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# Popular Golf Holiday Destinations among Finnish Golfers

Where and Why?

Business Economics and Tourism

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## TIIVISTELMÄ

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Jo opintojen alussa päätin että opinnäytetyöni pohjautuu jollain tavalla harrastukseeni golffiin. Golfin ja matkailun sekoittaminen antoikin työlleni äkkiä suunnan ja ei mennyt kauan kuin keksin että lopputyöni koskee suomalaisia golffareita ja heidän matkustustapojaan golf lomien suhteen. Halusin selvittää minne suomalaiset golffarit matkustavat ja miksi he ovat valinneet juuri kyseisen matkakohteen.

Tutkimuksessa käytettiin pääosin määrällistä tutkimusta, koska tavoite oli saavuttaa niin monta golffaria kuin mahdollista. Laadullista tutkimusmenetelmää kuitenkin sekoitettiin mukaan jotta motivaatio kysymyksiä varten. Tutkimus toteutettiin netti-kyselynä joka oli suunnattu suomalaisille golffareille. Tulokset analysoitiin käyttämällä Exceliä ja SPSS tietojenkäsittely ohjelmaa.

Saadut tulokset jotakuinkin täyttivät odotukset joita oli asetettu omien pohjatietojen perusteella. Suosituimmaksi matkakohteeksi odotetusti nousi Espanja, koska se sattuu olemaan halpa maa niin matkustaa kuin pelata golfia. Muita syitä Espanjan suosimiseen olivat lyhyet matkustus ajat ja kohteitten hyvä golf kenttä valikoima.

Havainnot tutkimuksen jälkeen osoittivat että teoria tuki tutkimusta juuri sopivasti ja antoi tarvittavat taustatiedot tutkimukselle. Myös kysymyslomake oli suunniteltu siten että tulokset oli helppo analysoida ja tutkimus ongelmaan löytyi helposti vastaus.



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis discusses Finnish golfers, their habits to travel abroad to play golf on a golf holiday and the reasons behind the actual destination and travelling choice. Finland's golf season is approximately three to seven months because of the climate and depending on the location, so there is a high demand for golf holidays during winter time when playing outside is not possible.

Golf is becoming more popular all the time and in 2013 there were 133 courses and over 144,000 members in Finland. In 2000 the same numbers were 66,500 golfers and 96 courses and in 1985 Finland only had 6,000 golfers and 18 courses. This means that the number of players has been increasing over time which creates more possible tourists within the segment of golf tourism. (Suomen Golfliitto. 2013)(Hudson. 2003. 181).

The aim of this thesis is to find out what are those destinations that Finnish golfers tend to travel and what are the reasons they choose these specific locations. A motivation side of the holiday is considered in a way that it defines the factors behind the decision to leave on a golf holiday and does the location play any part when choosing a destination outside of Finland? This thesis will only look at the holidays in which golfers actually travel to play the game themselves and leaves out travelling to tournaments and attractions where a golfer acts as a member of an audience.

This thesis starts with the theoretical part that defines tourism in general level and discusses travel and tourism trends. Next part is dedicated to explain what golf actually is and how the game is implemented into sport tourism. Later on in the theoretical part comes the motivational aspect of why people decide to travel to play golf.

The empirical part of the thesis discusses about the research in general level first. The structure is defined and the methods used are explained in detail. This part also includes information about the questionnaire behind the research and later on examines and discusses about the results and thoughts of the topic.

## 2 DEFINITION OF TOURISM AND TOURIST

Most often tourism is defined as the movement of people who travel away from their home area to spend time in another destination near or far away. This form of tourism also includes the need of using some sort of transportation to get from one place to another. World Tourism Organization UNWTO defines tourism in their home page to be “a social, cultural and economical phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.” (World Tourism Organization UNWTO)

Although one may find many definitions to the term *tourism* it is such a broad subject that it might be quite impossible to come up with a definition that would define the whole tourism industry. Tourism includes tourists (people who travel), transportation (e.g. airplane, trains, car, and ship), and destination to travel but what people may not think as a tourism are parts that provide all other services inside tourism. These parties include the businesses behind tourism products, the parties that provide services to tourists from accommodation to activity companies and restaurants, and of course the host community which offers workers to companies that makes travelling to their city possible. Tourism includes all above mentioned areas while they interact and create needed relationships with each other's.

Tourism is often related to just leisure travelling and so called beach holiday is usually a first image that comes into people's mind when thinking about tourism but actually it consists of more than just chilling on the beach. Business tourism has been increasing over the past few years as companies become more and more international. Sport and health tourism also attract more tourists because people care more about their health and well-being than before.

(Goeldner & Ritchie 2012, 3-4), (Hall 2005, 16-17)

## 2.1 Tourist

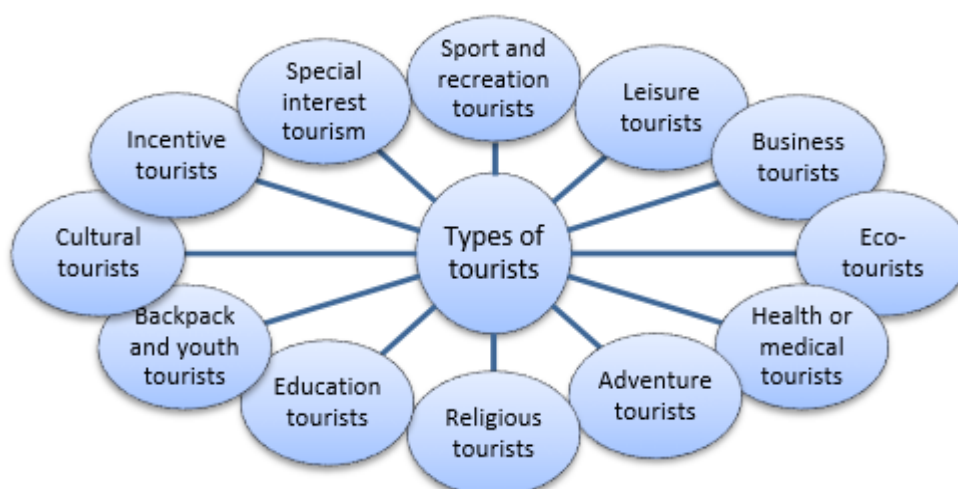
Visitor and traveler are both defined as people who travel between their usual residence and another location or country. Both visitor and traveler are divided into separate subgroups according to time spent away from their home area.

*Day trippers, same-day visitors and excursionists* are all travelers who stay at the destination less than 24 hours but are considered as tourists. This means that they arrive and depart within the same day.

A *tourist* is a person who travels away from their usual living area and stays on the destination at least one day. A tourist can be either *domestic* or *international*. A domestic tourist travels inside their home country where international tourist travels to another country.

Tourists can also be divided into groups according to their interest, hobbies and reason why they travel. These groups can be sport, adventure and activity tourists, health, medical and well-being tourists, food and culinary tourists, shopping tourists, and education tourists. These are just examples because there are numerous different types of groups (Figure 1 (HRI)) that all have their own purpose for travelling.

(Goeldner & Ritchie 2012, 6-8)



**Figure 1.** Types of tourists.

### 3 TRAVEL AND TOURISM TRENDS

Tourism trends are always being one of the most interesting areas to explore. There is numerous things that somehow have an effect to tourism and how it changes over the years. Skift (launched a website for travel news and trends in summer 2012 and nowadays it is one of the visited travel website) collected 14 travel trends for 2014 which give a small idea of the future of travelling. According to their findings, travel trends for 2014 show that business and leisure travelling is closer to each other's due to increase of mobile services and mobilization in general and this will have a negative effect to hospitality side of the industry.

Other thing they mentioned is a rising use of visualization in terms of marketing and promotion. The increasing popularity of photo sharing apps and sites has become one of the best new ways to holiday and tourism companies to market and advertise their services for customers. More thought has also been put into the design of the services and tourism products to meet the rising demand of comfort and luxury among today's travelers. Locality is also a factor that is becoming more and more popular among tourists, and that is why hotels have taken actions to offer similar experiences than tourists get from smaller, private accommodation and restaurant services. One significant trend in future tourism according to Skift is a rising number of low cost carriers and more relaxed visa regulations which allows more people to travel and explore the world.

(Ali R., Clampet J., Schaal D. & Shankman S. 2014)

Similar things can be found in ABTAs travel trends report for 2015 according to which the holidays are planned better and every activity is taken into consideration by using holiday time more efficiently than before. The report also shows that tourists like to experience new things and travel to new destinations more often and at the same time they want to get familiar with the local culture and that way deepen the travel experience all at once. The rising trend according to the report is sport and wellness tourism which has been growing during the past few years as people have started to take care of their wellbeing and health more than before due to a rising trend in fitness in general. (ABTA Travel Trend Report 2015)

## 4 WHAT IS GOLF?

*Golf is a curious sport whose object is to put a very small ball in a very small hole with implements ill-designed for the purpose. –Sir Winston Churchill*

*Golf is deceptively simple and endlessly complicated; it satisfies the soul and frustrates the intellect. It is at the same time rewarding and maddening - and it is without a doubt the greatest game mankind has ever invented. – Arnold Palmer*

Golf is an outside game and sport which is played with maximum of 14 different clubs, a 4.27cm diameter ball and usually on a 18 hole golf course. The aim of the game is to hit that small white ball into each hole with as few shots as possible and repeat this in each of the 18 holes on the course. Each hole varies with length, difficulty and design. To make the game even harder, each course is unique and differs from one another, and the design of every hole is different, not forgetting the water and sand hazards along the fairways of each hole. Also because golf is an outside sport, the weather conditions and climate also play their own part to the game.

