Kalevala kartalle – developing a culture travel concept for Japanese travelers

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The goal of the thesis study was to create a culture travel concept based on the Finnish-Karelian mythology and the national epic Kalevala. The Kalevala kartalle -project was a pilot to evaluate and demonstrate the concept for Japanese tourists during 01/2020-12/2021. The Stefan Moritz´s service design model was utilized as the methodology to conduct the product-oriented thesis.

Cultural heritage raises emotions and opinions how to utilize it. Although the mutual opinion is, that traditions and immaterial heritage are everyone´s right and at everyone´s responsibility, the praxis seems more complicated than that. The tourism industry has developed travel and leisure experiences inspired by cultural elements, stories, and myths. Nevertheless, the Finnish folklore is not widely known among international tourists.

Stories are an impactful means to engage, educate and immerse the audience during the travel. Cultural routes demonstrate a journey through time and space; the heritage of a country and its culture contributes to a living and shared cultural heritage.

The concept of the travel route was developed in co-operation with stakeholders from the public and private sector and other relevant organizations. Two pilot groups were created: one in the capital region of Finland and the other one in the region of Kainuu. These destinations created the touch points of the route, from Helsinki ending to Kuhmo city.

The outcome of the pilot project was the concept of the Kalevala kartalle -culture travel route, digitally and on-site. Two seminars were organized with Visit Finland, a digital trip was produced and piloted for Japanese travellers and the concept launch was organized for the Finnish audience. The Kalevala kartalle -project gained a lot of attention in the media and was raised to the public discussion in March 2021. The IPR conflict with Kalevala Koru Oy underlines the importance and relevancy of mutual understanding of the use of cultural heritage in a commercial context.

The development of new services with an ecosystem of stakeholders requires continuous work and financing. The conclusion of the pilot project is that the Japanese market has an interest in travel experiences combining the learning aspect of local culture and nature activities.

Keywords
Service Design, experiencescape, co-creation, culture travel, digital travel, new service development, travel route

Contents

Abbreviations

Cultural tourism   Cultural tourism is described to be an experiential activity, e.g., getting to know the local culture and gaining knowledge in local traditions.

Digitour   A virtual and digital trip held over the internet in Zoom.

IPR   Immaterial Property Rights

Kalevala   The Finnish-Karelian national epic, collected and edited by Elias Lönnrot.

"Siitäpä nyt tie menevi, ura uusi urkenevi."

- *Kalevala*

1   Introduction

The goal of the thesis study is to create an experience travel concept based on the Finnish mythology and the national epic Kalevala. Chapter one explores the background to the research, presents the thesis problem and the research questions and makes the justification for the research. Thereafter the development process is explained briefly, following how the outline is constructed and then the key definitions are explained. The chapter is closed by determining the delimitations of the scope and finally with the conclusion words.

1.1   Background to the research

The tourism industry has an impactful contribution to the European economy generating, directly or indirectly, approximately 10,3 % of EU GDP in 2018 (European Parliament 2021). Long before the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism was one of the industries with the best forecast due to tourist demand for more comprehensive, varied services and increasingly active leisure activities (Commission of the European communities 2001, 4). In tourism, the function of a generic product is the facilitation of activity and travel of individuals away from their daily environment. An explicit and clear concept of the product provides clarity in terms of discussions related to the development process; planning, development, management, delivery and nature of travel products. (Smith 1994, 582-583.)

A tourism product is a collection of service and physical features which together are expected to address the needs and wants of the buyer. That is a satisfying activity in a desired environment and destination. Smith (1994, 583-584.) argues that this definition is incomplete because it doesn´t describe how the product is produced or structured. Service industries in general emphasises on marketing instead of product development, which some authors classify as a subset of a marketing concept.

In addition, the structure of a service is considered complex, including activities, tangibles, and different levels of service. A statistical, data driven approach to tourism products aims to develop more consistent, credible, and coherent magnitude of the tourism industry. This approach tends to miss the essence of a travel product because it doesn´t take the experiential and intangible aspects to account. Thus, the product development of tourism services must be an integrated process involving attractions, accommodations, information services and transportation to create a smoothly functioning tourism system. (Smith 1994, 585-586.)

Assisting tourists during their trip is a significant concern that has been evident for many years. A recommender system provides help to determine which information and parts of the trip experience are most likely to be relevant to the requestor. Thus, a certain user group will get targeted information and leaving the irrelevant elements out. The advantages of the "smart routing" approach are that it is possible to reflect on the tourist's dynamic preferences, arrange points of interest that creates a storyline and create a chain of trips that the tourist will find attractive. As a result, each trip can be personalised in a "smart way" which adds to the tour´s cultural value. (Aksenov, Kemperman, Arentze 2014, 257-258.)

Cultural routes demonstrate a journey through time and space how the heritage of a country and its culture contributes to a living and shared cultural heritage (Council of Europe portal 2021). One of the evaluations criteria on certified cultural routes is that they must develop tourist services and products aimed at different groups. In addition, they must create innovative and exemplary projects in the field of sustainable cultural development and cultural tourism. (Council of Europe 2021.)

As a typology, cultural routes can be grouped in related activities in four categories; raising awareness of cultural heritage, commercialization of cultural attractions and products, heritage restoration and preservation and, business and marketing development. Building cohesion through complementing activities such as networking, market competitiveness programs, promotional activities and certification process aims to stimulate involvement between heritage institutions, local authorities, and SMEs in the case of the Roman Emperors Route. The development work targeted to improve the visibility of the route, increase the attractiveness of it and strengthen product cohesion among the service providers. (Cojocariu 2015, 959-967).

Cultural heritage is the legacy of intangible attributes and physical artefacts from the past, bestowed for the future generations and maintained in the present. It requires active effort to safeguard cultural heritage, despite the form it takes. Cultural heritage can be significant because it can make people feel as belonging to something, such as a tradition, way of life or a country. It may create a certain emotion within us and be valuable due to its possible or present economic value. The best way to preserve cultural heritage is by sharing it with others. (Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts 2014, 4-6.)

A survey implemented by the Finnish Heritage Agency (Suomen Kotiseutuliitto 2018) showcases that cultural heritage is considered as traditions, handcraft, shared experiences, stories, and language. The research emphasised that both cultural heritage and cultural landscapes should be restored, because they would affect positively the

reputation of the area and improve understanding among different people. The majority of the respondents thought that the public authorities (69%) had the most responsibility to preserve cultural heritage, then to citizens (64%) and communities (53%). As result, the research supports the thought that the responsibility of nurturing cultural heritage and landscapes are shared by everyone.

Cultural heritage raises emotions (Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts 2014, 4-6.) and opinions how to utilize it. Although the mutual opinion is, that traditions and immaterial heritage are everyone´s right and responsibility (Suomen Kotiseutuliitto 2018), the praxis seems more complicated than that. As an example, the immaterial property right (IPR) conflict between the jewellery brand Kalevala Koru and the Kalevala kartalle -culture travel project, managed by Ikitaival Oy, rises multiple issues what it comes to so called ownership of heritage and development of commercial products (Lindfors & Mäkelä 2021, 1-3; Helsingin Sanomat 2.3.2021).

1.2 Research problem and research questions

The problem addressed in this research is:

How to create a culture travel concept about the national epic Kalevala for Japanese travellers?

To answer to the research problem, three issues are highlighted:

Issue 1: Elements of cultural travel products. What makes a successful, culturally, and financially sustainable, travel product?

Issue 2: New service development for cultural travel products. How to develop a culture travel route? What is the process of creating cultural travel products?

Issue 3: Forms of travel experiences. How to present culture heritage to Japanese travellers? What are the elements of a Kalevala themed experience?

This research explores how and what kind of resources are needed to develop a travel product. The word ´product` is somewhat limiting when thinking of immaterial products such as experiences and "turnkey" services. Therefore, the goal is to create a concept which answers to an end-to-end need, not only a part of it. Real concepts are moderated through interaction and grounded in social experience, compounding with the general culture of a community. To realise a concept the aim is to make a change in the social practice. A concept must put roots in the ground to last, thus, to be impactful and fulfil a social need. (Blunden 2011, 8, 300.)

Tourism and travelling are an activity associated with relaxation, activities, access to culture and nature. It is an opportunity to self-education and learning about differences between cultures and their people. Tourism is a possibility to practice environmental sustainability as well as create economical wealth locally. Tourism activities and policies should be conducted with respect for the archaeological, artistic and cultural heritage. Services for tourists should be designed and planned in such a way that it enables to sustain folklore, crafts and traditional cultural products. (UNWTO 2020, 13-15.)

Cultural tourism is embodied in knowledge, practices and expressions the individuals and communities use. As well, it is associated with cultural spaces and objects which generations recognize as part of their cultural heritage. The traditions and a human link to the local culture has become one of the principal motivations to travel. One of the challenges however is to present the cultural heritage in a sustainable way and to foster it responsibly. (UNWTO 2012)

The scope for this research is to study the development of cultural travel products by exploring the national epic Kalevala as the underlying theme. The story has inspired artists, researchers (Kalevalaseura 2021a, Flinit 2021.) and even the travel industry (Business Finland 2021), but there is no unambiguous definition of what Kalevala is or what it should be in the context of tourism.

The baseline for any new business is the real demand in the market and how to address it in a cohesive way. It is essential to understand if any demand exist, what kind of needs could be fulfilled and what resources are needed to sustain a business. Iterative service or product design models such as Stefan Moritz´ (2009) service design process, the BAH model (Nasiopoulus 2015) or the Double Diamond (Ball 2021) aims to address the service development problem divided in different phases.

New services can be developed in several ways, but a concept related to cultural heritage has its own characteristics. That is why attention to the process must be made compared to service development in traditional business industries. Furthermore, Kalevala has only been utilized locally to the travel sector in Finland by various companies and organizations (Kalevala kartalle 2022a), but no nationwide collaboration exists. The research is carried out as a pilot project in 2020-2021 to have a clear framing and roadmap for the thesis. The user centric approach of service design supports the goal of collaborating and gathering information, from and with, several stakeholders. As a result, a culture travel concept and its´ elements are determined and explained. For a finish, new research questions are proposed to address for future research which would be beneficial to answer. Major bodies of theory are presented in Chapter 2.

1.3   Justification of the research

Finnish-Karelian folklore and the tale of Kalevala is relatively unknown internationally (Shaknovich, 6; Tuononen 2021, 6-7). Some companies have utilized the symbols of the Finnish national epic in their business (Yle Areena 2016: 13:50; Kalevala Koru 2021) but the stories behind remains unknown. Also, some companies on the travel sector have presented Kalevala´s characters and stories in their services (Shaknovich, 7; de Weerd 27th August 2020). However, the outcome hasn´t been a success in the big picture and the business outcomes have been vague.

Maria Laitinen states in her thesis (2012, 32, 38.) that Kalevala could be better utilized on the travel sector and presents the current situation of the use of the national story in tourism products. As Laitinen (2012), also Antti Lindfors and Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä (Elore 2021) argues that it is problematic to commercialize Kalevala because its roots to immaterial heritage and the history behind it. The viewpoint and goal of this research is to answer the question how a cultural heritage related travel product should be developed with respect to its background.

Kalevala is collected from thousands of poems in the 19th century in Finland and Karelia. The story is valuable as such and is a symbol for the Finnish identity. It had also a remarkable consequence for the development of Finnish language. (Juminkeko 2021.) Today however the importance of the epic has vanished, and it has not been brought to the spotlight in a modern context in the tourism industry.

Other international examples shows that a story, historical period or a national epic can be a huge success for the travel sector. These stories have been designed for different purposes as movies, amusement parks, souvenirs, experiences, and destinations to visit (Bolan 2017, 2149, 2155; Kaak 2017, 2; Halewood 2001, 565-574).

New service development requires investments, collaboration between different stakeholders, leadership over the project and an infrastructure to make successful business opportunities as an outcome (Rahman 2020, 306-310).

The research project is executed using service design methodology explained in chapter 3. Design thinking and a service design framework was a logical method to choose because the research topic requires consistent collaboration with a number of stakeholders. The core of the Moritz´ service design process is that the development work is iterative to determine the final outcome.

The national epic Kalevala is a forgotten jewel which could provide possibilities to create new businesses, gain interest internationally and bring travellers to Finland to explore the essence of Finnish traditions. This task is not something that happens over night or which anyone could do by themselves. Thus, the journey has begun, and this report aims to provide concrete ideas how to further develop a tale to a business opportunity.

1.4 Process in brief

The thesis research is conducted following the Service Design process of Stefan Moritz (2005). The research project started with the *Understanding* phase when information was collected and the foundation for the research was created by accomplishing study supporting courses.

The *Thinking* phase gave direction and scope for the research and the big picture of the project baseline was formed. The third phase, *Generating*, was the time for ideation and co-creation with diverse stakeholders.

During *Filtering*, which was the following phase, the main products and service experiences were selected for the final concept. The *Explaining* phase consisted of activities where the concept was presented and promoted to the audience.

The final phase, the *Realising*, included the launch and other PR-events to showcase the concept of the Kalevala kartalle –culture travel route. The process and the used methods are described in detail in Chapter 3.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis follows the structured approach of thesis writing by Chad Perry (2012). Chapter one is the introduction to the thesis and the research question. Section 1.1. outlines the field of study and presents the broad theme and topics related to it. Section 1.2. presents the research problem and sub-questions to be addressed. The justification of the research is made in section 1.3. where the research problem is stated to fill theoretical and practical gaps related to the use of cultural heritage in the context of tourism. Section 1.4 is an introduction and overview of the process utilized in the thesis. This section, 1.5, outlines the structure of the thesis and briefly describes each chapter. Section 1.6 explains the terms used in this thesis. The terms underline the collection of data and puts boundaries to the research findings. Section 1.7 gives frames to the research findings

Chapter 2 presents the literature review and theories complementing the thesis research. The chapter begins with 2.1 explaining the typical elements of culture travel products and continues with 2.2 where new service development is discussed from a theoretical point of view. Section 2.3 explores different types of experiences the traveller might face before, during and after travel and 2.4 deepens the topic with presenting variables of digital, immaterial and physical experiences. Storytelling is a remarkable medium to present and tune the traveller to the mood and this is discussed in section 2.5. In 2.6, culture travel routes are presented and for a finish, the chapter is closed with section 2.7 where the theoretical framework for the thesis is discussed.

Chapter 3 explores what design thinking and service design are and the principles for user centric design. The process in 3.2 is briefly summarised in chapter 1.4 and section 3.3 presents service design tools and methods for iterative new service development.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of data following the thesis research process explained in the previous chapter. Chapter 5 is the finishing chapter where conclusions and implications are made. 5.1 presents the outcome of the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project following the discussion in section 5.2. Further research ideas and suggestions are given in 5.3 and the thesis ends with the acknowledgements in section 5.4.

1.6   Key definitions

Kalevala is the Finnish-Karelian national epic and probably the most translated work of Finnish literature. Kalevala is collected and edited of thousands of poems by writer, doctor and professor of Finnish language, Elias Lönnrot in 1835. It is rooted in oral tradition back in time when the Finnish people did not have a written language. Lönnrot sought to create a picture of Finland where the era of shamans, magic and heroes was coming to an end and Christian traditions was taking over. (Järvinen 2017, 7-11, 66-67.)

The story is valuable as such and is a symbol for the Finnish identity. It had also a remarkable consequence for the development of Finnish language. (Juminkeko 2021.) The history of Kalevala is controversial, and it has been argued if it is cultural appropriation, because a majority of the material is collected in Karelia (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2022).

In the modern world many artists, businesses and people around the world have got inspired by the Kalevala. The most known art was created by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, whereas J. R. Tolkien took influences on his book trilogy the Lord of the Rings. (Yle Areena 2016.) Businesses, such as Kalevala Koru or the Kalevala village, have developed

products and experiences with variating success throughout the years (Via-Kalevala 2016; Karjalainen 2021).

There is no clear definition what Kalevala is or how it should be addressed. The Kalevala is celebrated annually 28th of February and it is reminding of the importance of Finnish culture, language and traditions. (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2022.)

1.7   Delimitations of scope and key assumptions

This section provides additional delimitations to the research question presented in section 1.2. The tourism industry is by nature a global business where the whole world can be a suitable target market. Two key segments were selected for this research to narrow down the scope. A preliminary study was carried out in January 2020 about Japanese tourists´ interest toward travel services related to Kalevala. (Hon, Komali, Myrä, Sukanen & Urasto 2021.) The culture and folklore-based travel concept was selected to be piloted for Japanese travelers because they are familiar with travelling to Finland, are interested in design, nature and culture (Business Finland 2020, 17, 20, 57-58.) and have old traditions related to stories and storytelling (Smedlund 2020, All good stories 2022).

Later, the Covid-19 pandemic burst out in March 2020 (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2020) and there was a need to adjust the target group. This thesis research and the pilot project´s goal was to create a travel concept which would benefit the stakeholder's business and compensate their financial losses to some extent. Therefore, a second target group, Finnish domestic travellers were chosen to gain income during the next summer 2021.

The target groups, Japanese and Finnish customers remained as wide segments for two reasons. The Kalevala´s story is internationally very unknown (Hon 2020, 11; Shakhnovich 2021, 6; Tuononen 2021, 6-7.) why further market research must be done to find the right niche and their precise needs regarding cultural travel services. The findings in chapter 4.4.2 provides insight of the preliminary segment of Japanese who have an interest toward Kalevala themed culture products.

This research and the pilot project aimed to create a Kalevala themed concept and a ´way of working´ as a network with a shared agenda. This research excludes the development of a single service or travel product and focuses on the collaborative approach and its´ possible benefits or disadvantages. The workshops held during the pilot were organized to help the culture and travel field partners to improve their existing services and design them with storytelling methods.

During the project different type of partners were selected for co-creation of the Kalevala kartalle -concept. Cities, public and regional travel organizations were an essential support for their network and resources. The second group of partners were micro- and midsize companies on the culture, handcraft, or travel field. The third type of partners were non-profit organizations related to cultural heritage or the art sector. Other field of business´ or organizations were excluded from the concept.

Two pilot groups were formed and selected based on their geographical location. The first group was in the South of Finland; Helsinki, Vihti and Lohja and the second group in the Kainuu area Kajaani and Kuhmo. Most international travelers fly to Helsinki-Vantaa airport when arriving to Finland and spend few days in Helsinki before continuing the trip (Matilainen 2018, 11). The region of Kainuu locates in Northern Finland and it is known for its roots to culture and Elias Lönnrot (Juminkeko 2022). Connecting these areas provides the route for the traveler to explore both the urban and the traditional Kalevala. Kalevala is however cultural heritage which could be explored and utilized all over Karelia and Finland in diverse contexts. These ideas for further development are presented in chapter 5.3 for future research.

New service development requires a legal entity and infrastructure to meet operational requirements. A new company was founded to manage the financial activities and address the bureaucracy. In the context of the thesis research, Ikitaival Ltd. was the commissioner for the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project. Ikitaival Ltd. provides services such as service and business design consulting, online and on-site events, webinars and training. The project included also activities regarding marketing, public relations and immaterial property rights during the pilot in 2020-2021. Thus, all the operational service selection and end-products were managed by the pilot project partners and Ikitaival Ltd. was the network coordinator for the Kalevala kartalle -travel concept development.

The Kalevala kartalle -project was a starting point for new service innovation and had multiple possibilities what the outcome could be. The Kalevala kartalle -cultural travel concept was an opportunity to create both intangible and tangible outputs, such as services, culture or digital experiences. Thus, the format of the final Kalevala kartalle - concept was not specified when the pilot project started. No delimitation was done in the preliminary stage, because the goal of the research was to find out what the structure of the concept should be and in what form.

