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A handbook in package tour arrangement

Golf tourism

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ABSTRAKT

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Syftet med detta lärdomsprov var att undersöka uppgifterna en researrangör har när resor för större grupper blir planerade. Ändamålet var att samla information om gruppresor och på samma ställe definiera researrangörens skyldigheter för att skapa en handbok åt arrangörerna. Lärdomsprovet är skrivet speciellt för arrangörer av golfresor.

Teorier som har använts är bland andra Maslows hierarkitrapa och vilka trender som påverkar golfturismen för tillfället. Andra teorier som varit till hjälp är definitioner av olika slag, till exempel definitionen av en golfturist eller hantering av risker.

Den empiriska delen utgjordes av en kvantitativ enkät som skickades ut via internet åt målgruppen golfare i Jakobstad med omnejd.

Resultaten av frågeformuläret visade att de svarande uppskattar att researrangören vet vad kunderna vill ha och genom enkäten har arrangören fått svar på vad de svarande anser som viktigt. För att researrangörer skall hålla sig uppdaterade angående trender krävs det att de regelbundet samlar in feedback av sina kunder. Av resultaten kan man också se att de svarande värderar bekvämlighet högt under sina golfresor vilket ger researrangören tydliga riktlinjer hur han eller hon skall planera resor i framtiden.

ABSTRACT

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The aim of the thesis was to research what it means to be a trip organizer. The objective was to gather comprehensive information about a trip organizer's responsibilities and opportunities in one place in order to make a handbook for the arranger. The thesis was written specially for golf tour organizers.

The theoretical framework consists of definitions of concepts like who a golf tourist is and what risk management process is. Other theories used are Maslow's hierarchy of needs, destination decision making process and trends influencing golf tourism.

The empirical study was done by conducting a survey through an online questionnaire. The target group was golfers in Jakobstad and the municipalities around the town.

The results showed that the respondents measure it important that the organizer knows what the customers want. Through this survey there were some signs of what the customers want but the solution for being up-to-date in the future is to regularly collect feedback from the travelers. The results also showed that the respondents value convenience as the most important feature in a trip which gives the trip organizer valuable guidelines on how to proceed in the planning process in the future.

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2 INTRODUCTION

As the average age of the population is rising, the golf tourism market is increasing in popularity at the same time. People in the age of 60 and older, the Baby Boomers, are a large percentage of today's population worldwide compared to earlier years. This age group is also the largest age group when it comes to golfers. And as the group is growing, so is the number of golfers.

In Finland the golf season is at best a six month long period but often the season is only four months long. Because of this, Finnish golfers travel abroad to be able to play golf the other six to eight months of the year. This research is conducted because of a growing interest in a golf tourist's demographics and golf travelling in general.

2.1 Research problem

The topic of the thesis is chosen to study what the behavior patterns of golf tourists are while travelling and to share the information with people in the golf tourism industry such as tour guides or especially tour organizers. The goal is to create a package for a new tour organizer or an experienced one to read when facing difficulties in the planning process. As a case study, a golf tour arranger in Jakobstad is contacted and a survey is done to connect the theories of the thesis with practical feedback.

2.2 Research method

The survey is done through a questionnaire on the internet. The questionnaire is quantitative in order to reach as many different people at once as possible and to get a clear overview of the subject. The quantitative research method is considered to be the best choice for this kind of a research.

2.3 Structure of the thesis

To start off the thesis, some basic terms are defined so that it is clear for the reader what the most important and often used phrases stand for. In addition, is presented how to build a group tour package and especially what a golf tour package includes. Theories like the destination decision making process, risk management and Maslow's hierarchy of needs are discussed. The theoretical study is finished with travelling trends that are currently shown to grow in demand when it comes to golf tourism.

The second section is the empirical study of the thesis. The case study is presented and the aim, structure and results of the survey are all discussed in their own chapters. After presenting the results, they are evaluated and a conclusion is drawn.

Finally the thesis as a whole is concluded and the references are presented.

3 DEFINITION OF TOURISM

Tourism can be looked at in several different ways, which makes it hard to have only one definition of the term. Tourism, for one person can stand for the volume of visitors and for another it can mean product development.

One definition that covers the basics of tourism is that there is a supply side and a demand side in the process. The demand side is the consumers. There is a travel related product or service that the consumer wants or needs and a price that they are willing to pay to get it. The supplier is an organization or a company that sees this demand and decides to provide it. The purchase process can start the other way too; that there first is a supply of one product or service and when it is marketed the customer realizes that there is a demand. This way the supplier is creating the demand.

These two parts are dependent on each other and neither works alone. If there is demand for a product but no supply, the consumer will be dissatisfied. If there, on the other hand, is supply but no demand, the supplier will not get any recognition or money for the work that has been done.

(Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008, page 11-15)

3.1 Definition of a tourist

Basically, a tourist is a consumer who has bought a tourism product from a supplier and has now taken it into use. The most used definition of a tourist is that it is a person who travels to a place away from his/her usual environment for a period of more than 24 hours and less than one year. The purposes of the trip can be many different things. It can be leisure, meetings or conventions, medical purposes, religion (e.g. when Muslims travel to Mecca) or study visits. When a person is visiting family and friends for the same amount of time he/she is considered to be a tourist.

Exceptions to this rule are people who, for example, stay in a different country to work, serve the military or study. Neither are refugees and nomads considered to be tourists. These are all considered to be living temporarily in different locations.

(Goeldner, Richie, 2009, page 4-7)

4 DEFINITION OF GOLF TOURISM

To put the definition of tourism into golf, more analyzing has to be done. Shortly, when tourists are travelling away from their home environment to either participate in or observe golf they are considered to be golf tourists. As in other sports there are different ways to experience golf. Around the world tourists travel to visit attractions like, for example, golf museum or golf hall of fame. Visitors of attractions associated with golf are also measured as golf tourists. (Hudson, 2010, page 3-4)

The sport of golf can be either the primary or the secondary activity on the trip. The writers of *Sports Tourism: An introduction* Tom Robinson and Sean Gammon (2004) have divided golf sport and tourism in two parts to show the different levels of the field. The first one they call golf sport tourism. Here golf is the primary reason of travel. The tourist chooses the destination and time of travel according to the requirements of the sport. The tourist can be participating actively or passively in golf events, for example a competition. The accommodation most often used are golf resorts or golf cruises.

The second part they describe as golf tourism sport. Golf is now the secondary reason for travel or totally incidental. Tourists participate in activities that take less time than a game of golf and can be done without expert knowledge, for example mini golf, driving ranges or museums. The incidental interest in the sport can be because the accommodation used is near by a golf course, which might motivate tourists to play even though it was not planned. A business tourist might find extra time on the business trip to play golf if it is near by the hotel. Here it is crucial for the hotel to arrange club hire services.

(Hudson, 2010, page 4-5, figure 1.1)

4.1 Definition of a golf tourist

In 2008 there was an estimate of 59 million golfers worldwide. 5-10 percent of these worldwide golfers travel overseas each year to play golf, added to that are the golfers who travel within their home country to play. More than 50 percent of the registered golfers are from USA, with its 30 million golfers in 2008. Europe has 8-9 million golfers and the rest 18 million are from other parts of the world, for example Japan, Australia and South Africa.

(Hudson, 2010, page 17-18)

The game of golf is at the moment dominated by men. More women are entering the sport but the golfers are predominately middle-aged men or men who are in their early retirement years. In Sweden the sport attracts more women golfers and from the 500 000 players that they have, a third are female.

(Hudson, 2010, page 28,31)

The typical golf tourist has an income of well above average. They are often male business owners or managers who tend to be older than the average golfer. The Baby Boomers, people born after World War II between the years 1946 and 1964, are considered to dominate the field. Golf tourists tend to use more money than the average tourist, which makes them valuable customers. Golf resorts are often expensive compared to other accommodation and provide more extra services.

This will be covered later on in the report.

(One Caribbean, Golf, page 45 and Hudson, 2010, page 28)

4.2 History of golf tourism

That people travel to participate or observe sport events is not a new reason for travelling. Thousands of years ago people travelled to Greece to see the Olympic Games or to Italy to actively or passively participate in gladiator fights. The game of golf is a lot younger than that.

The Scots created a game played with ball and club where the ball starts at a point just above ground and ends with the ball going into a hole below ground level. In 1457 golf got its first recognition in Scotland when the Scottish Parliament

declared that the game was interfering with the practice of archery. Golf continued, however, to be popular with both Scottish and English royalty and was starting to spread to the common people of Great Britain.

The game of golf spread in Britain in the 19th century as a result of the British Empire spreading as well. In 1820, India established the first golf club outside Britain and the rest of the world followed. In 1897 the association The Royal and Ancient created the rules of golf at St Andrews golf course. Even though USA in 2008 had the most golfers it took until 1890 before the first golf course was opened. By that time golf was well established in the rest of the world. But after the first golf course was opened, the field of golf grew rapidly in the USA. By 1896 the number of courses was already 80 and four years later, in 1900 there were 892 courses all over USA. At that point there were more courses in America than in Britain. Hundreds of Scottish architects, green keepers and teaching professionals travelled and moved to USA which helped boost the field of golf.

It is hard to say how big the size of the golf tourism market is since golf trips often are connected with other activities such as conventions, cruising or skiing. According to International Association of Golfing tour Operators, the global golf tourism market is worth over 20 billion US dollars.

Today many destinations see the advantage in this market. As mentioned earlier, golf tourists spend more money than the average tourist, which means that golf tourism can have a significant impact on a destinations economy. Developing countries such as Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Myanmar (Burma) are countries which have seen this opportunity and are expanding their golf tourism market. Another advantage some destinations might have in the field is the seasons, or lack of. Since we, in Finland have four seasons, the golf season is relatively short compared to, for example, Spain. In Finland the golf season is between April and September, depending on the weather that year. When the snow and cold weather comes, the golf season is over. In Spain golf courses are open around the year. Destinations that have possibilities to have a longer golf season can take advantage of it, because dedicated golfers from the northern countries will travel

south to get to play golf during the winter.

