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MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES OF “LIVING LIKE A LOCAL”:
CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BLOGS ABOUT HELSINKI

Tourism Research, TourCIM

Master's thesis

Spring 2018

University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Sciences

Title: Memorable Experiences of “Living Like a Local”: Content Analysis of Blogs about Helsinki

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Degree programme / subject: Tourism Research, TourCIM (Tourism, Culture and International Management)

The type of the work: pro gradu thesis laudatur thesis

Number of pages: 90

Year: 2018

Summary:

The present research is concerned with the experiential dimensions of a memorable tourism experience within the notion of shareable tourism and particularly peer-to-peer accommodation. Both of the concepts, memorable tourism experiences and shareable tourism are significant in the accelerating competition of the present-day tourism industry. Only those experiences that are memorable have a possibility to influence travellers' future behavioural intentions, leading to repurchases, word-of-mouth and company's long-term profitability. In turn, there is a growing demand for tourism experiences that allow experiencing the destination authentically and “like a local”. Offering live like a local experiences is identified as a strategy for destination differentiation.

The aim of this research was to identify the experiential dimensions that are attached to a memorable “live like a local” experience in Helsinki, Finland. The study is employing qualitative methodology and interpretive paradigm. A content analysis with both deductive and inductive coding approaches was conducted for 14 blog texts in total written by travellers who visited Helsinki and locals living in the city. Memorable tourism experience (MTE) scale functioned as the deductive base for the analysis.

The results indicate that the memorable experience within shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation in Helsinki is based on six experiential dimensions: knowledge, social interaction, novelty, sensory stimulation, involvement and surprise. These dimensions induced both positive and negative emotions. Locals living in Helsinki attached certain elements to the experience of living like a local: atmospherics, being in a place and places of hipster subculture. In general, travellers' and locals' experiences of Helsinki were different. The role of locals as gatekeepers to the local culture was identified as crucial; whenever travellers were connected to locals, it resulted in a more authentic experience. In these experiences, travellers attached authenticity to staying in peer-to-peer accommodation and social interaction with locals. Suggestions for further research include for instance applying the research in other destinations and with samples from different demographic backgrounds.

Keywords: memorable tourism experience, tourism experience, sharing economy, peer-to-peer accommodation, blogs

Further information:

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1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is all about experiences. Academics agree that the two concepts of tourism and experience are inseparable. Sharpley and Stone (2010) describe, “To consume tourism is to consume experiences”. Ooi (2005, p. 51) explains that tourism industry is a business of selling experiences. Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007, p. 120) argue that nearly everything that a traveller undergoes during his or her travel is an experience. Pizam (2010, p. 343) reasons that hotels do not solely sell a place to sleep in, but rather an overall experience, and in fact, the phenomenon of tourism has been defined as “the delivery of positive experiences to tourists” (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1367). Oh et al. (2007, p. 119) describe that entire tourism destinations can be regarded as experiences since the physical characteristics of a destination are not the main motivation for traveling anymore, rather the emotional image of the destination as a whole. During this era of fierce competition, tourism businesses are finding ways to gain competitive advantage to stand out from the vast experience offering (Zhong, Busser & Baloglu, 2017, p. 202).

One way for tourism businesses to pursue competitive advantage is to offer tourism experiences that are memorable (see Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Kim, 2009; Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The memorability of tourism experience has been stated as a more valuable post tourism experience conceptualisation than customer satisfaction (see e.g. Kim et al., 2012; Xu & Chan, 2010; Zhong et al., 2017). This is because only those experiences that are memorable have the possibility to significantly shape travellers’ future behavioural intentions (Hoch & Deighton, 1989, Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon & Diener, 2003). Kim (2010, p. 125) explains that the memorable past tourism experience increases the likelihood that the traveller revisits the destination and generates positive word-of-mouth (WOM) that acts as a highly credible marketing material. Pine and Gilmore (1998) describe that memorable experiences influence travellers’ attitudes towards a destination positively. Similarly, Oh et al. (2007, p. 120) state that the value of the destination is determined by the nature of the experience that is formed in travellers’ minds after visitation. Pizam (2010, p. 343) concludes, “Creating memorable experiences is the essence and the raison d’etre of the hospitality industry”.

There is a certain type of experience that attracts the contemporary traveller: experiencing the destination authentically, like a local (Richards, 2014). Since the first tourism experience conceptualisations and increasingly nowadays, it is identified that travellers are urging to experience the destination authentically (MacCannell, 1973; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Richards and Russo (2014) explain, “We no longer just follow the guide book, we ask our friends, we email those who live in the destination and we avoid those pockets of “tourist culture” that still cling to the increasingly tumultuous experiencescape of the contemporary city”. In fact, as the word “tourist” has transformed into a metaphor for inauthenticity and shallowness, visitors want to distance themselves from tourists, and instead, identify as travellers, i.e. visitors that seek more individualised and authentic experiences (Week, 2012, p. 186). The development of culture in general has moved along the same lines. Sacco (2011) introduces that culture has transformed from what he calls Culture 1.0 to Culture 2.0, and recently emerged into Culture 3.0. Through these steps, culture has developed from a pre-industrial viewpoint of patronage and limited access to the co-creation of culture and the interchanging roles of producers and users who are connected through online platforms. Thus, in today’s tourism market, the destinations that are regarded as “hot” are far from the classic cultural capitals (Richards, 2014).

Shareable tourism is a phenomenon that has partially emerged due to the consumer trend of seeking to experience authentically and to “live like a local” (Paulauskaite, Powell, Coca-Stefaniak & Morrison, 2017, p. 1). Shareable tourism is a term developed by Hakkarainen and Jutila (2017) to capture the innovations of sharing economy within tourism industry. Even though travellers can use a variety of sharing economy platforms while travelling, for instance Uber for transportation or book a food experience through Withlocals, sharing in tourism is particularly related to accommodation. There is a wide selection of peer-to-peer accommodation available nowadays: Airbnb, Couchsurfing, Home Exchange, and the list goes on. Peer-to-peer accommodation is regarded as a gateway to experiencing the destination like a local (Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Due to the demand for experiences within shareable tourism and the uniqueness of local cultures in destinations, “Live like a local” experiences have been introduced as a strategy and method for destination differentiation (Richards, 2014). The

advent of experience economy and tightened competition in tourism industry has resulted in a serial reproduction of destinations and urban cultures (Richards, 2014; Fainstein, 2007). Richards (2014) argues that the reproduction of creative ideas and the counterproductivity of development efforts can be tackled by offering authentic local experiences and by the possibility to meet and be like a local.

1.1 Previous research

Research on memorable tourism experiences is commonly concentrated on describing positive customer experiences and finding the experiential dimensions that enhance the memorability (Knobloch, Robertson & Aitken, 2014, p. 600). Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the notion of memorable experience, as they described experiences with the adjective “memorable” when comparing experiences with the economic offerings of products and services. Since then, research on memorable tourism experiences has revealed a myriad of different experiential dimensions, for instance knowledge (Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), novelty (Kim, et al., 2012; Morgan & Xu, 2009), social interaction and cultivation of relationships (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004; Larsen & Jenssen, 2004; Morgan & Xu, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), affective emotions (Chandralal et al., 2015; Kim, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), extraordinary experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993), identity formation (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and element of surprise (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004; Knobloch et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, only in the past decade, memorable tourism experience has gained ground in tourism and hospitality as a critical concept (Zhong et al., 2017, p. 201). Kim (2009) in his doctoral dissertation was the first researcher who created a measurement scale that portrays the components that are validated to contribute to the memorability of a tourism experience. In addition to publishing the memorable tourism experience scale, MTE scale in short, in his doctoral dissertation, Kim presented the scale in a series of publications (Kim, 2009, Kim, 2010; Kim et al., 2012). The MTE scale consists of seven different experiential dimensions: hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness,

knowledge, involvement and novelty (Kim, 2009). Thus, these are the experiential dimensions that were identified to form a memorable tourism experience. Kim et al. (2012, p. 12) explain that the purpose behind developing the MTE scale was to form “a valid and reliable measurement scale that will assist in understanding the concept and in improving the effective management of the memorable experience”. After Kim’s conceptualisation, the previous research has mainly been quantitative in nature and aimed at measurement development and validation of the scale (Zhong et al., 2017, p. 202).

Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) questioned the validity and reliability of the MTE scale by Kim, as the sample consisted solely of college students. They argued that students do not represent a typical and leisure-oriented tourist segment due to irregular income and financial standing. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) developed a new instrument aiming at measuring memorable tourism experiences from the perspective of a more representative sample. This memorable tourism experience scale resulted in identifying ten memorable experiential dimensions: novel experiences; authentic local experiences; self-beneficial experiences; serendipitous and surprising experiences; significant travel experiences; local hospitality; impressive local guides and tour operators; social interactions; fulfilment of personal travel interests; and affective emotions. The following version of the measurement development by Chandralal, Rindfleish and Valenzuela (2015) led to identifying seven memorable experiential dimensions, namely local people, life and culture; personally significant experiences; shared experiences; perceived novelty; perceived serendipity; professional guides and tour operator services, and lastly, affective emotions.

According to Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 602), the diversity of the findings within memorable tourism experiences indicates that the memorability of is greatly dependent on the context of consumption and the type of the tourism experience. Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 602) continue to explain, “An experience such as skydiving is most likely memorable for reasons that are different from a romantic evening watching a sunset on a remote beach”. For instance, the conceptualisations by Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), and Chandralal et al. (2015) and MTE scale by Kim (2009) were all formed without concentrating on any specific experience or empirical setting. Afterwards, memorable

tourism experiences have been researched in specific empirical settings. Kim and Jang (2016) tested the MTE scale in cultural event experiences with similar results as the previous researches by Kim and his colleagues (Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012). Sthapit (2018) investigated memorable experiences in hotels in Rovaniemi, Finland, and discovered that in addition to practical memorable aspects such as comfortable bed and friendliness of the hotel staff, the findings support Kim's (2009) MTE scale dimensions of refreshment and novelty. Also the impact of cross-cultural differences on the perception of tourism experience memorability has been studied with varying results (Kim et al., 2014; Mazlina & Ahmad, 2016).

Even though there is a body of literature on tourism experience memorability, the work is still uncommon and very little is known of what distinguishes an experience from a memorable experience (Knobloch et al., 2014; Lanier & Hampton, 2009; Pearce & Packer, 2013; Zhong et al., 2017). As previous research has led to differing results and a myriad of dimensions are stated to impact the memorability, researchers agree that discovering the experiential dimensions that make a tourism experience memorable and reaching a comprehensive understanding requires further research (see Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Kim et al., 2012; Knobloch et al., 2014). Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1368) emphasise that the essence of memorable tourism experiences needs to be discovered as well as what truly makes experiences to stand out as memorable. The research on tourism experience memorability is characterised as a new and atypical interdisciplinary approach that links tourism research to positive psychology and memory research (Pearce & Packer, 2013; Zhong et al., 2017). Similarly, Ritchie and Hudson (2009, p. 123) identify the memorability of an experience as the most contemporary stream of research among experiences, and argue that true understanding of tourist behaviour concerning memorable experiences is a challenge for future research.

As according to previous research, the experiential aspects that are memorable are dependent on the experience context (Knobloch et al., 2014), the present study is examining memorable tourism experiences from the perspective of a specific empirical phenomenon—within the notion of shareable tourism. Little attention has been given to the relationship between memorable tourism experience and shareable tourism. However, a

small body of literature concerning the nature of authenticity within shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation exists. The authenticity is generally attached to two factors: to the function of staying in local inhabitants' residences (Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017) and to the interaction with local people (Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Steylaerts & O'Dubhghaill, 2012). There is a call for further research on the essence of authenticity sought from shareable tourism and how to live like a local, as researchers agree that these are the main motivations and driving forces behind the phenomenon (see e.g. Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). As Paulauskaite et al. (2017, p. 4) explain, "Successful delivery of authentic experiences is difficult to achieve without a good understanding of what such a thing might actually be".

1.2 Empirical phenomenon

Sharing economy is defined as "An economic model based on sharing underutilized assets from spaces to skills to stuff for monetary or non-monetary benefits" (Botsman, 2013). A variety of similar terms, such as collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer consumption and peer economy are used to describe this phenomenon depending on whether the emphasis is laid on the way of consumption, the operator, or the form of activity (Hakkarainen & Jutila, 2017, p. 183). Hakkarainen and Jutila (2017, p. 184) explain that sharing as such is not a new phenomenon as throughout the times, people have borrowed items for instance from and to their friends and neighbours. Similarly, Belk (2014, p. 1595) describes, "Sharing is a phenomenon as old as humankind, while collaborative consumption and the 'sharing economy' are phenomena born of the Internet age". Hence, the advancements in technology and different online social networking platforms have allowed easy matching of people and the development of sharing as an economy (Botsman, 2013; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016).

While the advancements in technology have enabled the emergence of sharing economy, several other aspects have driven its development and popularity. There has been a need to rethink the ways of consumption in the present-day world. Firstly, environmental pressures are very present nowadays due to climate change and finite natural resources (Botsman,

2013). Also economic realities and the recession have resulted in the fact that consumers attempt to be more mindful about their spending (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016, p. 1). Connecting people through sharing economy platforms leads to the maximum utilisation of existing assets and resources; the assets that are underutilised by someone can be utilised by another (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman, 2013; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). The phenomenon has shifted attitudes away from materialism and ownership, even though the dominant perspective to consumption has traditionally been “you are what you own” (Belk, 1988, p. 156). Botsman (2013) describes today’s society as “a connected society that is rethinking what ownership and sharing mean in the digital age”. Due to this change in attitudes, also the power distribution has shifted from large corporations and institutions to individuals and communities (Botsman, 2013). Botsman (2013) explains that instead of being passive consumers of the industrial economy, the sharing economy turns consumers into producers, creators and providers.

The importance of sharing economy and shareable tourism to the present social economic system is undeniable. The buzz around sharing economy started in 2010 after Botsman and Rogers published their book “What’s Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption” and already in 2011, sharing economy was listed as top ten inventions that will change the world (Walsh, 2011 as cited in Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015 p. 286). Sharing economy has a strong influence particularly on tourism industry—presently and in the future (see e.g. Cheng, 2016; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016; WTM, 2016). In fact, tourism scholars have envisioned that shareable tourism will transform the dynamics of the tourism industry (Cheng, 2016, p. 60). Guttentag (2015, p. 1206) states that the rise of Airbnb as well as other peer-to-peer accommodations can be regarded as “disruptive innovations”. According to the disruptive innovation theory by Christensen (1997 as cited in Guttentag 2015, p. 1194), a disruptive innovation does not seem like a threat for the existing market at first as it lacks the generally desirable key performance attributes. However, over time it transforms the whole market by appealing to an overlooked segment, which is usually the low-end of the market, or, by creating a whole new market. Eventually, the mainstream market will be captured as well.

Shareable tourism has been around less than a decade, but has already impacted the dynamics of tourism industry significantly (see e.g. Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). The yearly industry report by World Travel Market (WTM, 2016, p. 47) shows that the influence sharing economy is posing at the tourism accommodation industry is growing in importance. In 2015, 58 % of the industry said they are unaffected by sharing economy, whereas in 2016, the share was decreased to 47 %. In 2016, of the 53 % that had been affected by sharing economy, 32 % stated that the impact has been negative. Currently, Airbnb as a peer-to-peer accommodation is gaining ground in terms of market share and nights booked, as well as engaging new markets, for instance business travellers, who initially were not regarded as a potential segment. Due to its disruptive nature, phenomenal growth rates and impact on tourist behaviour, further research on shareable tourism can give valuable insights to the entire tourism industry concerning proactive tourism planning and relevant management decisions (Guttentag, 2015; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). In order to stay viable in the market, hotels need to recognise the potential and alternative benefits that shareable tourism offers and reassess their business model as well as ways of marketing (Guttentag, 2015, p. 1194; WTM, 2016, p. 47).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The present research is partaking in the scientific discussion on memorable tourism experiences and shareable tourism by examining the relationship between the two concepts. The focus of the research is specifically on peer-to-peer accommodation: the accommodation provided in a variety of shareable tourism platforms. As visitors to foreign countries, who seek individualised and authentic tourism experiences want to identify themselves as travellers (Week, 2012), in the empirical sections of the present research, these visitors are called as travellers. Moreover, the study is not only examining the authenticity of an experience within peer-to-peer accommodation from the travellers' perspective as previously done, but also introducing a new perspective: locals' viewpoint on authenticity, i.e. the experience of living like a local.

This research is conducted through qualitative methodology and interpretive social sciences paradigm by carrying out a content analysis of blogs. The aim of the research is to identify the experiential dimensions that are attached to a memorable “live like a local” experience in Helsinki, Finland. The research is seeking to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: “Which experiential dimensions become evident in the blog texts written by ¹travellers?”

RQ2: “How are the experiential dimensions illustrated in the blog texts written by travellers?”