This chapter summarises the thesis. It introduces the research problem and its issues and research questions. There after the research was justified and the definitions were presented, the thesis process was outlined, the choice of methodology was briefly

described and justified, the thesis structure was presented, and the delimitations were given. With this foundation, the thesis can proceed to the detailed description of the research.

2   Literature review

The previous chapter was an introduction to the whole thesis and made the foundation for the research. The literature review in this chapter at hand, presents the parent theories for this thesis research. The research problem and questions formed in section 1.2 are discussed and justified theoretically. As a summary, section 2.3 lists the research questions, and the theoretical framework is presented.

2.1   Elements of culture travel products

Intangible cultural heritage is embodied in those existing expressions, skills, knowledge, and practices of a community. It is as well linked with cultural spaces and objects that individuals and communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage. It provides humanity with a sense of continuity and identity when constantly recreated through generations. (UNWTO 2012, 2.; Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts 2014, 4-5.)

A *cultural environment* is an environment created in the interaction between humans and the nature. Cultural environments and sites can be buildings built by humans, solid remains, archaeological attractions, cultural landscapes, and tradition biotopes. Also, the human association of the past and present, given meanings and diverse naming are linked to cultural environments. (Digi- ja väestövirasto 2022.)

Traditions and culture have become one of the principal motivations for travel and tourists are seeking to engage with new cultures. Experiencing the global variety of handicrafts, performing arts, cuisines, rituals, interpretations of the universe or the nature, builds understanding and prompts dialogue. This, in turn fosters tolerance and peace. (UNWTO 2012, 2.)

Contribution to the identification, safeguarding and protection of intangible cultural heritage through tourism development are challenges for the travel sector. Fostering the responsible use of living heritage can dispense new employment possibilities, curb rural flight migration among the marginally employed and young people and help relieve poverty. Responsible tourism development might nurture a sense of pride among communities and tourism offers a powerful incentive for enhancing and preserving cultural heritage. The revenue it generates secure the long-term development and can be channelled back into the initiatives. (UNWTO 2012, 2.)

The creation of intangible cultural heritage must be managed carefully in the increasingly globalised world. The appreciation of other´s values and aspirations of all stakeholders involved leads to mutual understanding and true partnerships. Communities, heritage

managers, the tourism and heritage sector need to acquire an awareness of cultural heritage management practices. Each partner can build on their shared interest in cultural assets through mutual understanding and close consultation with local communities. (UNWTO 2012, 2.)

Cultural travel is balancing with education and entertainment. Showcasing the most interesting of living culture to tourists in an attractive way might come in the form of participatory workshops, culinary arts, or performances where the hosts can directly communicate their core values. (UNWTO 2012, 5.)

2.2   New service development

This section 2.2 explores frameworks of developing new service concepts and discuss their advantages and drawbacks. It´s argued that there is no clear consensus on what the exact definition of a service is. However, following perspectives are described in literature. The classification consists of four features; services are intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable and perishable. (Parry, Newnes and Huang 2011, 20-22.) ´OECD´ (2005, 8.) defines products to be goods and services, not only tangible items. It is not uncomplicated to distinguish the exact, dictionary definitions of a certain word and the overtones of how respondents may react to it. In this thesis *product* refers to individual associations with a variety of symbolic and instrumental connotations people have with both intangible and tangible attributes of a particular product (Helfenstein 2005, 76; Arantola 2010, 33.); in other words, the user experience of the product matters, not only the tangibles elements of the product.

An *invention* is by definition a commercially promising product or service idea, when *innovation* requires a successful entry to market (Branscomb 2002, 1; 34.). An innovation is a new or substantially improved product, service, or process. It must be new to the company, but not necessarily to the company´s industry or the market. The goal for innovation activities is to develop lucrative processes, products or concepts. (Arantola 2010, 37-38.) Authorities have proposed a list of different type of innovations; a qualitative change in an existing product or introduction of a new product, process innovation which is new to an industry, innovation on opening of a new market, development of new sources of supply for various inputs such as raw materials and changes in industrial organisations. (OECD 2005,16.)

Why The drivers for new service development origins in the diversified and dynamic competitive market environments, service quality expectations, service cost and leadership in technology-based services. These elements may require service companies

to provide a service toward their target customers, which needs to be created by means of a successful new service development process. (Rahman 2020, 304.)

Innovation is the starting point of economic change. Radical innovations forward big changes in the world and additional innovations adds up to the process of change continuously. Firms innovate to seek competitive advantage or defend their position on the market. The approach to innovation can be reactive to prevent losing market share or proactive to gain strategic market position relative to competitors.

New service development projects are clustered in previous research into four typologies which are routine-, contact-, technology- and knowledge-intensive services. In addition, it is suggested to link the traditional components of project success with the critical success factors which influence a project externally, indirectly and directly. (Rahman 2020, 304-306.)

New service development projects (NSDP) are influenced by the efficiency of the internal project team (IPTE), the service firms´ cross-functional integration (CFI) and research also indicates that both IPTE and technology infrastructure (TI) mediated the relationship between new service projects and CFI. Moreover, the model developed by Rahman, Hussain, Hussain, Hassan and Johns (2020, 303-310.)´ confirms that knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB), the firms´ culture (FC) and authentic leadership moderate the relationship. Consequently, coordination, cohesion and cooperation both internally between the team members and external parts, such as operating divisions are remarkably influential for the success of growth efforts (Naisapoulous 2015, 2-3). New service development receives attention on many disciplines and domains, thus new tools and perspectives are offered on the various dimensions of NSDP´s success (Rahman figure 1).
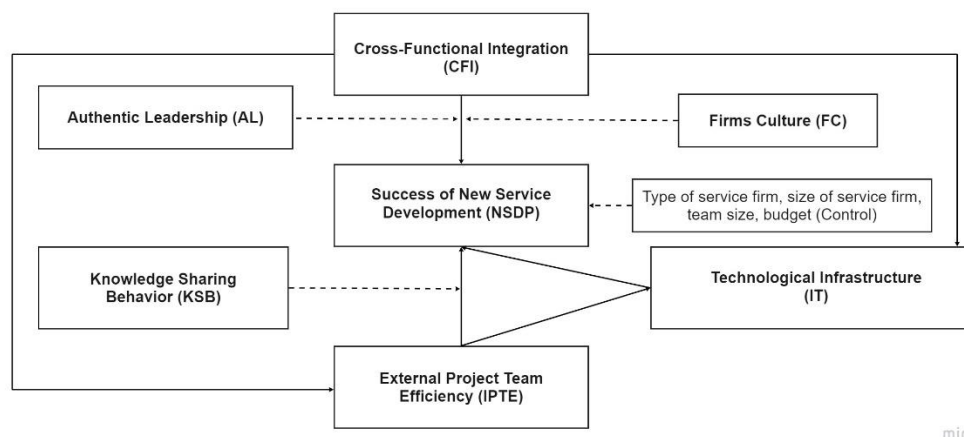

Figure 1. The Paradigm of new service development (adapted from Rahman 2020).

Other dimensions to new service development are provided by Watson, Hogarth-Scott and Wilson (1998, 217-222.) as various aspects might impact the survival of a new venture. The research focuses on small business start-ups and their success factors during their early years and states that there is no fixed set of attributes that guarantee a desired outcome. In addition, it is argued that also the capacity to accumulate capital and the firm´s underlying business concept have a role on the continuity of the firm. Both internal and external factors, communication and infrastructure are essential, such as the NSDP model (Rahman 2020, 303-310.) proposes, and financial competences are required for sustainable development of new services. The results of commercial activities are responsible for economic growth, employment, high standards of living and technological progress. (Bhuiyan 2011, 747.)

Scalable concepts have advantages what it comes to cost of production, process optimization and sales. Focusing on universal needs and concepting the service provides the opportunity to scale internationally. Arantola (2010, 39-41.) states that a small domestic market is a hindrance to start a scalable concept, because it wouldn´t meet the benefits of mass marketing. Launching a concept locally has however, its own benefits. The deep knowledge of ones´ own market gives advantages to personalize and focus marketing to a niche customer segment. This approach may resonate better than a one-size-fits all realization. (Crosby 2020.)

Where Arantola (2020, 39-40) claims that a scalable service is the key to success, it requires management to rethink how tasks are done and who does the tasks. Communicating the advantages of better service quality and benefits on affordable pricing are required to familiarize with this type of service distribution. The customers´ expectations about automated services will most likely evolve as technologies progress and awareness of its possibilities increases. ´(Webster 2020, 263-267.)

All relevant stakeholders must be well informed in both concepts when integrating cultural heritage into tourism development and planning. Understanding the link between the two and being fully aware of the customs is crucial for success of the collaboration. (UNWTO 2012, 5.)

The product development process differs from industry to another, moreover, the company´s characteristics has its own impact to the process as well (Bhuiyan 2011, 748). Other authorities state the same and recommends modifying the development process upon the context when designing services (Moritz 2005,154-156; Davies no date, 6). Services are more complex to produce than physical products. Many service companies

think that they are selling products although their "product" requires interaction with multiple points of service before, during and after the use. (Polaine 2013, 19-22.)

Next is presented few service development frameworks that are explored on the tourism and hospitality sector. It is not a new idea that traditional industries, which have focused on developing tangible products, should instead focus on providing services. The small domestic market in Finland is not a deficiency if the way of thinking is global and the distribution is digital. Automating services was an emerging field a decade ago ´(Arantola 2010, 12.) and is still today and the full potential has not yet been uncovered. Many of the tasks in hospitality, tourism and travel have been automated by year 2020 and this will continue to disrupt the industries. The technologies are improving and available but there may be some customer groups which find the use of automated services negative. (Webster and Ivanov 2020, 267.)

Developing sustainable rural destinations involves different activities that must be accomplished to achieve the desired goal. A development project consists of six main stages which are also typical to the service design methodology presented in chapter 3. These stages are idea generation, evaluation of the project proposal, detailed planning to ensure the usefulness of the project, implementation, launch and the review of the project. These elements form the life cycle of a project and process to meet the vision of the project. (Mwesiumo 2021, 3.)

2.3 Experiences during the customer journey

Traveling involves three different phases starting with the pre-trip period, the travel experience itself and a post-purchase phase. The journey begins when the customer discovers an interest toward the idea of traveling. This phase includes information search, the booking process and decision making. In this stage the customer builds expectations about the forthcoming experience and the value is embedded in anticipating the actual trip. (Yachin 2018, 202-203.)

Users´ pre-encounter beliefs about products are affected by the general product values they hold as consumers, and what their concrete experiences have been as users of the product. The consumers´ relation to specific products may predict how they react to actual designs that allows to explore the extent and manner to which past interaction biases affect future user experience, as Helfenstein (2005, 76-77.) imply. Research argue that products serve a variety of purposes to express symbolic, expressive, hedonic, and functional values, and these aspects vary among users. (Helfenstein 2005, 94-95.)

In the active phase both the service provider and the customer are at the same place at the same time. The core of the activity, the experience, is followed by transiting moments in interaction of the customer, the environment and the firm. After the participating phase the value is created by reflecting on the experience, using a nostalgic reinterpretation of satisfaction and events during the trip. (Yachin 2018, 202-203.) Thus, the travel experience is created during the customer journey displayed in figure 2 below.
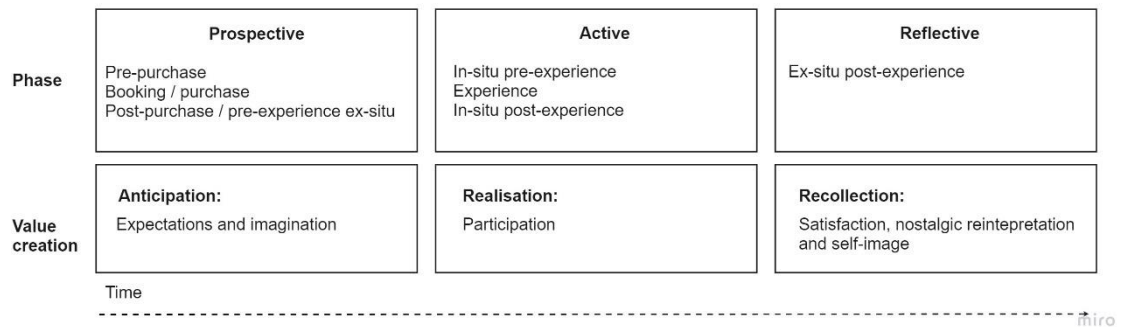

Figure 2. The customer journey model adapted (adapted from Yachin 2018)

The concept of experience is complex, and it has attracted scholarly attention (Chen 2019, 2). The progression of economic value according to Pine (1998, 97-98) is the shift from extracting commodities to making goods, delivering services and finally to staging experiences. Services have typically been lumped in with experiences, but they are as different as services are from goods. Consumers have a desire for experiences and businesses are responding to the request by offering and designing new experiences. As goods before, also the services increasingly become commoditized.

Experiences occur when services are intentionally used as a stage to engage individual customers, with goods as properties, in a way that creates a memorable experience. Commodities, goods, and services are external to the buyer while experiences exist only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an intellectual, emotional, physical, or even spiritual level. The experience derives from the interaction between the individual´s state of mind and the staged event (like a circus show). (Pine 1998, 99.) Experiences emphasises on feelings and fantasies and requires active participation and immersion from the consumer (Mei 2020, 95).

Experiences has been the core of the entertainment business but the concept of selling an entertainment experience has pervade in the corporate world. Companies stage experiences whenever they engage customers in a memorable and personal way. (Pine 1998, 99.) Experiences are subjective to the person facing it and it is challenging to

develop a comprehensive definition of it. A tourism business cannot make the experience for the tourist but can provide a staged context around it. Thus, the individual achieves the best experience as a mental response to the stimulus of the event and the environment. (Mei 2020, 95.)

2.4 Physical and immaterial travel experiences

Tourism operators and destinations have recognised that they need to provide tourists opportunities to gain extraordinary and compelling experiences to gain a competitive position. Strong and memorable experiences are made up of memory process functions that help them to be stored in the long-term memory. (Mei 2020, 95.)

According to Pine (1998, 101-102), experiences can be analysed across two dimensions. The first corresponds to *connection*, or environmental relationship, that unites the consumer with performance or the event. At one end of the connection spectrum lies immersion and at the other hand the absorption. Seeing a film with a large screen, an audience, with quality audio in a theatre is far more immersive than watching a movie at home.

The second dimension of the experience is the *customer participation*. At the end of the spectrum is *active participation* in which customers are key players in creating the event that yields the experience. At the other end lies *passive participation* in which the individual does not affect the performance at all. However, even those people who watch a ski race from the audience are not completely passive because they contribute to the aural and visual event that the others experience. (Pine 1998, 101.)
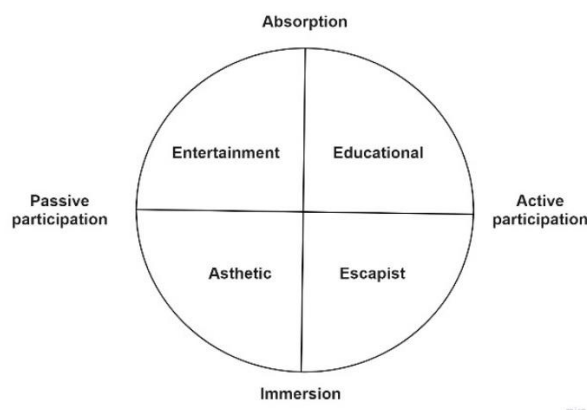

Figure 3. Pain´s model of the Four Realms of an Experience (adapted from Pine 1998).

The physical environment can have an impact on the ambiance by using elements such as sound, sight, touch and scent to evoke and end enhance feelings. These triggers in the

atmospherics persuade the customer to commit a purchase. Servicescape, as a term, was conceptualised to describe the physical environment in which the service is delivered and assembled. It is compound with tangible elements that facilitate performance and the customer communications and interaction. With the same logic, as trade of services occurs in the servicescape, the exchange of experience or experience creation occurs in the experiencescape. (Mei 2020, 95.)

The experiencescape is defined as the environment in which the consumer´s experiences are created as part of their internal and mental process. In this process the specific contexts, physical objects, the subjects and their relationships must be considered. The individual is influenced by the experiencescape as it integrates the social actors, participants, the environment, as well as the organisational features of the service delivery. The experiencescape is beyond the servicescape or the physical environment because the consumption occurs within social and physical surroundings with hedonic benefits. The customer stays in the experiencescape a longer time than in the physical environment. Therefore, it is valuable to develop opportunities for that in tourism. (Mei 2020, 95-96.)

Experiencescapes are functional spaces that capture totality of how experiences are consumed and produced and enables interactions between diverse stakeholders. Experiences are continuously evolving and encompass multiple influences how service providers, marketers and end-customers participate in the formation of experiences. (Chen 2019, 2.)

The experiences can be sorted into four broad categories depending on where they locate on the spectra of the two dimensions. Typically, experiences are thought to be events of entertainment such as attending a concert or watching television. These experiences tend to be those in which the individual participate more passively than actively and their connection with the event is likely to be less immersive. Educational experiences involve more active participation but still tend to be more outside the event than immersed in the activity. Escapist experiences can be amusive and as instructive as educational ones, but they require greater consumer immersion. If the level of the individual´s active participation is minimized, an escapist experience become esthetical. (Pine 1998, 102.)

The richest experiences are generally compounded of all the four aspects of the four realms which forms a "sweet spot" around the area where the spectra meet. Like goods and services, experiences have to meet customer demand, work effortless and be deliverable. Experiences derive from an iterative process of scripting, exploring and

staging as services are developed from an iterative process of research, development and design. (Pine 1998, 102.)

2.5 Memorable experiences through storytelling

Businesses have utilized stories for decades in their work to create internal corporate culture. Apart from that, storytelling can be used in external communication and management. These include branding stories, such as organization or product stories, advertising stories or stories about stories, e.g. when a founder of a company tells how the company was created. In the tourism industry it is also common to use fictive characters in development of travel products. Furthermore, many theme parks are built around a story, such as the Moomin World in Finland or Astrid Lindgren´s World in Sweden. (Mossberg 2008, 195-196.)

Other examples on travel products and experience concepts are locations where internationally popular films or books are set. The Da Vinci Code, Star Wars, Crocodile Dundee and Notting Hill have led to huge interest to visit these destinations where the story has taken place. Stories are also central to ordinary or theatrical guided tours, museums and exhibitions. Not forgetting events based on myths and stories, such as chivalry or medieval events and festivals are popular. (Mossberg 2008, 196.)

Pine (1998, 102-105) has defined five key experience-design principles. *The theme* of the experience ties the service activity together into a staged experience. An effective theme is compelling and concise, but not a marketing tagline or a corporate mission statement. It has to drive the whole design process including elements and staged events. *Harmonizing* impressions with positive cues enhance the company to create desired impressions. These are the "takeaways" of the experience and fulfil the theme when used consistently. Even the smallest cues can set the stage for a unique experience. When a restaurant servant declares "your adventure is about to begin" instead of only stating "your table is ready can make a huge difference. *Eliminate* negative cues. *Mix in memorabilia*. Engage all five *senses*. The use of the different senses makes the experience memorable.

The tourism sector demonstrates an industry which is technically a service industry but goes beyond fulfilling customer´s functional needs. The tourism operator is not simply delivering a service when storytelling is integrated into the ´scape´ to create unique stories. (Mei 2020, 95.) The experiencescape is the people involved and the environment which facilitate storytelling, whereas storytelling is a resource or tool to develop unique stories around the concept (Mei 2020, 95-96).

The end-customer, the traveller, usually expresses themselves to be the protagonist in their stories and describe their goals that derive their actions. Travellers tell stories about memorable consumption experiences and often repeat stories told to them. Tourists might also create new stories based on archetypal myths. This can happen spontaneously also on their social media platforms where travel experiences are described in the form of a story. Reviews, blogs and social media posts with visual content tend to be more attractive to readers when it the travel experience is presented as a story. (Moscardo 2020, 4-5.)