### 4.1 History

Many say that golf is originated from British Scotland but there are implications from other parts of the world that have practiced similar games long before the Scottish invented the modern form of golf. The earliest history and a form of golf has been found in a Roman game paganica that was played with the bend stick and a leather ball back in 100 BC. Chinese are known to play a similar game with several clubs and a ball between 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century. Around the same time in Europe the Belgians and Dutch had both a game that had significant similarities with golf. (Hudson 2003, 166)

Even though there have been signs of golf in the past, the most similar form to a modern game is dated back to Scotland in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The modern way of playing the game, from teeing the ball in a certain point to playing it into a hole

below ground level distant from the starting point, is the Scottish version of the game. Soon after, golf became popular among British royalty and numerous courses were built across Scotland where people could play and enjoy the game. The most popular and well-known course St. Andrews in Scotland was one of the first courses to appear in Scotland in 1552 and still in this day is one of the respected courses in the world and many say that St. Andrews is the real birth place of golf. Golf clubs and private clubs started to form in Britain in 18<sup>th</sup> century and the rules of golf were formulated in 1897 by the Royal and Ancient golf club of St. Andrews. (Hudson 2003, 166-167)

(International Golf Federation)

## **4.2 Development of golf**

Expansion of the game was mostly done by British army who took the game with them everywhere they went along with their journeys to expand British Empire in 19<sup>th</sup> century when the British Empire was its largest. The first outside Britain golf club was opened in 1820. Around 1890 first golf clubs opened in Asian. In Scandinavia and middle Europe the golf was introduced by the British workers around 1880 and it had spread all over the world by 1885. In the USA there are some mentions of golf even before the Civil War but the modern game landed in the USA around 1890 and by 1900s there were more courses in US than in Britain. (Hudson 2003, 167-168)

Since the beginning of 1900s golf have gained more and more recognition and in the 1960s when the game was introduced to “normal” people and in 1970s when the huge names of golf like Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus were playing on television the game of golf really expanded to the world. The growth was able due to a rising development and investment opportunities and increase in economy. Golf also became a part of destination and resort development and more investors and real estate buyers became attracted to golf investing into certain locations. (Hudson 2003, 169)

## **5 SPORT AND GOLF TOURISM**

Sport tourism is defined in the same way as tourism only the reason for travelling is different. The reason why it is called sport tourism and not just tourism is that people travel and interact with sport during their travel. This can be either to participate and play in a sport activity or competition, observe a tournament or a game or just travel to a sport attraction. Sport tourism covers five areas; attractions, resorts, cruises, tours and events, which differ from one another in terms of location, services and products.

Attractions are generally destinations that offer different sport related activities to do and experience for example parks, stadiums and wildlife. Resorts offer tourists a place where they can practice various sports either by themselves or with a local instructor. Typical sport resorts types are for example golf and tennis resorts, snow sport resorts and nature resorts but many resort offers more than just one alternative to choose from. The sport resort category also includes sport camps that offer training sessions all day long in almost every sport possible.

Sport cruises include all boat related trips that offer sport as their main activity on board such as competitions or various games. Sport tourism tours offer a package holiday to see a sport event or participate in one in various locations arranged by the operator. They usually offer transportation, accommodation and tickets for tourists and sometimes provide a guide for help. Sport tour can be a trip to a sport museums or a holiday to Swiss Alps for skiing and snowboarding. Sport events usually attract a major number of participants to enjoy and follow a specific event, game or a tournament. Examples of a sport event are Super Bowl, Olympic games and Masters Tournament in Augusta National Golf Club.

(Hudson 2003, 2-9)

### **5.1 Golf tourism**

Golf tourism covers all travelling that has something to do with golf. It includes domestic and international travel away from ones usual environment to participate in leisure golf holiday, tournament or an event either as a player or a member of

an audience, or to travel for golf related business purposes. Destinations that are popular with golfers are usually located on sport resorts that offer various activity opportunities. Many resorts that focus mainly on golf also offer facilities for tennis, gym, swimming pool and many small games for example pool tables. (Hudson 2003, 165-166)

### **5.1.1 Development**

Golf tourism started to boom when bigger tournaments from USA, Europe and Asia were shown on television and therefore the interest for playing new courses around the world began to spread among the viewers. The biggest players also drove people from their home countries to travel and play the same courses where their favorite players had been playing. The overall increase of international championship tournaments and visibility of golf have created new hobbyist which then have become an important segment for golf tourism.

Reasons that allow golf tourism to develop are seasonality, increase in economy, and improvements on quality and products. Seasonality helps different locations to attract golfers in a similar way than every other sport for example winter sports. Destinations that have conditions for playing golf around the year attract travelers from Nordic countries during winter time and perhaps Southern Europeans are interested of Nordic courses during summer time and travel there to explore new possibilities. The general growth in economy has helped golf tourism to develop even further and to even more exotic locations. Golf resorts in East Asia are now available for European golfers due to Europeans rising economy. Rising visitor numbers and therefore income in these destinations allows new and better improvements on both quality and the actual product. This then makes possible for customers to stay longer, spend more money and demand better service from the golf tourism provider which can help the destination gain better image and that way attract even more customers.

(Hudson 2003, 169-176)



### **5.1.2 Situation nowadays and the future of golf tourism**

The number of golf courses in the world today is about 32000 which are located in 140 countries worldwide (Hudson S. 2009). In the last twenty years the number of golfers in Europe has increased from 1.7 to 4.3 million players and the number of golf courses over the same period of time have increased from 3578 to 6811 (Statista). This growth directly affects to golf tourism that has been increasing over the past few years.

According to IAGTO (International Association of Golf Tour Operators) the number of overall golf holidays increased from 1.5 to over 1.6 million between 2011 and 2012. IAGTO estimates that future trends within European customers include more 5-night stays than 7-night stays, the last-minute offers and best-deals are being looked out more often, and customers have also started to value experiences outside the chosen hotel (e.g. restaurants, local attractions and atmosphere). Popular destinations among Europeans during the winter season continue to be Spain and Portugal, and in summer time Scotland and Ireland.

(IAGTO International Association of Golf Tour Operators 2013)

Golf tourism is expected to grow in the future due to a rising number of participants within the game. New destinations are surfacing all the time and old ones are being develop all over the world to meet the rising standards of today's golf tourists. This development affects to golf holiday markets all over the world and re arranges the potential destinations. (Hudson S. 2009)

## 6 TOURISM DESTINATIONS

It can be said that destination, regardless of its shape and size, creates a base for tourism and travel. A destination can be found in various geographical places for example it can be a single country, a specific area of a specific country, collection of countries or just a small city, area or resort in one country. All destinations provide products and services for tourists to meet their needs and expectations. This creates competitions among different destinations forcing them to become better and to stand out with new and unique services and products to attract more tourists. Destinations are categorized into urban, rural or coastal destination.

*Urban* destination cover city tourism and therefore every single destination is unique, different from one another, and available for tourists all year around. City destinations attract a large number of tourists all around the world with their unique atmosphere and their own specific products and services they offer, even though bigger destinations may offer same services in terms of accommodation, restaurant, and shopping.

*Rural* destination offer natural environment that usually consists of hills, mountains and lakes, ordinary countryside, national parks and changing weather conditions. One can find a small town that has not yet been affected by development and usually the surrounding environment is protected from it to keep the landscape and rural structure intact while there might be some visibility of tourism being an important part of the city. The cultural and behavioral difference between locals and tourist in rural destinations is bigger than in urban destinations.

*Coastal* destinations cover all locations situated by the coastline and usually one can find a beach holiday resort from there. Most of the coastal destinations have developed over time from small fishing villages to a major city offering various resorts and miles of beaches by the coast (some of these locations have been developed so much that mass tourism has turned them into an overbuilt and placeless location with crowded and polluted beaches).

(Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill. 2008. 475-480)

## **6.1 Golf tourism destinations**

Golf tourism destinations can easily be separated from typical tourism destinations due to a fact that a golf tourism destinations always has at least one golf course near to the location. These kind of destinations are very typical for a golf holiday but do not usually locate main tourism center but more away from coast and bigger tourism centers. Usually nowadays golf tourism destinations offer a resort kind of services offering various sport facilities and opportunities for tourists. Nowadays more and more resorts focus also on business customers offering conference rooms and meeting facilities. One can also find often more luxurious resorts on locations near golf courses than in a popular tourist area.

Different destinations have their own positive sides that attract tourists and that is why nowadays there are numerous new destinations that are becoming more popular than the old familiar ones. In the future both old destinations and the new ones continue to fight over the tourist flow. Few older destinations like North America, Portugal and Spain have gotten new competition that offer golf holidays in very affordable price. These so called new destinations are for example Asian countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and China, Egypt and Mexico. Future trending destinations might also include the rising business and leisure hub Dubai in the Arab Emirates and India that has emerged in the golf holiday market in recent years.

(Hudson S. 2009.)

### **6.1.1 Popular destination**

Popular destinations are those that attract tourist to come for a holiday over and over again in a same place or area. In 2012 the most popular international destinations were Spain and Portugal followed by golfs born place Scotland which are predicted to maintain a strong demand for golf holidays in near future as well. Couple of reasons why these locations main on top are the easy access, a right type of package and the fact that both Spain and Portugal both have possibility to play golf all year around which is very important. Other destinations that are ris-

ing all the time are Turkey and Ireland in Europe, Dubai and Abu Dhabi in Arab Emirates, and destinations in the USA and Asia such as Thailand and China. (Golf Advisory practice in EMA. 2013)

## 7 MOTIVATION THEORY

Motivation is what most often drives people forward to achieve a certain goal. BusinessDictionary.com defines motivation to be “internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested and committed to a job, role or subject, or to make an effort to attain a goal”.

### 7.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

According to Abraham Maslow all humans have needs that they want to fulfill and which act as personal motivators at the same time. These needs are gathered in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs (figure 2). Originally there were five different types of needs and whenever one is completed one will move on, trying to fulfill the next one. These needs are physiological and biological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. Later on (1970s) cognitive, aesthetic and transcendence needs were added into the hierarchy.



**Figure 2.** Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Man & Society. 2010)

Maslow's needs are divided into two groups; basic needs and higher level growth needs. Basic needs cover four bottom needs in the hierarchy and growth needs the rest four on top of the hierarchy. To be able to progress on the hierarchy one has to satisfy the basic needs before moving onto the growth needs. Basic needs usually are the easiest ones to achieve since they are the ones that are shown in everyday life and are easy to achieve. For example one has a home that offers food, protection, family and respect that covers all basic needs. Growth needs are a bit harder to achieve and require more work than basic needs but they are not impossible.