(Hudson, 2010, page 6-10)

4.3 Future of golf tourism

Due to the recession many planned expansions and developments of golf courses have been postponed. The 9/11 terrorist attack in USA has slowed down tourism worldwide, including golf tourism and global warming is threatening coastal golf courses if the sea level rises dramatically within the next century. Still there is a bright future for golf tourism.

(Hudson, 2010, page 260)

The golf tourism market is growing rapidly which means that the competition is increasing. This forces companies to make themselves unique to keep their loyal customers and get new members to the golf club. Fernie Golf and Country Club in British Columbia has put themselves on the map by connecting the game of golf with helicopter tours and in Canada there are clubs focusing on winter greens. To compete in the market and attract customers there are many different additional activities that can be provided by the golf club of resort. Some clearly growing trends are golf clubs combined with spas, safaris, fitness classes and cooking classes. By having these additional services, the golf club attracts a wider target group when for example male golfers can bring their wife with him to enjoy the spa services.

(Hudson, 2010, page 266)

The game of golf has become slower and more expensive during the past century which has shown to increase the demand of shorter, more affordable courses. An opportunity for companies would be to have easier golf courses that are affordably designed, built and managed and not so called "championship courses". That way the prices could be lower than the competitors.

(Hudson, 2010, page 267)

Another trend overall in tourism is tourists wanting to be environmentally friendly whilst travelling. This includes golf tourism as well. Environmentally friendly

designed and managed courses are increasing in popularity and attract a wide range of tourists. One way to be eco-friendly is to build golf courses on soils that could not be used for anything else and where there, for example, does not have to be cut down any trees during the built. A destination to where communication already exists should be chosen so that there does not have to be any additional constructions made.

(Hudson, 2010, page 274)

As mentioned it would be in the golf clubs' best interest to widen their target group and two customer groups to focus on in the future are women and children. Since women golfers are increasing they are becoming to be important customers for the golf clubs. When designing courses they should be made with different tees. The tee is where a player takes the first stroke. Most courses have three tee markers, each with different colors and at different distances from the hole. A player can use whichever tee he or she wants but often different tees are meant for different player types such as, men, women, juniors or pensioners. The tee marker for men has the longest distance to the hole and the juniors the shortest. To attract women the first step is to have these different tee markers so that they can play from wherever they like. As discussed earlier additional services such as spas would attract the female customers and golfers and the club's or resort's customer base would widen.

(Hudson, 2010, page 268)

The junior golfers are another group of customers that are important for the golf clubs. The definition of juniors are often youngsters up to 15-18 years old. The juniors are potential loyal customers which is why there should be put a lot of effort in satisfying that customer group as well. Around the world there are different training camps and competitions for junior golf players and by organizing that kind of event a golf club would get extra recognition. Children are not as hard to satisfy as the older age groups. This means that it does not require so much effort and money for the company to focus on them. When marketing a product to children the advertisements have to attract the parents as well since it is most often the parents who make the final travel decision. If a golf club wants to

organize a tournament for juniors it has to convince the adults that their children will gain from the experience that is provided. One way to attract junior golfers would be to have a theme on the course such as Disney or pirates. If a child sees an advertisement that he or she likes, the parents will hear about it and decide if the product is the right one for their family.

(Hudson, 2010, page 268)

In an interview for the book *Golf Tourism, 2010* by Simon and Louise Hudson Graham Moore, the founder of Graham Moore International Golf Schools stated that "...without juniors in any sport, you don't have an industry, you'll have a dying industry."

(Hudson, 2010, page 276)

5 DEFINITION OF GROUP TRAVEL

Tourists that value convenience often chooses to buy package trips when travelling. By buying a complete package the consumer does not need to have knowledge in all the different parts of the trip and that attracts travelers who wants to save time when making their purchase.

A group is defined as a minimum of 9-10 people who are connected to each other by having common social standards or interests. In theory this means that a tourists travelling in a group have the same wants and needs when it comes to travelling. The shared interest could be in the destination, the accommodation or activity.

(Reverso dictionary, group)

As mentioned, tourists buying package trips value convenience which is why a complete package is the best option for them. The consumers save both time and money by purchasing a bundle of travel products that are being put together by a third part, the trip organizer. The trip organizer puts together travel products and services and resells them as one final product called package or tour. When the trip organizer books for example 20 rooms at a hotel, he/she gets a lower room rate than when a private customer books one room. This is why the price of the

final package can be lowered to attract customers and still be profitable for the trip organizer.

(Goeldner, Ritchie, 2009, page 317-318)

6 THE ROLE OF THE TRIP ORGANIZER

As mentioned in the beginning of this thesis there are two parts that are dependent on each other in tourism, the supply side and the demand side. Basically, a trip organizer is a third part, a middle-man that sells different suppliers products and services to the customer as one final product. Practically this means that the trip organizer combines the products to one package and a travel agent sells it to the customer.

The trip organizer creates demand for the product and by being a specialist in every area of the tour who saves the client both time and money. As discussed earlier, the trip organizer does a so called bulk purchase. That means that a large amount of products are bought and the organizer can thereby sell it at a more affordable price than it would cost for the consumer to buy it privately. Still, the organizer has to consider that price indicates quality. If the price is too low the consumer expects lower quality but if it is too high there are higher expectations and bigger risk of disappointment. Additional travel-related services could be included in the package as well, such as insurance or money exchange to increase the value of the final product.

Since the package is sold at a lower price it is important for the organizer to control the costs throughout the process to maintain and increase profitability. Keeping a budget is a way to control how much money is spent and how much is gained. This will be discussed more in the next chapter.

As a final task the trip organizer has to collect feedback from the customers. Both positive and negative feedback are vital for the organizer to be able to improve his/her skills as a middle-man and to increase the satisfaction rate of the consumers in the future.

(Goeldner, Ritchie, 2009, page 183-184,186,201-202 and Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008, page 385-390)

7 HOW TO CREATE A GROUP TRIP PACKAGE

The planning process when putting together a package trip is more complex than an outsider would think. Everything from transportation to marketing has to be considered and planned carefully.

The first step is to identify what kind of trip is going to be made. The rest of the process depends on what the aim of the trip is, if it is a package trip to Disney land or a skiing trip. When the objectives have been identified the actual planning can start. There has to be a clear identification of the target group in order for the organizer to be able to decide on what is best for that group. Important features to take in consideration can be age, income, origin, religion or sex. It depends on the product what features that are being considered as important. But whatever these features are, they make the target group and identify what the group wants and needs are and that is vital in the package making process.

If the organizer is experienced in the field, there might be past records saved from the previous trips that he or she has made. By reading customers feedback and own comments, the same kinds of problems can be noticed before they happen and the good parts can be enhanced even more.

A budget has to be made in the beginning of the process to decrease the risk of economic problems. In the budget there has to be stated the maximum amount of money that can be spent in different parts of the package, such as accommodation and transportation. Sponsors are an affordable way to help with the financing. The sponsors pay to get something in return, for example advertising space when the product is marketed.

Co-operations can be made in order to lower the costs even more. After the trip organizer has been working in the field for a while there are connections that have been made and previous positive experiences can be used as a safety option. The

co-operation has to be profitable for both the organizer and the supplier. This means that the organizer is a loyal customer and therefore gets a lower price for the purchase.

Co-operation with hotels are a good example. If the trip organizer uses a worldwide hotel chain for the different package tours the chain can give a lower room rate since it is most certain that he or she will return when organizing the next trip. This way both parts are satisfied and gain profit in the long run.

Other possible suppliers to co-operate with are flight companies or tour guides. There is also a possibility to co-operate with for example bus drivers and in return the bus driver would get to go on the trip with the group as well. It is common that the person driving a sports team to a game gets to stay overnight at the same hotel with the team and take part in the activities provided by the organizer. This is an affordable way for the organizer to get transportation in return.

When the budget is done and there is a clear picture of how much money the organizer has to spend, the packaging can begin. A suitable destination has to be chosen and linked to that a suitable time of the year taken seasons, months and length of stay in consideration. The destination decision making process will be discussed later in this report. When the destination is chosen the transportation options might have been limited down to one or two. The trip organizer decides what way of transportation is the most convenient and affordable for the trip that is going to be made. There can be combinations of bus, flight, cruise and train or if the destination can comfortably be reached with one mode of transport, that type would be chosen.

The order of which the different parts are planned can vary, the important thing is that the final package is convenient for the customers to buy.

When the accommodation is being chosen the previous parts have to be taken in consideration. The target group shows what properties the accommodation should have, and the budget tells the organizer how expensive the room rate can be. The different types of accommodation suits different kinds of people and when the

target group is identified the trip organizer decides whether the most suitable accommodation type is a resort, bed and breakfast or camping site. The location of the hotel facilities should be carefully thought over and the transportation between the hotel and the planned activities should be convenient.

The next feature of the package to plan is the program. It is up to the organizer to decide if there is going to be a schedule that has to be followed or if the package includes activities that can be done whenever the customer likes. Meals can be planned for the whole group to enjoy together and sightseeing tours can be booked in advance by the organizer.

When planning all the different elements of the trip risk identification has to be done. There are risks in every part and it is easier to recognize them if the risk identification is done throughout the planning process and not in the end of it. Risk identification and management will be discussed in a later chapter.

After designing the whole package there are three stages left; pricing, marketing and feedback. When pricing a product the budget comes up again. In the budget it is stated how much costs there has been and for the organizer to be able to make profit from the product, the total price has to exceed the costs. This is why the trip organizer has to know how many trips that need to be sold for a specific price in order to reach and exceed the breakeven point where spent and gained money are equal. For example, if there are 20 trips sold, the price is 400 euro per person but if there are only 10 trips sold the price has to be higher otherwise there will not be any profit for the organizer. The pricing has to match the target group and the income that it is identified to have.