RQ3: “Which Helsinki related experience elements become evident in the blog texts written by locals?”

RQ4: “What are the differences and similarities between locals’ and travellers’ experiences?”

Justification for the present research arises from the growing popularity of authentic tourism experiences within shareable tourism as well as from the increasing competition in tourism and experience industry. As shareable tourism has been widely acknowledged less than a decade, understanding the contributors behind its success and the possible disadvantages is crucial. In accordance with the suggestions for further research in previous literature (Knobloch et al., 2014), the study is concentrating on a specific empirical setting: Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Helsinki presents an ideal setting as the city is experiencing accelerating growth in both visitor numbers as well as the development of shareable tourism (Helsingin Kaupunki, 2018; TAK Oy, 2018; TEM, 2017; Yle, 2018). Therefore, research on memorable tourism experiences, shareable tourism and locals’ experiences of living like a local can provide valuable insights for tourism industry in Helsinki concerning product development and sustainable profitability.

¹ In these research questions, traveller refers to a person who uses peer-to-peer accommodation during his or her visit to Helsinki

1.4 Data and methodology

The empirical material of the present study consists of blog texts written by travellers who have visited Helsinki and by locals living in the city. In the present study, in total 14 blog texts, of which seven are written by travellers and another seven by locals were collected online through Google search by employing judgement sampling. These blog texts were coded in Atlas.ti content analysis software by utilising both deductive and inductive coding approaches. The MTE scale by Kim (2009) as the first comprehensive conceptualisation of the memorable tourism experience is chosen as a deductive starting point for the analysis, but also inductive approach was employed so that the research would not be solely affected by the previous classifications and theories. The coding process enabled identifying patterns in the dimensions that were recalled by the travellers and in how the locals perceived their home city.

Research on both memorable tourism experiences and authenticity within shareable tourism has been previously conducted mainly quantitatively by using questionnaires as data (see e.g. Kim, 2009; Kim & Ritchie, 2013; Mahdzar & Shuib, 2016; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). The downside in examining especially the memorability of past tourism experiences through questionnaires is that it may distort the results by offering cues to the respondent. As Carù and Cova (2008, p. 270) explain, experiences are something that the researcher cannot directly access, posing challenges to the research of memorable experiences. Based on previous research, academics agree that blogs are especially suitable for researching tourism experiences as well as the experiential dimensions that are memorable (see Carù & Cova, 2008; Knobloch et al., 2014; Rahmani, Gnoth & Mather, 2017; Volo, 2010). Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 602) argue that the future research should be executed from so called “insider’s perspective” by utilising tourists’ spontaneous narratives of their experience. To the author’s knowledge, tourism experience memorability has been previously researched by using blogs as data by Chandralal et al. (2015) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015).

The methodological choices of the present research are consistent with the interpretive social sciences paradigm. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 124) explain that interpretive

paradigm “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject cocreate understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures”. Firstly, interpretive paradigm supports the use of qualitative methodology (Jennings, 2010, p. 40). It also seeks to understand tourism behaviour directly from insider’s perspective by collecting data from natural real world settings rather than in experimental conditions (Jennings, 2010, p. 40; Ryan, 2000, p. 122). According to the paradigm, there is no single theory or reality that explains a phenomenon (Jennings, 2010, p. 40). Thus, even though the present research is intending to form an understanding on the memorable experience within shareable tourism in Helsinki, due to the subjective nature of experiences (see e.g. Kim et al., 2012; Ooi, 2005), it is evident that the desired experience cannot be designed and delivered to travellers. What tourism operators can do is to assist with the formation of a desired experience.

1.5 Structure of the study

The present research consists of seven main chapters. Theoretical framework is divided in three chapters, starting from the second chapter of the study. The second chapter defines the concept of tourism experience and moves on to introducing current topics in the scientific discussion on tourism experiences: memorable tourism experiences and experiences within shareable tourism and particularly peer-to-peer accommodation. Third main chapter concentrates on the factors behind the perceived importance of designing tourism experiences that are memorable from the managerial perspective. The last chapter of theoretical framework, the fourth chapter, discusses the experiential dimensions that have previously been attached to tourism experience memorability. The methodology of the research, i.e. the empirical setting, blogs as data and methods for data collection and analysis are introduced in the fifth main chapter. Sixth main chapter presents and discusses the findings: the experiential dimensions that are memorable in Helsinki within shareable tourism and the experience elements that locals attach to a live like a local experience, comparing these experiences to travellers’ experiences. Lastly, the seventh chapter concludes the main findings and introduces the managerial implications and limitations of the study as well as directions for further research.

2 DISCUSSION ON TOURISM EXPERIENCES

2.1 Tourism experience

The notion of experience was introduced in the field of marketing and consumption along with Holbrook and Hirschman's work in 1982. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) questioned a prevailing perspective according to which consumers' purchasing decisions were thought to be guided by a need to solve problems in a logical manner. Instead, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) suggested that attainable symbolic meanings, hedonism and esthetical criteria lead purchasing decisions especially in the case of leisure activities. Academics agree that pursuing hedonism is tightly related to purchasing tourism and leisure products, and thus, logic is not the main determinant for buying behaviour (see Cohen 1979; Prebensen, Skallerud & Chen, 2011; Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005). The importance of experiences continued to grow as before the turn of the millennium Pine and Gilmore (1998) anticipated that experiences would rise as a valuable economic offering; a fourth economic offering in addition to commodities, products and services. Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated that customers are increasingly searching for unique and differentiated experiences, and as this need cannot be satisfied with product-orientation, businesses need to change their management paradigm.

However, even though experiences in tourism field have been a central concept since the early days of 1960's (Uriely, 2005, p. 199), there still is no consensus on the definition of the term tourism experience (Knobloch et al., 2014; Oh et al., 2007; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). One factor that makes the definition and appropriate usage of the term tourism experience somewhat challenging is the fact that the word "experience" has dual meaning in English language (Aho, 2001). In some other languages, for instance in Finnish, German and Swedish, the word "experience" can be translated into two separate words that both have distinct meanings. For example in Finnish, experience is translated into "kokemus" as well as "elämys". Dilthey (1976 as cited in Turner, 1986, p. 35) suggests an etymology for the English word "experience" and explains its two possible meanings by making a distinction between a "mere experience" and "an experience".

“Mere experience is simply the passive endurance and acceptance of events”, explains Dilthey (1976 as cited in Turner, 1986, p. 35), whereas an experience is something that “stands out from the evenness of passing hours and years and forms”. This etymology captures rather well the two distinct meanings of the word experience.

In addition to the challenging nature of the word experience in English language, another aspect that makes the definition of tourism experience challenging is the subjective nature of experiences (Ooi, 2005). Researchers have attempted to define tourism experiences through convergent interpretations of an experience, through tourism motivations and by identifying experiential dimensions that tourism experiences encompass. For instance, MacCannell (1973) stated that tourists are on a quest for authentic and meaningful experiences. Additionally, tourists are often regarded as travellers for pleasure or refreshment (Cohen, 1979, p. 179). Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 170) conceptualised the service experience in tourism by identifying dimensions that structure experience. They discovered contributory elements: hedonics, peace of mind through offering physical and psychological safety, involvement and recognition. Comparably, Rageh et al. (2013) discovered a total of eight tourism experience dimensions: education, comfort, novelty, hedonism, recognition, relational, safety and beauty. Pine and Gilmore (1998) identified four realms, or dimensions, of experience product that all together form an ideal experience, i.e. “the sweet spot”: education, entertainment, escapism and aesthetic. Nevertheless, these are only examples of the numerous attempts of conceptualising tourism experience.

As seen from the examples above, research has revealed an extensive number of tourism experience interpretations, motivations and dimensions through which the tourism experience phenomenon is defined (see e.g. Cohen 1979; MacCannell, 1973; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Rageh et al., 2013). However, many of these conceptualisations are not researched further or unanimously supported due to their exclusive nature. Ryan (2000, p. 122) concludes the attempts of defining tourism experience aptly: “In short, tourist experiences are ‘messy’”. Research has shown that the myriad of different individual experiences is as diverse as the range of tourists and destinations (Prentice, 2004, p. 276). Thus, it is evident that tourism experience is a

subjective construct (Kim et al., 2012, p. 13), leading to the fact that no two tourists can have the exact same experience (Ooi, 2005, pp. 51–52).

The attempts to define tourism experiences have afterwards acknowledged the subjectivity of the experience. Due to this realisation, Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 166) define the concept of tourism experience as “the subjective mental state felt by participants during a service encounter”. By 2011, Ritchie had developed the definition further with another colleague, and they (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1369) explain: “Tourism experience is: An individual’s subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e., affective, cognitive, and behavioural) of events related to his/her tourist activities which begins before (i.e., planning and preparation), during (i.e., at the destination), and after the trip (i.e., recollection)”. Similarly, Rageh et al (2013, p. 126) describe customer or tourism experience as “the internal and subjective response that customers have of any direct or indirect contact with a company”. Volo (2009, 119) explains, “Tourism is essentially a marketplace of experience and tourists provide the ‘mental places’ where the tourist experience happens”. These conceptualisations of tourism experience are inclusive and rather vague, but the subjectivity of experience interpretations does not in fact allow for more detailed definitions.

2.2 Memorable tourism experience

The scientific dialogue on memorable tourism experience begun after it was identified that certain experiential dimensions are more vividly recalled than others due to the physiology of human memory. Memory can be divided into two separate functions: short-term memory, also called as working memory and long-term memory (Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 11). Pearce and Packer (2013, p. 11) explain that long-term memory stores two types of memories, which are semantic (i.e. factual and conceptual material) and episodic (i.e. personal experiences) in nature. These two types of long-term memory together are called autobiographical memory (Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 11), and it is here, where memories from tourism experiences are stored. However, the stored memories are not permanent unlike previously believed, but continually reconstructed (Braun-Latour, Grinley & Loftus

2006, p. 361). Research shows that the remembered experience is not identical to the experience one truly had (Wirtz et al., 2003, p. 520). Consistently, Bartlett (1932 as cited in Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 11) suggests that instead of having a memory, there is only the process of remembering.

There are multiple factors that distort or weaken individual's ability to remember past tourism experiences. Wirtz et al. (2003, p. 520) explain, "Research has shown people's memory of events is often inconsistent with their self-reported moment-by-moment experience during those events". Behavioural scientists argue that it is because tourists only remember a portion of all events during their holiday vividly, and "gloss over the rest" (Knobloch et al., 2014, p. 600). That is to say, the overall evaluation of a tourism experience is built primarily on peak moments of that experience, moreover, generally exaggerating the intensity of emotions during the past experience (Wirtz et al., 2003, p. 520). Other factors that distort the memory are for instance new information acquired after the experience, which falsifies the past experience (Braun-Latour et al., 2006), reinterpretation of past experience so that it is consistent with expectations (Klaaren, Hodges & Wilson, 1994) and plain memory retrieval errors, such as source confusion or selectivity (Hoyer, 2013). Certainly, the human memory is not unlimited either, which leads to pure inability to recollect all past tourism experiences one has had. Hence, not every tourism experience is memorable (Kim et al., 2012; Knobloch et al., 2014).

Research on tourism experience memorability is concentrated on describing positive customer experiences and revealing the experiential dimensions that enhance the memorability (Knobloch et al., 2014, p. 600). Kim et al. (2012, p. 13) operationally define a memorable tourism experience as "a tourism experience positively remembered and recalled after the event has occurred". This field of study is combining two perspectives to tourism experience research: the social science approach and the behaviour approach, with a stance of positive psychology and memory research (Volo, 2009; Zhong et al., 2017). Volo (2009, p. 112) explains that in social sciences, research aims to discover the essence of an experience, thus, concentrating on tourism motivations, attitudes and meanings with the focus on the subjective nature of tourism experiences. On the contrary, the marketing and consumer behaviour approach to tourism experiences examines experiences as an

offering. Typical research topics within the marketing and consumer behaviour approach are for example satisfaction, how past experience influences future consumption, and most recently, memorable tourism experiences and how to design experiences for the benefit of both tourists and industry (Volo, 2009, p. 116; Zhong et al., 2017, p. 204).

However, similar to the concept of tourism experience, there is no single agreed-on definition for memorable tourism experience (Knobloch et al., 2014). In general, the definitions are based on the memorable experiential dimensions found in each research and as a myriad of dimensions has been identified, there is no consensus on the construction of a memorable tourism experience. Another reason to lack of unified definition is the misleading use of the word “memorable” in experience research. Due to the dual conceptualisation of experience in English language, researchers have aimed at distinguishing the extraordinary nature of tourism experiences compared to everyday life by utilising the word memorable (see e.g. Dilthey, 1976 as cited in Turner, 1986; Oh et al., 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Knobloch et al. (2014) researched tourists’ perceptions and the usage of four words commonly used in describing experiences by researchers: “peak”, “extraordinary”, “special”, and “memorable”, and discovered that participants attached distinct meanings to each of the words, even though in academia, these words have been used interchangeably. Knobloch et al. (2014) state that the lack of unified terminology in the research of experiences is truly hindering the understanding of the concept of memorable tourism experience and advancing the scientific dialogue. They conclude that the comparability of results from research on tourism experiences is questionable, and in order to understand the nature of tourism experiences, the terms must first be clearly defined.

2.3 Tourism experience within peer-to-peer accommodation

Another addition to the scientific discussion on tourism experiences that is growing in importance at a fast phase is experiences within the notion of shareable tourism. The prominence of peer-to-peer accommodation within the scientific dialogue on shareable tourism is based on the fact that sharing in tourism industry is especially related to

accommodation. Tourism experience within peer-to-peer accommodation is an interesting field of study, since the experience is very different compared to an experience of staying in a regular hotel. The scientific dialogue on shareable tourism can be divided into three levels according to the parties involved: micro (individuals and users), meso (firms and organisations) and macro (government and community) levels (Cheng, 2016). The present research is concentrated on two of the levels: micro and meso levels.

Firstly, research on micro level is focused on the individuals and user of sharing economy and handles for instance how the phenomenon has been adopted by the users and what kind of benefits they are seeking (Cheng, 2016). Peer-to-peer accommodation lacks the usual factors that are of key importance in hotel selection: staff, services, security and a reputable brand image that conveys feelings of safety (Chu & Choi, 2000; Dolnicar & Otter, 2003; Guttentag, 2015). Yet, what staying in peer-to-peer accommodation offers includes for instance more affordable pricing and better level of equipment in the accommodation, but most importantly, it offers the traveller a chance to have a more authentic and local experience—to “live like a local” (Guttentag, 2015, Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Academics agree that experiencing the destination from the locals’ perspective is one of travellers’ main motivations for booking peer-to-peer accommodation (Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Stors & Kagermeier, 2015 p. 9). Tourism researchers agree that travellers are increasingly searching for authentic experiences and peer-to-peer accommodation is continually attracting even wider markets as it offers experiences that present-day travellers seek (see e.g. Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016; Week, 2012). In fact, the quest for authentic experiences as a consumer trend has been a partial contributor to the emergence and popularity of shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation (Paulauskaite et al., 2017, p. 1).

Even though it is acknowledged that travellers are seeking authentic experiences from shareable tourism, due to the multidimensionality of the concept it is not evident what kind of authenticity do they truly seek. Paulauskaite et al. (2017, p. 2) explain the reasons behind the vague and problematic nature of the term authenticity: “It is a mixture of philosophical, psychological, and spiritual concepts that can then be placed in objective,

constructive, and existential typologies”. The first typology of authenticity, objective authenticity, concentrates on the museum-like authenticity of toured objects (Wang, 1999, p. 350). For instance, MacCannell’s (1973) theory of staged authenticity, according to which the authentic local “back regions” can be staged and purposefully offered to tourists is an example of objective authenticity. The typology of constructive authenticity builds on the notion of objective authenticity. However, even though constructive authenticity is object-related, the authenticity does not depend solely on the object, but on the authenticity of the subjective experience (Uriely, 2005, p. 207). In turn, the typology of existential authenticity is not object-related. Wang (1999, pp. 365–366) explains, “What tourists seek are their own authentic selves and intersubjective authenticity”. Uriely (2005, p. 207) highlights further that existential authenticity “corresponds to a potential existential state of being, which is activated by the participant practices”.

A small body of literature concerning the essence of authenticity within peer-to-peer accommodation already exists. Guttentag (2015, p. 1197) describes that the authentic local experience includes the aspects of living like a local, interacting with the local people, for instance the host and neighbours as well as the possibility to stay in an area that is not a touristy neighbourhood, rather favoured by the locals. Guttentag (2015, p. 1198) states, “The appeal of such experiences is directly reminiscent of MacCannell’s (1973) description of tourists’ common desire to access ‘back regions’”. Steylaerts and O’Dubhghaill (2012) discovered that Couchsurfers regard the interaction with the hosts and the information obtained from them as authentic, whereas interaction for instance with hotel staff is inauthentic. In the context of Airbnb, Paulauskaite et al. (2017, p. 7) discovered that authenticity is attached to three themes: the interior and atmosphere in the accommodation, interaction with hosts, and lastly, interaction in local culture. Hence, in that case, authenticity is attached to the subjective perception of internal and external factors (Paulauskaite et al., 2017, p. 7).

