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**PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE STRATEGIC TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT OF LAPLAND**

Case Study: Tour Operator's appearance in social media

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<p>The aim of this report was to investigate how the use of promotional activities can help to develop the tourism industry by giving special attention to the case of Finland. The goal for this research was to analyze the utilization of social media accepted by tour operators as a means of promotion.</p> <p>This report was based on both theoretical and empirical point of view. Literature was used for the theoretical analysis. Information sources include articles, journals, and internet web page etc. In the empirical part, the qualitative research was conducted as textual analysis. The text analysis was completed based on four tour operators' promotional activities on social media.</p> <p>It was discovered that, promotional activities play an important role for the development of the tourism industry. Finland is very potential in its natural beauty. Every year large numbers of tourists visit this country and the number of tourists increasing day by day. But still it fails to meet the expectation. As the country lacks accessibility especially in the winter and Christmas season. Moreover, the country's image is not well known globally. So to attract more potential tourists, Finland needs to launch more promotional activities. After text analysis the results also revealed that the utilization of social media by Finnish tour operators is not professional. They have little presence and interest in social media. As the social media is 'two way communication channels', the companies could enhance the promotional efforts through social media.</p>		

<p>Key words Lapland tourism, Online promotion, Promotion, Social media, Tourism industry, Tourism development.</p>
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ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social media network has created a revolution in tourism industry all over the world. For this reason, social media has been used to promote the tourism industry through networking sites. The introduction of internet and e-commerce has changed the marketing trends. Today's businesses cannot depend on traditional marketing anymore. Social media applications provide great opportunities for businesses to use the word-of-mouth as an effective way of getting new customers. A company not only provides the information but also able to receive both positive and negative feedback through social media. This is why, many tourism companies have selected social media to advertise and promote their products.

This thesis begins with a theoretical framework. The first chapters of this thesis focus on providing theoretical information about promotion and its role in tourism development. This information is followed by an examination on how tourism industry is developing in Lapland, what are the development strategies and which authorities are responsible in development process. The second chapters deal with background information on Lapland, Lapland main markets and customers and SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis helps to have a clear information and picture of a country's all internal strengths and weakness as well as external opportunities and threats.

After the SWOT analysis, the next chapters make familiar the meaning of online promotion and its effects on tourism industry. This theoretical information will helps the reader to get an idea about how internet can help to promote tourism industry. At the end of the chapter, there will also be a discussion on social media which is very fundamental in this thesis. The uses of social media in promotion and some of the most popular social media will be introduced. The theoretical part ends with a brief history of four Finnish tour operators. These tour operators are Lapland Welcome, Luxury Action, Kontiki Finland and Wild Nordic.

This thesis also includes a research part. The research is going to be carried out by analyzing the chosen tour operators' webpage as well as their visibility on six most popular social media channels Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest. Before starting the analysis, the main concepts of research and different research methods will be presented which will end with the emphasizing of chosen methods of the research.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the promotional activities that are performed by the tour operators to attract and develop the tourism industry. Online promotion through social media will be the main tool to discover the tour operators' activities. The acceptance of social media by tour operators is attempted to be identified throughout the study. The chosen research method for the research is qualitative text analysis. Finally, after completing the analysis, a conclusion of the results and recommendations based on the findings will be presented to the strategy makers.

The case market of this research is Lapland. Lapland is a region in the northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. It covers almost a third of the total land of Finland. Lapland has potential natural beauty to fascinate tourists. In Finland the full potential of tourism could not be used mainly due to poor accessibility, high seasons of Christmas and insufficient promotional activities. It is true that, as a tourist destination, Finland is not so well known. In the rest of the Nordic countries like, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the governments have been investing more in tourism sectors compared to Finland. In order to increase the demand from the international market all the year round, strong marketing measures are required. The most important thing in marketing is creating good images. Thus it is very essential to know to whom to market, what to market, how to market and in which way to market.

2 PROMOTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

Tourism development has not achieved in a short time and still it is developing. The development of tourism is facing competition all over the world between the tourist destinations and attempt to fascinate more tourists through marketing procedure and policy. Promotion is one of the most important elements which include several action plans to inform the current or prospective customers about the development of a good product, its price and availability. This chapter will discuss about the promotion and development of tourism in Lapland.

2.1 Promotion in tourism development

Tourism promotion means trying to encourage the actual and potential customers to travel a destination through the spreading of information. Promotion is one of the most effective marketing mix elements used in marketing a tourist product. The objectives of promotion those are consistent with the general marketing plan is to identify the target group to which the promotion is conducted, to find out the effective advertising, sales support and public relations programs to be planned, and to select the best methods to be used to control and assess the promotion operation. (Baldemoro 2013.)

According to Mill and Morrison (2009), the following three types of promotion help to modify the consumer's behavior in the stages of buying process. Firstly, informative promotions are most effective at the earlier buying process stages like attention and comprehension. Secondly, persuasive promotions work well at intermediate buying process stages which assist with

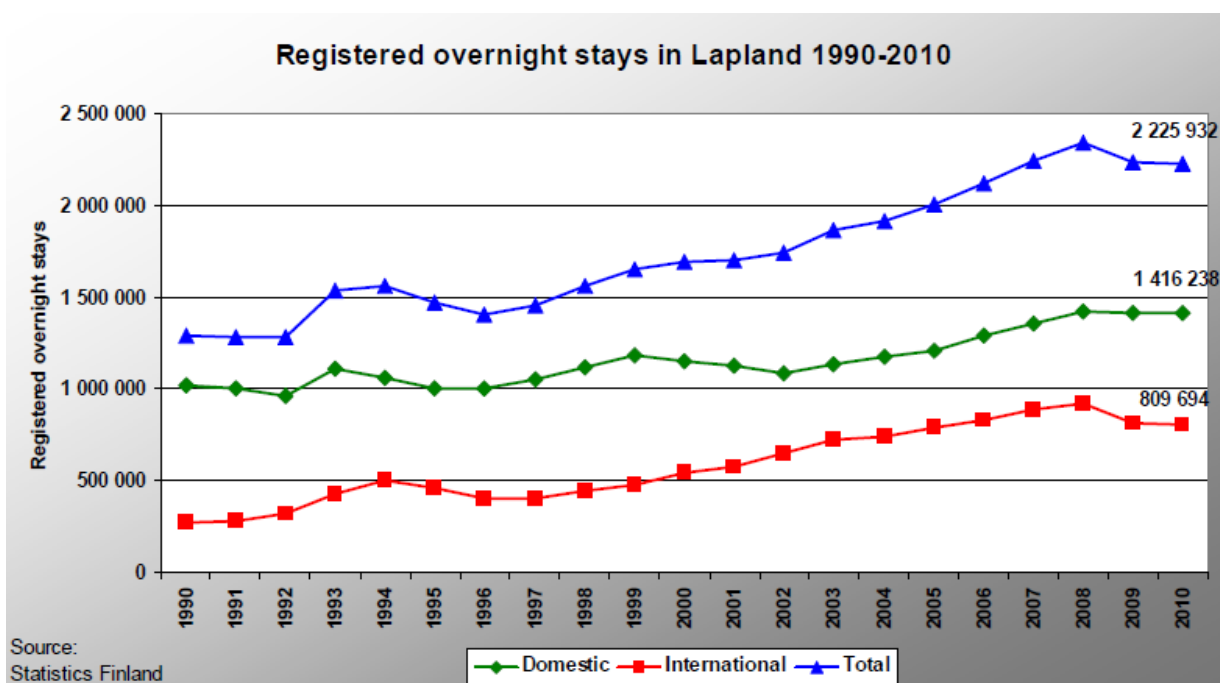
attitude, intention, and purchase. Finally, after the first visit or usage the services, reminder promotions are effective to use. It is quite clear from this statement that promotion plays a vital role to advertise any destination and can help to modify the tourist behavior by ensuring the repeat visitor continue to purchase the same product instead of switch to another destination. Promotion in tourism helps to draw the attention of the potential tourists, modify the behavior of the existing buyers and influence them to visit a destination. (Mill & Morrison 2009.)