Marketing is another finishing feature of the process. For the customers to be aware of your product the marketing channels have to be chosen carefully. The channels have to be chosen so that they can reach the whole target group. Depending on who the customers are different channels are suitable for the product. For reaching the youths, social media is a fitting channel, newspapers would reach most of the pensioners and having an advertisement in the television would be seen by people in a wide income range. It is up to the organizer to find a

way that is within the marketing budget and that suits both the theme of the package and the target group. Depending on the budget the organizer chooses whether to use the cheaper internet channels or the more expensive television and newspaper channels.

After the actual trip has been made there is one important step left; evaluation.

The customers give both positive and negative feedback to the organizer about the different features of the trip. This helps the organizer to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the product and to be a better organizer in the future.

(Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill, 2008, Part 3, page 303-499)

8 THE GOLF TOURISM PRODUCT

When putting together a golf tourism tour the basics are the same as in any other type of travel. The package includes accommodation, transportation and additional activities.

The most common accommodation type used when travelling as a golf tourist is a golf resort. Golf resorts are high class and luxurious hotels that are situated by the golf course. Since the golf resorts often are more expensive than a hotel their customers are people with high income. The golf market is growing and expanding to common people with medium income. As a result there is a growing trend in golf resort development. The demand for smaller golf-oriented properties is increasing and companies are starting to design and build inns and lodges with around 100 rooms. These smaller properties are meant for golfers with medium income that values the golf experience more than the quality of the accommodation. Access is provided to golf courses nearby the hotel.

It is important that the transportation is convenient since the travelers might have their own golf equipment with them. This includes transportation to the destination, at the destination and from the destination. With a suitcase and a golf bag the travelers would not appreciate if they would be forced to walk a longer distance for example between the hotel and the golf course.

In addition to the accommodation and transportation a golf tourism package usually includes pre-paid green fees and pre-booked tee-times at a chosen course. If the golf course is nearby some other services such as a vineyard the package could include a wine tasting for the whole group. Other additional services that have a high value for the golf tourists are equipment rent, car rent, cash exchange services and guided tours at the destination or at the golf course. These services could be included in the package or they could be offered as optional services for those in the group who need them.

If the trip organizer wants to add a final activity to the travel experience there are museums all around the world that are connected to golf. World Golf Hall of Fame in Florida is a popular golf attraction which could both serve as the main purpose of a trip or as an additional activity.

(Hudson, 2010, page 58-74)

9 DESTINATION DECISION MAKING PROCESS

When a package trip is made a destination for the trip has to be chosen. The destination has an important part when tourists choose their vacation. That is why it is important for the trip organizer to decide what destination would attract the most people and that suits the tourism package that is being made. The destination decision making process can be divided into 5 steps.

First, a definition is needed of what you want from the destination. All the planned activities have to be taken in consideration and the target group for the trip will work as guidelines. In this phase the trip organizer is aware of who the target group is which makes it easier to identify their wants and needs. This way there will be a smaller set of destinations to consider when you know what your customers expect.

When this is done the second stage is started. Information about the different destinations is gathered to limit the possible destinations even more. In this step it is important to consider information about the specific destination that is relevant for the planned trip. If there is going to be a particular activity done during the trip

that requires for example snow, it is important to find out information about the different seasons at the destination. Since the purpose of the trip was defined in step one the trip organizer now knows what kind of facilities and services are needed to fulfil the wants and needs of the customer. This makes it easier to find a destination where everything that is needed is easily accessible with different transportation to satisfy the customers.

In the third step in the destination decision making process there is still some information search taking place but after the second stage there is now less options to do research about so the information is more complex than in the previous stage. The options that are left all have more or less the same features so the gathered information has to result in a decision at this stage. The final decision would preferably reach as many of the customers wants and needs as possible. If the target group are people who like convenience, a relevant destination choice would be a place where the currency is the same as in the target group's home country or where the used facilities are close to transportation services so everything is easily accessible. These few alternatives that are left now have to be evaluated and compared to each other. Possible risks have to be taken in consideration to decrease the possibility of problems later on. Risks at destinations will be gone through more deeply in the next chapter. Other relevant information to look at would be how expensive one alternative is compared to another.

After this a choice has been made. The ideal destination for the package trip has been found and now the planning of the trip can begin. Accommodation and transportation has to be booked, possible time schedule has to be planned and marketing of the product is put into process. Additional to this fourth step of the process, it would be safe to choose a plan B option too. If the first choice destination shows to have a problem of any kind it is easier to have a plan B, the second best option, close than to start the whole process all over again.

The fifth and last step is done after the trip itself has been made. This is the post-purchase evaluation stage where feedback is given. The customers will give their honest opinion about the trip and let the trip organizer know what they were more

or less satisfied with. With this information future trips can be improved and the trip organizer would get feedback as well.

(Southern Cross University E-Publications. Destination decision making and consumer demands: identifying critical factors)

10 RISKS AT DESTINATIONS

When choosing a destination for a trip it is important to look at all the potential risks. In case of a problem it is easier to solve it if the trip organizer is prepared for it.

There is a reason why tourists do not travel to countries such as Iraq as often as to for example France. The reason for this is the increased chance of war in the former destination than in the latter. War is one of the main reasons why tourists choose not to travel to a specific country. When a country is at war, the traffic to that country is often stopped and tourists are sent back if they already are in the area. It is hard to predict where and when a war is going to start but to do research about the chosen destinations history will help the trip organizer to find possible threats.

Another war related risk factor is terrorism. Terrorism is even harder to predict but when a tourist destination gets attacked by terrorists the tourism slows down at least for a while. If the terrorist hit destination has a large tourism market it will regain it when the situation has calmed down. Many tourism destinations such as New York and London have gained back their credibility as safe tourist destinations after serious terrorist attacks. When a package trip is being made the trip organizer thoroughly chooses a destination for the trip that is clear from these two mentioned risks at that moment. This way the customers will not be intimidated with buying the final product.

Greece is an example of another risk in destination decision making. During the past two years Greece has had economic problems that have had a big impact on the tourism market in their country. And if the tourism slows down, the economic problems might increase even more. Nonetheless, if a specific country is

economically unstable their tourist destinations can still be travelled to. The economic problems are often least noticeable in those areas of the country. For instance during the economic crisis in Greece, tourism to the mainland decreased whilst there was not any clear changes in sold travels to Rhodes or Crete.

One risk that has similar impacts on tourism as terrorism is natural disasters. Natural disasters slow down tourism to the damaged destination as long as it takes to rebuilt it. After the tsunami in 2004 in the Indian Ocean tourists were not allowed or chose not to go through with their bookings to Thailand, which decreased trips there rapidly. However, Thailand is a country that is dependent on tourism so the rebuilt of the hurt destinations was done in a short time and tourists were travelling to their country again. If a trip organizer is planning a trip to for example Thailand when this kind of disaster strikes it is wise to change destination for the trip to increase the chance of the final product to sell, since the consumers will choose a destination that is safer to travel to.

There are numerous other risks that the trip organizer has to consider when planning a package trip. There are factors such as past or present criminality, drugs, violence, politics or deceases that might affect the customers not to purchase the final package. The factors that can should be avoided to increase sales and the trip organizer has to be prepared for other disasters which might occur during the planning stage or during the actual trip.

10.1 Risk management

Even though all measures have been taken to avoid problems during the trip, there might still be some unfortunate event that has to be solved. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the key word for success is preparation. By being prepared for everything the problems does not have to mean failure of the final product but simply a delay and change of plans. For this to be true it is vital that there is a plan B for the trip and even plan C if possible.

The risk management process can be divided into four steps. The process starts before the actual threat has struck. By risk identification the trip organizer reflects

over what kind of problems could harm the different parts of or the whole product. When it is clear what the threat is, if it is the weather, transportation delays or illness among customers the rest of the process can be continued.

The second step is risk measurement and evaluation. Now it is time to estimate how bad a specific threat is for the planned trip and in which way it damages it. This can be done by controlling the frequency of the possible risk and doing research about the history and how it has behaved before. If the risk is identified as a weather issue, the consequences might be that the transportation is delayed or even stopped. This means that if the trip organizer is not prepared for it to happen, the travel group would not get to their final destination and they would like their money back. For the trip organizer this would result in further economic problems.

When the seriousness of the situation is measured step three can be taken into action. This is the reduction stage where the question asked is 'What can be done to lower the risk of the threat to happen?'. Everything that can be done to prevent the damage and if there is nothing to be done the trip organizer has to have, as mentioned earlier, a plan B. In cases of sudden unpredictable disasters such as natural disasters there is nothing that the trip organizer can do to prevent it. Hence, the measures that can be taken are to have a second choice of destination or time of travel. Plan B should be completely different from the first plan in the way that the destination has to have a lower risk of having the same problems as the previous one otherwise it will not help the trip organizer in proceeding with the planning.

