

Finnish Design

Potential Attraction for Hotels?

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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyö on tutkimus suomalaisen designin potentiaalista hotellien vetovoimatekijänä ja se tehtiin Palace Kämp Groupille. Tavoitteena oli määrittää kuinka suuri tekijä design on majoitusta valittaessa ja pystyä osoittamaan suomalaista designia esittelevälle majoitukselle potentiaalisen asiakas-segmentin pääpiirteet.</p> <p>Tutkimusta varten toteutettiin kysely sadalle ulkomaalaiselle matkustajalle Helsinki-Vantaan Lentoasemalla. Pohjatietoa sekä kyselylle että teoriaosuudelle ammennettiin Internetistä ja alan kirjallisuudesta. Tietoa kerättiin majoitusalan historiasta, nykypäivästä ja tulevaisuudesta sekä alan trendeistä, turistien käyttäytymisestä ja luokittelusta. Kerätty tieto alan taustoista helpotti kyselystä saatujen tulosten ymmärtämistä ja yhteenvetämistä, tämä taas edesauttoi päätelmien ja suositusten hahmottamista.</p> <p>Kyselyn tulokset olivat useilta osin moniselitteisiä, mutta osoittivat kuitenkin selvästi että suomalaisella designilla on potentiaalia olla vetovoimatekijänä majoitusta valittaessa. Suurin osa vastanneista oli sitä mieltä että joidenkin ehtojen täytyessä (mm. hinnan ollessa oikea) suomalainen design vaikuttaisi positiivisesti heidän majoitusvalintaansa. Kyselyn pohjalta pystyttiin myös määrittämään liikemiehet todennäköisimmäksi asiakasryhmäksi, mutta suositus potentiaalisten asiakasryhmien tarkemmasta tarkastelusta annettiin. Internetistä ja alan kirjallisuudesta kerättyjen tietojen perusteella pystyttiin toteamaan että suomalaisen designin lisäksi hotelliin tulisi painottaa teknologiaa, yksilöllisyyttä sekä vihreitä arvoja ollakseen vetovoimainen.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tulosten pohjalta on mahdollista lähteä tekemään liikeideaan tai uутteen majoitusalan konseptiin tähtäävää lisätutkimusta. Työ antaa pohjan potentiaalisia kuluttajaryhmiä määriteltäessä, mutta jättää tilaa tarkkojen ryhmittelyjen laatimiseen.</p>		
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Abstract <p>The thesis is a research about potential of Finnish design being attraction for hotels. The research was made for Palace Kämp Group. Goals of the thesis was to determine how big factor design is when choosing an accommodation and to be able to offer suggestions for potential customer segments.</p> <p>A questionnaire survey was carried out at Helsinki-Vantaa airport to research the interest of tourists in this sort accommodation and design in all. The number of tourists taking part in the survey was 100. To support the survey in the thesis and give an idea of past, present and future, as well as trends in tourism and accommodation business, and of tourist behaviour, some industrial facts were introduced. Internet and literature were used to gather information about these matters. The background information of the industry helped to draw conclusions about the research results and added to the picture of the potential, which could not have been based only on the views of the respondents.</p> <p>The results from the survey were in many parts colliding but despite this, the main result was clear: Finnish design has potential to attract customers when choosing an accommodation. Most of the respondents agreed that Finnish design would have positive effect on their accommodation choice if e.g. the price was suitable. Based on the survey results it was also possible to draw conclusion that businessmen would be possible target segment for the hotel but a recommendation for further research was given. Desk research showed that, on addition to Finnish design, concentration on personalization, green values and technology are crucial for hotel to be attractive.</p> <p>The research gives base for further research aiming for business idea or new accommodation concept. The research helped to form a picture of the potential level of demand and possible segments but also left a lot of room for further research the specific segments.</p>		
Keywords Future trends, tourism, design, research, questionnaire survey		
Miscellaneous		

Table of Content

1 INTRODUCTION	4
Research Objectives	5
2 HOTEL INDUSTRY – THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE FUTURE	5
3 TOURIST BEHAVIOUR AND FUTURE TRENDS	7
4 TRENDS OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN HOTEL INDUSTRY	8
4.1 Technology	9
4.2 Personalization	10
4.3 Environmental Friendliness	11
5 DESIGN HOTELS AND FINNISH DESIGN AS AN INSPIRATION FOR THE RESEASRCH	12
5.1 Design Hotels AG	12
5.2 Idea and Hypothesis	13
6 RESEARCH	14
6.1 Determinants of the Research	14
6.2 Questionnaire	14
6.3 Research Results	15
6.3.1 Respondent Characteristics	15
6.3.2 Activities and Behaviour	18
6.3.3 Attitudes and Motivations	20
6.4 Analysis	26
6.4.1 Gender as a Factor for Interest	27
6.4.2 Continent as a Factor for Interest	27
6.4.3 Occupational Status as a Factor for Interest	29
6.4.4 Age as a Factor for Interest	32
6.4.5 Purpose of Visit as a Factor for Interest	32
6.5 Possibilities to Consider	35
7 CONCLUSIONS	36

8 RECOMMENDATIONS	38
REFERENCES	40
APPENDIX	42
Appendix 1: Questionnaire	42

CHARTS

Chart 1: The Cycle of Real Estate Emotions-Opportunity	6
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GRAPHS

Graph 1: Age group	16
Graph 2: Occupational Status	17
Graph 3: Continent	17
Graph 4: How Often Do You Travel Abroad	18
Graph 5: How Often Have You Visited Finland	19
Graph 6: What is the Purpose of Your Visit	20
Graph 7: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, 1-5	22
Graph 8: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, >4	22
Graph 9: Where Would You Like Local Design and Culture to Show in a Hotel	24
Graph 10: When Buying Souvenirs, Are You Looking for: Local	25
Graph 11: Interest / Gender	27
Graph 12: Interest / Continent	28
Graph 13: Interest / Occupational Status	30
Graph 14: Occupational Status / Age group	31
Graph 15: Interest / Age Group	32
Graph 16: Interest / Purpose of Visit	33
Graph 17: Occupational Status / Purpose of Visit	34
Graph 18: Purpose of Visit / Age Group	35

TABLES

Table 1: What is Your Destination in Finland	20
Table 2: What Words Would You Use to Characterise Finland	21

Table 3: In Which Hotel Are You Staying During the Visit	23
Table 4: Why Not Chosen According to Most Important Aspects Named in Question 9.	24
Table 5: What Finnish Design Brands Are You Able to Name	26

1 Introduction

Love for Finnish design, her education and interest in combining Finnish design in a new way with lodging industry, drove the author to prepare and carry out a research determining the potential of Finnish design as an attraction point in hotels.

The research started with examining the background of hotel industry to show what has been in the past and how the industry has developed, what the current situation is, and what the future holds. After examining the industry, the author moved forward to study the tourist and the motives. This was found important since tourists are the consumers of the industry; the only way to be successful in any industry, is to understand the consumer. From the tourists the research moved on to the trends that the demand of tourists and the situation of the world have created and then towards the research that would, potentially, determine the level of demand for a hotel based on Finnish design.

It was interesting to see if the literature and Internet given trends would hold in the course of the research and if the idea of Finnish design being an attraction would meet the view of the tourists in early spring of 2009.

The author learnt, when carrying out the questionnaire survey at the airport, that the language barrier, the country of origin and low level of education of a few respondents could explain some of the unclear or inconsistent survey results. The conclusions and recommendations were drawn bearing in mind the portion of unclear responses.

Research Objectives

The objectives for this research were to determine the demand and the potential segments for the Finnish design hotel and create a clear picture of what would be needed, in addition to design elements, to make the hotel a realistic concept. The results and the ideas given will be based on the information gathered from the questionnaire survey and desk research. As an end result, potential segments and survey based ideas will be introduced.

2 Hotel Industry – Past, Present, Future

The first signs of the development towards the hotel industry, as we know it today, appeared in Europe in the 18th century. Starting in the 1760's, the time of industrial revolution, the construction of hotels in mainland Europe, in England and America got the boost. (Jacques Levy-Bonvin. 2003.) John Reinhold Seipel (1751-1819) is considered as the founder of hotel and restaurant industry in Finland since he was the first one to run an official hotel, even though the word "hotel" became in general use decades later. (Asunta, T., Brännare-Sorsa, R., Kairamo, H., Matero, S. 2003. 251-256.)

Globally, the 1920's was the time for the first actual boom in the hotel industry. Second boom followed in the fifties and third in the 80s in the form of more careful customer segmentation and specific marketing. (Jacques Levy-Bonvin. 2003.) The grand leap in the hotel industry in Finland occurred in the seventies as several new hotels and restaurants were established. The 1970's as well as 1980's was the time for product development since travelling on business, marketing abroad and family tourism were new aspects in tourism in Finland. It also became clear that a hotel with a comfortable bed was not any more enough for tourists; they wanted experiences. (Asunta, T., Brännare-Sorsa, R., Kairamo, H., Matero, S. 2003. 251-256.)

The beginning of 90s was hard for the industry, in Finland and worldwide alike, due to the global depression. In 1993, 15 percent of hotels in Finland

were bankrupted. Nevertheless, the industry turned to growth that continued in the 21st century but is currently, due to the present depression, decreasing though only momentarily. In the long run, the future of the industry looks bright. (Timo Lappi. 2008.) According to PKF Hospitality Research, difficult times in hospitality industry of the world will continue through 2010 until 2012 (Chart 1: The Cycle of Real Estate Emotions-Opportunity.)

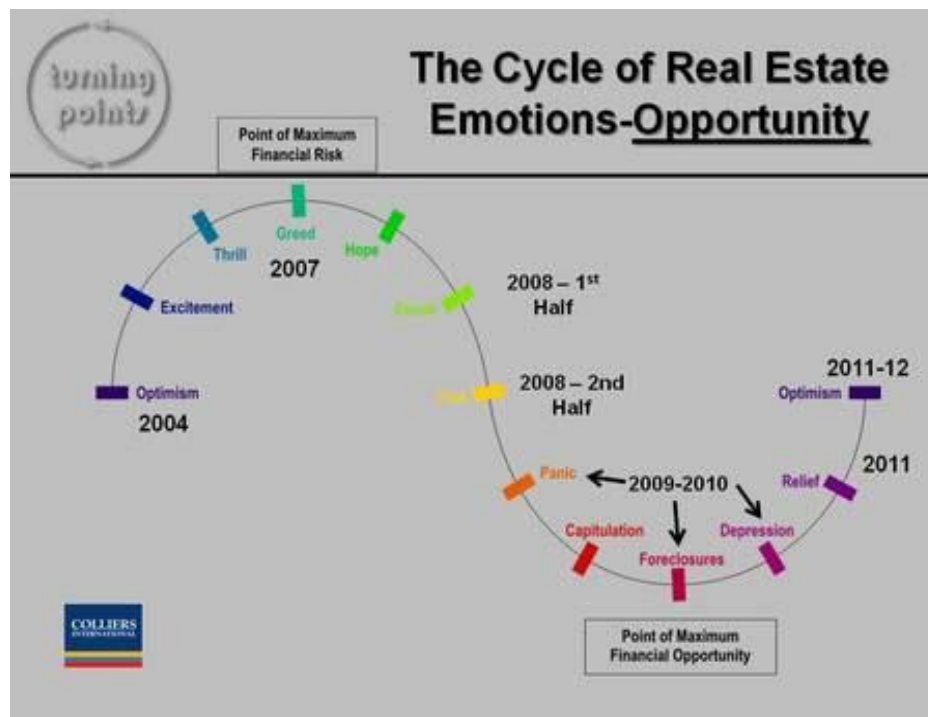


Chart 1: The Cycle of Real Estate Emotions-Opportunity

In 2008, there were 1536 lodging companies and 1867 sites of business in Finland. The industry was employing 10885 people and the turnover of the industry was 1.2 billion Euros. According to records from 2006, most of the businesses were situated in Lapland (289 businesses) whereas most of the hotels were situated in the Helsinki region (121 hotels). The share of hotel chains in the lodging business is ever growing and includes already every fourth hotel in Finland. Based on their workforce, the largest companies in Finland, in 2006, were Sokotel Oy with 1367 and Scandic Hotels Oy with 681 employees. (The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy. 2008.)

