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**Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City
to Enhance Tourist Experiences**

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ABSTRACT

The tourist attractions implement creative tourism activities by integrating traditional cultures, allowing local hosts and visitors to exchange knowledge, experiences, and skills through engaging participation in tourism activities offered by attractions. Rovaniemi plays a significant role as a major tourism destination in Finland that promotes the local cultures and tourist activities incorporated in tourism products and services. This research combine with a qualitative approach was conducted by semi-structured interviews to gather data from 4 participants in public and private organisations to characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City, and a quantitative approach was implemented to acquire data through questionnaires from 226 tourists to understand their perceptions on creative tourism attractions' development and activities in Rovaniemi City.

The research showed Rovaniemi possesses distinctive natural and cultural assets that can be potential to develop creative tourism, particularly in nature-based activities. However, the incorporation of active activities in arts, crafts, and design, gastronomy, sports, and digital technologies for creating tourist experiences remains limited, showing merely passive engagement and retail oriented. Stakeholders also suggest that Rovaniemi needs an effective collaboration with local communities, and application of practical marketing strategies to target creative tourists. Furthermore, tourists express their strong interests to engage with local creative attractions and activities, suggesting that developing and promoting in arts, crafts, design, gastronomy, and sports alongside nature-based could significantly enhance their travel experiences and potentially contribute sustainable benefits to locals.

Keywords: Creative Tourism, Creative Tourists, Attraction Development, Tourist Experience, Tourist Perception

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Tourism significantly shapes destination countries, influencing their economies, societies, environments, and cultures (Weaver & Lawton, 2014, p. 3). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the international tourism sector activity is expected to have recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2024 (UNWTO, 2024). There were approximately 1.4 billion of globally overnighed visitors were recorded in 2024 (UNWTO, 2025). In particular, travel destinations such as Europe have already exceeded the numbers prior to the coronavirus pandemic. The phenomenon is not limited to international arrivals into these countries, but a spectacular increase in the spending by tourists during their stays has also been observed, with crucial benefits to the economic activity, including the creation of jobs and revenues to states via the associated taxes (UNWTO, 2024).

This is because the domestic and international travelling in Europe plays a significant part in its economy, and the industry is able to effectively respond to the changes in global economic and tourists' unpredictability, including the increasing demand for more distinctive destinations (Lockwood & Medlik, 2001, p. 29). Additionally, the European Commission (2022) highlighted the transitioning of tourism in Europe via tourism products and services and a wider range of destinations. The aim is that tourism will benefit local people and tourists by integrating local culture elements into tourism to enhance the visitors' authentic experiences through creative activities. In Europe, cultural attractions can be seen as strategic tourism development in large cities and rural areas to promote their diverse cultures and identities, including economies (Richards, 2001), which the cultural tourist attractions are able to integrate with locals' way of living and thinking and products such as arts, artefacts or events and festivals to increase tourists' novel experiences through tourism activities (Richards, 2001, p. 7).

The growth of cultural tourism highlights an important tourism type for travellers to explore local history, culture, and heritage at the destinations (Richards, 2000). This leads to cultural tourism attraction being an alternative tourism activity which is more creative than repetitive experiences in traditional cultural tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2005, p. 1209). According to Richards (2020) urged that the new demand of tourists at the attractions has to develop tourist

activities by integrating creative resources and local engagements for establishing participatory activities to enhance traveller experiences and to create perceptions of tourists to recognise the attractions. In addition, the tourist attractions focus on redesign its local cultural landscape, such as festivals, cultural heritages, cultural tourism routes, and museums, to attract tourists with immersive and interactive activities, which enable experiences of participants through creative tourism developed by local communities (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Hence, Richards and Wilson (2007, p. 1) pointed out that creative tourism is crucial for transitioning cultural or heritage tourism to engaging participation in tourism activities.

Furthermore, UNWTO aims to promote tourism co-creation schemes, where tourist attractions allow stakeholders in tourism fields to incorporate for enhancing sustainable tourism, boosting local's socio-economy and, and reducing negative impacts on environments from tourism industries through the guideline of Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs (UNWTO, 2018). According to the study by KC et al. (2021), concerning the participation of tourism stakeholders in Nepal on SDGs, reveals that tourism is able to generate local income through job employment and to enhance ability of local tourism-related businesses to contribute economy to local communities. Moreover, Nepal will focus more on environmentally friendly transportation modes to access to tourist sites. Yet, the incorporations between tourism's public sectors and private sectors in national and international, and local levels need to be considered in order to develop tourism in the country (KC et al., 2021, p. 10).

A concept of creative economy has arisen in diverse forms of tourism, which are involved with actors who are the hosts and participants in certain activities and attractions where they are able to have opportunities in sharing knowledge or skills and the possibility to contribute to the economy of the host at tourist attraction places (Pine et al., 2011, p. 37). The emergence of creative tourism development distinguishes it from the mass market in cultural tourism, aiming to provide cultural authenticity and interactive experiences that allow tourism participants to develop their creativity with engaging activities offered by various tourism attractions in many countries (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, [OECD], 2014).

