailun pääteemojen kehittämisessä. Lisäksi matkailun kausivaihtelua tulisi kehittää yhteistyöllä ja tuotteistamisella ympärivuotisen matkailun saavuttamiseksi.

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1 Introduction

The pandemic has increased the domestic tourism and visitor numbers in Central Finland's National Parks (Metsähallitus, 2021). "Also, the traditionally remote and quiet destinations popularity has increased" (Metsähallitus, 2021). All nature destinations visitor amounts have grown by 17% and National Parks have gained 23% more visitors in 2020 than in 2019. (Metsähallitus, 2021). Central Ostrobothnia's tourism strategy was written in 2020 and approved in a meeting by the county council 14.12.2020 (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021). The topic of a tourism strategy data collection was relevant for the municipality of Lestijärvi at this time because Central Ostrobothnia started to develop its tourism services based on the strategy. The goal of the new investments and development discussed in the tourism strategy of Central Ostrobothnia, is to help the whole region grow its tourism (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021). Therefore, the research will consider and be in line with the tourism strategy of Central Ostrobothnia. In order to keep up with the regional development, it was decided that Lestijärvi should have its own tourism strategy, which considers the municipal tourism pull factors and developments in more detail.

The idea of the thesis topic was formed during the authors practical training, which was done at the municipality of Lestijärvi during summer 2020. Lestijärvi is also the authors hometown, which gave extra motivation for the topic. The purpose of the practical training was to figure out which aspects of tourism needed improving in order to attract more visitors to Lestijärvi. Since the municipality had very little information and no clear objectives concerning local tourism, a tourism strategy concept for Lestijärvi was formed. Due to the topic's extent, it was decided that the thesis will cover the data collection for the strategy and that the writing of the strategy itself, will be left for the municipality.

This research aims to collect data of Lestijärvi's tourism development needs based on national and regional tourism strategies, strategy development process, traveller's and entrepreneur's needs collected through questionnaires, and a SWOT analysis created based on a brainstorming session. The collected data will be delivered to the Lestijärvi municipality, that serves as the commissioning party of this thesis. The municipality may then utilize the results of this research when compiling a municipal tourism strategy.

The data collection for a tourism strategy is needed for mapping the current state of Lestijärvi's tourism, finding the points of development and actions to achieve the hoped outcomes in a way that the tourists will want to visit Lestijärvi. A strategy minimizes the unwanted and unexpected

impacts and helps to create a base for sustainable tourism development (Flax, 2021). Therefore, both of the questionnaires also cover the topic of sustainable tourism.

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the thesis is to find out how Lestijärvi municipality could develop its tourism and how it should be done. The aim is to collect information from tourists who have visited Lestijärvi previously to find out what type of services they require for their holiday and from entrepreneurs, who work in the tourism field in Lestijärvi, to find out what kind of support they need from the municipality in order to develop their businesses and how in their opinion the development actions should be implemented. The data collected for this research is aiming to give the necessary information and methods for the Lestijärvi municipality to write a tourism strategy.

The benefits of a tourism strategy will not come only to the municipality but also to the local people and entrepreneurs. The local entrepreneurs will be included in the strategy data collection process, which will also provide them with new ideas that they can use in their businesses. By including them in the process, it is expected that they will also commit to the upcoming strategy better.

1.2 Commissioning party - Municipality of Lestijärvi

The commissioning party for this thesis is the municipality of Lestijärvi. Lestijärvi municipality is defined as the local authority of Lestijärvi, which consists of an elected board of local councillors who are members of various municipal committees and employed council officers who work in various municipal departments, including the director of the municipality. In this thesis, the municipality will later be referred to as Lestijärvi municipality.

Lestijärvi municipality organization has the basic legal duties of education, day-care, culture, youth and library, town planning and land use, water and waste disposal, environmental services, social and health-care services and fire department and rescue duties. In addition, a municipality can take on other autonomous duties like employment services, economic duties, or housing. (Ministry of finance, 2021). In addition to the before mentioned duties, Lestijärvi municipality has the taken on the duty of tourism development.

Lestijärvi is the second smallest municipality in mainland Finland, with the population of 725 and is located in Central Ostrobothnia. Lestijärvi was founded in 1868 and consists of Syri, Yli-Lesti and Kirkonkylä towns. Lestijärvi is known for its windiness, vendace fish and its spring water, which is bottled in Finn Spring Oy. The closest cities with shopping opportunities, city life and restaurants are Ylivieska or Kokkola, which are both more than 80 kilometres away from Lestijärvi. (Lestijärven kunta, 2021).

Lake Lestijärvi also carries the title of county lake of Central Ostrobothnia (Järviwiki, 2021) and provides the visitors with possibilities for water activities (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021). The 110 kilometres long Lestijoki river brings variety to the area with fishing and white-water rafting opportunities (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021). Lestijärvi is also part of Metsäpeuranmaa area, which consists of five municipalities, three counties and includes the Salamajärvi National Park. In Metsäpeuranmaa there runs a 115-kilometre-long nature route called Peuran Polku, which is one of the biggest attractions in the area (Metsähallitus, 2021).

2 Tourism strategy development

To create a successful strategy, there are some methods and guidelines to be followed. There are several strategical planning methods available but for the purpose of this thesis the modified strategic planning process from Hiltunen (Hiltunen, 2012) was selected and complemented with the basis of strategy work by Määttä (Määttä, 2021). Also, the key concepts used in the strategy process will be defined below.

2.1 Concept definitions

According to the Cambridge dictionary strategy as a term means “a detailed plan for achieving success in certain situations” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). In business, the strategy sets out the common goals for the whole organization and provides guidelines on how to achieve those goals. A strategy can consist of many different subjects such as how to prepare for competitors, how to better understand your customer or how to do better in sustainability issues. After the goals and the current situation are written in a strategy, it will also be easier to adjust them to the changing trends of the industry and to measure the success in the future. (Tribe, 2016).

Strategic work should be looking forward into the future but as the future can never be predicted precisely, the strategy should be created in a way that it can be altered along the way. A strategy should be unique and clear and define what the organization does and doesn't do. The strategy should also stand out from the competitors and have its own purpose in the global operating environment. (Hiltunen, 2012).

Vision for a tourism destination is what sets the practical or ideal picture of the desired future. The vision describes the destination's essence and it can be either brief and descriptive or it can visualize a larger picture in a more idealistic way. After the vision is created, a mission will be formed from the information gathered. (Hiltunen, 2012).

Mission is a short statement, describing the objectives and goals of the destination or organization. Based on the values and expectations, mission describes why the organization exists. In short, the strategy describes the steps that must be taken to achieve the vision and the mission describes why those steps should be taken. (Hiltunen, 2012). This will set the base for the strategy writing (Goeldner & Ritchie, *Tourism principles, practices, philosophies*, 2012). Vision and the

mission should be based on values that describes the character, culture, and behaviour of the organization as well as the way the organization is attempting to achieve its goals (Hiltunen, 2012).

2.2 Strategy development process

Strategy works purpose is to improve the organizations/businesses competitive advantage (Määttä, 2021). The first steps towards creating a strategy are the phases of data collection, analysis, and diagnosis. The process will start by mapping the current state and figuring out how the organization is doing at the moment (Hiltunen, 2012). This will be continued by analysing the external and internal operating environment and what is happening in it now. Understanding the organization's position and though it the strengths and already existing knowledge and resources is an important part of the strategy process. This also includes finding out the differentiating factors within the organization. (Määttä, 2021). From there the process will continue to assessing the strategic success factors and what needs for development there are. (Hiltunen, 2012) This can be achieved by figuring out the needs of the customer (Määttä, 2021). The diagnosis stage is about how the current strategy is working and how it should be altered. For this first phase, the information gathering can happen by creating different analysis such as trend analysis, market and customer analysis, competitor analysis and company analysis. This information will be then collected and summarized into a SWOT analysis, which also considers the strategic challenges and alternatives. (Hiltunen, 2012).

From the first steps, the strategy process will move on to the next phase, which includes the strategy creation, implementation and follow up stages. The strategy creation includes writing up the mission and vision based on the information from the previous phase and the values, bases for success, principles, and the needed actions of the strategy. The last stages are implementation and follow up. (Hiltunen, 2012). It is important that these last stages are also followed through as a strategy has no meaning if it is not implemented. Therefore, all the workers within the organization should take part in implementing the strategy, which can only be done if everyone understands the meaning and content of the strategy. (Määttä, 2021).

In order to obtain a full understanding, also the tourism planning process, which provides very specific information on how tourism can be successfully planned ahead. The tourism planning process is displayed in the following tables.

Planning Activity	Organizational Development	Community Involvement	Tourism Product Development	Tourism Product Marketing
Where Are We Today?				
1. Gather information.	Evaluate existing group composition. Identify potential representatives that could or should be involved.	Identify both tourism and nontourism interests that may be affected by the proposed tourism development. Determine key issues and concerns of the various stakeholders.	Conduct an inventory and assessment of the area's tourism resources, services, and infrastructure. Estimate existing levels of use and carrying capacity.	Profile the existing markets in terms of geographic origin, demographics, family life cycle, spending patterns, needs, and interests.
Where Do We Want to Go?				
2. Identify community values.	Tourism organization members express community values by answering questions related to quality of life now and in the future.	Community representatives express their values by answering questions related to quality of life now and in the future.	Values expressed by the tourism organization and community representatives begin to form the foundation upon which future tourism development and resource allocation decisions will be based.	Values expressed by the tourism organization and community representatives begin to form the foundation upon which future tourism marketing decisions will be based.
3. Create a vision.	Tourism organization members create an image of how the community should look, feel, and be, now and in the future.	Community representatives create an image of how the community should look, feel, and be, now and in the future.	The descriptive "story" about future development and quality of life in the community further strengthens the foundation and guides tourism development and resource allocation decisions.	The descriptive "story" about future development and quality of life in the community further strengthens the foundation and guides tourism marketing decisions.
4. Identify concerns and opportunities.	Tourism organization members brainstorm a list of concerns and opportunities that the group or community may be facing. Similar ideas are combined and narrowed down to reflect (1) those related to tourism, and (2) those the tourism organization <i>should</i> handle.	Community representatives brainstorm a list of concerns and opportunities the community may be facing. Similar ideas are combined and narrowed down to reflect (1) those related to tourism and (2) those that can be addressed by the tourism organization or through tourism initiatives.	The major concerns and opportunities will provide direction for tourism development initiatives. Ideas expressed should be revisited as more concrete plans for developing or enhancing tourism attractions, services, and infrastructure are being considered.	The major concerns and opportunities will provide direction for tourism development initiatives. Ideas expressed should be revisited as more concrete plans for marketing tourism resources and services are being considered.
5. Develop a mission.	Tourism organization members articulate their purpose for existing and determine who they are serving. It is important to recognize not only the visitor, but also community needs during this activity.	The tourism organization's mission serves as a vehicle to inform the community about the group's purpose for existing.	The mission, along with the values, vision, concerns, and opportunities help guide the tourism development effort.	The mission, along with the values, vision, concerns, and opportunities help guide the tourism marketing effort.
6. Develop goals.	Based on the tourism organization's values, vision, concerns, opportunities, and mission, goals relative to the structure and administration of the organization are developed.	Goals related to community education and involvement in the tourism development effort are developed. Most likely, goals will center on ways to involve the public in the planning process.	Based on the expressed values, vision, concerns, opportunities, and mission, goals for the physical development and/or enhancement of tourism resources, traveler services, and infrastructure are developed.	Based on the plans for tourism product development and/or enhancement, goals for tourism marketing are developed.
How Are We Going to Get There?				
7. Develop objectives.	Tourism organization members develop action-oriented statements that propose how to achieve each <i>organizational</i> goal. The number of objectives for each goal will vary depending on the group's stage of development and available human, physical, and financial resources.	Tourism organization members develop action-oriented statements that propose how to achieve each <i>community education and involvement</i> goal. The number of objectives for each goal will vary depending on the community's level of interest and involvement in the tourism initiatives, and the available human, physical, and financial resources.	Tourism organization members develop action-oriented statements that propose how to achieve each <i>tourism product development</i> goal. The number of objectives for each goal will vary, depending on the community's stage of development, the quantity and quality of existing tourism resources, services, and infrastructure, and available human, physical, and financial resources.	Tourism organization members develop action-oriented statements that propose how to achieve each <i>tourism product marketing</i> goal. The number of objectives for each goal will vary depending on the quantity and quality of existing tourism marketing activities and available human, physical, and financial resources.
8. Develop actions.	Tourism organization members define strategies and tactics that outline specifically how each <i>organizational development</i> objective will be achieved. This includes exploring funding and technical assistance alternatives, identifying timelines, and assigning tasks.	Tourism organization members define strategies and tactics that outline specifically how each <i>community education and involvement</i> objective will be achieved. This includes exploring funding and technical assistance alternatives, identifying timelines, and assigning tasks.	Tourism organization members define strategies and tactics that outline specifically how each <i>tourism product development objective</i> will be achieved. This includes exploring funding and technical assistance alternatives, identifying timelines, and assigning tasks.	Tourism organization members define strategies and tactics that outline specifically how each <i>tourism marketing objective</i> will be achieved. This includes exploring funding and technical assistance alternatives, identifying timelines, and assigning tasks.
How Did We Do?				
9. Evaluate progress.	Organization members conduct a periodic review of the organization's activities and progress. A report is written and copies submitted to appropriate governing bodies, funding agencies, and the general public.	Organization members conduct a periodic review of key public involvement activities. A report is written and copies submitted to appropriate governing bodies, funding agencies, and the general public.	Organization members conduct a periodic review of tourism product development and implementation activities and progress. A report is written and copies submitted to appropriate governing bodies, funding agencies, and the general public.	Organization members conduct a periodic review of tourism product marketing activities and progress. A report is written and copies submitted to appropriate governing bodies, funding agencies, and the general public.
10. Update and modify plan.	Based on new information or changing circumstances, revisions to the organizational development plan are made.	Based on new information or changing circumstances, revisions to the plan for community involvement are made.	Based on new information or changing circumstances, revisions to the plan for tourism product development are made.	Based on new information or changing circumstances, revisions to the plan for tourism marketing are made.

Table 1. Tourism planning process (Goeldner & Ritchie, Tourism principles, practices, philosophies, 2012)

3 Tourism trends in Finland

Finland's tourism strategy gives an overlook of the current stage of tourism and its trends in Finland. Finland's tourism roadmap mentioned four key strategic themes, which are wellbeing, culture, nature-based summer activities and winter (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020). In Business Finland's themes and goals towards sustainable, year-round tourism, three cross-sectional themes are mentioned: year-round travel, digitalisation, and responsibility. In addition, there are seven main themes. First theme is nature activities, which means that nature is productized into tempting packages or day trips. Next is education which includes year-round product selection from Finland tour operator programs. Third is culture, where Finnish culture is a pull factor that is wanted in international markets. Next is luxury, where nature experiences and "alternative luxury" can be found from Finland. Fifth is food tourism, which will become a part of Finnish travel experience. Another one is health, where health service providers will become international. The last theme is sport, which will increase Finland's visibility as a year-round destination amongst the sport enthusiasts. (Business Finland, 2021). Sustainability is also mentioned in both Finland's tourism road map (TEM, 2015) and Business Finland's themes and goals (Business Finland, 2021) and therefore sustainable tourism will also be defined below.

3.1 Nature tourism

Nature tourism is loosely defined as travel that focuses on visiting attractions in a natural environment. This definition is the larger picture that can also include the other types of tourism. Many other types of tourism, like adventure tourism, can also be defined as nature tourism when they are taking place in a natural environment. Therefore, the term nature tourism is overlapping and cross sectioning several types of tourism. (Edelheim & Ilola, 2017). Another definition for nature tourism or nature-based tourism is that it includes experiences in natural places usually though environmentally sustainable outdoor activities (Tourism New South Wales, 2021).