3 Tourist Behaviour and Future Trends

The world is full of different destinations quite necessary due to the increasing tourist activity and to the demand for new types of tourism products. This is affected e.g. by changing taste of tourists, technological innovations and social concerns. (Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S. 2007. 230-231.)

Tourists have different motivators when making decisions on consuming. The six main motivational factors in tourism are cultural (e.g. sightseeing), status (e.g. fashionability), personal development (e.g. increasing knowledge), personal (e.g. visiting friends and relatives), emotional (e.g. nostalgia) and physical (e.g. relaxation). These are dependent on factors like the personality, lifestyle, past experiences, past life, perceptions of one's own strengths and weaknesses and the way a consumer wishes to be viewed. Research has shown that the culture of a consumer has an effect on the behaviour and for example on the quality perceptions. (Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S. 2007. 53-55, 195.)

Due to the improving economical situation (with depression as a passing setback), tourist activity has become reachable for a growing number of people. As the level of income of an individual increases so does the amount of money spent on tourism. Postmodern tourists will require experiences, individuality, more variety, quality and highly developed products.

Environmental friendliness, authentic, and reality will be key words for tourist experiences. According to Swarbrooke and Horner "There is evidence to suggest that the mass market and standardized approach to tourism will become increasingly out of date by 2010". (Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S. 2007. 195-197.)

Market segments that will grow in the future due to a demographic change in Northern Europe, the USA and Japan: elderly people, and in Southern Europe, South America and South East Asia: market segment of 18-30 years of age, children (since they increasingly take more holidays separate from their parents), more non-Christians travelling, segment of similarities (the

nationality is not the bounding factor but e.g. studying) and last but not least people with disabilities. (Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S. 2007. 230-231.)

4 Trends of the 21st Century in the Hotel Industry

The 21st century hotel industry standard is BASIC:

- Bed
- Air conditioning
- Shower
- Interior design
- Clean
- Service

(Viisi Tähteä. 2005.)

These are the elements expected but it is up to a hotel, and its concept, which one is emphasized.

According to Daniel Edward Craig, Hospitality Net, the trends for this year (2009) in the hotel industry are affected by the global depression since the occupancy rates will be the lowest since 1971 and the economy of the industry is on the low. In his article, Mr. Craig names ten trends for the year:

- Dropping the room rates
- Travellers wanting more value adds-on with less money with no cuts in service
- Service quality will decrease due to shortage of employees
- Environmental friendliness will decrease due to the costs that it causes
- Automation and do-it-yourself options will replace employees since they save in salary costs
- Offering healthy food will be reduced since e.g. burger sell better and are more profitable
- Lifestyle hotels will increase in popularity and the customization will be taken a step further
- Complimentary amenities will vanish and only essential items are left in

hotel rooms

- Traditional hotels will move towards the “boutique-hotel-as-nightclub” trend
- Hotels in the mixed-use developments will include more services to the complex

(Daniel Edward Craig. 2009.)

In their report of 2008, The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy (2008.) also acknowledges the current depression and says that the growth of the market is expected to slow down in 2009 and 2010. The report has a positive tone regarding the future and its trends in the longer run. The report concentrates on the views of Rolf Jensen, a researcher of future trends of the industry. He emphasizes experiences as the main objectives in the future. According to Mr. Jensen, we are moving towards the society where individualism, feelings, experiences and quality are the main factors. More products, diversity and services are required in the future. Personalization, theme based entirety and environmental factors are the core aspects of the future trends.

In short, in the longer run the trends are not affected by the depression. The three most often discussed trends of the future, on tourism related websites, are technology, personalization and –despite the view given in the article by Mr. Craig, and supporting the view presented in future trends in tourism behaviour and by Mr. Jensen– environmental friendliness.

4.1 Technology

Technology has a major part in both interior design and marketing of hotels. Microsoft highlights five main technology trends in hotel business. Firstly, a new type of customer relations management programme that saves all the preferences of the guest from the earlier stays in a hotel. The programme enables the information to be shared between the hotels of the same chain so questions will be saved in the check-in and the guest will get customized

service faster. The second trend also deals with information sharing though in delivering data between different departments. Due to the new programme, the data of different departments can be integrated which leads to faster data transferring and service. The trend of integration also shows in hotel rooms through the fusion of different functions into one system. Microsoft gave an example of television assisted control of room temperature and lights by the guest including games and displaying the bill on top of the regular television functions. Already introduced trend in technology is radio frequency identification (RFID). It is a bracelet that can be charged with money and can be used for paying e.g. lunch inside the signal area. The bracelet also works as a locator as long as a guest wears the bracelet, and he can be located in the signal area. The fifth trend mentioned is not visible to a hotel guest but still makes the stay more convenient: Self-healing hotel technology. It is a programme that fixes the problems in the systems of a hotel before they become so serious as to affect the whole property. (Microsoft. 2009.)

Several technology trends are compounded to the trend of personalization, as already mentioned above: the new type of customer relations management programme. In his article, "Back to the Future: Meet the Hotel Guest of 2020", Mr. Jitendra Jain deals with aspects like intelligent hotel rooms and menus, always-on service line, fingerprint identification, marketing campaigns "as real as they are entertaining", making use of guest references since word-of-mouth and social networks are increasingly important in advertising and in choosing and booking specific items and activities for the stay. (Jitendra Jain. 2008.)

4.2 Personalization

In his article Mr. Jain determines intelligent hotel rooms as being able to adapt to the guest's liking in e.g. colours and textures and enabling feedback in the form of new video technology, voice or "mood snap", which quickly corrects the possible lapses. Intelligent menus are based on health, taste and moods of a guest and they can be discussed e.g. on the always-on service line enabling in live video conversations with the personnel. All this, with the

fingerprint identification that removes the need for the key and other identification cards, and makes e.g. check-in and -out smoother, and the stay more convenient. (Jitendra Jain. 2008.)

“From technology to amenities, hoteliers are realizing that the best way to please their seasoned luxury traveller client is to personalize their hotel stay as much as possible”. The quote was taken from the article “Personalizing Hotel Stays in 2008” that reviewed the personalized hotel experience as one of the major trends for 2008. (Perfect Escapes. 2007.) Whereas the article “Personalizing Hotel Stays in 2008”, written in December 2007, dealt with luxury travellers, an article from February 2009; “Hospitality Industry Hotels Business Current and Future Trends” suggests that the trend of personalized stay has become a reality of not only in luxury accommodations but also in boutique motels. The idea of the boutique motels is to offer accommodation to budget conscious travellers and create new image for motels and guesthouses that have been thought as cheap and dingy. (Nick Nikolis. 2009.) Alongside with the personalization becoming more reachable for budget conscious consumers, the upscale design has also become more of a trend to be honoured instead of synonym to luxury. (Hotelmarketing.com. 2007.) This supports the idea introduced by Mr. Craig in his article about hotel industry trends in 2009: guests are becoming more demanding simultaneously with increasing budget consciousness. (Daniel Edward Craig. 2009.)

4.3 Environmental Friendliness

The article “Hospitality Industry Hotels Business Current and Future Trends” suggests that the majority of travellers prefer Green and Eco lodgings. The article bases this information on the results of surveys realized by actors that include Partnership Travel Industry Association and Yahoo. According to these surveys *“nearly 70 per cent of the tourists are willing to pay extra when it comes to environmentally friendly lodgings”*. (Nick Nikolis. 2009.) The importance of environmental friendliness and its popularity also shows in number of hotels that have started marketing themselves as green hotels.

Being environmentally friendly is not only a trend any more of stand-alone themed hotels but has reached large hotel groups like The Rezidor Hotel Group (www.rezidor.com), the Restel Hotel Group (www.restel.fi) and the InterContinental Hotels Group (www.ichotelsgroup.com). All these hotels have a link to their “responsible business” programmes on their front pages just to show how important the green values have become.

5 Design Hotels and Finnish Design as an Inspiration for the Research

A possible trend that does not rule out any of the previously mentioned trends for the future concentrates on one of the BASICs (discussed in chapter 4): Interior design. It goes hand in hand with personalization and lifestyle that Mr. Craig emphasized as one of the rising trends of 2009 and with a view of Mr. Jensen of theme based accommodation being one of the core aspects of future trends. It also supports the earlier idea of the postmodern tourist who requires “*experiences, individuality, more variety, quality and highly developed products*”. (Daniel Edward Craig. 2009.) Based on the interest of the author in design hotels and Finnish design, she found it exciting and important alike to research the potential for Finnish design hotel in Finland.

5.1 Design Hotels AG

There is an association of design hotels in the world: Design Hotels AG. It has 176 hand-selected member hotels in over 43 countries. In short, the mission of Design Hotels AG is to “*...create an international hotel lifestyle brand whose hallmark is distinctive architecture and design, as well as impeccable service*”. (Claus Sendlinger, Michael Adams. 2003. 32.) To become part of Design Hotels AG, hotel is required to have: “*...individuality, progressive architecture and design, concepts of sustainability and an authentic connection to location or legacy*” with the most advanced ideas and options that include experience,

inspiration and even education instead of only relaxation. (Design Hotels AG. 2009.) Members of Design Hotels AG are representing the most advanced ideas of hospitality industry and are work of famous designers and architects. (Klaus K Hotel. 2009.) Currently, the only hotel in Finland that meets the requirements of Design Hotels AG is Klaus K Hotel in Helsinki.

According to Haaga Research, in order to be successful a design hotel needs to be situated in an environment that is dynamic and international and has nightlife or a view that differs from the standard. (Heikkinen, V.A. and Kortelampi, S. 53.) Based on these requirements, it seems that Klaus K Hotel is well situated.

5.2 Idea and Hypothesis

As learned, the requirements for different types of accommodations, tourist experiences and individuality, followed by new niche markets are increasing. Therefore possibility for at least a niche demand for a hotel that is basing its operation on Finnish design is present. When executed well, Finnish design hotel could be a hotel that could even meet the demands of Design Hotels AG and join Klaus K as the second design hotel in Finland with true Finnish and design touch alike.