Every person is situated somewhere in the hierarchy according one's personal situation and what one has already accomplished. The goal is to reach the self-actualization need when person feels like he or she has accomplished everything they ever wanted and were capable of succeeding. Self-actualization means that every person has their own goal they want to accomplish since all people are unique beings and everyone is motivated by different things. For example self-actualization can be achieved by creating something significant (a book or a painting) and succeeding in sport (Olympic medal) or success in work (to become a CEO). Maslow also believed that peak experiences were some kind of measure for self-actualization and that peak would happen when person feels joy and wonder and experiences the world as it is and nothing more.

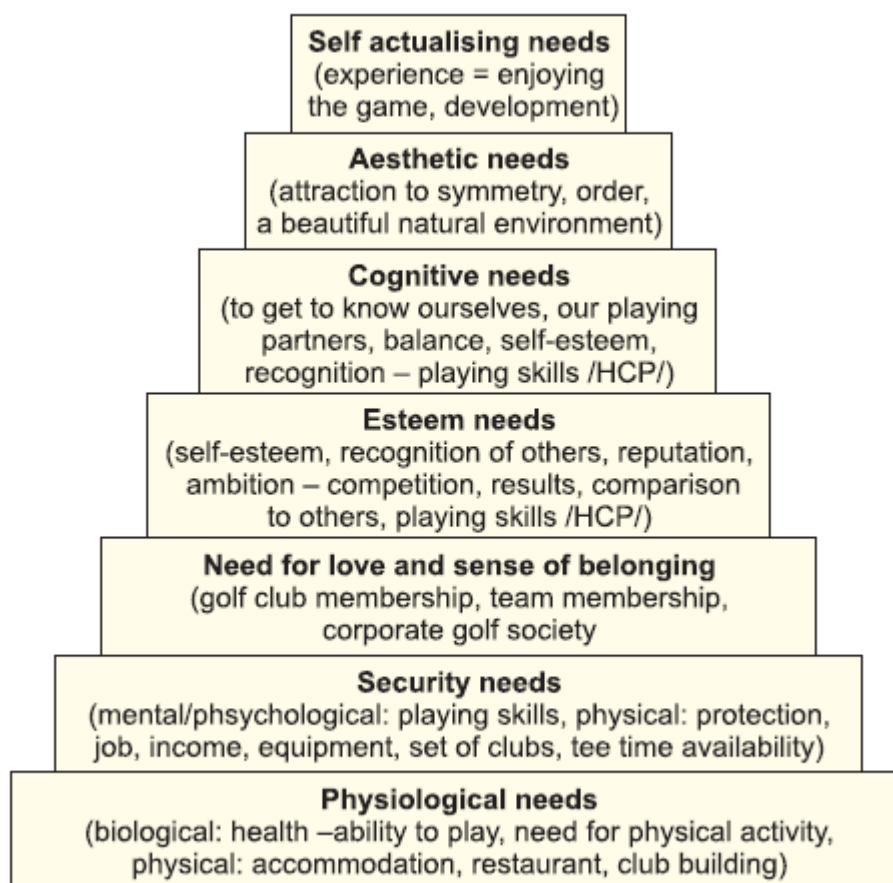
There is one need that is not shown and explained in the Figure 2 and it is a transcendence need. This need is situated the very top of the hierarchy pyramid. Transcendence need means that a person has already reached the self-actualization need and is now trying to help other people to achieve their self-actualization or it can be something that considers the whole world and togetherness in it.

(McLeod. 2007)

### **7.1.1 Golfer's needs**

Maslow's hierarchy can also be applied in golf. Just as in Maslow's needs, every golfer has some kind of goal they want to achieve, whether one is a playing pro-

fessional on the European Tour or just a basic club golfer who enjoys the game as a hobby. Everyone has the same base for different needs but the reason and adjustment of these needs vary a lot between persons. All needs have a different meaning for golfers and they are shown in Figure 3 below. For example the love and belonging need in a golfers point of view can be a club membership or a place for instance in a national team, and for the golfer, the top of the pyramid means a certain reached skill level or a personal goal, or simply enjoyment of the game and nature while playing on a course. (Kiss R. 2014)



**Figure 3.** Interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of motivational needs from the perspective of golf. (modified by Kiss R. 2013)

## 7.2 Push & pull theory

Push and pull factors are used to measure motivation in different levels. Push factor simply means the demand side of the motivation and pull focuses on the supply side. These are also related often so that the push factors can be found at the tourists home area and pull factors are situated in the destination.

Push factors or push motivations can either be emotional or internal. These usually are the need for relaxation and rest, need to maintain health and fitness or other social need that needs to be satisfied. It can also mean exploration and travelling to entire new places where none of the friends are been before. Many tourists also travel because they need to escape reality or work for a few days and what better way to do that than travelling somewhere.

External factors then are related to pull motivations and are tied to a destination, e.g. the things that attract a tourist in a certain destination such as beautiful beach, warm weather, nature and other services such as shopping, entertainment and cultural sites. Pull factors can also modify or influence on push factors in both positive and negative way. If the location offers everything that tourist needs the pull factors play a bigger role and the holiday is most likely booked to that specific location. If the factors are turned other way, the push factors might not affect the same way anymore when the pull factors have lost their interest on tourist and the holiday might have to wait for a better time or location.

(Virginia Tech)



## 8 THORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When looking at the popular golf holiday destination among Finnish golfers there is a need for different theories in order to understand the bigger picture of the research. This means that all theories mentioned above need to link one way or another to each other's. Firstly one needs to understand the basics of tourism in order to continue with a research related in it. Basics of tourism is therefore the first theory that was used to get started with the thesis, but also there is a tourist visible in the thesis which is why it is also defined in the beginning of the thesis.

Like in every other field also tourism has its own trends which can change either quite rapidly or over a longer period of time. Nowadays and near future trends are defined because it helps the reader to get a glimpse of what is happening in the tourism world right now and what to expect in the future from the field that keeps growing all the time.

Since the thesis is about golf holidays and golf travelling, golf itself needs to be explained. It is not a typical sport which means that people who do not play it themselves might not have any clue what sort of game it is. This thesis only looks at golf very shortly and explains its background and little statistics of the game since it is a topic that could cover an entire book. Hence golf is a sport there is also the need for shortly defining sport tourism which is the base for the thesis and of course what is golf tourism and how it differs from sport tourism.

Travelling always includes a new location or an old one but every time in a different location than where one's home area is, and destination is a key to this thesis, which means that destination theory is needed to declare the most important part of the theoretical framework in order to get a deeper understanding of the results in this thesis. Destinations vary and so do golf holiday destinations. There are some visible differences between locations for leisure travelling and golf travelling which is why there is a separate section that specifically goes through destinations that are associated and aimed for golfers. Also already the popular destinations are searched so that the results can be reflected into the old results which give an idea if the destinations are new to a market of golf holidays or whether

they are old popular ones that still today attract tourists to visit the location all over again.

The motivation part of the thesis is the “why” and in order to gain understanding of the results few theories are mentioned to back up the motivation side. Maslow’s theory is known to everyone, but it is explained shortly and also a small definition is added to figure out the needs for golfer and what they value within their hobby. Of course every person is unique being but similar to every hobby or group they all are driven by the same needs within their own field of interest.

The push and pull theory is an important part of the theory since almost the whole motivation part of this thesis is based on it and the questionnaire, which is used in the empirical part of the research, is based on the push and pull factors. They define why these people really want to travel and what factors affect their decisions considering the destination and location of their holiday.

The questionnaire used to gather the information is based mainly on the motivation theory side since the target group is familiar with the sport and almost all people know the basics of tourism, but also a small part of the tourism trends and popular destination theory is used. They gave the main idea for the questions and how they should be formed to get the information that needs to be gathered in order to reach the results that correspond to aim and the problem of the thesis.

## **9 RESEARCH**

This part will in detail discuss the research done for this thesis. The research is divided into separate sections to make it easier to understand. First the aim of the research is defined and explained in detail, i.e. what the actual research is all about and how it is conducted using different methods. Also this part will explain and open the questionnaire used in the research and determine the reliability and validity of the research. Also the possible problems have been listed in the end of this part. Later on, the results of the thesis are presented, and different analysis and notices are being introduced with the help of different tables, maps and graphs.

### **9.1 What is research**

Research is a process that aims at answering a specific question or problem set by a researcher before the research process starts. Research simply means gathering and searching new information about a previously set topic that can be anything one wants to know more about (for example news about all new researches almost daily). Research can be a small information search about the new holiday destination or a favorite sport team, or it can be a bigger project or scientific research for example for the new medicine.

Research usually starts from a problem or question, which can be about something that has happened or some phenomena that needs deepen understanding, but the answer is not yet known. Next step would be figure out what sort of steps has to be taken in order to reach the answer and when these necessary steps are done, results can be analyzed and shared to whomever wants to know more about the topic or one can just keep the findings to oneself to grow one's own knowledge.

(Kowalczyk D. Study.com)

## **9.2 The aim of the research**

The aim of this research was to figure out which the most visited destinations Finnish golfers travel to play golf on a holiday are and why they choose these specific destination. In more detail this research aims to figure out the countries that Finnish golfers prefer and look for reasons why they have chosen this location and what motivational factors led them to these decisions.

## **9.3 Research methods**

This research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods and is executed as an online questionnaire with E-lomake tool. Quantitative research method means that the data is mostly gathered in numerical form with surveys (paper, online or phone), it is more conclusive and allows the use of bigger target groups than qualitative method. Most of the research in this thesis are done in quantitative research but some qualitative research is done as well.

Qualitative research is more exploratory and gives deeper understanding of the topic that cannot be expected that well. It usually means interviews and observations but this research uses qualitative method in some of the questions in the questionnaire in order to get the respondents own opinion about some of the things that handle the motivation side of the research problem.

(Surveyqizmo. 2015)

## **9.4 Questionnaire**

The research in this thesis was carried out through an online questionnaire. This questionnaire included 19 questions that were divided into three different parts. The first part defines the basic information of a person who is answering the questionnaire and is for everyone to answer. The purpose of the basics is to get a glimpse what type of people or families travel to golf holidays and is there some kind of differences in their travel habits. Also since the thesis discusses Finnish golfers, there was a question that asked the respondent's home club, which gives a

picture of where the respondents live and whether there is people from all over Finland or just within one area.