In general, stories make our lives meaningful and speak to our human needs. Our principles and values are transferred from generation to another through stories. They reveal our history and background and give continuity to our lives. Stories stimulate our imagination, amuse us and involve us emotionally. Environments and services linked to storytelling in hospitality and tourism consumption touch points can be seen as a competitive tool that reaches new dimensions. Integrating stories can be an effective strategy for PR and gaining media attention. (Mossberg 2008, 205.)

2.6   Culture travel routes

Cultural routes of diverse themes exist in Europe. 45 different routes illustrate history, European memory and heritage. These travel routes contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of the present-day Europe. The themes vary from design, historical events, politics, fictional stories and archaeological heritage. (Council of Europe 2022.)

Assisting tourists during their trip is a significant concern that has been evident for many years. A recommender system provides help to determine which information and parts of the trip experience are most likely to be relevant to the requestor. Thus, a certain user group will get targeted information and leaving the irrelevant elements out. The advantages of the "smart routing" approach are that it is possible to reflect on the tourist's dynamic preferences, arrange points of interest that creates a storyline and create a chain of trips that the tourist will find attractive. As a result, each trip can be personalised in a "smart way" which adds to the tour´s cultural value. (Aksenov, Kemperman, Arentze 2014, 257-258.)

Cultural routes demonstrate a journey through time and space how the heritage of a country and its culture contributes to a living and shared cultural heritage (Council of Europe portal 2021). One of the evaluations criteria on certified cultural routes is that they must develop tourist services and products aimed at different groups. In addition, they

must create innovative and exemplary projects in the field of sustainable cultural development and cultural tourism. (Council of Europe 2021.)

As a typology, cultural routes can be grouped in related activities in four categories; raising awareness of cultural heritage, commercialization of cultural attractions and products, heritage restoration and preservation and, business and marketing development. Building cohesion through complementing activities such as networking, market competitiveness programs, promotional activities and certification process aims to stimulate involvement between heritage institutions, local authorities, and SMEs in the case of the Roman Emperors Route. The development work targeted to improve the visibility of the route, increase the attractiveness of it and strengthen product cohesion among the service providers. (Cojocariu 2015, 959-967).

Cultural travel routes can be national or go beyond geographical country borders. For example the St. Olav´s mainland way is a pilgrimage path starting from Turku and reaching to Olavinlinna. In the future the pilgrimage path is going to be extended from Novgorod in Russia to Trondheim in Norway. (Pyhän Olavin mannerreitti 2021.) The routes of the council of Europe integrates at least three European countries. The collaboration between different countries provides an opportunity to improve international visibility, develop synergy benefits to the travel industry and reach travellers beyond country borders. (Museovirasto 2021.) As Anna Genovese (620-621, 2016.) confirms, that they constitute the connection of touristic and cultural interest between elements of heritage that encourages intercultural dialogue and enhances European identity.

In conclusion, culture travel routes demonstrate experiencescapes where services and experiences can be created in cooperation beyond different stakeholders. Travel routes include elements of different touchpoints onsite and digitally. Mossberg (2007, 2006) states that a story can be a foundation and framework for tying together entire businesses. This includes the décor and design, music, artefacts, dramaturgy and personnel which may encourage the consumer to take an interest and co-create the story experience.

2.7   The theoretical framework and research issues

Figure 4 summarizes the literature review and display the theoretical framework for this thesis. It is a combination and adapted from the *Paradigm of new service development* (Hussain 2020.), the *Four Realms of an Experience* (Pine 1998) and the *Conceptual framework for stories and storytelling in tourism* (Moscardo 2020).
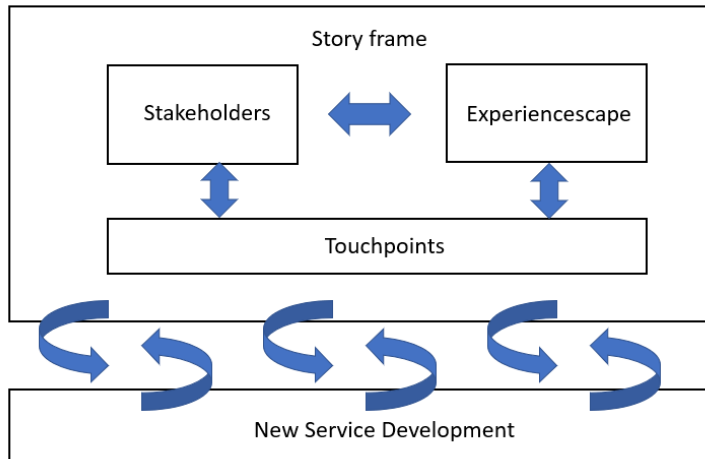
Figure 4. Theoretical framework for the thesis research.

The research question and issues of the thesis:

How to create a culture travel concept about the national epic Kalevala for Japanese travellers?

Issue 1: Elements of cultural travel products. What makes a successful, culturally, and financially sustainable, travel product?

Issue 2: New service development for cultural travel products. How to develop a culture travel route? What is the process of creating cultural travel products?

Issue 3: Forms of travel experiences. How to present culture heritage to Japanese travellers? What are the elements of a Kalevala themed experience?

The story frame for the concept is the original version of the national epic Kalevala. The experiencscape is created with utilizing the story as inspiration for determining activities and digital or physical environments. The different stakeholders have a major impact on what kind of points of interests (POI) are created. The co-operation and collaborating with the end-customers as well as other decision makers and service providers are fundamental to service design. Moreover, new business development starts with the why and the customer need which determines the requirements for the business and its infrastructure. Service design is an iterative development process which takes place over time and can be operated asynchronized in multiple layers.

It starts with defining the concept of new service development and its variables influencing the innovation process. The thesis continues with exploring experiences in the context of cultural travel. The objective is to recognize and analyse the process of new service

development related to immaterial cultural heritage. As a conclusion based on the theoretical review and its findings, the prerequisites for the Kalevala-themed culture travel concept are created.

3   Project process

This thesis is qualitative research which aims to solve an issue about the best practices of new service development related to cultural travel. Qualitative research problems answers to questions such as *how* and *why*, and the methodology is typically a case study or action research. Quantitative research on the other hand seeks answers to what are the relationships between variables that have been previously identified and measured. Research questions are then presented in the form *who* (how many) or *what* (how much). (Perry 2013, 46.)

The variables can be measured, and it provides numbered data that is analysed using statistical procedures. Qualitative research is a means for understanding and exploring the meaning of groups or individuals to a human or social problem. This method involving emerging procedures and questions and data is typically collected on the participant´s setting. Data analysis is built from particulars to general themes with making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (Creswell 2009, 22-23.) Thus, quantitative research would not address the thesis problem properly because its practical and culture connected nature.

A thesis for creating a construction or a product provides and output which can be either tangible or intangible, such as a service. In this type of thesis, the development of the product constitutes most of the work. Iterative development is appropriate for instance when applying service design methodologies. (Soitinaho 2021.) The selected Moritz´s model for the service design process is justified in chapter 1.3.

Some service design practitioners prefer to split the different design approaches apart and others lump the methods, terminology and viewpoints together. Whether the discussion is about design, experience design, design thinking, service design, user-centred design, holistic UX, new marketing or human-centred design, the approaches have a lot in common. (Stickdorn 2018, 18-19; Brown Tim 2008, 2-3.)

3.1   Service Design principles

Service design is an integrative, holistic, and multidisciplinary field. It enables to create new innovations or improve existing services to make them desirable, useful and efficient for users or organisations. Service design choreographs interactions, processes and technologies to co-create value for stakeholders within complex systems. (Moritz 2005, 8, 23-27; Stickdorn Marc, Hormess Markus Edgar, Lawrence Adam, Schneider Jakob 2018, 18-19; Brown 2008, 2-3.)

Service design is holistic considering the entire service environment (Stickdorn 2018, 24). Design can be described with various definitions but the core of it is to transform complex and abstract ideas into tangible outputs. It is the process of translating thoughts to reality as something concrete. It does not matter whether it is a physical product, a service or a process that needs improvement, few essential attributes underpin design driven projects. Design is an integration of innovation and creativity. (Davies and Wilson, 3; Holmlid 2007, 3: Tshimmel 2012, 2.) Design Thinking is considered as a complex thinking process of conceiving new phenomenon, introducing the design culture and its methods to various fields. Mastering design methods and tools provides the ability to identify, solve, preview and visualize problems in a creative and systematic way. (Tshimmel 2012, 2-3.)

Service design should be viewed with a wide view and not as a strictly framed discipline. The context includes operations, service development, marketing and operations. These together form the base for service performance quality. A service is often composed of inventory, ready-made artefacts, IT-systems, the meeting as such and artefacts produced during the process. The difference between distribution, manufacture and production is not distinctive for services. (Holmlid 2007, 2-3; Brown 2008, 2.) Stickdorn (2018, 24-25.) agrees that physical elements and artifacts have a role in evidencing the service. Visual clues can be a strategic choice of branding.

Methodologies such as the framework presented by Andrew Polaine, Lavrans Lovlie and Ben Reason (2013, vii, 2-3.), underlines the importance of user centric approach. It is not only about *design thinking* but also *doing* design, implementing ideas to tangibles. The key principle is to co-create, not only for people, but with the essential stakeholders and people involved. *Co-creation* makes use of easy, affordable and quick experiments with a systematic innovation approach. The process proceeds iteratively through stages of development, experimenting and evaluation which are partially overlapping and repeated in varying order. (Hagman, Hirvikoski, Wollstén and Äyväri 2020, 5-6.) Christian Muller-Roterberg (2018, 1-2.) agrees that Design Thinking focuses on involving customers in an early phase. The designing starts with people and not the business or a technology goal. Empathy is a central element to observe the user from their perspective and creates distance to the designer´s own persona.

In addition to empathy, stories are an important tool in the design process. Design decisions should be made on user experiences and intentions which can be explored by holistic methods. This might include creativity, imagination, science, and stories, especially of the users. Stories are central to human experience in general and play a notable role in tourism and travel practices. (Moscardo 2020, 2.)

Holmlid (2007, 3-4.) presents the service design production as highly virtual, highly ongoing and highly physical, whereas the interaction or industrial design production are less continuous processes. New innovations and service improvements require hard work augmented with user-centred discovery process and iterative cycles of testing, prototyping and refinement. The design process is not a predefined series of steps, but metaphorically a system of spaces which consists of related and continuous innovation activities. Design projects must have three spaces such as inspiration, ideation and implementation. (Brown 2008, 4-6.)

Moritz (2008, 117-123, 149.) on the other hand divides the design process in six phases; understanding, thinking, generating, filtering, explaining and realising. These phases might appear in a design process several times during the redefining of the concept in iterative cycles. Even if the service design process is visualized sequentially (Moritz 2005, 159; Design Council 2005, 6-7; Brown 2018, 4-6.), there are numerous loops of feedback and iteration on previous outputs in each phase (Muller-Roterberg 2018, 3-6). The service design process and its iteration phases are discussed in next subchapter 3.2.

3.2 Service design process

Design is not a precise process or field of activity that has a standard structure (Design Council 2019; Davies and Wilson, 6). The word process however gives a hint that there are typical steps or phases when designing a new product. The Double Diamond design process (Davies and Wilson ND, 7.) for instance has similarities to the service design process presented by Stefan Moritz (2005, 149.).
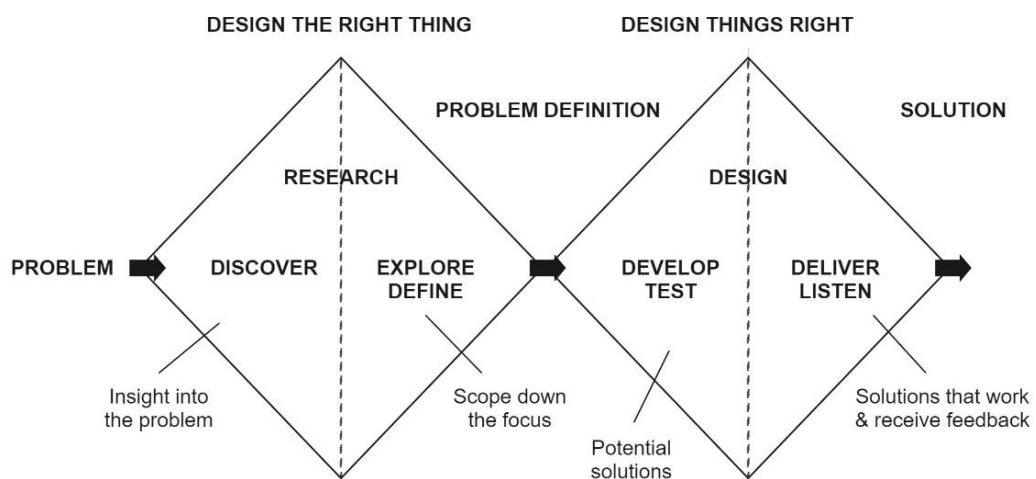

Figure 5. The double Diamond design framework (adapted from Design Council 2019).

The Double Diamond process is divided in four phases; the discovery, define, develop and delivery. The discovery phase is for investigating the matter and creating understanding around the matter. It requires spending time and speaking to people who are affected by the problem. The define phase aims to clarify what the issue is by analysing the insights gathered from the discovery stage. These two steps are the first part of the double diamond process. (Design Council 2019.)

The second part starts with the development phase, encouraging people to designate alternative answers to the well-defined problem. Inspiration can be sought and co-designed with a range of different stakeholders. The last phase is the delivery which involves piloting and testing a set of different solutions at small scale. During the delivery iteration the solutions that won´t work will be rejected and those that seems credible will be improved. (Design Council 2019.)

Moritz on the other hand has made the process to cover six essential steps. The service design phases enable the application of the tasks and the suitable tools. The design process starts with understanding and thinking of the problem, whereafter initial concepts are generated, selected and finally explained and realised. Thus, the goal is to first explore and understand what the current situation is, then create and list ideas which are prioritized and tested until a cohesive solution is developed. (Moritz 2005, 123-147.) The Swiss innovation academy (2022) agrees that the design process framework enables to understand what kind of tasks should be executed during a specific phase and that the mind-set should be aligned to the phase at hand.
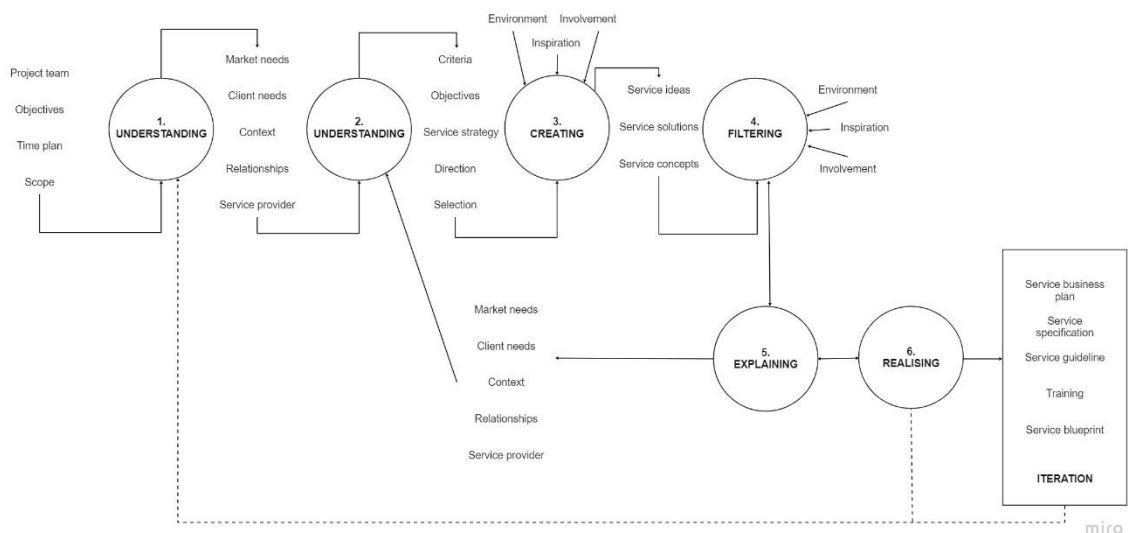

Figure 6. Six phases of Service Design adapted from Moritz (2005, 159).

The primary steps, the understanding and thinking stages, are the main data collecting points and a crucial part of a service design process. This process however is not linear and shifting between the different stages can be expected in complex research projects. (2009, 156-157.) Data in this research was collected by desk- and market research, stakeholder mapping, interviews, online, hybrid and on-site workshops, surveys and webinars.

The presented service design methodologies by different authors claim that the process of stages is to give frames, not lock the proceeding design work strictly. Most methods and tools can be adjusted by altering the level of detail and choosing the suitable ones respectively. (Gustafsson 2019, 43-44; 6.)

3.3 Service Design methods and tools

The tasks of a service design process can be addressed with design tools and methods. Tools are concrete models, such as storyboard templates, spread sheets and journey maps. They are usually built on a template or follow a pre-defined structure. Methods are procedures to approach or accomplish something. This can be, for instance, conducting a contextual interview as a research method or a desktop walkthrough as a prototyping method. Methods usually answer the question "how" we apply design tools in a design project and tools represent "what" is used during the iteration phases. (Stickdorn 2018, 36.)

Tools and methods should be adapted to the task at hand. Some of the design tools works best for detailed questions whereas others are more suitable for thinking of the big picture. There are several valid tools and adaptions of them and there´s no definite list of design methods. Most of these tools can be adapted by changing the level of detail. In a design process it is beneficial to balance with using tools for both specific and comprehensive tasks, in addition to adjusting the depth of the focus. The suitability of methods and tools are selected related to the requirements of the project at hand. (Davies and Wilson, 6-9; Moritz 2005, 115, 121.)

The Design Council has divided the methods in three areas; Explore, Shape and Build. The Explore stage discovers needs, opportunities and challenges, during the Shape stage insights, visions and prototypes are created and the final, the Build stage include plans, ideas and expertise. Examples on methods are user shadowing, user journey mapping, user personas, service blueprints, business model canvas and scenarios. These methods and tools can be adapted and adjusted to the different phases of the Double Diamond design process. (Design Council 2022; Design Council, 6.-9.)

Several researchers emphasise that visual materials, such as drawings, sketches and physical models help to explore the project problem and its possible solutions. Visual representation has a central role in development and formation of new ideas in a design process. (Tschimmel 2012, 3-4.) The early versions of a solution don´t need to be perfectly elaborated, but fast sketches so that the idea can be explored. The less beautiful the drafts are, the easier it is to not get too attached to them. (Stickdorn 2018, 32-33.)

4 Analysis of data

The previous chapter presented the thesis project process and the fundamentals of service design methodologies. This chapter reveals how the data was collected according to the service design process and summaries the analysis of the outcomes.

4.1 Understanding

This chapter starts the first phase of an iterative service design process, which covers data collection with various methods. The understanding stage included desk-research, interviews, stakeholder mapping and market analysis. These tasks were done during the pilot period either by the project manager or in cooperation with a master´s student team during the Applied Design Research course. The deliverables of this research were a summary of stakeholder interviews, a project report regarding Japanese interest toward the story of Kalevala, persona profile, a stakeholder map and key findings summary of the market analysis.

4.1.1 The travel industry and drivers for change

Method: desk research

Deliverables: desk research summary

According to UNWTO (2018; Haller 2021, 1121-1123) Europe is a major destination for tourists. Five member states of the European Union are in the world´s top 10 destinations for travellers, thus tourism has an important role in terms of its potential for employment and the economy. Tourism has also an environmental and social impact.