According to Dowling, Newsome and Moore natural tourism falls under the category of alternative tourism (Dowling;Newsome;& Moore, 2002), "which can be defined as tourism that involves respect for the values of local people and nature, favouring encounters and exchanges and building experiences" (Smith & Valene, 1992). Natural tourism is also an umbrella term for other types

of tourism like adventure, nature-based, wildlife and ecotourism as seen in figure 1 (Dowling;Newsome;& Moore, 2002).

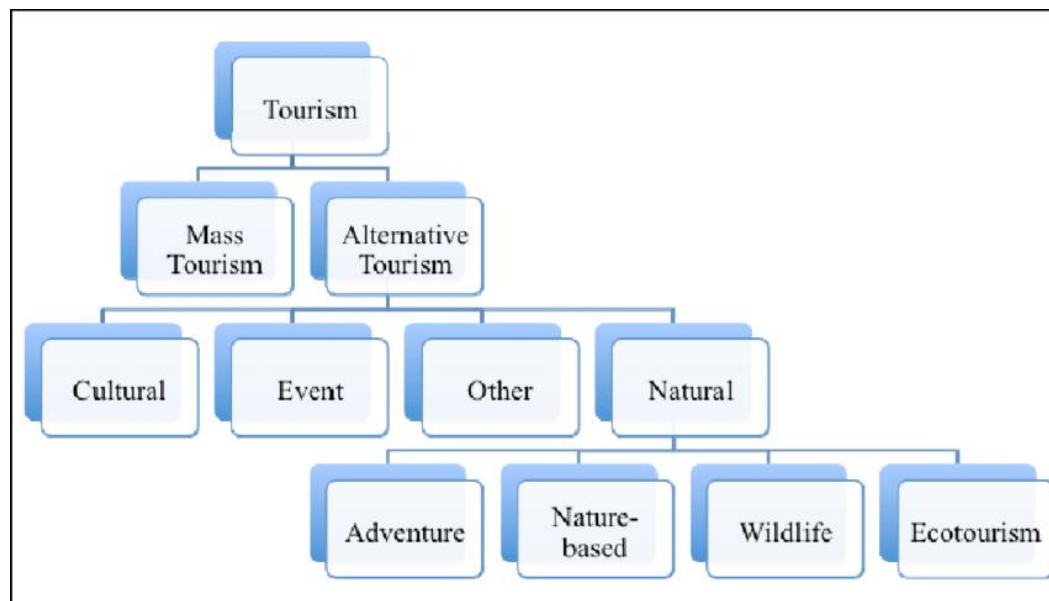


Figure 1. Classification of tourism types (Dowling;Newsome;& Moore, 2002).

Tourism strategy of Finland points out nature related products as one of the most important product development themes. In the SWOT analysis of the strategy, pure nature, air, and water as well as nature activities, snow and peacefulness were considered as strengths. The visitor numbers in National Parks in Finland are also expected to grow from 2,3 million in 2013 to 3,7 million in 2025. (TEM, 2015).

According to the Finland's tourism strategy and action plan pull factors are related to nature, Finnish lifestyle, culture, and Finland's main target groups in the international markets are Activity Enthusiasts, Nature Wonder Hunter, Nature Explorers, City Breakers, Authentic Lifestyle Seekers and Comfort Seekers. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020). What these target groups have in common is that they all are looking to explore and experience nature.

3.2 Wellbeing tourism

Wellbeing tourism much like nature tourism is an umbrella term for many types of tourism. Some examples of the wellbeing tourism subclasses are spa tourism, yoga or meditation tourism and other activities, which often include services that improve either physical or mental wellbeing of the traveller. Wellbeing tourism can be defined as traveling for the purpose of personal wellbeing,

health advancement and self-pampering and the goal of the travel is to achieve all-encompassing good feeling. (Edelheim & Ilola, 2017). The Global Wellness Institute has a similar definition; "travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal wellbeing". (Global Wellness Institute, 2018).

As mentioned in the tourism strategy of Finland, wellbeing is one of the key developmental aspects of Finland as they are starting a new project called Finrelax. It's goal is to make Finland the leading country in wellbeing tourism. Finland's tourism services will be developed based on themes one which is health and wellness tourism. Finland has good preconditions for offering high-class health care and wellbeing holidays together with the nature and culture. Therefore, Finland will need to focus on building services and products but also in branding these services in order to create a working service chain for health and wellbeing tourism. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020).

According to Business Finland (Business Finland, 2021) wellbeing travel is one of the fastest growing segments of international travel. Finland's clean nature and its activities like sauna and traditional treatments are the cornerstones of Finnish wellbeing tourism. The elements that Finns enjoy on a daily basis; sauna, lakes, forests, Nordic exotics, pure water, natural light, food, peaceful nature, berry and mushroom picking form the basis for the Finnish wellness tourism. (Business Finland, 2021).

Wellbeing tourism is also a globally growing trend as it has been growing at a 6,5% rate annually from 2015-2017. In total travellers made 830 million wellness trips in 2017. The Global Wellness Institute estimates that wellness tourism will grow at an 7,5% annual rate through 2022 making it rapidly growing global trend. (Global Wellness Institute, 2018).

3.3 Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is defined as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO, 2021).

According to Edelman and Ilola (Edelman & Ilola, 2017) the definition of sustainable tourism often focuses on the impacts of tourism and therefore are used as an indicator of sustainability. The impacts are also part of the reason why the sustainable tourism developed into a global trend as the consequences of mass travel became apparent, people took notice of the issue. Sustainable tourism also has some main goals: maintaining the quality of environment, improving the quality of life of the host communities, raising awareness of the impacts of travel, providing high-quality travel experiences, and improving equality and development. In order to look at sustainability from all perspectives it is often divided into sociocultural, economic, and ecological sustainability. (Edelman & Ilola, 2017).

Tourism plays a great role in the possibilities it can bring to sustainable development but also to the issues that arise from tourism. This is due to the large contribution it brings to the host communities and destinations and because the visitors, the industry, environment, and the local communities are linked. A “special relationship” exists between these elements because it requires that the customer comes to the product, which is not very common in other sectors. Therefore, there are three different point of views to tourism and sustainable development relationship, which are interaction, awareness, and dependency. The interaction refers to the experiences where the customer interacts with the host communities and the local environment. Awareness means that people who travel might start taking more notice on the environmental issues during traveling and perhaps even for lifetime. The last aspect is dependency, where the traveller seeks for experiences in a pure environment, nature, historic destination or cultural traditions and friendly locals and the dependency comes from having these aspects in order. Therefore, tourism can have either a positive or negative effect on sustainable development. (Goeldner & Richie, *Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies*, 2012).

Sustainability is globally one of the biggest trends in the tourism field according to the (UNWTO, 2021) and therefore also Finland’s tourism strategy 2019-2028: *Achieving more together - sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism*, (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020) points out sustainability and ecological solutions as possibilities in Finland’s tourism development. Finland’s vision according to the strategy is to be the most sustainably growing destination in the Nordic countries, which can be achieved by developing tourism as a responsible and growing industry, which creates wellbeing and employment all year around to all regions in Finland. In the strategy sustainability is mentioned as a “basic requirement of tourism”. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020).

4 Tourism in Central Ostrobothnia and Lestijärvi

4.1 Tourism strategy of Central Ostrobothnia

Central Ostrobothnia's tourism strategy sets the regional goals for tourism development. The tourism strategy of Central Ostrobothnia was written in 2020 and approved in a meeting by the county council 14.12.2020. The strategy was created in order to specify the regional tourism and culture development goals. The strategy supports organization within the industry and long-term planning of the future. The strategy drafting phase ended in a statement round, which was aimed to the public sector, third sectors and representatives of entrepreneurs and other tourism industry operators. (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021).

In the tourism strategy of Central Ostrobothnia, Lestijärvi is mentioned as a nature tourism destination and the special pull factors that rise above all else are the Lestijoki river area, Metsäpeuranmaa and Peuran Polku. (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021)

Central Ostrobothnia's tourism strategy acknowledges sustainability, co-operation, and wellbeing the cornerstones for the tourism development work (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021), which supports the goals of Finland's tourism strategy. Below the SWOT analysis of Central Ostrobothnia is presented.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse nature • Strong cultural skills • Small distances • Safety • Event production • Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Location • Un-known • Small resources • Lack of mass attractions/destinations • Lack of accommodation • Lack of professionalism • Lack of leading companies
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-known • Co-operation networks • Unesco intangible cultural heritage • Tourism megatrends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global threats (COVID-19) • Tourism megatrends • Weakening of public transport

Table 2. Central Ostrobothnia swot in English (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021)

As mentioned in the SWOT analysis, the accommodation is lacking and therefore also Central Ostrobothnia has the lowest number of overnight stays of Finland's regions as seen in the figure below.

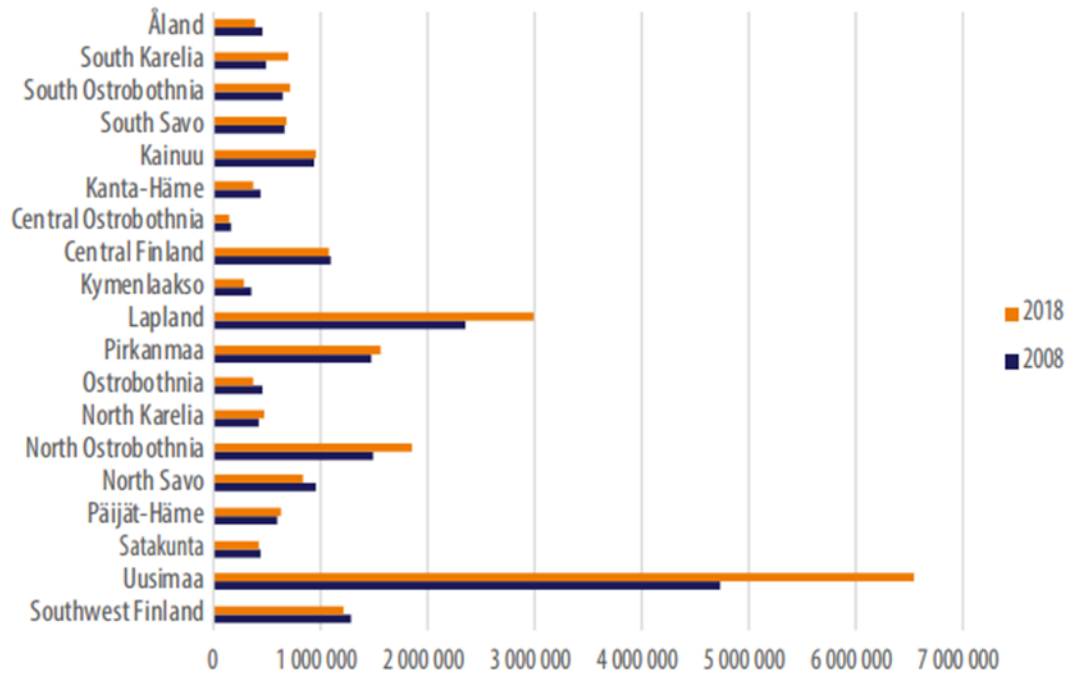


Figure 2. Comparison of overnight stays in Finnish regions (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021)

4.2 Tourism in Lestijärvi

Lestijärvi is part of two larger tourism areas; Lestijoki and Metsäpeuranmaa areas, which both provide possibilities for nature tourism. Lestijärvi is most known for its vendace fish, fresh spring water, which is bottled and sold by Finn Spring Oy and its windiness, which will be utilized into wind power with the largest windmill park in Finland in the upcoming years. (Lestijärven kunta, 2021). Lake Lestijärvi carries the title of county lake of Central Ostrobothnia (Järviwiki, 2021) and is therefore an important aspect from the tourism point of view. There are also numerous smaller wilderness lakes within Lestijärvi that are used for recreational purposes (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021).

Lestijärvi is one of the five municipality's that are part of the Metsäpeuranmaa area, which includes the Salamajärvi National Park to which Lestijärvi is connected to by a 115-kilometre-long

nature trail called Peuran Polku. In Salamajärvi National Park the visitor numbers have increased by 28% making the total visitor number 25 900. (Metsähallitus, 2021). One of the biggest strengths for Salamajärvi National Park and Metsäpeuranmaa area is that the visitors tend to make longer trips to the nature trails even though Salamajärvi had the smallest growth in visitor numbers comparing to other National Parks in Central Finland. (Tervo, 2021). In addition to the Metsäpeuranmaa area, there are also other nature and hiking routes in Lestijärvi (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021).

Currently there is no hotel accommodation in Lestijärvi but there are various cottage accommodations available for renting, three caravan parks and the municipality of Lestijärvi also rents out two fully furnished apartments and a large cottage in the town centre (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021). The program service selection offers visitors possibilities for guided hikes, canoeing tours in river Lestijoki and planned team building activities for companies. In addition, there are equipment rental possibilities like SUP-boards, snowshoes, and fat bikes. (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021). There is one restaurant in Lestijärvi which is open all year round and one which is open from spring to autumn and in the summer of 2021, there was also two summer cafes in Lestijärvi, one in the town centre and one by the public beach Paranta. There is also a catering company, which can deliver food to wherever the customer wants it, even nature and it also has a restaurant space in Valkeinen. The restaurant is only open by booking and it can be used for weddings and other celebrations. There is also a bakery called Pullapuoti, which is located in the town centre, and it sells homemade bread, buns, soups pastries and other delicacies. The owner of Pullapuoti also keeps a catering company, where you can order food for meetings and other events. (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021).

The current status of the public transport is that there is only one bus that goes through Lestijärvi once a day on weekdays. The bus is a school bus, so it obeys the school schedules and therefore does not run during the holiday seasons and weekends. (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021).

The municipality published its new website on 9.7.2021 (Instagram, 2021) and a tourism website visitlestijarvi.fi on 23.6.2021 (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021). The old website had only less than one page of information of the tourism in Lestijärvi, but the new website has lots of information on the accommodation, services, activities, nature routes, restaurants, transportation and much more. On the new tourism website, the information can also be found in English. The comparison of the new and the old website can be seen from pictures one (1) and two (2). Lestijärvi municipality is also using social media channels in marketing the tourism. Visit Lestijärvi has an Instagram page (Instagram, 2021), a Facebook page (Facebook, 2021) and a shared YouTube channel for both the municipality and Visit Lestijärvi (YouTube, 2021).

 **LESTIJÄRVI** soisee sykkeestä salomaille



AJANKOHTAISTA
KUULUTUKSET
KUNTATIEDOTTEET
LESTIJÄRVI -PAKETTI
YLEISTIETOA
KARTTAPALVELU
ASUMINEN JA YMPÄRISTÖ
HALLINTO
HENKILÖSTÖHALLINTO
MYYTÄVÄT TONTIT JA
KIINTEISTÖT
PÖYTÄKIRJAT
TARJOUSPYYNNÖT
PALVELUT
YHTEYSTIEDOT
MATKAILU
LINKIT
PALAUTE
ETUSIVU

Matkailu

Lestillä on luonnon voimaa!
Lestijärvellä asuttiin jo 1500-luvulla. Siitä saakka riistamalla ovat vaeltaneet era- ja kalamiehet. Nyt ihmiset etsivät "juuriaan" luonnon rauhasta, puhtaudesta ja luonnon antimista. Lestijärven kirkasvetiset järvet ja upeat maisemat tarjoavat yhä samaa rauhaa ja jännitystä. Erämaa ja järvet ovat jälleen tärkeitä.