The last two parts are divided so that the second part consists of questions for those who have been travelling at least once within the last two years and the third part is for those who have not been on a holiday but would like to go. In second part there is questions that reveals the destinations people have been and the reasons behind the choice. It also handles how the holiday was reserved and whether there were any external factors that would have had an impact on the holiday. The third part only includes a couple questions asking if the person wants to travel and where. Both of the last parts also include a bonus question in the questionnaire which tries to figure out what would be the ultimate dream holiday destination among Finnish golfers.

The questionnaire was first supposed to be in English (Appendix 1) but was changed into Finnish to collect more responses. After all the research is done based on Finnish golfers and their travel habits, so it was obvious that a Finnish questionnaire would get more responses than one in English. Also the model of the questionnaire was updated several times and the final questionnaire can be found in the appendices below (Appendix 2).

The questionnaire was shared several times on Facebook during a period of two months. During that time the questionnaire was shared by a number of people and total of 65 people answered it. When the questionnaire was first published it got 26 responses in a couple of days, and after the few shares there was a total of 56 answers in a two-week-period. Two weeks later the questionnaire was shared once more in a different channel on Facebook and it was filled a few more times and ended up with 64 answers. After another two weeks a thank you note was posted still with the questionnaire link and it got a final answer and the total number of responses ended up being 65. In this research all 65 answers are used.

## 9.5 Reliability and validity

A successful research includes analysis for reliability and validity. Both reliability and validity are desirable qualities that make the research stronger. Reliability means you get the same results from repeated tests without any outside distractions or manipulation concerning test subjects, research conditions or other things that could have an effect on the results. The test should be as normal as possible to ensure the quality and reliability of the research problem. This means that the research is repeatable and would give the same consistent answers during the similar time period. Validity measures the accuracy on the test or research that is carried out. Validity concerns more of the whole result and how successfully it corresponds to the actual research question. (Heale R., Twycross A. 2015), (Writing@CSU)

## 9.6 Possible errors during the research

Always when conducting a research there is a possibility of potential errors that can occur. For example if the questions in the questionnaire are somehow predictable or they have been formed in a way that the person answering the questions decides to go with the generally known answer rather than his/hers own opinion or does not understand the question at all of the subject in question, the results might be hard to gather in reliable way.

Human error are always also visible when the research is conducted by a human. If the measurement in the research is possible to do with the help of robots the reliability and validity would be much higher than in case where the whole measurement is done by human. Without bigger malfunctioning you can assume that the robot will do the experiment or measurement always in the same way but if the same measurement is done by human there is always some flaws between separate measurements and that is what causes the decrease in reliability and validity of the research.

(Surveyqizmo. 2015)

## **10 RESULTS**

This section presents the results of the research that was set to identify the popular golf holiday destinations among Finnish golfers during the past two years. Hence all the answers were obtained the results from the questionnaire were collected for the analysis. Graphs maps and tables are used to give clearer idea of the answers. The analysis of the results is done with traditional paper and pen, Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software. All answers were used since only 65 were available at the beginning.

### **10.1 Expectations of the results**

The expectations for this research are quite similar to what the most popular destinations have been on the past years in travelling for golf holidays. Spain should be on top of the list because among Finnish golfers it has been very popular in past years. The neighboring countries are also expected to be among the most popular destinations because they are easy to reach and do not require that big budget for travelling.

Since the results are obtained from the questionnaire aimed for golfers, expectations for gender and age can be anything because golf is a sport or a hobby for everyone from dependent of age or gender. This is also why it is very difficult to predict which kind of answers there would be for the motivation aspect and that is why the answers can vary a lot.

### **10.2 Background**

The first part of the research includes the background information about the golfers. It is covered with seven questions that asked about the respondents' age, gender, household and income, and also what sort of golfer are they. The purpose was to identify the type of people who have travelled or did not travel to help to get a deeper understanding behind motives, but also to understand if different situations carry an impact on travel habits.

The first two questions were about the gender and age. Out of all 65 respondents 25 were male and 40 were female (Table 1). There was five different caps to choose age and the biggest group of respondents were from age 36 to 55 that covered 38.5% of all respondents but persons aged 18 to 25 were almost as big group with the 33.8% of the respondents. The smallest group was persons aged 26 to 35 with only 3.1% of the respondents (Table 2).

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Men	25	38,5
	Women	40	61,5
	Total	65	100,0

**Table 1.** Gender.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18 - 25	22	33,8
	26 - 35	2	3,1
	36 - 55	25	38,5
	56 +	16	24,6
	Total	65	100,0

**Table 2.** Age of the respondents.

The purpose of the third and fourth question was to determine the ability for travelling from the income level and the household size of a person. Of course if the person has a high income and they live alone they most likely travel a lot but if one belongs to a lower income level and lives with a family of five, they might not have ability to travel even if they wanted to.

Among the 65 answers the biggest household size was two persons with 31 respondents that belonged to this group (Table 3). That most likely means a couple that can either be a young couple, one with grown up children or a couple with no children. This group is situated quite even when considered the income level. There were 10 respondents for both one and three person households which show a bigger variation in income level. Also respondents with four and five or more



family members had answered the questionnaire covering little over a sixth of all responses.

One person households were situated in the lower income level where three to five and bigger person households placed more evenly among all income level groups. The further analysis shows the income level and household in relation with the number of holidays per year.

		: 4. Income level €/kk					Total	
		- 1999	2000 -	3000 -	4000 -	5000 -		6000 +
: 3. Household (person/s)	1	5	2	3	0	0	0	10
	2	6	7	6	5	2	5	31
	3	3	3	1	2	0	1	10
	4	3	0	2	0	1	2	8
	5+	3	0	1	0	1	1	6
Total		20	12	13	7	4	9	65

**Table 3.** Household size in relation to income level.

The purpose of the last three questions from the background part was to figure out what kind of golfers the respondents are. Question number five might have a huge impact on the results since if the person is a professional golfer it means that they travel for tournaments all the time, an competing amateur might have few international competitions and practice camps abroad and a pro/coach can organize a tour holidays for their home clubs players, but if the person is a normal hobbyist one might not have that big drive to travel outside of Finland.

The biggest group in this research was club players or hobbyists in 47 out of 65 responses (Table 4) that covers 72.3% of all respondents, whereas only one professional and one pro answered the questionnaire which combined means only 3%. Also 16 amateurs answered the questionnaire.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Professional	1	1,5
	Competing amateur	16	24,6
	Club player / hobbyist	47	72,3
	Pro / coach	1	1,5
	Total	65	100,0

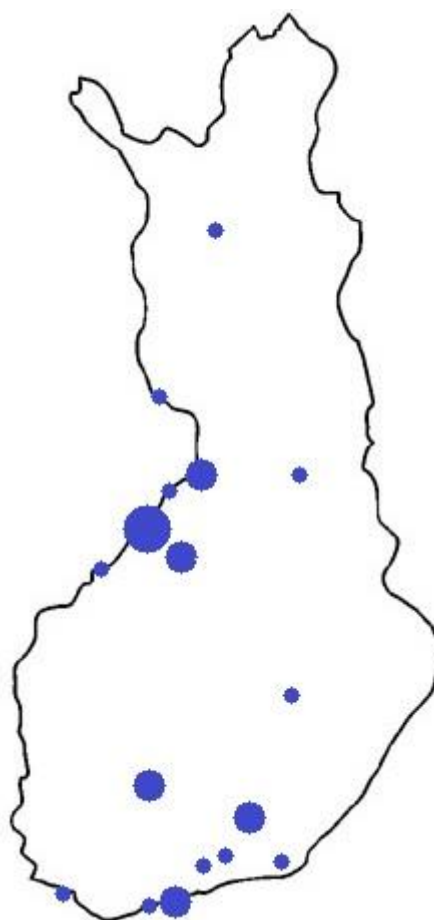
**Table 4.** Type of a golfer.

The fact that every type of golfer has answered the questionnaire makes it wider and not narrowed to one specific type of golfer. Also the big number of so called club players that answered the questions, makes the research more appealing, because after all thesis is about Finnish golfers in general. Further on is the comparison with the player type and the times they travel abroad to play golf.

The sixth question asked the handicap and the average handicap of all respondents was 13.4 means that the respondents include more hobbyist than better players such as amateurs, professionals and pros. If the research was done completely about professionals or competing amateurs the results would be straight reflected from their competition and practice calendars.

Question number seven was about the home club and was included to get a picture how well the whole Finland could be taken into consideration since the thesis is about Finnish golfers. Almost one third of the respondents (Table 5) were from the authors' home club Kalajoki but the rest two thirds were from all over the Finland for example from Helsinki, Savonlinna, Oulu, and Levi, as the Map 1 shows. This means that the scale of locations is big enough to consider the whole countries golfers.

Home club	Nmb of respondents
Kalajoki	29
Lahti	4
Oulu	4
Nivala	3
Virpiniemi	3
Espoo	2
Kirkkonummi	2
Kuopio	2
Raahe	2
Helsinki	1
Kemi	1
Kerava	1
Laukaa	1
Levi	1
Nokia	1
Paltamo	1
Pietarsaari	1
Pornainen	1
Savonlinna	1
Tampere	1
Turku	1
Vantaa	1
No home club	1



**Table 5.** Number of respondents per home club.

**Map 1.** Respondents and their locations on Finland's map.

### 10.3 How many times do you travel outside of Finland to a golf holiday?

This question was the most important one in the questionnaire since it determined the number of respondents for both categories “have been travelling” and “have not travelled”. The purpose was to divide the responses so that those who have been travelling would answer the following seven questions (numbers nine to fifteen) and those who have not travelled would answer separate questions specifically designed for them (numbers sixteen to nineteen).