The scientific dialogue on shareable tourism on meso level is concentrated on the firms and organisations and how they operate in this new marketplace; which strategies and frameworks are the most suitable to this context (Cheng, 2016). New strategies are indeed needed as shareable tourism is not only adding direct competition to the tourism market,

but also stimulating changes in travel behaviour (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016, p. 13). It is identified that the experiences within peer-to-peer accommodation engage travellers in a new way. These experiences increase travel frequency, length of stay and the number of activities participated during the travel. The causes behind these changes in behaviour include firstly the more affordable pricing of peer-to-peer accommodation compared to hotels, but importantly the social relationships with local community tied during the trip and the possibility to experience the destination authentically. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016, p. 14) reason that the realisation of these new ways of traveling increases the travel frequency. Additionally, they explain, “Because local hosts have rich information regarding cultural traditions and local environments, having access to this knowledge will enable travellers to explore and stay longer in the destinations”. Longer stays and meaningful interactions with locals lead to developing strong attachment and deeper understanding of the destination, which often results in loyalty and revisits (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016, p. 14).

There are few researches on the strategies for tourism operators on how to operate in this dynamic marketplace after the wide introduction of peer-to-peer accommodation. Guttentag (2015, p. 1207) suggests that hotels can either embrace alternative strategies, for instance focus more on luxury and high-end accommodation and services, or start competing directly with peer-to-peer accommodation. In order to compete directly with peer-to-peer accommodation, hotels could offer more affordable properties outside the most touristic areas that would be managed and for instance decorated by locals (Guttentag, 2015, p. 1207). Richards (2014) introduces live like a local experiences as a part of a destination differentiation strategy called creative tourism. Richards (2014, p. 121) explains, “The ‘serial reproduction’ of consumption-led and experience-based redevelopment strategies led to complaints about the ‘cloning’ of urban landscapes and increasing ‘placelessness’”. By offering creative tourism, destinations are aiming at achieving intangible competitive advantage, which will prevent the reproduction of creative ideas, and thereby the counterproductivity of development efforts. Richards (2014, p. 130) describes that the essence of the differentiation strategy is “embodied in experiences that allow one to ‘meet the locals’ or ‘live like a local’”.

Richards (2014) introduces examples on how destinations can differentiate by embracing their local characteristics and offer live like a local experiences to travellers. Firstly, Richards (2014, p. 131) states that local people are the gateway to living like a local; they know how to navigate the city and show travellers the places that are important and typical for locals. Hence, in order to experience this, travellers need to be connected with the locals for instance through a variety of shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation platforms. Den Dekker and Tabbers (2012, p. 130) state, “The easier a creative environment can be approached and infiltrated, the more attractive this city is for the contemporary tourist”. These experiences provided by locals are regarded as authentic since they are provided specifically by locals, and unique due to the process of co-creation (Richards, 2014, p. 132). Travellers value the unexpectedness and the gap between prior expectations and reality caused by these co-created experiences (Richards, 2014, p. 132).

Secondly, there are certain common characteristics for places that interest travellers wishing to live like locals. Richards (2014, p. 126) explains, “Places express their identity through different ‘languages’ attached to physical morphology, social and economic structures and communicative interaction, which can be ‘read’ by certain kinds of tourists”. Rather than visiting sights of high culture, travellers wishing to live like locals are interested in the atmospherics and everyday life of the destination (Richards, 2014, p. 132). It is not about seeing sights, but rather about being in places that are cool and trendy, and about “being seen” and “being cool”. Additionally, Richards (2014, p. 126) states that spaces that allow social interaction, such as plazas, bars and parks are attractive. Hence, the experiences that are sought are not tangible items and sights of high culture, but intangible encounters of local everyday life. Moreover, living like a local is attached to particular characteristics of a neighbourhood; neighbourhoods situated in more affordable areas outside the centre that are edgy, in the verge of gentrification and offering “safe danger” are regarded as attractive (Richards, 2014, p. 126). Still, the amount of research is scarce, and there is a need for further research in order to validate these findings.

3 MANAGERIAL IMPORTANCE OF MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

3.1 Creating loyal customers through memorability

Customer retention and loyalty are of great importance to businesses in every field. Shoemaker and Lewis (1999, p. 349) describe loyalty as follows: “Loyalty occurs when the customer feels so strongly that you can best meet his or her relevant needs that your competition is virtually excluded from the consideration set and the customer buys almost exclusively from you”. Hence, customer loyalty can be regarded as a predictor of future behaviour, contributor to consistent flow of revenue over time, and thus, a source of profitability and competitive advantage (Cossío-Silva, Revilla-Camacho & Vega-Vázquez, 2018; McIlroy & Barnett, 2000). This can be reasoned with the fact that it is claimed to be five times more expensive to attain a new customer than to retain an existing one (McIlroy & Barnett, 2000, p. 347). Customer loyalty consists of two sets of components: behavioural and attitudinal components (Cossío-Silva et al., 2018, p. 2). In tourism context, the former translates as revisiting a destination and re-practicing the offered tourist activities while the latter equals WOM communication and recommendations to friends, family, colleagues, etc. Practicing both types of loyalty leads to the strongest customer-company relationships (Cossío-Silva et al., 2018, p. 2).

Customer satisfaction has traditionally been regarded as the single most valuable indicator of business performance (Oliver, 1999, p. 33). Generally, customer satisfaction is defined through the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm according to which expectations function as a reference point for the evaluation of the actual experience (Zhong et al., 2017, p. 204). Oliver (1977, p. 480) explains three possible outcomes expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm can lead to: “one's expectations will be negatively disconfirmed if the product performs more poorly than expected, confirmed if the product performs as expected and positively disconfirmed is performance is better than anticipated”. Even though satisfaction through confirmation or positive disconfirmation of expectations has

been without a question one of the most important key performance indicators for businesses, research shows that more than 60 % of customers who switched to another brand stated that they were satisfied with the initial brand (Reichheld, 1993 as cited in Kim et al., 2012, p. 12). Hence, unlike dominantly believed, satisfaction does not necessarily guarantee a repurchase or customer loyalty, even though loyalty unquestionably requires satisfaction (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Oliver, 1999).

The attention has turned into understanding what are the aspects that truly create long-lasting impressions that translate to loyal behaviour and repurchase (Knobloch et al., 2014, 602). Kim et al. (2012) suggest that tourism experience memorability should be treated as a predictor of loyal behaviour over satisfaction. Kim et al. (2012, p. 13) describe, “satisfaction and quality alone are no longer adequate descriptions of the experience that today’s tourists seek”. Tourists are increasingly searching for memorable experiences, and in order to answer to this new demand and build loyal customer relationships, tourism companies need to form a “distinct value-added provision for products and services” (Oh et al., 2007, p. 119). In effect, research has revealed that memorable tourism experiences lead to high levels of satisfaction, and thus, Kim’s suggestion is accepted widely (see Arnould & Price, 1993; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Xu & Chan, 2010; Zhong et al., 2017). For instance, Wirtz et al. (2003) conducted a path analysis to reveal the relationship between predicted, on-line and remembered experience and future desire to repeat the same experience and the results revealed that remembered experience was in fact the only predictor of future behaviour. Hence, memorability acts as a crucial connecting element between satisfaction and loyalty since quite obviously, a satisfactory experience does not lead to loyalty if the tourist cannot remember it (Kim et al., 2012).

3.2 Effect of memorability on information retrieval behaviour

In marketing literature, memory has an important role during pre-purchase information retrieval phase (Hoyer, 2012; Kim, 2009). When making decisions, consumers retrieve information from two different sources, i.e. internal and external sources (, Kim & Morrison 2005, p. 161). Internal sources include the information stored in the long-term

memory, including memories from past information retrievals, continuous exposure to marketing stimuli and past experiences for example from holidays (Jang, 2005, p. 42). Sources for external information are commonly divided into four basic categories: personal (e.g. advice from family, friends and colleagues), marketer-dominated (e.g. advertisements offline and online), neutral (e.g. travel guides and agencies) and experiential sources (e.g. pre-purchase visits and contacts) (Beatty & Smith, 1978). Researchers agree that when consumers are retrieving information prior to making purchasing decisions, the internal information sources are accessed first (Lehto, Kim & Morrison, 2005; Jang, 2005; Johnson & Russo, 1984). Braun-Latour et al. (2006, p. 360) describe, "Memory is important for the tourism industry because future decisions are based on it".

The fact that information retrieval begins with accessing internal information decreases the need for external information retrieval (Lehto et al., 2005; Jang, 2005; Johnson & Russo, 1984). In case the consumer feels like more information is needed, doubts the reliability of remembered information or if the purchase involves high level of risk for example due to high prices, she or he then proceeds to search information from external sources (Lehto et al., 2005, p. 161). Of course, external information retrieval is not only conducted prior to a purchase; information retrieval behaviour can be also on going (Crotts, 1999, p. 153). Crotts (1999, p. 153) explains that on-going information retrieval is conducted with the aim to collect information for later use or just because the process as such is pleasurable. Still, research conducted by Crotts (1992) reveals that 39 % of the respondents reported that they had not retrieved any information prior to purchasing a vacation, thereby solely utilising internal information from memory. Hence, stored memories impact the decision-making process significantly—they offer cues that form and lead the pre-purchase information retrieval and mapping, inclusion and exclusion of options (Hoch & Deighton, 1989).

Consumers dominantly rely on internal information for two reasons. Firstly, consumers balance between perceived costs and benefits before proceeding to external information retrieval (Hoyer, 2013). In the case of private consumer, the cost of information retrieval is commonly rather time and effort instead of money. Due to the easiness and quickness of basing decisions on remembered information, the search cost is lower when executing

internal information search than external search (Mazursky & Hirschman, 1987 as cited in Jang, 2005, p. 43). Secondly, the internal information is regarded highly credible as it is based on personal memories and past experiences. Whether a satisfactory solution can be retrieved from the memory, the need for information retrieval from external sources is decreased (Lehto et al., 2005, p. 161). Wirtz et al., (2003, p. 520) rationalise this with the psychological principle of reinforcement (i.e. the relationship between behaviour and the event that follows it), according to which tourists will repeat experiences that they enjoyed and avoid the ones that have evoked negative feelings.

3.3 Memorability as a booster of word-of-mouth

Researchers agree that memorable tourism experiences are strongly connected to storytelling behaviour. Kahneman (2011, p. 388) explains the nature of tourism by stating: “Tourism is about helping people construct stories and collect memories”. In addition to creating stories and memories, tourists also want to share these experiences with others, and thus, Pearce and Packer (2013, pp. 8–9) explain that storytelling is a central part and an outcome of a tourism experience. Similarly, Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 170) identified that tourists want to be able to get memories and stories from their experience and also share them with others. Research by Zhong et al. (2017) supports this view by revealing that memorable tourism experience is a strong antecedent for storytelling behaviour. Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 604) uncovered that tourists define memorable tourism experiences as something that they would talk about in the future. Tourists’ urge to tell stories is connected to reliving the experience or to making sense of the past experience—consciously or unconsciously (Woodside & Megehee, 2009, p. 420). While the stories are shared over and over again, they form an even stronger data unit in the individual’s memory (Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 9).

Stories from memorable tourism experiences present another potential contributor to achieving competitive advantage for tourism companies. Storytelling is a particular type of WOM communication structured as a narrative (Zhong et al., 2017, p. 206). Harrison-Walker (2001, p. 63) defines WOM as “informal, person-to-person communication

between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver regarding a brand, a product, an organization, or a service". Kotler (1988 as cited in Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004, p. 186) states that WOM is one of the most important sources of information for consumers. Hence, the memorable tourism experiences mediated through WOM communications not only affect the tourists' own future information retrieval and purchasing behaviour, but also those processes of friends, family, colleagues and other people who they are in touch with (Braun-Latour et al., 2006, p. 360). WOM has a possibility to affect the formation of a destination brand (Hollenbeck, Peters, & Zinkham, 2008), and the stories can even reach a considerable audience through telling and re-telling (Pearce & Packer, 2013, p. 9).

WOM is likely to affect other consumers' future purchasing decisions for multiple reasons. Firstly, consumers do not trust in company-generated material since they realise its goal: to purposefully influence attitudes and beliefs (Villanueva, Yoo & Hanssens, 2008, p. 49). Instead, WOM is regarded as a reliable and unbiased source of information that reveals both the negative and positive sides of an experience, whereas company-generated material exhibits only the positive features (Volo, 2010, p. 299). Secondly, due to the intangible nature of experiences, the quality of an experience product is not certain before actually experiencing it (Jang, 2005, p. 43). Yet, through travel stories and recommendations from tourists who have attended the experience, the consumer can get information about the true quality, and get a validation for company-generated material (Jang, 2005, p. 43). Lastly, according to the principle of social validation we tend to reach for advice and support from others especially when we are uncertain on how to behave in a situation (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2002, p. 47). Hence, we not only utilise WOM to get information, but also to validate our decisions, as well as ourselves.

Internet with its numerous social media platforms has revolutionised WOM communications; in addition to mere information seeking, Internet and social media platforms have created a possibility to generate and share content to large number of people (Volo, 2010, p. 297). This electronic WOM, also known as eWOM or word-of-mouse, allows information to flow outside of one's typical inner circle (Volo, 2010, p. 299). Blogs as a type of eWOM are an extremely popular medium through which tourists

can share their travel stories to a wide audience. Sharda and Ponnada (2007, p. 2) describe blogs as “virtual diaries created by individuals and stored on the web for anyone to access”. Zehrer, Crofts and Magnini (2011, p. 1) describe that nowadays millions of consumers can connect with each other through travel blogs either as users or contributors. Volo (2010, p. 297, 308) explains that it seems that some bloggers are regarded as “key influencers” due to the knowledge and credibility mediated from their blog entries. Hence, travel blog posts have a potential to influence the decision-making processes of any consumer who happens to come across the text (Volo, 2010, p. 308).

WOM communication offline and online poses a risk for a company because the generated material cannot be controlled. Certainly, past experiences or WOM communications online or offline are not only positive and thus, in order to avoid negative WOM, the tourism destination or company’s performance is crucial. However, despite its riskiness, the production of WOM also involves advantages from company-perspective. Due to the unbiased nature of WOM communications, customers acquired through WOM are more loyal and long-term in comparison to customers who are acquired through company-generated marketing material (Villanueva et al., 2008, pp. 48–49). Additionally, Villanueva et al. (2008, p. 49) describe, “Because these communications can spread with less support from the firm’s marketing resources, the firm can enjoy larger financial gains from customer acquisition”. Therefore, acquiring customers through WOM leads to cost-savings in marketing and customer retention, as well as to overall sustainable profitability (Villanueva et al., 2008, p. 58).

3.4 Subjectivity as a challenge for tourism experience design

Due to the aforementioned behavioural intentions that memorable tourism experiences generate, tourism operators are interested in purposefully designing and offering memorable tourism experiences. The idea of purposefully designing memorable experiences started with Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) suggestion: “An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event”. Pine and Gilmore (1998)

argue that memorable experiences can be “staged”, and suggest five key experience-design principles in designing these staged memorable experiences: theming the experience, offering coherent positive cues, eliminating negative cues, introducing memorabilia and engaging all senses. Researchers and businesses have followed in these footsteps, although with slightly differing design principles (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1372). Lanier and Hampton (2009, p. 18) introduce three steps for designing memorable experiences: managing and intentionally designing the symbolic nature of the experience, creating engaging transactions that fit to the intended symbolic meanings and flow purposefully, and lastly, enhancing internalised value as the experiential offering is not only a means to an end, rather a means unto itself (Lanier & Hampton, 2009, pp. 18–19). Additionally, for instance, Tarssanen and Kylänen (2005) designed a multidimensional experience pyramid that comprises all the elements of a perfect experience product.

However, Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) theory of staging memorable experiences as well as the other derivative design principles have received critique. The subjective interpretations of a single tourism experience leads to the fact that no two tourists can have the exact same experience (Ooi, 2005, pp. 51–52). While the economic importance of memorable tourism experiences has been widely acknowledged, it is obvious that the design of these experiences is not that straightforward. The subjective nature of tourism experiences is justified with three perspectives; experiences are tied to cultural and social backgrounds, they arise from the combination of physical environment and social meanings embedded to them, and lastly, they are existential and dependent on the person’s mood and feelings (Ooi, 2005, p. 51; Sharpley & Stone, 2010, p. 5; Vespestad & Mehmetoglu, 2010, p. 88). For instance, Abrahams (1986, p. 55) explains that culture acts as a filter through which experiences are interpreted. Similarly, Sharpley and Stone (2010, p. 5) state that the nature of the past experience is principally dictated by the tourist’s socio-cultural world that is dynamic and evolving. Helkkula and Kelleher (2010, p. 37) argue that it is impossible to understand customer experience “in isolation of the customer's other lived experiences recalled within his or her phenomenological frame of reference”. Tourists are a diverse and unmanageable segment and therefore, the possibility to design memorable experiences to tourists is questioned (Ooi, 2005, p. 68).