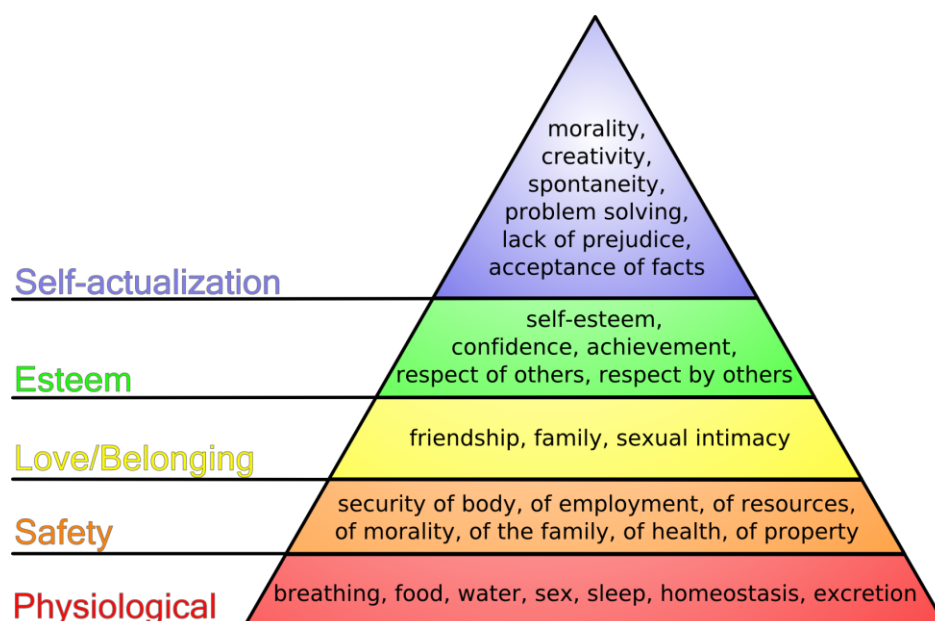
The fourth and last step is planned at the same time as the previous ones but executed after the actual threat has hit. In the planning stage economic impacts are faced and measured. The trip organizer evaluates how much it would cost to repair the damages. The fact that the customers might require refunds if they are not satisfied has to be recognized and to minimize the economic impacts there are other ways to satisfy the consumers. If it is a smaller group or a family that is affected the trip organizer can give them the option to change the time of travel

and giving them an upgrade of some sort, for example a better room at the hotel or tickets to an attraction at the destination. If the travel group is a bigger assembly it will be hard to get everyone to agree on a new date for travel. In this case a possible solution is to give the customers their money back as vouchers that can be used within two years. This way the trip organizer minimizes the economic impacts and the customers in a way get their refunds. The importance is in the customers being satisfied and the trip organizer getting positive feedback.

All the information about the process is saved for future reference to help the trip organizer improve the trip the next time it is made.

(Hudson, 2010, page 124-126)

11 MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



In 1943 physiologist Abraham Maslow published a paper with research and findings about human motivation. He showed his findings in form of a pyramid with five different levels. What he wanted to illustrate with the pyramid was that everyone starts at the bottom with the physiological needs. As shown in the picture that is the level of basic needs such as breathing, eating, drinking and sleeping. A person has to go through these needs to get to get to the next level of

human needs. First when a person's need of, for example, food is filled there will be a need for safety.

Safety is the second level where the need of security of body, money, family and health has to be filled. The satisfaction is reached when a person has roof over his or her family's heads and a permanent job from where this person gets salary to pay things like rent.

Maslow shows with the pyramid that the social needs create the third and middle level of human needs. People are dependent on each other in the society and at this stage there is a need of feeling like they belong somewhere. It could be at the workplace or at home with family and friends. People need to feel like they are being loved to reach the last two levels of the pyramid.

When a person has plenty of food and water, feels safe about all the different aspects in life and has people in his or her life that gives the feeling of belonging there is going to be a need of achievement. This is shown as the esteem level in the picture. Here people want to do activities or live life in the way that their self-esteem is increased. They want to respect others and by the same time be respected themselves. The way to fulfil this need is very personal and it can be done in many different ways. The basic idea is that a person has to feel like he or she has achieved something and feels more confident than before.

The last level is a further step of the need of achievement. This is the level where people try to find the meaning of life and their role in the society. Maslow describes self-actualization as follows:

'It refers to the person's desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially.

The specific form that these needs will take will of course vary greatly from person to person. In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in still another it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions'. (Maslow, 1943, pp. 382– 383).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is clearly shown in tourism. Tourists had identified what they want from their trip and according to that chooses the right destination, accommodation, restaurants, transportation, activities and attractions. By analyzing the trip that a tourist makes it can be shown in what stage of the pyramid the tourist is.

In the next chapter ten trends in consumer behavior are presented and some of them are clearly from a specific level of the pyramid.

(Simply psychology, Maslow's hierarchy of needs)

12 TRENDS INFLUENCING GOLF TOURISM

Currently there are growing trends in consumer behavior within the golf tourism market. Some trends are older ones and then there are a couple of newer ones that are growing rapidly.

12.1 Learning and enrichment

This first trend is from the upper half of Maslow's pyramid. Golf travelers are in search of learning something whilst travelling and the experience should provide them with increased understanding in for example a new culture or politics.

The travelers value an authentic, hands-on experience where they get to be interactive and create personal connection to places and people. Golf courses' awareness of this trend is increasing and the supply of packages which include both golf and cooking classes or language lessons is growing.

(Hudson, 2010, page 43-44)

12.2 Environmentally friendly products

The demand for greener tourism products and services is one of the newer growing trends. Every year more people become more aware of the nature and global warming which has led to an increasing demand for greener tourism. This means everything from green values at a hotel to ecological food in a restaurant.

In Las Vegas there is an association named Southern Nevada Water Authority. Out of 48 courses in Las Vegas, 26 are participating in this association. SNWA's mission is to reduce the water usage with the help of different kinds of businesses. The golf courses are helping by eradicating unnecessary grass on their courses and reducing irrigation by as much as they can without killing the grass.

Another golf resort that has high green values is Mauna Lani Resort in Hawaii. They show their values by selling recycled biodegradable products such as tees, golf shirts and golf visors.

(Hudson, 2010, page 45-46 and SNWA, Conservation, Waterwaste)

12.3 Health-consciousness

Connected to the environmentally friendly trend is the demand for healthy food. As the awareness of eco-friendly products increase, so does the demand of healthy products and services. The goal for the tourists is to have a healthy psyche, body and soul. This is reached by eating healthy food, exercising and relaxing. This target group is looking for restaurants with a wide range of healthy food and beverages and golf courses near to spas or gyms. Many golf resorts have taken on this trend and have spas and gyms at the premises to attract this target group. (Hudson, 2010, page 47)

12.4 Corporate and social responsibility

Added to the two previous values of a supplier, the travelers prefer companies that have strong work ethics and treat their employees well. This is a hard factor to prove for the customer since the companies will not market themselves as a company that gives to low salary to the employees or have too long shifts. But if the staff is treated badly, it shows in the customer service they are giving. If the staff does not feel comfortable in their job it will affect the service in a bad way and this might lead to bad feedback in for example booking pages online. Consequently travelers that value the corporate and social responsibility would not chose that specific hotel as their accommodation. That leads us to the next

trend in consumer behavior influencing golf tourism; service quality.
(Hudson, 2010, page 48)

12.5 Service quality

Golf travelling has come to the stage that simply a good golf experience is not good enough. The demand of having high quality accommodation and food combined with their round of golf is increasing.

This is a trend that every single company should take seriously. If a hotel does not market themselves specifically as environmentally friendly or does not have any outstanding extra service that can be look past. But the quality of the services they are providing is a something that every corporation can and should keep high.

If the customers are happy, it is a bigger chance that they will return and in the future become loyal customers that spends a lot of money on the provided products and services. In a marketing point of view it is also important to keep the customers satisfied because it is proved that bad reputation moves faster than good reputation.

(Hudson, 2010, page 49-50)

12.6 Nostalgia

For travelers that value safety another important feature in their vacation is nostalgia. Travelers that have been travelling to different places might have one favorite destination due to the local food, people or weather.

To choose a destination that is known from before by the consumer makes it a save choice. If the experience has been good in that specific place before, it is likely that it will be good again. When booking a trip and there is a lack of time it is safe to choose a familiar destination. It saves time and effort when the traveler does not have to make any research.

Another side of this trend is that the tourists want to re-live their youth. They want to travel back to that place where they went with their family decades ago where

they created good childhood memories. Maybe these travelers bring their own children to that same place to bring the traditions forward.

(Hudson, 2010, page 46)

12.7 Customization

Customization is a need from the top of Maslow's pyramid. Travelers want to feel like they play an important role in how their trip works a package. The reason is often lack of time. If the time for extra activities is limited travelers want to ensure that they get to experience the things they really want and not just activities that are planned by a tour guide.

To satisfy this target group the package should include different options when it comes to activities. There can be a couple of different activities to choose from and then some additional ones to buy on the side. The golfing experience could be combined with fishing, photography or seminars to attract the widest range of customers. These kinds of tailor made golf tours are getting more popular as the demand is increasing.

(Hudson, 2010, page 47-48)

12.8 Convenience

As mentioned earlier the convenience is an important thing for golf tourists since they have a lot of baggage when travelling. The transportation is one feature that has to be convenient in order to satisfy the customers. The transportation should be easily accessible and convenient in the way that there is as few stops and changes as possible.

At airports worldwide self-check-in terminals are becoming more popular. They help by decreasing long lines at the check-in points and saves time and effort for both the staff and the travelers.

Location is another thing that affects the convenience. For the trip to go smoothly the location of the hotel should be easily accessible with some kind of transportation for example buss or taxi and the location between the

accommodation, the golf course, restaurants and other attractions should be short and with good connections.

Additional golf services that improve convenience are club rentals. Golf resorts or golf courses should have the possibility to give sets of golf clubs and other golf equipment for rent to the players. The travel package could include the rental services or it could be an additional service to buy for those who need it. For example, HRS Golf in San Diego, California is a golf resort that offer brand new top brand Taylor Made or Callaway golf club sets for rent to their customers. The equipment is delivered and picked-up at any golf course in San Diego by the company itself.

(Hudson, 2010, page 48)

12.9 Spiritual enlightenment

Golfers interested in meditation and religion are growing as a target group. One opportunity for companies is to provide their customers with spa facilities where there can be meditation done in groups or in private. There could, for example, be yoga classes that the customers could take part in. Another opportunity would be to have religious services at the premises or good connections to the nearest church.

In Thailand religion is an important part of their everyday life. And with golf tourism as a growing income source they have recognized the economic benefits that come with it. That is why many golf courses have clear connections to the religious rites of the country mostly in design. Holiday Golf Thailand has taken it to the next level and provides the golfers with information about how to enter and behave in their religious temples. There are strict rules of what to wear and how to greet the monks at the temples and Holiday Golf Thailand is now helping the tourists to behave the correct way.