Aitoon erätunnelemaan pääsee ohjatulla luonto- ja eräretkillä. Peuran polun ukkoureitti on maastoon merkitty patikkapolku Reitsijärveltä Lestijärven kautta Perhoon. Samoilijan näkökenttään voi osua luonnonvarainen metsäpeura, kotka, pöllö, kalasaaksi, ilves, susi, karhu...

Visit Lestijärvi
- visit@lestijarvi.fi / Ronja Tuikka

Esitteet / brochures
- [Suomenkielinen matkailusite](#)
- [Brochure in English](#)

Kalastus- ja metsästysluvut:
- Huoltoasema / Pekka Kauppinen puh. 0400 561787
- [Peltian lomatalot](#) puh. 06-863 8814, 0400 830995
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- [Lestijärven kalastuskunta](#)
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- www.villipohjola.fi
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Ajankohtaista

[AVOIMET TYÖPAIKAT: Laitosiivoja, Yhdistelmätyöntekijä, Koulukäynninohjaaja](#)
[Varhaiskasvatukseen lastenhoitaja ja 0-3-vuorokautta koulunhoitaja ja henkilökohtainen avustaja](#)
(julkaisu: 29.06.2021)

[Lestijärven kunnan teknisen toimien nuorten kesätyöhaku kesällä 2021](#)
(julkaisu: 02.06.2021)


[Halsuan Henkekankaan ja Kanniston luulvoima-alueiden yleiskaavojen ehdotus-vaiheen aineisto uudelleen nähtävillä](#)
(julkaisu: 31.05.2021)

[Kuntalausvely: Mitä mieltä Lestijärvellä?](#)
(julkaisu: 15.04.2021)

[Vesiallos tiedottaa](#)
(julkaisu: 14.03.2021)

Vanhemmat ilmoitukset löydät klikkaamalla [tästä](#)


Picture 1. The old municipality website - tourism information

 **LESTIJÄRVI**
Voimaa luonnosta

SIVUKARTTA TEKSTIKOKO - +

Hae sivustolta **HAE** **FI EN**

ETUSIVU KOE NÄE MAISTA MAJOITU LÖYDÄ AJANKOHTAISTA OTA YHTEYTTÄ



Lestijärvi - Voimaa luonnosta

▶ ||

Picture 2. New tourism website visitlestijarvi.fi

5 Research task

5.1 Purpose, objectives, and research questions

The objective is to research the current state, weaknesses, strengths, and development points of Lestijärvi's tourism and from the data, analyze the results and find out how the issues should be developed. The different research methods and target groups aims to ensure that the strategy will be developed considering various point of views. The research methods and questions of the questionnaire were selected based on the strategy development processes. Objective is to find answers to the research questions and form the informational base for a tourism strategy. The research has been done with qualitative methods such as the brainstorming session and the questionnaires are mainly quantitative excluding the open questions.

The research questions the thesis is aiming to find the answers for are as follows:

1. How is a successful tourism strategy developed?
2. How are the tourism trends developing in Finland?
3. What services do the travellers require for their holiday in Lestijärvi?
4. How should the services in Lestijärvi be developed to the expected levels?

Tourism strategy development and methods for writing a strategy were researched to answer the first research question. The aim was to find a working strategy tool and instructions on how a strategy can be created in a way that it will be useful to its users within the municipality and the tourism industry entrepreneurs in Lestijärvi. To have the necessary information for strategy writing, one must also know the current tourism trends in Finland and therefore the main trends were be researched. The third research question will be answered by distributing a questionnaire about Lestijärvi as a tourism destination to the travellers who have previously visited Lestijärvi. The entrepreneur questionnaire will help answer the last research question by finding out what actions should be taken to achieve the needed developments.

5.2 Research methods

Brainstorming session was selected as a method to collect opinions about Lestijärvi as tourism destination and future tourism developments in Lestijärvi. As there are many ways to carry out a brainstorming session, a method for execution was selected before the session. The method used is called Round-Robin Brainstorming in which all the participants have their turn to contribute their ideas to the brainstorm. This is done by letting each member participate before others can make new points to the discussion. This method ensures that everyone has the same opportunities to participate and that all opinions are heard. (Wilson, 2021). This method was done by giving the participants a topic and then going in rounds to hear everyone's opinion related to that topic.

The brainstorming session as a research method was used to collect opinions from locals and to let them participate in the decision making. The locals have a lot of knowledge of Lestijärvi and therefore their output is important for the strategy. The session was open to everyone and received 15 participants, six of the participants took part in the session face-to-face and nine through Microsoft Teams application due to the corona safety issues. The brainstorming session was held on 09.02.2021 at the congregation house and the participants for the session included locals, visitors, municipality workers, organization representatives and entrepreneurs.

The brainstorming session's objective was to answer both the third and fourth research question and to receive information on what aspects need development and knowledge of the current situation of Lestijärvi's tourism from the local's point of view. During the session we discussed the upcoming tourism development possibilities for Lestijärvi as well as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Lestijärvi's tourism. Also, concrete ideas for development and services were discussed. All the ideas that rose during the session are in entrepreneur's and locals free use if they wish to use them. The brainstorming session was recorded by written notes and based on the session a SWOT of Lestijärvi was created.

To conduct the research, two separate questionnaires were made. The first questionnaire was distributed to travellers and visitors of Lestijärvi to answer the question "what services do travellers require for their holiday in Lestijärvi". The second questionnaire was sent to the entrepreneurs to figure out the resources, their perspective on the development of tourism and required actions to achieve those development needs, which will answer the last research question "how should the services in Lestijärvi be developed to the expected levels".

The first questionnaire was distributed to travellers to discover pull factors and developmental aspects of Lestijärvi from their point of view. The target group was travellers and visitors who have travelled to Lestijärvi previously or own a summer cottage here. The questionnaire, which was available for three weeks, was distributed on 12.05.2021 through local and neighboring towns Facebook groups of which most of the visitors are part of. The population in the Facebook group was 2200. The goal was to receive at least 50 answers to the questionnaire. To receive answers to the questionnaire, a draw was conducted. An open 70€ gift card to Lestijärvi's accommodation services was drawn from all the participants who left their name and phone number. The names and phone numbers were deleted after the draw was concluded to maintain the anonymity of the participants and the ethicality of the research.

The questionnaire was divided into six sections. In the first section of the questionnaire the travellers were asked questions of their basic information like age, nationality, county of residence and gender. The questionnaire then moved on to ask about general interests and habits while travelling to get a basic idea of the target group. The next section focused on travelling in Lestijärvi to receive information on how long their visits are, how many times they visit, why they visit and whether there is seasonality in their visits. The fourth section was aiming to find out the opinions of the travellers about the travel services in Lestijärvi. Then the questionnaire moved on to find out the thoughts regarding the accessibility of Lestijärvi and lastly there was a section about sustainable tourism.

The questionnaire was sent out by email on 14.6.2021 and remained available for two weeks. It was sent to the entrepreneurs who work in the tourism field in Lestijärvi to find out their current situation, main target groups, co-operation needs and what are the most important development issues concerning businesses and their opinions of the tourism in the area. The questionnaire also had a section about sustainable tourism due to the current trend of sustainability in Finland's tourism. The questionnaire was conducted to get a general idea of the businesses around Lestijärvi and what is their current situation and future plans. The questionnaire was sent out to 16 entrepreneurs and the goal was to receive minimum of ten answers.

5.3 Ethicality, validity, and reliability

Reliability and validity in qualitative research mean that the links between the problem and the interpretations are properly described and that the explanations are reliable (Hirsjärvi;Remes;&

Sajavaara, 2001). In qualitative research this can be done by ruling out the possible problems to the validity. In the questionnaire some of the questions are open questions, which means that all answers are correct and therefore it is important to stay objective and not change any wordings. It is important that the research methods are conducted in a way that they will answer the research questions and the link between the research, theory and the interpretation of the results will be carefully explained to ensure the validity of the research. (USC University of Southern California, 2021).

To ensure the ethicality of the research, both questionnaires are made anonymously unless the participants want to take part in a draw, in which case they add their name and phone number. All the names and phone numbers will be deleted after the winner is drawn from the answerers and none of the names will be published in the research. A threat to the reliability of the research is the translations since most likely some the participants will answer the questionnaires in Finnish and therefore extra caution will be taken when translating the answers so that the reliability would not be compromised in the process and the meaning of the answers would stay the same in both languages. The processes of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data are explained in detail to maintain the reliability of the research. The questionnaires will be analyzed objectively without discrimination or bias towards the commissioning party, or any other parties and all the answers are included whether they were negative or positive.

For the brainstorming session a permission to publish the answers will be asked and the anonymity will be maintained by recording only the number of participants from the brainstorming session. The brainstorming session will be recorded by notes and after analyzing the results, the data collected from the session will be written into the SWOT analysis. The brainstorming session will be also conducted in Finnish and therefore the notes will be translated into English and the points then picked to the SWOT analysis.

6 Results

6.1 Results of the brainstorming session

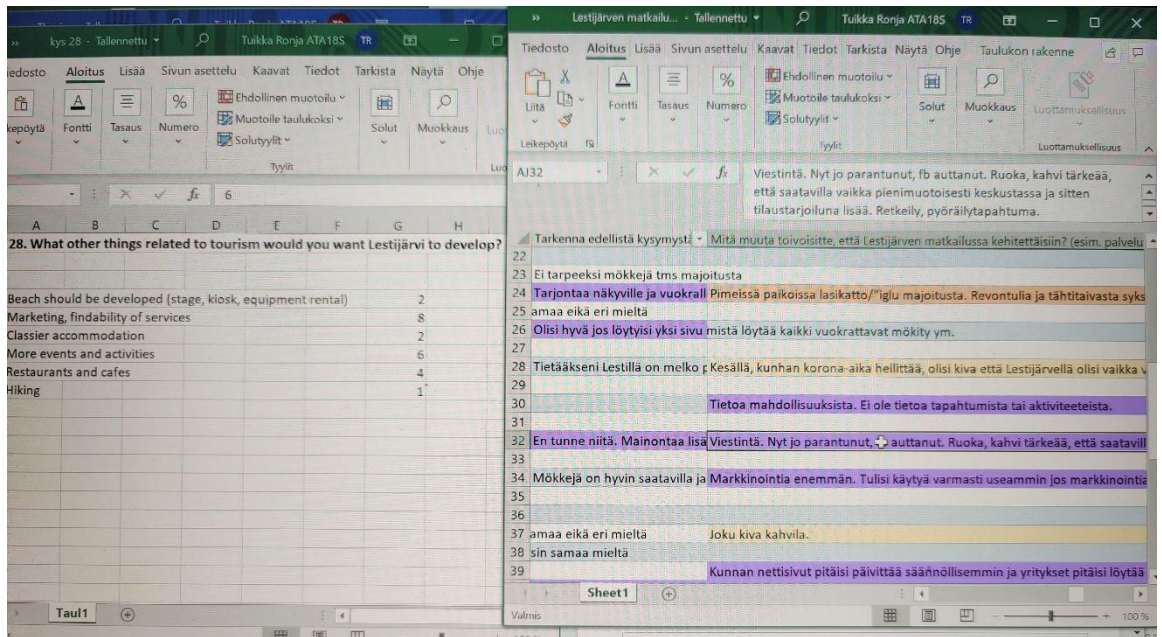
Based on the brainstorming session, a SWOT analysis was created. During the brainstorming session ideas, and ways of how to develop the tourism in Lestijärvi were discussed. The SWOT outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Lestijärvi's tourism development and future tourism. The strengths discussed during the brainstorming session were mainly related to nature and the activities it offers. Other discussion points were Lestijärvi's independency despite the small number of residents and its good location on the route of road 58. The weaknesses were spread into a wider spectrum: problems with fishing tourism, marketing, digitalization, cooperation, public transportation, and nature route maintenance. As opportunities mainly possibilities for different nature related activities were listed but also distant working, Finnish seasons, sustainable development, online selling platform Johku and the possibility for the municipality to start a tourism committee, which would take responsibility of Lestijärvi's tourism development. The threats pointed out that it is very hard in Lestijärvi to change a summer house into a full-time residence due to the town planning. Sustainability was also listed as a threat due to the upcoming windmill project in Lestijärvi. Also, the lack of entrepreneurs in Lestijärvi, who could provide services now and in the future was seen as a threat because the services will disappear without the entrepreneurs to keep them going. The brainstorming session was recorded by written notes based on which a SWOT analysis was created. The discussion points of the session are displayed in the SWOT analysis below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent, small municipality – is a miracle in itself • Nature tourism is increasing (28% increase in Salamajärvi national park) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean nature • Steady and existing customer base for fishing and hunting tourism • The maintenance of the ski tracks • Summer tourism and activities • On the route of road 58 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing tourism – the fish can not rise across the river because of the dam (Korpelan pato) which doesn't give the best potential to fishing tourism • Winter activities – not advertised or utilized enough • Lack of co-operation with regional tourism parties like KPEDU and Visit Keski-Pohjanmaa and with the municipality, organizations and entrepreneurs • Maintenance of the nature routes, the lake, beaches and river • Bad/non-existent public transport • Lack of digital selling platforms
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal watching/safaris (Finnish forest reindeer, bears) • Distant working possibilities should be created and advertised (Kase's network project) • Tourism working committee • Johku – an online selling platform/website • Sustainable development to preserve the unique nature • The Finnish seasons – should be better advertised • Sustainable development • Public transport – retkibussi and other on-land options • The windmill project will bring more jobs, residents and money to the municipality • International interest towards Central Ostrobothnia – huge visitor numbers in Outdooractive • Attracting young people to Lestijärvi by employment • A photobook of Lestijärvi • Lots of nature activity possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing a summerhouse into a full-time residence is very difficult • Sustainable development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wind mill project will destroy Lestijärvi's nature tourism (Lestijärvi is building the largest wind power plant in Finland) • If we do not attract more entrepreneurs to provide services, the services will disappear • Young people move out of Lestijärvi • Uniqueness - How can Lestijärvi stand out from the rest of the small tourism municipalities in Finland?

Table 3. SWOT analysis based on the brainstorming session

6.2 Questionnaire for travellers

The questionnaire received total of 52 answers. The questionnaire was distributed through local and neighbour towns Facebook groups. The goal was to receive minimum of 50 answers. Note that the questionnaire was sent out for distribution 12.5.2021, which was before the new Lestijärvi municipality website was published. Therefore, some of the answers regarding the information about Lestijärvi's tourism that concerned the website, could be different if the questionnaire was sent out after the publication of the website. The questionnaire was created by using Forms, which is one of the Microsoft 365 office tools (Microsoft, 2021). Some of the results were already transformed into figures by the Forms tool but the open questions were analysed by using excel. The results were uploaded from Forms to Excel, then colour coded to match similar answers, translated, and moved to another Excel sheet to count the number of similar answers and finally to create figures. The analysing process can is presented in the following picture.



Picture 3. Traveller questionnaire analysing process

6.2.1 Basic information

The question regarding gender received 52 answers. Most of the respondents were female (75 %) and the rest (25%) male. The age segment varied from 22-69 years old, and the average age of a respondent was 44, mode 47 and median 45. The age question was answered by 49 persons and therefore the average age was calculated based the number of respondents. All the respondents (100%, n=52) were Finnish from twelve different counties. All the counties were presented as options but Satakunta, Pirkanmaa, Päijät-Häme, Pohjois-Karjala, Lappi, Ahvenanmaa and Kymenlaakso received 0% answers. The distribution of counties can be seen from figure 3.