Due to the subjectivity of experiences, the research on memorability has moved from analysing the objects a tourism business provides to analysing the meanings and interpretations those objects hold (Uriely, 2005, p. 206). Academics have realised that it is crucial to understand the essence of memorable tourism experiences so that the probability of delivering those experiences to tourists is maximized (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1369). Lanier and Hampton (2009, p. 11, 18) describe that instead of placing the attention on the type of the resource, the attention must be placed on the meanings and perspectives those resources present and facilitating the formation of intended subjective meanings. Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 604) argue that even though one ideal and predetermined memorable tourism experience does not exist, some experiential aspects are more memorable than others. Those experiential aspects should be recognized in order to advance the research on memorable tourism experiences, for proactive tourism product development and efficient resource allocation. Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1369) argue that tourism planners' key mission is to "facilitate the development of an environment (i.e., the destination) that enhances the likelihood that tourists can create their own memorable tourism experiences".

4 MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCE DIMENSIONS

4.1 MTE scale development process

Academics' and tourism operators' interest have revolved around identifying the dimensions of a memorable tourism experience due to the managerial importance of offering memorable experiences. Kim (2009) in his doctoral dissertation was the first researcher who created a measurement scale that portrays the components that are validated to contribute to the memorability of a tourism experience. The purpose behind developing MTE scale was to form "a valid and reliable measurement scale that will assist in understanding the concept and in improving the effective management of the memorable experience". The MTE scale development was a multi-staged process that included four stages related to the collection of a rich and valid data pool and finally the actual scale development and analysis stage.

The MTE scale development process was started with executing a comprehensive literature review on potential components of a memorable tourism experience (Kim, 2009). The literature review included elements discovered through research on the essence of tourism experiences and experiential dimensions as well as two very popular research streams among tourism experiences: tourism motivations and sources of customer satisfaction. In total 16 construct domains (i.e. hedonism, relaxation, stimulation, refreshment, adverse feelings, social interaction, happiness, meaningfulness, knowledge, challenge, assessment of value and service, unexpected happenings, personal relevance, novelty and participation) potentially contributing to a memorable tourism experience were extracted from the literature review (Kim et al., 2012, p. 16).

The next stage in this multi-staged measurement scale development was an open-ended interview to 62 individuals on their memorable tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2012). The respondents were asked to describe their most memorable tourism experience by using five

words. The responses from this preliminary study were used to validate the potential construct domains that were found from the literature review. After this, the preliminary instrument was shown to a jury of experts in tourism experiences for further refinement. Lastly, the MTE instrument was empirically evaluated by conducting a quantitative questionnaire survey to U.S. college students in a Midwestern university (Kim et al., 2012, p. 16). The respondents were asked to recollect a past tourism experience and rate the defined construct domains and their contributory items on a 7-point Likert-scale. 511 usable questionnaires were returned for final scale development and validation. After purification, assessment of latent structure and scale validation, the final defined MTE scale consists of 7 different experiential dimensions: hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement and novelty (Kim et al., 2012).

4.2 MTE scale dimensions

Hedonism

Human behaviour is naturally pleasure-seeking (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 135), and especially when consuming leisure experiences, hedonistic behaviour is fundamental (Hightower, Brady & Baker, 2002). Leisure experiences are commonly categorised as satisfying experiences that involve satisfying feelings of relaxation, excitement, fun and enjoyment (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p. 7). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 134) explain that when consuming tangible products, the benefits that the product offers are mostly objective features, such as durability or size, whereas when consuming experiences, the benefits are subjective symbolic meanings, hedonism and esthetical criteria. In a study on tourism motivations, Cohen (1979, p. 193) presents that tourists are traveling for mere pleasure. For instance, because of pleasure and enjoyable weather “sun and sand tourists” travel en masse to the beaches in Southern Europe (Prebensen et al., 2011, p. 858). Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 170) list hedonism as a service experience dimension in tourism. They explain, “Respondents confirmed the need to be doing what they loved or liked, to have their imaginations stirred and to be thrilled by the service activities”.

Tourism experience memorability is linked to positive feelings by several academics (see Knobloch et al., 2014; Chandralal et al., 2015; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Research by Tung and Ritchie (2011) support the memorability of positive feelings, and they describe these emotions with the term “affect”. Affect covers various positive emotions experiences during the travel, such as happiness and excitement. Consequently, Chandralal et al. (2015) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) identify affective emotions as an enhancer of tourism experience memorability. They describe that various positive emotions, such as happiness, enjoyment and excitement, are embodied in the affective component. Kim (2009) categorise memorable positive feelings under the term “hedonism”. Kim et al. (2012, p. 15) define hedonism as “pleasurable feelings that excite oneself”. In the MTE scale the dimension of hedonism is described with four items: thrilled about having a new experience, indulged in the activities, really enjoyed this tourism experience, and exciting (Kim, 2009, p. 52).

Refreshment

Kim et al (2012, p. 15) define refreshment simply as “The state of being refreshed”, and further describe it with four items, namely liberating, enjoyed sense of freedom, refreshing and revitalized (Kim, 2009, p. 52). Refreshment is related to the out-of-ordinary nature of experiences: tourists will feel refreshed after experiencing something other than normal everyday life. Cohen (1979, p. 185) defines tourism as a “mechanism which recharges the batteries of weary modern man, refreshes and restitutes him so he is able again to return to the wear and tear of ‘serious’ living”. Indeed, refreshment is identified as a motivation that is very evident for touristic activities. For instance, Prentice (2004, p. 264) explains the purposes of tourism through two paradigms: the romantic paradigm and mass tourism paradigm. The mass tourism paradigm sees tourism as a means to escape the everyday life into a dream world. In effect, the escapist experience is one of the most acknowledged touristic motivations. Pine and Gilmore (1998) explain the escapist experience by highlighting that the tourists do not solely leave from everyday life when traveling, but they also travel to a specific place that is worthy of their time. Even though refreshment is identified as a valuable touristic motivation as such, it can be argued that it is very similar to the hedonistic motivation.

Meaningfulness

Arnould and Price (1993, p. 42) state that consumers buy experiences to give their life a meaning. Consistently, Graburn (1983 as cited in Otto & Ritchie 1996, p. 166) defines tourism as one of “institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives”. According to the second paradigm aiming at explaining the purposes of tourism by Prentice (2004, p. 264), i.e. the romantic paradigm, tourism products are consumed in order to achieve “personal enlightenment, with motivations to consume the extraordinary as a means to self-education and spirituality”. Certainly, the process of giving meaning to one’s life can appear in many forms depending on what the individual regards as meaningful. According to MacCannell (1973), tourists are on a quest for authentic experiences; they are searching for something that cannot be found in the individual’s daily life, something meaningful. On the contrary, Arnould and Price (1993) state that a sense of danger as a source of self-renewal makes an experience extraordinary and meaningful: The fear aroused by such experiences helps crystallize one's sense of self” (Donohue, 1991 as cited in Arnould & Price, 1993, p. 36).

Kim et al. (2012, p. 15) define meaningfulness as “A sense of great value or significance”, and describe it with three items: I did something meaningful, I did something important and learned about myself (Kim, 2009, p. 52). Several academics identify similar elements as enhancers to the tourism experience memorability. Tung and Ritchie (2011) call a similar memorable element as “self-discovery”. A respondent in their research describes the self-discovery as follows: “An eye opening experience that you learn more about the world and expand your perspective in life” (Tung & Ritchie, 2011, p. 1380). The memories from these types of experiences are long lasting and change one’s way of life. Similarly, Chandralal et al. (2015) identify personal significance as a contributor to the formation of a memorable tourism experience. An experience of personal significance is in a way personally beneficial; it might be very exclusive in nature or for example a lifelong dream (Chandralal et al., 2015, p. 685).

Knowledge

Gaining new knowledge appears typically among research on tourism motivations. Kim and Ritchie (2014, p. 3) explain that one of the motivations why people travel is the urge to gain new knowledge and an overall understanding of the visited destination. Oh et al. (2007, p. 121) describe that knowledge and skills, both specific and general, are typically accumulated through various educational experiences in the destination. Arnould and Price (1993) state that tourists attain personal growth through acquiring knowledge, which makes an experience extraordinary. Arnould and Price (1993, p. 36) conducted their research in river rafting context, where knowledge appears in the form of learning very practical skills such as paddling techniques, use of safety equipment and new jargon that is tightly related to the boatman's lifestyle. Pine and Gilmore (1998) list education as one of four realms, or building blocks that form an optimal and memorable tourism experience. They explain that knowledge and skills are accumulated through active engagement of mind or body. Tung and Ritchie (2011) too acknowledge the development of physical skills and overcoming physical challenges as a memorable experiential element.

Kim et al. (2012, p. 15) define knowledge as "information, facts, or experiences known by an individual". It is further described with three items: exploratory, knowledge and new culture (Kim, 2009, p. 52). It is clear that the component of knowledge is overlapping with the memorable component of local culture. Tung and Ritchie (2011) present acquiring new knowledge of the destination as a memorable experiential element, hence combining the components of local culture and knowledge identified by Kim (2009). Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1380) explain that the element involves "learning the history, local culture, way-of-life, natural physiography, and language of the destination". There are also similarities between the components of knowledge and meaningfulness. According to the romantic paradigm by Prentice (2004) tourism products are consumed as a means to self-education. Among the memorable tourism experience components identified by Chandralal et al. (2015), the memorable components of meaningfulness and knowledge are combined, forming a component called personal significance, which in addition to the meaningful nature involves the aspect of intellectual development and gaining new skills.

Involvement

Kim et al. (2012, p. 15) define involvement as “the level of involvement of oneself with a tourism experience”. It is composed of the following items: I visited a place where I really wanted to go, I enjoyed activities which I really wanted to do and I was interested in the main activities of this tourism experience (Kim, 2009, p. 52). Hence, involvement refers to personal relevance towards a tourism experience. Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 170) define involvement as the willingness of being an active participant in the activity. Kim and Ritchie (2014, p. 3) explain that involvement can occur in two different phases in relation to tourism experiences: during planning stage and on-site. During the planning stage, tourists visualize themselves in the activities and develop expectations and emotions towards the upcoming experience. Higher levels of personal relevance and involvement towards an upcoming tourism experience results for example in high expectations, more intense emotions as well as feelings of anticipation. On-site, involvement occurs as immersion and active participation in touristic activities (Kim & Ritchie, 2014, p. 4). Otto and Ritchie (1996, p. 170) add that the sense of on-site involvement is enhanced by being educated and informed accordingly and having control over the experience outcome. Logically, if an experience is personally important and relevant for a tourist, it will also be more easily remembered, than an experience that is indifferent for the individual.

Novelty

Kim et al. (2012, p. 15) define novelty as “A psychological feeling of newness resulted from having a new experience”. It is further described with four items: once-in-a lifetime experience, unique, different from previous experiences and experienced something new (Kim, 2009, p. 52). Novelty seeking is one of the most typical motivations attached to tourism (Duman & Mattila, 2005, p. 313). Simply, people travel since they want to experience something new (Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 733). Contradictory aspects, familiarity and novelty, both have been argued to enhance the memorability of a tourism experience. Familiarity is often connected to memorability, as repetitive stimuli and rehearsal logically thinking leads to improved memory (Cox & Cox, 1988). However, research is dominated by the perspective that familiar events are regarded as uninteresting,

and thus they are not memorable (Kim, 2014, p. 35). For instance, Chandralal et al. (2015) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) define novelty as one component of a memorable experience, since unusualness, uniqueness and newness enhance the memorability. Kim (2014, p. 35) explains, “If the novelty factor of an event is high, all facilities of the memory system are employed to implant the new event”.

The component of novelty is challenging as it involves overlapping aspects with other researched memorable components (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Firstly, novelty involves the concept of change from routine and everyday life that is related to the escapist motivation introduced within the component of meaningfulness. Berlyne (1950 as cited in Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 736) explains that tourists’ desire for novelty implicates the “urge to escape to some new form of stimulation”. Pearce (1987 as cited in Kim & Ritchie, 2014, p. 3) continues by stating that tourists are seeking novel experiences in order to satisfy their need to experience something new—the experience must be something that is not found in their homeland. Secondly, novelty is attached to the memorable component of arousal (Kim & Jang, 2016, p. 13). Arousal is basic trait that moves on a continuum from sleep to anxious excitement (Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 734). By seeking novel experiences tourists are alleviating boredom as home environment is not enough to satisfy their need for optimal arousal (Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 736). Lastly, Berlyne (1950 as cited in Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 736) categorise surprise, a commonly identified experiential component as such, as one dimension of novel stimuli.

Local culture

Experiencing local culture is regarded as an important travel motivation (Kim, 2014, p. 37). MacCannell (1973, p. 590) explains the motivation by applying Goffman’s front-back dichotomy into tourism settings: “The front [region] is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back [region] is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and prepare”. He argues that tourists have an urge to enter the back regions in order to gain more authentic tourism experiences and experience the local way of life. In the MTE scale, local culture is composed of three items, namely, good impressions about the local people, closely

experienced local culture, and local people in a destination were friendly (Kim, 2009, p. 52). As can be seen, these items are closely connected to the social interactions between the tourist and local people. In fact, in a further study on MTE scale in a cross-cultural context, Kim and Ritchie (2014) renamed the memorable component of local culture as “Social Interaction and Local Culture”.

The importance of local culture, and namely the social interaction with locals as an enhancer of tourism experience memorability has been acknowledged widely. Farber and Hall (2007, p 258) connect interaction with locals with the formation of an extraordinary tourism experience, which for them was an unexpected result. Chandralal et al. (2015, p. 684) establish local people, life and culture as a memorable experiential dimension. They describe that especially meeting and visiting local peoples’ homes, getting to know their daily life and being introduced with the local culture and cuisine makes an experience memorable. The importance of local culture and people is evident in three separate memorable dimensions in Chandralal and Valenzuela’s (2015) research results: authentic local experiences, local hospitality, impressive local guides and tour operators. Moreover, their component of social interaction also highlights the importance of interaction with locals. Similarly, Morgan and Xu (2009) state that memorable tourism experiences result from social interaction either with travel companions or locals. Lastly, Canadian Tourism Commission (2004, p. 11) identifies the role of local experts as a vital contributor to a memorable tourism experience, and the importance of including local experts to tourism experiences lies in the fact that they can add value to the experience through authentic stories and local knowledge.

4.3 Other dimensions associated with memorability

As the MTE scale is not the only effort to conceptualise memorable tourism experience, there are many other memorable dimensions frequently identified by other academics. Firstly, social interaction is frequently presented as a contributor to the memorability of a tourism experience. In MTE scale, the social interaction was identified solely in relation to the dimension of local culture (Kim, 2009). In other studies on memorable tourism

experiences, academics widely support also the memorability of social interaction and the possibility to share the experience with travel companions, family, loved ones, friends or strangers as a contributor to a memorable experience (Farber & Hall, 2007; Knobloch et al., 2014; Larsen & Jenssen, 2014). Additionally, Canadian Tourism Commission (2004, p. 10) state that tour guides are an important contributor to the formation of a memorable tourism experience; tour guides connect the group of tourists together, and thus, influence the formation friendships. Tung and Ritchie (2011) argue that social development through improving in existing friendships, forming new friendships, and better appreciation of family and relatives makes a tourism experience more memorable. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015), Chandralal et al. (2015) and Morgan and Xu (2009) add that experiences shared with others are more exciting, enjoyable and memorable.

Secondly, negative emotions have been included in the memorability research often, but with varying results. For instance, Kim (2009) and Chandralal et al. (2015) do not confirm a connection between memorability and negative experiences. Similarly, Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1378) state that negative experiences are rarely remembered. Knobloch et al. (2014) state that a tourist can experience negative feelings due to an unexpected happening during the travel, but the whole experience will only be memorable, if the overall evaluation of the happening is positive. However, Wirtz et al. (2003) unexpectedly discovered that negative experiences are memorable, and as a matter of fact, the level of negativity was intensified in the retrospective evaluations. Oh et al. (2007, p. 123) state that negative experiences will definitely lead to a long lasting memory and a negative attitude towards the destination. Because of this, Ritchie and Hudson (2009, p. 118) advise tourism companies to not exclusively concentrate on the positive side of an experience, but to focus on the totality, i.e. both negative and positive sides.