The author's idea for the Finnish design hotel is a concept where the hotel in question would be boutique sized since it can be assumed to be segmented for a niche market due to its strong theme base. It could introduce Finnish design, by large Finnish companies as well as individual Finnish designers, in its interior, accessories and services. To find a hotel functioning with a similar concept, one does not have to look further than Sweden. Birger Jarl is a boutique sized hotel situated in Stockholm and has its 250 rooms designed by several Swedish designers. (Birger Jarl Hotel. 2009.)

The research was made keeping in mind all the assumptions introduced: niche market, Finnish design, demand. These assumptions created the

research hypothesis: *There is a niche demand for a hotel basing its interior and services on Finnish design.*

6 Research

The research was partly executed as a respondent and partly as an interviewer-completed questionnaire survey. (Veal, A.J. 1997. 147.) One hundred inbound tourists were interviewed on land side at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport from 30th March to 2nd of April 2009 for this research. Altogether thirty hours was used to collect the data. The data was analysed with the SPSS software (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*).

6.1 Determinants of the Research

The questionnaire survey executed is part of social science. Since humans are active research targets not predictable, like targets in physical and natural sciences, they can change their behaviour according to research and its outcomes. Therefore, it is rarely possible to execute a research that would give similar answers not bound to place and time. (Veal, A.J. 1997. 2-3.)

The interviews carried out at the airport are defined as a user survey executed en route, which means that while answering the questionnaire, the respondents are travelling. This kind of survey includes the questionnaires executed at an airport. (Veal, A.J. 1997. 73, 154-155.)

6.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be defined as: “...a written or printed form used in gathering information on some subject or subjects consisting of a list of questions to be submitted to one or more persons”. (Key, J. 1997.)

The questionnaire sheet (Appendix 1: Questionnaire), prepared for the interviews at Helsinki-Vantaa airport, is two-sided and has fifteen questions both pre-coded and open-ended. Open-ended questions do not offer any range of answers to choose from, like pre-coded questions do, but only an area where the respondent is expected to answer his/her own words. The open-ended questions are generally considered to give more precise information since they are not as leading as pre-coded questions but they also have disadvantages regarding the work load, when entering the information on the computer. In the end, this may not give any more important answers than well pre-coded questions. They might also give a low response level or a low quality of response when respondent-completed. (Veal, A.J. 1997. 164-167.)

The questionnaire starts with determining respondent characteristics. Then it moves to activities and behaviour, and finally to attitudes and motivations so the questionnaire covers the general information groups. (Veal, A.J. 1997. 162.) The questionnaire starts with questions about activities and behaviour, and changing, towards the end, the concentration of the questionnaire to determine the level of interest of respondents on design and local culture in accommodation services (Appendix 1: Questionnaire).

6.3 Research Results

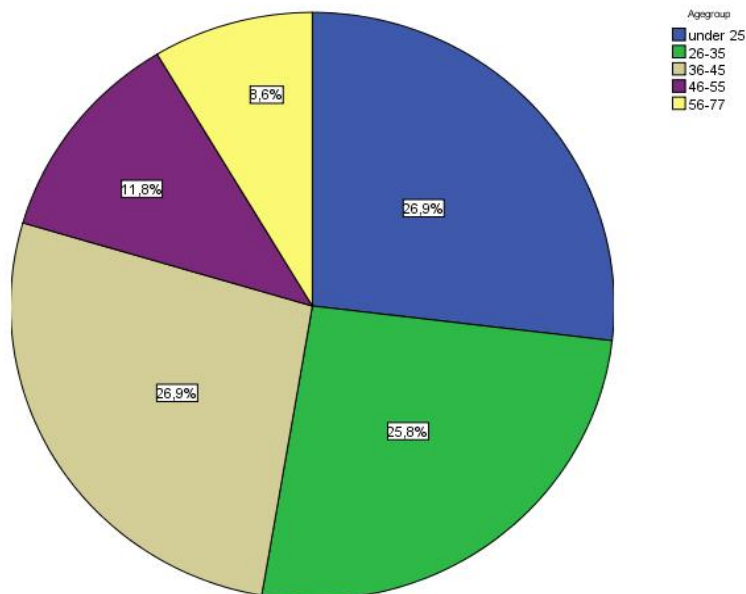
Below, the responses of the questionnaire will be discussed one by one with graphs presented. The explanations, for why these specific questions were asked and how they were expected to be benefitted from when making the

conclusions, will be given.

6.3.1 Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics are: age, occupational status and continent of origin. They are all important factors when determining the segment for the Finnish design hotel in the case of the concept seen a potential.

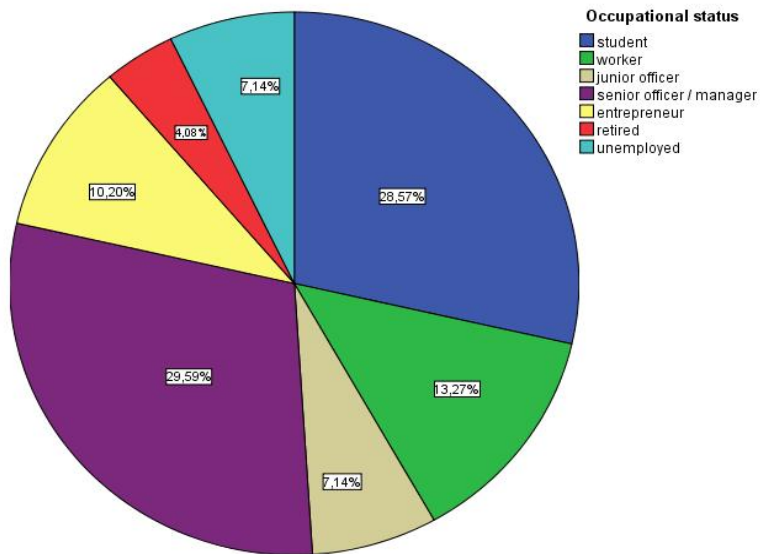
The majority of the respondents (55 out of hundred) were men and 44 were women. One respondent left the question unfilled. The age dispersion of the respondents is wide. The age varies from 19 to 77. For the graph, the respondents were divided into age groups starting with those under 25 years of age and continuing with ten-year intervals per group until the last group of 56 to 77 years of age. Three age groups were dominant in the questionnaire: those under 25, 26-35 and 36-45 years of age. Seven respondents did not fill in their age (Graph 1: Age group).



Graph 1: Age group

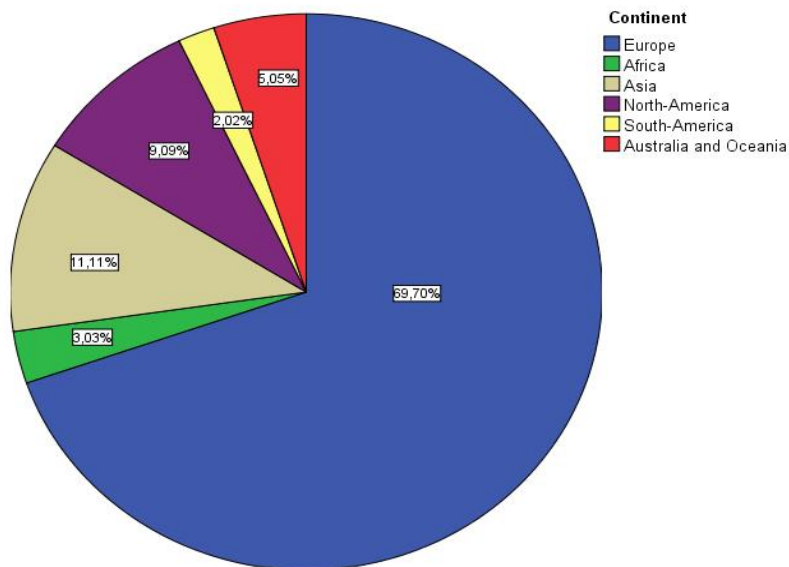
The two main occupational groups of the respondents were senior officers / managers with 29, and students with 28 respondents. 13 workers, ten entrepreneurs, seven junior officers and unemployed people and four retired

people filled in the questionnaire (Graph 2: Occupational Status).



Graph 2: Occupational Status

Respondents from 35 countries filled in the questionnaire. For the graph, the 35 countries were divided into continents to give a clearer picture. The continent with the most respondents was Europe with 69 respondents. There were 11 respondents from Asia with less than ten from the rest of the world. All the respondents answered this question (Graph 3: Continent).



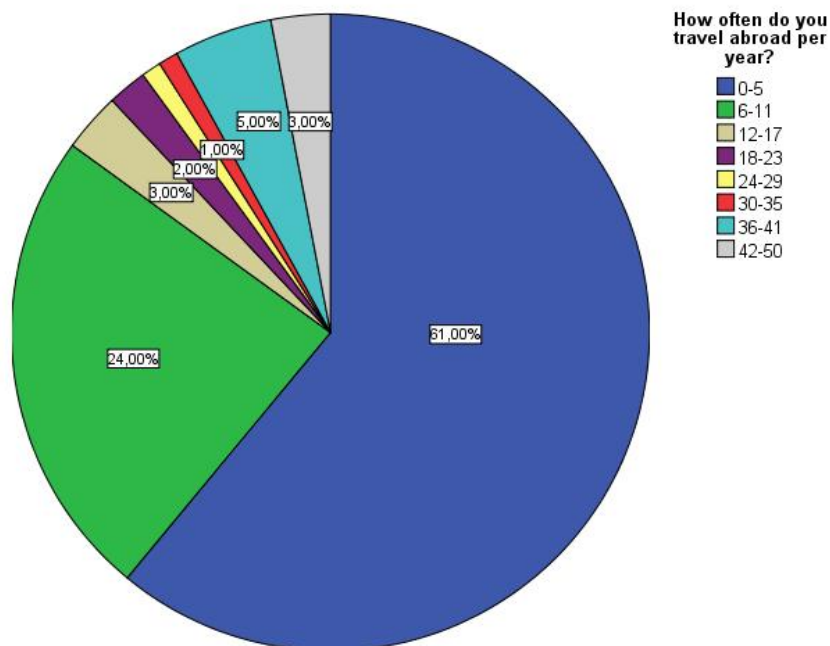
Graph 3: Continent

6.3.2 Activities and Behaviour

Determining the activities and behaviour of the respondents will show if the travelling frequency, frequency of visiting Finland or purpose of the visit has an effect on the demands for one's accommodation and interest in staying in a Finnish design hotel. This category also includes the destination of a respondent in Finland which is to show the potential location of the future hotel.