The tourism industry can also have a significant influence on European regions and developing new infrastructure. As a result, investments to the tourism industry contributes to the local development, jobs are maintained or created. Furthermore, sustainable tourism preserves and enhances natural and cultural heritage including local gastronomy, preserving biodiversity and art. (UNWTO 2018)

Heritage is seen as an essential element in enhancing capital-based development complexes and increasing consumption. Tourist flows tend to be greater in countries which are easy to access, and the infrastructure supports delivery of services. (Haller 2021, 1121-1122.) Culture heritage routes are one example of developing and enhancing local destinations beyond nation borders. The collaboration between different destinations

provides synergy advantage in terms of promotion, welfare, and development of communities. (Campolo, 581.)

Global trends and changes in tourist behaviour affect the travel industry. Travellers value more complex ways of spending their free time and traditional holidays get less interest. Tourists evaluate the destinations by the experiences and services they enjoy. These elements affect tourists´ choices. (Haller 2021, 1121-1122.) There is variation between different nationalities in what amount they prefer activities, gastronomy and cultural attractions are most desirable themes in addition to holidays spent in nature destinations (TEM 2015, 18-21).

The Covid-19 pandemic has had its own influence on the tourism industry. The impact of the pandemic was underestimated from the start of the crisis and has realized as restrictions, loss of turnover, unemployment, and significant drop in travel worldwide. It has been estimated that global production decreased by 7 % during China´s lockdown, which increased to 23% when the rest of the world took actions in implement lockdown. These effects are expected to be long-lasting for the economy and the tourism industry. (Skare 2020, 12-13.)

The "Sustainable travel 2020-2023" -program is established to improve and further develop Finland's competitiveness in the travel market. The key development themes are sustainability, accessibility, year-round travel, and digitalization. The goal is to strengthen digitalization abilities, improve sustainable operating and communication and increase the amount of domestic and international sleepovers in Finland. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland 2019, 2-9.)

The leap from traditional travel organizing to a more digital one, has taken place over a long time (Business Finland 2019). Although virtual tourism has developed continuously since the 1990´s, the adoption of technology and digital tools has significantly increased after the COVID-19 outbreak. People have been forced to stay home and replace traveling to an onsite destination with virtual experiences. (Repo 2021, 19-20.) Juho Pesonen claims that the development of digital travel products has been slow in Finland (Massinen 2021.), but the progress and ability to respond to a crisis is depended on many factors. Some travel organizations grow their business with digitalization in focus, whereas others are resistant in development of new informational technologies. (Januszewska 2015, 71.)

The transformation of travel has also had its effects on the Finnish tourism industry. New service development is crucial in order to stay competitive in the global tourism market.

The selection of supply must be present in major online channels in addition of active promotion in local and company managed websites and online stores. Shared market platforms and collaboration between travel enterprises and public organizations to enhance knowledge sharing and sales of tourism services. (Kosonen 2019).

4.1.2 What is culturally responsible tourism?

Method: desk research

Deliverables: summary

The definition of responsible tourism can be presented in terms of social, environmental, and financial aspects. Cultural tourism implies a travel activity in which the visitor´s motivation is to discover, experience, consume and learn the intangible and tangible cultural products or attractions at a travel destination. These outputs can be intellectual, emotional and spiritual features of a society that encompasses architecture, art, cultural, historical and culinary heritage, music, literature, living cultures, lifestyle, beliefs, value systems and traditions, in addition to other distinctive material. (UNWTO 2022.)

Cultural heritage, and the implementation of it, is a complex and multidimensional issue. Intangible cultural heritage is fragile, but yet an important element in preserving cultural diversity. Lack of understanding and dialogue creates challenges in developing mutual respect for other ways of living. (Minan Sinan University of fine Arts 2014, 5.). Bob McKercher and Hillary Du Cros (2002, *xii*) agrees, the foundation of creating quality and responsibly produced culture travel products, relies on partnership and interaction between the cultural heritage professionals and the tourism industry. The result and conclusions of this discussion should also be clearly communicated to the travellers. If no collaboration exists, the result is lost opportunity and failure to provide tourism experiences in an ethically, environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.

Visit Finland runs a certification program Sustainable Travel Finland for companies in the tourism industry. One of the 10 leading principles is that the business commit to uphold the cultural heritage of the area. This translates to the intent to express culture in an authentic and respectful way. In addition, culture is also recognized to have been developed in interaction with other and has elements of other traditions. (Business Finland 2022e)

The challenges of responsible implementation of cultural heritage, that McKerch (2002, iix), Minan Sinan University of fine Arts (2014, 5.) and UNWTO (2012, p. 5.) explain, have realised during the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project. On the other hand, the transformation

and productization of Kalevala has been praised (Business Finland 2020, appendix 7.) and on the other hand the project has been accused of exotism and exploitation of cultural heritage (Kurko 2021.). Maintaining authenticity when commercialising living culture, poses challenges, as it might lead to simplification of cultural heritage (UNWTO 2012, p. 5.).

Cultural heritage is a delicate topic that raises discussion and divergent opinions how it should be addressed in tourism and generally in business (Huttunen 2004, 34-36). Moreover, Kalevala is a disputed entity of tradition, oral heritage, art, and culture which have been used for political interests in the past, but also as a conjunctive piece of the Finnish people (Kalevalaseura 2021b). The discussion around the rights of the ownership and use of cultural symbols linked to the indigenous Sámi people (Sámediggi 2022.), has similarities to the discussion of the ownership of Kalevala (Yle Areena 2021; SKS 2022; HS 2021; Karjalan Liitto 2022.).

In rural travel destination development, it is proposed that the destination should be managed as an integrated system. The purpose is to facilitate implementation of sustainability principles by creating an overall destination strategy, intra-destination, and inter-organisational coordination, emphasising destination capabilities and inter-destination bridge ties. It is however argued that an overall strategy with multiple actors is rarely effective due difficulties of coordination among diverse stakeholders. (Mwesiumo 2021, 2).

Culture travel management seems to obtain the same problem and measuring the sustainability of culture travel products have no official evaluation criteria. Cultural tourism integrates both intangible and tangible cultural elements and environments, thus the measurement criteria must consider social, environmental and financial factors. (Valtioneuvosto 2020, 1-6). Visit Finland is developing and gathering data to create indicators for national sustainable travel and the research work has been started in 2022 (Business Finland 2022f).

Neither the Finnish Standard Association gives an answer to measuring immaterial cultural heritage or applicable standards targeted for the travel industry. The SFS-EN 15898:2019 Conservation of cultural heritage: Main general terms and definitions standard is aimed for preserving tangible heritage. (Finnish Standard Association 2022a.) More general standards like the ISO 9001 standard could be useful in developing new services in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, however it is neither directly linked with social, financial, or environmental sustainability measurement on the tourism industry. (Finnish Standard Association 2022b.)

The MAMOMI project (Valtioneuvosto 2020, 1-6) highlights four points to improve the perseverance of cultural environments and to sustain the adhesion of cultural destinations:

- The impacts of travel in cultural destinations should be monitored regularly
- The positive experience of tourists should be secured sustainable and responsibly
- The measurement methods of impacts to cultural environments must be taken to use
- The use of finances and income from tourism activities should be developed and directed to preserving cultural environments

In the outcomes of the MAMOMI project is presented that tourism visitor sustainability examine the ecological sustainability and integrates the financial sustainability to social sustainability. This means consideration of local communities and the welfare of local people. (Valtioneuvosto 2020, 1-6)

4.1.3 Kalevala as the source of inspiration

Method: Interview, desk research, brainstorming, webinar

Deliverables: Mood board, webinar

Kalevala and culture heritage are a great source of inspiration in diverse services and products beyond any industry. The story, characters and the collection of ancient poems, songs and idioms can be experienced in touristic destinations, accommodation providers, fashion, literature, games, jewellery, theatre plays, music, and business names. (Kalevala kartalle 2022)
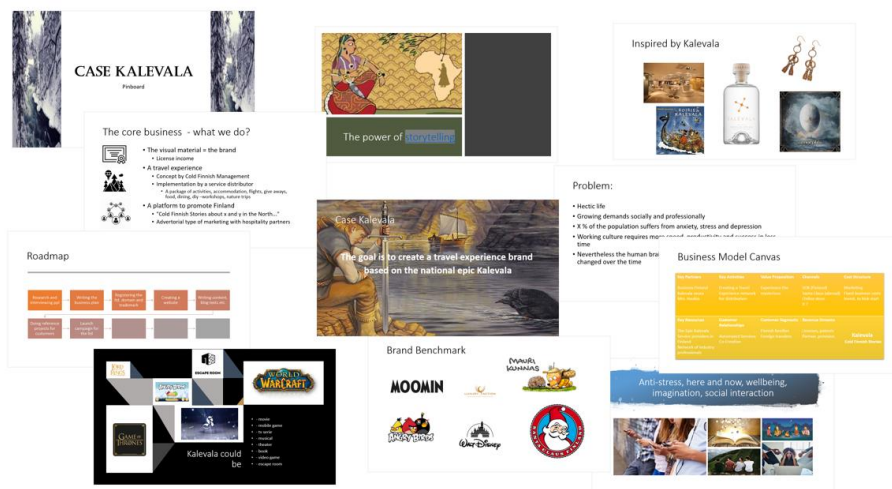

Figure 7. Kalevala mood board: Initial concept brainstorming collected to a PowerPoint collage (appendix 2).

In the Moritz Service Design model (Moritz 2005, 143, 226.) the mood board method is presented in the Explaining phase, which is the last stage of the process. The tool however is a visual way of organizing separate information, themes, pictures and thoughts related to the initial idea. The mood board as shown in Figure 7 was a ´quick and dirty´ collage grouping and explaining the purpose, value propositions, stakeholders, business model, current tourism or consumer services, culture and art related to Kalevala.

Multiple stakeholders and prospect partners were contacted and interviewed during the first six month of the pilot project. Visit Finland is the national expert organization in the travel industry promoting travel from abroad to Finland (Business Finland 2022a). It is part of the Business Finland which is the roof organization for innovation funding and trade (Business Finland 2022b).

In fall 2020 a seminar about developing experiences out of the story of Kalevala was organized in collaboration with Visit Finland (Figure 8). This seminar gathered approximately 300 stakeholders from the travel industry to discuss and learn about utilizing cultural heritage, tradition and storytelling in service creation. (Markkola 2020; Business Finland 2020.)

Figure 8. Snapshot from the Kalevala kartalle webinar 2020 produced with Visit Finland.

Kalevala has been presented in various contexts as the seminar program could reveal. The story and history of Kalevala is thought in school in Finland, but a deeper understanding of heritage remain vague. The edition of Kalevala from 1849 the ´New Kalevala´, referred as the original or complete version, is old language and consisting of 23 000 verses (Tarkka 2020.) which are not easy to read and requires a lot of

concentration. The seminar had two presentations about how German and Japanese travelers are aware of Finnish folklore and what they value in travel products related to Kalevala. According to research most of foreign tourists do not know about Kalevala at all and the story should be designed according to the traveler's interest. For some tourists a nature activity with some story elements is enough, whereas culturally aware travelers could better be inspired of in-depth Kalevala experiences. (Business Finland 2020.)

Storytelling and productization of folklore are claimed to improve the attractiveness of a culture destination and differentiate it from the global competition. Kalevala is said to be well known around the world (Rui 2020.), however other market research states that the story is unidentified by consumers (Hon 2020, 24-25.; Shaknikovich 2021, 6.; Visit Finland 2021, 6.). The recommendations for productizing folklore are that consistent branding work and financial investments are needed, the Kalevala story should be presented according to the traveller's profile and interests, and that it could be integrated in nature experiences and activities, because Kalevala per se, would not be the only reason to travel to Finland. (Business Finland 2020; Business Finland 2021.)

4.1.4 Japanese as the target segment

Method: Interview, survey, desk research

Deliverables: Project report

An initial customer interest research was done in early spring 2020 in cooperation with Master´s students during the Applied Design Research. The expected outcome of the applied research was to get a verification on how the Kalevala story should be presented to Japanese tourists. The research outcomes aimed to help the Kalevala kartalle -project to finetune the standpoint and get the better idea for what the final product would be like.

The base for a successful concept is that there´s a real need and a proof of concept. The aim of the study was to find out if Japanese travellers are interested in cultural activities implemented with the story of Kalevala. The assumption was that no travellers know the Finnish national epic from before. The original plot of the story is rather complicated why the story was chosen to be presented through the characters. A story character is easier to understand and relate to compared with introducing the story as a whole. (Hon 2020, 3-4.)

The motivational factors of Japanese travellers consist of relaxation, cultural and historical experiences, nature, family-oriented travel and sports. The motivation may also depend on the destination and demographical factors, but the main result of the study shows that

Japanese travellers are experience and relaxation seeking. Local culture, food and nature are one of the notable motivational factors for them when travelling. (Hon 2020, 3-4.)

Asian tourism has steadily increased in Finland during last years. According to the statistics of Finland Chinese were the fifth largest group in overnight stays and Japanese ninth. Both nationalities figures of overstays were increased from previous year. As the number of Asian travellers in Finland is growing, they are potential target groups for local operators and service providers. One supporting signal is that Finnair has increased direct flights between Finland and Japan. Also, number of Japanese travellers in Finland has increased in previous years. (Hon 2020, 10.)

Finnish design as Iittala and Marimekko are popular among tourists visiting Finland. Visitors also appreciate pure, Scandinavian nature, local food, tranquillity and the four seasons. (Matilainen 2018, 20; Strandberg 2018, 34-35.) Finnish literature in tourism might be an underutilized opportunity and our task is to find out how to build an experience from a Finnish mythology. Cultural experiences and learning new might add additional value to the stay in Finland.

Finland has a positive image in Japan. Trendy people have the Nordic countries on top of the mind and Finland plays number 1. The most known words to describe Finland by Japanese are Santa Claus, Moomins, high education, Aurora Borealis, happiness, nature, Finnish basic social security and sauna. (Matilainen 2018, 22; Strandberg 2018, 34-35; Hon 2020, 10-11.)

The initial customer segment was rather vide because of the initial assumption, that the Japanese are not familiar with Kalevala from before. For the data collection, several interviews were held in central Helsinki and Helsinki Vantaa airport with Japanese tourists. The tour operator companies didn't have the information or possibility to let the project team interview their customers to tight logistics and schedule on Helsinki Vantaa airport, therefore individual interviews were held with independent travellers. (Hon 2020, 11.)

To have a comprehensive understanding on the current travel practice in Japan toward Finland and their perspective towards Kalevala and cultural tourism in Finland, interviews with industry experts were conducted in both Japan and Finland. Unfortunately, the outbreak of coronavirus in Japan had caused a distress in the tourism industry that require extra workload, as a result, two industry professionals were interviewed. (Hon 2020, 15-16.)

One represented a design hotel in Helsinki with a Kalevala theme and the other interview was conducted with representative from Finnair Japan station. The answers reconfirmed that there is a strong interest for Japanese tourists toward European cultural and historical related activities. Beside the opinions about demographic, market segmentation target, and itinerary activities, interesting findings from the response mentioned such as the potential growth of Japanese tourist visiting Finland, Kalevala related activities are underserved from Japan, the existence of Special Interest Traveler (SIT) toward Finnish composer Jean Sibelius and designer Alvar-Aalto. (Hon 2020, 15-16.)

Interviews conducted with Japanese tourists showed that they are interested in cultural tourism and activities within cultural tourism. They were also interested in the story of Kalevala and stated that they would be interested in products & services related to it. Pictures shown to them raised interest and they were crucial support material while introducing the story. One of the main challenges during the interview process, was the language barrier. For some of the interviewee questions were hard to understand and some of them had to be skipped. Visual content was a good tool during the interviews, but for some people, who had difficulties with English it was almost impossible to continue the survey. (Hon 2020, 24-26.)

4.2   Thinking

This chapter presents the second phase of the Kalevala kartalle -projects´ service design process. The thinking stage included desk-research, interviews, surveys, user profile analysis, stakeholder definition, project and business plan development, workshops, and a webinar. The deliverables of this development and research a project plan, business plan, user personas, webinar.

4.2.1   Physical and digital experience products

Method: qualitative research (commission), interviews, webinar, workshop, benchmark

Deliverables: Master´s thesis by Repo, webinar

Physical experiences can be experienced e.g. on travel routes, which combines activities related to tradition, food culture, handcrafts, accommodation, museums and nature attractions. The Singing Heritage Route as an example, is based on the intangible singing heritage and is materialized as attractions and heritage themed activities or services reaching from Inari in the North of Finland to Helsinki in the South (Singing Heritage Route 2022).

Digital experiences can be divided in experiences led by an external party or independently experienced activities. Digital experiences take many forms with elements of three-dimensional material (3D), 360° video material, extended reality (XR), virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), artificial reality (AR), mobile guidance and gamification. (Heinonen 2021, 3-7.)

A masters´ thesis research was made as a commission to the Kalevala kartalle -project in 2021 to discover the essentials of virtual and digital experiences on the tourism sector. The target group for the research was Japanese travelers and the data was collected with use of focus groups. (University of Eastern Finland 2021.)

Key reasons for Japanese travelers to participate in a virtual trip with a live guide are the restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic, desire to learn about culture or destinations and enjoying new experiences. The advantages of virtual travel in the travelers' eyes are the easiness, low cost, limited time, getting detailed information and safeness of travel. The most memorable elements of the trips were the immersive feeling of actually being in the destination, interaction with other people, experiencing local lifestyle and culture, discovering interesting content and tools and the feeling of freedom to travel anywhere in the world. (University of Eastern Finland 2021.)

In the Kalevala kartalle -digitour, presented in section 4.4.2, the participants valued the technical production of the digital trip which was easy to join and experience. On the other hand, the internet connection of the viewer and the solidity of the connection causes problems with streaming the video in the Zoom-environment. (Kervinen 2021, 8-9.)

As Repo´s (2021) research states, also the feedback of the digitour confirms that the learning aspect of other cultures is interesting, especially when Japanese and Finnish culture were assimilated to each other with examples. Visual material, such as videos and pictures, in combination with music, singing, nature sounds, and moments of silence increased the experience and interest toward the destinations presented during the trip. (Kervinen 2021, 8-9.)

Multiple product ideas were created during the concept innovation process. For this thesis the example product was selected to be the digitour. Both pilot groups were given the opportunity to participate in the Kalevala kartalle -digitour production. Finally, the second pilot group in Kainuu decided on joining and it was selected as the collaboration partner for the digital trip.

This study explains the method of new service development in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. The emphasis is on value creation through co-creation and developing

culturally sustainable travel products. This study does not go into detail regarding the created travel products or their business model.

4.2.2 Project plan

Method: desk research, SWOT, Gantt chart research, interviews

Deliverables: Project plan, User personas

A project plan was created to clarify the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project´s goals and tasks. The NSDP model presented in chapter 2.2 lists that new service development projects requires authentic leadership, knowledge sharing, project team, the technological infrastructure and cross-functional integration. A project plan is an activity of the planning stage and a tool to communicate what the project is about. The plan usually can be edited during the project.

The project plan starts with a problem statement, introduces the desired outcome, includes a SWOT-analysis, the measurement values (see 4.1.2), presents the project team, key stakeholders, the roadmap, the financial, information technology environments and channels, marketing plan and the administration which covers the NSDP themes presented in Section 2.2.

The problem statement was modified during the pilot project to it´s final form: How to develop a culture travel concept for Japanese travellers? The wanted outcome was defined to be a physical and digital culture travel route between two destinations in Finland. The key success and failure factors were evaluated with the SWOT framework.