Unexpected happenings and equivalent terms such as surprise and spontaneity are connected to the memorability of a tourism experience extremely frequently. Abrahams (1986, p. 64) describes that tourists are secretly waiting for positive and spontaneous unexpected happenings. Tung and Ritchie (2011, p. 1378) claim that expectations are related to the dimension of surprise; the difference between prior expectations and the actual experience can lead either to positive or negative surprises. Canadian Tourism

Commission (2004, p. 11) also attach the element of surprise to tourism experience memorability and explain: “The beauty of surprise situations is that they create unique opportunities for human interaction, generate a special connection with the place, and build a common bond between travellers”. Knobloch et al. (2014) and Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) support that an unexpected happening makes an experience positively memorable. Chandralal et al. (2015, p. 687) address the unexpectedness with the term “serendipitous”. They define, “Serendipitous experiences are unplanned but positive and memorable incidents that happened during travel”. Farber and Hall (2007) unite novel, unique and unexpected experiences as one memorable dimension. As a critique to this categorisation, an unexpected happening is not necessarily novel or unique, albeit a novel or unique happening can be an unexpected one.

5 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BLOGS

The present study examined memorable tourism experience dimensions and the experiences of living like a local within shareable tourism through qualitative methodology and interpretive social sciences paradigm. Boas (1943 as cited in Jennings, 2010, p. 166) explains the key principle behind qualitative methodology: “If it is our serious purpose to understand the thoughts of a people, the whole analysis of experience must be based on their concepts, not ours”. Hence, qualitative methods were selected as they allow investigating reality in all its complexity (Walle, 1997, p. 535). The methodological choices of the present research are introduced in more detail in the following chapters.

5.1 Empirical setting

The empirical setting of the present research includes examining the memorable tourism experiences within shareable tourism by concentrating on a single destination and from the point of view of a particular traveller segment. This decision was made as destination and segment specific results may lead to more practical and feasible results than examining the memorability from the perspective of a variety of experiences acquired in different destinations. Moreover, in this study, all separate activities experienced in Helsinki during the visit were regarded as a single experience.

Helsinki, the capital of Finland is situated in the South coast of the country was chosen as the destination for the present study. Helsinki is a destination that is becoming more and more popular. Year 2017 was a record-breaking year for Helsinki regarding tourism; the overnight stays increased by 13 % compared to the previous year (Helsingin kaupunki, 2018). In 2017, the total number of overnight stays by international tourists was 2 259 143 (Visit Finland). Top countries of origin of these tourists were Russia, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom and USA. This growth phase exceeds the corresponding percentages of many capitals of neighbouring and Scandinavian countries: Stockholm, Oslo, Tallinn and Copenhagen. The pull factors behind the rising popularity of Helsinki include outdoors and closeness to nature as well as interesting urban culture and events. Additionally, since

today's travellers are seeking local and authentic experiences, Helsinki as a small city and a relatively new destination for masses can offer these experiences better than the most popular European cities (Helsingin kaupunki, 2018). Due to the increasing popularity of Helsinki as a destination, research on the travellers' experiences is essential for instance regarding tourism product development.

Sharing economy and shareable tourism as rising phenomena are well acknowledged in Helsinki. According to the report by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland (TEM, 2017, p. 9), in other European countries, sharing economy is currently more developed and versatile than in Finland. In 2016, the total value of individual purchase events within sharing economy was slightly over 100 million EUR in Finland. Accommodation was the second largest sector with 19 % share of the total purchases after collaborative finance with 65 % (TEM, 2017, p. 5). However, based on the history of other European cities, aggressive growth rates are anticipated in the very near future. In fact, the total value of individual purchase events in 2020 is estimated to reach 1,3 billion EUR (TEM, 2017, p. 20). This accelerating growth is already visible; according to a recent research, a fifth of the total accommodation capacity in Helsinki is offered on Airbnb (Yle, 2018). In January 2018, the total sales concerning entire apartments or houses (i.e. not private or shared rooms) on Airbnb was 1,76 million EUR with an increase of 63 % from the previous year (TAK Oy, 2018). Since shareable tourism is anticipated to introduce a significant change in the dynamics of tourism industry in Helsinki, research on the phenomenon is of great importance. The research findings may provide important findings and understandings since the phenomenon is still on its early stages and developing.

The specific segment of travellers that was included in the empirical setting is travellers who stayed in peer-to-peer accommodation during their visit to Helsinki. This specific segment was chosen as the target for the present research since particularly their insights are most valuable in developing shareable tourism in Helsinki. Ooi (2005, p. 52) states that it is impossible, or at least extremely challenging to appeal to all segments with a single designed memorable tourism experience, thus choosing the target segment is essential. Wenger (2008, p. 171) explains this further, "While destinations may benefit from paying attention to all blogs that concern them, the more important blogs are likely to be those

written by representatives of key markets and markets that are targeted for growth”. Additionally, there is a lack of research about the experience of living like a local from the point of view of locals living in the destination. Previously, the authenticity of shareable tourism and living like a local has been examined through travellers’ experiences in the destination (see e.g. Paulauskaite et al., 2017). In the present research especially locals’ experiences of living like a local is an aspect that is considered as significant—locals are the “experts” who have the most reliable information on the matter.

5.2 Blogs as data

The present study was conducted qualitatively by carrying out a content analysis of blog texts. Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 602) argue that the research on memorable tourism experiences should be conducted without biasing the results, by utilising spontaneous and authentic travel narratives, through so called “insider’s perspective”. Based on previous research, academics agree that blogs are especially suitable for researching tourism experiences as well as the experiential dimensions that are memorable as they offer exactly such authentic insider’s perspective (see e.g. Carù & Cova, 2008; Knobloch et al., 2014; Rahmani et al., 2017; Volo, 2010). For instance, Rahmani et al. (2017, p. 1) explain that blogs are a channel through which personal accounts of personal experiences are mediated. Similarly, Volo (2010, p. 298) explains: “[Blogs] represents an occasion for tourism marketers to ‘view’ the tourist in his/her natural mental environment and to explore their experiences”. Blogs are regarded as authentic due to their unsolicited nature—they are not initially meant for research purposes (Chandralal et al., 2015, p. 681). Additionally, what makes blogs especially suitable for researching memorability is the fact that blog posts are usually not written while having the experience, but rather after it. Therefore, only those aspects of a tourism experience that are remembered are included in the blog texts.

The research data consists of two separate data sets: travellers’ blog posts about their visit to Helsinki and local Helsinkian’s blog posts about their home city. Therefore, the data collection was also two-phased. Concerning the first data set, blog posts that were (1) written in English (2) by an international traveller (3) who had visited Helsinki (4) and

stayed in a form of peer-to-peer accommodation were included in the sampling frame. The end sample was decided by employing non-probability methods, and more precisely judgment sampling (Bradley, 2013). Even though, non-probability methods are relying on human judgement, and thus, are highly subjective (Smith, 2010, p. 201; Bradley, 2013, pp. 167–168) the method was suitable for the present research as the aim was to form an overall perception of the memorable tourism experience from the point of view of a segment that is seeking “live like a local” experiences in Helsinki, Finland. The demographic qualities, such as nationality, age or gender and their effect on the experience perception were not in the centre of the present research—rather the destination that was travelled to. Due to these specifications, the aim was to compose as versatile sample as possible regarding the demographics of the travellers by employing judgement sampling.

In general, bloggers can choose between two options when deciding where to publish the content: in a blogging platform, for instance www.travelblog.org, that hosts blogs from a number of travel bloggers as sub-domains, or under a separate individual domain. A great deal of bloggers nowadays host their own domains instead of listing their blogs in general platforms. Therefore, even though the data collection was started by searching blog entries from www.travelblog.org, the most suitable data was found from individual blog domains through Google search. The search words included “travel blog”, “Helsinki” and a variety of word describing the accommodation, such as “Airbnb”, “Couchsurfing” and “apartment”. The search results were reviewed starting from the top results. The sample was delimited to its final form by evaluating the richness of information and the length of the text as well as its relevancy. Blog posts that did not reveal the chosen type of accommodation were discarded. Additionally and importantly, blog posts that expressed that they were written due to a sponsorship were not included in the sample either. Hence, the chosen blog posts were authentic travel narratives in that sense.

The end sample included seven blog posts from seven international travellers. Sample included both female and male bloggers, as well as couples. The manifested or estimated ages ranged from 25-year-olds to the expressed status of “retired”, and the sample included evenly travellers from different ages between these two extremities. The home countries of the travellers included United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Australia

and Canada. The blog posts were written between the years 2011 and 2017. The travellers had stayed in different peer-to-peer accommodation options: Airbnb, House Sitting, Roomorama and a home visit through SERVAS International, which is a non-profit organisation aiming at advancing peace and intercultural understanding. In one case, the accommodation was initially booked from Airbnb, but due to unexpected problems with the host, the accommodation was cancelled and the traveller moved to a hotel. Nevertheless, this text was included in the sample due to the intention of staying in an Airbnb apartment, and thus being a representative of the chosen research segment. The sample included bloggers that travel full-time, and thus are writing the blog as their profession, but also those who have a job in their home countries and write due to other reasons than earning money. These seven blog entries by travellers were assigned with identifiers T1 to T7 for easy reference during analysis phase.

Concerning the second data set, the sampling frame included blog posts written by inhabitants living in Helsinki concerning either a day they spent in the city or suggestions how they would spend a day in the city. Being “local” was defined as having lived in Helsinki for over than two years. Again, judgement sampling was employed in order to compose a versatile sample concerning the locals’ demographic features. The blog posts were searched from Google and additionally from www.blogit.fi, which is an open Finnish blog platform where anyone can freely list their blog in order to be found more easily by readers. The platform works with simple search engine logic by using search words. The search in both Google and [blogit.fi](http://www.blogit.fi) was conducted by utilising for instance the following search phrases in Finnish: “what to do in Helsinki”, “a day in Helsinki”, and “tourist in my own city”. Again, the sample was delimited to its final form by looking at the length of the text, the quality of its content and its relevancy. Sponsored blog posts were not included in the sample. Additionally, the blog needed to include the information about the blogger’s relationship to Helsinki—has the blogger been born and raised in the city or when has he or she moved in the city?

The end sample concerning this second data set included seven blog posts from seven Helsinki-based bloggers. The end sample consisted of blog posts by both male and female bloggers as well as one couple. The locals’ ages, either estimated or manifested, were

evenly distributed along the age range from 25 to 55. Many of the locals were native Helsinki, and the one who had moved to the city most recently had been living in the city for “almost three years” at the time of writing the text. The blog posts were written between the years 2014 and 2018. Again, the levels of professionalism involved in the blogging varied: some of the locals are professional bloggers, and some write besides their day job. These seven blog entries by locals were assigned with identifiers L1 to L7 for easy reference. As all of the blog texts in this second data set were written in Finnish, the quotations from data presented among the findings were translated into English by the researcher.

5.3 Content analysis

The data analysis method for the research was content analysis, which is a range of tools that are used to examine graphic communications and printed material (Smith, 2010, p. 201). Content analysis is a non-obtrusive technique as it aims to describe the data with extreme precision and optimal objectivity (Stepchenkova, Kirilenko & Morrison, 2009, p. 455). Weber (1990, as cited in Stepchenkov et al., 2009, p. 455) states that it is “a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text”. Content analysis helps in revealing the meaning of the data by identifying structures and patterns (Stepchenkov et al., 2009, p. 455). To assist the analysis, the data was coded in Atlas.ti content analysis software. Using software in content analysis helps in handling large amounts of data and its effective categorisation. Even though in tourism research, the data is increasingly qualitative in nature, the variety of available content analysis software is not widely used (Stepchenkov et al., 2009, p. 467). Stepchenkov et al. (2009, p. 467) state that this derives from the fact that content analyses have been conducted as a simple word counts without attempts to seize the deeper meanings of the data. Uncovering the dimensions and interpretations behind the memorable tourism experience was the aim of the present research and therefore, using Atlas.ti software helped in achieving it effectively.

Both coding approaches, deductive and inductive coding were employed. In deductive coding, the codes arise from a pre-selected theory (Mehmetoglu & Dann, 2003, p. 1). Thus, in this case the deductive codes are the memorable dimensions in MTE scale by Kim (2009). In inductive coding, the researcher applies codes into the data without following an existing theory; the concepts are grounded in the data (Mehmetoglu & Dann, 2003, p. 5). Some academics support the deductive approach strongly. For instance, Neuendorf (2002, p. 11) argues that the decisions concerning the coding rules must be done prior to the actual coding process. Wickham and Woods (2005) state that inductive coding can lead to the creation of new codes without a logical purpose. However, Elo and Kyngäs, (2008) advise to use the inductive approach if the knowledge concerning the phenomenon under research is fragmented. Inductive coding is not aiming at testing a theory, but at openly examining the data and its meanings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). In general, the decision between the two coding approaches is depending on the purpose of the study, and often the decision is to balance between both of the approaches (Stepchenkov et al., 2009, p. 466; Elo & Kyngäs, 2007, p. 109).

In the present research, the decision to employ both inductive and deductive coding approaches was based on the suggestions from previous literature on memorable tourism experiences. The previous research about memorable tourism experiences has been characterised as rather uncontrolled, leading to the fact that the essence of memorable tourism experiences has remained uncovered (Knobloch et al., 2014; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). The reasons for the uncontrolled nature include for instance incoherent terminology in research (Knobloch et al., 2014). The MTE scale by Kim (2009) is the first comprehensive conceptualisation of the memorable tourism experience. It was formed based on an extensive review on previous literature, consulted by industry professionals and validated through quantitative questionnaire survey. The researcher decided to treat Kim's MTE scale as the deductive base for the analysis even though Kim's MTE scale has received critique and there are other partly similar conceptualisations (see Chandralal et al., 2015; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015). Through this decision, the aim was to tackle the uncontrolled nature of the previous research. Research in this case needs to logically proceed from examining the validity of the first conceptualisation, leading to employing

the same terminology if it is proven to be applicable before forming new conceptualisations with possibly only slight differences.

However, as Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 602) argue, in order to gain a thorough understanding on the concept of memorable tourism experience the research must be conducted unaffected by the previous classifications and theories of the concept. Therefore also the inductive approach was employed. In fact, after completing the literature review on the dimensions attached to tourism experience memorability, the researcher became more aware of the totality of identified memorable dimensions—also those memorable aspects that Kim’s MTE scale discarded. It was also identified that the MTE scale dimensions were overlapping with one another; thus, they are not adequately defined and divided into experiential categories. These overlaps are presented in more detail in the section 4.2. The issues with MTE scale dimension discriminability question the reliability of the scale, and therefore the choice of employing inductive coding approach was supported. Hence, even though the analysis was conducted by employing the MTE scale as a deductive baseline for the analysis, the inductive approach aimed at forming a more reliable and well-defined outcome unaffected by previous theories.

The analysis was based on the presumption that blog posts include only those experiential dimensions that are memorable. This relates to the fact that blog posts are written after the actual experience has taken place. Thus, the blogger is able to recall particularly those memories, stories and emotions that are included in the blog posts, while some others that are not mentioned might have already faded away from the memory between the actual happening and the process of writing. The analysis of the present research consisted of three main phases. The first phase included an analysis on the first data set (i.e. travellers’ blogs) with the aim of revealing the experiential dimensions that are the memorable ones. The first data set was coded deductively as well as inductively. The combination of two coding approaches worked as follows: first, the deductive codes were applied into the data and then the remaining text segments were coded inductively. The inductive coding led to the formation of new categories, and therefore also the deductively coded text segments were then re-evaluated and re-coded for better representation, if it was necessary.

Simultaneously, previous literature was searched and consulted in order to seek validation for the emergent categories.

The second and third main phases concentrated on the formation of a “live like a local” experience in Helsinki. In the second analysis phase, locals’ blog texts were coded in order to reveal what experiential dimensions are memorable for them. Through attempts of deductive coding, it was identified that the deductive codes are not widely applicable to this data set. This was certainly acknowledged by the researcher beforehand, as the MTE scale is portraying the memorable dimensions during a tourism experience, and thus, the researcher moved promptly to inductive coding instead. Some similar categories emerged inductively from the data as during the coding of travellers’ blogs, but also new categories were identified. The third analysis phase concentrated on the comparison between the experiential dimensions in the two data sets. This comparison was aiming at identifying the differences in the experiences, which helped in concluding which dimensions should be included in the travellers’ experiences through tourism experience design in order to form an authentic live like a local experience in Helsinki.

5.4 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations of the present research concern the use of blogs as research data, and in fact, the matter is dividing academics’ opinions (Hookway, 2008; Kozinets, 2010). The differing opinions are primarily based on the question whether Internet is a public or private space, and thus, whether the researcher needs to ask for the bloggers’ consent when using blog entries for research purposes. Kozinets (2010, p. 141) explain that Internet is a medium through which people publish content, and therefore most people who post content online are fully aware that it will become public knowledge and accessible by everyone. Similarly, Hookway (2008, p.105) reasons that as the content is publicly accessible, there is no need for participant consent. However, Markham and Buchanan (2012, p. 13) explain that even though the content is published on Internet, people may have not intended it to be used for research purposes. The blog writers include parts of their identity in their texts, and for that reason texts are not to be treated solely as public

data (Markham & Buchanan, 2012, p. 13). Markham and Buchanan (2012, p. 4) even state, “In different contexts the rights of subjects may outweigh the benefits of research”.