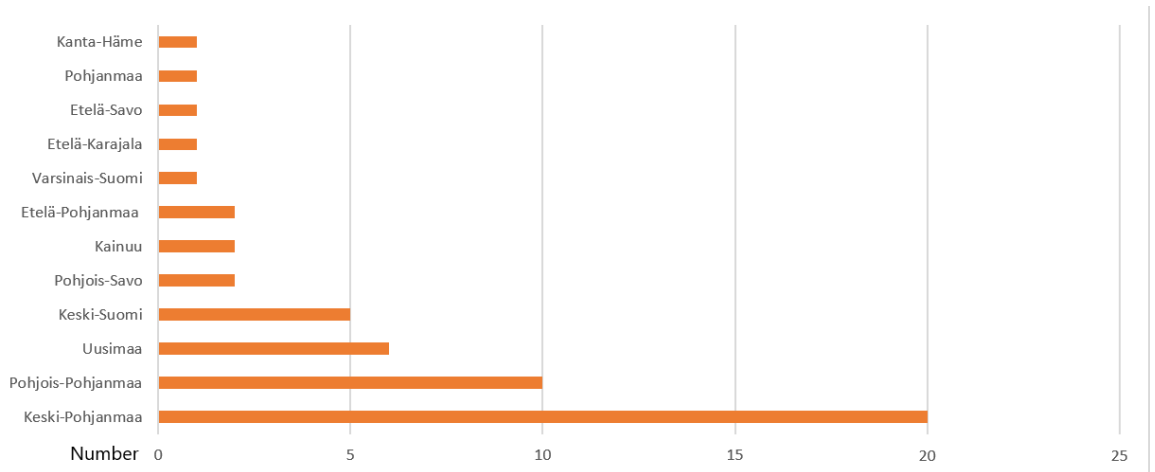


Figure 3. Travellers County distribution (n=52)

6.2.2 General interests and habits while traveling

Most of the respondents (67 %) travel mainly domestically and the rest (33 %) travel both domestically and internationally. The question was answered by 51 persons. The interests of the respondents while traveling were varied but nature took the first spot (100 %) and after it came food (60 %) and the third interesting was sports (48 %) as seen in figure 4. The two other answers were motorsports, and peace and quiet. This question was answered by 52 respondents.

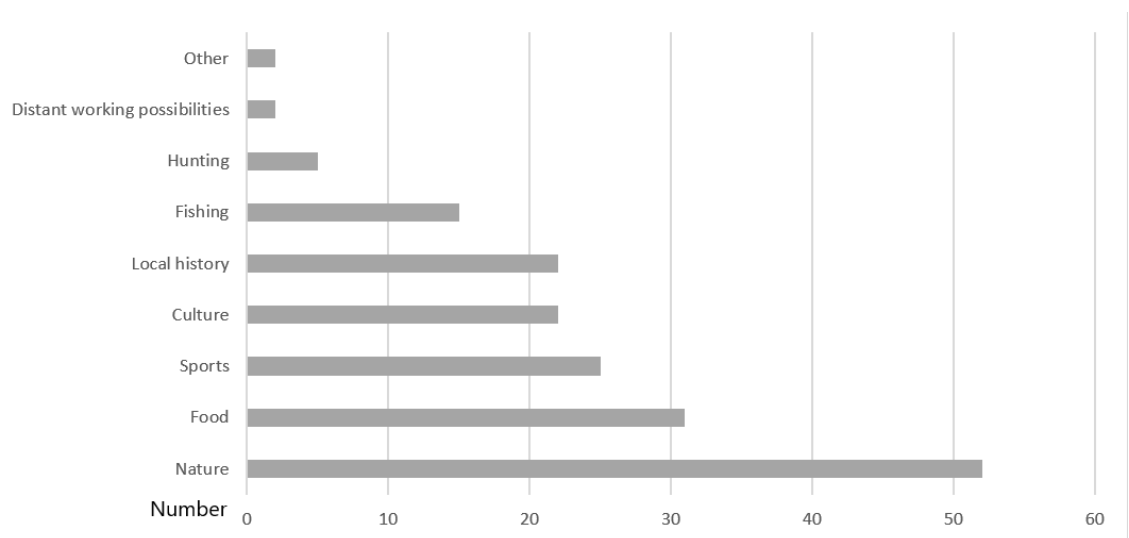


Figure 4. Interests while travelling (n=52)

When asked about the use of program services, most (42 %) answered maybe, 35 %, said yes and 23 % said that they do not use program services. The question was answered by 52 respondents. Next, they were asked whether they use travel services during domestic travel trips. Most of the respondents (56 %) use travel services during their trips as seen in the figure 5 below. This question was answered by 52 persons.



Figure 5. Pie chart of travel service use during domestic travel trips (n=52)

Next, they were asked what services they use. From the travel services, travellers use mostly restaurant (65 %), accommodation (59 %), and equipment rental services (50 %) as can be seen from the figure below. This question was answered by 34 respondents.

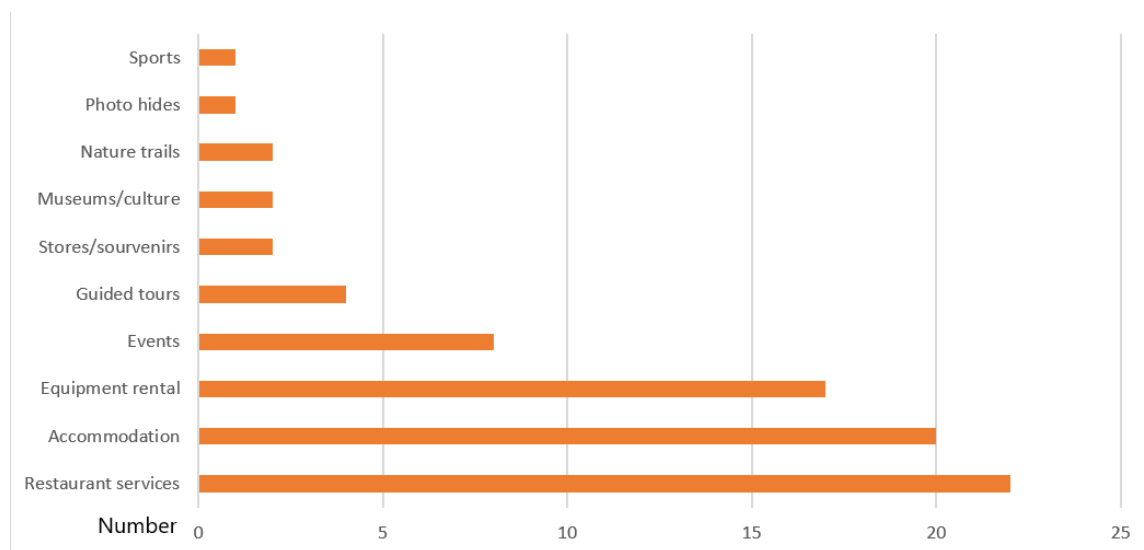


Figure 6. Use of travel services (n=34)

6.2.3 Traveling in Lestijärvi

Mostly the travellers visit Lestijärvi five times a year or less (50 %), the next group (35 %) travels ten times a year and a few (15 %) travels 20 times a year or more. The questions received 52

answers. The travellers are mostly not particular about the time of year when they travel to Lestijärvi as most said that they visit Lestijärvi any time of year (65 %). Some did have preferences about the time of year and the most popular season to visit based on the results is summer (27 %) as seen in figure 7 below. The question was answered by 52 respondents.

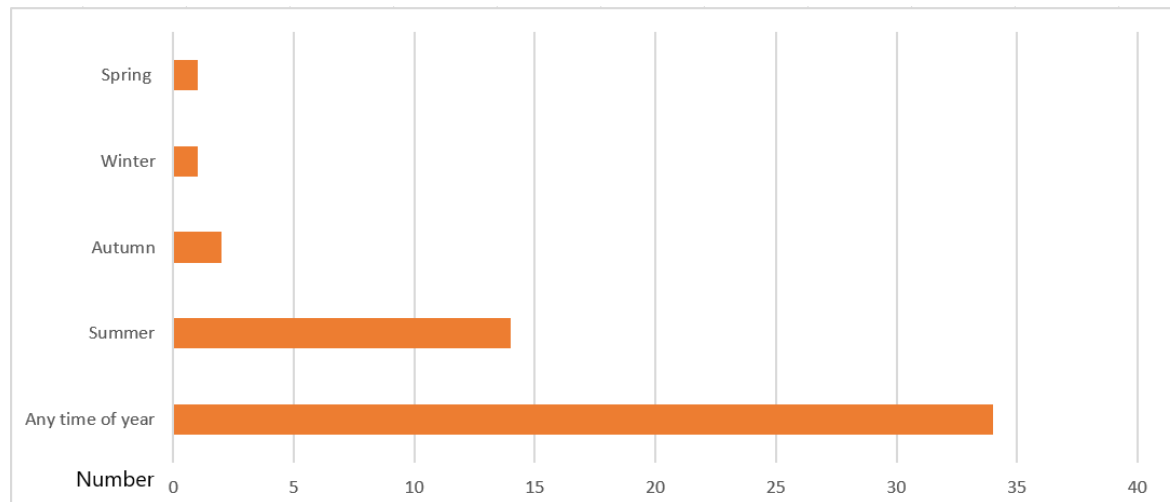


Figure 7. The seasonality of travel (n=52)

The reasons for the seasonality of travel to Lestijärvi can be seen from table 4 below. The question was answered by 34 respondents. As this was an open question, one person was able to list multiple reasons to why they visit during a specific time of year and therefore 52 reasons were given meaning that when a person answered any time of year, they were able to list reasons separately for every season. The answers were then divided and calculated by their popularity in table 4. In the summertime the most popular reason to travel to Lestijärvi is the lake Lestijärvi, which according to the respondents is at its most beautiful during that time of year. In the spring people come for various reasons which are listed below in table 4, but there is not one main reason for visiting Lestijärvi in the spring. In the autumn people travel to Lestijärvi mainly to hike. During winter, the attractions are to ski and ice fish. The reasons to come any time of year are mainly due to owning a cottage in Lestijärvi, which allows visiting any time.

13. Specify the previous question: Why do you travel to Lestijärvi in the specific time of year?					
Summer		Spring		Autumn	
Lake at its most beautiful	4	Holiday from work in the Spring	1	Holiday from work in the Autumn	1
Boat trips	1	Event	1	Nature	1
Swimming	3	Nature	1	Berry picking	1
Nature	1	Sauna	1	Sauna	1
Sauna	1	Hiking	1	Hiking	3
Hiking	1		5	Hunting	1
Summer holiday	4			Events	1
Events	2			Cottage	1
Cottage	3	Any time of year			10
Canoeing	1	Cottage	9		
Fishing	1	Friends, family and relatives	2		
	22	Own house	1		
Winter		To see all the seasons	1		
Skiing	1		13		
Ice fishing	1				
	2				
				Reasons total	52

Table 4. Reasons for the seasonality of travel (n=34)

The question of why the travellers visit Lestijärvi was answered by 52 persons. The main reason for travelling to Lestijärvi is to have a holiday (58 %). The secondary reason was to come visit their family and relatives (32 %). A few also come to Lestijärvi to work (4 %) and 6 % said they come for other reasons which are visiting friends, visiting relative’s graves, to hunt, to fish and for the nature. The question of how they accommodate while visiting Lestijärvi was answered by 51 respondents. The travellers four main accommodation during their trips to Lestijärvi are family’s or relative’s house, own cottage, rental cottage/apartment or they accommodate in another municipality and only make day trips to Lestijärvi. Two stays in a camp site and three in caravan park and three in other accommodations which are forest, relative’s cottage and a trailer as displayed in figure 8 below.

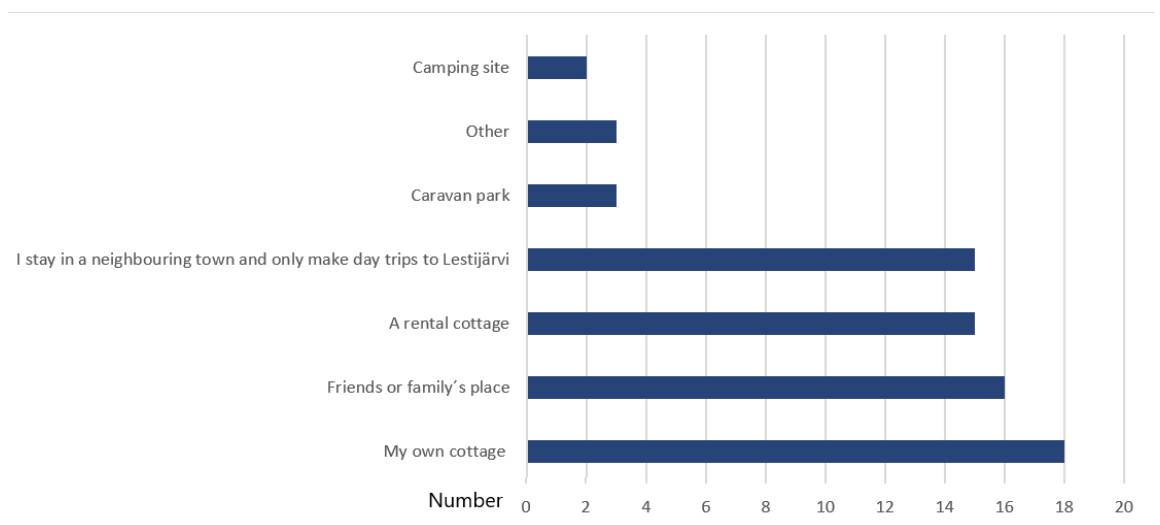


Figure 8. Form of accommodation when traveling to Lestijärvi (n=51)

Mostly the travellers make short trips to Lestijärvi which last for 1-2 nights (48 %). The second most popular answer was 3-7 nights trips (27 %) and third was to make trips without an overnight stay (21 %). One (2 %) stays for 8-30 nights and one (2 %) for over a month as described in figure 9 below. This question was answered by all 52 respondents.

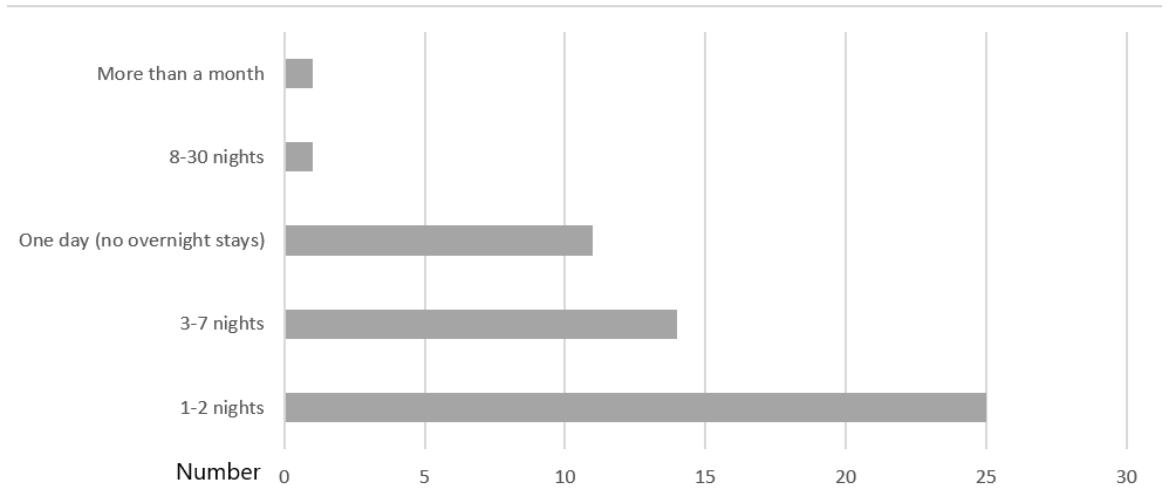


Figure 9. The length of the trips to Lestijärvi (n=52)

6.2.4 Travel services in Lestijärvi

When asked about whether the travellers use program services (e.g., guided tours, equipment rental, visiting events) while traveling in Lestijärvi, most said they do not use them (52 %). Some said maybe (37 %), and the least popular answer was yes (12 %). The question was answered by 52 respondents. In the follow-up question, which was asked to answer if they said yes to the previous question, the travellers were asked which program services they use and 45 % answered that they attend events during their visits, 45 % said they use different equipment rental services and one of them also added that they use accommodation in addition to the equipment rentals. 9 % answered restaurant services. The questions received 11 answers. Next, the travellers were asked how they experience Lestijärvi's program services. The question was presented in a Likert scale and there were two separate statements in the scale. The first statement, which got 52 responses, was that there are enough program services in Lestijärvi. 3,8 % strongly disagreed with the statement, 17 % disagreed, 21 % neither agreed or disagreed, 10 % agreed, 2 % strongly agreed and 46 % had no experience. The other statement, which got 17 responses, was that the program services are of high quality. 22 % neither agreed or disagreed, 22 % agreed and 56 % had no experience of program services.