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	22	33,8
	2	15	23,1
	3	4	6,2
	4 +	2	3,1
	I haven't travelled	6	9,2
	Less than once a year	16	24,6
	Total	65	100,0

**Table 6.** Number of holiday times per year.

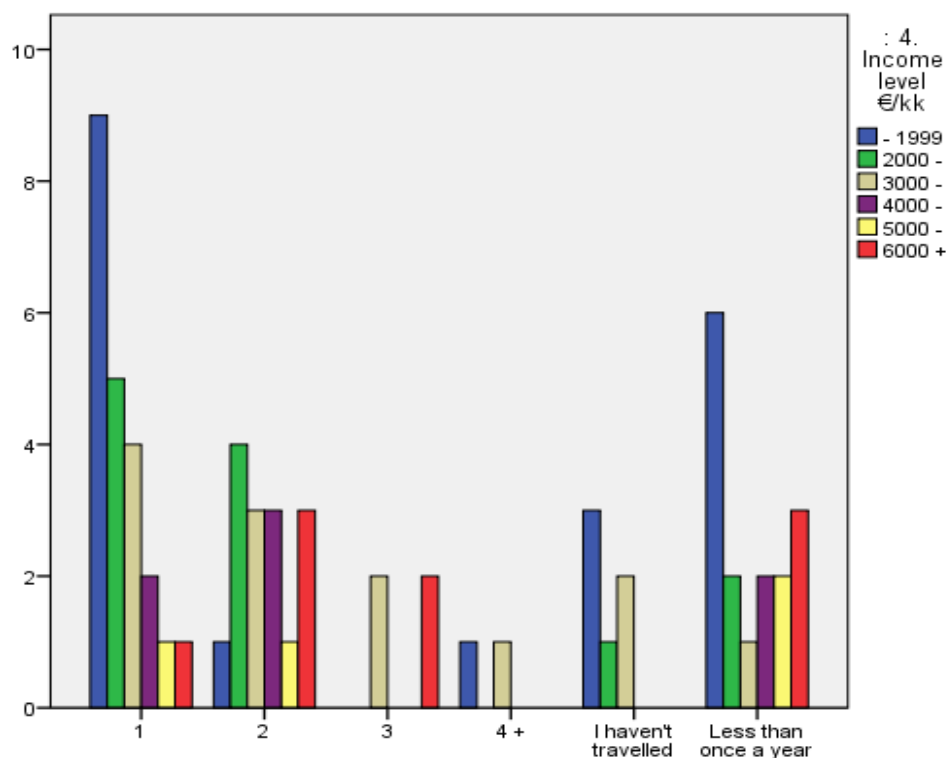
Most of the respondents, 33.8% answered that they travel once a year to a golf holiday (Table 6) and 24.6% said they travel less than once a year. 23.1% travel abroad twice and only 9.3% more than two times. The variation between holiday times is somewhat what was expected, but the fact that there was six people who had not travelled at all was a surprise. This allowed me to quickly look at the destinations that would be a possible new locations for the golf holidays in a different perspective without any previous distractions.

The number of holiday times among different type of golfers spreads quite as expected (Table 7). The one professional travels more than four times a year as expected since the competitions are always in different countries. Competing amateurs have a little variation in holiday times and this might depend on their personal training plan or status. A pro that answered, most likely travels with the group as a group leader to a holiday and the club players and hobbyists either travel with the coach or book their own trips to enjoy the game and explore different courses.

	: 8. How many times do you travel outside of Finland to a golf holiday?						Total
	1	2	3	4 +	I haven't travelled	Less than once a year	
: 5. Me as a Player:							
Professional	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Competing amateur	8	2	2	1	1	2	16
Club player / hobbyist	14	12	2	0	5	14	47
Pro / coach	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	22	15	4	2	6	16	65

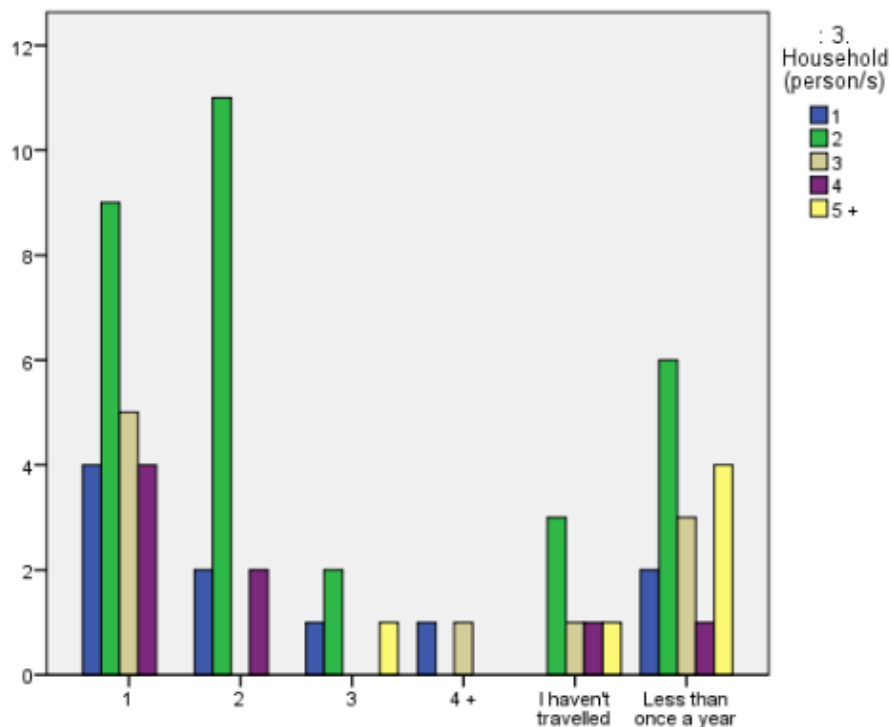
**Table 7.** Golfer type in relation to holiday times per year.

To determine whether or not the income and the household size have some effect on the holiday times they were cross checked against holiday times. From Graph 1 can be seen that the persons in the low end income groups tend to go on a holiday at least once every year to a holiday when the middle income groups travel more than once a year. The one under two thousand earning player that answered to travel more than four times most likely is an amateur who most likely plays in the national team. The biggest surprise is that on top of the income level the persons tend to travel either three or less times during the year but of course in that case, work may be a restricting factor in number of holidays.



**Graph 1.** Income level in relation to holiday times per year.

The household in relation to number of holidays is shown in Graph 2 and it is clear that the household size does have an effect on holiday times during one year. The bigger the family is fewer the holidays they have, and the smaller household clearly has more holiday times. The biggest group that travels are one and two person households but there is also a few bigger families that travel more than once during the year but at the same time are the biggest group that travel only once or not at all.



**Graph 2.** Household size in relation to holiday times per year.

#### 10.4 Who travelled to golf holiday

This part will look more closely at the results that go through the popular destinations among Finnish golfers during the past two years. This part also determine the main motivation aspects for these destinations and why was the certain destination chosen.

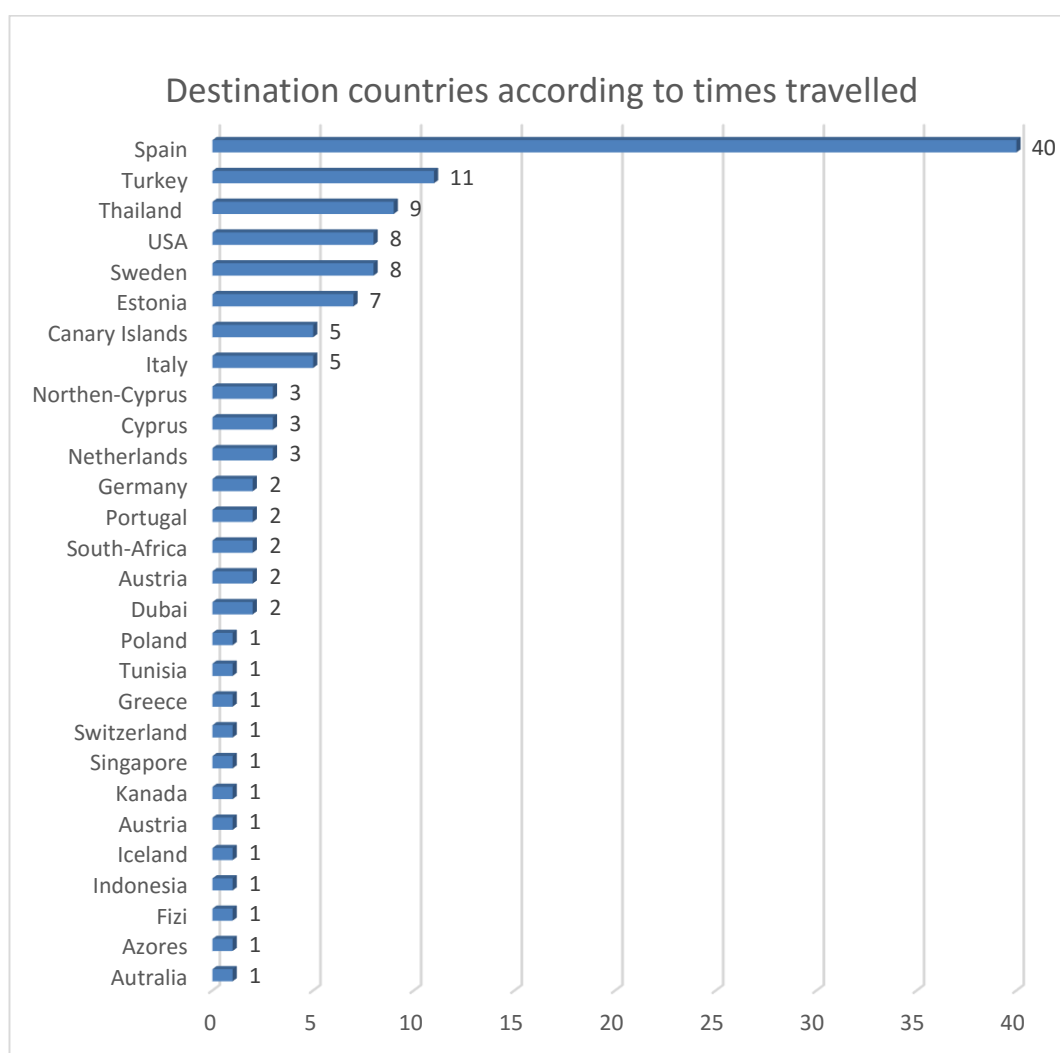
Out of all 65 respondents, 54 had written at least one country they have travelled to within last two years, so 54 answers are used in this part of the research. Some of the questions were formed so that more than one alternative was possible to choose which is why few of the questions more than 54 answers are used.