(Hudson, 2010, page 49)

12.10 Experience

The last trend is the need to have an extraordinary experience. Travelers want to get a kick whilst traveling and having something out of the ordinary to tell and show to their friends and family at home. That gives the traveler something memorable and the traveler feels more special when he or she has done something that is not so common or typical for that person. Experiences can be different for one person to another but the common factor is that it is an activity that gives excitement and a contrast to the person's everyday life.

When it comes to golf experiences the most common way to give the golfers a unique experience is by designing themed golf courses. Around the world there are golf courses designed to look unique to attract more tourists and stand out from the competitors since the golf courses often look a lot alike with the grass, ponds and hills. By having courses that on the map look like different countries or cartoon characters makes golfers more interested in trying something new and they can be more motivated to travel a longer way to experience this.

One golf resort that is very famous for providing the golfers with an over the top unique experience is Legend Golf and Safari Resort in South Africa. As most of the golf courses worldwide this course is an 18 hole course. The difference is that Legend Golf and Safari has one additional service, the 19th hole. The tee of the 19th hole is situated on the Hanglip Mountain and is only reached by helicopter. The whole experience starts with a helicopter ride to the top of the mountain that reaches a vertical distance of 400m from the green. The golfers get a chance to hit the ball to the green and watch the 27 seconds long fall of the ball until it reaches the ground. The green is shaped as the map of Africa which adds an extraordinary feature to the whole experience. Golfers can play the 19th hole after the first 18 holes or then play it separately, either way the price is US\$350. (Hudson, 2010, page 50-51)

13 CUSTOMER SERVICE

One way of satisfying customers is to provide them with a high quality service. The aim is to exceed customer expectations to keep them using the products and services provided. Since the golf market is growing, the competition is as well and that forces individual businesses to challenge their rivals to keep their customer base.

The earlier mentioned target group, the Baby Boomers, is a critical group of customers with high expectations which makes it even more important for the service provider to focus on the service quality. The Baby Boomers are willing to pay more to get better service and that makes them valuable customers.

To provide a high quality service that is convenient for the customers there has to be well trained staff. The knowledge of the staff should be high and they should be experts in their line of work. If a customer asks for the directions to a specific place the staff should know the area or know where to get the information from.

In a hotel for example the receptionists are the face of the hotel. They are the people who make the customers feel welcomed so it is in the hotels best interest to have a happy staff. If the staff is being treated well by their supervisors and have a good work environment they are motivated to perform better towards the customers. Two ways to motivate the staff would be rewards such as Christmas bonuses and by having a maximum of 8-10 hour long work shifts.

Additional services should also be provided. A hotel should have Wi-Fi, tourist information available and the customer should be able to pay with different payment methods. This way the business are competing in the field and the customers gets a convenient stay.

As a final way to solve potential problems the staff should be able to give a disappointed customer an upgrade. This requires the customer to complain in time and not after the stay. If the staff gets a complaint at check in or early in the stay,

for example if the air condition is not working, the staff should be able to give the customer another room and if possible an upgrade.

When the trip organizer chooses accommodation, activities and attractions for the package he/she should take the service quality in consideration. On booking sites on the internet and in travel guides there are comments of both critics and private tourists that have experienced the service at a specific site and those comments can give the trip organizer a picture of how the service quality is. The organizer does not want to be the reason that the consumers get a poor service quality at their hotel or at the golf course.

(Hudson, 2010, page 123-124)

14 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout the report several theories have been used in order to introduce the reader to field of golf tourism. These theories will also act as guidelines for the construction of the conducted survey.

The reader is provided with theories about who makes a group tour package, what the package includes and who buys the final product. The tour organizer's responsibilities are presented and in the survey it will be studied which responsibilities the customers value highest. The survey will also cover the different parts that are included in a group travel package based on the ones discussed in the theoretical part of this report. When it comes to the consumers, theories about golfers' history, present and future are discussed.

Other theories are the destination decision making process, facts about risks and how to prevent and solve them, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and trends influencing golf tourism. The risk management on previous trips will be studied in the following research to find out the respondents' history of problems when travelling with a group. Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows the reader the different levels of the traveler's needs and these levels are shown in the trends that were discussed. The named trends are forming one question in the survey and it is

learned which one of these trends is the most important one for the respondents and which is the least important.

15 EMPIRICAL STUDY

15.1 Case study

Every year Pirilö Golf Center in Jakobstad arranges a golf trip abroad for its members. For four years the organizer of these trips has been Johan. Johan lives in Jakobstad and is himself a member at Pirilö, captain of the organization and a frequent golf player. During the four years he has been the tour organizer the trips have been arranged for a group of around 30 people. The trips have been made to Italy and he has himself been participating in the trips as a fellow traveler and guide. The demand for the trips is growing which increases the pressure on the tour organizer.

To put the discussed theories of the report into a practical frame a case study about these golf trips is conducted. The aim of the report as a whole is to help Johan improve his tour arranger skills and this is done by first presenting him with the theories and facts of what a tour arranger's responsibilities are. Secondly a survey is made to be able to find his strengths and weaknesses. This way it is possible to conclude what needs to be improved.

15.2 Reason for study

To help Johan improve his skills in package tour arrangement a questionnaire is send out to both golfers who have participated in his previous trips and to potential new customers. The survey will give information about which destinations, activities and trends the customers prefer. The results will also show the positive and negative feedback that Johan receives from his previous trips.

The aim of the research is to observe the golfers travel habits as well as their wants and needs. This is reached by sending out a questionnaire to a group of 160 golfers from Jakobstad and municipalities nearby like Larsmo, Pedersöre and Oravais. The questionnaire is send through an online forum where members of

Pirilö Golf Centre can participate. These 160 members are in different ages from 15 to 65 both female and male.

15.3 Research method

To get the needed information for a survey the right research method has to be chosen. Depending on what the research topic is like either a quantitative or qualitative research is conducted. Qualitative research is mostly used for case studies and observations when the results have to be high quality and the source as few as possible. For the survey conducted in this report the quantitative research method is chosen. This method is ideal for surveys where the reliability of the results is reached by having as many responses as possible to e.g. a questionnaire, experiments or structured interviews.

15.4 About the questionnaire

The topic of the questionnaire is 'Travelling habits in golf tourism' and it is stated that the survey is done by a student at VAMK, University of Applied Sciences for a student's final thesis. The questionnaire is in Swedish since the majority of the members in the forum are Swedish speaking. However, the optional text boxes in the questionnaire shows that a couple of the respondents were Finnish. The respondents are able to stay completely anonymous.

The members of the forum had a week to fill out the survey and of the 160 members, 90 people saw the post within this week and 48 replied. This means that the response rate is 53,33 %.

The questionnaire consists of 15 questions. The whole questionnaire is attached at the end of the thesis. The questions are divided into background, travel habits, Italy trips and personal opinions.

To prevent the respondents from feeling overwhelmed by the questions in the survey, the first section of questions are relatively easy for anyone to answer. By having simple questions in the beginning, respondents get to feel confident about their knowledge and are gradually prepared for the following questions.

The respondents are asked to choose their gender and age from different options that were given. The gender was divided into men and women and the ages were divided into groups of ten years, e.g. under 20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and over 60 years old. The last question in the background section is how long they had been golfing. To answer this question the respondents had to fill a box with text themselves. This way the optimal responses are collected.

In the second section the respondents presents their travel habits. The first question asks where they most often travel to play golf. Seven options are given and only one could be chosen. The options were within Finland, Sweden, other Nordic countries, Europe, America, Asia and Other. The following question shows how often they travel, both domestically and internationally. To get the responses to be relatively similar, five options of times travelling per year were given. That way answers like “regularly” or “rarely” can be avoided. The last question guides the respondent either to the following section or to the fourth and last one depending on their answer. The respondents have to answer the question “How many times have you participated in the previous Italy trips?”. The options are from 0-4 and if a respondent answers ‘0’ he or she is guided to skip the following three questions and continue onto question 10. The ones who chooses an option between 1 and 4 is to fill in the questionnaire as it is.

The following three questions are about the trips to Italy that Johan has organized four times in the past. It is studied if the customers have any chance to affect e.g. on the choice of destination and if the answer is yes the respondent is asked to fill in a box with how the feedback was given. With the two next questions problems are discussed. First, the respondents get to discuss the problems that had occurred during some of the trips. The options for the respondents are five common problems like problems with the time schedule, problems within the travel group, health problems, problems with finding from point A to B and problems with the weather. It is also possible to answer ‘no problems’ or ‘other’. After this, there is a follow up question. The question is “If yes, how was the problem handled?”. Four different solutions were given for the respondents to choose from. They are; the problem was solved by the trip organizer, the problem was solved by the travel

group, I solved the problem myself, the problem was never solved. By having these questions Johan is able to see the problems that have occurred during some of his trips and he can avoid the ones that are possible to avoid in his tours in the future. In the end a box is left in the end of this section where the respondents can give positive feedback to Johan.

In the last section the respondents give their personal opinions about trends and preferences. This section is mandatory for every respondent. The first question is built so that there are five of the trip organizers responsibilities presented and the respondent has to grade each one from 1 to 4 with 1 being not important and 4 being very important. The question asked is “How important is it that the organizer is...” and the five responsibilities are being up-to-date with travelling- and golf trends, choosing the right channel for marketing, aware of the customer’s wants and needs, thinking about the future (e.g. attracting juniors) and good at solving potential problems during the trip.

The next question is in a form of a box where the respondent can write his/her answer freely. The question asks where he or she most would want to travel to play golf. The respondent is guided to name a country, city or a special golf course. As a follow up question the respondent also has to choose his or her ideal length of a golf trip from the options less than three days, 3-6 days, one week, two weeks or more than two weeks. Question 13 gives the respondent the chance to give his or her personal opinion about what is important during a golf trip. Nine features of a trip are given and it is possible to choose more than one option. There is alternative answers like e.g. the quality of the golf course, food, accommodation, price and having planned activities during the trip.