The Likert scale was followed up with another question where the travellers had to specify what good/bad/improvements there are in the program services in Lestijärvi. Answers to the open questions, which received 25 responses, are displayed in figure 10. The biggest improvement needed in the program service sector is the visibility and findability of information as seen in figure 10. 56 % of the answers mentioned that there should be more information of the program services. The travellers specifically wished for more information online about activities, nature trails, equipment rentals, guided tours, events, and other program services.

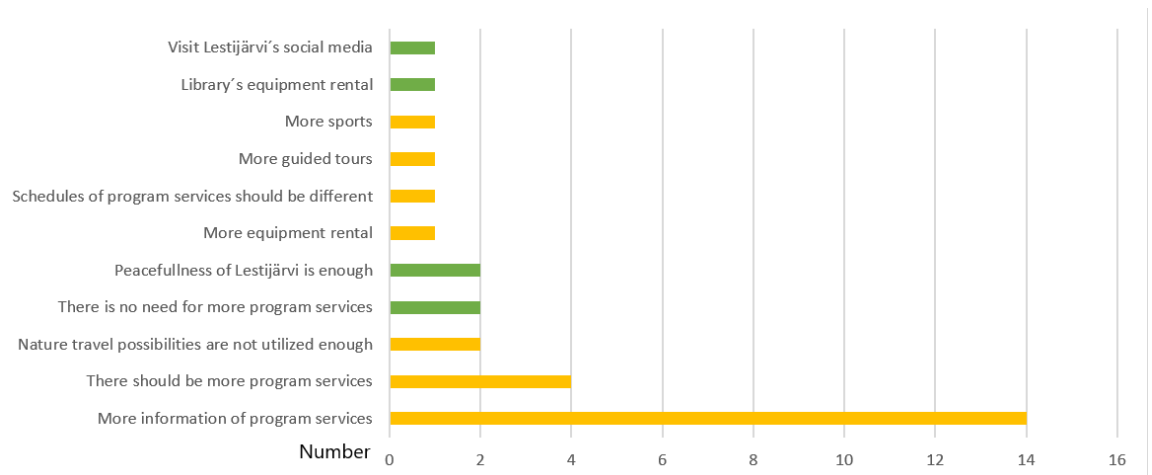


Figure 10. Improvements (yellow) and positive comments (green) of program services in Lestijärvi (n=25)

The next question received 23 answers and it aimed to find out which kind of program services the travellers want and from the open questions, the program services were categorized to see which activities would be the most wanted as seen in figure 11. The categories were guided tours and activities, equipment rental services, sports, events and culture, and infrastructure. Of the categories', guided tours were the most popular. The most wished guided tour was nature tours (30 %) and the second was guided fishing (17 %). From equipment rentals some only said they wish for more equipment rental services in Lestijärvi without specifying what type (17 %) but the most popular equipment to rent based on the answers would be water jets (9 %). In the sports category all the mentioned sport activities had one answer each. Events in general and summer concerts got both two (9 %) answers in the events and culture category. For infrastructure, restaurants were the most wanted improvement (17 %). The figure below was created in order to demonstrate the division of different activities.

21. What kind of program services/activities would you like to have in Lestijärvi?			
Guided tours and activities	33	Equipment rental services	11
Guided tours in general	2	Water jets	2
Guided fishing	4	Photo hides	1
Boat tours	3	Bikes	1
Guided nature tours	7	Equipment rentals	4
Biking tours	1	Smoke sauna (savusauna)	1
Walking tours	1	Electric bikes	1
Stand up paddle boarding tou	2	Canoes	1
Snowshoeing tours	1		
Winter trips to nature	1		
Skiing tours	2		
Cemetery tours	1	Events and culture	10
Dog sled tours	1	Culture events	1
Canoëing tours	1	Summer theatre	1
Photography tours	2	Events in general	2
Horse back riding	2	Lectures: Lestijärvi's history, nature, animals etc.	1
More activities in general	2	Summer concerts	2
		Art shows	1
Activities in total	46	History event	1
Votes in total	73	Ice fishing contest	1
Respondents in total	23		
		Sports	10
		Padel	1
		Football	1
		Orienteering to sightseeing and historical attraction	1
		Golf	1
		Karting	1
		Adventure park	1
		Paintball	1
		Minigolf	1
		Biking routes	1
		Sports in general	1
		Infrastructure	9
		Nature routes with maps for self guided hikes	2
		Restaurants	4
		Cafes	1
		Beach with dressing rooms	1
		Safe boat harbour for kayaks/boats	1

Figure 11. Program service wish list by categories (n=23)

Next, they were asked if Lestijärvi were to add more program services to the selection, would they use the services. The results are shown in the figure below.



Figure 12. Pie chart of respondent's willingness to use program services in Lestijärvi if the selection would grow (n=52)

The questionnaire moved on to find out the reasons why the travellers would not use the program services if more were added. The question was answered by six (6) persons as some people who answered maybe or yes to the previous question, also answered why they might not use the services. The reasons listed were that they might not use the services because there are no online payment options available. One said that they only want to spend quiet and peaceful time at their cottage. Two respondents said that there is no need/aren't interested. Two of the respondents most likely misunderstood making the answers inconclusive.

The next topic was the restaurant services in Lestijärvi, which were asked by using a Likert scale as demonstrated in figure 14. Out of 52 respondents 21 % strongly disagrees that there are enough restaurant services in Lestijärvi, 27 % disagrees, 21 % neither agrees or disagrees, 23 %

agrees, 2 % strongly agrees and 6 % has no experience. The second statement “The selection of the restaurant services is versatile” got 21 answers. 20 % strongly disagrees with the statement, 45 % disagrees, 20 % neither agrees or disagrees, 10 % agrees and 5 % does not have experience of the restaurant services.

With the same method, the next question was to specify the previous question; what good/bad/improvements there are in the restaurant services in Lestijärvi. The comments of the restaurant services are listed in figure 13 below and divided into improvements (yellow), no experience (blue) and positive comments (green). 7% answered that they have no experience of the restaurant services. The question was answered by 28 persons.



Figure 13. Improvements (yellow), and positive comments (green) of restaurant services in Lestijärvi (n=28)

The next question focused on finding out the experiences the travellers have of the accommodation services in Lestijärvi. The first statement was that “there are enough accommodation services in Lestijärvi.” Out of 52 respondents 4 % strongly disagreed, 15 % disagreed, 10 % neither agreed or disagreed, 33 % agreed, 17 % strongly agreed and 21 % did not have experience of the accommodation services. The second statement was that the accommodation services are versatile. Out of 19 respondents 5 % disagreed, 37 % neither agreed or disagreed, 21 % agreed, 26 % strongly agreed and 11 % had no experience.

Again, the respondents were asked to specify what good/bad/improvements there are in the accommodation services in Lestijärvi. The green colour in figure 14 represents positive comments and yellow is the improvements. The biggest improvement in the accommodation services, that

the respondents were looking for, was the information and visibility (32 %). Two of those, who commented that there is not enough information, said that there should be a webpage online, where all the accommodation is gathered. There were also positive comments about accommodation in Lestijärvi and mainly it was said that there is a wide and good selection of cottages. The comments are displayed in figure 14.



Figure 14. Improvements (yellow), and positive comments (green) of accommodation services in Lestijärvi (n=22)

When asked about the overall developments that should be done in Lestijärvi, half of the respondents (50 %) pointed out the marketing and findability of information and services. The next biggest developing point was events and activities (23 %) and the third was restaurants and cafes (19 %). The question was answered by 26 respondents and the rest of the comments are presented in figure 15.

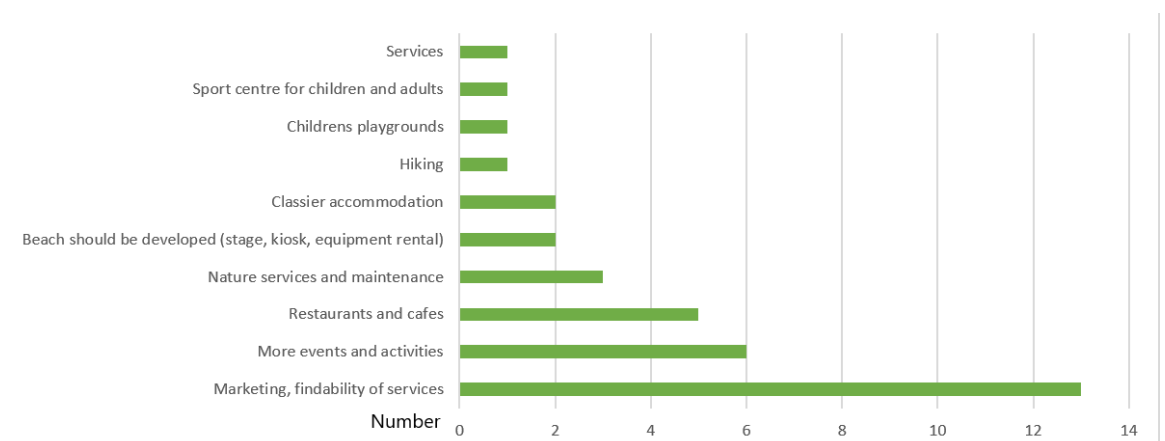


Figure 15. Other comments about tourism developments (n=26)

The respondents were asked what they consider to be Lestijärvi's strengths as a tourism destination and the question received 46 answers. Majority considers nature to be the biggest strength in Lestijärvi (76 %), lakes the second (43 %) and peacefulness the third (26 %). Also, many other comments, which are presented in the following figure, were related to nature but in order to get a more specific understanding of which parts of nature, the comments were separated and scored independently.

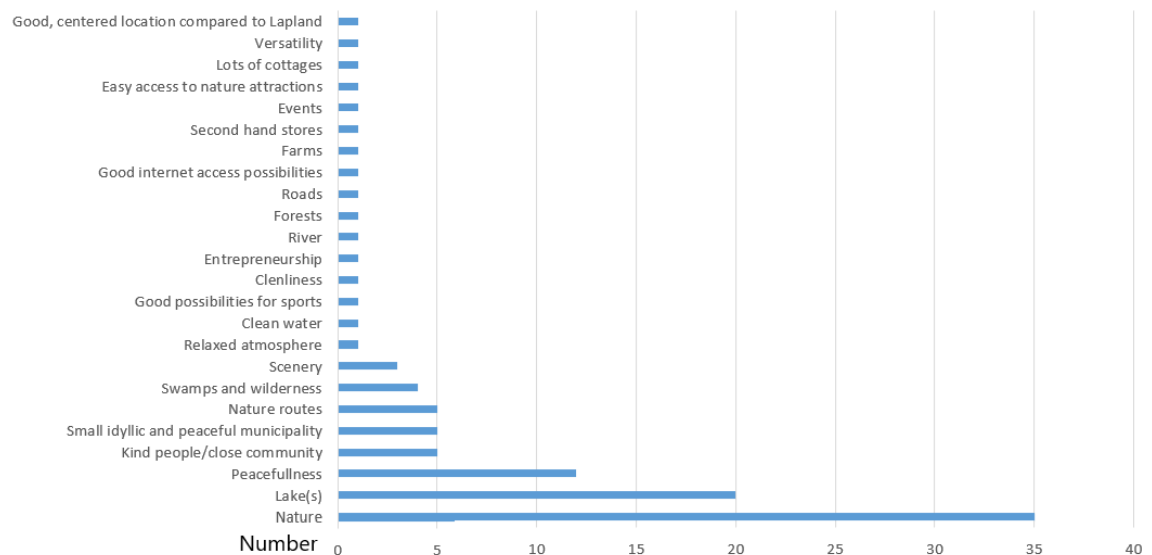


Figure 16. Lestijärvi's strengths as tourism destination (n=46)

As opposed to the strengths, Lestijärvi's weaknesses as a tourism destination were asked next and the question received 37 answers. Mostly the weaknesses discussed were related to lack of services (35 %) and considered it as the biggest weakness. Some of the respondents pinpointed the lack of services to a specific category e.g., accommodation (8 %), restaurants (16 %). Marketing and visibility were seen as the second biggest weakness (19 %) and the lack of restaurant services was the third (16 %). To clarify the meaning of windmills vs nature destination image in figure 17, 11% of the respondents were concerned that once the planned windmill project is finished, it will hurt Lestijärvi's image as a nature destination.

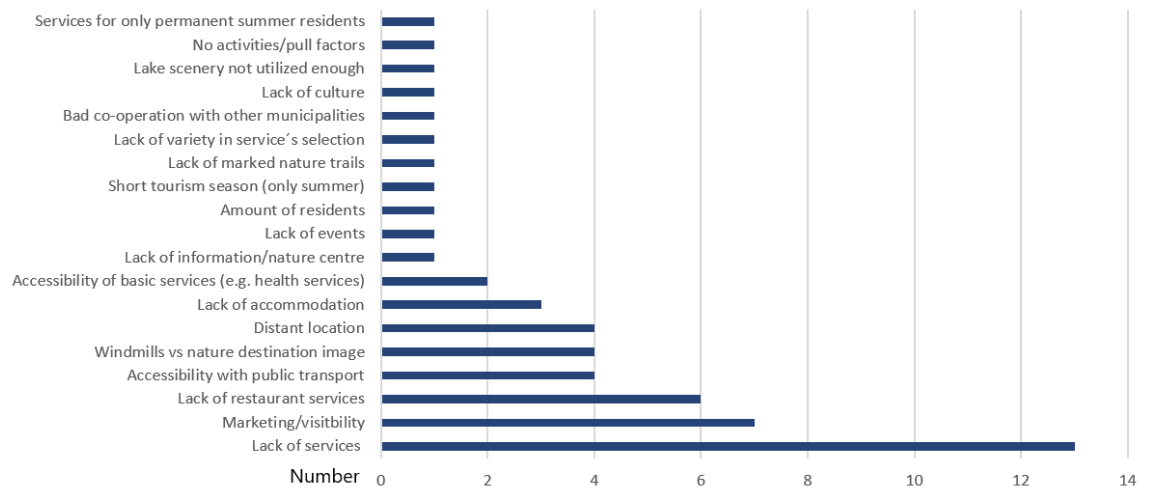


Figure 17. Lestijärvi's weaknesses as a tourism destination (n=37)

6.2.5 Accessibility

The accessibility part covered the topics of findability of information, accessibility of transportation and passage. The first topic was the information and communication, which was asked again in the form of a Likert scale. The statement, which received 52 answers, was "It is easy to find information of Lestijärvi's tourism". 12 % strongly disagreed, 29 % disagreed, 23 % neither agreed or disagreed, 21 % agreed, 10 % strongly agreed and 6 % did not have experience. The next statement "There is enough information of Lestijärvi's tourism" received 21 answers of which 10 % strongly disagreed, 24 % disagreed, 14 % neither agreed or disagreed, 33 % agreed, 14 % strongly agreed and 5 % did not have experience.