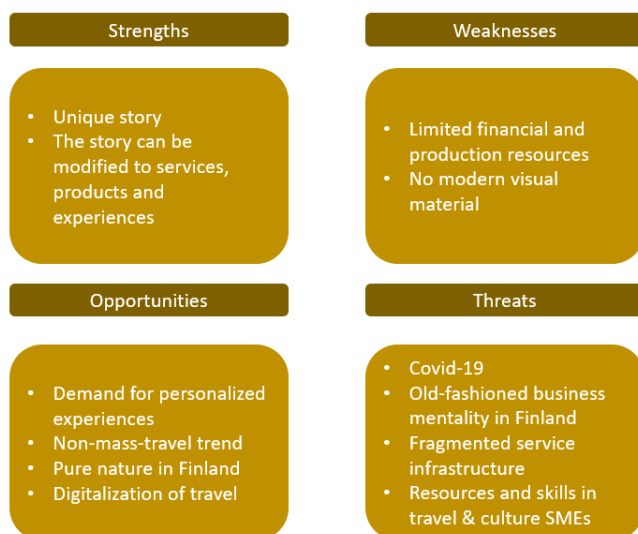| Strengths	Weaknesses
• Unique story • The story can be modified to services, products and experiences	• Limited financial and production resources • No modern visual material
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Demand for personalized experiences • Non-mass-travel trend • Pure nature in Finland • Digitalization of travel	• Covid-19 • Old-fashioned business mentality in Finland • Fragmented service infrastructure • Resources and skills in travel & culture SMEs

Figure 9. SWOT analysis for the Kalevala kartalle -concept.

The project team varied during the pilot project from 1-30 people. A project, especially related to the rural development, needs a competent and skilled project facilitator and complementing skills from other team members. (Mwesiumo 2021, 7-8.) The project manager took care for the overall management and project strategy and was supported by external, part-time expertise in the fields of tourism, graphic design, digital product development, finance applications and immaterial property rights and legal issues.

Key stakeholders listed in Table 1 were public organizations, cities, small and medium sized businesses, culture organizations and consulting firms. Finally, two pilot groups were formed, one in the Southern Finland and the second group in the Lakeland area, Kainuu.

Pilot group 1		Pilot group 2
Helsinki city	Ulla.fi	The Regional council of Kainuu
Lohja city	Tripsteri	Kuhmo city
Kalevalaisten naisten liitto (1-8/2020)	Sabrina ja Saarten tyttäret	Hotelli Kalevala
Hotel Klaus K. (cancelled due to Covid-19)	Kalevalafest	Mandana
Nuuksion Taika	RUNO	Elias Lönnrot ry.
Naturested	Kalevala World - The return of the golden age	Juminkeko
NITA International	Meltorauta taidetakomo	
Mai Niemi Design House	Virko	

Table 1. Kalevala kartalle -project partners.

The target group for the Kalevala kartalle -concept was defined during the initial stages of the projects to the form of persona profiles (Moritz 2005, 62). Japanese travellers were selected to be the core target group. The representative of Visit Finland Japan Mr. Koichi Numata claimed that the awareness regarding Kalevala is very low in Japan, therefore the promoting of the theme should start from the basics. According to his suggestions, school groups and public or educational institutions could be a suitable target group for travel products linked to Finnish heritage and the story of Kalevala. (Business Finland 2020.)

A roadmap was created with a Gantt template (Appendix 3) to cover the major activities of the project. These were marketing, events, workshops, milestones, and other development activities. The project aimed to create new services which meant that an administrative body was required to be set up. There are many possibilities to establish a company (Yrittäjät 2022) and finally a limited liability company was selected to be the right form to achieve the long-term goals of the project. The responsibilities of the company were to manage development work, human resources, it infrastructure, marketing and public relations. The sales, finances, taxes, and billing were organized through the company to meet legal requirements.

4.3 Generating

This chapter presents the third phase of the Kalevala kartalle -projects´ service design process. The generating stage included journey mapping, desk-research, brainstorming and workshops. The deliverables of this phase are the Kalevala kartalle -journey map, a workshop.

4.3.1 Defining touchpoints

Method: Journey Mapping

Deliverables: Journey map

Figure 10. Kalevala kartalle Journey map and touchpoints. (Appendix 4)

Touchpoints are encounter points that a user experiences and a journey map in Figure 10 visualizes the full journey from the understanding phase to the post-phase. Planning and designing the full customer journey helps to improve the overall user experience when all essential touchpoints are recognized. (Moritz 2005, 150, 166.)

The overall Kalevala kartalle -journey map was scoped to address the preliminary stages of marketing and information search to recognition online and in partners´ channels, paid advertisement, visiting the website and online store, arriving to the destination, participating in the activities and experiences, departure and re-marketing in social media and other channels.

A detailed version of the journey map was created with the scope from pre-marketing to arriving to Finland until departure. The first phase of the customer journey is the *prospective* phase (Yachin 2018, 203). The final Kalevala kartalle -culture travel route starts with Facebook marketing in Japan via a Japanese partner. The local travel agent books Japanese to participate in a digital trip explained in Section 4.4.2. After the digital Kalevala kartalle -tour the participants receives a newsletter showcasing the destinations and attractions presented during the tour. The customer is directed to the website where the Kalevala kartalle -route and additional information is showcased. The customer has the opportunity to browse, evaluate and purchase Kalevala themed experiences from the online store.

The second phase of the customer journey is the *active* phase (Yachin 2018, 203.). Upon arrival the customer is kept up to date with welcoming letters and practical tourist information. The core activities and touchpoints on-site, in the destination, are accommodation, in 83% of the time a hotel or motel (Visit Finland 2016), food and dining, shopping and activities such as Finnish cultural attractions which interested 46% of Japanese travellers (Visit Finland 2016).

The third and last phase of the customer journey is the *reflective* phase (Yachin 2018, 203.). This includes de post-travel experience when the traveller has left the destination and returned back home. In this phase the tourist reflects on the overall experience, the feelings and thoughts about the trip. The memories can be shared with friends and family or be reinterpreted by oneself. (Yachin 2018, 203.) This stage is an opportunity for remarketing and sending surveys to gain feedback and keep the consumer interested by interacting with the customer in different channels. (Moscardeo 2020, 3.).

4.3.2 Workshops with project stakeholders

Method: Hybrinars, webinars, workshops, brainstorming

Deliverables: webinar, workshop

Several workshops were organized during the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project. The stakeholder groups were iterated with time and workshops were held with different compositions as in the second Kalevala kartalle -webinar in Figure 11. The goal of the workshops was to engage the partners to the development process, enable networking and getting to know each other, brainstorm and plan product ideas and educate to the possibilities of a shared marketing and sales ecosystem. The workshops did not focus on individual travel or culture businesses product development, but the whole service

selection of the partner stakeholders. As a result, a coherent travel route was expected to be developed as a result, digitally and as a physical route.

Figure 11. Snapshot from the Kalevala kartalle webinar 2020 produced in cooperation with Visit Finland.

All workshops were not organized in the generating phase, because the two parallel key partner groups were not formed the same time. Moreover, the stakeholders´ had varying needs and challenges which had to be addressed individually. Thus, the development work in a workshop setting were iteratively arranged according to the current problem at hand. As a result, public and private workshop sessions created a loop of continuous development tasks, which is the core to reach goals with the service design approach (Moritz 2005, 178; Stickdorn 2018, 60).

The development and ideating workshops were organized either live, online or as a hybrinar with participants both on-site and remotely. The workshops had usually two facilitators were the other one was in charge of the overall facilitation and technical support and the other one as the expert of the topic at hand. The workshops typically included a introduction to the topic, interactive group or individual work and group discussions. The discussion was documented during the workshops and the chat conversation was in some cases filed for analysis.

Organizing collaborative workshops require suitable facilities or digital tools, communication and guidance of participants before, during and after the session. The challenging parts were coordinating the stakeholders which had very diverse needs and level of experience what it comes to collaborative working methods, technical skills and openness to sharing ideas. Addressing each and everyone's needs was the most challenging task, since personal guidance was required especially with operating with digital tools. The other hindrance to really create a shared and codeveloped concept was the participants will to create new service products together instead of working standalone. Therefore, the project manager was responsible for outlining the overall

concept and the travel route and each travel company were responsible for their own service selection.

A summary was made from each workshop. In conclusion several product ideas were formed from the initial information and pre-workshop queries, ideas created in the workshops, in addition to other collected information. The product ideas are presented in the next section 4.3.3.

4.3.3 Product ideas

Method: workshop, brainstorming, mock-up planning, bulls' eye

Deliverables: Kalevala kartalle -digitour script, online store mock-up

Generating product ideas are an essential task of the Generating phase in the Moritz (2005) Service Design model. The outputs of the previous development phases provided insight and information which were refined to concrete product ideas. In the starting phase of the Kalevala kartalle -project the goal was to create a culture travel route with the theme of Kalevala without editorialising the form of the route or its tangibles.

During the ideating phases several product ideas and product variations were listed and developed. These ideas were put together and then prioritized to make a bundle of services which creates a comprehensive concept. The overwhelming number of ideas and opportunities during the service and travel route iteration provided a good starting point for the concept, however the scoping and defining the concept took a lot of effort. The product ideas were prioritized based on the suitableness to the Kalevala kartalle -culture travel route, how well it complemented and supported the other services on the route, how feasible it was and whether it was possible to test financial wise during the pilot project.

As mentioned in section 2.3 an experience is a multidimensional entity which is developed from the state of discovering a need to participating in the experience until post-experience. The experiences are a formed and created with tangible and intangible elements where some parts can be controlled, whereas other situations or outcomes are impossible to control. The products and product bundles are divided in tangible, digital and immaterial products since the experiences can take various forms as discussed in section 2.4. The concept consists of core services, digital services and supporting services to enable the production of the Kalevala kartalle -concept.

Tangible products

- Experiences onsite by the Kalevala kartalle -route

- Souvenirs and handcraft
- exhibitions, pop up museum
- walking tour Helsinki

Digital products

- Kalevala themed culture travel route online
- Digitour
- Online store and website, present cards
- Digital experiences, notifications upon arrival etc

Immaterial products

- Kalevala themed culture travel route, no control over these, might include non-planned touchpoints e.g. meeting and discussing with other people during the trip
- memories of participants, stories
- the character Pohjolan tytär – embody the character by storytelling

Each participating company or culture organization got to develop their own services. Most of the stakeholders had already some services linked to heritage and the story of Kalevala, thus the tangible products were aligned to meet the needs of Japanese travellers and fine-tuned for the overall culture travel route. Public organizations, such as the Regional Council of Kainuu, Kuhmo city and Lohja city were supporting partners and collaborated as a communication and coordinating partner toward their local stakeholders. Thus, they did not develop individual culture travel products.

The tangible product ideas included activities at accommodation partners, nature experiences, design clothing, accessories, handcraft, workshop at a blacksmith, small products suitable for souvenirs, guided tours, transportation, music performances, visit to a culture centre, meals, and food. Most of these service providers had not any digital products why they required development and planning work to be modified to a digital context. Each service was planned to be distributed on the Kalevala kartalle -website at the online store. In practice this meant that a description, product pictures and a stakeholder account was made to the online store system.

The tangible products such as souvenirs and handcrafts can be presented and sold in many stages of the customer travelling journey. Kalevala has also inspired artists, composers and screenwriters, thus new curated exhibitions could fit the Kalevala kartalle -concept. If produced as a pop-up concept, it could be distributed as a tournee or as a visiting exhibition around Finland or internationally. A guided tour could be organized on-site at a culturally important venue, such as a museum or nature attraction, or as a mobile tour in an urban environment.

The digital product integrating the services in the Kainuu area was a digital trip produced in the landscapes of Kajaani and Kuhmo. The Kalevala kartalle digitour is a two hour long digital trip in Zoom-environment described in section 4.4.2. The digitour worked as a standalone product, however it worked as a touchpoint to attract travellers to discover more about Kalevala and travelling to Finland. A digital product provides the opportunity to develop a scalable business which impacts the business plan. The technology combined with a professional guide or performer are however a key to create an immersive experience. Moreover, the digital trip is a good opportunity to provide personalized information in interactive discussions, promote local travel and culture services and make a call to action to purchase the trip or some activities to Finland.

The piloted Kalevala kartalle -travel route can also be seen as one of the immaterial products of the concept, integrating the tangible, digital and intangible elements of the overall experience. These aspects together create an experiencescape and memories triggered by emotions experienced during the different phases of the trip. As the Kalevala kartalle -route is yet only materialised as a list of attractions and destinations between Helsinki and Kuhmo, the finalization of the route and production of the operational part of it, requires further development work.

As storytelling is a powerful tool to trigger emotions and create experiences more desirable (Moscardeo 2020, 4.), it has been utilized in the marketing material of the project, the website and to storify the project manager as one of the characters of Kalevala. The personnel of the company or service organization is in direct interaction and contact with the stakeholders why it creates a great opportunity to impact the experiencescape and experience of the person whom the interaction takes place with. This type of roleplay is a tool to immerse the audience to the story. (Moscardeo 2020, 2.). The Kalevala kartalle -projects manager studied the main characters in Kalevala and chose the daughter of Pohjola to be "brought to life" during the pilot project. Kalevala does include multiple characters, animals and objects which could be storified and revise as a modern version. Especially the feedback from the Japanese travellers underlined, that linking the past, elements of the story and the present phenomenon are interesting to discover when participating in a trip (Nita International 2021; 4.).

The customer, in other words, the end users of the Kalevala kartalle -project are Japanese travellers and the subsidiary client group are the concept stakeholders which are responsible for the operational service of the concept. Therefore, service products were also planned for the stakeholders to support the actual concept and each stakeholders´ development work.

Stakeholder services

- License package; brand manual, trademark, and marketing material
- Support services: consulting, coaching, workshops
- Building the ecosystem: seminars, networking events
- Sales channels: online store, digital marketing

The very base for any business to run is to establish a company and protect the immaterial property rights (IPR) which is discussed in section 4.3.3. The owner of the trademark has the legal right to grant others to utilize it with a license contract and deny others to utilize it without permission (Finnish patent and registration office 2022). The advantage for the licence user is that it can benefit and utilize an established, possibly well known brand, in its own sales and marketing. The license provides credibility in discussions with other stakeholders and is more cost efficient than creating a brand from zero. (AGMA 2020.) Moreover, there are several artists, art and creatives who gather inspiration from Kalevala (Kalevala kartalle 2022.) but no one have created a solid visual identity and brand around the national epic. Therefore, an updated brand and marketing package is required to support the development of the Kalevala kartalle -concept and provide an aligned image of the entity.

A brand package with a trademark is one part of productizing the concept, however also individual coaching and support is needed to implement the brand in practice. The findings of discussions, workshops and seminars during the pilot project evidence that the travel field is very fragmented demographically and poor what it comes to technical abilities or productization expertise. Research suggests that overall education and skills should be improved in marketing, digital communication, utilizing digital sales channels, collaborating in networks as an ecosystem, improving the level of customer insight and needs and productization of services. (Kinnunen 44; Helinko 2020). Thus, consulting, coaching and workshops are tools to support SME´s needs in their growth to meet their full potential.

As the different new service development frameworks and the field research suggest, the efficiency of the ecosystem of stakeholders is the key to successful facilitation of new innovation and services (Helinko 2020). Visit Finland works as a coordinating party between stakeholders and as a promotor for incoming tourism in Finland (Business Finland 2022c). Therefore, cultural travel and industry specific seminars are important for knowledge sharing and networking. Seminars are also a great opportunity to interact with diverse partners and gain feedback on a multidimensional topic, such as cultural heritage. For best synergy the ideal is to produce industry relative events in collaboration with the

publicly managed organizations like Visit Finland. As an organizing partner it also creates credibility in the eyes of the professional stakeholders in the tourism sector.

There are multiple projects funded by public organisations to improve the economy in the tourism and hospitality industry in Finland. The results of industry supporting projects are wished to especially boost actual sales besides improving the infrastructure and network building (TEM 2015, 32). DMO´s, individual travel destinations and businesses (Äksyt ämmät 2022; Arctic Lakeland 2022; Business Finland 2021.) have their own or partly shared online stores and sales channels, however the foreign travel operators would prefer one instead of many sales channels for simplicity (TEM 2015, 32). Also, Kalevala and Finnish or Carelian cultural heritage experiences are promoted on several local sites (Äksyt ämmät 2022b; Wild Taiga 2022.), however there is no digital hub which would collect and cover all the Kalevala themed services in Finland under one roof.

After few iteration rounds the Kalevala kartalle -culture travel route got its final definition: a Kalevala themed culture travel route, digitally and physically.

4.3.4   Immaterial property rights and licensing

Method: analysis of data, desk research, benchmark, interviews

Deliverables: Trademark, Ikitiaival Oy, grant applications

Developing a new commercially sustainable concept requires a suitable infrastructure and resources. Since the goal of the Kalevala kartalle -project was to facilitate service development and innovation work at the travel industry, a company was needed to run the financials and legal requirements. Ikitaival Oy was established in spring 2020 to address these activities.

Figure 12. Ikitaival Oy logo created as a commission by Laurea UAS students.

A logo presented in Figure 12, was created by Laurea University of Applied Sciences students. A project logo shown in Figure 13 was designed by the project manager for the Kalevala kartalle -project and created as a student commission by Aleksi Saarinen. The

logo includes a modernized version of an approximately 1000-year-old symbol Saint John´s Arms, *Hannunvaakuna* in Finnish. The symbol is in common use e.g., in signs of places of interest and cultural attractions (Väylävirasto 2022; The Unicode Standard 2021.). In folklore the looped square is a symbol to protect the owner from bad luck and evil spirits (Taivaannaula 2009). It is situated in the middle of two circles which symbolizes the border from Kalevala to Tuonela, the underworld in Finnish mythology (Järvinen 2017, 43-44.).

The hardly readable text in the circle *"siitäpä nyt tie menevi, ura uusi urkenevi"* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2015, 340.) is a citation from the last poem in Kalevala, freely translated: "there´s the road, let the path open". Below is the name of the project, Kalevala kartalle, "Kalevala on the map" and translated to "Experience Kalevala" in the English version of the logo. The first version of the logo was targeted for Finnish travel and culture field stakeholders and English-speaking travelers. To address Japanese audience, the logo should be modified, and the name translated to Japanese.

Figure 13. Kalevala kartalle logo and trademark created as a student commission by Aleksi Saarinen.

Protecting the immaterial property rights is crucial for several reasons, especially when operating with culture and heritage related themes as explained in section 4.1.2. The logo was registered as a trademark at the Patent and Register office, PRH in spring 2020.

A trademark gives an exclusive right to the owner to prohibit others from using the sign for any services or goods that are similar to the owners´ brand and service selection. For consumers a trademarked service gives trustworthiness of quality and consistency of the products. The mark can then be associated with a specific producer or business which establish the brand toward competition. (PRH 2022a; AGMA 2020.) The trademarks are classified to *product* (1-34) and *service (*35-25) categories (PRH 2022e).

The Kalevala kartalle -trademark was registered in category 35 to cover *services* related to marketing, promotion and sales in the travel industry, onsite and online events, virtual fairs, customer relations programs and consulting, research, and other supporting services. (PRH 2022b.)

A license is an agreement through which a licensee leases the logo, visual identity, or brand from a licensor. These legally protected pieces of intellectual property can then be used in conjunction with a product or service. There are multiple reasons why to license a business and it is a tool for brand marketing. The use of a well-established brand provides marketing support for the core business, and it is simple to try and expand to new product categories or stores when the brand concept is in place. (Licensing International 2022.) In the pilot project the trademark worked as a proof of being part of the concept, however other parts of the brand book were excluded to be created in a later phase.

The licensing business is worth 272 billion dollars globally in 2018. Well known licensing brands are Disney, Lego, Moomin Characters, Rovio and LVHM. (AGMA 2020.) In the travel industry there are also some examples, such as Travel + Leisure which gives their brand and trademark in use with a license contract (Travel + Leisure 2022). Thus, these examples shows that one story or character can be expanded to many different product and service categories.