Every destination country should extend its efforts to discover the needs and follows necessary promotional strategies to raise interest among the potential tourists. It is very important for the decision makers to understand how customers acquire information especially for tourism related services and products. Research has proven that tourist information is an important element to have a positive image about the destination and the decision making process of tourists. The information about a specific destination which is mostly demanded by tourists is considered as an important means of promotion for tourism industry. (Academic Journals 2010, 722-723.) Destination marketing is identifying what tourists would like to see which means product and the variety methods are used to attract tourist which means promotion.

Generally, the potential tourists like to know in advance about the products, services and facilities at the destination. Using various forms of promotional activities can lead the organization to carry out different promotional measures in order to provide the message to the potential tourists and influence them to visit the destination. However, certain diversified, unpredictable and unsteady factors such as political, social, cultural, economic which are related with pre-purchase information can interrupt to make the decision.

2.2 Tourism development in Lapland

Tourism is one of Lapland's most important industries. Its natural beauty, rich season, quietness bring hundreds of thousands of tourists every year to visit Lapland. Since the 1980s, tourism has been playing a significant role in development of the Lapland region. The golden times of tourism in Lapland were in the year 2000 to 2008. The amounts of overnight stays were grown by an average of 4.5% per year. But, due to the global recession the amount of international travelers saw a decline by 4.5% in 2009. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 7.)



GRAPH 1. Registered overnight stays in Lapland 1990-2010 (adapted from Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 8)

The graph shows that, in the past years Lapland's tourism has seen a significant growth and in 2009 Lapland recorded 2.2 million overnight stays. However, in 2010, in the first six months, the amount of overnight stays slightly increased by 3.4% in comparison to the previous year.

The Christmas season and Russian tourists have played an important role to increase the number. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 8.)

In Finland, Lapland has a higher contribution in Finland's economy than any other zones of the country. According to Regional Council of Lapland (2011), tourism created about 4400 full time jobs in 2010 and generated almost 594 million euro. The Regional Council's strategic goal is to increase the revenue and employment respectively triple and double by 2030. To achieve the goal, major tourist centres such as Levi, Rovaniemi, Saariselkä, and Ylläs were concentrating as growth centres. These major centres still look for the ways to fulfill the demand of international tourists for all the year basic as the natural tourism of Lapland is seasonal. The majority of international tourists visit Lapland in the winter season such as Christmas time. From 2007 to 2012 the overnight stays of international tourists increased by 6 per cent and the total market share increase from 46 to 49 per cent. However, in summer the total overnight stays increased by approximately 5 per cent but the market share remained the same. The economic recession is the main reason for the slow growth that will have the long term impact on tourism development in Lapland. (Granås & Viken, 2014.)

Rovaniemi is the capital of the Lapland region, a city that is known as "Santa Claus's headquarters" or the "City of Christmas". Unique locations of Rovaniemi include the Arctic Circle which fascinates almost half a million tourists each year. The winter and Christmas time are the main tourist seasons of Rovaniemi when 64% of foreign visitors visit. As Rovaniemi is the second largest international tourist venue, to attract more tourists, Rovaniemi has been trying to develop by introducing product improvement tasks and creating investment. Several new facilities such as a conference center and a caravan area are being setup near the tourist center also there are plans to increase the number of accommodation facilities. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 18.)

2.3 Development strategy

At the beginning of the 2000s the central based tourism development strategy in Lapland has showed effective and tourism in Lapland has immense development in the last decade. The previous Lapland tourism strategy mainly focuses the quantitative and strategic goals of the tourism trade according to the sub-areas such as strong, intermediate, developing and others tourist areas. During the tourism strategy 2007 to 2010 tourism development projects mainly allocated the funding for the Eastern and Northern Lapland sub-regions. Public financing support was used to promote the intermediate and developing tourist centres. This priority will also continue in the current strategy. However, strong centres also have the opportunities to continue the development operation. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 14.)

Lapland's Tourism Strategy 2011 to 2014 is a short term project which is strongly based on Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020. Finland's Tourism Strategy setting for the goals to develop the tourism industry, highlight Finland's image and strengthen the industrial policy. Lapland's Tourism Strategy also co-related with Lapland's regional plan 2030. Lapland's regional plan is a long term development project which aim is to reach the objectives by increasing tourism income and employment. The purposes of the new strategy will be developed by the growth of the tourist areas, new product development, increasing experience, improving accessibility, maintaining safely and quality. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 5.)

2.4 Promotional activities for Lapland

Finnish Tourist Board/ Visit Finland which is a government organization works with and for the Finnish travel industry. Finnish Tourist Board was established under the Ministry of

Employment and the Economy. The main aim of this organization is to promote tourism to Finland by active marketing communication and highlighting the image of Finland in foreign markets. To achieve the goals Finnish tourist Board carry out product campaigns in the target markets. Finnish Tourist board collects data from market research and provides it to the tourism industry. Finnish Tourist Board conducts a number of surveys on an annual basis. The funds for the operation acquired from the state budget are used to attract domestic and international tourists through different product campaigns and other activities. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2014.)

Finnish Tourist Board and Finpro are working together to promote tourism of Finland. Finpro supports Finnish SME companies to setting their business in international markets as well as encouraging foreign companies to invest in Finland. In support to Finnish business, Finpro conducts marketing and promotional activities to attract foreign investment in Finland. Finpro gives advice about foreign business opportunities and talks about the current market position. It is estimated that in the near future Finpro will sell tourism promotion services to Finnish Tourist Board by carrying out promotional operations in the most important target markets. To promote Finland, Visit Finland works with Ministries, travel agencies, transport companies and Finnish regions. (Visit Finland 2015.)

The neighbor countries Norway and Sweden are the main competitors of Finland. Lapland's tourism trade is facing challenges with the Northern part of Norway and Sweden. From the year 2009 to 2010 Sweden has big achievement in tourism development. Generally, every year the Nordic countries allocate a part of the state budget for tourism marketing activities. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 10.)

TABLE 1. Governmental funding of national tourist organizations in the Nordic countries in Euros (1000) (adapted from Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 11.)

	2009	2010*	Change	Change, %
Denmark	15 761	15 761	0	0
Finland	14 800	9 779	-5 021	-33,9 %
Norway	27 606	29 604	1 998	7,2 %
Sweden	10 530	14 353	3 823	36,3 %

* The budgets for Norway and Sweden for 2010 are proposals

In 2010, the Finnish government funding for tourism promotional operation was only 9.7 million euro which was reduce from the previous year by 34%. Denmark had no change in their budget and the budget was the same in 2009 and 2010 fiscal year. However, Sweden and Norway increased their marketing budget in 2010 by 36% and 7% respectively. Both countries especially, Sweden has showed it's strengthening in potential tourism marketing. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 11.)

In 2010, Lapland's tourism marketing activities were introduced cooperation with the Finnish Tourist Board, travel industry, financiers and other responsible authorities. Regional Council of Lapland conducted a number of surveys in 2009 and based on that surveys and negotiation with the tourism industry the new structure of marketing tourism industry was created. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 40.)