The last question is based on the trends discussed earlier in the report. The ten trends are the most important ones in the tourism industry right now. They affect both on the demand and supply in the industry which makes it an essential topic to study. The question is formed the same way as question 13 with the scale from 1 to 4, 1 being not important and 4 being very important. The question asked here is “How important is the following tourism trend for you?” The reason for this

question is to give Johan the knowledge about what his customers' wants, needs and personal values are.

Before posting the filled questionnaire, the respondents had the chance to write any other comments they would like to give, either about travelling, golf or the questionnaire.

16 EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

As mentioned, 48 answered questionnaires were received and after evaluating them it can be said that the results gave clear insight on the golfers in Jakobstad and the municipalities nearby and their travel habits and preferences. The received number of replies was sufficient for the purpose and there could clearly be seen a pattern in the responses with a few exceptions to the rule.

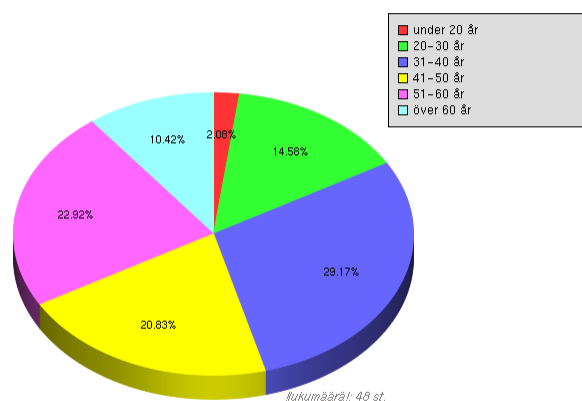
The fact that the majority of golfers are middle aged men is verified with the responses of this survey. Out of the 48 respondents, 39 were men and 9 were women which makes the percent division 81 to 19 percentages. When it comes to the age, over 80 percent of the respondents were aged between 31 to over 60 and the scarce 20 percent were under 30 years old. Of all the age groups, the most common one was 31-40 years old with its 29,17%, second most commonly chosen one was 51-60 years on 22,92 % and third 41-50 years old that was 20,83%. Only one out of these 48 people was under 20 years old. The results of these two first questions prove that the theory studied in this thesis is accurate.

With the third question it was shown that the level of experience in golf varied between almost every respondent. There were respondents who were over 60 years old that had been golfing for 30 years and others who were the same age but had been playing golf for one year. Also, there were there respondents who were 20-30 years old with a golf background of ten years and others in the same age group with a one year experience in the sport. This shows that even though the average golfer is between 40-60 years old, the level of experience can differ from one golf season to a whole lifetime. The answers to this question were everything

between one year and 35 years and the average age when calculated was 11 years. The mode value was ten years and the median is 9,5.

2. Ålder [ei otsikkoja]

Svarens relativa fördelning



The results about the golfers' travel habits gave an insight on travelling patterns of the golfers here in Jakobstad. On the question where the respondents were asked where they most often travel for golf 56% answered that they most often travel domestically. 22% of the respondents, or 11 people, give Europe as their first choice of destination, 12,5 % answered Sweden and 6, 25% most often travel to America. One respondent chose the alternative "other Northern country" and none chose Asia or other destination.

When looking at the results the next question gave it can be understood that the majority of golfers in the Jakobstad-area travel between one and six times per year. 29 respondents, which makes 60,4 percent out of the 48 received questionnaires travel 1-3 times per year. Almost 30 percent of the respondents answered that they travel between four and six times per year, four persons travel less than once a year and one person travels once a month. These results show that it is most common that golfers in the surveyed area travel between one and six times a year but also that there are exceptions that both travel more and less than the majority.

If the results of the two previous questions are combined it shows that the golfers travel between one and six times per year, and choose to travel within Finland. These two results can effect each other so that if a tourist plans a trip once a year the tourist can afford to travel further away and spend more money on that one trip. If a tourist travels up to six times per year the trips have to be cheaper in order for the tourist to be able to travel that number of times. The choice made depends on whether the golf tourist prefers quality or quantity.

The main objective of the sixth question was to divide the respondents into two groups, the ones who have been participating in previous Italy trips and the ones who have not. This way the questions concerning the Italy trips were answered by the ones who have participated and the results are reliable. From all the respondents, a group of 19 had participated once or more in the organized trips. Seven people had travelled once with Johan, two had participated two times, three answered three times and another group of seven had participated in all the four of Johan's trips. In these results there was no clear pattern, but the question served its purpose to guide the respondents further in the questionnaire.

The first question concerning the trips to Italy was about the travelers chance to affect different decisions that are made about the trip, e.g. in the destination decision making process. Fourteen people denied that they would have any chance to affect the decisions while five of the respondents said that they have had a chance to influence on the decisions through feedback, discussions and by suggesting destinations. All of the five respondents that have had a chance to be a part of the decision making process answered the follow up question where they were asked how they reached Johan.

One of the organizer's responsibilities is to have the ability to solve potential problems that might occur during the tour. To survey how the travelers find the risk management in the trips they have participated in, they were asked two questions concerning this matter. The first question was if they have had any problems and they were presented with five types of problems and a "no" and "other" options. The majority, 14 people, of the respondents had not had any

problems during these trips which left five people with some kind of trouble. The remaining options (problems with the time schedule, problems within the travel group, problems with finding from point A to B, problems with the weather and other) were each chosen by one respondent. No one had had any health problems. The results of this question give a view over which problems have occurred in the past and could occur in the future. When an organizer is aware of the risks, the risk management process can be started and it is easier for the organizer to prevent the problems from occurring in the future.

According to the responses on the follow up question the problems were solved alone or with the help of the trip organizer. Two had solved their problems themselves, one had gotten help from the organizer and one answered that the problem was never solved. There were only four replies to this question which makes the results lack reliability. Even though the results say that two out of four problems are solved by the traveler alone, it cannot be expected that the rate would be 50% in a larger group of people. There should have needed to be several responses to make that kind of a rule.

The final comments about the trip were optional and from a research point of view the comments did not contribute with any significant information. On the other hand Johan got some positive feedback to get positive feedback in relation to the discussions about the problems of his trips. Some positive feedback that he got was that the destination was valued highly for its nature and culture. The golf experience and the group of travelers have been appreciated by several respondents and it was pointed out that the fact that there have been planned activities combined with free time lets the travelers get the best out of their time travelling.

The fourth and last section of the questionnaire is answered by both the ones who have participated in the trips to Italy and the ones who have not. That makes the results of the following questions more reliable than the three previous ones. To survey what qualities the trip organizer should have according to the travelers, the respondents were asked to evaluate five different skills. These five skills were

chosen in a way that they would cover most of the organizer's responsibilities in as few topics as possible.

The first skill to grade was the skill of being up-to-date with travel- and golf trends. 12 people answered that it is very important, 19 people that it is important, 13 that it is not so important and 4 graded the skill to not being important at all. These results show that almost 65 percent of the respondents think that it is at least important for the organizer to keep himself or herself updated when it comes to current trends in the golf tourism industry.

Following skill was the skill of knowing where to market the product to be able to reach the target group. Marketing skills were very important for 11 people and as in the previous question there were 19 respondents who valued this skill as important. Ten people graded the quality as not so important and eight respondents as not important at all. To compare how highly the respondents value this skill over the previous one the results show that 62,5 percent value the latter skill as important or higher.

The third feature to evaluate was knowing the wants and needs of the customers. The results of this question differed to the two previous ones. Here it is clearly shown how the travelers value this particular skill. Over 50 percent, 28 people, of the respondents think that knowing your target group is very important. Another 16 people valued the skill as important, only one thought that it is not so important and three respondents answered not important.

As discussed earlier in the report it is important for an industry like the golf industry to focus on the younger players since they are the potential future customers. To have a strong base of juniors gives the industry a strong future. But to attract younger people and children to play golf requires extra attention. To attract youngsters and children on the golf trips there need to be arranged activities and competitions for them and it is vital not to stop once the juniors have started but to continue making the game interesting for them in order to make them want to continue. Even though this is a very important topic to talk about in every kind of industry, the results of the next question show that the

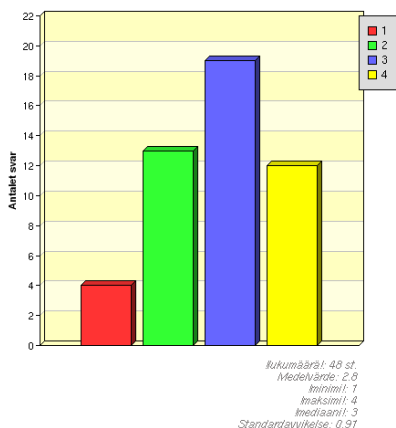
respondents of this survey do not value the skill of thinking about the future so highly compared to the other four features. 19 of the respondents think that this quality is not so important and four consider the skill as not important at all. Still, there were 15 people who see it as important and ten graded it as very important. These results show that 48 percent of the respondents think that attracting juniors and thinking about the future is not so important or not at all.

The fifth and last question in this survey is the knowledge how to solve problems during the trip. 27 people, which makes over 50 percent, valued the skill as very important and another 16 respondents graded it as important. Only three respondents saw the quality as not so important and two as not important at all. That means that 89,6 percent of the respondents thinks that problem solving is important or very important and that makes this skill the second most important one according to the findings of this survey.

When looking at all the results of the question “How important is it that the organizer...” it can be stated that there are two features that are valued as important, two as not important and one in the middle. One of the two most important qualities was having the knowledge about who the target group is and their wants and needs. The second was the ability to solve the possible problems occurring during the trip. The two valued as the least important qualities were marketing skills and thinking about the future. According to the findings, being up-to-date with trends in tourism and golf is placed as the third most important quality out of these five, placing it the middle one.