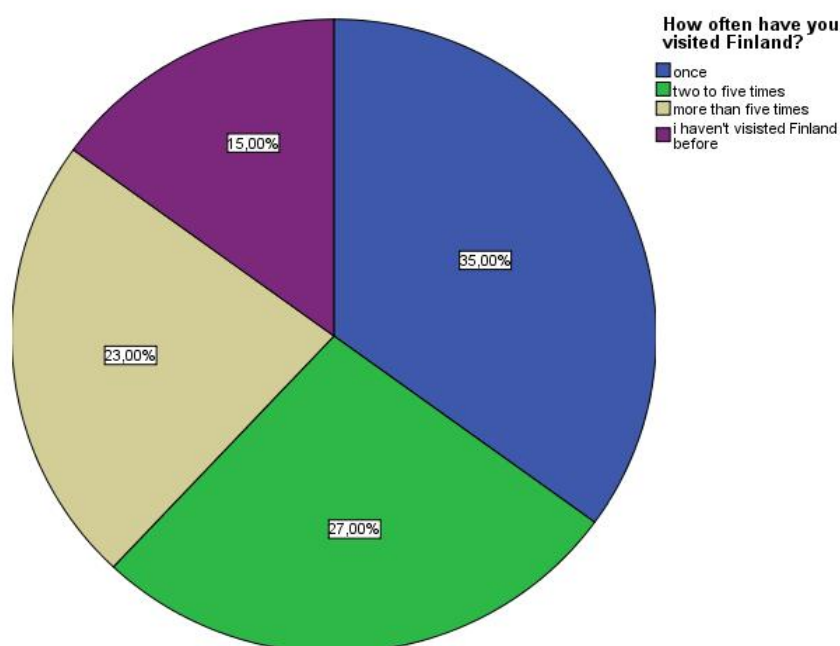
The frequency of travelling abroad in a year had a wide spread from 0 to 1 times to 50 times a year. Due to the wide dispersion of the responses it seemed clearer to divide the numbers of visits into groups starting with 0 to 5 times and continuing from there with five times per group until the last group of 42 to 50 times.

The exact numbers of visit that cover each over ten percent of the total, have the highest response rate. Those are; one, two, ten and three times a year. Response rate was 100 in this question (Graph 4: How Often Do You Travel Abroad).



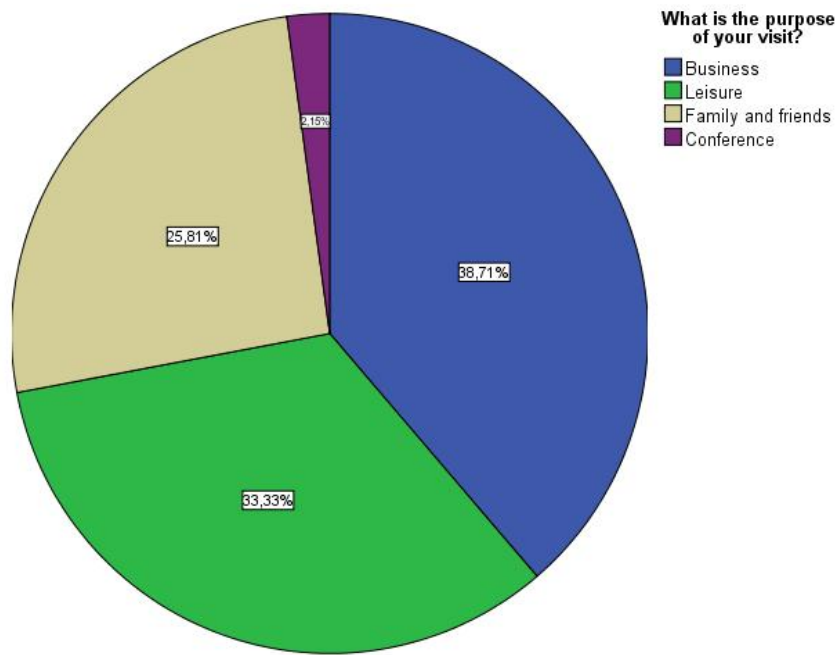
Graph 4: How Often Do You Travel Abroad

When asking about the frequency of visiting Finland, the responses were well spread in all the response categories. Over one third (35) of the respondents had visited Finland once before. 27 respondents had visited Finland two to five times, 23 respondents had visited Finland more than five times and 15 respondents had not visited Finland before. It can be noticed that most of the respondents have visited Finland before: all together 85 respondents. All the respondents answered to this question



Graph 5: How Often Have You Visited Finland

Over one third of the respondents (36) were visiting Finland on business. Leisure and family and friends had almost same number of respondents: 31 and 24 respectively. The number of conference tourists (2) was lower than that of missing answers (7) (Graph 6: What is the Purpose of Your Visit).



Graph 6: What is the Purpose of Your Visit

For most of the (67) respondents Helsinki was their main or at least part of the scatter of destinations. All the other destinations got a noticeably lower number of responses; the three following Helsinki being Turku, Lapland / Ivalo and Lahti. (Table 1: What is Your Destination in Finland).

Response	Frequency
Helsinki	67
Turku	6
Lapland / Ivalo	5
Lahti	4

Table 1: What is Your Destination in Finland

6.3.3 Attitudes and Motivations

The attitudes and motivations of the respondents were to be shown through the questions about their opinions: characteristics of Finland, aspects of appreciation of a hotel, the amount of local culture and design in a hotel, souvenir preferences and their interest in a hotel based on Finnish design. To support these questions, the questions about respondent's familiarity with,

attitude towards and interest in Finnish design were covered. The respondents were asked to tell where they were accommodating during the stay and if the hotel included all the aspects they found important (these aspects were also asked in the questionnaire) to determine if the aspects named were bound to the actual choice of hotel, and if they were not; what were the reasons behind it.

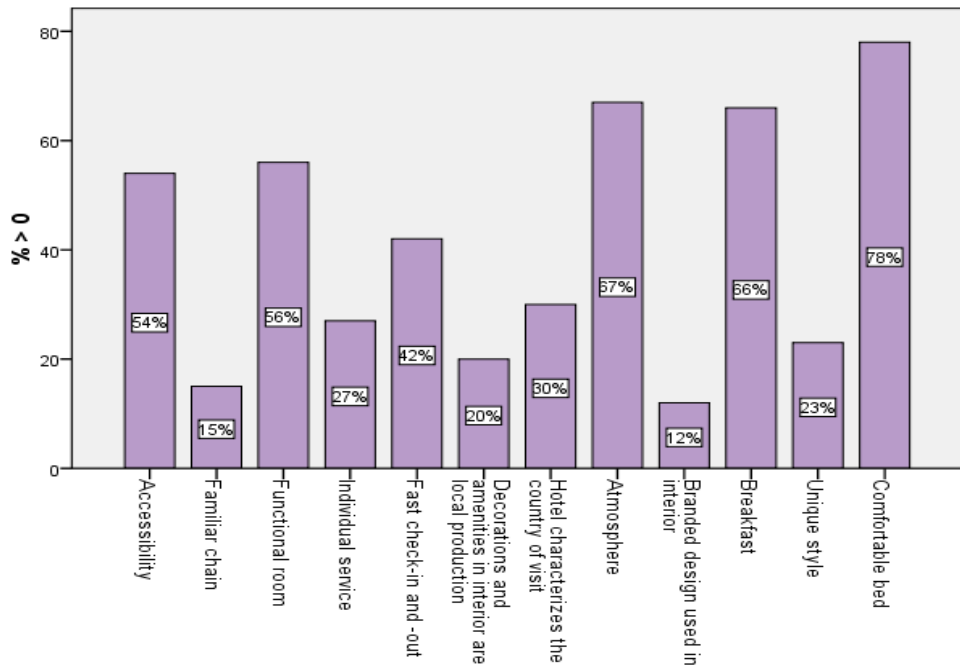
The list of adjectives / words included in the question about the characteristics of Finland is long. Therefore, only the ones mentioned over ten times are listed. The Most common was “friendly people” including words with a similar meaning e.g. kind, kind helping people and hospitality. This kind of similarity search was also used with other words (Table 2: What Words Would You Use to Characterise Finland).

Response	Frequency
Friendly people	38
Cold	26
Clean	16
Nature	16
Beautiful	16
Snow / Winter	15
Expensive	11

Table 2: What Words Would You Use to Characterise Finland

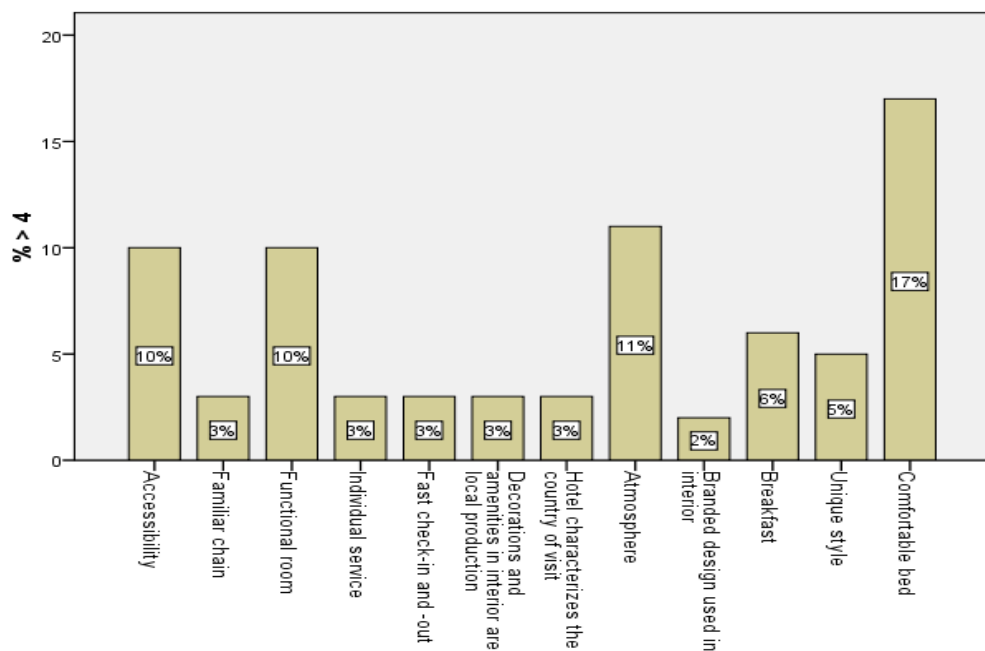
In the question about the important aspects in a hotel, a number of choices was given and the respondents were asked to name the 5 most important aspects, which were then graded with a scale of 1-5 (1 least important, 5 most important).

The first graph demonstrates all the choices, regardless of how they were graded. The three most frequent are: comfortable bed, atmosphere and breakfast. (Graph 7: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, 1-5)



Graph 7: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, 1-5

In the graph with the responses showing the most important aspects (grade five), the order changes slightly: comfortable bed, atmosphere, accessibility and functional room. (Graph 8: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, >4)



Graph 8: What Aspects Do You Appreciate in a Hotel, >4

When the respondents were asked why these aspects were appreciated, the answers mainly emphasized easiness and comfortability. One respondent spoke for many others: *“A hotel for me is mostly spend the night, so apart from good accessibility and a comfortable bed / good breakfast, it's not so important”*. These answers also made it clear that many respondents appreciating these aspects were business tourists: *“Bed at a business trip everything you need. Room needs to be functional and I want breakfast”* just to give an example out of many. To give an example of a respondent appreciating atmosphere: *“It's nice to find unique atmosphere and feel you are in a special place”*. The reasons for appreciation were related to the purpose of visit.