If blogs are decided to be used as research data, another issue is whether to protect the anonymity of the blogger or to credit him or her. Some researchers state that the identities of the bloggers should be preserved, while others argue that online content should be cited just as the work of any other author; many well-known bloggers would rather like to get credit for the work if it is being used (Hookway, 2005, p. 106; Kozinets, 2010, p. 143). Markham and Buchanan (2012, p. 5) advise to determine the most relevant solution in each individual research context so that no harm is caused to the blogger.

The present research is situated between the two extremities concerning the ethical procedures when using blogs as research data. As Markham and Buchanan (2012, p. 4) stated, in some cases the subjects’ rights outweigh the research. This is the case especially when the research is concentrated on delicate personal issues, for instance addictions. However, the nature of the data in the present study is not considered as sensitive or harmful; it is travellers’ and locals’ stories about their experiences in Helsinki. Moreover, travel blogs, and especially professional ones, are written with the aim of reaching as wide audience as possible. Travel bloggers do not in general consider their content private, unlike some other types of bloggers might. Therefore, it was reasoned that the use of these texts is not causing harm for the bloggers. Still, the researcher decided to contact the bloggers to inform that their blog entries will be used for research purposes. The researcher could not find any contact details for two of the bloggers, but despite the lack of contact details, decided to include these posts in the sample. After all, those posts are publicly accessible and it is evident that the bloggers do not wish to be contacted. All other bloggers, in total 12, were contacted and informed. They were also given the possibility to decline the permission to use their texts as research data, however no one did decline it.

Concerning the decision between anonymity or crediting the bloggers, the researcher decided not to publish the names of the writers or the names of the blogs. This decision was made primarily as the names were considered as irrelevant information and also to give a level of protect over the identities of the travellers and locals. The blogs were

assigned with identifiers T1–T7 in the case of travellers and as L1–L7 in the case of locals. One of the travellers wanted to be credited for the work, and therefore, the name of the blog and the blog post are revealed in the footnote under the first citation from that post. Despite the anonymity in case of rest of the blogs, the bloggers do not have a maximum level of protection over their identities as direct verbatim quotes were used in the present research to introduce the findings. Therefore, the blogs can be found from search engines. Again, this decision was made due to the insensitive nature of the content at stake.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter is presenting and discussing the findings of content analysis of both research data sets: travellers' and locals' blog texts. The first subchapter provides an answer to the first and second research question, namely, which experiential dimensions are evident and how they are illustrated in the blog texts written by travellers. The experiential dimensions that constitute a memorable tourism experience within the notion of shareable tourism in Helsinki are introduced supported by demonstrative quotations from the data. The second subchapter concentrates on the third and fourth research question and presents which Helsinki related experience elements are evident in the blog texts written by locals, and also what are the differences and similarities between locals' and travellers' experiences. Locals' experiences about Helsinki are introduced with quotations from their blog texts.

6.1 Traveller's memorable experiences in Helsinki

In total six memorable tourism experience dimensions were evident from travellers' experiences within shareable tourism, and particularly, within peer-to-peer accommodation. Three of the dimensions are consistent with the MTE scale by Kim (2009), namely the dimensions of knowledge, novelty and involvement. The other three dimensions emerged inductively from the data, and these new dimensions are sensory stimulation, social interaction and surprise. Additionally, it was discovered that the process of experiencing the memorable dimensions results in positive and negative emotions. In the MTE scale, hedonism is one of the scale dimensions, whereas negative emotions are not included in the scale. The deductive coding process of the present research revealed issues with causal connections between the MTE scale dimensions defined by Kim (2009); the scale dimensions include both causes and effects classified as equal. For instance, the findings demonstrate that positive emotions and hedonism are a result of gaining new knowledge as seen from the quotation below describing the mood after visiting the Finnish National Museum:

For us it was revealing and interesting and with a warm and good feeling in the belly, more knowledge and probably bit more wisdom even and last but not least an extra

portion of satisfaction we strolled slowly back through the meanwhile dark Helsinki to our hotel. (T5)

Hence, by including positive emotions such as hedonism and refreshment among the memorable dimensions, the scale included both causes and their effects. These mixed causal connections between the MTE scale dimensions posed difficulties in coding the data adequately, as for instance the quotation above could have been coded with both hedonism and knowledge. The decision of not including emotions among the memorable experiential dimensions is supported by Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 605), as they claim that emotions cannot be treated as a detached factor, or one factor among others—in fact they might be in the core of a memorable tourism experience.

Additionally, previous literature quite one-sidedly suggests that memorable tourism experiences lead to positive feelings by often mentioning solely the following three emotions: happiness, excitement and enjoyment (see e.g. Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Wirtz et al., 2003). The present study supports the previous findings, but additionally demonstrates that the myriad of positive emotions that is generated is extensive. As mentioned, the present findings show that in addition to positive emotions, also negative emotions were identified. The memorability of negative emotions is dividing academics' opinions, but is supported by several researchers (see Knobloch et al. 2014, Oh et al., 2007; Wirtz et al., 2003). The variety of emotions that experiencing memorable dimensions induced can be seen in the quotations in the upcoming subchapters.

6.1.1 Knowledge

Travellers widely remembered the experiential dimension of knowledge as they acquired both destination specific and general knowledge during their trip to Helsinki and while staying in peer-to-peer accommodation. Hence, the present study suggests that both destination specific and general knowledge are subcategories under the memorable dimension of knowledge. General knowledge covers the types of information that do not concern the visited destination. This type of knowledge was acquired by visiting sights, such as museums:

This museum was one of the coolest museums I've seen in a long time. While it does a good job describing the history of money in Finland, what it really does is well explain the history of modern finance. It offers up detailed background and great exhibits. It was quite a learning experience. (T3)

However, destination specific knowledge was clearly the dominant category over general knowledge. Destination specific knowledge covered information such as the destination's history, culture, habits, local cuisine, design and architecture. It was acquired either from social interaction with locals, or from visitation to local places. One of the travellers took part in a home visit provided by SERVAS International, a non-profit organisation aiming at advancing peace and intercultural understanding. The traveller explained her learning experience through social interaction: "Making friends through peace is the goal of SERVAS home visits, and our first experience was a shining example of how one to one relationships fosters understanding about culture and differences" (T1).

The second avenue for acquiring destination specific knowledge was visitation to local places. One of the travellers advised readers to "Explore Helsinki's food culture at one of its markets" (T7). Another stated, "A visit to the furniture and decor sections of a large store is always a good way for us to experience modern day culture of the country" (T1). From the visit to furniture store, the traveller observed that Finnish design follows the same sophistication and simplicity as in the Scandinavian countries. New information about Helsinki and Finland was additionally acquired from visiting sights, such as churches and museums:

²Temppeliaukio Church. Also known as the Rock Church because it is literally built into the rock. Now we always make a point to visit churches when we go abroad because they're generally free and always great examples of that country's architecture. (T2)

It may sound like a truly boring museum, but I thought it was actually quite interesting to see the evolution of mail service from sleds and ships to a modern postal service. There's a lot of detail here about how it evolved under Swedish rule, then Russian, and then to modern Finnish. (T3)

The quotation below represents the two avenues through which travellers gained

² The quotations assigned with the identifier T2 are from a travel blog called Travelling Weasels and from a blog post named "14 FREE Things to do in Helsinki Finland". This information is given as the blogger desired to be credited for the work.

destination specific knowledge during their travels:

Between the museum and our conversations with Hanna, we have learned much about this independent country, that was once a part of Russia and fought against Russia with the Germans in WWII. There are about 5,000,000 Fins whose language is completely separate from any other language. (T1)

These two avenues were also combined in a single situation, as for instance, one traveller gained valuable insights on the local habits and way of life by observing and interacting with local people in a place where they typically spend time:

It is common to drink while sauna-ing and you will often see a small crowd sitting out front, enjoying a beer between soaks. You may also encounter a strange practice during a sauna session: Finns whacking themselves with bundles of wet birch leaves. This is supposed to exfoliate the skin and cool the body, also releasing a lovely, natural smell. If you're keen to try, then ask to borrow someone's bundle! Most Finns are happy to share. (T6)

In previous literature, the memorability of experiences that include acquiring knowledge is widely supported (see e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Chandralal et al., 2015; Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Gaining destination specific knowledge is regarded as one of the main motivations to travel (Kim & Ritchie, 2014, p. 3), but previous research has also identified that general knowledge (Oh et al., 2007) as well as activity specific knowledge are acquired in the destination (Arnould & Price, 1993). Moreover, in order to be able to experience the destination authentically and like a local, the traveller needs to gain destination specific knowledge. Thus, the memorable experience dimension of knowledge is in the core of the tourism experience within shareable tourism (Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2016). Richards (2014, p. 131) explains that interaction with locals opens up the true essence of the destination to the traveller. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016, p. 14) state that deeper understanding of the destination that is gained from meaningful interactions with locals shape traveller's future travel behaviour toward that specific destination leading to loyalty and revisits.

6.1.2 Novelty

In the present research, novelty was attached to two main aspects. Firstly, the whole destination of Helsinki was described as unique: “Yet what makes Helsinki unique is the city’s artsy, bohemian vibe” (T6). Secondly, novelty was attached to specific sights and activities. For instance, one of the traveller described the unique Finnish take on tango: “The Finns have their own version of the Argentine tango so why not take a lesson while you’re there? We even had a go in the snow!” (T7). Also the offering in the Old Market Hall was regarded as out-of-ordinary: “But hey, where else to find real bear meat? Or fresh, huge, red salmon? Delicious sweet Lakka-berry-liqueurs? And so much more...” (T5). Another traveller described: “Many of the sites that I recommend in this blog are notable because it feels like they could only exist in Helsinki” (T6). Lastly, the uncommonness of Suomenlinna Fortress Island as a historical site was mentioned:

One of the most interesting things about Suomenlinna is how the Finnish government has decided to develop the island. In addition to the typical museums, restaurants and gift shops, a small community of 900 permanent residents has been built amongst the ruins of the fortress. While exploring, you’ll see cottages sitting side-by-side with ancient fortifications, making Suomenlinna feel like a truly “living community” — quite unusual for a historic site of this type. (T6)

As seen from the quotations above, the novel experiences led generally to positive emotions, to feelings of enjoyment, amazement and wonder. Nevertheless, novel experiences generated also feelings of uncertainty:

At the conclusion of our day we headed to our first SERVAS visit. We would be spening the evening with a woman named Hanna. Before arriving, we stopped to buy some flowers, some cheeses, fruits, and pastries and some cans of apple and cranberry hard cider. We weren't completely sure whether we should be expecting dinner when we arrived so we came prepared to supplement our cup of soups or to add to dinner. (T1)

However, these feelings of uncertainty were not regarded as negative, but rather as a positive type of indecisiveness and anxiety that precedes having a novel experience.

The memorability of novel experiences is supported by previous research (see e.g. Chandralal et al., 2015; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005). In the present research, the novelty of an experience was

conveyed through the use of adjectives such as “unique” and “unusual”, or simply by explaining an event that the traveller had not experienced before. These interpretations were consistent with Kim’s (2009, p. 52) contributory items for novelty: once-in-a lifetime experience, unique, different from previous experiences and experienced something new.

6.1.3 Involvement

It was identified that involvement, or personal relevance toward an experience is externalised during two different stages: during the planning stage as well as on-site. Firstly, involvement appeared as engagement into activities that the traveller had planned to engage in beforehand. For instance, one traveller described the reason behind going to sauna: “A visit to Helsinki wouldn’t be complete without a trip to the sauna” (T7). These pre-planned activities included also for instance a visit to the local Hard Rock Café, since it “cannot be missed” (T5), and shopping for Moomins, childhood favourites that happen to come from Finland (T2). The second stage of involvement, i.e. involvement on-site appeared as a well anticipated change compared to previous trips: “Having had enough mosques and churches for awhile we chose to go to an outdoor museum Seurasurri [Seurasaari]” (T1). These personally relevant experiences led to positive emotions of enjoyment and exhilaration as seen from the visit to Moomin shop: “I spent over half an hour in the Moomin shop in the Forum shopping centre before Tanbay put his foot down and dragged me out” (T2). The memorability of involvement as an experiential dimension is supported in previous literature (see Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Kim & Ritchie, 2014). The findings that travellers develop involvement towards the tourism experience either during planning stage or on-site is supported by Kim and Ritchie (2014).

However, the present findings show that not in a single case, the personal relevance and involvement concerned the whole destination of Helsinki, rather separate touristic activities. This may derive from the fact that Helsinki was on the travellers’ way to or from somewhere else. One traveller emphasised the easiness of visiting Helsinki as a part of a tour: “Located on the southern coast of the country, the city is close to neighboring capitals, Tallinn, Riga and Stockholm – making it easy for travellers to reach Helsinki by ferry from these destinations” (T6). Another traveller described, “Like most people, I

simply passed through here on the way to somewhere cheaper (Tallin, Estonia)” (T3). He continued to ponder: “Helsinki never seems to be on the travel radar of most budget travelers I know. I’m not sure why. I guess Helsinki just doesn’t get the raving press that other places do” (T3). As one benefit sought from booking peer-to-peer accommodation is the affordability, within this particular empirical setting, the fact that the price levels in Helsinki are relatively high might be one reason behind the lack of involvement and special desire to travel to Helsinki. Additionally, scarce amount of marketing or WOM communications about the city, and their poor reach might also be contributors.

6.1.4 Sensory stimulation

Travellers widely recalled the pleasurable feeling of sensory stimulation from aesthetically pleasing views, culinary experiences and soundscapes. The Finnish landscapes during winter were impressive for the travellers: “The city enchanted us with its snowy landscapes” (T7). A traveller who visited Helsinki during summer was equally impressed: “The Töölo area has a pleasing mix of beautiful old building and the scenic Töölo bay. It’s a wonderful area to walk around in and appreciate Helsinki’s natural beauty” (T7). Moreover, the architecture in Helsinki, for instance Uspenski Cathedral, generated amazement:

This large red church is hard to miss, as it sits on a hill overlooking the city. This Eastern Orthodox church is massive and very impressive with its large domes and gold crosses. The interior is lavishly decorated too, with typical Eastern Orthodox icons. (T3)

Travellers remembered the stimulation of taste and culinary experiences during their trip. For instance, a visit to the Old Market Hall not only did offer beautiful architecture, but also stimulated the sense of taste:

As one of the first highlights we discovered the beautiful harbour of Helsinki and its amazing old market hall (Saluhall) Vanha kauppahalli. Opened in the year 1888 for the first time, the market hall with its beautiful wood carvings and unique fantastic delicious specialties is truly a touristic highlight. (T5)

Additionally, one of the travellers explained: “We ended our day with a lovely meal that Hanna prepared for us including a huge bowl of vanilla ice cream and fresh Finnish grown

strawberries and raspberries” (T1). Another visited the Market Square and described: “We had some delicious, salty sardines here and a Reindeer Hotdog” (T2). Lastly, the culinary highlights, for instance “the best pizza” and “best cinnamon bun in town” were recalled and mentioned (T7).

Especially those soundscapes that were harmonic and peaceful were recalled. For instance, several travellers mentioned Tempeliaukio Rock Church in their blog texts. One described: “We visited a rock church designed from an old quarry and was currently in use as a performing venue for a performing girls' choir from Canada. The acoustics were amazing” (T1). Another recalled: “Being built into the rock gave it a really natural feel and there was a piano playing in the background which really added to the ambience. It was very peaceful and spiritual and a must see in Helsinki” (T2). Several travellers vividly recalled the peaceful soundscape in the Chapel of Silence. One of the travellers described the visit to Kamppi Chapel of Silence and the coincident stimulation of more than one sense:

Inside it is a perfectly silent, sound-proofed room, with rows of wooden benches, foam seating blocks, and a tiny altar. Natural light enters through the roof of the cylindrical space and suffuses the whole space with a wonderful glow. I was nervous about even taking photos here — due to the noise of my camera shutter! (T6)

The interior was aesthetically pleasing due to the decoration and natural light flooding in. Additionally, the soundproofing made the chapel extremely quiet, even though on the outside, the venue was “constantly surrounded by a noisy stream of passing pedestrians” (T6). This combination of two sensory stimuli resulted in revitalized and refreshed feeling:

I imagine it would be a perfect place for busy Finns to come and meditate for 10-15 minutes during their day. Less popular than the Rock Church, you can usually get inside without a long wait. I found the energy of the place to be incredibly rejuvenating. Wouldn't it be awesome if we had more urban spaces like this? (T6)

Even though sensory stimulation was not included in the MTE scale by Kim (2009), previous research strongly supports the memorability of this particular dimension (see e.g. Dolcos & Cabeza, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tarssanen & Kylänen, 2005). For instance, several academics have suggested sensory stimulation as a means to manage environments in order to create conditions for a positive experience that lasts in the memory (Agapito, Mendes & Valle, 2013, p. 65). Agapito et al. (2013, p. 65) explain, “the

frameworks for staging tourist experiences have raised the importance of stimulating the senses, in order to reach the heart and the mind of tourists”. As an example, Pine and Gilmore (1998) included engaging all senses as one of their five key design principles for staging memorable experiences. Oh et al. (2007, p. 123) describe that offering sensory stimulation is likely to lead to strong memories, as emotional information that is sensory-based has “privileged access to cognitive processing resources”. Some of the travellers mentioned the atmosphere in a place. Within shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation, it is stated that rather than visiting sights of high culture, in order to live like a local the traveller needs to experience the atmospherics and everyday life of the destination (Richards, 2014).