The respondents were again asked to specify the previous question; "Why do you think it is easy/difficult to find? Why is/isn't there enough information? What could be improved?" The results are displayed in figure 18, where green represents positive answers and yellow represents the needed improvements. The question was answered by 27 persons. On the positive side, some said that information is quite easy to find from online (22 %). As opposed to the improvement side, where it was said that the municipality website needs to be developed/renewed and there needs to be more up-to-date information (22 %). Few also said that information of Lestijärvi's tourism cannot be found at all (14 %). 7% had no experience. All the answers are presented in the figure 18.

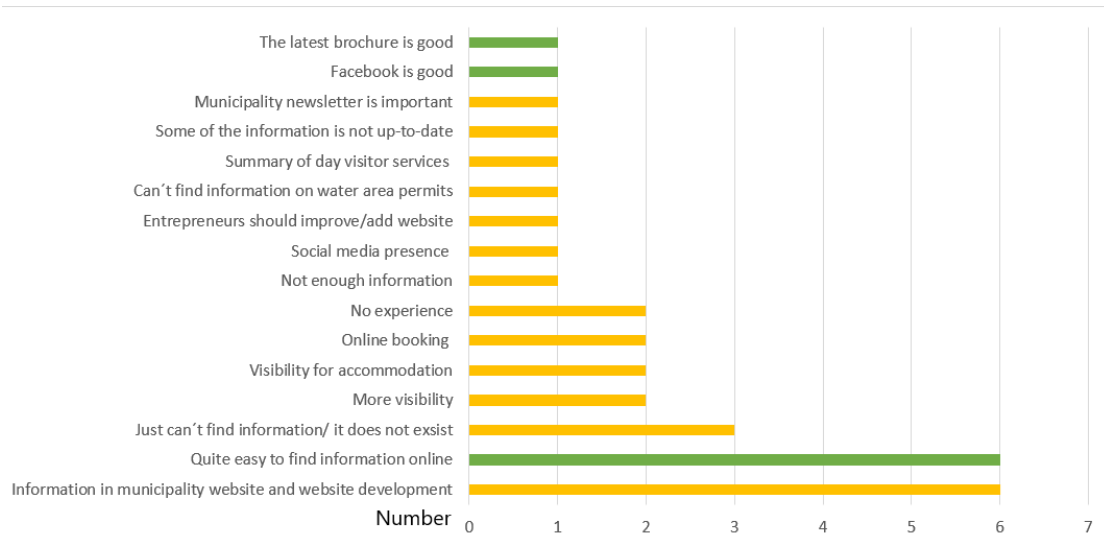


Figure 18. Improvements (yellow) and positive comments (green) on information findability (n=27)

Next the respondents were asked how they travel to Lestijärvi, and all 52 respondents answered that they come with a car. This was followed by a question of how they experience traveling to Lestijärvi to which all 52 of respondents answered. According to the statement "Traveling to Lestijärvi is easy", 6 % strongly disagreed, 14 % disagreed, 8 % neither agreed nor disagreed, 25 % agreed, 48 % strongly agreed.

Next the respondents were presented with a follow-up question about why they feel it is easy/difficult to travel to Lestijärvi. The question was answered by 38 respondents. In figure 19, colour green represents the positive answers, blue neutral and yellow is improvements. It was considered that it is easy to travel to Lestijärvi by car (47 %) but at the same time it was considered difficult to travel by public transport (47 %). Some (16 %) said the distance is short and 11 % said that the roads are in good condition whereas 5 % said that the roads are in bad condition.

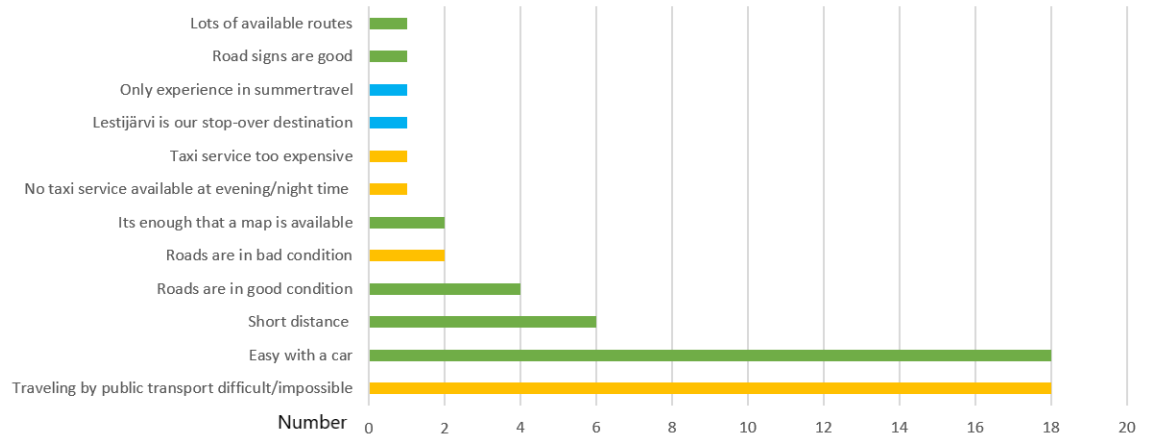


Figure 19. Reasons for easiness/difficulty of travel (n=38)

The next question, which received 33 answers, was “how do you experience Lestijärvi’s accessibility (for example transport, road connections)?” Mostly it was seen as bad (45 %), some said it is easy with car and difficult with public transport (30 %), a few considered it good (9 %), 6 % of the answers were neutral and 3 % had no experience.

6.2.6 Sustainable tourism

The last section of the questionnaire focused on sustainable tourism. First the respondents were asked whether they think sustainability is important when choosing a tourism destination. This question was answered by 52 respondents. Majority (77 %) said yes, nine (17 %) answered maybe and three (6 %) said it is not important. The following question was asked to find out which of the following sustainable tourism principles affect their travel decision (Business Finland, 2021). This question was also answered by 52 respondents. Respondents were also able to add their own answer in the other section. The results are displayed in the following figure. Nature was the most important sustainable tourism principle (92 %) and the second was favouring locals (82 %). One also answered other and specified that he/she has never even considered these matters.

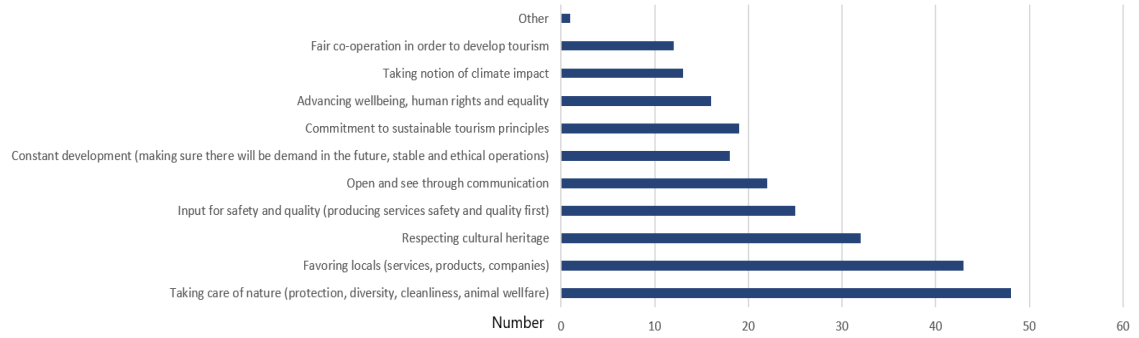


Figure 20. Sustainable tourism principal’s effect on travel decisions (n=52)

Next, they were asked if they think of Lestijärvi as a sustainable destination. The results are displayed in figure 21. The question was answered by all 52 respondents.



Figure 21. Pie chart with opinions of Lestijärvi as a sustainable destination (n=52)

Reasons why Lestijärvi was or wasn’t seen as a sustainable destination were varied. The question was answered by 13 respondents. In figure 22 yellow represents no answers to the previous question (figure 21), light blue no experience answers, dark blue maybe answers and green the yes answers.



Figure 22. Reasons for Lestijärvi being/not being a sustainable destination (yellow = no answers to the previous question, light blue = experience and green = yes), (n=13)

The last question of the questionnaire was: On the scale from four to ten (4=worst, 10=best), how would you rate Lestijärvi as a tourism destination? The question was answered by 50 respondents. The average grade was 7,7 and the mode was 8. The standard deviation was 1,2.

6.3 Questionnaire for entrepreneurs

Similarly, to the traveller questionnaire, the questionnaire for entrepreneurs was created by using Forms, which is one of the Microsoft 365 office tools (Microsoft, 2021). Again, some of the results were already transformed into figures by the Forms tool but the open questions were analysed by using Excel. The only difference was that since the questionnaire was answered only by six entrepreneurs, the similar results were translated, and moved to another Excel sheet directly from the Forms, to count the number of similar answers. The questionnaire was sent out by email to the entrepreneurs on 14.6.2021 and remained available for two weeks.

The questionnaire received total of six answers from the local entrepreneurs. The majority of the six entrepreneurs who answered the question of whether they work in the tourism sector as an entrepreneur full or part time, are working part time (67 %) and the rest (33 %) work full time. Half of the six entrepreneurs also said that they are not planning to expand their business in the future (50 %) and only one (17 %) is intending to expand, two (33 %) were unsure. The reasons given for not expanding were related to health, age, and lack of volunteers.

When answering the question of whether it is profitable/successful to have a tourism business in Lestijärvi two out of six (33 %) answered yes, one (17 %) answered yes part time, one (17 %) no, and two (33 %) did not give a direct yes or no answer; "in order to be a full-time entrepreneur in tourism field, you need a lot of "small streams", to receive income. For example, accommodation services are hard to grow into a profitable business if you have to start from the beginning; buying a property, building, and marketing, but if all that is ready, the situation changes. The challenge with program services is the long winter. It is hard to find activities, which can be sold on the long winter months". The other answer was that "the organization receives some income when the operation is done by volunteering. Most likely the prices could be lifted higher, and it could be marketed better but that would also increase workload at the cottage".

Based on the answers of six entrepreneurs the main target groups for the entrepreneurs of Lestijärvi are Finnish (100 %) and non-local travellers (83%) whereas only (17%) said locals are the main target group. The customers are generally estimated to be between the ages of 31-50 (83

%) and one (17 %) said the customers are 51-7 years old. This question was answered by six entrepreneurs. When asked about how else they would describe their customers and interests, half of the six answered that their customers are interested in fishing (50%). Most (67 %) mentioned either nature, countryside, or the lake as one of the customers interests. One (17 %) also specified that the target group is families with children.

Next the entrepreneurs were asked about their opinions related to tourism development in Lestijärvi and all the following statements received six answers. The first statement in the Likert scale was: I feel there is a lot to develop in Lestijärvi's tourism. Half (50 %) answered agree and half (50 %) strongly agreed. Next statement was that "I think Lestijärvi has a good operational environment for tourism". One (17 %) disagreed, (33 %) neither agreed or disagreed and half (50 %) agreed. Next it was stated that there are enough services in Lestijärvi and most (83 %) disagreed while one (17 %) agreed. The last statement was that there is enough information about tourism in Lestijärvi and the answers were even between disagree (33 %), neither agree or disagree (33%) and agree (33%).

The entrepreneurs were asked to specify the previous question by answering which aspects need development in the tourism field from the perspective of the entrepreneur. This question was answered by five of the respondents. The cross-sectional answer from all the five entrepreneurs was that there should be more co-operation inside Lestijärvi and with other municipalities (100%). Also, majority (60 %) mentioned that the marketing and visibility should be developed and preferably there should also be joined/done with co-operation. One (17 %) entrepreneur pointed out that the existing smaller tourism products should be packaged into bigger travel packages.

The co-operation with other entrepreneurs rose up also when asked if the company itself would be willing to add more products to their selections. The question was answered by four entrepreneurs (67 %). If there was more co-operation, half (50 %) of the entrepreneurs would be willing to expand their products. One (25 %) also said he/she would be willing to expand the products and services, but it would require a full time focus on the company. One (25 %) was not willing to add more products.

Next, they were asked about co-operation. All the following statements were answered by all six entrepreneurs. The first statement on the Likert scale was: I think co-operation with other tourism field operators is important. One (17 %) strongly disagreed, two (33 %) agreed and half (50 %) strongly agreed. Next it was stated that co-operation with the municipality is easy and one (17 %)

disagreed, one (17 %) neither agreed or disagreed, two (33 %) agreed and one (17 %) strongly agreed. This was followed by “I think co-operation with other entrepreneurs and tourism field operators is easy” and the responses to that were evenly divided as disagree (33 %), neither agree or disagree (33 %), and agree (33 %). The last statement was: I would like more co-operation with other entrepreneurs, municipality, and other tourism field operators and this was answered half and half (50 %) to agree and strongly agree.

Then they were asked which type of co-operation they would want, and this was answered by four entrepreneurs. For the type of co-operation, the entrepreneurs wished for joined products, travel packages and marketing (100 %). In addition to these one (17 %) also wished for a joined selling platform for the products, and another wanted co-operation with events.

Also, the entrepreneurs were asked what they think are the biggest strengths in Lestijärvi’s tourism and how they should be utilized. The question was answered by five of the entrepreneurs. Nature was present one way or another (lake, Lestijoki river, wilderness, Peuran polku nature trail) in all the answers and mainly it was said that it should be utilized more (100 %) but only two (40 %) specified how it should be done. Both of the two (40 %) said that the Lestijoki river and its break stops along the way should be developed and especially as a canoeing and fishing destination. One (20 %) suggested that the biking routes, Peuran polku nature trail, and wilderness through more program services should be developed (20 %). As opposed to the strengths, they were also asked about the weaknesses and how they should be developed. The question was answered by five of the entrepreneurs. Three (60 %) mentioned smallness of Lestijärvi as a weakness and two (40 %) of them added that therefore there needs to be more co-operation with bigger tourism areas. Other comments were about location (20%), public transportation (40%), lack of professionalism within tourism entrepreneurs (20%), bad phone reception and internet connections, which could be improved by expanding the optical fibre network (20 %), digitalization and purchasing products online (20 %), visibility (20 %) and lack of services (20 %).

In the next section the entrepreneurs were asked about sustainability. First question was whether they consider sustainable development important in their business operations and all the six entrepreneurs (100 %) agree that sustainability is an important part of their business. Next, they were asked to justify why they think it is/ isn’t important. The question was answered by five entrepreneurs. According to three of the entrepreneurs (60 %), sustainability is important to them due to the nature preservation and natural image of Lestijärvi. One (20 %) also argues that the sustainably aware customers provide better profit for the company than the ones who do not see environmental and socio-cultural values important. Another one (20 %) also said:

“Sustainability is a requirement for a quality product”. One (20 %) justified the importance of sustainability with Lestijärvi not being able to handle mass tourism and another (20 %) said that development is important because otherwise the customer would not visit their business.

This was followed by a question of which Business Finland’s sustainable tourism principles affect their business operations. The question was answered by all six entrepreneurs. Two (33 %) said input for safety and quality, two (33 %) answered fair co-operation in order to develop tourism and two (33 %) answered other. One of the other answers was “all of these” and the other was “taking care of nature and favouring locals”. Note that despite it says the entrepreneurs could choose more than one option, they could not, which was pointed out in the free word section in the end of the questionnaire.