There is quite a scatter in hotels named. Even the most frequently mentioned accommodation –a hostel– had only 16 answers. Chain hotel Scandic and Sokos Hotel followed with 13 responses and Radisson BLU with 6 responses (Table 3: In Which Hotel Are You Staying During the Visit).

Response	Frequency
Hostel	16
Scandic	13
Sokos Hotel	13
Radisson BLU	6

Table 3: In Which Hotel Are You Staying During the Visit

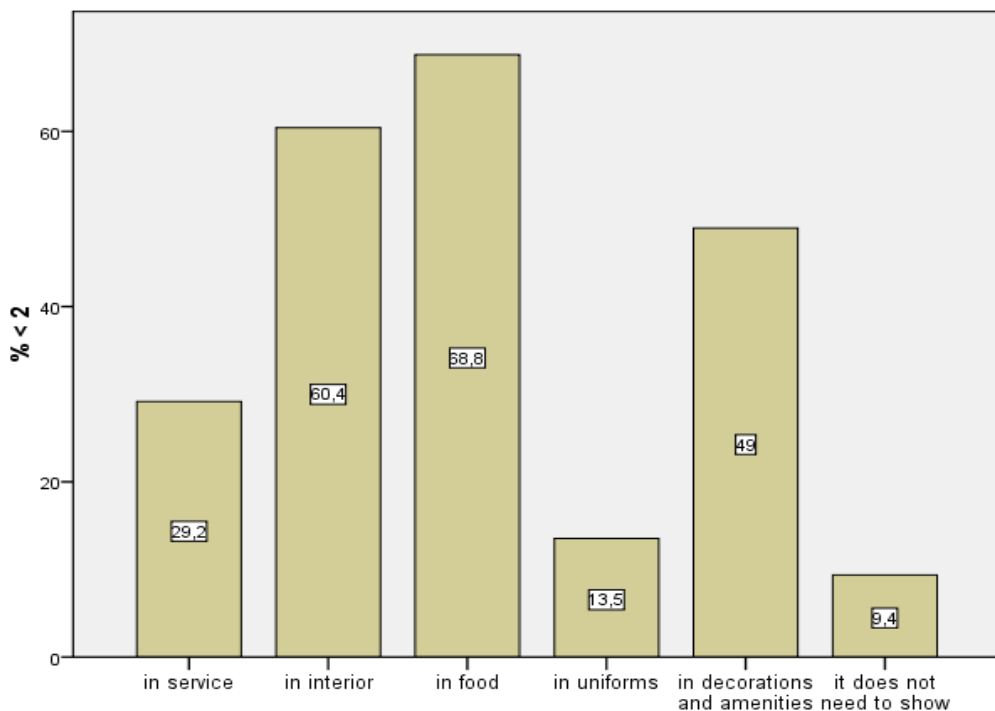
Most of the respondents (48) did not base their choices of accommodation on the important aspects named in an earlier question (question nine). Twelve respondents did not answer this question.

Four reasons rose above others when determining why the choice was not made according to the aspects found important: price, the hotel was company chosen, staying with friends and family and the accommodation not chosen by the respondent themselves (Table 4: Why Accommodation Not Chosen According to Most Important Aspects Named in Question 9).

Response	Frequency
Price	13
Company Chosen	8
Stay with Friends and Family	6
Not Chosen by Themselves	4

Table 4: Why Not Chosen According to Most Important Aspects Named in Question 9

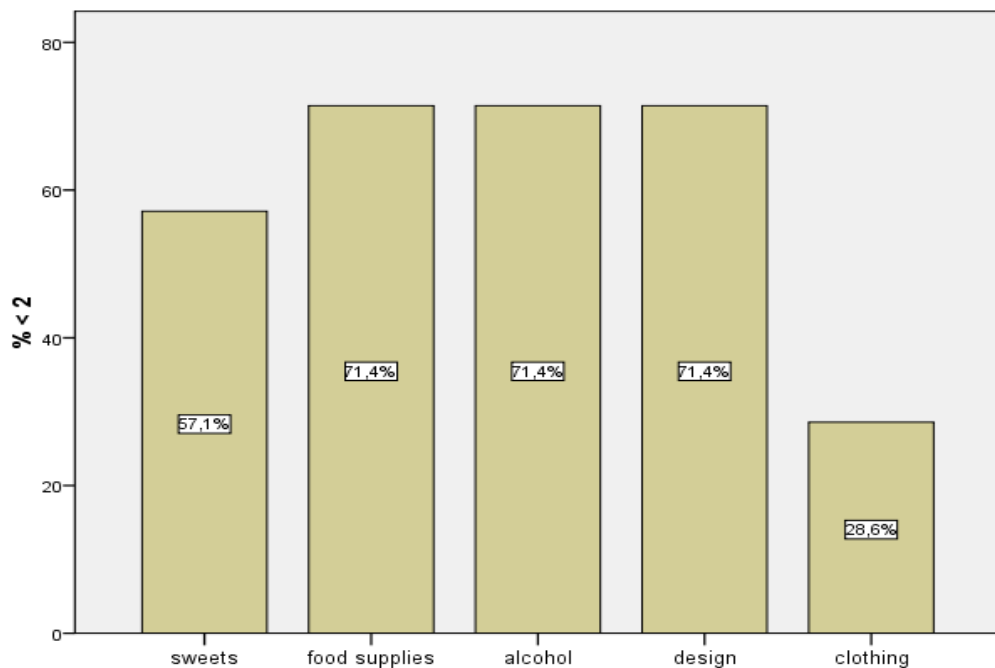
In the question that asked where one would like the local design and culture to show in a hotel, options: in service, in interior, in food, in uniforms and in decorations and amenities were given and most of the respondents ticked more than one answer. Food was seen as the most important aspect to show the culture and design in with almost 70 percent respondents agreeing and interior being the second most preferred way to show design and culture. Uniforms were seen as the least important and 9.4 percent of the respondents did not find local design and culture important to show at all (Graph 9: Where Would You Like Local Design and Culture to Show in a Hotel).



Graph 9: Where Would You Like Local Design and Culture to Show in a Hotel

Respondent given ideas on showing local culture and design in food, were mainly to show Finnish cuisine and local specialities with local ingredients and products. The ways the culture and design could show in interior were partly collating with the ideas given for decorations and amenities. It was often mentioned that in interior the culture and design could show in decorations, use of wood and having typical Finnish aspects.

What comes to souvenirs, most of the respondents agree that especially food supplies, alcohol and design should be local production. Over half of the respondents found also local sweets an attractive souvenir. In clothing the local was not a factor (Graph 10: When Buying Souvenirs, Are You Looking for: Local).



Graph 10: When Buying Souvenirs, Are You Looking for: Local

All together 74 respondents answered a question where Finnish design brands were asked to be named. Approximately one fourth of the respondents were familiar with marimekko. Other frequently mentioned brands were Nokia, Iittala and Fazer. Based on the total number of responses, it can be assumed that 26 respondents could not name any Finnish (design) brands (Table 5:

What Finnish Design Brands Are You Able to Name).

Response	Frequency
Marimekko	22
Nokia	17
Iittala	14
Fazer	9

Table 5: What Finnish Design Brands Are You Able to Name

The last question dealt with the respondent's interest in Finnish design hotel as an accommodation. Most of the respondents, 74.5 percent, were interested in the sort of accommodation. One respondent left the question unfilled.

Reasons for the interest were mainly including responses about interesting idea, hope to see and learn more about the culture, enjoying uniqueness and liking Finnish design. Many positive responses had also the addition saying this accommodation would be interesting but price was considered more important factor if needed to choose between hotels. Respondents with negative answers were mainly explaining the negativity with low interest in design.

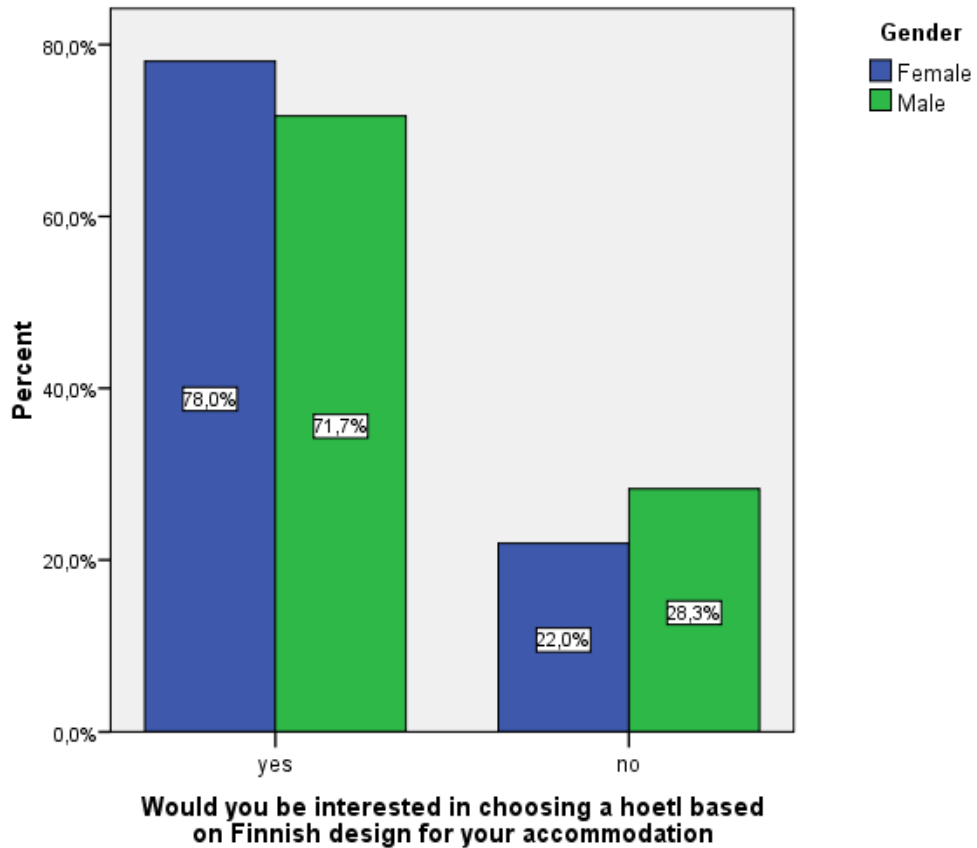
6.4 Research Analysis

It is stated that most of the respondents (almost three fourth) would be interested in staying in Finnish design hotel. With one glance the results seem clear but when examined more carefully, collisions occur. This can be partly explained by different perceptions of a question, by perception of a word design, by English as the language used and by positive statements that include conditions: "yes, I would be interested if..."

When cross-tabulations from the results are formed, they reveal many interesting aspects about the responses. To form accurate conclusions, simultaneous viewing between the results is required.

6.4.1 Gender as a Factor for Interest

There is no considerable difference in interest between men and women for the hotel. The difference of interest is only 6.3% which includes around six respondents. Thus, the gender is not a factor for interest (Graph 11: Interest / Gender).