##### 10.4.1 Travelled destinations

The first question (question number nine on the questionnaire) asked where the respondents had been travelling on a golf holiday during the past two years. In addition they were asked to write down a maximum of five countries they have travelled starting from the recent one towards furthest holiday. This questions is the key to this thesis since it gives the information of the most popular destination

among Finnish golfers within the last two years. The results of this question have been opened in a few different ways since some respondents only travelled once but others twice or even more times.

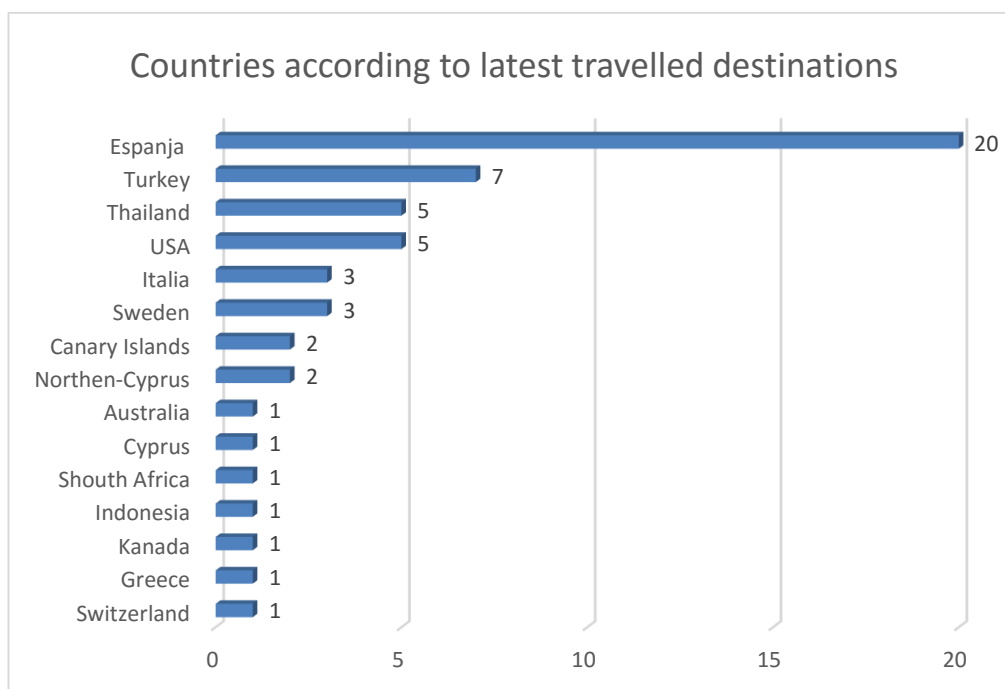
When counting all responses together (Graph 3) the result shows the most popular destinations respondents travelled over the last two years is Spain with 40 travel times which is 32.3 % of all holidays recorded by respondents. Second place is Turkey with 11 visits and third Thailand with nine travel times. Other popular destinations are USA and neighboring countries Sweden and Estonia.



**Graph 3.** Destination countries according to times travelled.

When looking only the latest holiday destinations (Graph 4) the graph is a bit smaller and there are some variations to the overall result shown in Graph 3. For

example Italy located better according to the latest holiday destination being on fifth place with 3 visits. The top four destinations are in the same place, which indicates that they are also popular destinations in a shorter term. This list is the one that is used in future results when the motivations aspect is gone through since questions ten to fifteen are based on the latest visited location.



**Graph 4.** Countries according to latest travelled destinations.

#### 10.4.2 Duration of the golf holidays

The time spend on a holiday usually depends on a situation and the reason behind the holiday. In this research respondents could choose from five different time periods. The most typical durations for the holiday was seven to thirteen days which was chosen by 23 respondents (Table 8). The reason why the scale is from seven was because golf holidays may last eight or ten days but not many lasts the exact seven days. Also the top being thirteen it leaves the two week holidays to their own category of 14 to 27 days into which group belonged 13 holidays. It was also possible to choose one to three or four to six days long holidays or then holidays that lasted more than 28 days which ended up being third most popular duration of the holiday with 11 responses. Short term holidays (less than a week) only got 7 answers in total.



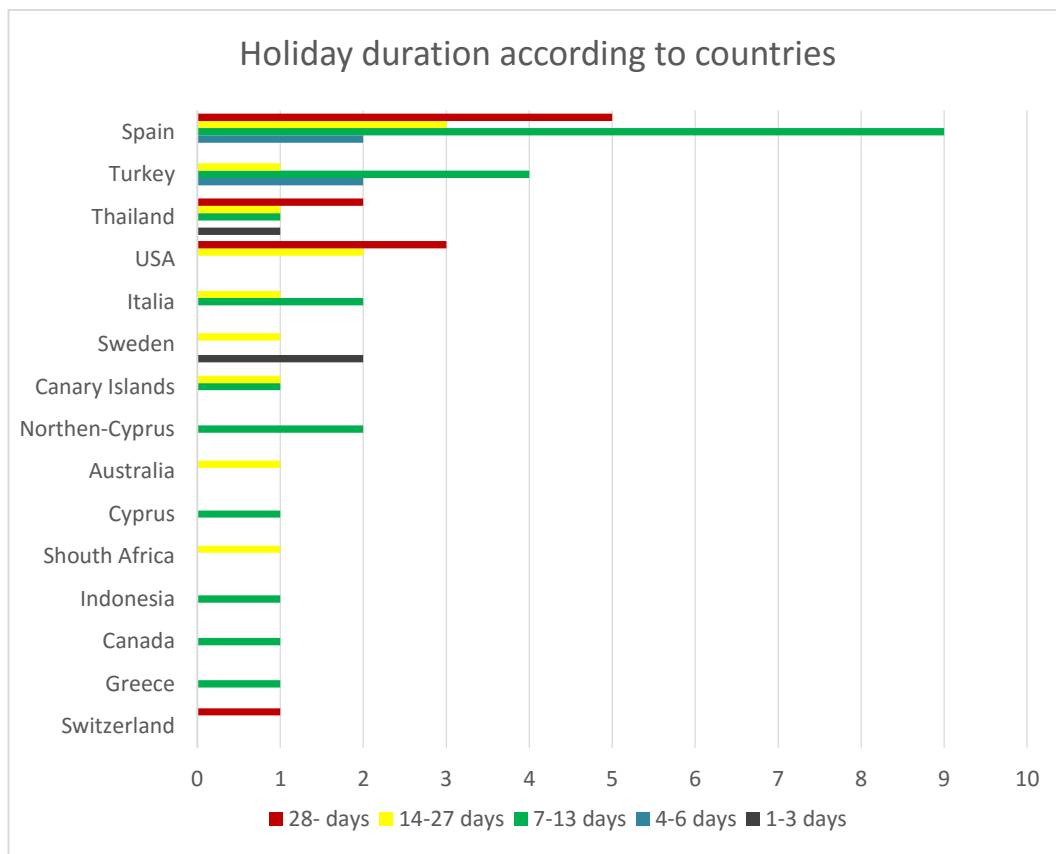
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1 - 3	3	4,6
	4 - 6	4	6,2
	7 - 13	23	35,4
	14 - 27	13	20,0
	28 +	11	16,9
	Total	54	83,1
Missing	System	11	16,9
Total		65	100,0

**Table 8.** Duration of golf holidays.

Comparison between the lengths of the holidays with the resent destinations travelled can be seen that the location does not play that big role in terms of the length of the holiday. For example when looking at the holiday destinations where holidays lasted 14 to 27 days the countries are both near such as Sweden, Spain, Italy and Turkey but also further countries Thailand, USA, Australia and South Africa. Of course the time period is quite board but for example holidays that were 7 to 13 days long were mostly travelled in Spain with nine holidays and Turkey with four. Once travelled 7 to 13 day holiday destinations were mostly in Europe but there was holidays to Thailand and Canada as well.

Longer stays that exceeded 28 days were to Spain, USA and Thailand (Graph 5) which are predictable since Spain is very popular winter home among retired golfers, USA also is strong long term destination because of the market in golf courses and resorts. Thailand also is a location that attracts golfers with affordable holiday residences near golf courses. Switzerland also had one longer stay holiday but the further research showed that the reason for that was a practical training place in a Swiss company.

There was also three one to three day holidays of which two were to Sweden which is reasonable but one was to Thailand. There was no indication on data whether the stay was just a small stop between flights or intended short holiday but the first prediction is more probable than the second one, when the location is taken into consideration



**Graph 5.** Duration of holidays per country.

#### 10.4.3 Type of a holiday and motivation factors

It was also important to figure out the ways the holidays were booked and what is taken into consideration while selecting the destination. Different types of influences on that matter are considered in this part and in addition, the motivation behind the holidays. Questions 11 – 14 deals with these factors. The first thing was to figure out the reason behind the holiday, then the booking style and did it have any influencing factors and last the motivation factors which affected to decision of the destination.

The purpose of question 11 was to identify the reason for the holiday. There were five possibilities to choose an answer from and one could pick as many points as they thought would best describe their holiday. The most usual reason for a golf holiday was free time since 58.4% of all respondents answered it. The second biggest group with 22.1% of responses were those who travelled with family and on-

ly 5.2% considered having a potential golf holiday along with the business trip and 3.9% were asked along with a friend (Table 9).

The reason of a holiday	Nmb of responses	%
Free time	45	58,4
Along with the business trip	4	5,2
Friend asked with	3	3,9
With family	17	22,1
Other reason	8	10,4

**Table 9.** Reasons for a golf holiday.

There was also a possibility to pick other reason which got 10.4% out of all answers. According to respondents that chose “other reason”, the reasons for a golf holiday were for example training camps and different level international competitions. Other reasons they mentioned were going to see a friend or a relative, job alternation leave, a practical training for school and also an exploration year abroad was mentioned for a reason.