Recently, Lapland presented its natural image to international customers for marketing based on the message 'Lapland - North of Finland'. This image marketing project was implemented by the Regional Council of Lapland and support with the Finnish Tourist Board. The Lapland – North of Finland project is a long term marketing plan which aim is to convey the image to the target groups. In addition, event marketing has come into force recently in tourism

marketing of Lapland. Tour operators' participation in the international travel fairs resulting familiarizes the tourism product and the attraction of Lapland to the target area. Moreover, the Lapland Film commission has started to produce short Films, TV and commercial production which increased noticeably in the recent year. Internet marketing, however, is poorly used in Lapland. To ensure effective promotion, the development of e-market is important as it convey the message very fast to the target audience. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 41-43.)

3 THE LAPLAND'S TOURISM MARKET

The background of the Lapland province, the main tourism market areas, and the situation of the tourism market of this region are described and analyzed in this chapter. All the information and the study about this province are the base and support of a new strategic marketing plan for tourism market of this province.

3.1 Background of Lapland

Lapland, the northern part of the world is a land of extreme, pure nature, wild rolling fells, night-less summer, colorful autumn, northern lights, and white winter where there's always snow. Lapland includes 21 municipalities from 6 sub-regions which total land area is 98,984 km² and approximately 182,000 inhabitants. The local people of Lapland are Sami with a population of about 10,000. Lapland is the coldest and snowiest part of Finland. Lapland has main four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Moreover, Lapland also can be defined as a land of eight seasons which are deep winter, late winter, spring, early summer, summer, late summer, autumn, and early winter. Spring is the time when snow starts to melt. Summer in Lapland is bright, warm and the night can be seen as a night-less. The average temperature in the summer can be found between 10 to 16 degrees Celsius. Winter starts in November but the first snowfall in Lapland may happen early August–September. February is the coldest month of the year. In Christmas time only a few hours daylight can be observe and the sun does not rise above the horizon. In extreme cold the temperature can drop to - 40 C in the winter. The lowest temperature was - 51.5 degree Celsius in 1999. (Lapland Above Ordinary 2014.)

Lapland is a place with many natural attractions includes highland lakes, fells, and wide forest. It also offers many outdoor activities like skiing, hiking, biking, fishing, snowmobile safaris and plenty of wonderful sports. The best attraction of Lapland is the Northern lights. The Northern lights as colorful light wonders that can be viewed on a clear and dark night close to the polar region. The Northern lights move slightly east to west arcs and the colors change dramatically. Lapland is also famous for Santa Claus. Korvatunturi is a place where Santa's home and Santa Claus village is located in the town of Rovaniemi. The village conveys the story of Santa Claus, new Santa Claus office, Santa Park, Christmas exhibition and many exciting fun activities. (Lapland Above Ordinary 2014.) According to Madhu Puri!

Stunning landscape of fells, forests and tundra's, the Lapland is one of the planet's best places to enjoy the great outdoors. Although it's most famous for winter activities, there's plenty to do in the warmer months, too (Lapland Finland 2014).

The best way to reach Lapland is by air. The capital city Rovaniemi and Ivalo are the main airports of the area. Both airports offer daily flights as well as seasonal charter flights. Tourists can also travel to Lapland by train from various destinations to Kemi, Rovaniemi, Kolari or Kemijärvi. There are a number of bus connections that offers daily. Local transport, ski busses and taxis can be other options. Of course the best way to reach Lapland is by car. Car hire is very famous in Lapland. Tourist can rent a car from airports to move around the remote region. (HappyTellus.com 2014.)

3.2 Markets and customers

The main tourism market areas for Finland are UK, Russia, and Central and Southern European countries. Among them—British tourist as an international travelers have been traveling in Finland most often for a long time. However, the economic recession and weak exchange rate of pound made the British less profitable for Lapland’s tourism trade. Tourist from Germany and France are also important for Finland. Although German market has some fluctuations, for a long time it remaining unchanged. In 2010, again the trend began to rise. At the beginning of the 2000s, France market has large contribution to Finland’s economy. However, after this speedy growth the number of overnight stays by French travelers has been dropping for several years. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 9.)

TABLE 2. Foreign passengers visiting Finland between 2008to 2012 (adapted from Border Interview Survey 2012, 1)

Country of residence	Year					
	2008 (1000 pass.)	2009 (1000 pass.)	2010 (1000 pass.)	2011 (1000 pass.)	2012 (1000 pass.)	Change 2011- 2012, per cent (%)
All visitors	6 072	5 695	6 182	7 260	7 636	5
Russia	2 331	2 192	2 561	3 261	3 578	10
Estonia	522	583	561	708	758	7
Sweden	765	753	712	681	702	3
Germany	376	332	363	399	342	-14
Great Britain	316	267	263	278	273	-2
Norway	187	160	195	216	235	9
United States	114	104	89	121	174	44
Japan	105	142	109	150	143	-5
France	120	94	132	145	127	-12

According to the Table 2, the most important market for Lapland's tourism is Russia. In comparison to 2011, Russian tourists increased by ten per cent and the total amount reached almost 3.6 million which is the highest visitor group. The following country of visitors is Estonia. In 2012 a total of 758,000 travelers came from Estonia and their share increased by seven per cent from the previous year.

There are many different reasons to visit Finland, such as business trips, leisure trips, friends' or relatives and others reasons. Among them the recreation activities occupied the first position. In 2012, approximately 4200,000 foreign passengers came to Finland for leisure purposes and the amount increased by 10 per cent in comparison to the previous year. On the other hand, visiting friends and relatives was decreased by 12 per cent in 2012 compared to 2011. Business is the second reason for foreign visitors to come to Finland. 21 per cent of foreign business travelers visited Finland in 2012. (Statistics Finland 2013.)

The largest customer groups in Lapland are domestic travelers and most of them holiday travelers. Their major share of all travelers is almost 65 percent. In the winter, the main visitor group in Lapland is skiing holiday people whereas hikers are the largest visitor in the summer. Visitors who want to admire the colors of nature coming to Lapland in the autumn. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 24.)

It is very important to have a better knowledge about the travelers as it is one of the most significant competitive assets in the tourism industry. Though the domestic customers have a strong contribution in tourism business, the industry often focuses on international customers particularly in developing new products. Domestic travelers are destination-loyal customers who travel more frequently. The Finnish Tourist Board has started to focus on 'modern humanists' as the primary target group. The travelers who have already seen the world's metropolises and looking for something new are considered as modern humanists and some 15% of the world's travelers are belong to this group. The other consumer group is LOHAS

(lifestyle of health and sustainable) which is now growing consumer in the tourism industry. LOHAS consumer gives priority on sustainable development, social responsibility, and healthy living habits. LOHAS consumer prefers to buy services rather than products that must have a meaning and purpose. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 25.)

In addition, WHOP (wealthy, healthy, older people) consumers are particularly interested in culture and wellness tourism. WHOP consumers consider a strong segment in the last few years because they have money and they are used to travelling. Moreover, DINK (double income no kids) is an important segmentation in tourism. The couple who have no children always have more money to travel and can set a plan more easily. (Regional Council of Lapland 2010, 25.)

The above are just a few examples of different type of consumer segmentation. These are not the efficient consumer segmentation methods. It is very important to gather information about customer lifestyle, consumer behavior and value for segmentation. Moreover, combined new and traditional methods should be used to find new customers and achieve market growth.

3.3 SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis method helps to explore the current situation of a country through considering the internal and external factors. To have a clear view of Finnish tourism it is important to define it through a SWOT analysis.