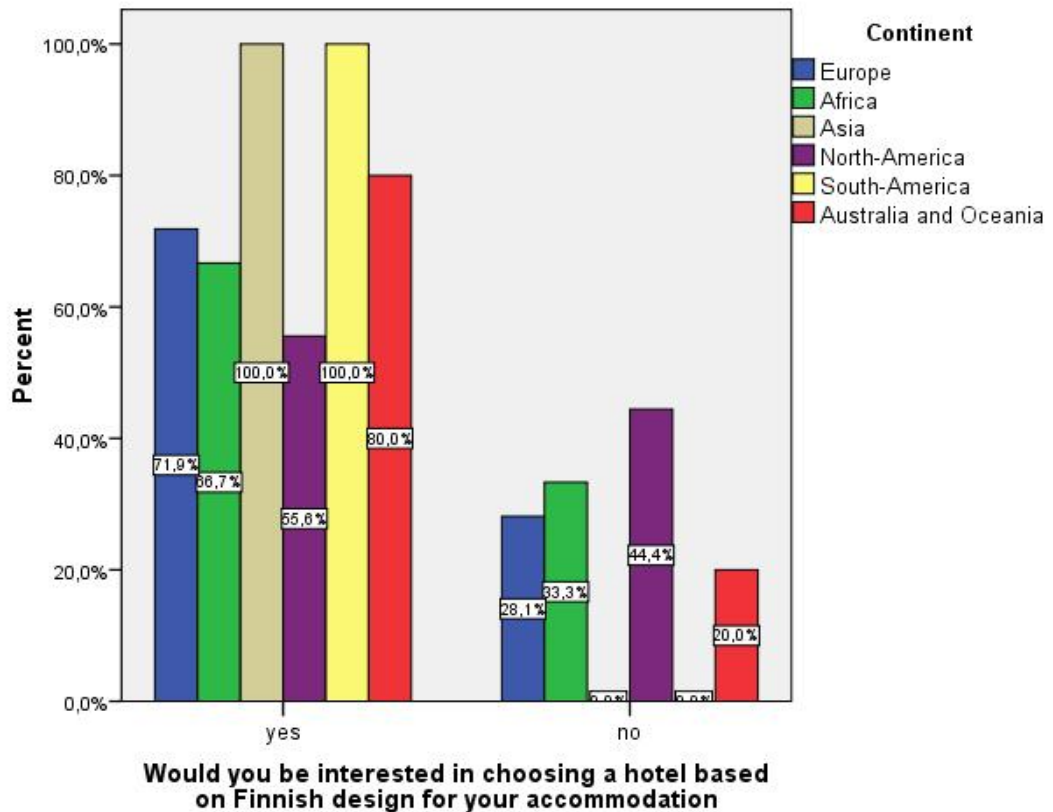


Graph 11: Interest / Gender

6.4.2 Continent as a Factor for Interest

Cross-tabulation about interest in Finnish design hotel being dependent on continent, indicates Asian and South-American being the most interested. Hundred percent of the Asian and South-American respondents were interested. What makes these continents problematic to analyse, is South-America covering only two percent and Asia eleven percent of the total answers. This indicates that the result of hundred percent of interest is not comparable with other results. The continent that had the highest percentage

of responses was Europe: 69.7 percent. Since European respondents included over half of the questionnaire survey sample, they provide reliable and valid information. Over seventy percent of Europeans (48 respondents) were interested in the idea and therefore, their responses are considered most trust-worthy. Fact that seventy percent of Europeans had positive attitude towards the Finnish design hotel, indicates that positive statement of market share existing for Finnish design hotel in Europe is reliable. Asia and South-America are potential segments but require further researching due to amount of respondents (Graph 12: Interest / Continent).



Graph 12: Interest / Continent

The interest level of Europeans, that seemed high and clear, becomes questionable when comparing interest expressed to stay in Finnish design hotel with the aspects named important in an accommodation. 30 of the 69 European respondents did not find it important to have culture or design aspects in their accommodation. It was found more important to have e.g.

comfortable bed and breakfast. This raises a question about true interest of the respondents to culture and design, and thus to the Finnish design hotel. Scenario is that when choosing an accommodation, these 30 respondents might settle on regular hotel. Since culture and design are not important aspects in an accommodation, they are not core values for decision making but supporting factors.

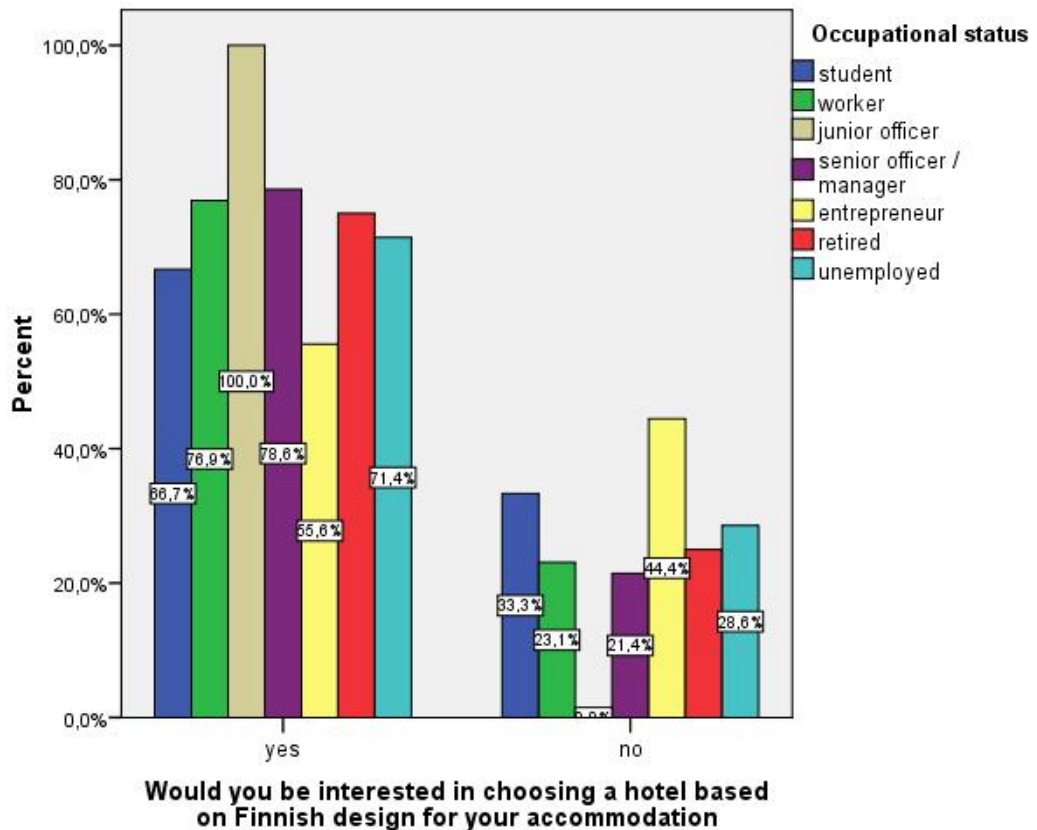
Colliding responses, between the interest and important aspects in an accommodation, can be partly explained by different perception of the questions. Some responses show the respondents considered their current trip and how the hotel had been, and not question being general of kind. Some businessmen were considering only business trips and did not find design aspects important in an accommodation when doing business. Seven of interested respondents, were adding price being a factor for interest and six respondents (according to their answers) did not seem to understand the question.

Viewing the answers given by Europeans and considering only the ones showing interest to the Finnish design hotel and appreciation to design and culture factors alike, there were only 16 positive answers. It can be considered that those 16 could be the most potential consumers since they consider design aspects interesting and important. Even though the sample covers Europe alone, it gives an indication to potential demand. The 30 respondents with inconsistent answers might find the idea of Finnish design hotel interesting but when choosing from several hotels, the design might not be the factor to make the decision on. Therefore, their interest to the design hotel is considered questionable.

6.4.3 Occupational Status as a Factor for Interest

When occupational status is considered and compared with the level of interest to stay in Finnish design hotel, junior officers are the most interested segment. A closer look reveals that junior officers are covering only 7.14 percent of total. This percentage cannot be considered as reliable base for

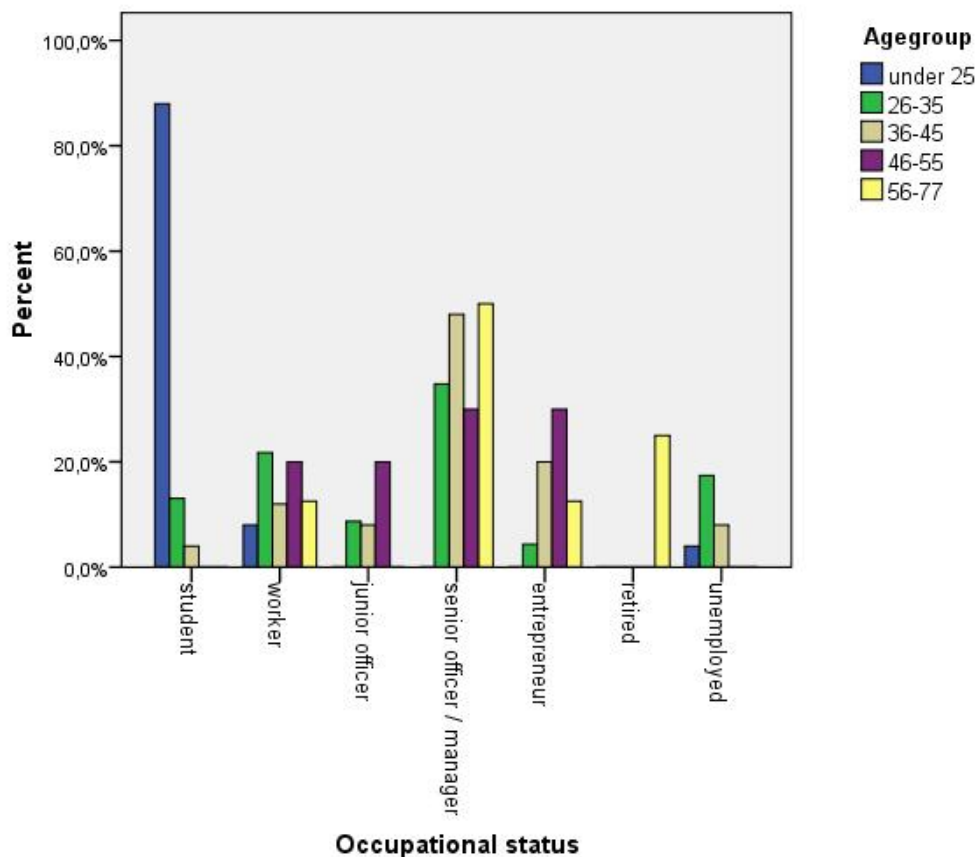
generalizing the interest level of junior officers. The result gives only an indication and needs further research. It is not a base for a statement that junior officers would be the segment to concentrate on. Regardless to occupation, most respondents (60.2 percent) were working (senior officers 29.59, workers 13.27 and entrepreneurs 10.20 and already mentioned junior officers 7.14 percent). Junior officers, senior officers and workers are the three segments with highest interest rate. This is to show that people who are in working life are most potential consumers for the hotel (Graph 13: Interest / Occupational Status).