The reason behind questions 12 and 13 was to find out how golfers book their holidays and how they find information about it. There were two different ways of booking, package holiday and self-reserved holiday, but also an option for reserved other way (Table 10). Out of all holidays considered in this thesis 63.1% were booked by the respondents by themselves, 16.9% reserved a package holiday some other way and two said other way. These other two ways were that the holiday was booked by parents and the other one asked offers from different travel agencies according to needs and requirements of the person in question.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Package holiday	11	16,9
	Reserved by myself	41	63,1
	Other way	2	3,1
	Total	54	83,1
Missing	System	11	16,9
Total		65	100,0

**Table 10.** Reservation method.

Looking at the results for where the respondents got their information about the holiday, the question is set so that more than one alternative can be chosen and in the results all answers are counted together (Table 11). More than half of the respondents, 55.7% find the information from the internet, as it is after all the easiest place to search all sort of information. Friends are also a great source of information according to 20% of respondents and other good place is the home clubs' club house which according to answers 14.3% found information about their holiday. Only two said they got information of their holiday from an advertisement. There was also available to choose "from somewhere else" and five persons had found the information via some other channel. Other ways they mentioned were parents, work place, other organization, and from their own previous experience.

Information source	Nmb of responses	%
Internet	39	55,7
Club house	10	14,3
Advertisement	2	2,9
Fried	14	20,0
From somewhere else	5	7,1

**Table 11.** Information source.

The question that defines the real motivation behind the final choice of the holiday destination is why this specific destination. The question has two parts, the first will define the factors respondents thought were important, and the second part will then ask grounds for the choices in the first part. In this question there were six ready given factors from which respondents could choose as many as they

thought would define their reasons and there was one section for their own reason (Table 12).

Reason to choose a destination	Nmb of responses	%
Golf course	13	11,2
Country of destination	29	25,0
Hotel	8	6,9
Price	19	16,4
Good package (hotel+flights+green fees)	16	13,8
Easy access	22	19,0
Something else	9	7,8

**Table 12.** Reasons to choose a destination.

All responses spread quite even with factors but the biggest reason to choose a destination is the country of destination with 25% of all responses. Easy access is also important as well as the price. Many respondents also thought that the good package is a reason to choose a holiday and some pick the holiday destination according to golf course, but clearly, the hotel is not that important according to respondents. Something else was also picked and quite number said a friend to be the reason for their choice. Some had their friend's wedding, some said they got a free accommodation at their friends place and to some friends had recommended the destination. Also a package deal of six different courses, own apartment at the destination and a short stop along the way around the world, were mentioned.

The second part of the question aimed at finding out more about the reasons chosen before. Many of the answers said that the biggest factor is the price-quality relationship, but at the same time they valued the condition of the course and the hotel. The second thing that received much of notice was the golf course and the destination. They needed to be in a good condition and the destination was valued if there was good variation of other services nearby. The one thing that also was mentioned in many of the comments was the fact that the location would be easy to reach and travelling to that destination would not take all the day. Some also mentioned to have an apartment at the locations when they only needed to pay the travelling costs to get to the destination. Following is some of the comments the

respondents had written down (freely translated from Finnish) for their motives behind travelling to a certain country.

“I don’t have money for an expensive holiday, so I chose price as a criteria. A hotel in a clean environment and near the course means golfers get good service and package because well-organized is less stressful.” – Female, 3.8 handicap, travelled to Spain

“Definitely the course since the area has so many potential courses which you can choose a new course every day.” – Female, 24.6 handicap, travelled to Spain

“Time doesn’t go to unnecessary travelling which means more time is left on the location.” Female, 24.6 handicap, travelled to Spain

“I wanted to play on a beautiful course which was located within walking distance from my apartment.” – Female, 2.3 handicap, travelled to Australia

“An easy destination for us, good playing conditions and surely warm weather.” – Male, 7.6 handicap, travelled to Sweden

“As a student, the price is the key factor but also a good location meant good public transportation.” – Female, 3.0 handicap, travelled to Switzerland

“A new destination that has been recommended a lot and a good group to travel with.” – Female, 15 handicap, travelled to La Gomera, Canary Islands

“Free accommodation which saves a lot in the budget. Also Finnair’s offer ticket flights from and to Helsinki, how simple!” – Male, 7.7 handicap, travelled to Indonesia

“Price-quality needs to be on point because I travel many times a year. Also the course needs to be challenging enough, and nice to play.” – Female, +0.1 handicap, travelled to Northern-Cyprus

### 10.5 Who did not travel to golf holiday

The last part of the questionnaire was for those that have not travelled on a golf holiday outside Finland at all. These questions got six respondents that answered “I haven’t travelled” to the eight question, but also additional seven people answered for these questions even if they were meant to answer the other part of the questionnaire most likely because their trip has been over two years ago.

The first questions was if they wanted to travel on a golf holiday and 12 respondents said they would like to travel somewhere (Table 13). Only one responded said there is no interest for travelling abroad to a golf holiday. Those who answered “yes” for the first questions were asked in the second one where they would like to travel.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	12	18,5	92,3
	No	1	1,5	7,7
	Total	13	20,0	100,0
Missing	System	52	80,0	
Total		65	100,0	

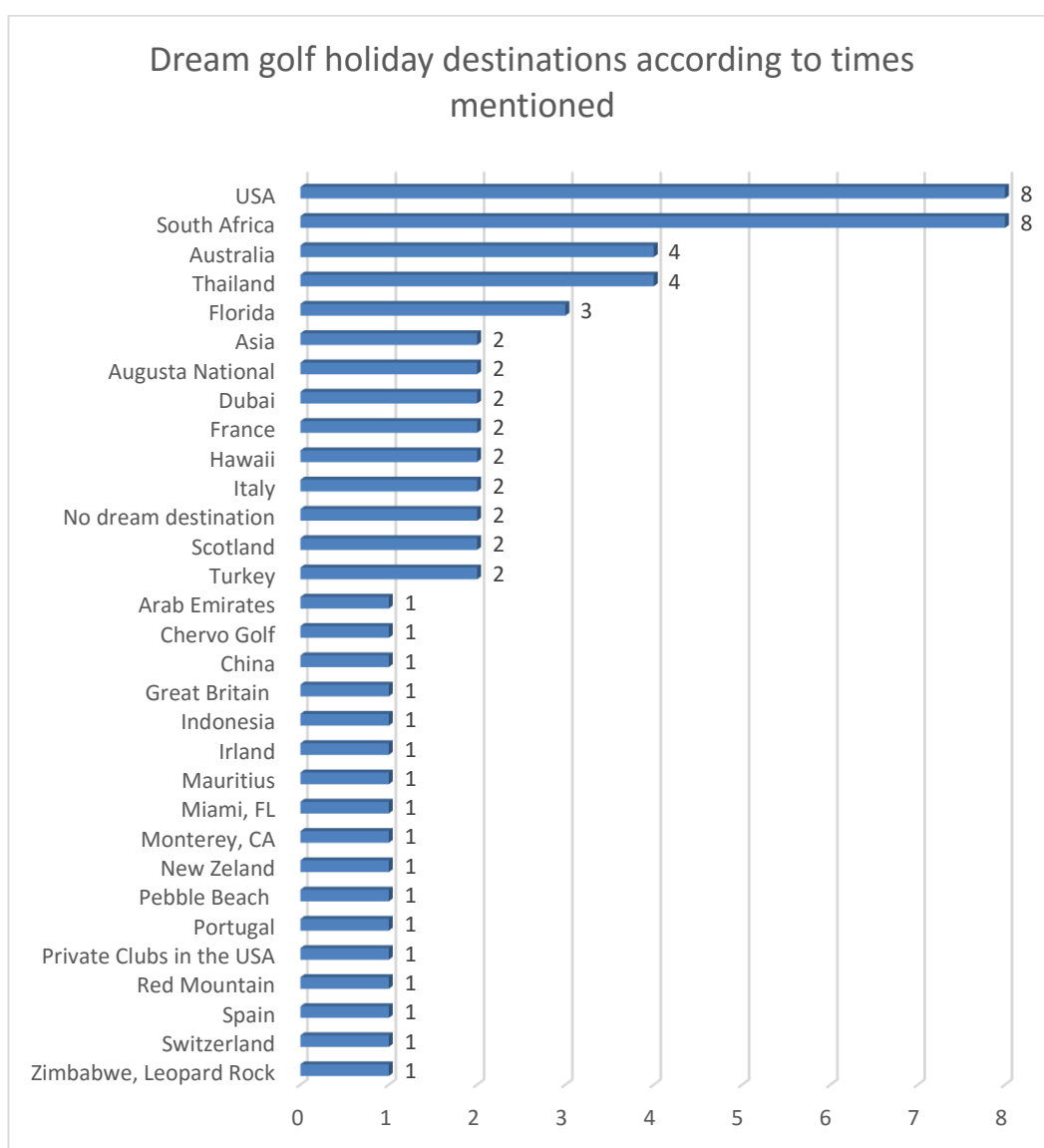
**Table 13.** Do you want to travel to a golf holiday outside of Finland?

These answers vary quite much from each other. Destinations where they would like to travel were Spain and Ireland that both were mentioned couple of times, and also Florida, Turkey, Austria, Slovenia, Great Britain and Thailand were mentioned. There was also couple answers that said any destination outside of Finland would be nice to travel.

The reasons behind these destinations also vary but somehow reflect on what the country itself has to offer in terms of nature, traditions and services. Spain and Turkey had quite similar grounds, easy access and relatively cheap location and good recommendations from friends. Great Britain and Ireland both have deep traditions in golf and specific type in course design which were mentioned by a couple of people. Also reasons such as, already visited location, good price-quality relationship and course selection were mentioned.