6.1.5 Social interaction

In the present study, social interaction, with the sub dimensions of local hospitality and cultivation of friendships, was identified as a memorable tourism experience dimension. Firstly, many of the travellers mentioned the local hospitality while summarising their stay into a couple of sentences, which further highlights the perceived importance and memorability of this sub dimension. For instance, one of the travellers described, “Helsinki was beautiful and had good food, and the locals were lively and very friendly” (T3). Another traveller stated, “This unique city and its friendly locals are sure to charm you” (T6). The encounters with local people were enjoyable and satisfying and locals’ friendliness created a feeling of safety: “Everyone's really friendly and unlike some other capital cities you don't feel threatened or like you're going to be mugged. Go Helsinki!” (T2). The encounters with hosts induced positive emotions such as amazement: “After failing miserably at finding a Couchsurfing host, Roomorama was awesome enough to find me an apartment in the city for two nights. The hosts were amazing” (T3). However, for all, meeting the local host was not that special experience:

We met our hostess who showed us around her small but tidy IKEA display home, told us about smaller islands nearby you could get to by foot across shallow water, and then that was the last we heard of her. (T4)

The fact that the travellers stayed in peer-to-peer accommodation most definitely affected the high frequency of recalled encounters with local people. Travellers booked their

accommodation through different peer-to-peer accommodation platforms, such as Airbnb, Roomorama and House Sitting. These accommodation options often include mandatory encounters with local people; usually meeting the owner of the apartment while receiving keys and instructions. Partly due to these “mandatory” meetings, the encounters with local people were widely mentioned. However, as it is previously mentioned, today’s travellers are seeking authentic experiences, and research reveals that authenticity is sought particularly from the interaction with locals (Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Steylaerts & O’Dubhghail, 2012; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Hence, travellers purposefully seek interaction with local people by entering the local community, and thus, the encounters with locals are not only mandatory but also personally relevant.

Secondly, in addition to the hospitality of the locals, the aspects of cultivating and establishing friendships were illustrated in the data. One traveller wrote about a meeting with old friends from school years: “It was great catching up with the girls and reminiscing about the old days at school. We agreed they were some of the best years of our lives” (T4). Meeting with old friends raised positive emotions of enjoyment and excitement as well as feelings of nostalgia from sharing stories and memories with each other. Even though the overall evaluation of the reunion was positive, the goodbyes aroused feelings of sadness: “After a long day it was really sad to see them go knowing it will be a long time before we ever hook up again (unless they ever come to Australia)” (T4). New friendships were also created, for instance with locals:

Hanna, herself was warm, helpful, and welcoming. Through our many conversations, we identified many similar points of view and enjoyed each other's company. We could become close friends if our proximity from each other were not on the opposite side of the planet. (T1)

The traveller continues: “While we enjoyed the sights of Helsinki, our time with Hanna is by far the Highlight of Helsinki” (T1), which highlights the perceived importance of new social interaction.

In previous literature, the memorability of social interaction with locals as well as interaction with travel companions and friends are strongly supported. For instance, the friendliness of local people was a part of the dimension of local culture in Kim’s (2009) MTE scale. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015, p. 304), too, emphasise the importance of

interaction with locals, and list specifically local hospitality as a memorable tourism experience dimension. They continue to explain, “Tourists also tend to feel comfortable, safe and happy when they are welcomed and assisted by locals at hotels, on streets or in shops; hospitality can greatly improve their evaluation and memory of a destination”. Social interaction with travel companions and friends is supported by several academics (see e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Farber & Hall, 2007; Larsen & Jenssen, 2014). For instance, Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 604) argue that making friends or sharing the tourism experience with others makes the experience memorable.

6.1.6 Surprise

In this study, surprise as a memorable experiential dimension refers to the cognitive assessment based on the probability of an event, not the emotion of surprise. The dimension of surprise includes two types of surprise: positive and negative surprise. Firstly, the sub dimension of positive surprise is comprised of positive unexpected happenings and the surprise from exceeding traveller’s expectations. The positive unexpected observations were relatively small and specific events; funny and surprising remarks along travellers’ visitation that they decided to share with readers. For instance, one of the travellers noticed something absurd and at the same time amusing while touring the city of Helsinki:

A Ferris wheel grabbed our attention because it had one VIP capsule which was more of a lounge, and another one that had a sauna! I don’t know about you but I normally want to get out of saunas after 2 minutes so that seemed like hell to me going around for 15 minutes in heat! (T4)

Another traveller visited the Three Smiths Statue and amusedly wrote, “What we found interesting about this statue was a) they are naked but more that b) some 'vandal' had covered up their manly parts with Sellotape..” (T2). A traveller from Australia unexpectedly found something homely while being on the other side of the globe: “At one point we passed an Aussie bar which seemed kind of interesting and funny but since they charged Finland prices we kept walking“ (T4).

Travellers' expectations were positively exceeded, either regarding particular sights or the whole destination. For instance, a visit to Temppeliaukio Rock Church was beyond the usual church visits, and thus, exceeded the expectations: "We rarely feel 'spiritual' in them though, mostly they are boring and some of them are just down right creepy. But this was one of the rare exceptions - it was lovely!" (T2). One traveller described the change in attitudes towards the destination: "Helsinki is actually a really amazing city. Our initial reaction though was that it was cold and expensive, but once we got over that we ended up really enjoying it." (T2). Another traveller stated: "Steve and I fell in love with Helsinki. We went in the wintertime when the city enchanted us with its snowy landscapes and stylish culture" (T7). Moreover, for one traveller Helsinki was a "pleasant surprise" (T3).

Secondly, the sub dimension of negative surprise includes negative unexpected happenings and the negative surprise from falling below traveller's expectations. The negative unexpected happenings were mainly attached to the high price levels in the city. The negative surprise from falling below expectations was illustrated in the description about iconic Helsinki Cathedral: "We really love the stars on the dome and that it's free entry and warm inside, but really if I'm honest it wasn't our favourite cathedral/church in Helsinki. It's a little boring inside" (T2). For one traveller, the Airbnb apartment did not meet the expectations at all, and as a matter of fact, the check-in to the apartment is described as "Airbnb disaster" (T5). Even though the traveller experienced negative feelings of disappointment and mistrust in the beginning of the stay in Helsinki, in the end, the traveller concluded the trip as follows: "The next morning we flew back to Berlin and I resumed a most satisfying first visit in Finland" (T5). Thus, regardless of the negative emotions, the evaluation of the experience was positive. The positive overall evaluation in this present study may relate to the greater overall amount of positive emotions compared to negative ones, the intensity of positive emotions or to the experience timeline, and in which stage of the experience the negative emotions occurred. For instance, Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 604) state that an unexpected happening can include negative and positive emotions but is memorable only if the overall evaluation of the happening is positive.

Researchers widely support the memorability of both positive surprise (see e.g. Chandralal et al., 2015; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015; Farber & Hall, 2007; Knobloch et al., 2014) and negative surprise (see e.g. Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004; Tung & Ritchie,

2011). Berlyne (1950 as cited in Lee & Crompton, 1992, p. 736) state that surprise and novelty are overlapping concepts. Even though they both are identified as memorable dimensions in this present research, they are distinct from each other; novelty represents the uniqueness and newness of an experience, whereas surprise is about the unexpectedness and the difference between expectations and the outcome. Surprise and unexpected happenings are also attached to the experience within shareable tourism; travellers value the unexpectedness and the gap between prior expectations and reality caused by the experiences co-created with the locals (Richards, 2014, p. 132).

6.2 Experiencing Helsinki like a local

The experiences and the nature of the stories of the locals and travellers were very different, and thus different analysis methods needed to be employed. Many of the travellers stated that they were visiting Helsinki for the first time, and therefore the experiences included high levels of novelty, gaining new knowledge especially about the destination and positive and negative surprises from new situations and encounters with new service providers. In the case of locals, the blogs included in general two types of texts; firstly, lists of locals' favourite places or activities in Helsinki, and secondly, stories of actually spending a day in the city either with local friends or friends from abroad. Hence, in general, the experiences, activities and places manifested in the blog posts were already familiar to the locals. Hence, dimensions of novelty, gaining knowledge or surprise were not identified from this data set, and therefore, the concentration was not on the memorability, but on the perception of the city and the experience elements that were illustrated by the locals. It was identified that locals' experiences of Helsinki were based on certain experience elements: atmospherics, the function of being in a place and the interest towards hipster subculture. Additionally, it was discovered that locals have a crucial role as gatekeepers to the local culture and way of life. These findings are presented in more detail in the following sections.

6.2.1 Atmospheric

In locals' blog text, the ambiance and atmosphere of a certain place were often in the centre of the experience. In previous literature, ambiance is defined as a unity of senses; it involves the stimulation of all senses at once (Thibaud, 2016, p. 204). Thibaud (2016, p. 204) explains that ambiance "allows us to describe the whole spectrum of sensory experience without necessarily evaluating what is at stake". Locals used a variety of Finnish words that can be translated in English as "ambiance", "atmosphere", "atmospheric" and "feeling the vibe" of a place extremely frequently when describing a place:

Market Square is mostly swarming with tourists, but in Hakaniemi market, you can enjoy the authentic working-class atmosphere of the Eastern downtown. Nothing really makes the summer feeling as the scent of fresh coffee, fingers meddled in sugar, street musicians playing summer tunes and the screeching of seagulls circling above the market. (L3)

Esplanade Park and the Market Square are lovely. It is good to take some time and enjoy everything. There are performances on the stage of Esplanade Park during the summer time, which are nice to watch. And if the visit happens to be on the first Friday of the month, you can see American vintage cars cruising around. I absolutely love that nostalgic ambiance. (L5)

One of the locals described the atmosphere in the Old Market Hall: "We continued to explore the local food in the Old Market Hall. Because of the cosy ambiance, I keep returning there over and over again" (L1). When talking of Café Sinisen Huvilan Kahvila, one local stated, "The best thing in the place in addition to its immediate atmosphere is the views overlooking the bay" (L4). Moreover, another described: "Nothing wins the ambience of the Market Square as a place to have coffee, even though it is not as it used to be after they stopped serving to tables" (L7).

Locals not only identified the atmospheric and stimulation of all senses, but also emphasised the sensory stimulation from specific happenings and stimuli. For instance, in the locals' texts, the sense of sight was stimulated by aesthetics of architecture and landscapes. The experiences were also highly dominated by culinary experiences—everyone had his or her own favourite restaurants and cafes that they wholeheartedly recommended. However, the frequent use of words such as ambience and atmosphere was

an element that distinguished the experiences of locals and travellers from each other. Travellers widely recalled the sensory stimulation during their experiences, but they were able to distinguish the sense, which was stimulated by a certain experience as seen in section 6.1.4. Nevertheless, in some cases the travellers also used “ambience” and “atmosphere” to describe their experience. For instance, in Temppeliaukio Rock Church, one of the travellers described that in addition to the aesthetics of the church, “piano playing in the background added to the ambience” (T2). Another traveller stated: “symphatic atmosphere of the Finnish capital Helsinki in winter made this trip a perfect start into an amazing travelling year 2016!” (T5).

In the small body of previous literature on how to experience a destination authentically like a local, the focus is particularly on the destination’s atmospherics. There is a division between the two types of experiences: visiting sights of high culture and experiencing the atmospherics of the destination and its everyday life (Richards, 2014, p. 132). The latter type allows the traveller to experience the destination like a local. Also the atmosphere in peer-to-peer accommodation is identified to lead to an authentic experience (Paulauskaite et al., 2017, p. 7).

6.2.2 Being in a place

The importance of atmospherics for the locals is attached to spending time in the place. For the locals, experiencing Helsinki was not mainly about visiting and seeing sights, but about spending time in atmospheric places with others:

There are many nice parks for picnic in Helsinki, but our favourite place for a picnic is the pier of Pitkäsillanranta. – – You don’t have to enjoy the picnic snacks alone, because on summer weekends and quite often during the weekdays too many picnic groups of different sizes gather here, some of them even equipped with tables and chairs. (L3)

You will never get bored with the seaside of Kaivopuisto Park, at least I won’t! My friends and me, we have coffee on the terrace of Café Ursula every summer, and Café Carusel situated on the other end is a nice place for sitting around as well. Coffee with a sea view—a summer evening can’t get much better than that :) (L4)

Another local described, “Teurastamo is a cosy chilling spot on any weekday, but it comes alive on weekends and during events” (L3). During the summertime, locals preferred to spend time especially outside in places such as terraces, islands of Helsinki archipelago and parks having picnics and socialising with friends.

At times, due to the comprehensive sensory stimulation and pleasurable atmosphere, the locals were amazed themselves of how much they enjoyed the experiences in their home city. In certain situations, they stated that Helsinki positively resembles other destinations for instance of Central or Southern Europe:

We headed to Restaurant Holiday for dinner. On the terrace, under the infrared lamps and wrapped in blankets, it felt like on a holiday somewhere. Those sea views with old boats and the red-bricked buildings of the Kanavaranta Street are a really atmospheric view. (L1)

Flying Dutch, a restaurant boat parked on the banks of Pitkäsillanranta Street is our former local pub and has our absolute favourite terrace. The channel-like Kaisaniemenlahti Bay and Pitkäsilta Bridge with its arches resemble the city of Amsterdam or even Paris. Well, they call the area as Little Amsterdam. (L3)

Situated next to the Market Square is the lovely Allas sea pool. Its atmosphere is as in the holiday destination in the sun, if the weather is favourable! Here you can sit in the sun chairs and for instance grab a cider. (L5)

Travellers’ experiences in Helsinki were dominated by visitation to sights and museums. Therefore, they did not experience Helsinki similar to locals concerning this experience element. However, during their stay in Helsinki, some of the travellers realised locals’ habit of being and spending time in places. For instance, after a visit to Suomenlinna Fortress Island, one traveller discovered, “Lots of Finns come here to hang out during the summer and relax” (T3). Another described Kaivopuisto Park: “This huge park located down at the southeast end of Helsinki is a good way to end the day. During the summer, residents and tourists alike flock to this park to hang out, play sports, have a picnic, and take in the amazing view of the harbour” (T3).

The function of being and spending time in places is consistent with previous literature on how to experience the destination like locals do. Richards (2014, p. 132) describes that when experiencing the destination like a local, it is about being in places that are cool and trendy, and about “being seen” and “being cool”. Therefore, Richards (2014) states that

spaces such as bars and parks that allow mere spending time, sitting around and hanging out are regarded as attractive for travellers who wish to experience the destination authentically. The findings of the research by Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 605) revealed similar aspects that form the core nature of experiences: “experiencing is predominantly about ‘being there’; being absorbed in the experience, and ‘feeling it;’ more than about cognitive and evaluative aspects”.