Licensing is a business model to scale the production and standardize the quality of the service. In the case of Kalevala kartalle -the idea is to gather suitable service providers under one roof and provide them a sales and marketing channel through the Kalevala kartalle -brand. Kalevala kartalle works only as a brand and marketing coordinator providing the sales channel and consultancy how to productize Kalevala themed experiences to the travel sector. Thus, the project partners, the licensees, are responsible for the operational production of their own services.

After the registration of the Kalevala kartalle -trademark, during the opposition period lasting for 60 days, the project manager received an opposition letter from the jewelry brand Kalevala Koru. The company has trademarked their *products* mainly in the product category, including categories 14,18, 20, 21, 24, 25 and 35. These cover items such as jewelry, leather accessories, belts, bags, furniture, dishes, interior textiles, clothing, and shoes (PRH 2022c).

They required that the culture travel project Kalevala kartalle would give up using the word *Kalevala* in its activities and make an exclusion to the trademark classification in PRH. This exclusion was requested to cover *watches, jewelry, and art objects or decoration*

items. (Wikipedia 2022*)* It is noticeable that the word Kalevala has been trademarked by diverse companies for products and services covering food, spirits, coaching services, jewelry, marketing and PR services, games, theater, AR experiences and hotel business (PRH 2022d). Moreover, the Kalevala kartalle -trademark is protecting services not products.

After an approximately 12 months opposition process the Patent and Registration office concluded that there was no hindrance to utilize the Kalevala kartalle -trademark and the opposition of Kalevala Koru was discarded. PRH stated that the trademarks as whole, differentiate from each other and the comparison can´t be made only looking at details of the visual trademark. Kalevala Koru´s business is in the jewelry; thus, they are selling products. The activities registered under the classification 35, such as marketing, market research and invoicing services, are general activities of any business and not the Kalevala Koru´s core business. (PRH 2021.)

As discussed in section 4.1.2, commercializing phenomenon and immaterial cultural heritage is problematic. Not only the subject itself with the history and discussion of cultural appropriation, but the current state, that productizing and branding such a matter seems to be taken negatively by the bigger companies. A culture travel project could be a platform and network to find new target groups, expand to new markets and connect with a customer segment that are passionate about tradition, culture and handcraft. A brand of course chooses its own strategy and target groups, thus Japanese and Finnish story enthusiasts might be out of Kalevala Koru´s target. It is difficult to see why a platform providing travel experiences would be a threat to an established brand like Kalevala Koru. Trademarks are meant to protect the immaterial property of the owner (PRH 2022a.), but the communication of it is at least important.

Financing of the project was made with traditional sales, contacting prospect partners by phone, email and recommendations. The problem in many public or nonprofit projects are, that the continuity of the development work ends when the project budget is used. The Kalevala kartalle -project applied for grants during the pilot period and the concept will be iterated for the future applications.

4.4 Filtering

This chapter presents the fourth phase of the iterative Kalevala kartalle -projects´ service design process. The filtering stage included planning of the website mock-ups and the production of the Kalevala kartalle -digitour. The deliverables of this phase were a mock-up and the digital trip conducted for Japanese tourists.

4.4.1 The online store offering

Method: mock-ups

Deliverables: Mock-up plan

To distribute the Kalevala kartalle -experience and travel service selection an appropriate infrastructure is needed. The Kalevala kartalle -website is one touchpoint on the customer journey (appendix 4) of the traveller, thus the online store would be integrated on the site. The online store was out of the scope in the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project and executing the plan would require financial investments or a suitable platform partner to collaborate with.

The service portfolio in the pilot project consists of the activities and experiences on the route from Helsinki to Vihti, Lohja, Kajaani and Kuhmo. Some of the service selections are traditional accommodation services, in addition to design clothing, handcraft, nature activities such as forest bathing and storified tours and digital or on-site visits to a museum. (Kalevala kartalle 2022b.)

A mock-up of the online store was made on Johku-platfrom which is already in use on the travel sector. It is built to provide a drop and drag -type of platform for SME´s to set up an online store and additionally a website. Johku has a commission-based pricing and an option for cross-selling of other businesses products. (Johku 2022.) It was chosen for the pilot mock-up because it was fast to open the account and there were no fixed or opening costs.

The downsides were that it is limited how the online store layout is modifiable and getting the partners onboard required a lot of personal support. Few products were tested on the site; however, the implementation and the store architecture require financial investments and employee resources to be opened.

4.4.2 Kalevala kartalle -digitour

Method: prototyping, testing, surveys

Deliverables: digitour pilot report (commission), customer expectations report (commission)

Digital products, such as a digitally experienced trip, are activities that provide information and awareness about the destinations, in addition to the learning element about Finnish folklore. In the Kalevala kartalle -concept the digitour is an essential touchpoint for the

Japanese travelers to get familiar with the on-site trip in Finland. It is also a stage to set the expectations for the experiencescape and create feelings through interaction with the participants as presented in Figure 14.

The Kalevala kartalle -digitour is a 2 hour long digital trip guided in Japanese. The digitour was filmed in the landscapes of Kainuu where the national epic has been collated and written. The trip was organized in Zoom-environment and the trip is scripted to follow the structure of an actual trip to the destination. The live guide has a significant impact on the atmosphere and the flow of the digitour. A professional guide must also obtain advanced technical skills or have technical support during the presentation of the digital trip.

The digitour starts from the airport in Tokyo, the plane lands to Helsinki-Vantaa airport and a small tour is made to the market square in the city center. After some local snacks the trip continues to Kajaani where the collector and writer of Kalevala, Elias Lönnrot lived. The trip takes a tour to Lonnrot's herb garden and a cup of tea was enjoyed with him. After that it is time for lunch and the trip continues to a local restaurant highlighting the menu of the day. Next the participants "travel" to Kuhmo where an artist introduced her relation to Kalevala and its´ origins. Then it was time for some relaxation in the sauna and a dip in the lake. The digitour ends to a traditional Finnish feast with a rune singers' song.

Figure 14. Experience Kalevala digitour flyer for Japanese customers.

The feedback from the pilot digitours provided insight on the preferences of the Japanese participants. Approximately 50 customers participated on the digital trips organized during fall 2021. Approximately 90% of the customers were 35–50-year-old women and 66% of the customers answered the feedback form. Most of them had tried digital travelling before in some form and they were especially curious about the destinations which were presented during the trip. Food, experiences, such as sauna, art, and music, were interesting themes when planning the possible trip to Finland. (Nita International 2021)

The participants were asked to give feedback on how to further improve the experience on the digitour. The participants wished for additional material, e.g., a flyer where all the relevant characters of the story, places and essential information would be presented. The quality of the technical aspects was considered good; however, some participants own internet connection was poor and made difficulties to follow the tour without distractions. Some wished for subtitles so that they could have listened to Finnish language as the natives discussed during the tour. Quiet moments were also requested so that there would be moments for only observation and assimilate specific acts. (Nita International 2021)

For the next product development iteration, the digitour concept could be improved with establishing the marketing and sales channel, creating additional handover materials of the story, services, and the destinations, as well as searching for new technological solutions to automate the overall customer journey and marketing of the digitour. The human factor, the live guide, and the interactions, are highly valued by the consumers, why there should be created new ways to make the digitour experience more immersive (Repo 2021). This will naturally require investments on research and development activities. It is also useful to figure out how the guide, or the experience of having a live guide, could be compensated without binding one guide to each individual digitour. Thus, what is the optimal combination of digital interaction, immersive elements, and authentic, human socializing?

4.5 Explaining

This chapter presents the fifth phase of the iterative Kalevala kartalle -projects´ service design process. The explaining stage included designing initial website mock-ups and user testing. The deliverables of this phase are the Kalevala kartalle -website and mock-ups.

4.5.1 Kalevala kartalle website

Method: Wireframes, mock-ups

Deliverables: Kalevala kartalle website, mock-ups

Visualizations and mock-ups are deliverables to showcase and explain complex and multidimensional concepts. A website was essential also to the audience to promote and communicate the upcoming events and additional information about the culture travel route (Figure 15). The first version of the website was created with Wix which was an easy drag and drop -type of platform. The website service provider had an option to integrate

their own online store to the Kalevala kartalle -site, but it turned out that the Johku online store was already in use on the travel sector in Finland and it did not have fixed monthly costs upon setup. With limited resources it is challenging to educate and guide multiple stakeholders in only the account setup. An efficient IT-infrastructure is crucial for new service development (Rahman 2020, 303-310) and the selection of different systems seems to increase in the future. As both businesses and customers wish, a centralized system and use experience would be the best (TEM 2015, 31-33).

Figure 15. Snapshot from the Kalevala kartalle -website.

The domain for the project was chosen to be in Finnish, because the pilot projects first phase was targeted for Finnish travel businesses and culture organizations. In later phases the website and the domain must be provided in selected languages according to what the target customers prefer. E.g., the Japanese travelers want to read and find information in before the trip in Japanese. Although, the level of English language skills have improved especially among the younger travelers, service provided in Japanese creates a feeling of trust and safety. (Nita International 2021, 9-12; Visit Finland 2018, 6-17)

The Kalevala kartalle -project participated as a commissioner to a Laurea University of Applied Sciences visual communication course in fall 2020. Few student groups created mock-ups for the site with the idea that it would be targeted for the international travelers. Several international travel sites and brand websites were benchmarked, and the best practices designed to fit the Kalevala kartalle -brand. E.g., the experience search function, a visualization of the culture travel route, a map over Finland, language options, additional content such as videos and blogs, as well as presenting the service providers were key elements to showcase on the site. (Laurea 2020) A link to trusted travel sites is also important to build trust on the quality of the overall service. The consumer protection in Japan is strong and established travel operators have their purchase guarantees on place, why it may be beneficial to cooperate with them as a supplier. (Kervinen 2021.)

The website has gained feedback for its coherent, distinguished, and mysterious layout. The cover loop video with a canoeing person creates a feeling of almost being in the kayak because the video is wagging, instead of a stable picture which is often more desirable. Websites per se, is a two-dimensional interface, however the immersiveness can be increased by creative web design, audio, video and technologies which virtual, augmented or mixed virtual elements. There are many levels and touchpoints where the immersive experiences can be delivered, the experiences, devices, commerce, engines and delivery and the creative ecosystem. (Adobe 2022.) The story of Kalevala gives also excellent material for storytelling and gamification throughout the digital touchpoints (Mossberg 2008, 196; Bartoli 2018, 1-2).

By the end of the Kalevala kartalle -pilot project in end of the year 2021 the site is up and running, however it needs an update for the next development phase. Next stages would be to modify and re-organize the site structure, provide different language options and create a separate sub- or master site for the actual end customers.

4.5.2 Marketing and media coverage

A concept, such as the Kalevala kartalle -project, which is unknown in all markets, the marketing and branding work starts from zero. In the first phases of the project, the target group for the communication was Finnish public organizations, travel and hospitality businesses and culture organizations. The marketing and communication plan included to first focus on these parties, instead of direct marketing to the Japanese end customers. The visibility on the website and social media, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, were digital environments to present the Kalevala kartalle -projects´ partners and the overall brand.

During fall 2020 a group of Laurea University of Applied Sciences students created mockups and initial social media visual plans for the Kalevala kartalle -project. The projects´ launch event in spring 2021 was also produced as a student commission by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences´ students presented in section 4..6.2. Moreover, the trademark presented in section xx was a commission work by a graphic design student. The Kalevala kartalle -project was kickstarted as a Master´s thesis project and approximately 30 students had their input on the development work in the various stages. (Laurea 2020; Haaga-Helia UAS 2021.)

The project gained visibility also by participating in public contests and bootcamps. Ikitaival Oy was selected to the finals in a competition for creative SME´s and won a radio campaign to promote the Kalevala kartalle -project (Radio Helsinki 2021). The project was

also selected to the top 10 Ultrahack startup community bootcamp in 2020 to enhance the concept. (Ultrahack 2020.) These events were great opportunities to promote the concept, gain a wide marketing reach in the organizing parties' channels and gain feedback of the initial concept.

The project included both internal and external briefing and communication. An approximately monthly newsletter was sent to market the upcoming events and the project´s status. The project team varied during the pilot and stakeholders were updated according to the need by phone, email and other instant messaging channels. In new service development one success factor is the efficiency of communication and sharing information. A shared IT-infrastructure would have been ideal, however the communication was fragmented and decided to be done in the project partners´ channels and platforms. As expected, this caused confusion and gaps in communication which is a typical challenge in even established organizations (Salem 2008, 6-7).

The Kalevala kartalle -project and its partners got approximately 25 media hits in several medias such as Helsingin Sanomat, Ylen Aamu, Ilta-Sanomat, Radio Rock, Radio Helsinki, YLE Radio Suomi and multiple local newspapers during the pilot in 2020 and 2021 (appendix 6). After the trademark opposition between Kalevala Koru and the Kalevala kartalle -project burst out, also the social media become filled with comments, arguments, and questions around the topic (figure 16).
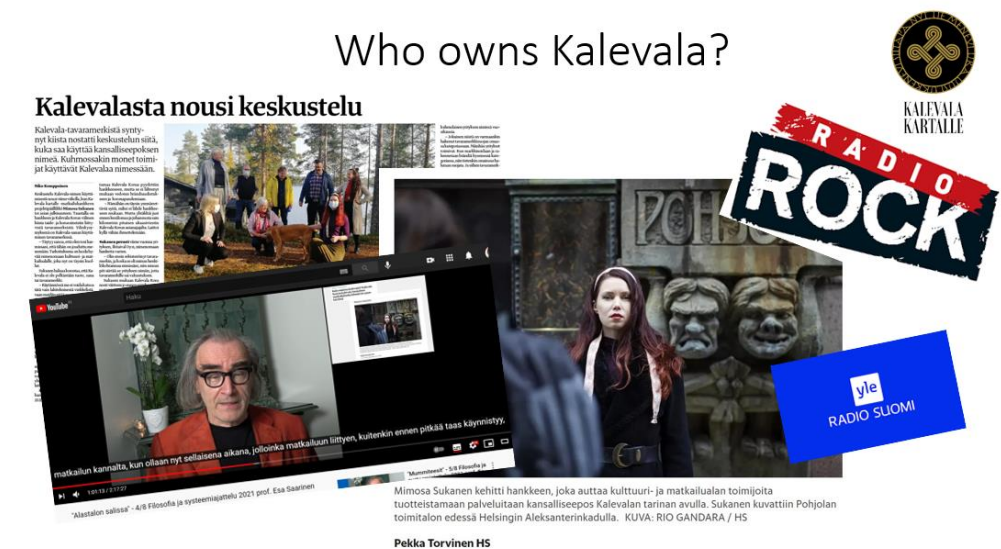

Figure 16. Who owns Kalevala? Discussion on social media.

As in any service development project or business, the public relations and crisis communication plan must be prepared. Social media crises escalate fast and there are no

ways to control a message to spread when it has become public. Emotions, the subject, visuals, the actuality of the subject and the story are elements that trigger social media crises to burst. (Venäläinen 2017, 25-29). It is recommendable to have a team and a plan ready to minimize the stress and stick the external communication in facts.

The projects funded by the European Union is required to invest resources on marketing and communication. Project plans, detailed reporting, utilizing social media channels, building a website, organizing events and executing outdoor and digital marketing (EU 2022.) are applicable activities also for other kind of projects, such as the development work of the Kalevala kartalle -project. Media coverage and visibility is important to spread the project information widely, thus actuality, focused handout and what has been achieved and what are the results are essentials to get a project update through in the media. Similar elements, such as in social media crises, most probably improve the go-through rate in main medias. People tend to react and contribute to news that raise emotions and have a good story. (Venäläinen 2017, 25-29) The widely spread public discussion and debate around Kalevala did indeed cover all the previously mentioned elements (HS 2021; Yle Aamu 2021; Saarinen 2021; Kalevala Koru 2021).

4.6   Realising

This chapter presents the sixth phase of the iterative Kalevala kartalle -projects´ service design process. The realising stage included producing the launch event, organizing digitours for pilot customers and a PR-presentation at the Hitto Desu! – Creative Finland export fair in Japan. The deliverables of this phase are the Kalevala kartalle -digitour and the projects´ streamed launch event.

4.6.1   The Kalevala kartalle concept

Method: Business Model Canvas, pilot project research,

Deliverables: business plan, Kalevala kartalle -concept paper, blueprint

The purpose of the Kalevala kartalle concept is to provide a comprehensive culture travel experience to international travellers. The Kalevala kartalle -concept is a service-based theme route digitally and physically on-site. The travellers can choose suitable services and experiences according to their interests. The route and the provided services work as inspiration to explore the destinations and learn about Finnish culture.

The concept comprehends a culturally and financially sustainable business model which takes to account the sales and marketing channels, the stakeholder network, the service

selection and service design development support to partner businesses. The concept was developed during the pilot project 2020-2021 and further development suggestions are presented in chapter 5.3.

The business model of the concept is licensing of immaterial property and providing additional consulting services, such as customer centric service design, new service development and productization of existing services. The owner and founder of Kalevala kartalle -project, Ikitaival Oy, is the licensor, coordinator, and promotor of the concept. The stakeholders, the licensees, are responsible for the operational production of their own services. They present their own, individual brand in the Kalevala kartalle -network and service selection, which is common to the platform economy and digital marketplaces (Kenney 2016, 65-66.).

As discussed in 4.1.2, there are no unambiguous definition on how to evaluate sociocultural sustainability. Some metrics and evaluation criteria's have been developed, but the definition work is still ongoing. Therefore, the concept has been developed in discussion, collaboration, and dispute with other stakeholders to produce and present a sociocultural sustainable outcome. (Business Finland 2020, Business Finland 2021, HS 2021.) The collaborative approach is fundamental in user centric design (Moritz 2005, 34, 51), such as the implemented service design development process of the Kalevala kartalle -project.

The route starting from Helsinki via Espoo, Vihti, Lohja, Kajaani and ending to Kuhmo. The purpose of linking two different areas is to provide a coherent and comprehensive experience that users can follow. International travellers are interested in diverse ways to learn, explore and understand local culture. For the culture and history-oriented people can be further developed travel packages and experiences that presents the cultural heritage and its many aspects in detail. For those, who are just stopping over in Finland or want to discover the destinations on high level, the Kalevala theme can be integrated in a more contemporary way or as a side story of the core experience.

The other reason to combine two areas is the demographics and infrastructure. International travelers usually arrive via Helsinki-Vantaa airport by plane. The most known and common destinations after the greater Helsinki region are the archipelago and Lapland (Matilainen 2018, 18.). E.g. Rovaniemi area have a good service infrastructure and it is accessible by plane, train or bus. Other destinations and cities in Finland have not as good connections or infrastructure which is crucial for the ease of travel especially when traveling from abroad.

The route is not "a physical" or a historical road in contraire to many internationally known culture routes (Council of Europe 2022). Instead, it is co-created in collaboration with non-profit organizations, travel and culture related companies and the public sector as the service development process suggest (Moritz 2005, 34). The synergy and end goal is that all of these route stakeholders would benefit from the collective marketing and promotion effort which is the most important need for small businesses and travel destinations. (TEM 2015, 4, 32.)

The Kalevala kartalle -concept combines digital and physical service elements during the travel route, which are different ways of realizing experiences as explained in chapter 2.4. The foundation of the experiences is in the project partner´s own services which includes storytelling, physical and immaterial hints to evidence the story of Kalevala. The stakeholders provide their services in physical spaces designed to meet the theme, have created story characters for the personnel which realizes the story during the customer journey and sells handcraft as souvenirs that have a "role" or purpose in the Kalevala story. These services and products are collected on the website in addition to the completely digital products, such as the Kalevala kartalle -digitour. These touchpoints and the customer journey together create the overall experiesescape of the Kalevala kartalle -concept.