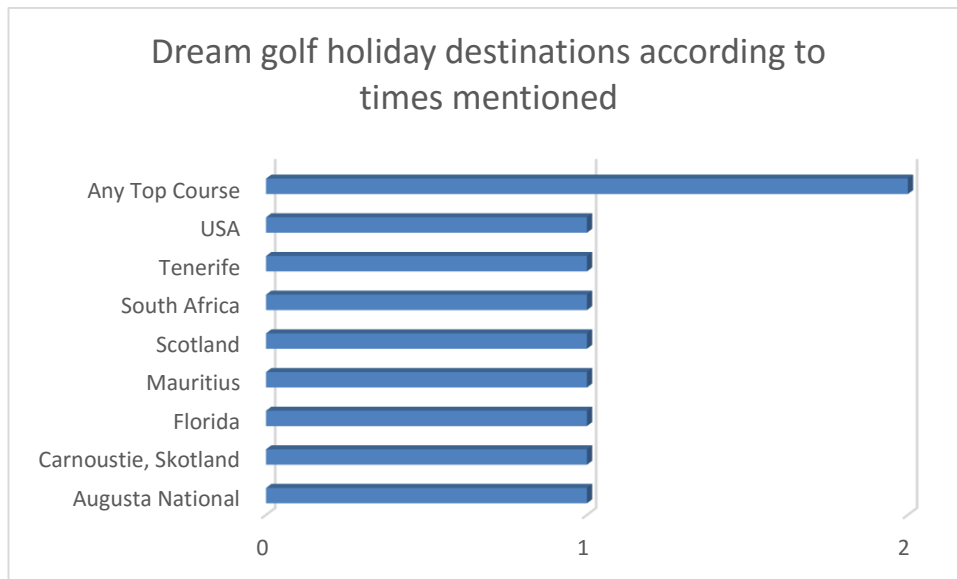
## 10.6 Dream golf holiday destination?

This question was asked from both, travelers and those who had not travelled, only because out of a curiosity. Later on the question turned out to be a good tool to think about the futures top holiday destinations, and what would be the best future market for tour operators. Graphs 6 (already travelled) and 7 (have not travelled) below show countries separately for both groups what is their dream golf holiday destination. Most mentioned countries were South Africa and USA among those who already have travelled.



**Graph 6.** Dream golf holiday destinations according to times mentioned.





**Graph 7.** Dream golf holiday destinations according to times mentioned.

According to these answers tour operators might think that South Africa and USA, although these locations are quite pricy compared to for example European countries, are the next very possible destinations to organize a package holiday for Finnish golfers. Also fewer times mentioned but not that popular destinations among golfers, might turn out to be on a future's golf holiday market. Below a couple of pictures from different locations or golf courses mentioned among the dream locations and a little explanation of the location.



**Photo 1.** *Blair Atholl Golf, South Africa.* One of the longest courses to play from the back tee and is in top 5 of all courses in South Africa.



**Photo 2.** *Augusta National Golf Course, Georgia, USA.* One of the worlds well known golf courses that also hosts one of the year's biggest golf tournament Masters every year.



**Photo 3.** *St Andrews old course, Scotland.* World's famous golf course and some say this is the home place of golf and where the game was born.



**Photo 4.** *Mission Hills, China.* Hosts tournaments for both men and women professional tours.



**Photo 5.** *Faldo course, Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, Arab Emirates.* Hosts yearly a season ending tournament for both men and women. Belongs to the world's top 100 courses.

## 11 CONCLUSION

Considering the research question and problem the results met the requirements set in the beginning. The research problem is answered and the motivation side is also looked through. The used theory gave the needed background information for the research. The quantitative research method turned out to be the right choice and mixing a small qualitative research into it gave it a bit more depth to some of the questions. Also the fact that all qualitative type of questions were in the questionnaire gave the respondents an unbiased zone to write what they really thought.

In terms of theories, all that was included in the theory part really gave the depth to the research. In order to understand the results it was important to select theories that somehow reflected to the research question. Basic theories being tourism and tourist, travelling trends and destination theory summed the first part of the research problem. Maybe the most important theories were sport and golf tourism and golf itself, since the research was about golfers and their travelling habits. Also the theories used in the motivation part really gave a good ground for the motivation aspect of the research question. All in all it was relatively easy to find these theories for the research that would give enough information and knowledge in order to understand the results of this thesis.

The research was surprisingly easy to carry out because I am an enthusiastic golfer myself and I try to turn my hobby into a profession and therefore also travel on golf holidays quite often. That is why the outcome of the research was very much was expected in terms of Spain being the top destinations, but also the reasons behind the choice of the destination. The country is easy to reach from Finland and travel time is relatively short. There are plenty of good golf courses especially along the coast line and they are quite cheap to play.

In terms of reliability and validity the research is valid since the number of respondents was big enough to get clear differences concerning results and all the responses are gathered during a specific time period. Also the fact that the results are all got from the different parts of Finland makes it reliable.

Something that could have been done better was the spreading of the questionnaire. Due to a lack of ideas the questionnaire was only shared on Facebook. It received a few shares from other people as well, which helped to get more people from all over the Finland to answer it. Now when looking at the channels, the questionnaire could have been sent to Suomen Golfliitto which could have shared it on their web pages. It could have also been sent it to some of the few Finnish travel agencies who specialize in golf holidays and they could have sent it to their customers. But the fact that the questionnaire only got 65 answers which is quite few, but when considering the results, the consistency with the top destinations was pretty clear and motivation aspects started to repeat so not many more necessary was needed in the end.

### **11.1 Future research ideas**

This thesis raised few new questions that could be next potential research problems for the future. The first one is “Why Spain attracts so many Finnish golfers?”. The fact that almost half of all responses indicated Spain being a popular destination raised a question why is that? It would be nice to research what the factors that really pull Finnish golfers to Spain are.

The other problem that came up during the research is that “How do other people’s opinions affect on destination decision making process?”. This question was also a possible thesis idea in the beginning. The questions also kept circling throughout the analysis part which is why would be nice to do a deeper research on the topic.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire model

Questionnaire for the thesis: Trending Golf Holiday Destinations: Finnish Golfers

1. Age:

- 18 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 55
- 56 +

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Household:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 +

4. Income level: €/month

- 1999
- 2000 -
- 3000 -
- 4000 -
- 5000 +

5. Handicap: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Player status:

- professional golfer
- pro
- club player

7. How many times do you travel per year to play golf? (outside Finland)

- 1 time
- 2 times
- 3 times
- 4+ times
- I haven't been on a golf holiday (skip to the question 13.)



8. Why did you decide to go on a golf holiday?

- leisure
- business
- friend asked to join
- other reason, what? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Form of your holiday?

- package holiday
- self reserved hotel/green fees/airplane tickets...
- something else, what? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How did you find information about the holiday? (choose one or more)

- internet
- from the clubhouse
- advertisement
- from a friend
- somewhere else, where? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Where have you travelled within past 2 years (country) and how long was/were the holiday(s)?  
(If you have travelled more than one mark maximum of five latest.)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

12. Why did you choose that/ those specific destination(s)? Give grounds?

(you can choose more than one option)

- course
- country
- hotel
- price
- package
- easy access
- something else, what? \_\_\_\_\_

Because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your answers!

13. Would you like to go on a golf holiday outside Finland?

yes

no

If you answered no, thank you for your answers!

14. Where would you like to travel to a golf holiday?

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Why that specific destination? Grounds?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Finally, what is your ultimate dream golf holiday destination?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your answers!

## Appendix 2. Electronic questionnaire

### Kyselylomake golf matkustamisesta.

Hei! Olen viimeisen vuoden matkustajan osittella Vaasan Ammattikorkeakouussa ja tämä kysely on osa lopputyöni jolla haluan selvittää suomalaisten golfareiden ulkomaille suunnituttavien golfmatkoja.

#### Taustatiedot

	Mies	Nainen				
1. Sukupuoli	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				
	-18	18-25	26-35	36-55	56+	
2. Iän	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	1	2	3	4	5+	
3. Koffeinaattien kanta (harkkoo)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	-1950	2000-	3000-	4000-	5000-	6000+
4. Tulotaso (€)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Pelaajana olen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	Ammattilainen	Kilpailuamaton	Klubi pelaaja/amatööri	Provuorinpelaaja		
6. Tasoitus	<input type="text"/>					
7. Kalleus	<input type="text"/>					

#### Golf matkustaminen

	Hiljemminkin kuin kahden vuoden	1	2	3	4+	En ole matkustanut
8. Montako kertaa viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana olet matkustanut Suomeen ulkopuolelle pelaamaan golfia?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Jos vastaat "Hiljemminkin kuin kahden vuoden" tai useammin, ja se osaa ajankohdan on ollut viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana vastaa kysymykseen 9 - 15, muuten jos vastaat "En ole matkustanut" tai useammin kuin kahden vuoden vastaa kysymykseen 16 - 19.

9. Mihin maahan/maihin olet matkustanut pelaamaan golfia viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana? (maks. viisi vastausta, aloita listan vastaamattomasta maasta)


Vastaa seuraaviin kysymyksiin viimeisimmän matkan perusteella

	1-3	4-6	7-13	14-20	20+
10. Kuinka monta kertaa kesä?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Golf matkan syy? (valitse yksi tai useampi)

- Vapaa aika
- Työmatkan ohessa
- Ystävä pyysi mukaan
- Perheen kanssa
- Muu syy

Jos vastasi muu syy, mikä?

	Vähemmän	Venäjän alue	Kuuluu tavalle
12. Kuinka jätettiin matkan?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Jos vastasi muulla tavalla, miten?

13. Miten löysit tietoja matkasta? (valitse yksi tai useampi)

- Internetistä
- Klubista
- Matkatoimasta
- Ystävästä
- Jostain muualta

Jos muulle mitään?

14. Mikä vaihtelu jätti lemmen tunteita/berkaselle voimavaroja melkoisesti? (valitse yksi tai useampi)

- Kone
- Käsiä
- Urat
- Hint
- Hyvä palvelu (esim. hotellivierasto-pöytä)
- Helppo sijainti
- Jokin muu

Jos jokin muu, mikä?

Mikä yllätyksellinen asia oli voit mielestäsi tässä vaihtelussa?

15. Mitä on unelmakohde missä haluaisit pelata golfia?

Kiitos vastauksesta! :)

Jos et ole käyttänyt golf matkalla Suomen ulkopuolella vastaa ystävällisesti seuraaviin kysymyksiin.

16. Haluaisit lähemmäs golf matkalle Suomea ulkopuolella?  Kyllä  Ei

17. Minne haluaisit matkustaa pelamaan golfia?

18. Perustelut, mikä juuri kyselyn kohde kiinnostaa?

19. Mitä on unelmakohde missä haluaisit pelata golfia?

Kiitos vastauksesta!! :)