6.2.3 Hipster subculture

Building on the experience element of being in places, it was identified that especially places that have characteristics of hipster subculture were regarded as appealing by the locals. Hipster subculture has received increasing academic attention in the 2010’s, which signals the perceived importance of the trend, yet the term hipster is still without a uniform definition (Maly & Varis, 2015, p. 1). In short, being “hipster” equals a certain type of identity, which is comprised of being against mass-produced mainstream culture, and thus, seeking individualism and creativity (Maly & Varis, 2015). Maly and Varis (2015, p. 12) explain that this identity not only leads to the fact that hipsters traditionally have a certain look (skinny jeans, vintage sneakers, beanies and big glasses), but also to the preference for certain types of places. These places that are consistent with hipster subculture include third-space servicescapes such as bars, cafés and restaurants, music stores, and thrift shops (Arsel & Thompson, 2010; Maly & Varis, 2015). Areas that appeal to hipsters are traditionally in the verge of gentrification (Cowen, 2006 as cited in Maly & Varis, 2015, p. 12). However, Maly and Varis (2015, p. 6) emphasise that hipsterism is a trans-local phenomenon that appears differently depending on the location

In Helsinki, hipster subculture was attached especially to the area of eastern downtown. One of the locals described the district of Kallio as one of her favourite places in the city and listed the offering of the area: “Vintage shops, antiquarian bookshops, thrift shops, ethnic markets as well as food and drink offerings. So indeed, there is everything you need” (L2). Another local advised that people visiting Helsinki should experience “the delicacies in Teurastamo, the overall feeling in Bruno Workshop (and flea market) without forgetting the industrial milieu and graffiti in Suvilahti area!” (L2). Another local

described the area of Kallio: “I must say that new and extra interesting restaurants, cafés and bars are opening in that area all the time—I should definitely check out these hoods more often!” (L1). Moreover, one local described:

This is what Helsinki has been missing! Bruno Workshop in the neighbourhood of Vallila—only a stone throw away from our home—is the city’s own living room that resembles the hipster meccas in Berlin as well as the area of Telliskivi in Tallinn. Bruno Workshop comes alive on weekends, as then there is a flea market, yoga, street food, live music, clubs and a cosy indoor terrace. (L3)

Some of the travellers as well acknowledged the hipster nature of Helsinki and especially that of the Eastern downtown:

Yet what makes Helsinki unique is the city’s artsy, bohemian vibe. Many of the sites that I recommend in this blog are notable because it feels like they could only exist in Helsinki. The city is filled with a profusion of local markets, stylish coffee shops, and restaurants perfect for foodies — basically, a hipster’s paradise. (T6)

The Mondo guidebook said Kallio was full of “hipsters and bums” and I’d say it was about right. This trendy district has an edge to it but as with all places touched with the hipster wand, it is slowly becoming gentrified. There are tons of cool cafes, restaurants and shops to explore. (T7)

Another traveller had stayed in an apartment in the area of Kallio and described: “Kallio — A former working-class neighborhood, Kallio has gentrified in recent years to become a hipster paradise of coffee shops, art galleries and restaurants. We loved it!” (T6).

The attractiveness of areas and neighbourhoods that are in the verge of gentrification, similar to the Eastern Downtown of Helsinki, is in previous literature attached experiencing the destination like a local (Richards, 2014). Richards (2014, p. 126) explains that these neighbourhoods are attractive for this particular segment of travellers as they are situated in more affordable areas outside the centre, are edgy and offer “safe danger”. Similarly, Richards and Russo (2014) state, “The working class neighbourhoods of cities are now the exotic places where tourists remake and remodel the lived spaces of the ‘local’ into the consumption spaces of the ‘tourist’”. Guttentag (2015, p. 1197) states that the authenticity within peer-to-peer accommodation is attached to the possibility to stay in an area that is not a touristy, but favoured by the locals. Moreover, in previous literature, in addition to the aspects of gentrification, trendy and cool third-space servicescapes that allow for social interaction and shopping in small boutiques and thrift shops over

multinational brands are a part of hipster subculture (Maly & Varis, 2015; Richards, 2014). In the present research, locals recommended readers to shop in the cosy small boutiques and flea markets around Helsinki and to spend time in the cool places of Eastern Downtown.

In previous literature, similar characteristics that in this present research are connected to hipster subculture are in the core of today's popular tourism experience within cultural tourism (Richards, 2014; Sacco, 2011). Richards (2014, p. 132) characterises the presently popular destinations: "There is a particular emphasis on 'cool' and trendy places in cities, many of which are currently undergoing gentrification". For instance, American cities that are listed as hot destination in the next 20 years include Brooklyn, which is described as a "hipster-friendly borough [that] attracts young chefs, artists, entrepreneurs, families, and more, who have opened hip farm-to-table restaurants, cool art galleries and boutiques, and hipster markets" (Polland, 2012 as cited in Richards, 2014 p. 119). Thus, even though individualism is in the core of hipsterism, it seems that the subculture is turning into mainstream and as a cornerstone of the contemporary tourism experience (Maly & Varis, 2015). Based on the findings of the present research, the reason behind the growing popularity of Helsinki as a destination (Helsingin Kaupunki, 2018) might be the trendy and hipster-like character of the city.

6.2.4 Locals as gatekeepers

It was evident that travellers were purposefully seeking authentic experiences. Travellers emphasised often what at least in their opinion was regarded as "touristy" and comparably, what was authentic and local. For instance, one traveller advised the readers to go to sauna while in Finland and guided to try a "truly local experience at the Kotiharju Sauna in Kallio" (T7). Additionally, the traveller suggested to explore the food culture in Helsinki by visiting its markets: "The more touristy, but nonetheless beautiful, option is the picturesque Market Square. For a more local experience go to the Hakaniemi market in Kallio" (T7). Many of the travellers questioned the authenticity of the Market Square, and wondered whether it is a mere tourist attraction or a considerable shopping place for the locals too. For instance, one traveller described Market Square's offering as touristy:

“There are lots of touristy things here - reindeer skins, knives, flags etc.” (T2). Another reasoned that both tourists and locals visit Market Square due to a simple remark on the spot: “This place is usually swarming with tourists, but I heard enough Finnish there to know it isn’t a complete tourist trap” (T3). Lastly, one traveller concluded: “Helsinki’s colourful Market Square dominates the south harbour of the city, where bright tents sell to tourists and locals alike” (T6).

It became evident that the travellers experienced uncertainty and dubiety while trying to experience Helsinki like a local without the help of a local. In some situations, travellers succeeded in their efforts to experience the destination like a local. For instance, travellers’ experiences included visiting the iconic sights in the city and many of these sights were regarded as “must see” by the locals, too. For instance, one of the locals suggested, “You should at least check out Helsinki Cathedral and have a coffee on the stairs, the impressive Uspenski Cathedral and Sibelius monument” (L2). Concerning the Market Square, one of the locals stated, “There is no holiday in Helsinki without the Market Square!” (L1). Thus, even though the travellers questioned the authenticity of the Market Square, in the end, they came to the truthful conclusion that it is favoured not only by the travellers but also by the locals. However, in general, travellers’ and locals’ experiences were different from each other. Travellers’ experiences were dominated by the visitation to sights and mainly lacked the experience elements were in the core of the experience for the locals: atmospherics, being in a place and the wide appreciation towards hipster subculture.

The findings suggest that locals’ position as gatekeepers to the local culture and way of life is significant. Whenever travellers and locals were connected together, it resulted in a more authentic experience for the travellers. Moreover, having a local person to introduce the city was something that was preferred by the segment of the present research: travellers who stayed in peer-to-peer accommodation. For instance, after introducing a list of suggested activities in Helsinki in his blog text, one of the travellers concluded:

Note: You’re probably thinking “this is a pretty touristy guide.” You’re right. With such little time and such great parks and informative museums in Helsinki, there wasn’t much time to do other things. Of course, if you have locals to show you around, follow them. But if you don’t, then this is what I’d do with my time. (T3)

Travellers were connected with locals in multiple ways: through booking peer-to-peer accommodation, spontaneously by interacting with locals in the city and due to meeting with local friends. Firstly, booking peer-to-peer accommodation for instance through Airbnb enabled travellers to access the local way of life:

We stayed in a stylish studio called Villa Studio in the Kruunuhaka district, which can be booked on AirBnB. It really helped to make our stay, giving us an insight into the life of local Finns and offering a cosy respite from the winter weather. It made it hard to leave. (T7)

Secondly, one of the locals described a spontaneous and enjoyable meeting with South African travellers that from the quotation below seemed to be very insightful for the travellers:

Our sightseeing cruise was saved by the fact that we happened to sit in the same table with a couple from South Africa, who were asking a lot of everything concerning Helsinki and Finland from us. The most interesting thing for them seemed to be Löyly (“What? A public sauna with a restaurant attached, really?”) and the icebreakers of which the audio tour didn’t say a word. (L3)

Additionally, in another case, the knowledge and suggestions of a local friend while visiting the Market Square were insightful and credible:

We browsed the stalls and explored what all is offered on a Finnish market. Of the things we found, cloudberry jam was for sure the most exotic, and so Finnish that my friend bought it also as a souvenir with her. I along with coffee I ordered Karelian pasties with egg butter for us, and they turned as my friend’s favorite delicacy! (L1)

Lastly, instead of exploring the city of Helsinki on his own or guided by a tourist brochure, one traveller had local friends to show around the city:

They gave us the grand tour of Helsinki but remembered to see the important bits like the outdoor bars, saunas and ice cream vans - the latter having every type of salted licorice ice cream you could want... Or not want. I personally love it. (T4)

Due to the presence of local friends, this experience included activities that the locals regarded as important and interesting; thus, it was not a regular touristic city tour that included solely visiting the iconic sights. After this tour with local friends, the traveller came to a conclusion: “Helsinki seems to be the kind of city where you go for the ambience and not the sights” (T4). Evidently, this conclusion is exactly in line with the findings of the present research concerning the importance of ambience for the locals. As

explained previously, only few other travellers paid attention to the atmospherics of a place.

The importance of locals when it comes to experiencing the destination authentically is supported by previous literature. The authenticity of the tourism experience within peer-to-peer accommodation in previous literature is mainly attached to staying in locals' residences and to the interaction between travellers and locals (see Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Steylaerts & O'Dubhghaill, 2012; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). These findings are supported by the present findings; as seen from the quotations above, travellers attached authenticity to staying in peer-to-peer accommodation and to the social interaction with locals, which led for instance to the fact that travellers gained destination specific knowledge. In locals' blog entries, instead of being the recipient of the knowledge, locals were sharing destination specific knowledge to travellers. Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016, p. 14) regard the interaction between locals and travellers as a contributor to loyalty and competitive advantage for the destination as it helps to develop a strong attachment towards the destination. Connecting travellers to locals is vital for the formation of an authentic experience (Den Dekker & Tabbers, 2012, p. 130; Richards, 2014, p. 131).

7 CONCLUSION

As a response to the increasing competition in tourism industry and growing importance of shareable tourism, this master's thesis sought to provide an understanding of the constitution of a memorable live like a local experience within the notion of shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation in particular. Memorable tourism experiences are stated to help tourism operators and destinations in gaining competitive advantage (see e.g. Kim, 2009), whereas shareable tourism is a phenomenon that is appealing to the contemporary traveller due to the authenticity it offers (see e.g. Paulauskaite et al., 2017). The focus of the present research was on Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Helsinki introduced an ideal setting for the research as the popularity of the destination is rising at a fast phase, and even though sharing economy in the city is still in its early stages compared to other European capitals, aggressive growth rates in the demand and offering of peer-to-peer accommodation are anticipated in the near future (TEM, 2017). Therefore, there was a need for research that provides practical insights on how to maximise the benefits from these trends.

The study has four key findings. Firstly, the content analysis of travel blog entries about Helsinki with deductive and inductive coding approaches revealed six memorable tourism experience dimensions within peer-to-peer accommodation supported by previous research: knowledge, social interaction, novelty, sensory stimulation, involvement and surprise (see e.g. Canadian Tourism Commission, 2004; Chandralal et al., 2015; Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Secondly, it was discovered that experiencing these six identified memorable tourism experience dimensions leads to positive and negative emotions. The previously introduced memorable tourism experience conceptualisations (e.g. Kim, 2009; Chandralal et al., 2015) include positive emotions among the memorable scale dimensions, and thus, those conceptualisations have incorporated both causes and effects classified as equal without a clear outlook on the causal connections between the dimensions. Moreover, previous research has introduced varying findings on the memorability of negative emotions (see e.g. Chandralal et al., 2015; Kim, 2009; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Wirtz et al., 2003). The present research shows

that also negative emotions are memorable, yet they do not affect the overall evaluation of the tourism experience.

Thirdly, locals' experiences of living like a local in Helsinki were based on a combination of experience elements that in previous research have been attached to the authenticity within peer-to-peer accommodation and the experience of living like a local. Firstly, instead of the stimulation of a specific sense, locals emphasised the importance of ambiance, i.e. the stimulation of all senses at once (Richards, 2014; Thibaud, 2016). Secondly, locals highlighted the function of being and spending time in a place (Richards, 2014). Thirdly, places that were consistent with the characteristics of hipster subculture especially in the Eastern Downtown of Helsinki were regarded as appealing by the locals. In general, areas that are undergoing gentrification, third-space servicescapes such as bars, cafés and restaurants, small boutiques, and thrift shops are attached to hipster subculture, which was the case in the present study, too (Arsel & Thompson, 2010; Cowen, 2006 as cited in Maly & Varis, 2015). In the light of the present findings, Helsinki seems to be a destination that appeals to contemporary travellers, as the interest is moving from classic cultural capitals towards destinations that can be experienced like a local and that have characteristics of hipster subculture (Richards, 2014; Sacco, 2011). The fact that Helsinki offers these characteristics might be a contributor behind the growing popularity of Helsinki as a destination.

Lastly, the importance of locals as gatekeepers to the destination, its culture and way of life emphasised in previous literature (see Den Dekker & Tabbers, 2012; Richards, 2014) proved to be crucial in the present research, too. In general, the experiences of locals and travellers were different from each other. Travellers' experiences were dominated by visitation to sights, whereas locals' blogs included the experience elements of atmospherics, being in a place and hipster subculture. The present study strongly supports previous findings stating that travellers are seeking authentic experiences (see e.g. Guttentag, 2015; Paulauskaite et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Travellers were purposefully seeking authenticity and managed to identify some experience elements that were important for the locals, but also experienced dubiety while evaluating the nature of certain sights and whether they were mere tourist attractions. Whenever travellers were

connected to locals during the experience, for instance due to spontaneous interaction with locals or due to meeting local friends, it resulted in a more authentic experience. Travellers' experiences of authenticity were attached to staying in peer-to-peer accommodation and to the social interaction with locals.

As a managerial implication, the findings introduce a framework that due to the subjective interpretations does not guarantee, but enables the formation of a memorable experience within shareable tourism and peer-to-peer accommodation in Helsinki. The findings suggest that by incorporating the six memorable dimensions of knowledge, social interaction, novelty, sensory stimulation, involvement and surprise into their offering, tourism operators in Helsinki can enable the formation of a memorable tourism experience to travellers within this empirical setting. Previous research suggests that offering memorable tourism experiences is connected to the business' ability to generate revenue (see e.g. Kim, 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Following the same logic, by incorporating the six experiential dimensions into their offering, tourism operators in Helsinki can increase their profitability. Additionally, in order to offer "live like a local" experiences in Helsinki, there is a need to connect the travellers with locals and help them with the creation of the desired authentic experience. As stated, travellers' experiences were not similar to locals' experiences. In order to shift travellers' experiences from touristic visitation to iconic sights towards the appreciation of spending time in atmospheric places of hipster subculture, businesses need to act as gatekeepers to local culture themselves by offering relevant information via their information channels or by connecting travellers with locals who are willing to introduce their home city for instance through a variety of available applications and online platforms.

The present study has limitations. The results cannot be generalised to a wider population due to the exploratory nature of the research. Firstly, the sampling frame included bloggers, who represent only a small subgroup of people. The end sample was decided by employing judgement sampling, which is a subjective non-probability method that does not lead to a representative sample (Bradley, 2013, p. 168, 175). The end sample from the travellers' blogs was purposefully formed so that it contains a variety of travellers with different demographic features (i.e. age, gender and nationality). Research concentrated on

the experiences of a group with similar demographics may lead to different findings, as researchers state that tourism behaviour and the perception of a tourism experience is dictated by the cultural and social backgrounds of the individual (Ooi, 2005; Sharpley & Stone, 2010; Vespestad & Mehmetoglu, 2010). The sample size of the research was also relatively small, although it generated rich and saturated perspectives on the topic. Moreover, as the blog texts handled travellers' and locals' experiences of Helsinki, the findings apply only to this particular destination and research on other destinations may lead to different findings.

As a direction for further research, the memorable dimensions within shareable tourism should be studied further by concentrating on the differences in perceptions between travellers from different demographic backgrounds due to the subjective nature of experiences. It would also be worthwhile to investigate the effect of memorability on future behavioural intention; does the memorable tourism experience truly lead to a repurchase or WOM communications offline or online? Moreover, there is a call for further research on the role of emotions in the formation of a memorable tourism experience. Knobloch et al. (2014, p. 605) state that the intensity and rarity of experienced emotions and the contrast to everyday life might be a crucial factor behind the memorability—even over the memorable dimensions that arouse these feelings. Lastly, in order to reach more comprehensive understanding, the study on memorable experiences within the notion of shareable tourism needs to be executed in other destinations in order to reach comparable results and targets for benchmarking on how to design memorable live like a local experiences.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor José-Carlos García-Rosell from the faculty of Social Sciences at University of Lapland. His guidance and comments along the entire thesis process were insightful and helped me to finish the project. Even though at times I had a very tight schedule, he found time to comment and steer me to the right direction. I would also like to thank Maria Hakkarainen from the faculty of Social Sciences at University of Lapland, the second reader of this thesis, for her valuable comments and expertise.

I must express my profound gratitude to Helsinki Tourism Foundation for supporting this thesis project financially. It allowed me to concentrate fully on the thesis, and also gave me extra incentive to finish the thesis project promptly within the agreed schedule, yet carefully. Lastly, my thanks go to my family as well as friends from TourCIM for continuous support and the strength to listen to my momentary challenges with the thesis writing.