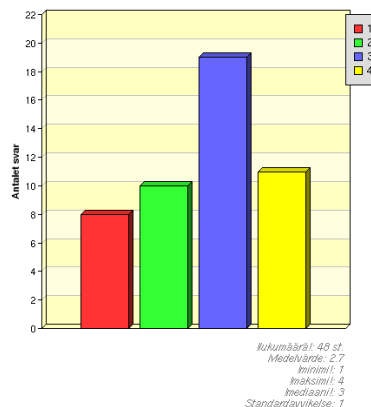
10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:
håller sig uppdaterad om aktuella res- och golfrender

Svarens absoluta fördelning



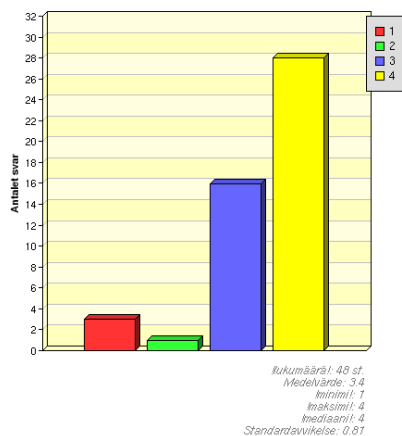
10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:
marknadsför i rätt forum (internet, tv, tidning)

Svarens absoluta fördelning



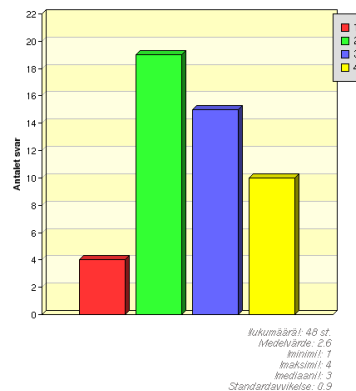
10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:
vet vad kunderna/resenårerna vill ha

Svarens absoluta fördelning



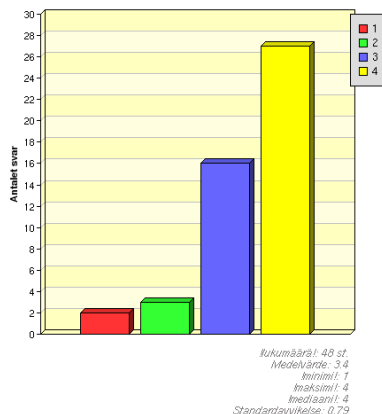
10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:
tårker på framtiden (t.ex. locka juniorer)

Svarens absoluta fördelning



10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:
år bra på att lsa problem under resans gånå

Svarens absoluta fördelning



Tables 1-5, Question 10 "How important is it that the organizer..)

To help Johan understand over where golfers want to make their golf trips the respondents were asked to write counties, cities or specific golf courses where they would travel to for golf if they could chose themselves. As a follow up they were also asked how long their ideal golf trip would be. As mentioned earlier the respondents were able to write in their own words and there were no options to choose from. There were five destinations that were clearly mentioned most. The one with the most responses was USA which was chosen by 12 respondents and out of these 12 American destinations, Florida got six responses. The second most commonly chosen destination was Scotland which was written down by nine people. Other popular destinations were Ireland, Thailand and Spain. Besides these five there were 11 other destinations that were seen once or twice in the results. Examples of these destinations are Dubai, England, Turkey, Morocco, Poland, Denmark, Sweden and South Africa. When it comes to the length of the trip there was no pattern since the division between the options was 17, 12, 10 and 9. No one chose the option less than three days and the most commonly chosen answer was one week. 3-6 weeks was chosen by 10 people, two weeks by 12 people and more than two weeks by nine people. The results these two questions gave was that the ideal golf trip would last for one week and to please the largest group of people the trip would be made to Florida or Scotland. When planning the next trip Johan can use these results as guidelines and feedback to develop his trips.

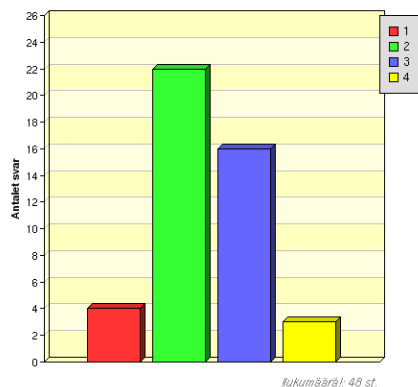
The results of question number 13 show a list of what the golf tourists value as the most important features of the trip. The aim of this question is to find out what the organizer should focus on when planning the trip and which features that the travelers do not see as important topics to focus on. The results of this question will save the organizer time, money and effort when planning trips in the future. The respondents had the opportunity to choose one or several options in this question. This way the results are more reliable and the respondents do not have to choose only one option if they value several equally. According to the findings the quality of the golf course and the travel group are the two most important features in a golf trip. The quality of the golf course was valued as the most important feature by 35 respondents and the company by 36 people. The price and

weather were also chosen by over 50% of the respondents each. 21 people value accommodation as an important feature and food was important to 15 respondents. The remaining three features were the least important ones according to the findings. Only two people thought that luxury is one of the most important features, five people sees it important to have a large amount of free time when travelling with a group and no one had chosen the option to have a lot of planned activities. The conclusion of these results is that the travelers value the travel group highly but still do not want to have a lot of planned activities with the whole group. Golf is a social sport so the fact that the respondents have a high value of the quality of the golf course as well as of the company travelling and playing golf with makes sense.

The final question in the questionnaire introduced the current trends that are influencing golf tourism to the respondents and gave them a chance to reflect on how important they personally think the trends are. After evaluating the results it was shown that the most appreciated trend among these options was convenience where 93,5 percent of the respondents valued it to be important or very important. Service quality was the second most important feature with almost 78 percent of the replies being important or very important. The two options that were measured to be the least important ones were nostalgia and spiritual enlightenment. 95,7 percent of the respondents think that nostalgia is not so important or not important at all and 88,9 percent answered the same when it came to spiritual enlightenment. Learning and enrichment was valued important or very important by 42,2 percent of the respondents whilst only 28,3 percent saw environmentally friendly trips as important or very important. For 26,6 percent of the respondents it is important or very important to be conscious of health while travelling. 58,7 percent sees customization as important or very important and having an unique experience was rated the same by 55,6 percent of the respondents.

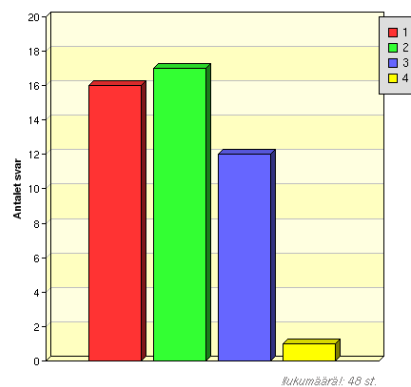
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
lärorika resor (matlagningsresor, golflektioner osv.)

Svarens absoluta fördelning



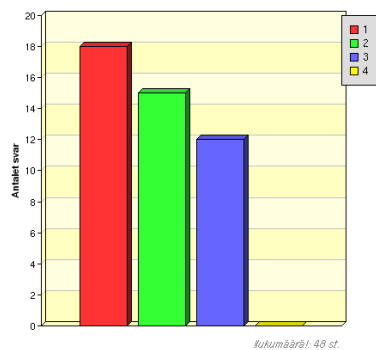
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
miljövänliga resor

Svarens absoluta fördelning



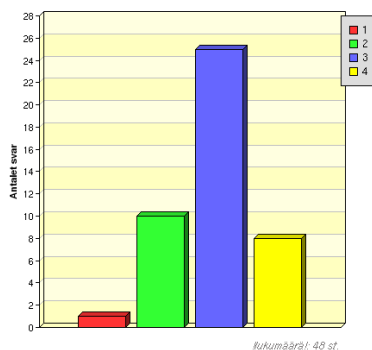
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
hälso-resor

Svarens absoluta fördelning



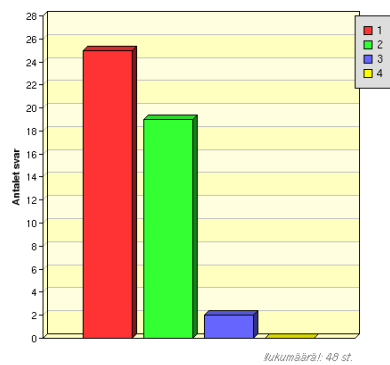
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
hög servicekvalité

Svarens absoluta fördelning



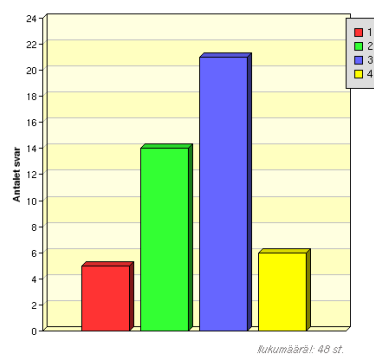
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
nostalgiska resor (att resa dit du varit som ung)

Svarens absoluta fördelning



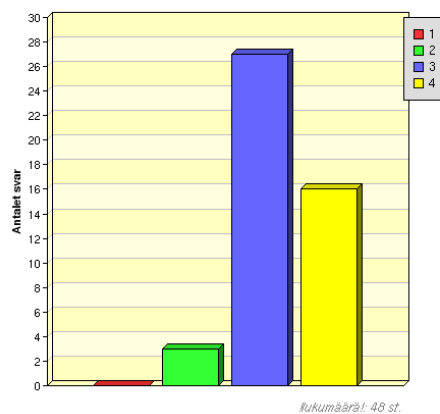
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
egendesignade resor

Svarens absoluta fördelning



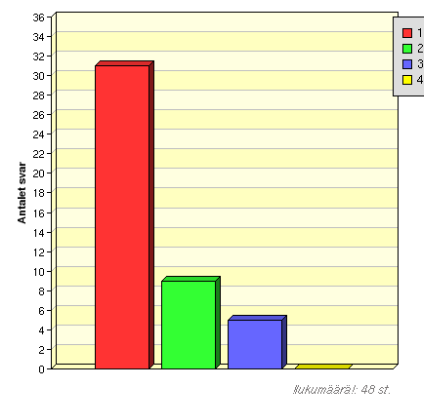
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
bekvämlighet (smidig transport)

Svarens absoluta fördelning



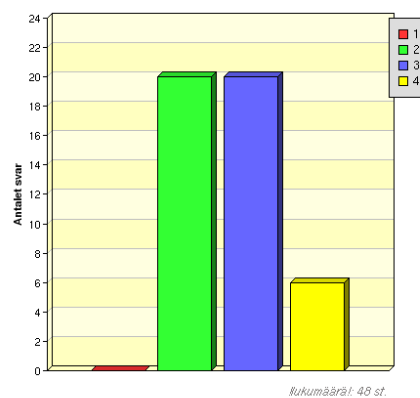
14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
religion

Svarens absoluta fördelning



14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?
unik upplevelse

Svarens absoluta fördelning



Tables 6-14, Question 14 "How important is the following trend to you?"