Graph 13: Interest / Occupational Status

The number of students answering this questionnaire was almost the same as the senior officers (students 28.57 and senior officers 29.59 percent). This makes the results between these two segments comparable, and gives an indication that the interest rate of students is slightly lower.

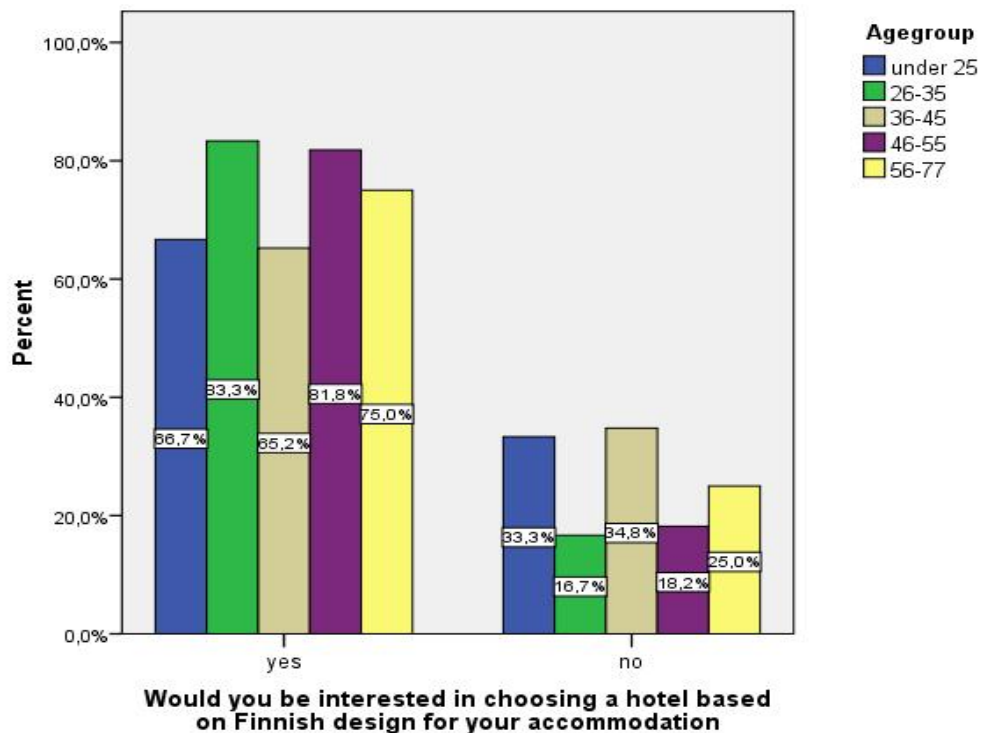
Comparing age with the occupational status –can have an effect when determining the potential segment– reveals that most of the respondents, under 25 years of age, are students. Above the age of 25, there is no age group peaks bound to position. Senior officers / managers cover the highest share in all other groups of age. This can be partly explained by viewing the graph of occupations (Graph 2: Occupational Status); 29.59 percent are senior officers / managers. It covers the highest percentage of occupational statuses (Graph 14: Occupational Status / Age group).



Graph 14: Occupational Status / Age group

6.4.4 Age as a Factor for Interest

The most potential consumers for Finnish design hotel are 26 to 35 years of age and 46 to 55 years of age, followed by 56 to 77 years of age. This indicates that young people in working life, people who have been in working life for years and retired people, are the potential segments. It must be noticed, that even though these three groups have the highest interest rate, the positive attitude towards the accommodation covers all age groups. Over 60 percent of each group show interest which can be considered to reveal potential in every group (Graph 15: Interest / Age Group).

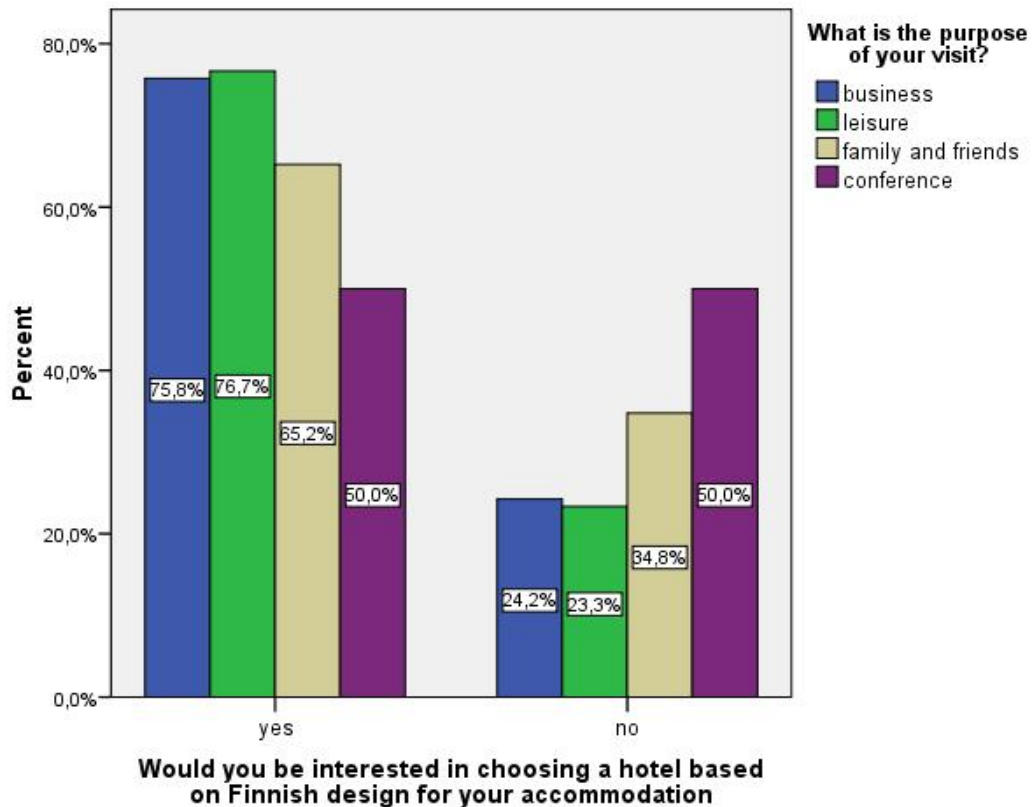


Graph 15: Interest / Age Group

6.4.5 Purpose of Visit as a Factor for Interest

Comparison with purpose of visit and the interest to stay in Finnish design hotel, did not reveal clear connection between purpose of visit and the interest. Regardless to purpose of visit, the interest rate was at least 50 percent and with respondents visiting in leisure and business it was over 75 percent. When making conclusions, the differences in respondent numbers

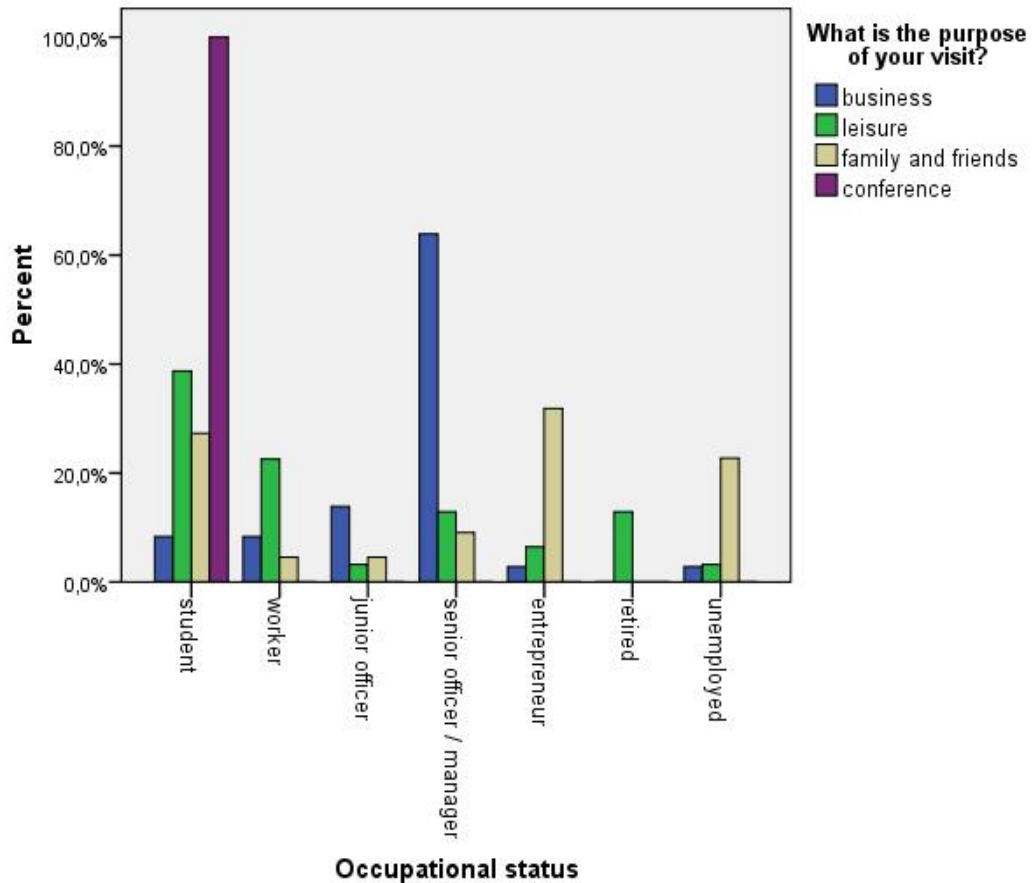
require consideration, e.g. 38.7 percent are visiting in business where as visiting in conference covers only 2.2 percent. This makes it impossible to compare people visiting in conference with businessmen. Based on the information gathered from purpose of visit –regardless to other cross-tabulations– and comparing it with the total interest level (74, 5 percent), it can be stated that there is not remarkable difference in the interest level that could be bound to purpose of visit. Comparison of differences is especially hard when the two segments, covering highest percentages, are as far from each other as leisure and business (Graph 16: Interest / Purpose of Visit).