Four entrepreneurs answered the question whether they think Lestijärvi is a sustainable destination and all the four answered yes (100 %). One of who said yes also added that more could be done in the future as the windmill project is starting in Lestijärvi and that could provide the electricity for electric car charging stations and other electric forms of travel (25 %). Lastly the entrepreneurs were given a free word where they were able to add other comments, suggestions, and development ideas. Three entrepreneurs added their free word. As mentioned before, two (67 %) of the entrepreneurs pointed out that they were not able to choose more than one option in question 19 (figure 27). One said that it is good that a tourism strategy will be written as it will be easy to plead to it later (33%). One suggested that “the becoming windmill park should have a scenic route going through it, where one could safely get to know the windmill park and there should be info boards with facts of the park and the route should be built in a way that it could be used by bikes, quad bikes, cars and by walking. More co-operation with Kinnula and Perho was also wished due to the joined Metsäpeuranmaa area and national park’s impact zone” (33 %).

7 Conclusions and suggestions

The research was conducted to collect data for a tourism strategy for the municipality of Lestijärvi. Firstly, the strategy writing process, Finland's tourism trends, Central-Ostrobothnia's tourism strategy and an overlook on Lestijärvi's current tourism was researched through literature to answer the first two research questions: how a successful tourism strategy is developed and how the tourism trends are developing in Finland. Secondly, a brainstorming session, a questionnaire for travellers and for entrepreneurs were made in order to answer the remaining two research questions: what services the travellers require for their holiday in Lestijärvi and how the services should be developed to the expected levels.

7.1 Themes, target group and development suggestions for the tourism strategy

Based on this survey, the visitor of Lestijärvi is a 44-year-old female from Finland and more specifically mainly from Central-Ostrobothnia, North-Ostrobothnia and Uusimaa. The average age was calculated from the traveller questionnaire answers and the entrepreneur questionnaire supports the average as they estimated that their main customers are usually between the years of 31-50. The reason for their visits is to have a holiday and their main interests are nature activities, food, and sports. The travellers who visit Lestijärvi mainly travel domestically. Most of them use travel services such as accommodation, restaurants, and equipment rentals while they travel. When visiting Lestijärvi, they tend to stay for 1-2 nights at their own cottage. The reason for visiting is usually to have a holiday.

Cross-sectional themes related to the services and overall developing points in Lestijärvi were found through all the research methods. One of the focus points is nature and related activities and services. When asked about the traveller's interests while travelling, all 52 respondents said that they are interested in nature. Nature tourism is also a growing trend in Finland (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020) and can be seen in the increasing statistics from the National Parks across the country (Tervo, 2021). It is also one of the strengths mentioned in the tourism strategy SWOT of Central Ostrobothnia (Keski-Pohjanmaan liitto, 2021). Majority of the travellers also considers nature to be the biggest strength in Lestijärvi, lakes the second and peacefulness the third. Also, all the five entrepreneurs who answered the question about Lestijärvi's strengths said nature is Lestijärvi's biggest strength. Therefore, Lestijärvi municipality

should focus its development and marketing activities to nature and upkeeping the existing nature routes, taking care of the lake Lestijärvi and wilderness lakes as the nature protection in the sustainability section of both questionnaires rose as the main action that should be taken, and the main focus of the protection should be the lake Lestijärvi. Sustainability was seen important for the travellers when choosing the destination and the entrepreneurs also saw it as an important part of their business operations. Lestijärvi was already mainly seen as a sustainable travel destination, which is an important factor from the tourism point of view as it is mentioned in both the national and regional tourism strategies as goals. That image of sustainability should also remain that way in the future. Therefore, nature and related activities and sustainability with a special focus on nature protection should be taken as cross-sectional themes for all parts of the tourism strategy.

Another development suggestion for the strategy is the seasonality of travel. Most of the travellers said they come to Lestijärvi at any time of year, but the second most popular answer was summer due to the lake being at its most beautiful at that time of year. Only one said they visit Lestijärvi during winter and only two reasons for visiting in the winter were given: ice fishing and skiing. Also, during the brainstorming session, it was discussed that the winter and its activities in Lestijärvi are not utilized enough. This development suggestion is backed up by Business Finland's themes, where the year-round travel acts as a cross sectional theme for tourism development (Business Finland, 2021). Finland's tourism roadmap also mentioned winter as one their four key strategic themes (TEM, 2015). Therefore, Lestijärvi municipality should take extra notion of especially the winter season but also autumn and spring, so that the travel would happen in Lestijärvi year-round. This can be achieved by focusing on the productization of winter activities (this can be done together with the entrepreneurs as they wished for productization and more co-operation) and by more efficient marketing of the winter season.

One of the biggest issues in Lestijärvi's tourism is the accessibility and especially the difficulty to find information of where to accommodate and eat, what activities and services are available and how to get here. The travellers were asked; "What other things related to tourism would you want Lestijärvi to develop?". Half answered that finding information is one of the development points. The lack of information and visibility rose as one of the biggest issues in almost all of the topics (program services, accommodation, and restaurant services and Lestijärvi's weaknesses) of the travel services in Lestijärvi section of the traveller questionnaire. Most also said that it is hard to find information of Lestijärvi's tourism in the accessibility section. This aspect was already improved during the thesis process as the municipality of Lestijärvi renewed their websites and

added a tourism website as well, which was one of the wished developments in the traveller questionnaire. Since this was already done, the results might be different if the travellers were presented with the same questionnaire now. Nonetheless, a concrete development suggestion could be to acquire an online selling platform where the entrepreneurs could also sell their products as the lack of it was mentioned in the brainstorming session, entrepreneur questionnaire and the travellers wished for the possibility to book the services from online. From the accessibility also the public transport could also be advertised better, as it seems that most of the travellers do not know about the possibility to travel to Lestijärvi with a bus, which was mentioned in the tourism in Lestijärvi section. Also, some solutions to add more public transportation could be looked at together with the other tourism operators and municipalities in Central Ostrobothnia as it was also on the development list for the whole region. Nonetheless it is not the main development point as it was mainly agreed that it is easy to travel to Lestijärvi and many of the travellers were satisfied with the option of travelling with their own car. From the sustainability point of view this of course should be one of the actions in the future.

The tourism trends in Finland, which were nature, wellbeing, and sustainable tourism, are mainly aimed at the global markets and were taken as part of the research as it was not known before the research that only Finnish customers would answer the questionnaire for travellers. The questionnaire was also conducted in English, which made it possible for the foreign customers to answer as well but since none of them did, this might indicate that Lestijärvi is not able to reach those target markets. From the questionnaire, it did become apparent that the Finnish customers, who visit Lestijärvi are also interested in the same activities and themes as the international customers who travel to Finland and therefore there is also a chance for Lestijärvi to provide experiences for the international customers as well as the domestic. Based on this information, the author would suggest focusing on providing and developing the experiences for the domestic customers first and once the necessary improvements for them are made, the marketing for international tourists can be started.

Once the activities and services are developed according to the needs of the domestic customer, the international customers can be taken as another target group. As the result that generally the visitors of Lestijärvi come from Finland, (both in the entrepreneur and traveller questionnaire) suggests that the foreign potential customers are not reached through marketing and since in the brainstorming session it was said that there is rising international interest towards Central Ostrobothnia in Outdooractive, which is a website for nature routes and destinations, the author would suggest the Lestijärvi municipality to include a marketing strategy to the tourism strategy or write

a separate one in order to improve the communication and visibility of Lestijärvi. In the strategy the potential international markets could be considered better so that once travelling will return to “normal” after the Covid-19, Lestijärvi could be an option for the international guests as well. Also, the marketing strategy would help in adding more relevant and up-to-date information for the main target group, which according to the author, should be the Finnish customers.

In general, the services that need most development are restaurant services as the travellers think that there are not enough restaurant services and that the existing services are not versatile. The biggest complaints were that there is not enough information of them, they are not open enough or that the opening hours cannot be found and that there is need for more selection. To develop the restaurant services, Lestijärvi needs entrepreneurs to do it. As it was discussed in the brainstorming session that if Lestijärvi can not attract more entrepreneurs, the services will disappear. Also, there is the problem of the young moving out of Lestijärvi, which presents a challenge to receiving more entrepreneurs to the municipality. Therefore, Lestijärvi municipality should focus on providing good operational environment for the entrepreneurs and the young, who could potentially turn into entrepreneurs in the future. According to the entrepreneurs, who also disagreed that there are enough services in Lestijärvi this could be improved with wider and better co-operation both within the municipality and regionally as if there was more co-operation, some of the entrepreneurs would even be willing to expand their business.

7.2 Follow-up

The thesis was made as a data collection for a tourism strategy of Lestijärvi. The thesis followed the tourism strategy processes by Hiltunen (Hiltunen, 2012) and Määttä (Määttä, 2021) and the tourism planning process by (Goeldner & Ritchie, *Tourism principles, practices, philosophies*, 2012) and therefore this thesis included the first three steps of the strategy process: data collection, analysis, and diagnosis. These steps included finding out the current state of tourism, finding the development points and by doing the analytical work, where the questionnaires analysed and the data from the brainstorming session was collected to a SWOT analysis and finally the diagnosis, which was conducted in the conclusions and suggestions section of the thesis. The last three stages of the process; strategy writing, implementation, and follow-up, will be then left to the municipality of Lestijärvi.

The collected data will be delivered to the municipality of Lestijärvi and will serve as a base upon which they can build their tourism strategy. In any case, the questionnaires and the literature overlook provide them with a better understanding of the tourism sector and trends in Finland, Central-Ostrobothnia and Lestijärvi. The research data helps to understand the main pull factors of Lestijärvi and the needed developments for the tourism to grow. The tourism strategy writing will be left to the municipality of Lestijärvi and once done, it will be presented to the local council, which will then confirm the strategy. After the tourism strategy is confirmed, Lestijärvi municipality still must implement the strategy by taking action and to follow-up to find out whether the strategy was successful or not.

To ease the process of strategy follow-up, the questionnaire forms will be given to the Lestijärvi municipality in order to provide them with a change to conduct the questionnaires again in the future. The answers received from the traveller questionnaire can serve as a way to measure the success of the tourism strategy. If the strategy is written based on these materials, it will also ease the process of creating new follow-up strategies in the future.

The questionnaire results also revealed another possible research topic: marketing strategy development.

8 Discussion

The topic for the thesis was found when the author started her first practical training at the municipality of Lestijärvi. The practical training focused on marketing and developing Lestijärvi as a tourism destination but quite soon it became clear that there were no clear goals or idea of which direction the tourism should be developed. Therefore, it was decided that a tourism strategy for the municipality of Lestijärvi should be written. This thesis process started with the assumption that the strategy would be created as a product of this thesis but due to the extent of the research, it was decided that the thesis would only collect the data for the strategy and that the municipality could then, based on the data, write the strategy.

8.1 Thesis process

The thesis process started out with a literature search where the strategy writing methods, Finland's tourism trends, definitions of concepts and an overlook on the current tourism in Lestijärvi were established. These were researched through books, online sources, and reports after which the thesis plan was presented. After the presentation, while still gathering more literature sources, the first research method; the brainstorming session took place. The brainstorming was conducted 9.2.2021 with 15 participants, who consisted of locals, visitors, municipality workers, entrepreneurs, and organization representatives. The results were gathered into a SWOT analysis all the while the process continued with more literature searches. After the brainstorming session there came a longer break, which was not planned in the authors thesis schedule. The original goal was to finish the thesis before the authors second practical started in the beginning of June but due to various reasons related to work, studies, motivation, and health, this did not happen. Before the start of the practical training in the spring, the author was at the point that the research questionnaire for the travellers had been distributed. The entrepreneur questionnaire was distributed shortly after the start of the practical training on 14.6 and it was available for two weeks. During the summer and the four-month training/work my thesis was mostly on stand still. I did manage to analyse the entrepreneur questionnaire but other than that, not much happened.

Once the practical training period was over, I took a month off from work and left for an Interrail with my friend and classmate Roosa Honkonen. During the interrail, I finally was able to destress and had time to focus on the thesis as I was determined to graduate by Christmas 2021. In the

beginning of the Interrail we had a thesis follow-up meeting with my supervisor Helka Leimu-Pelkonen. During the meeting, it became clear that I nowhere near the finish line and that there was still a lot to be done. At this point it was evaluated that the grade for the thesis would be around 2 and it was a hard reality check for me, but it gave me the push that I had needed and for which I am grateful for. She has also constantly reminded me to stay within the set boundaries of the thesis because this subject is already wide, it would have been easy to extend it further and further, which would have been too much. Also, I learned that if I wanted to graduate, I would need to return the thesis on 16.11.2021, which was at that point one month away. I started analysing the traveller questionnaire and worked on it through out the Interrail and also finished all my remaining reports for the practical training and researched more literature for the thesis. This month was an important part in the process as I had more time than I had had in a long time, and I had support from my friend Roosa Honkonen whom I was able to write with and who was able to keep me grounded and remind me that rest is also needed from time to time.

Once I returned home, I had two weeks left until the return date but still I was not able to use the time for the thesis as I had to leave for a work trip. Due to the lack of time, I asked for two days off from work so that I could spend a long weekend finishing the thesis. During those four days I finished the traveller questionnaire analysis, conclusions, discussion and did all the needed checks for the thesis. Without the flexibility from my workplace Lestijärvi municipality, I could not have finished the thesis on time and therefore I am very grateful and especially to my supervisor, our administrative director Susanna Tuikka for the help and support in this matter. Even though this has been a long process, it has been very helpful and has given me ideas how to be better at my work at Lestijärvi municipality in the future.

8.2 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study was the findability of information on Lestijärvi's tourism. When the author started the thesis and literature review, the municipality did not have much information of the tourism in Lestijärvi. Based on less than a page worth of information on the services and other tourism related matters, it was hard to write source-based information for the thesis. The author did have some own personal knowledge of the tourism in Lestijärvi though her work, but of course that would not suffice for a source. During the summer 2021, the new municipality website (Lestijärven kunta, 2021) along with a separate website for tourism (Visit Lestijärvi, 2021) was published. The publication of the websites eased information search but at the same time it

presented another challenge: some of the information was taken from the old website, which no longer can be found as the new website took its place with the same online address. Therefore, some of the old references might now be directed to a page on the new website. Another matter also related to the new websites, is that the traveller questionnaire was conducted before the release of the new websites and therefore some of the most wanted development matters (renewing the municipality website) regarding the findability of information, have already been solved. Lastly, the website release posed a threat to the reliability of the thesis as both the municipality and the tourism website content was written by the author of this thesis as part of her work. To resolve this issue, the website content and the correctness of the information was checked by all the department heads in the municipality; the administrative and technical director, environmental secretary, headmaster of the school, who is also in charge of the sports, leisure, culture, and library departments and also by the leisure time instructor because besides the author herself, she has the most knowledge of Lestijärvi's tourism within the municipality.

Other challenge as mentioned already in the thesis process, was keeping the research within the content that was set in the thesis plan. Like also mentioned the thesis had to be constricted to only the data collection instead of the whole tourism strategy to keep it from extending too much. Even though some cuts to the content were made, this thesis became quite wide. In addition, the schedule and finding the time and motivation to write the thesis was a challenge.

Also, some mistakes were made, as originally a few questions in both of the questionnaires were intended as questions, where the respondents could choose more than one answer, but due to forgetting to press one button while creating the questionnaires, this did not happen. Luckily the questions where this happened had follow-up questions, where the participants were able to specify their thoughts and therefore the opinions were still received through the responses of the questionnaires and the reliability of the research was not damaged.