3.3.1 Strengths and opportunities

Finland is very strong in its natural beauty. Finnish nature offers variety and high level of tourist products ensuring safety and good quality. Attractive tourist areas from north to south include many different activities in the summer as well as in winter. Lapland expresses the Finnish culture and winter tourism in Finland which is something different in the winter. Other things to mention are high quality of service, language skills, technological skills and qualified employees which can be experienced by travelers. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

Finland has a good image with cleanness, security, trustful and well working social security system which made the country known and carry the image abroad. Good accessibility connected with Russia increasing the number of tourist every year. The high speed Helsinki to St. Petersburg rail link ensures the arrival in right time. Finland enjoy the facility of being next to Russia and Finland is the only country with whom Russia has good and quick connections. Being a member of the EU and euro zone helps Finland in the international market. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

There are many possibilities in the tourism field of Finland. Proper planning and effective marketing strategy can increase the growth of tourism. Finding out the demand and new market areas through market research make it more efficient. Story telling about the area and culture always makes the trip enjoyable and memorable. The service quality could be developed more mainly when it's related with special groups or senior tourists. Adding consulate offices all over the world can market Finland and enhance other possibilities. Finland has thousands of lakes and sea beaches which can attract more tourists in the summer times but need to develop them. More attention in taking promotional measures can increase good number of tourists in Finland. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 89.)

Better use of technology applications and infrastructure development could be received more advantage in the tourism development. Professional training for the staff is highly needed which move to successful tourism business. Immigrant skills are one of the most important resources for Finland. Proper trained work force can be created for facing the demand. Transport connections and network in the business need to be higher to develop tourism business. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 89.)

3.3.2 Weaknesses and threats

When to find out the weaknesses, Finland is still unknown to many countries. Many potential tourists are not aware about the natural attractions of Finland. This is because of insufficient amount of money that is allocated for tourism promotion. In addition, lack of marketing knowledge and unplanned activities cannot allow introducing the number of international as well as domestic tourists. Service chain management is incomplete and ineffective and there is no quality management to control the quality of service. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

Price plays a key role to choose a travel destination by foreign customers. The cost of tourism services in Finland is higher than other European countries. High taxes and high labour costs are the reasons of high prices. On the other hand, the number of accommodation and transportation are not sufficient during Christmas time. Poor accessibility can be seen as a weakness because distances from other parts of the world to Finland are longer which raises the travel costs. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

Finland's educational institutions holiday periods are different from other EU countries. For this reason, Finland lack of having potential international tourists in the summer as well in the

winter holidays. Tourism business in Finland is still in small scale which resulting the lack of development and unconsciousness of the business. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

The main threat for Finnish tourism would be climate change. As the average temperature will rise in the future, winter tourism will impede more than summer tourism particularly in Southern Finland. Finnish tourism is based on the nature and the climate change will change the nature very quickly which can be risky for tourism business. Other threats can be lack of entrepreneur and co-operation. As in the summer time the number of tourists arrival is not satisfactory, many local people move away from the tourist areas and being involved in other subsistence. In addition, the price level and costs is higher in Finland therefore new competitor countries, for example, Russia, new EU members may take the attention away from Finland. New development of law against the company may demotivate the travel arrangers to run their operation. (Suomen matkailustrategia 2006, 88.)

4 USES OF ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This chapter will introduce and discuss about online promotion and how tourism and online promotion are related with each other. Here will be examined the role of online in tourism industry and what tools are used and relevant for tourism communication. In addition, there will be a brief overview on what is social media and the role of social media in tourism promotion.

4.1 Online promotion

The revolution of the information technology has reshaped the communication system by making it faster, wider and more accessible for everyone. Internet has created a vast chances and opportunities in different sectors for instance, business world, leisure time activities, networking, and in social communities. The more use and development of the internet there is the more chance to connect the world and people together. The revolution of internet has more impact on marketing practice and there is no other business form, which has enjoyed radical changes as marketing business. However, marketers should be extremely careful to designing the brand message. It is true that nowadays customers have more control on their decision making process when it comes to the internet. (El-Ansary, Frost & Strauss 2006, 315-317.)

Online promotion is a part of the marketing mix, including internet advertising, internet branding, e-mail, direct marketing, sales promotion, and customer support through the internet. Internet provides information to millions of potential clients in the world with cost-effective and labor-efficient way. It is very necessary to use the available tools and innovation

to make the promotional activities more attractive and informative. Promotion through internet brings several benefits and profits to the consumers and to the marketers, too. Ethical and legal issues are considered and highlighted while promoting via internet. Internet can provide information as correct and detailed as a brochure, magazine ads and TV commercials. As there is no capacity or space limit on the Web, the site can supply as much information as possible. Through the hyperlinks, for example, the company can provide all the necessary information such as best attractive place, local tradition, weather, exchange rate, prices and time schedule. Moreover, online promotion is much more flexible medium than the traditional media as it can be considered as an electronic billboard, electronic advertisement or electronic catalog that provides information on a product or a service and at the same time contract information for interested consumers. (Lui 2000.)

Without advertising company websites it is hard to catch the attention of the customers. This is why the company should raise the awareness through the traditional advertising media for instance on TV or newspaper. The company can also perform advertising activities with other online organizations by hired a space in the form of a side banner or a pop-up window. However, pops up are not always the best advertising option because they are considered as disturbing and annoying to the viewers. (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, Ranchhod 2002, 262-264.)

To sum up, online marketing creates mutual favorable situations between the marketers and consumers. In a way, the company can target and communicate with a wider group of customers to meet the customers need. As mentioned before, internet marketing has created more opportunities to marketers. It breaks different barriers, for example, time zone and location between the customers and the marketers. Internet marketing makes it possible to the customers to have a quick access to products from any other part of the world. Decision making and buying the whole process happens through the internet.

4.2 Online promotion in tourism industry

The new entry of many tourist destinations into the market has created the challenge for many countries and forced them to go for promoting tourist places. In recent years, internet has become the most used channel in tourism promotion as well as destination marketing. Therefore, in order to effective use this new form of communication, new strategies have been created. Consequently, it is necessary to highlight the advantages of the web, resources, as well as the best strategies which might help tourism managers to be aware and promote a destination. Tourism promotion can be more effective through word-of-mouth marketing. Word of mouth (WOM) communication is a big part of online connections within the online tourist communities. Particularly, tourism specialists are interested in WOM communication because of its popularity, growth and influence on that communities. (Madasu 2013.)

In addition, web 2.0 and user generated contents are the most renowned marketing methods of tourism business. Web 2.0 has played a role to express an experience and feedback of a product by sharing photo, blogs, travel review and video sharing. Marketers can observe this sharing and contract with the interested people who have a positive experience at related products. The new technology growth increases the efficiency of the companies to communicate with the customers and their operation process such as booking, distribution and tour management. The appearance of the information technology also increases the power of the consumers. In the past decade, most of the tourism products such as destination choice, flight tickets, accommodation, and car rental service were handled by the travel agencies. The wide range of usages of the internet and search engines make it easier to the customers to select a travel option from a wider selection rather than limited offered by the travel agency or tour operator. (Middleton et al. 2009, 250-269.)

Internet marketing is bigger than marketing through brochure as in a brochure the number of page is limited therefore, the amount of information are also limited than a web page. Online usage enable customers to access more photos and videos of destinations and services, which helps to make a right decision on a trip. Moreover, consumers can also compare price on the internet because there are a plenty of options are available on internet. (Middleton et al. 2009, 260.)