Graph 16: Interest / Purpose of Visit

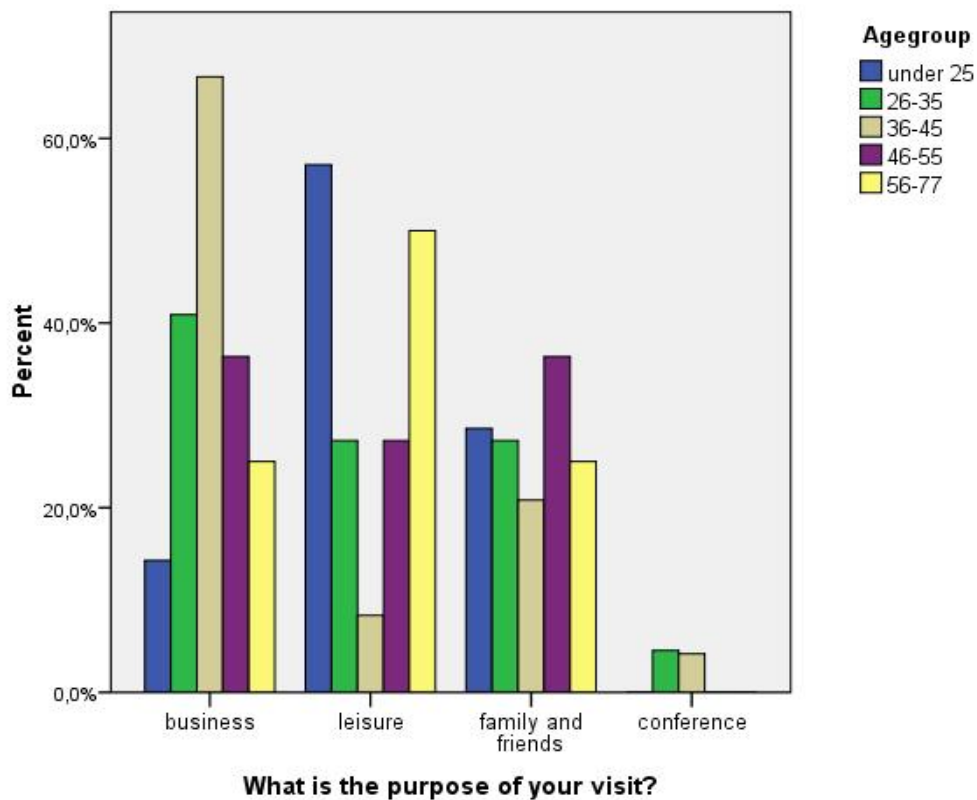
When purpose of visit is compared with occupational status, clear differences occur. Students visited Finland the most in leisure (38.7 percent) and senior officers visited Finland the most in business (63.9 percent). Entrepreneurs (31.8 percent) and unemployed (22.7 percent) visited Finland mainly to visit family and friends. It is insignificant to put stress on conference visitors due to

only two respondents. The information gathered from conference visitors is not comparable with the results from other visitation purposes. (Graph 17: Occupational Status / Purpose of Visit).



Graph 17: Occupational Status / Purpose of Visit

People, visiting Finland in business, are mainly 36 to 45 years of age (66.7 percent) and leisure visitors mainly under 25 years of age (57.1 percent) or 56 to 77 years of age (50 percent). Family and friends as a purpose of visit has fairly even result among the segments but the group of 46 to 55 year of age has slightly higher result with 36.8 percent. Conference visitors are not comparable with others due to two respondents in this category (Graph 18: Purpose of Visit / Age Group).



Graph 18: Purpose of Visit / Age Group

6.5 Possibilities to Consider

As learned, most of the respondents would be interested in the type of accommodation introduced. It is also stated that most of the respondents understood what they were answering yes to in the question about the interest. Fairly high percentage of the respondents had leisure as the purpose of visit and considerably high numbers of them were able to name several Finnish design brands and were interested in design aspects in a hotel. There was not high enough number of these respondents to form a peak in the research, but they exist and have to be considered as a potential market that is niche in size. Niche market is characterized to be “...*narrowly defined group whereby the individuals in the group are identifiable by the same specialised needs or interests and are defined as having a strong desire for the products on offer*”. (Novelli, M. 2005. 5.) There is a potential niche market for the hotel based on the interest a number of respondents showed in the survey for design and cultural aspects. This should receive attention and further research

since these respondents are potential to be a niche of "design tourists" or "special interest tourists" which are world-wide noticed and seriously taken segments.

Maurizio Ribotti, the CEO of Design Partners in Italy is a supporter of an idea, that Finland has potential to attract design tourists. He states that Finland has good reputation internationally in design field but Helsinki and whole Finland is lacking in marketing itself as a design destination. (Hannu Pöppönen. 2008.) Finland may lack in marketing, but it does not over rule the potential of Finland as a design destination. One great example of potential of Finland is Design District in Helsinki that consists of 25 streets and almost 200 different enterprises. It is created to strengthen the role of Helsinki as a city of design and is already popular as an attraction among tourists: e.g. Helsinki Expert is organising walking tours for friends of design in Design District. The recognition of the Design District and increasing design tourism are supporting the operation of the enterprises on the district. Hotels have noticed the possibility in Finnish design and are offering different hotel packages like one called "Design Shopping" offered in Sokos Hotel Tornii. The package consists of e.g. shopping map with discounts and a book of Finnish design year. (Design District. 2009.)

In the survey, cultural aspects were often seen important in an accommodation but purely design based aspects lacked in interest. This raises a thought that there might be already a hotel existing in Helsinki that is meeting the demand of most of the design tourists: Helka Hotel. The hotel has Finnish design aspects in it but is more concentrated in representing Finland, its nature and culture in its operation. It might be that this is enough even for the most design hungry tourists.

7 Conclusions

Interest in the Finnish design hotel was high, no matter the segment but to

concentrate on one, it is important to start with segment of 26 to 35 years of age. The segment is covering a fair share of total (25.8 percent) and is reliably comparable with the segments of under 25 years of age and 36 to 45 years of age due to almost equal amount of respondents (both with 26.9 percent). In comparison with the age groups of under 25 years of age and 36 to 45 years of age, the interest level for the Finnish design hotel was the highest in a group of 26 to 35 year olds. This segment is also travelling in business the most and the highest share of them is senior officers / managers. In addition, most of the respondents had Helsinki as part of the destination scatter if not the only destination. Based on these results, it can be said (with keeping further research in mind) that senior officers / managers who are 26 to 35 years of age and travel in business are the most potential consumers for the Finnish design hotel and it should be established in the city of Helsinki.

Addition to the segment of fairly young senior officers / managers, there is another segment existing that has potential to be interested in the accommodation in question: design tourists. This segment is a niche market due to their narrowly defined group with special interest but has potential to be beneficial for the hotel. Said this, the segment would need further research in order to identify the realistic potential of it.

In order for the hotel to succeed, it needs more than design aspects alone; they need to be combined with the major trends in accommodation industry. The hotel requires technology, personalization and environmental friendliness to be attractive in the future. The three major trends are not hard to combine with design since design is so varying in itself that enables offering aspects satisfactory for everyone. Different trends can be stressed in different areas of the hotel without having to decrease the importance of the main theme: design. The trends are not hard to combine with design, yet they need to be kept in mind when forming a plan for the hotel. The trends are the factor that ease the stay of a tourist, make the stay more enjoyable and give personality and individuality to it and that is what postmodern tourist is seeking. Technology, personalized stay and environmental friendliness of a hotel might not be the main motivators when choosing where to stay, but if they are

missing from the accommodation it will be noticed and thus decrease the satisfaction of the stay.

Most importantly the design was desired to be shown in food, interior and decorations and amenities in form of Finnish culture and wood as vocal points. These results, among the other responses, stressed the interest of respondents being more in Finnish culture than in Finnish design. It gave space to deliberate if there was already accommodation existing for the segment. Helka hotel has a stress on being Finnish and having design as not the theme but a point on display, and Klaus K having a Kalevala theme and with that showing Finnish culture. It has to be stressed that both of the hotels have their own theme still differing from the idea of accommodation researched: concentrating on representing Finnish design and having that as the theme of the hotel. These are the differentiating points but it is hard to say if the respondents made that difference when showing their interest to the Finnish design hotel.

Finnish design hotel has potential to meet the needs of a tourist, when combined with the global accommodation trends and marketed correctly for the right people.

8 Recommendations

The concept of a hotel has shown potential in the research but to be able to take the idea further, more specific research is needed with a recommended stress on the senior officers / managers who are close to the age group of 26 to 35.

In the future research, the concept of the hotel should be introduced clearer to respondents in order to be sure that the respondents understand what they are saying yes or no to.

Understanding possibilities of design tourism is crucial since this already existing market is potential to grow as the small groups with special interests are growing in an importance. This will happen along the requirements of individuality and personalization and therefore design tourism is potential to make a market share.

In the future, most recent technology and most innovative way of using it should be on high emphasis. Technology could, if not should, help in creating personalized surroundings for a guest. As the environmental issues are being in increasing numbers on display, they should be considered in operations.

In order to differentiate a business from others, it needs to have a unique concept. It needs to consider the trends of an industry and use them in innovative way. As people seek more individual options, Finnish design in a hotel has potential to attract tourists with its unique theme and therefore further research on the subject is recommended.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

The questionnaire you now have in your hands is part of a research that I am carrying out in the spring 2009 for my Bachelor's thesis. The aim is to study the role of design in the accommodation branch. By answering these fifteen relatively short and easy accommodation related questions, you will provide me with important information which will contribute to my task of writing the thesis.

*Jenna Kallioniemi, student
JAMK University of Applied Sciences, School of Business and Services
Management*

1. **Gender:** ___ Female ___ Male **Age:** _____

2. **Occupational Status:**

___ Student ___ Worker ___ Junior Officer
___ Senior Officer / Manager ___ Entrepreneur
___ Retired ___ Unemployed

3. **Nationality:** _____

4. **How often do you travel abroad?** _____ times a year

5. **How often have you visited Finland?**

___ Once ___ Two to five times ___ More than five times
___ I haven't visited Finland before

6. **What is the purpose of your visit?**

___ Business ___ Leisure
___ Family and Friends ___ Conference

7. **What is your destination in Finland?** _____

8. **What words would you use to characterize Finland?** _____

9. **What aspects do you appreciate in a hotel? Please, choose 5 most important ones and grade them on a scale of 1-5 (5 most important, 1 least important).**

___ Accessibility ___ Atmosphere
___ Familiar chain ___ Branded design used in interior
___ Functional room ___ Breakfast
___ Individual service ___ Unique Style
___ Fast check-in and -out ___ Comfortable bed
___ Decorations and amenities in interior are local production
___ Hotel characterizes the country of visit
Other, what? _____

Why do you appreciate these aspects? _____

10. In which hotel are you staying during the visit? _____

11. Was this accommodation chosen according to the most important aspects named in question 8?

___ Yes ___ No, why? _____

12. Where would you like the local design and culture to show in a hotel?

___ In service, how? _____

___ In interior, how? _____

___ In food, how? _____

___ In uniforms, how? _____

___ In decorations
 and amenities, how? _____

Other: _____ how? _____

___ It does not need to show

13. When buying souvenirs, are you looking for:

___ Sweets: ___ Local brands ___ Any

___ Food supplies: ___ Local brands ___ Any

___ Alcohol: ___ Local brands ___ Any

___ Design: ___ Local brands ___ Any

___ Clothing: ___ Local brands ___ Any

Other: _____

14. What Finnish design brands are you able to name? _____

15. Would you be interested in choosing a hotel based on Finnish design for your accommodation?

___ Yes ___ No Why? _____

Thank you for your help!