The number of responses varied between questions but as the questionnaires had voluntary participation, the author did not want to set the question settings in a way that some questions would have been forced to answer. Therefore, some of the questions did not receive the hoped number of answers. Therefore, the reliability of those questions that received only a few answers could have been better. The same applies to the entrepreneur questionnaire, but as there are not so many entrepreneurs overall in Lestijärvi, the number of responses was expected. Also, the author noticed that some questions could have been formed in a different way as there was a couple misunderstandings. This will also be one development point if the Lestijärvi municipality chooses to conduct the questionnaires again.

To ensure the reliability and validity in qualitative research the links between the problem and the interpretations were properly described, so that the reliability of the explanations remained intact. This was done by carefully explaining why the conclusions were drawn and by referring to the theory and the research. As the answers to the questionnaires and the discussion during the brainstorming session were all in Finnish, the author made sure to translate the answers carefully, so that the meaning of the answers did not change. The author also remained objective during the process, as even though there were negative comments and some concerns related to the actions of the municipality of Lestijärvi (e.g. the windmill project, which has been up to debate in Lestijärvi), they were still included in the research and the answers were explained as they were originally answered by the respondents.

As already mentioned in the development suggestions, all the respondents for the traveller questionnaire were Finnish. This could be due to an overall issue for Lestijärvi in reaching the foreign customers or that the author did not reach the foreign travellers of Lestijärvi with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed through the local Facebook group called Lestijärvi and as the administrator of the group, the author had knowledge that there are also international people in that group. Therefore, there might have been an issue in reaching them through the group (maybe they are part of it but do not follow it anymore, or that since the Finnish and the English questionnaire were released at the same time, they did not notice that there was an English option). For the Finnish travellers, the Facebook group worked well as the questionnaire reached its goal of receiving 50 answers and because it also reached the travellers who come from other parts of Finland (12 different counties).

One limitation with the ethicality was that it was not possible to delete the names from the Microsoft 365 Forms questionnaire (Microsoft, 2021), without deleting the whole questionnaire and therefore the names will be completely deleted once the thesis is finished. Therefore, to ensure the ethicality of the research the names were unlinked from the results after the winner of the draw was found and the results were moved to Excel and names were deleted from the Excel file. Therefore, the names remained unknown for the author as well when analysing the results. For the entrepreneur questionnaire, the names of the entrepreneurs or their companies were never even asked and for the brainstorming session, only the number of participants was recorded.

Overall, the research gave valuable insight of Lestijärvi as a tourism destination, the needs of the travellers and entrepreneurs, and solutions on how to develop tourism in Lestijärvi.

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10 Appendices

Brainstorming session notes

Brainstorming session notes

Time: 09.02.2020 – 17.00-19.30

Place: Lestijärvi congregation house

Participants

- 6 participants face-to-face
- 9 participants through Teams

Notes

- The municipality should acquire Johku, so that the products, equipment, and accommodation could be sold more easily. (Johku is a website platform where you can directly buy the products.)
- More co-operation is needed with Visit Keski-Pohjanmaa and KPEDU
- Young people need to be employed more and attracted to Lestijärvi
- The municipality needs to attract more entrepreneurs to provide services
- Hunting and fishing tourism has a good customer base as it is, this should be further advertised and developed
 - o Fishing travel should be developed – the fish cannot rise to the river because of Korpela dam (Korpelanpato)
- Lestijärvi could also think of animal watching products (Finnish forest reindeer, bears etc.)
- Public transportation
 - o Retkibussi (travel bus) project is starting, and it will bring customers to Peuran polku, Lestijärvi and Salamajärvi national park
 - o Finntouring Oy
 - o The development should focus on on-land travel options
- USP: Lestijärvi is a small and independent municipality (a miracle in itself)

- A photobook of Lestijärvi
- Productization of Lestijoki river, Metsäpeuranmaa area and the lake Lestijärvi
- Target group
 - o Huge visitor amounts from Europe in Outdooractive for Central Ostrobothnia
 - How can Lestijärvi bring back the foreign tourists that used to visit Lestijärvi?
 - o Families
 - o Salamajärvi national park visitor amounts had an increase of 28% last summer (2019)
 - Nature travel is increasing
- Lestijärvi already has relatively good summer travel, but also other seasons should be developed and advertised (skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing)
- The ski tracks are well kept and maintained
- The already existing tourism pull factors like the lake, river, nature trails and beaches should be maintained better so we can benefit from them and keep them usable
- Sustainable travel and environmental impacts need to be taken into consideration when creating new products so that the nature's uniqueness will be kept intact
- Product ideas: iglus, sauna raft (saunalautta), nature track runs, horse riding, dog sleds, adventure park to Valkeinen
 - o These activities would give families with kids something new to do and the customer base for the activities is already there as Kuturanta caravan park has lots of visitors all year round.
- The municipality should create a tourism committee (matkailulautakunta), which would be in charge of the tourism development and taking things forward. There needs to be more co-operation
- The frisbee gold track should have its opening once corona is over
- Visitor number research for the accommodation businesses (could be done through schools or by a project)
- Distant working spaces should be created and advertised (library)
- More co-operation within the municipality, tourism parties and entrepreneurs are needed.
- Municipality could organize a sport try-out day where there could be products and activities from organizations and entrepreneurs
- Holiday apartments are hard to turn into permanent housing due to town planning – should be made clearer and easier so Lestijärvi could have more inhabitants
- Jukola summer café should be implemented (more applicants if we define the rental prize/ do we give it for free?)

Cover note for questionnaire for travellers

I am a third-year tourism student from Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, and I am writing a tourism strategy for the municipality of Lestijärvi for the years of 2021-2025 as my thesis. For developing the tourism in Lestijärvi, it is crucial to hear the opinions of the travellers about Lestijärvi as a tourism destination. The objective of the questionnaire is to receive information on the current situation and which aspects are already working and which need more development in the becoming years.

Every answer is valuable for the developmental work and therefore, we will draw a price between all the participants of the survey, who stated their name and contact information. The price is a 70€ accommodation gift card, which can be used for any accommodation in Lestijärvi. The gift card is valid until the end of 2021. You can write your name and contact information down in the first question if you want to participate to the draw. After the draw and analysing the answers, all the personal data will be deleted. If you do not wish to participate in the draw, you can skip the first question and move on to answer the questionnaire anonymously. A huge thank you in advance to everyone who participates in this questionnaire!

Answering this questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

- Ronja Tuikka

A third year Tourism student in Kajaani University of Applied Sciences

Questionnaire for travellers

1. Name and phone number/email for the draw

2. Age:

3. Gender:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

4. Nationality

Finnish

Other; specify your nationality below in the muu-box

5. If you answered Finnish in question 4, which county do you live in?

- Uusimaa
- Varsinais-Suomi
- Satakunta
- Kanta-Häme
- Pirkanmaa
- Päijät-Häme
- Kymenlaakso
- South Karelia
- Etelä-Savo
- Pohjois-Savo
- North Karelia
- Central Finland
- South Ostrobothnia
- Ostrobothnia
- Central Ostrobothnia
- North Ostrobothnia
- Kainuu
- Lapland
- Åland
- Kymenlaakso
- Kanta-Häme

Osa 2

General interests and habits while traveling

In this section, the questions will focus on the general interests and habits while traveling

6. Do you travel mostly?

- Domestically
- Abroad
- Both

7. What are you interested in while traveling? (you can choose multiple options)

- Culture
- Nature
- Food
- Local history
- Sport
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Distant working possibilities
-

8. Do you use program services while traveling? (For example guided tours and activities, equipment rentals, visiting events etc.)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

9. Do you use travel services while traveling in Finland? (for example program services, accommodation, visiting events, restaurant services etc.)

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

10. If you answered yes to the previous question, which services you use?

Traveling in Lestijärvi

In this section, the questions will focus on more detailed travel habits and interests while traveling in Lestijärvi

11. How many times per year do you travel to Lestijärvi? (choose the closest option)

- 20 times or more
- 10 times
- 5 times or less

12. When do you travel to Lestijärvi? (you can choose multiple options)

- In the spring
- In the summer
- In the autumn
- In the winter
- Anytime of the year

13. Specify the previous question: Why do you travel to Lestijärvi in the specific time of year?

Kirjoita vastaus

14. Why do you travel to Lestijärvi? (you can choose multiple options)

- For holiday
- To work
- For family or friends

Muu

15. What type of accommodation do you use while traveling in Lestijärvi?

- Friends or family's place
- My own cottage
- A rental cottage/apartment
- I stay in a neighbouring town and only make day trips to Lestijärvi

Camping site

Caravan park

Muu

20. Specify the previous question: What good/bad/improvements in your opinion are there in the program services in Lestijärvi?

Kirjoita vastaus

21. What kind of program services/activities would you like to have in Lestijärvi?

Kirjoita vastaus

22. If Lestijärvi would add more program services, would you use them?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

23. If you answered NO to the previous question, why?

Kirjoita vastaus

24. What is your experience of the restaurant services in Lestijärvi? Restaurant services includes restaurants, cafes, bakeries and catering services etc.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strognly agree	No experience
There are enough restaurant services in Lestijärvi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The selection of the restaurant services is versatile.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Specify the previous question: What good/bad/improvements do you think there are in the restaurant services in Lestijärvi?

Kirjoita vastaus

26. What is your experience of the accommodation services in Lestijärvi?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No experience
There are enough accommodation services in Lestijärvi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accommodation services are versatile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. Specify the previous question: What good/bad/improvements do you think there are in the accommodation services in Lestijärvi?

Kirjoita vastaus

28. What other things related to tourism would you want Lestijärvi to develop? (for example services, events, restaurants, accommodation, communication/marketing, information)

Kirjoita vastaus

29. What do you think are Lestijärvi's strengths as a tourism destination?

Kirjoita vastaus

30. What do you think are Lestijärvi's weaknesses as a tourism destination?

Kirjoita vastaus

Accessibility

In this section, the questions will focus on Lestijärvi's accessibility. Accessibility means both the physical (transportation and passage) and the informational (communication) accessibility.

31. How do you experience accessibility from the point of view of information and communication in Lestijärvi's tourism?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly disagree	No experience
It is easy to find information on Lestijärvi's tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is enough information of Lestijärvi's tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. Specify the previous question: Why do you think it is easy/difficult to find? Why isn't there enough information? What could be improved?

Kirjoita vastaus

33. How do you travel to Lestijärvi?

- By car
- By public transportation
- Muu

34. How do you experience traveling to Lestijärvi?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No experience
It is easy to travel to Lestijärvi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. Specify the previous question: Why is it easy/difficult to travel to Lestijärvi?

Kirjoita vastaus

36. How do you experience Lestijärvi's accessibility? (for example transport, road connections)

Kirjoita vastaus

Osa 6

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Sustainable tourism

In this section the questions will focus on travel from the sustainability point of view. Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. (retrieved from BusinessFinland)

37. Sustainability is important when choosing a tourism destination.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

38. Which of the following BusinessFinland's sustainable tourism principles affect your travel decision? You can choose more than one option and add your own if you wish to.

- Fair co-operation in order to develop tourism
- Taking care of nature (protection, diversity, cleanliness, animal welfare)
- Respecting cultural heritage
- Advancing wellbeing, human rights and equality
- Favoring locals (services, products, companies)
- Input for safety and quality (producing services safety and quality first)
- Taking notion of climate impact
- Open and see through communication
- Constant development (making sure there will be demand in the future, stable and ethical operations)
- Commitment to sustainable tourism principles
- Muu

39. Do you think Lestijärvi is a sustainable tourism destination?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- No experience

40. Specify the previous question: Why do you think Lestijärvi is/isn't a sustainable tourism destination? What could be improved?

Kirjoita vastaus

41. On the scale from four to ten (4=worst, 10=best), how would you rate Lestijärvi as a tourism destination?

Kirjoita vastaus

Cover note for questionnaire for entrepreneurs

I am a third-year tourism student from Kajaani University of Applied Sciences, and I am writing a tourism strategy for the municipality of Lestijärvi for the years of 2021-2025 as my thesis. For developing the tourism in Lestijärvi, it is crucial to hear the opinions of the local entrepreneurs about Lestijärvi as a working environment. The objective of the questionnaire is to receive information on the current situation and which aspects are already working and which need more development in the becoming years.

The questionnaire can be filled anonymously, and the information will be used to create tourism strategy of Lestijärvi. A huge thank you in advance to everyone who participates in this questionnaire!

Answering this questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

Ronja Tuikka

Tourism student

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences

Questionnaire for entrepreneurs

Osa 1

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Background information of business operations

This sections researches the background information and scope of business operations.

1. Do you work full time or part time as an entrepreneur in the tourism sector?

- Full time
- Part time

2. Specify here what your business operations are and what they include. (e.g accommodation, food services, program services like guided tours or activities, rental services)

Kirjoita vastaus

3. Are you planning to expand your business operations in the future

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

4. If you answered NO to the previous question, why?

Kirjoita vastaus

5. Is running a tourism business in Lestijärvi profitable?

Kirjoita vastaus

Osa 2

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Company's target groups

This section researches the current target groups of the company.

6. Are most of the company's customers Finnish or foreign?

- Finnish
- Foreign

7. Are your customers mainly local or from outside of the municipality?

- Locals
- Outside of the municipality

8. What age are your main customers?

- 15-30 year old
- 31-50 year old
- 51-70 year old
- Over 70 year old

9. How else would you describe your customers and their interests?

Kirjoita vastaus

Osa 3

...

Tourism service development and co-operation in Lestijärvi

This section researches entrepreneurs point of views about tourism development in Lestijärvi and willingness for development and co-operation

10. What are your opinions about the following tourism development related matters?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel like there is a lot to develop in Lestijärvi's tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like Lestijärvi has a good operational environment for tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like there are enough services in Lestijärvi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like there is enough information about tourism in Lestijärvi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Specify the previous question: which aspects need development in the tourism field from the perspective of the entrepreneur?

Kirjoita vastaus

12. Would you yourself be willing to add more products, activities or services to your company's selection? Justify your answer.

Kirjoita vastaus

13. How do your experience co-operation with other entrepreneurs, the municipality and other tourism field operators

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel like co-operation with other tourism field operators is important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like co-operation with the municipality is easy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like co-operation with other entrepreneurs and tourism field operators is easy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like more co-operation with other entrepreneurs, municipality and other tourism field operators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What type of co-operation would you like? (joined products/events, training, counselling etc.)

Kirjoita vastaus

15. What are the biggest tourism strengths or Lestijärvi in your opinion and how do you think they should be utilized?

Kirjoita vastaus

16. What are the biggest tourism weaknesses of Lestijärvi in your opinion and how do you think they should be developed?

Kirjoita vastaus

Osa 4

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Sustainable tourism development

In this section the questions will focus on travel from the sustainability point of view. Sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. (retrieved from BusinessFinland)

17. Sustainable development is important in my business operations.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

18. Justify why sustainable development is or isn't important

Kirjoita vastaus

19. Which of the following BusinessFinland's sustainable tourism principles affect your travel decision? You can choose more than one option and add your own if you wish to.

- Fair co-operation in order to develop tourism
- Taking care of nature (protection, diversity, cleanliness, animal welfare)
- Respecting cultural heritage
- Advancing wellbeing, human rights and equality
- Favoring locals (services, products, companies)
- Input for safety and quality (producing services safety and quality first)
- Taking notion of climate impact
- Open and see through communication
- Constant development (making sure there will be demand in the future, stable and ethical operations)
- Commitment to sustainable tourism principles
- Muu

20. As an entirety, do you think Lestijärvi is a sustainable tourism destination?

21. Free word. (here you can make other comments, suggestions and development ideas)