4.3 Promotion through social media

Social media is an online application tool, which allows the user to make co-operation and collaboration on the internet. People with a common interest can gather to share their thoughts, comments and opinions. Social media sites enable companies and firms to advertise and promote their products with better possibilities. The advertiser can create their own website with interesting content and do not have to pay huge sum of money for publishing and distributing. On the other hand, consumers now just not receive the information, but also can interact with other consumers to express their ideas and experiences. (El-Ansary et al. 2006.)

Today's travel companies are more active in social media specially the international ones. Social networks are one of the fastest and most effective ways of communication to spread information to a large group. Social media allows companies to get closer as well as to receive both positive and negative feedback. This feedback helps companies to know about how a product or service is considered in the marketplace. (Agresta & Bough 2010, 3-8.)

Social media has an enormous impact on travel and tourism business. Tourism business mostly depends on word-of-mouth communication to share opinions and recommendations. Through Facebook and Twitter customers can share trips and suggestions which are most

valuable for tourism promotion. A survey founded that more than half (52 per cent) of travelers plans were affected after seeing friend's pictures of trips. Using social media helps to provide latest promotional offers for instance, short time promotion can be announce on social media when it is not possible in printing media due to limited time. (Bennett 2012.)

Social media is a “two- way street media” where people communicate and hold conversations with each other online. Instead of traditional one-way communication used in media channel, social media is the mean of two-way communication. According to Sterne (2010), there are six different social media tools such as forums and message boards, revive sites (Yelp), social networks (Facebook), Blogs, micro-blogs (Twitter), bookmarking (Digg, Reddit) and media sharing (YouTube). Almost all of these sites enable the user to interact with each other. Some of them using to ask questions or express opinion, where others using to answer them. While some of these are to give feedback on product for instance, commenting on Amazon.com. (Web Trends 2015, Sterne 2010.)

4.4 Types of social media

Facebook is a popular social networking website which can connect people together. Almost 1.5 billion people have a Facebook account and 700 million people use Facebook more frequently every day. Companies can create their own official Facebook page where they have the possibility to upload photos and videos as well as to promote their products. Facebook is an effective media of marketing because of vast number of members and followers who know that the business exists. (Maggs 2015.)

Twitter is one of the most popular and growing social media networks. There are about 232 million users who are very active on Twitter. It is micro-blogging network of real post. Users

can send a short message which is called “tweets”. Twitter user can follow other users and see the tweets of the persons. The tweet could be about anything, it could be business marketing. Company can tweet the customers and customers can tweet the company back. Tweets also helps companies to share and promote a product, events and special offers through uploading pictures, videos and links. Using Twitter is not a hard method for the company as the company can customize their Twitter page according to their business design temple. Even small with limited users company can expand the amount of users through Twitter. (Maggs 2015.)

YouTube is an international social media tool with video sharing possibility. Individuals and companies can upload their own videos or others videos which can be seen, commented, and downloaded. YouTube is also a good search engine which can search any type of video with keywords. Many organizations and businesses use YouTube for their advertising by uploading ads and commercial videos of their products. Customers can see the video, comment on it and even share it in other social media. Advertisements can be published on YouTube in different formats. The most used and effective type of adverts are video adverts. Video adverts play when the main video is loading. Some adverts are shippable after 5 sec. A company also can purchase display ads which appears in a small portion with another videos. (Maggs 2015.)

Google+ is one of the Google’s features which are operating within the Google. Google plus is a widely used social media network in the world. It allows the individual users to keep in touch with friends and families and the companies with their customers. Users can post different types of multimedia posts on Google+ page or can see others posts. One of the Google+ features—Hangouts are made for groups with video chat facilities. Many users can participate at the same time in Hangout. Companies can see customers review and rating points that were posted on their Google+ page. It is very important for the business to know customers thought about their business. Google+ is an effective way of business communication because it delivers the news to a large amount of people at the same time. (Maggs 2015.)

Instagram is a social networking application where users can upload their photos and videos. Similar to Facebook or Twitter, an Instagram user has a profile and news feed. Posted photos on Instagram can also share on Facebook or Twitter from Instagram. As Instagram is a visual sharing, travel and tourism companies can upload attractive images for marketing campaigns. Many country's destination marketing organizations have recognized this trend and started sharing pictures on their Instagram page. (Thinkdigital 2014.)

Pinterest is an online pin board that allows to sharing pictures, recipes, articles and small types of information. Users can create an account by registering a new one or using the existing Facebook account. In a pin board user can collect and organize their pin in their own way. Every pin is linked with the source of image that leads the readers to the main site. The important of Pinterest is not only in personal usage but also in business promotion. (Pinterest 2015.)

5 FINNISH TOUR OPERATORS

The following chapter will introduce and describe some tour operators in Finland. Afterward, these tour operators will be studied in the empirical part of this thesis.

5.1 Lapland Welcome

Lapland Welcome is a registered tour operator and an incoming travel agency which is located in the capital city of Lapland at Rovaniemi. They also known as a destination management company (DMC) and a program service provider. Though the company is in Rovaniemi, they provide services all over Finland as well as guest from all over the world. To ensure good quality of services the company appointed local and experienced personnel who know the best things of Finland and Lapland. In 2014, the company got the Quality 1000 Diploma award, which is a certified quality assurance system. (Lapland Welcome 2012.)

Lapland Welcome offers different holiday packages, tailor-made packages, programs and accommodation all over Finland and Lapland. Customers can have a variety of packages either in winter time as well as summer time. Most popular winter products of the company are snowmobile safaris, husky safaris, reindeer rides, and Northern Lights trips. For summer products, the company is known as canoeing, fishing, hunting and nature professional in Rovaniemi. In 2010, Lapland Welcome setup a new safari sales office in Rovaniemi and from 2013 September they introduced e-shop services for reservations, payments and e-marketing. (Lapland Welcome 2012.)

5.2 Luxury Action

Luxury Action is an exclusive private Finnish tour operator which operates their business especially in Lapland as well as in the rest of the Nordic region. Luxury Action specialist in exclusive services and programs and provides adventure holidays and packages. They also organize company meetings even in short notice. The products and services of the company have been created exclusively for the guests who like to have luxury experiences. (Luxury Action 2015.)

The company was founded in 1996 by Janne Honkanen who is one of the pioneers of Finland's luxury travel. The products and services including husky sled rides, reindeer sleigh rides, Northern Lights, ice fishing, ice swimming, ice driving, North Pole experience, summer tour, hiking, and so on. Beside these they also offers cuisine and accommodation facilities in best hotels and exclusive properties. (Luxury Action 2015.)

5.3 Kontiki Finland

Kontiki Finland is an incoming tour operator and experience maker in Finland. The company was started in 1987 by Thor Heyerdahl. The company is also familiar in outgoing business with the same name. Kontiki Finland can offer their services for individuals, small groups, business events, and agencies. Small groups are the main focus of the company. The company creates small groups specially the travelers who are interest to visit the natural and wild life. The company also offers short tailored packages for the travelers. Company's packages include day trips, city breaks, adventure, wildlife, nature, Christmas, and lake land holidays.

Beside the packages, the company also offers accommodation facilities. They co-operate with Hotelli Seurahuone, Hotel Haven, and Hotelli Krapi. (Kontikifinland 2015.)

5.4 Wild Nordic (Villi Pohjola Oy)

Wild Nordic is a destination management company which is a part of Lomarengas Group. They have been arranging wilderness holidays in Finland more than 40 years. In 2014, Wild Nordic has captured new area of Swedish, Russian, and Norwegian Lapland with a new name “Unique Lapland”. (VisitRovaniemi 2013.)