The concept´s service selection consists of accommodation, nature and wellbeing activities, live and digital guided tours, culture events and films, music, art, handcrafts and clothes design. These are touchpoints of the customer journey (Moritz 2005, 44.) which have been selected to evidence some elements from the Kalevala story.

The services for the project stakeholders include service design consultancy, the management of the online marketplace and marketing activities. These services are crucial to enable a cohesive and coordinated management of the overall concept. These support services are also a place for gaining feedback and insight continuously which is fundamental for iterative service development (Section 3.1). Emphasizing the stakeholders´ situation and challenges builds trust and develops strong relationships over time. In collaborative and user centric development all starts with understanding the reasoning, fears, and hidden thoughts of the stakeholders. (Section 2.2) The stakeholders have the best understanding of their business and are a firsthand source to explain the situation on the market. Thus, the internal and external insight are required to build a comprehensive outlook and it should be updated in time, as suggested in chapter 2.2.

The business model (figure 17, appendix 5) of the concept is a license business which gives the opportunity to expand the concept to diverse domains. In new service

development it is essential to discover the feasibility of the concept solution financially, technically and from the market desirability perspective. Iterative design aims to "fail fast" to minimize the risk of business failure and discover in an early stage how the audience responds to initial prototypes of the solution (Brown 2008, 3). Thus, the desirability of the concept was tested with direct sales to prospective pilot partners, building an early prototype of the webstore and its integrations with the key stakeholders and marketing and selling the digital tour in Japan.

Business Model Canvas

Key Partners 🔗	Key Activities ✔	Value Proposition 🎁	Customer Relationships ❤	Customer Segments 👥
Pilot 2020-2021: *Visit Finland Regional Council of Kainuu Kuhmo city Hotel Kalevala Elias Lönnrot ry. Lohja city Nuuksion Taika Naturested Main Niemi Design House*	*Travel experience marketing to travelers Collaborative service development Seminars & workshops* **Key Resources** 🗺 *Project manager Project team Stakeholders´ resources*	*Epic travel made in Finland* *A Kalevala inspired culture travel route online and offline with experiences for Japanese travellers to enable new service development and sales*	*Individual and group consulting Cocreation Online customer service* **Channels** 🚚 *Kalevala kartalle website Visit Finland´s channels Stakeholders´ channels Social media in Japan by a local tour guide*	*Japanese group or independent travellers* *Travel and culture field businesses* *Cities and DMO´s (destination management organizations)*

Cost Structure 🏷	Revenue Streams 💰
Marketing Product development Salaries IT-infrastructure IPR	*Kalevala kartalle webstore Digitours Licence fees Concept consulting & service design*

Figure 17. Initial and iterated Business Model Canvas for the Kalevala kartalle -concept (Appendix 5).

As a result, approximately 20 businesses, public and non-profit organizations joined the development work during the pilot project. The concept idea was supported by the tourism and hospitality field and Visit Finland had a pivotal impact on opening the discussion. As stated in Section 2.2, new service development requires the participation of both businesses and the support of public organizations. The received interest and feedback from the stakeholders (Visit Finland 2020) indicate that the Kalevala kartalle -project has potential to be developed to a desirable travel concept.

The prototyped webstore was tested with few project partners, however developing it to a minimum viable product requires significant financing and resources. As the new service development frameworks explain in Section 2.2, a functional IT-infrastructure and cross-organizational communication is required to build a successful service. During building up the prototype, the partners involved denoted their interest toward cross-selling of other partner´s services and it was tested on the webstore platform. The system provider Johku

provided an integration to cross-sell other businesses online store offerings, but the challenge lied in the introduction and personal guidance on the integration setup. Thus, supporting services, such as service and technology consultancy, are a must in a concept developed in collaboration with a network of stakeholders with diverse expertise in digital solutions. The third part of the concept evaluation was the pilot digitour for the Japanese audience which has been discussed in Section 4.4.2.

4.6.2 Launch: Pohjolan pidot

Method: event management, launch project plan

Deliverables: *Pohjolan pidot* – launch online event

The goal of the Kalevala kartalle -project was in the founding stage that the concept would have been tested in Finland by Japanese travellers. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak the plan had to be adjusted and the launch was organized online. During fall 2020 also a new target group, Finnish domestic travellers, were taken to focus. For practical reasons the concept launch was headed to Finnish travelers who were currently planning their summer vacations in spring 2021. In the service design process, the final stage of the iterative development process is *realizing* which covers activities and promotional materials to explain the final concept. (Moritz 2005, 144-145)

The launch event *Pohjolan pidot*, the "feast of Pohjola", was produced in cooperation with Haaga-Helia UAS students as a course commission. The event was streamed online and approximately 200 participants joined to view the program. The event showcased the Kalevala kartalle culture travel route starting from Helsinki to Vihti, Lohja, Kainuu and ending in Kuhmo. The participants had the opportunity interact and ask questions during the event and few discussion sessions were organized around topics related to domestic and heritage related travel experiences and Kalevala as the inspiration for storytelling.

4.6.3 Hitto desu! – Creative Finland export fair in Japan

Method: event management, launch project plan

Deliverables: Hitto desu! -export fair hybrid event

The sixth step of the service design process is realising, which is taking the service to the market. (Moritz 2005, 144-145.) A continuation of the overall culture travel route was to pilot and promote the Kalevala kartalle, *Experience Kalevala* Digitour in Japan. The international export fair was organized by AGMA, the Agents and Managers in Creative Industries and Business Finland in Japan.

Ikitaival ltd, as one of the associates and the Kalevala kartalle license owner, had the opportunity to apply to the Hitto desu! – Creative Finland export fair (Figure 18). 20 Finnish creative license businesses were selected to participate and network with Japanese culture and travel organizations in October 2021.
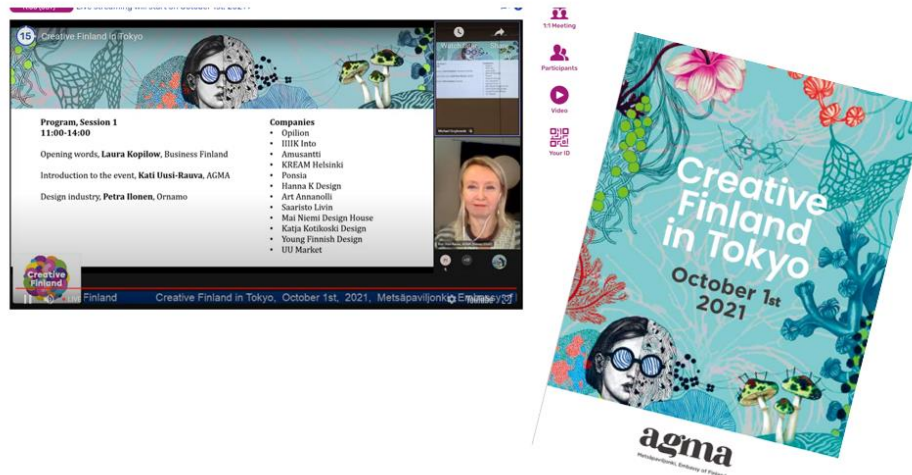

Figure 18. Screenshot from the Hitto desu! -hybrid export fair in Tokyo.

The participating businesses were somewhat different from the original Kainuu region´s partners and the group were reinforced with Vuokatti, Wild Taiga and Arctic Berries. Since the Covid-19 situation was still severe in both Japan and Finland, the event was organized as a hybrid format trade event in the Metsä Pavilion in Tokio. The goal of the export fair (figure 19) was to provide a space to promote Finnish design, license brands and travel experiences to the Japanese market. Moreover, the participating companies were able to book meetings and network with Japanese professionals from diverse fields.

The trade fare was organized with a tight schedule in collaboration with multiple stakeholders as the Covid restrictions were still ongoing. As a result, only few business meetings were organized among Japanese representatives and the Kalevala kartalle - partners which was a disappointment. The complex production of the hybrid event, with multiple stakeholders was a challenge to coordinate. The level of English skills is also still intermediate in Japan in some industries; therefore, it was challenging to interact and build trust with no prior contact the participants. Market entry to Japan can take years and normally requires solid, local agents who are able to make the promotional work in Japan (Maine International Trade Centre 2015, 13).

5   Conclusions and implications

This chapter discuss the foundations of the research, the results and findings during the service development process and assess them to the theory. Thereafter, conclusions and further research and development suggestions are presented, followed by the learning development of the author.

5.1   Outcomes: The Kalevala kartalle travel concept

The goal of the Master´s thesis and the pilot project were to develop and test a culturally sustainable travel concept targeted to the Japanese audience. The idea derived from the recognition and initial discussion with diverse people that the national epic Kalevala hasn´t been evidenced in its full potential. Moreover, national heritage related travel experiences and products exist in Finland, but the supply is geographically fragmented. Privately and publicly funded projects have developed travel services related to Kalevala and heritage, however no nationwide branding hasn´t been done which could compound stakeholders in the tourism and culture sector in a comprehensive way. Thus, a pilot project was intended to discover and find recommendations how to conceptualize the story of Kalevala. Moreover, the aim was to find if the story would have potential to become the next phenomenon which would attract tourists to travel to Finland.

The Kalevala kartalle culture route is a theme route providing travel experiences digitally and on-site. The final concept covers the business model, the core story, stakeholders, and the service design in an omni-channel environment. In result, the optimal combination of the previous functions and an iterative service development process provides additional value by enabling living heritage, creating new business opportunities and employment. This concept isn´t restricted to the travel and culture field and could be augmented to other domains of business as well. Additionally, the Kalevala kartalle service selection could be extended within the experience and hospitality field by inviting supplementing service providers to the network. Scaling and developing the offering would require consistent work, someone who coordinates it and financing.

As in this point, the Kalevala kartalle route is located in the capital region of Finland and in the region of Kainuu. In the future the route could be extended to other culturally important destinations and areas in Finland. In the long run the route could cover whole Finland from South to North, East to West. As the story of Kalevala is ductile, the core story and productization can be adjusted to fit the product or service line at hand. Commercialising the national heritage has been a concern already before the pilot project. The concern does not limit to Finnish heritage and many examples exist where cultural heritage has

been exploited by external parties (Cultural Survival 2020, Halsas, Anna; 2021). The concern is understandable when the heritage has been used with no connection to the original appropriates.

To prevent undesirable conflicts, it is needed that some instance or organisation takes responsibility of the coordination and discussion between public, private and non-profit organizations in heritage related topics. At this point, non-profit organizations refuse to comment business related affairs (Huntus 5.10.2020; HS 9.3.2021) although their purpose is to "get inspired by Kalevala, Finnish heritage and develop bold new interpretations of it" (Kalevalaisten Naisten liitto 2022; 7,17) and "enhance the knowledge and conspicuousness of cultural heritage beyond borders" (Kalevalaseura 2022). How are their missions going to be realized without the interaction and discussion with the private, corporate sector?

Visit Finland which is responsible for promoting cultural travel and Finnish travel destinations has limited resources to influence the discussion, because it is just one theme on their agenda. The private sector on the other hand is mainly consisted of small to medium size companies which have their own business interests and are not focused on developing the business ecosystem, despite that they are part of it. Companies, such as the Kalevala Koru example demonstrates, that they want to minimize the competition and maximize their own advantages (HS 2.3.2022).

This is unfortunate, because change is created in co-operation and requires input from stakeholders in diverse domains. Experiencing and developing cultural heritage is a shared activity beyond individual people, organizations, businesses, and the nation of Finland. The events of the Kalevala kartalle -project doesn´t only demonstrate that the link and discussion between these stakeholders are missing, but also that there´s a need for an agent which would coordinate the development. Without coordination the accuracy, quality and sociocultural sustainability in development of cultural heritage related activities is dispersed. Thus, it is evident that it is a risk for the common wellbeing, economy and culture that no one is in charge of the collaborative service and ecosystem development beyond the private, public and non-profit sector.

The new service development process was multidimensional, and the iteration of the concept took place in many layers simultaneously. The discussion and development work were ongoing one to one with the project manager and each stakeholder, as well as in pilot groups and during the communication to external stakeholders. The concept followed the Service Design model of Stefan Moritz (Moritz, 2005.) utilizing multiple design thinking methodologies and tools. Due to the parallelly and a-synchronically proceeding tasks it

was challenging to identify the development phase at a specific time point. From a project management point of view the project roadmap had a significant role to prioritize and divide goals to smaller tasks. Previous entrepreneurship and project management experience was an advantage in facing unexpected drawbacks and opposition during the pilot project.

What it comes to actual product and service development, the learning experience was rewarding. At the starting point it was not obvious what kind of services were going to be created. This is typical to service design where new services are developed from scratch, based on the requirements and end user needs. The foundation were the existing services some pilot partners had in addition to the vision that the final outcome would be a Kalevala themed culture travel route. As the Covid-19 epidemic hit, the project objective had to be adjusted and the digital development was taken to a focus. Therefore, digital experiences were developed in parallel with fine tuning the pilot partners existing services.

The solution to the problem when the whole culture, travel field and society were locked down, was to find the right resources and stakeholders to enable the creation of a digital Kalevala experience. The challenge was to create a digital experience which would be accessible despite the global travel restrictions. A product development iteration was again organized according to the six service design phases (Moritz, 2005.).

All these experience products, both digital and tangible services, requires the right distribution and marketing channels to be discovered. Setting up and developing a functional it-infrastructure and platform is a task which needs investments both in time and finances. The very minimum, a website was created for the pilot project and the foundations for an online store was developed by using third party platforms and software. Creating something by oneself is common in various public or private service providers when a shared ecosystem could be the most beneficial for all stakeholders. That would prevent from overlapping services, improve the efficiency of delivery, minimize cost and be user friendly when all services are found from one source. This however is not too simple to create in practise where various stakeholders have their own objectives, not to mention public financing and it-systems which should be integrated in the new infrastructure.

On the SME level the challenge was in the resources, level and knowledge of developing or even sustaining digital platforms, software and services. The public domain has varying financing to enable the development of tangible or digital services but lacks time since multiple projects and plans are developed parallelly. Therefore, support and finances for development work regarding cultural heritage should be focused and directed so that each

stakeholder gets personalized support. Publicly managed organisations or foundations such as the Ministry of Education and Culture or the Finnish Cultural Foundation provides grants and financing to selected projects, however they doesn´t resolve the issue of managing an ecosystem of stakeholders in a specific domain. The problem with one-time grants is also that it does not secure the continuity after the project which should be a key indicator in evaluating the potential and success of the project.

Unfocused resources and operating in silos lead to conflict when new ways of developing services are created. The aim of the Kalevala kartalle -project was to collect Kalevala themed experiences on a shared platform, provide support to the project partners and distribute it in digital channels, such as the webstore. The platform economy is an opportunity to scale and augment the distribution, but it stresses companies and non-profit organisations to transform their approach of their existing system and distribution. As the public debate regarding the ownership of Kalevala (HS 2.3.2021.) presents, either the companies can be the source of transformation and adapt to the new economic circumstances or then the public and end customers will make the change. Especially in culturally bound activities the companies and non-profit organizations should be extremely conscious about their motives and actions.

5.2 Discussion

In new service development for the culture travel field, it is crucial to be aware of the social, financial and environmental effects. Culture heritage and experiences can take multiple forms and are not only related to the physical world. Commercializing phenomena which is intangible, is extremely difficult to evaluate its´ worth in value. As one might find the productization of culture as cultural appropriation, the other side of the coin is the benefits of making it available and visible for new audiences. Traditional tourism as well as cultural tourism brings income to the society and has a positive impact on the employment. The key for developing sustainable cultural tourism is to include and collaborate with the local stakeholders and be aware of the impacts the business may have. Tourism after all is business, and it must be profitable, but at the same time it can be sustainably executed. This can be at its best, a great learning experience and cultural exchange between foreigners and the local community as the findings of the Kalevala kartalle -digitour reveals.

The process of developing culture travel products requires co-operation between multiple stakeholders and resources to coordinate the network. Travel products, such as culture travel routes are usually spread geographically which might be a challenge for the collaborative planning, although remote facilitation and online meetings are widely in use.

Gathering and coordinating multiple small and medium sized operators is difficult without well-set communications plan and personnel. Most travel field partners in the Kalevala kartalle -project had very limited resources to invest for comprehensive service planning and participation, although the interest to join and collaborate with the network was high.

The business side of the concept and culture product development is the business model and securing the immaterial property. As heritage, stories and experience concepts are intangible it is highly beneficial to trademark or protect the core business from a legal perspective. The IPR will most probably also help small businesses to develop their business and spread awareness of the rights and boundaries what it comes to immaterial property. From a end-customer point of view, a coherent and standardized culture travel route may be more trustable and easier to reach in compered to singular service providers spread over Finland. Moreover, collecting all relevant partners and service providers generates synergy and credibility in media, at the public sector and at the industry in general.

The challenge and the unfortunate downside of many projects are that they would need immediate financing and resources to continue the development work. As change and new service development for an international audience, not speaking of innovations, are slow, the roadmap and timeline should be 5-10 years before significant change can be measured. The Kalevala kartalle -pilot project took place for two years which is a good starting point for the culture travel route to gain preliminary insight of the concept. The pilot can be considered successful by measuring the interest among travel sector stakeholders, Visit Finland, the media coverage and the public discussion about the ownership of Kalevala. The project was run by a Master´s student who was working part time and coordinated the project team and pilot stakeholders alongside the studies. With full time resourcing and marketing budget the concept could be continued.

What still needs to be further researched and scoped is the core target group. As the research problem was focused and clear, the core customer segments remained wide. As the Covid-epidemic hit in 2020 also the target segment of the Kalevala kartalle -concept had to be adapted. The plan was to pilot the concept for incoming Japanese tourists, but the plan was adapted, and the piloting was held remotely in Tokyo. Covid-19 is neither anymore a major hindrance for travel so also the international customer groups are realistic to invite to Finland. The marketing and modification of the concept will be more accurate after a market segment study where the niche target group is determined.

As the thesis project was a pilot for a limited number of possible customer segments, the results can´t be directly generalised to other markets. The research however gives insight

that Finnish-Karelian culture heritage, the story of Kalevala combined with nature experiences have an interest in the Japanese market. Kalevala as a concept is still unknown why it would benefit from a comprehensive and long development roadmap in order to create it a solid brand for the Finnish travel industry.

The Kalevala kartalle -project has now a concept which can be put into practice. The service development would still have a lot of opportunities what it comes to digital travel products and scalable business ideas. The immersivity of digital experiences are still quite simple which could be further developed and commercialized on an international level.

As a conclusion, a culture travel concept about the national epic Kalevala for Japanese travellers is developed by a diverse group of professionals, continuous communication between and to different stakeholders, an effective team and a working ecosystem infrastructure both on-site and online, combined with an iterative development process. The drivers for successful service design and product development for the travel route are cultural, environmental and financial sustainability. Concrete development ideas and practical applications of the concept are provided in the following section 5.3.

5.3 Further research ideas

From this thesis project has raised four research ideas for further research. The topic of cultural appropriation and commercialising intangible heritage have been in discussed the last years. The travel and hospitality field are deriving inspiration from local surroundings, past events and history and stories to make compelling experiences. For the critics it is arguable that a corporate actor makes profit of cultural or environmental aspects. A positive financial profit is a necessity for the company to maintain and develop its business, not to forget the employment effects locally. What is then the ratio of "using culture" in business and who would be the right actor? It is positive that the discussion of cultural heritage has gained attention in the media and it would be interesting to analyse the positive and negative effects of cultural heritage inspired travel and experience products to the society.

To be able to research and measure the sociocultural and financial impacts, the measurement criteria and indicators should first be met. As the Finnish government (Valtioneuvosto 2020) has made some indicators for the hospitality field, however they are not comprehensive what it comes to analysing the total impact of combining cultural heritage to the travel business. The report claims that sustainable travel is a combination of social, environmental and financial aspects. The research emphasized culture environments, but the indicators to measure the relation of travel business to the

sociocultural effects remain undetermined. Therefore, further developing these measurement indicators would be highly beneficial for the mutual learning.