Discussed results are helpful for the organizer in future tour arrangements. The results show that the organizer should focus on providing the customers with convenient transportation and high quality service in order to satisfy the majority of the customers. And when looking at the importance of the qualities of the organizer, one of the highest valued was knowing the customers' wants and needs. Now when it has been found out what the respondents wants and needs are it is important for the organizer to acknowledge them.

16.1 Suggestions of improvement

The reason of the survey was to give golf trip organizers an overview of what golf tourists want from their golf trips. The questions the golf travelers were asked were linked to the facts discussed earlier in the thesis to make a connection between the examined theories and the practical survey.

There are improvement ideas for the organizer that can be found in the answers from the survey. The first section of the questionnaire shows the organizer who the customers are by giving a profile with gender, age, golf experience and travelling habits. Now that the organizer knows that the target group is mainly men in the age of 40 to 60, proper marketing channels can be chosen to reach the right target market, in this case those channels would be local newspapers and the golf club's web page. During the golf season there could also be advertisements at the golf club.

The results show that the majority of the participants of the trips to Italy feel like they have not had any chance to influence on the decisions that are being made about the trip. Even though it is up to the organizer to plan and arrange the tour it is vital to every day improve and listen to what the customer wants. This cannot be done if there is no constructive criticism gained. An improvement idea would be to have the travelers fill in a feedback form after every trip to get an overview of the positive and negative parts of each trip. The form could be filled while travelling back home e.g. on the airplane or then as an online form that would be sent to the organizer's email. For this particular target group the former option would probably be more efficient than the latter since all golf travelers might not all have email or a computer at home. Another option would be to gather the whole group on the last day of the trip and together discuss what was good and what went wrong during their travel.

When it comes to problem solving the area of improvement would be risk management. From the results it is shown that travelers have noticed some problems in the past trips and when realized the problems are easily prepared for. A suggestion for the organizer is to analyze the problems that have happened

previously and do everything that can be done to prevent them from happening again. The organizer should also find solutions to the problems in case they would occur in the future. An example would be to analyze why there previously have been problems with finding from one place to another. The organizer could find out if there were problems with finding out information from the local people, if there were problems with reading a map or if the distances were too long and therefore hard to find. When the cause of the problem is found a solution can be prepared and even though the solution does not help the past problem, the same solution can be used in the future. Preparation is the key.

As discussed earlier it shows to be of great importance that the organizer knows the customers wants and needs. Several of the question in the questionnaire give an impression of what those wants and needs are and they are there to help the organizer. There are the destinations where the respondents would like to travel, there are features they value more or less than others and there are trends that the target group appreciates. These results provide the trip organizer with information in many different areas of travelling and the following step is to analyze what can be done with what is now known. Golf tours could be arranged to Scotland where the focus is on having high quality service in the hotel, playing golf at a high quality golf course in a friendly company.

16.2 Reliability and validity

After evaluating the results some comments can be done regarding the questionnaire. The questionnaire gave the results that were needed but the reliability was not ultimate. The ideal would have been to have doubled the responses to reach higher reliability. This could have been done by having the questionnaire public for two or three weeks instead of the one week that the golfers had to fill it in. The main problem with the low response rate was that the results of the Italy related questions were not reliable. No consistent conclusions could be made from that section of the survey.

The results of the questionnaire show that the survey had a medium validity. The respondents were from many different age groups with increases the validity. To

get a higher validity from the survey the gender of the respondents could have been different. There was a large group of men responding and only nine out of 48 were women. For the validity it would have been ideal to have more women in the group of respondents. The research is still considered valid because of the wide range in the age groups and due to the fact that the focus group was people from Jakobstad and municipalities around it, there was no risk of getting irrelevant responses from people outside the focus area.

One observation is based on a comment that a respondent wrote at the end of the filled questionnaire. The respondent said that the questionnaire was not carefully made. No further description of the complaint was given but now afterwards it can be acknowledged that there was no red thread throughout the questionnaire. Even though the questions were disorganized the structure was clear and the questions were easy to understand. A large area was covered with a minimum number of questions to attract busy people that do not have the time to answer a long survey.

17 CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis is to create a handbook that suits both tour organizers who are beginners and those who are more experienced in the field. As a conclusion it can be said that the information gathered in the package is helpful for that aim. The package introduces new trip organizers with the basic information about golf tourists' demographics and the more experienced arranger is provided with more advanced information like risk management and current trends. For the handbook to be up-to-date it would need to be updated once a year since the trends change and after 10 or 20 years the demographics of the golf tourists will most likely have changed.

The relation between the studied theories and the results of the survey was close to ideal. The results from the questionnaire verified the facts about the most common age groups and the results also gave insight on how golfers in Jakobstad-area value the different trends that are said to be increasing in popularity. To show organizers that the facts are real, it is vital to conduct a survey and vice versa. The results from the study are not reliable without a solid theory behind it.

The research method was ideal for this kind of study but the outcome was not the best it could have been. There is an opportunity for future researchers to do this same study again after a year or two to keep it up-to-date. As a suggestion of improvement for future studies, more time could have been put into both creating the questionnaire and having it published to increase the reliability. That said, with the time put into it, the results were reasonable.

The only problem that was encountered was the lack of information about golf tourism. Considering the size and current growth of the field it was surprising to see that there are so few theories and facts on the topic to be found both in printed books and on the internet.

When it comes to satisfaction level considering the outcome, it can be said that it is high. The main aim of the thesis was reached and the feedback gotten from Johan and the respondents of the questionnaire has been positive. The researching

and writing process were both very interesting and when thinking about the amount of effort that was put into the project, the outcome was satisfactory.

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19 APPENDICES

Resvanor inom golfturnering

Blankett är tidsinställd: offentlighet inleds 6.1.2014 18.00 och upphör 14.1.2014 18.00

Jag har studerat turism i Vasa Yrkehögskola i 3 år och skriver nu mitt slutliga läroprov om hur man sätter ihop en paketresa för en större grupp. Efter mina 3 somrar vid Pirilö Golf Center har jag valt att specialisera mig inom golfresor. Sista steget i skrivandet är att göra en undersökning över golfare och deras resvanor.

Bakgrund

1. Kön

Kvinnor Mannor

2. Ålder

under 20 år 20-30 år 31-40 år 41-50 år 51-60 år över 60 år

3. Hur länge har du golfat?

Resvanor

4. Vart reser du oftast för att golfa?

Runtom i Finland Sverige Övriga Norden Europa Amerika Asien Annan

5. Hur ofta reser du (både i Finland och utomlands) för att golfa?

< 1 gång i året 1-3 gånger i året 4-6 gånger i året 1 gång i månaden > 1 gång i månaden

6. Hur många gånger har du deltagit i Italienresorna som ordnats för golfarna i Jakobstadstrakten?

0 1 2 3 4

Om ditt svar är noll (0), hoppa till fråga 10.

Italienresorna

7. Hade du som resenär några påverkningsmöjligheter vad gäller t.ex val av destination

Ja Nej

Om ja, hur ? (feedback, muntligt, röstning)

8. Stötte du på några problem under resan

- Ja, problem i tidtabell
- Ja, problem inom resesällskapet
- Ja, hälsoproblem
- Ja, problem med att hitta från ett ställe till ett annat
- Ja, problem med vädret
- Nej
- Annat

9. Om ja, hur gick problemlösningen?

- Fick hjälp av reseledaren
- Klarade mig genom problemet ensam
- Resesällskapet hittade en lösning
- Problemet blev aldrig löst

Frivilliga kommentarer (t.ex. det bästa med Italienresorna)

Dina personliga åsikter

10. Hur viktigt är det att researrangören:

	1	2	3	4
håller sig uppdaterad om aktuella res- och golftrender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
marknadsför i rätt forum (internet, tv, tidning)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
vet vad kunderna/resenärerna vill ha	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tänker på framtiden (t.ex. locka juniorer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

är bra på att lösa problem under resans gång



(1=oviktig 2=Inte så viktig 3= viktig 4=jätteviktig)

11. Jag skulle helst göra en golf resa till (land, stad eller golfbana)

12. Längd på resan

mindre än 3 dagar 3-6 dagar 1 vecka 2 veckor mer än 2 veckor



13. Vad är viktigast för dig under en golfresa? (möjligt att välja flera alternativ)

- kvaliteten på golfbanan
- boendet
- maten
- sällskapet
- priset
- lyx
- vädret
- mycket fritid
- mycket planerat program

14. Hur viktig är följande turisttrend för dig?

	1	2	3	4
lärorika resor (matlagningsresor, golflektioner osv.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
miljövänliga resor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hälso-resor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hög servicekvalité	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nostalgiska resor (att resa dit du varit som ung)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
egendesignade resor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bekvämlighet (smidig transport)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
unik upplevelse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

(1=oviktig 2=Inte så viktig 3= viktig 4=jätteviktig)

15. Övriga kommentarer

Skicka

Skicka uppgifterna

Tack för din hjälp / Liza