They have been providing services for individual travelers, leisure and group travelers. Moreover, the company also arranges events, meetings, conventions as well as wedding festivities. Beside these, Wild Nordic has occupied many different fields of business such as adventure safaris, incentives, Arctic Circle wilderness lodge, and Arctic lighthouse hotel. For accommodation, they offers more than 350 cabins all over Finland, while tourists going for hiking, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, skiing, or just for a break in beautiful nature. (VisitRovaniemi 2013.)

Wild Nordic offers Lynx Boondocker 600 and Lynx 900 ACE snowmobiles which is known best safari vehicles for long tour in deep snow and mountains. They also offers weatherproof driving outfits and others outdoor clothing. (VisitRovaniemi 2013.)

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter starts with a general introduction of the research. The following sub chapter will describe different types of research methods and the last subchapter will go deeper into the chosen methods for this research which is text analysis.

6.1 Research methods

Research is a scientific and systematic search on a specific topic. Some people define research as a movement from the known to unknown. The aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and has not discovered yet. In general, research means to search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem. The systematic approach regarding construction and the generalization of a theory is also research. As such the term ‘research’ is the study of practical activities that helps to produce new technique, or develop the model and findings the problem from the existing stock of knowledge. (Kothari 2004, 1-2.)

According to Kothari (2004), the term ‘research’ refers to the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analyzing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solution(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalizations for some theoretical formulation. The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English lays down the meaning of research as “a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge” (Kothari 2004).

Research is an important source of information which provides guidelines for solving different business, government and social problems. It is a form of formal training that helps one to understand a specific field in a better way. Decision making is not a part of research but research helps policy makers to make the decisions. Research aids the government to make the new policy for the future by providing information from the previous study. Moreover, research considered necessary to set up new policy and planning for the tourism industry. (Kothari 2004, 6.)

Research methods include all those methods/techniques that are used to conduct a research. Research methods are more general that generate research techniques. Research techniques discuss about the behavior and instruments those use in performing research operations such as making observations, recording data, and analyzing documents. On the other hand, research methods use in selecting and constructing the research techniques. Research methods are used by the researcher in performing a research operation. (Kothari 2004, 7.)

There are three types of research such as descriptive, explanatory and evaluative research. Descriptive research is most simple type of research which is typically used in the leisure and tourism area. It answers the question what exists instead of find out the cause. Explanatory research carries on from descriptive research and seeks to explain the rules. This research helps the researcher to find out the answer of why and how. Evaluative research use to evaluate the policies or programmes which are most effective. Evaluative research is well accepted in some field of public policy, for instance education but not in the field of leisure and tourism. Research can be scientific research or social science research. Scientific research is a research which is carried out within the principal and patterns of science. On the other hand, social science research conducted using the methods and traditions of social science. It deals with people and their social behaviour. (Veal 2006, 2-5.)

Research methods can be selected from the range of qualitative research method and quantitative research method. Quantitative research is based on the measurement of amount or number and is conducted in the form of questionnaire. While qualitative research designed to find out how people feel and what they think about a specific topic. (Smith 2010, 109.)

6.1.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research method is the best tool to analyze statistical data. It generally involves collecting and converting data into numerical form to draw conclusions. The data is collected from a large amount of participants by questionnaire survey for getting a trustworthy result. Computer software is used to prepare the data. (Veal 2006, 40.)

Creswell (1994) defined quantitative research as a type of research that is ‘explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that is analyzed using mathematically based methods’. Some attributes are followed in quantitative research such as testing hypothesis which ensures the nature of the truth, identifying variables, random sampling, numerically presentation of data, statistical tables and graphs presentation. Quantitative research methods not used to find out why things are happening instead of giving idea how things are occurring. (Jennings 2001, 131.)

According to Veal (2006) a questionnaire is a formally formulated structure of a question. On the other hand, a survey includes the process of designing, planning, collecting and analyzing the questionnaire. There are different types of questionnaire survey, among them interviewer-completed and respondent-completed are accepted in generally. The other forms of questionnaire survey are household survey, street survey, telephone survey, mail survey, user/on-site/visitor survey, group survey and e-survey. Commonly there are two forms of

questions such as open-ended and close-ended. Open-ended questions are such type of questions where the respondent is free to answer to a question without any preplanned options. The main advantage of open-ended questions is that the respondent can express his/her opinion without any influence. However, the disadvantage is the difficulty of analyzing the respondent response. On the other hand, a close-ended question is a form where preplanned alternatives answers are mentioned such as 'yes' or 'no'. The big advantage of this question is easy and fast to fill whereas a limited alternative is the main disadvantage. (Godfrey & Clark 2000, 196-197; Veal 2006, 232-254.)

6.1.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research method concentrates on collecting much more information from few sources rather than limited amount of data from a large amount of population. The aim is to achieve more understanding of a specific person or a topic. In qualitative research collected data is not presented in the numerical figure. In this method open-ended questions are asked by the researcher which ensures much more reliability. (Veal 2006, 40.)

Qualitative research is more subjective than quantitative research. It is a method of collecting, analyzing and understanding data by observing what people do and say. Participants are asked by the researcher to response to general questions about the topic or idea. The quality of the findings directly depends on the skills, experience and sensitive of the interviewer. Qualitative research is less costly than quantitative research and extremely effective in gathering information where people's communication is needed. In general, qualitative research provides rich, detailed and valid information that helps to have a better understanding of the contents. (Anderson 2006, 3.) Denzin and Lincoln in their Handbook of Qualitative Research, offer the following definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 3.).

In particular, qualitative research is an interpretative, naturalistic approach which concerned with better understanding the meanings. Qualitative research methods are effective to consider of social investigation and policy-making cycle with identifying what exist in the social world. The main facility of qualitative research is to describe and present phenomena in detail and in the study participants own terms. Therefore, it offers the possibility to unpack the issue, to see what lies inside and to explore how it understands by them. Qualitative research methods have a crucial role in identifying and generating explanatory hypotheses. As explanatory research deals with why phenomena occur, qualitative research provides facility to examine subjects in depth. It also allows finding out that occur in people's thinking or acting. On the other hand, evaluative research is concerned with the success or effectiveness of a policy. In order to carry out evaluative research, information is required for both processes and outcomes and qualitative research deals with them. It can investigate how things are operate as well as the outcomes by identifying the different type of effects or consequences. (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, 26-29.)

As defined by Veal 2006, quantitative methods is often easier to gathered data by the researcher, but on the other hand, the result that outcome from the qualitative research is much more easier to understand by the audience who does not have professional knowledge on the issues before. Moreover, qualitative research is more effective in practical related issues where quantitative research is impossible and unnecessary. (Veal 2006, 195.)

The main types of qualitative research are in-depth and informal interviews, observation, case study, and text analysis which were used in the research of this thesis. Interviews can be seen as structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. In qualitative research interviews are most commonly used which is often described as a form of conversation. Informal and in-depth interviews conduct to a small number of populations probably more than one time. Observation is the way of collecting the information where researcher examines certain people or phenomenon. Observation can be direct or participation observation. In direct observation, the researcher is a stranger to the group however; in participant observation the researcher is a visible part of the group. (Veal 2006, 40, 45-90.)

Case study is another widely used and most common way of qualitative research. Case study is effective when 'how' or 'why' question appears and when the researcher has little control over the events. Veal defines text analysis is a way of conducting research where analysis is done by the analyzing of text, photograph, poster, recorded music, films, or any other cultural product. (Veal 2006, 203.) The following sub-chapter will go into detail about text analysis.