The third research idea relates to immersion and digitalization in travel products. The Kalevala kartalle -concept and pilot project developed and tested the idea of a digital trip, the digitour, for Japanese travellers. The technology at hand was quite simple and the trips were organized over Zoom with a live guide. This was an excellent pilot to gain insight from the audience in an era of lockdown when the Covid-19 epidemic burst out. However, technology and digital experiences have just taken their first steps and there would be room for improvement, e.g. to develop the immersion of online travel experiences.

The fourth research topic relates to further developing the Kalevala kartalle -cultural travel route. As the public discussion and support has expressed, there´s a need for new business innovations related to sustaining and developing culturally remarkable heritage. The Kalevala kartalle -route has now the concept, partner network and fundamentals ready to further develop a compelling national epic inspired travel experience which could benefit the economy and Finnish society. This however requires financial investments, time and a comprehensive team with diverse expertise.

5.4   Acknowledgment

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Research material of preliminary study; Understanding phase

Applied Design Research, course study, Haaga-Helia UAS 2020

Attachment 1. Interview guide A

Question | Sub questions/Notes

1. Age?   ▮ Background info

2. Gender?

3. Where do you find information
   about this tour package?

Body

4. How many times have you visited Finland? a) How often do you travel?

5. What do you like the Finnish   a) What elements are important?
   culture so far?   (History, Culture, Nature)

6. Do you know about Kalevala?   a) Introduce Kalevala Characters
   Introduction to Kalevala

   b) tell the story of the character

   c) present the services

7. How do you like the Story? Why?

8. Do you like current tour package? Why?
   (is it packed? or too little?)

9. If there is chance, would you like to experience
   Kalevala together in the tour package?

Attachment 2. Interview guide B

Questions

Background Info
Gender

Where do you find information
about this tour package?

	0	1.-5.	6 +
How many times have you visited Finland?			
a) How often do you travel?			

What do you like the Finnish culture so far?

☺	☺	😐	🙁	☹

a) What elements are important?

☺	☺	😐	🙁	☹
History				
Cuture				
Nature				
Food				

Do you know about Kalevala?
a) introduction to Kalevala
　　　　b) tell the story of the character
　　　　c) present the services

How do you like the Story?
Why?

☺	☺	😐	🙁	☹

Do you like current tour package? Why?
(is it packed? or too little?)

☺	☺	😐	🙁	☹

If there is chance, would you like to experience
Kalevala together in the tour package?

☺	☺	😐	🙁	☹

Attachment 3. Kalevala image collage

Waka – Väinämöinen Finnish Prophet
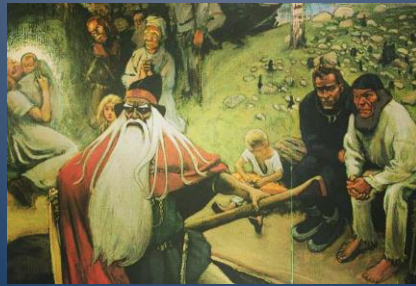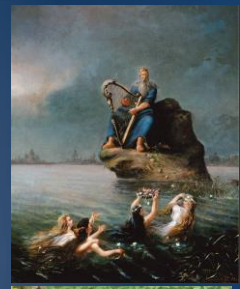
Aino – Drowned Maid

'

Joukahainen – Young Rebel

Louhi – Witch Queen
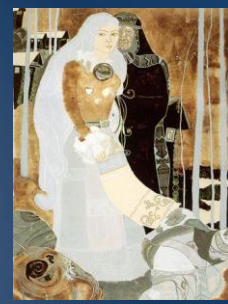
Attachment 4. Kalevala travel experiences

<u>AINO</u>

Finnish Blueberries Inside & Out Well-Being & Natural Beauty Experience :

- Natural, local products

- Blueberries, mud, essential oils

- Brushing, "vihtominen", massage

- Sauna, swimming in natural waters

- Hydrating after products

- Finnish Forest Tea & traditional Blueberry Pie

<u>LOUHI</u>

"Kalevalainen jäsenkorjaus" is traditional folk healing method based on a poem in Kalevala, poem 15. It is scientifically researched, EU-nameprotected finnish mobilisation treatment. "Kalevalainen jäsenkorjaus"is based on balancing the whole supportive chord's kinetic chain, correcting f alse posture by streching, opening interstitial fluids, releasing nerve jams and increasing b lood circulation and increasing mobilisation from head to toes.

<u>JOUKAHAINEN</u>

Adventure in Finnish country side;

- Canoeing

- Arrow shooting

- Sauna & Swimming

- Local, traditional Dinner by a campfire/open fire

<u>VÄINÄMÖINEN</u>

Silent Walk in the Finnish Forest which leads to a lake. There by the water takes place a private teaching session of traditional Finnish Harp "Kantele" where you learn to play magical spell to invite the Spirits of the Forest for Good Luck, Health and Protection.

Attachment 5. Interview guide for experts

1. Do Japanese tourist enjoy cultural/history related itinerary?

   a. What is their demographic?

   b. Are they travelling in groups or FIT?

2. How common for tour company to include historical or culture experience related attractions?

3. What are the typical cultural activities Japanese tourist like to enjoy in Europe?

   a. such as themed festival, dining experience, guided tour to historical site? Etc

4. What is the estimated % of Japanese tourist travelling to Finland are in Groups/package?

   a. With your expertise, do you see there will be more groups going to Finland in the next 5 years? Why?

   b. How are the tour operators' feedbacks? Are they willing to create more itinerary/packages to Finland? What are the difficulties do they face?

5. Have you spotted any changes in package programs to Finland for the past 2 years?

6. How common are tour companies to include historical or culture experience related attractions for Finnish tour?

7. Are there any in-depth Finnish cultural tourism program package in Japan right now?

   a. And how is the traveler's reaction to this? Is it getting popular?

      i. If yes. What do they offer at the moment?

8. Are there any tour companies in Japan selling Kalevala themed itinerary?

Attachment 6. Questionnaire for Travel industry experts about Kalevala

Interviewee: Ken Kitano (Finnair Japan Client Manager)

1.   Do Japanese tourist enjoy cultural/history related itinerary?

Yes, Japanese tourists also love to see cultural/historical site. Therefore, Italy and Spain where have enough historical sites are very popular.

a.   What is their demographic?

It should be elderly, retired people.

b.   Are they travelling in groups or FIT?

Groups since many of elderly Japanese fell difficulty for speaking English. Also, it is much easier to use a bus etc than using public transportation for them.

2.   How common for tour company to include historical or culture experience related attractions?

It is very much common here in Japan.

a.   What are the typical cultural activities Japanese tourist like to enjoy in Europe?

Mass market is visiting historical sites with a tour guide, but visiting themed festival is also popular. Dining experience is now getting familiar in Japanese market.

3.   What is the estimated % of Japanese tourist travelling to Finland are in Groups/package?

Roughly 30% group and 70% FIT.

a.   With your expertise, do you see there will be more groups going to Finland in the next 5 years? Why?

Yes, both FIT and groups will go to Finland more in coming years.

b.   How are the tour operators' feedbacks? Are they willing to create more itinerary/packages to Finland? What are the difficulties do they face?

Finland is not mass market like France, Italy and Spain etc and this is because there are not enough capacities in the hotels, restaurant, touristic sites etc. However, these days, Japanese tourists tend

to choose having "experiences" than just visiting touristic sites. Therefore, having unique experiences in Finland will get more attention from the Japanese market.

4.   Have you spotted any changes in package programs to Finland for the past 2 years?

Tours which having special experiences had been created.

5.   How common are tour companies to include historical or culture experience related attractions for Finnish tour?

Just visiting historical/cultural sites like visiting Alvar-Aalto house, Sibeliuksen syntymäkoti are common but I'm not sure yet what kind of attractions/experiences we can have. I personally would like to know what kind of experiences/attractions we can have at those cultural/historical sites.

6.   Are there any in-depth Finnish cultural tourism program package in Japan right now?

I don't think there is such packed tour yet.

a.   And how is the traveler's reaction to this? Is it getting popular?

That is not for mass-market, but some will be interested in those.

i. If yes. What do they offer at the moment?

I have seen SIT like studying Alvar-Aalto architecture, works before.

7.   Are there any tour companies in Japan selling Kalevala themed itinerary?

I don't find it yet, but some who love Jean Sibelius will be interested in it.

Appendix 2. Kalevala mood board

Appendix 3. Project plan

TAVOITELTU ASIAKASPOLKU
KALEVALA KARTALLE – HANKKEEN JÄSENILLE

DIGITAALISET KOSKETUSPINNAT

FYYSISET KOSKETUSPINNAT
Kalevala kartalle®

HUOMIOINTI | MIETINTÄ | PÄÄTÖS | KOKEMUS | PALKKIO

Online – näkyvyys
Hakutulokset
Maksullinen sisältö
Vertailu
Kotisivut
Yhteisö / SOME
Mobiili
Chat-keskustelu
Kyselyt
Palaavat asiakkaat

Yhteistyö-kumppanit
Näkyvyys paikan päällä
Lähipiirin suosittelut
Kattavampi tieto saatavilla
Kivijalka
Agentti/ matkatoimisto
Aktiviteetit paikan päällä
Puhelinkeskustelut
Suosittelut
Jälkimarkkinointi
Välitön rahallinen

KALEVALA KARTALLE

Business Model Canvas

Key Partners

Pilot 2020-2021:

Visit Finland
Regional Council of
Kainuu
Kuhmo city
Hotel Kalevala
Elias Lönnrot ry.
Lohja city
Nuuksion Taika
Naturested
Main Niemi Design House

Key Activities

Travel experience
marketing to travelers
Collaborative service
development
Seminars & workshops

Key Resources

Project manager
Project team
Stakeholders´
resources

Value Proposition

Epic travel made in
Finland

A Kalevala inspired
culture travel route
online and offline with
experiences for
Japanese travellers to
enable new service
development and sales

Customer Relationships

Individual and group
consulting
Cocreation
Online customer service

Channels

Kalevala kartalle website
Visit Finland´s channels
Stakeholders´ channels
Social media in Japan by
a local tour guide

Customer Segments

Japanese group or
independent
travellers

Travel and culture
field businesses

Cities and DMO´s
(destination
management
organizations)

Cost Structure

Marketing
Product development
Salaries
IT-infrastructure
IPR

Revenue Streams

Kalevala kartalle webstore
Digitours
Licence fees
Concept consulting & service design

Appendix 6. Media coverage

MEDIAOSUMAT 2021

Haaga-Helia 10.2. https://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/artikkelit/kalevalassa-kaikki-ainekset-suomen-seuraavaan-muumien-ja-joulupukin

Business Finland Kalevala - kulttuuriperinnön tuotteistaminen nykykuluttajalle https://www.businessfinland.fi/ajankohtaista/tapahtumat/visit-finland/2021/kalevala-kartalle---kalevalan-tuotteistaminen-nykykuluttajalle

YLE Radio Suomi 28.2. https://areena.yle.fi/audio/1-50747913

HS 2.3. https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000007835028.html

Mtv Uutiset 3.3. https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/kansalliseepoksesta-syntyi-erikoinen-kiista-kalevala-koru-ei-halunnut-toisen-yrittajan-kayttavan-markkinoinnissaan-kalevala-sanaa/8080362

Ilta-Sanomat 3.3. https://www.is.fi/taloussanomat/art-2000007838658.html

Esa Saarinen Systeemiajattelu ja filosofia kurssi 3.3. 59:00 alkaen https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SHaRxJmRNQ&t=3926s

Yle aamu tv https://areena.yle.fi/1-50777940

Radio Rock 4.3. https://www.supla.fi/audio/3804384

Karjalainen -lehti 4.3. (liite) https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/275108

Events by Haaga-Helia 4.3. https://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/ajankohtaista/uutiset/events-haaga-helian-konseptilla-kalevala-viedaan-japaniin

Tulossa ainakin Kuhmolainen ti 9.3. https://www.kuhmolainen.fi/artikkeli/kalevalasta-nousi-keskustelu-196810931/

Länsi-Uusimaa la 13.3. (liite)

ja kulttuurialan podcast haastattelu 11.3., Kanadan Sanomat sekä

Karjala-lehti 20.5. https://www.karjala-lehti.fi/index.php?p=21&yl=1&id=259

18.5. Radio Helsinki Njassan haastattelu

Keskustelu ja kommentointi on myös käynyt vilkkaana Facebookissa ja LinkedInissä.

6/2021 Kainuulainen https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-12002482

Tulossa Maarit ehdottaa juttua Seuraan, Suomen kuvalehteen.

https://www.sotkamolehti.fi/artikkeli/kalevalasta-luodaan-matkailubrandia-kulttuurimatkailureitti-kulkee-sotkamon-lapi-200413539/

https://www.agma.fi/post/prh-on-kumonnut-kalevala-koru-oy-n-v%C3%A4itteen

IS 5.5.2021 https://www.is.fi/taloussanomat/art-2000007959385.html?utm_medium=social&utm_content=android.is.fi&utm_source=whatsapp&utm_campaign=whatsapp-share

HS 5.5. https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000007959930.html?utm_medium=promobox&utm_campaign=hs_tf&utm_source=iltasanomat.fi&utm_content=promobox

30.6.2021 10:30:03 EEST | Tuunaansaaren Luola Oy

https://www.sttinfo.fi/tiedote/kalevalan-teemat-ovat-yha-ajankohtaisia?publisherId=69818049&releaseId=69913797'

Webinaarin tallenne on nyt katsottavissa täällä: https://youtu.be/XKJtBsSntF0

8.6.2021 Kainuulainen

https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11970420?s=03

6/2021 Kuhmolainen

https://www.kuhmolainen.fi/artikkeli/elias-lonnrotin-kotimaisemia-markkinoidaan-japanilaisille-201004431/

1.10.2021 Kainuuta ja Kalevala-virtuaalimatkaa esillä Tokiossa – digitaalinen kierros Kainuussa | Kainuun Sanomat

https://www.kainuunsanomat.fi/artikkeli/kainuuta-ja-kalevala-virtuaalimatkaa-esilla-tokiossa-digitaalinen-kierros-kainuussa-205824725/

**Appendix 7. Open feedback Kalevala kartalle – matkailuelämyksiä Kalevalan
tarinasta 27.8.2020**

Terveiset ja palautteet Kalevala-hankkeille (Kaikki vastaajat)

- Olen sisällöntuottaja ja innostava kansanmuusikko, pedagogi, ääni-improvisoida, kanteleensoittaja, haitarinsoittaja, perinnemusiikin taitaja. Jos yhteistyökumppaninsa tarvitsee päivitystä näihin seikkoihin, niin tulisin mielelläni opettamaan

- Mahtavaaaaaa!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- Antaa mennä! Erinomaista!!

- Samoin professional meininki. Kiitos, oli ilo olla mukana.

- Erinomainen hanke, onnitteluni! Olen todella mielelläni mukana katsomassa mihin hanke edistyy ja jos suinkin löytyy vaikka lomautetulle uutta työnsarkaakin, en yhtään laittaisi hanttiin. Olen matkatoimistoalan ammattilainen, incoming ja outgoing tuttua, innostunut kehittäjä ja matkailumuotoilija. Verkostoidutaan ihmeessä www.linkedin.com/in/susa-marju-huotari
  Onnea ja menestystä matkaan!

- Annoin palautetta jo Mimosalle suoraan. Hyvä hanke, toivon että kulttuurisesti kestävän matkailun ajatus olisi enemmän esillä.

- Hienoa työtä teette! :)

- Hienoja hankkeita kaikki! Toivotaan menestystä ja Kalevala maailmankartalle! :)

- Ihan mahtavaa, että halutaan ottaa Kalevalaa tuotekulttuuriin ja -markkinointiin mukaan. Toki, omaan makuuni moni asia oli ehkä turhan modernisoitua, sillä Kalevalan taika piilee mielestäni sen vanhan ajan mystisyydessä. Jos asioita korjataan liikaa meidän ajamme näköiseksi, sen sielu ja kauneus yleensä häviää. Toibon hartaasti, että ajatuksillani olisi arvoa näin kuluttajan silmistä katsoen :)

- Kalevala on aarreaitta, kuten koko suomalainen kansanperinne. Kannattaa katsoa aineistoa myös Kalevalan ulkopuolelta.

- Vihdoinkin ollaan houmattu Suomessa miten tärkea aarre Kalevala on Suomelle ja suomalaisille.

- -

- Terveisiä Varsinais-Suomesta, tulemme jatkamaan keskustelua mm. meren osasta Kalevalassa - olisi hienoa nähdä Lounais-Suomea upeassa kokonaisuudessa. Potentiaalia tarinallistamiseen löytyy.

- Jatkoa varten voisi hankkeiden nimiä miettiä uudelleen, sillä Suomen kansalliseepoksen nimi on paljon käytetty ja moneen kertaan tuotteistettu, tieteessä, taiteessa, taloudessa jne. Ja on siten aika kulunut. Kalevala on vain Elias Lönnrotin keksimä nimi kansalliseepokselle, nimi, joka ei esiinny kansanrunoudessa oikeasti. Mielestäni se ei tässä matkailuyhteydessä sellaisenaan toimi, Kalevala ei ole suomalaisten tositarina, muinainen uskonto tai historia, vaan vain Lönnrotin toimittama kokoelma vanhoja runoja. Kalevalasta on oikeasti vaikea löytää aitoja kiinnityskohtia todelliseen nykypäivän elämään ja matkailuun. Hankkeen sisältönä kannattaisi tarjota aineetonta kulttuuriperintöä, tarinoita, paikalliskulttuuria jne. laajasti ymmärrettynä, taitavasti , hyvällä maulla tuotteistettuna. Aitoon, elävään paikalliseen perinteeseen kannattaa keskittyä. Ilman oikeaa syventävää tietoa kulttuuriperinnöstä amatöörien esittämänä nämä Väinämöis-ohjelmat ovat pahimmillaan eri aikakausia ja kulttuuri-ilmiöitä keskenään sekoittavaa "puskateatteria". Kulttuuriperintö- ja teatterialan ammattilaisia tarvittaisiin suunnitteluun+toteutukseen, jotta niistä saataisiin riittävän laadukkaita puhuttelemaan kotimaan ja kansainvälisiä matkailijoita. Vain siten niistä saadaan riittävän laadukkaita ja taloudellisesti kannattavia. Joka tapauksessa potentiaalia on paljon, innokkaita tekijöitä näyttää olevan, joten kannattaa kehittää eteenpäin. Fantasia, mystiikka, nostalgia, mytologia puhuttelevat massaturismiin kyllästynyttä matkailijaa. Koulutusta tarvitaan joka tapauksessa lisää ja ideat tarvitsevat jatkokehitystä. Paljon oli myös hyviä ja onnistuneita esimerkkejä! Kiitos mielenkiintoisesta webinaarista! Hyvää jatkoa toivottaen

- Hienoa, että tätä asiaa viimeinkin viedään eteenpäin.

- Te teette mahtavaa työtä! Olen aina toivonut että Kalevala mytologia olisi enemmän esillä, vanhoissa tarinoissa on niin paljon potentiaalia. Hienoa että on ajateltu tarinoiden yhteyksiä nykymaailmaan ja että lähdetään viemään tätä ja Suomalaisuuden "ydintä" maailmalle. Toivon suuresti että saan mahdollisuuden osaltani vahvistaa kulttuuriperintöämme.

- Tsemppiä, olette oikealla asialla. Oletteko lähdössä Tokyo 2020 hankkeeseen? Me olemme ja etunenässä on suomalainen kivikautinen sauna ja siihen liittyvät tarinat. Voitaisiin tehdä yhteistyötä.