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Abstract

During the last decades, travelling has turned into an important part of many people's lives. With globalization and the growing number of new tourist destinations worldwide there has emerged a changing nature of competition where the tourist operators have to work harder to maintain their position in the market. In addition the changes are becoming faster and more complex all the time. The purpose of this study was to give the decision makers, investors and different operators valuable information about the possible changes in the Finnish tourism industry in the next twenty years. The aim was reached through finding answers to the five research questions: (1) Which are the events having a potential impact on tourism industry in Finland from the year 2008 through 2028? (2) Which will be the most important value changes of consumers (Finnish as well as foreign) 2008-2028? (3) What kind of changes will the Finnish tourism industry undergo in its structure from the year 2008 through 2028? (4) Which tourism products will gain popularity among the Finnish tourism operators 2008-2028? (5) Which of the tourist regions in Finland will develop in importance 2008-2028?

In the theory part the subject was approached with the help of a steepv analysis, which enabled the researcher to view the subject of the study from many different points of views. Social, technological, economic, ecological, political as well as value changes affecting the tourism industry globally and in Finland were presented.

In this study, a qualitative forecasting technique, Delphi, was used as a market research tool. There are many types of Delphi research, but there are also common features in those techniques, in short Delphi methods include following features: An expert group or panel has been formed for the purpose of the study, the experts express their opinions for the researcher separately, the experts are given anonymously written feedback about the views of the other panelists and the panelists are able to change their views at least once based on the presented data.

As a result in the study came out 16 factors which in respondent's opinion will be important factors affecting the Finnish tourism industry during the years 2008-2028. These factors are climate change, development of the global economy, change in the age structure, safety, environmental values, valuing ones well-being, valuing ones free time and the quality of products and services, growth in the size of the tourism enterprises and centers and the importance of business networks, lack of skilled labor force, increase in foreign ownership, health and wellness tourism, tourism related to snow and winter in Lapland, conference and congress tourism, Lapland, Helsinki/ capital area and Lakeland / East Finland.