6.2 Text analysis

Text analysis is a type of research method that makes the researcher use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. The main purpose is to describe the structure, contents and function of the messages contained in texts. Text analysis is useful in cultural studies, media studies, mass communication, and even in sociology and philosophy. Text analysis can be performed on interpret texts, films, television programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, and graffiti. The important considerations in textual analysis include what information can be taken from the source and how the message is delivered. In text analysis both actual and symbolic contents can be analyzed. In text analysis the researcher is

free to express his/her real feelings and opinions and the data which obtain from text analysis is called naturalistic data. (Smith 2010, 201-206.)

The first step of text analysis is to think and decide the objective of the research. The research can be hypothesis or optional or a few questions that will be answered. Then the second step will be finding out the key concepts around which the research concentrates on. After that a sampling frame has to be created to select the text or contents which will be included in the analysis. After the selection is done, the text can be reviewed and analyzed. (Smith 2010, 209.)

The visual research in the form of images like photographs not only shows the tourist's behavior but also the source of images that is available to the tourist. Tourism is a big industry and it is so difficult to explain a specific product or service but a photograph can convey many messages to the customers via advertising language. As tourism is a symbolic product, the visualization is also considered as for the fun and satisfaction. (Burns marketing Communications 2011.)

7 ANALYSIS

In the empirical part, the text analysis of this thesis is based on four Finnish tour operators webpage as well as their presence in social media will be analyzed. In this case, marketing view will be main focus rather than technical view. Tourism company should follow all the marketing methods and techniques in order to increase the market. For example, an attractive webpage, updated information and the offer in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social media make people visit the webpage.

7.1 Analysis of tour operators webpage

In this sub- chapter, the webpage analysis will be to find out the social media links in the company's webpage as well as how they are placed in the webpage.

Lapland Welcome is the first company that is analyze in this thesis. The company has an attractive webpage with a motion picture at the front upper side of the page. The company has seven social media links in their website such as Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Trip advisors (see APPENDIX 1). These links are placed at the bottom left corner of the webpage. The symbols are quite big and different colors but there is no text with the symbols and there are many others signs beside these social media links.

The second company of this thesis is Luxury Action. The company's website is as same as the name of the company. The company has a well-developed webpage with a motion picture of Northern lights. The links to social media is observable at the beginning of the left side of the

page. Black symbols on white background make it more visible. These symbols are placed on a bar so when scrolling down the page these symbols can also be seen. However, the symbols are too small and without text. The people who are not familiar with these symbols make it difficult for them to understand what they are meaning for. There are five links to social media, first one is for Facebook, and followings are Instagram, Vimeo, Pinterest and Twitter (see APPENDIX 2).

At the first took of the Kontiki Finland webpage social media links cannot be seen. However, these appear at the bottom of the page in the right corner. Four big symbols include the social media channel. Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook are the company's social media channel which used for promotion of their products (see APPENDIX 3).

In case of Wild Nordic, the social media links are placed on the top of the page at left corner. Left side text is more visible than the right side. Three different social media symbols with text can be seen in their webpage. First one is Facebook, second one is Pinterest and last one is YouTube (see APPENDIX 4). These links can also be seen at the bottom right corner of the page. This is the first one among these three companies who has social media links in two different places. Bottom links are added one more channel of, TripAdvisor. White marks on blue background make it more visible.

7.2 Tour operators on Facebook

Lapland Welcome has the same name with the company on Facebook without adding any others name. On Facebook page they have 2,177 likes and almost 748 people visited their page. The Facebook page is open for everyone. People can post anything on the wall, upload photos and videos as well as leave comments. Lapland Welcome has been using Facebook

since 2011 but seems to be less active on Facebook. The profile picture of the page is the company's logo and same as company's webpage. The cover photo on the front page is the picture of Northern lights. Lapland welcome has almost 59 pictures and only 2 videos. Most of the pictures are related about winter activities for instance; snowmobile safaris, reindeer rides, Northern light view. The posts are provided in English with the information and pictures of the trips they have organized. This is the way the company shares their business experience with the fans.

Luxury Action has a Facebook account since 2006 with 10k (10,000) likes on their page. The cover photo of the page is Northern lights picture with company's logo on it. In the page the user has some additional applications like events and review; however, there is no information on them. More than 650 high quality pictures have uploaded which provides evidence to have a memorable travel experience from them. Pictures include adventure trips, winter fun, deluxe accommodation, company's magazine and brochure. All of the pictures are about their high class services and facilities. Luxury Action also uploaded videos of their trips. There are videos related to New Year celebration, helicopter rides, snowmobile rides. People give comments on videos and share the videos with their friends. A wide range of information in English as well as in Finnish is posted quite regularly. Some posts inform the fans about upcoming offers concentrating on some special day such as Valentine's Day, New Year. Luxury Action also active on answering fans comments and questions.

Kontiki Finland also appears on Facebook with the same name. Kontiki Finland has almost 600 likes on their page. In compare with the activeness on Facebook, they are quite unexperienced to develop the FB fans. A picture of a bird with white background is the company's official logo and profile picture of the page. The Facebook account is always open for everyone where there is no restriction to upload any posts or pictures. Continued information in English is provided quite regularly to encourage the tourists. Information about the destination and upcoming package with the direct link to the company's main website is being provided on their Facebook page. A lot of pictures about destination and things to do are

uploaded with tour package and price. More than 650 pictures has uploaded and shared on the page. Kontiki Finland has an application on their page named event. In this page people can get information about upcoming events and dates. The account also has some other applications links in their Facebook page for instance, media and promotions. In this case they provided many key words with links to other organizations, YouTube video, Twitter and other social media.

Wild Nordic is also visible on Facebook in another name 'Unique Lapland/ Unique Safaris in Lapland'. They have 2,087 people's likes on their page, most of which are from people in the age group of 35 to 45 years old. Wild Nordic is very active on Facebook and provides services 24 hours a day. A lot of information and pictures of the destination and trip posted regularly. Most of the picture is related about adventure trips. Wild Nordic also offers discount packages on Facebook. Under the cover photo of the page there is an application named 'Book now' link where fans can make booking on accommodations, activities, packages and rental facilities.

7.3 Tour operators on Twitter

Wild Nordic can be seen undeveloped in case of using the Twitter profile. The company has not sign up yet Twitter account. Except Wild Nordic rest of the companies have Twitter accounts. Lapland Welcome has a Twitter account with 78 followers. The background picture of the profile is a photo branded as Northern lights (Aurora borealis). The bottom part of the picture is white snow on dark night. The upper part displays many colors with yellowish-green, blue, purplish-red, and violet. The profile picture is company's logo, green text 'Lapland Welcome Ltd' on white background. Lapland Welcome has been in Twitter not for a long period of time, since 2013 and seems to be active more seldom. The profile has 16 tweets and most of them about information of using other social media channels by the company.

Some tweets inform the followers about the winter activities and the best time to do. Lapland Welcome follows 27 other Twitter users of which most of them are tourism related companies.

Luxury Action has been active on Twitter since 2009. The profile photo is the picture of company's logo on white background. The profile has 1031 followers. Luxury Action has made 842 tweets including recent activities, package tour, accommodations facilities, and links to other social media. The company also tweets a lot of photos. Most of the photos concentrated on luxurious accommodations. Luxury Action also retweets of other tourism organizations and followers tweets. The company's follows over 2000 other profiles.

Kontiki Finland frequently maintains Twitter profile with 225 followers. The background photo is a couple in front of the blue sea. The profile picture conveys the company's logo where a black flying bird with the text 'Kontiki Finland' under it. Kontiki Finland follows 148 other Twitter users such as tourism companies, airlines, tourism related profiles and also profiles of followers. The company has 1,206 tweets so far and appears to tweet several times a day on topics which including travel related information, new offers, new destinations, special food and shopping. They also give a lot of information about Finnish culture and food with pictures. Some tweets provide the recipes of Finnish traditional food. To engage the followers at the page, several questions were asked by the company such as, what is yours favorite travel related apps right now, what is your favorite mode of transport etc. Kontiki Finland also celebrates some special day for instance, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Earth Day on Twitter.

7.4 Tour operators on YouTube

Lapland Welcome has been uploading videos on their YouTube channel since April 2013. The channel has 3 subscribers and total views almost 2,450. Until now, they have uploaded 12 videos on their channel. The videos of Lapland Welcome relates to the trip of nature path, skiing, hiking, and husky safari. They appearance to be less engaged in work on You Tube as last two years, they have not uploaded any videos.

Luxury Action appears on YouTube with two different channels; one is 'Luxury Action' and other one is 'Luxury Action- Private Travel'. Both channels were subscribed by the same company in 2014. Luxury Action – Private Travel is forward with three more videos where Luxury Action has only one video. The main channel Luxury Action- Private Travel has two subscribers. Over 650 people viewed their uploaded videos. High quality HD videos related to natural views of Lapland in winter and all the experiences that a tourist could get in their trip in Lapland.

Kontiki Finland does not have the link to YouTube channel in their main website but they have their own channel in YouTube. The channel has 8 videos but no subscribers. The highest viewers are on a video of Art & Design Finland that introduces the Finnish culture, tradition, and attractive places to visit.

Wild Nordic is more active on YouTube among these four tour operators. They joined in 2010 and 30,589 YouTube users already viewed their uploaded videos. Wild Nordic has 25 videos related to winter activities, accommodation, and adventure safari. They also have the playlist on their channel according to different segments.

7.5 Tour operators on Google+

All the mentioned tour operators seem to be updated Google+ profile less frequently. Lapland Welcome has 40 followers and 6,650 viewers in their Google+ profile. Another tour operator Luxury Action is inactive in Google+ without any detailed information about the page. On the other hand, Kontiki Finland has 8 people in their circles and viewed by 2,705 Google+ users. The posts are about the announcements of their new products, recent offers, holiday packages, and link to the main web site to book the product. Moreover, some posts have the same content that was published in their blog page. The last one, Wild Nordic recently uploaded some accommodation related videos from their YouTube channel however, except the videos no information can be found in their Google+ profile.

7.6 Tour operators on Instagram

The social media, Instagram has not been well accepted by the four tour operators. Most of them developed their Instagram profile with fewer posts. Among all the tour operators, the most active user can be considered to Luxury Action with 140 posts and 295 followers. Kontiki Finland has the second position with 94 uploaded photos and 43 followers. The least activity on Instagram is the profile of Lapland Welcome where Wild Nordic is invisible.

7.7 Tour operators on Pinterest

All the tour operators appear to be more or less active in Pinterest to uploading pictures and information. Lapland Welcome concentrates on providing images of different seasonal activities based on summer and winter. Luxury Action has various pins related to destinations, accommodations, food, and activities. Kontiki Finland shares pictures about holiday types, attractive places, and Finnish food as well as pictures of Finnish summer and winter. Wild Nordic attempts to give an overall visualization of Finland year round activities. They also include pins of accommodation facilities.

TABLE 3. Tour operators position in Pinterest

Name	Boards	Pins	Likes	Follower(s)	Following
Lapland Welcome	7	49	4	1	6
Luxury Action	7	221	31	319	368
Kontiki Finland	16	144	2	34	6
Wild Nordic	13	239	2	22	27

As a conclusion, the findings demonstrate that the activity of the tour operator is not same in every social media channel. Someone focuses on picture messages whereas another one has content based information. Someone seems to be more active on Facebook and Twitter while other gives extra emphasize on Instagram. However, in most of the social media channels, Luxury Action appears with wide range of information to communicate with their customers. They have also the trend to upload various exclusive pictures and videos about the destination and accommodation to fascinate the customers towards their company. Kontiki Finland spends more time on Twitter rather than on Facebook. They communicate with their customers through Twitter several times a day. Wild Nordic is still in needed to developing their social

media marketing strategy. This is the only company who does not appear in every social media channel.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The tourism industry has a significant role to play in the national economy and it has been growing in the whole world. Every country has been taking initiative to attract more tourists by adopting an active marketing strategy. Promotion plays an important role in achieving a marketing strategy as it is one of the vital elements of the marketing mix. On account of, tourists like to know about the product, offers and facilities in advance. Active marketers always try to provide all the required information through different promotional activities to attract tourists towards the destination.

Every country has its own characteristics such as climate, natural beauty and location that make the attractions of a destination. Finland also has some strong features. The tourism industry of Finland is increasing but not any big changes have been seen. In this case the responsible authority can take effective promotional measures to develop this industry. Lapland tourism is looking for progress in the international tourism market and is trying to develop its product quality. The product supply of Lapland is seasonal, focused on the winter season and the accessibility is not sufficient especially in the winter and Christmas season. In addition, Finland is not well known globally. There is a need to introduce more tourism publicity.

In the research it was observed that among all the analyzed social media channels, Facebook is the most accepted one. Twitter is in the second position in terms of the number of profiles and amount of information shared. Interestingly, YouTube is not that popular yet among the tour operators, having few videos and subscribers. Same goes to the photo services social media channel Instagram and Pinterest which need to be more updated. The least accepted channel is Google+ which is not recognized yet by one leading tour operator, Luxury Action.

Nevertheless, Luxury Action is still staying ahead on the most popular channels Facebook and Twitter, with highest number of likes and subscriptions.

The recommendations part of this thesis indicates the best way to run an efficient social media campaign is to involve as many employees as possible to the social media processes as it is not only the marketing personnel's responsibility but also the whole company should be behind it. Social media campaign increases the visibility of the organization which can lead to earn more profits. To raise the awareness for social media campaign the company should add social media logos for instance, "Like us on Facebook" and other links to their further advertisement. The company can add the new products and offers to their Facebook page that reminds their friends of it and ask them to share it as well as to invite their friends to attend. A big amount of audience engaged could be achieved by posting convincing and interesting contents for example, stories, pictures, and videos that activate interest and involvement on it.

For Twitter, the company should maintained Twitter profile regularly as the content of Twitter does not defer too much from Facebook. Moreover, the nature of Twitter is posting quickly so they don't have to be time consuming. Even though the amount of characters per post in Twitter is limited, companies can post links to other websites if the post is too long. The company can use Twitter lists to find new customers according to interest. The way to approach YouTube is uploading more promotional videos and the features of videos should be on auto play which means it starts playing automatically when opening the site. For uploading the picture in Instagram and Pinterest the concentration should be on the picture titles as it helps to promote the website by adding the URL means of title. Besides, some descriptions could be added for instance, who is in the picture, where and when taken the picture.

Even though the selected four tour operators are not big organizations and most of them have a fairly young profile, more emphasizing on social media channels would benefit the organization to find new ways of promoting their services and meet with the potential

customers. As social media tools allow the company to get direct opinion from the customers, many large companies invest more money on social media to get the positive outcome.

To sum up, at the beginning of the research, the author had an initial plan to collect the data from the tour operators through semi- structured interviews. As it is time consuming and required a lot of travel around Lapland, the author turn the research way into social media analyzing. As a result, tour operator's opinion could not be used in the research. So in further research tour operators can be interviewed. Furthermore, tourists' opinions can be collected from field survey to obtain the primary data for the research.

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