In addition, the countries in the Nordic Arctic region, namely Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark (Hall et al., 2009, p. 23), have adopted numerous activities regarding productions in creativity and culture. These activities occurred by transforming of people activities regarding

their traditions, cultures, and heritages into businesses, such as tourism, or business-related to indigenous people, aiming to attract tourists to perceive the Nordic's culture which contribute revenue to the local communities (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018, p. 17). This shifting is in accordance with campaigns of UNWTO (2021) that are to enhance tourism products and marketing promotions through creating new tourism experiences for tourist by adding values, storytelling, and local creativeness, incorporating with creative industries to diversify traveller's new choices in the tourism market (Korez-Vide, 2013).

In Finland, the government emphasizes the nation's cultural tourism development through enhancing cultural ways of living of Finnish people, tourist attraction places related to cultural heritages, and adoptions of creative industries, such as design, festival, or architecture (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2020, p. 41). This including visiting indigenous group of Sami people in northern region of Finland, allowing tourists to experience with Sami's traditions and cultures through handicrafts, fishing, or reindeer herding which these tourism activities seen as the sources of income and employment (Raento & Husso, 2002, p. 154). Furthermore, creative tourism has increasingly developed into tourism products of Rovaniemi City for a decade. The city provides opportunities for tourists to participate in ice sculpting, allowing visitors to learn how to design and use tools for creating art forms which are incorporated by local stakeholders in the city, such as artisans, local people, experienced guides, educational institutes, and the government to develop and organise this activity (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 72).

Historically, there has been a fishing sport and tourism called salmon lords that emerged in Oulu city, Lapland area, in 1885. This activity allowed tourists to participate with locals learning fishing techniques to catch salmon on Oulujoki River which local people earned money from guiding and rowing a boat for tourists, including inviting them to the house for tasting food, beverages, and tobaccos (Forsman, 2021; Liminganlahti Nature Centre, n.d.). Ultimately, this study of this phenomenon will gain more understanding in creative tourism development for Rovaniemi City to redesign creative tourism activities that would provide tourists with unique experiences.

1.2 Previous research related to creative tourism

A study by Duxbury and Richards (2019) stated that emergence of creative tourism research commencing in the early 2000s. Initially, the research focused on workshops in small-scaled groups created by local businesses in order to enhance visitors' experience. Hence, the future research in this field also incorporating with local community impacts from creative tourism and attractions development, including the links of creative economy and the needs for genuine experiences from immersive activities (Richards, 2020). In addition to growing of recent research in creative tourism fields emphasize the demands for comprehending the experience connection between creative creators and creative tourists. A study by De Bruin and Jelinčić (2016) leads to the concept called "Participatory Experience Tourism" or PET has introduced to capture tourist experience, including skill and knowledge via active engagement with the locals. From the adoption of PET, the participatory activities in creative tourism products also establish co-creation between stakeholders in terms of value addition and authentic experiences (Ribeiro et al., 2023, p. 995; Campos et al., 2015, p. 391; Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2014, p. 145).

A paper authored by Booyens and Rogerson (2015) urged that the potential of transitioning cultural tourism to creative tourism is adopting innovations for enhancing the economic growth at tourist attractions, for example in Cape Town. This includes the implementation of creative industries. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014, p. 14) illustrated the sectors in creative tourism comprise of diverse industries, such as software, interactive games, music and arts performances, cuisine, design, architectures, or online platforms. The implementation of these industries into tourism industries are aimed to foster economy and culture in terms of employment growth, innovative invention, urban and rural revitalization, for example the online connectivity is able to link people from remote areas with outsiders, for instance, customers, or people in other industries to access and exchange ideas, knowledge and skills (Townsend et al., 2016, p. 457).

This includes nurturing cultural identity to represent the past and present of nation's cultures and traditions as well (Palmer, 1999, p. 316). In addition, exchanging in creative knowledge and skills through integration of creative industries and creative tourism are able to create opportunity for engaging between educational institutes, policy initiators, consumers, or creators. Moreover, creative industries provide more valued contents for marketing promotion

to attract tourists as well as develop contents for create new tourism products, enhancing tourist attractions competition and attractiveness (Henriques & Elias, 2021, p. 348).

According to Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov (2010) urged that the model of creative tourism business is implemented to establish distinguishment of creative tourism from the traditional cultural tourism in both small towns and urban cities in order to enhance their potentials in creativities and local heritages. The results of employment creative tourism business are able to contribute revenue to local communities and local government which include creating job opportunities (Wagner, 1997) for handcrafters, artisans (Bakas et al., 2018, p. 744), designing makers, leading to sustainability approach in well-being of communities in terms of social equity and ability to adopt self-identity, creativity, and stories to tell in the processes of creative tourism, expressing the identities of local host while exchanging experiences through creative activities and service design with tourists in order to provide memorable experiences for travellers (Sarantou et al., 2020; Zehrer, 2009, p. 342). Furthermore, the potential roles of entrepreneurs in creative tourism businesses are initiating implementation of tourism products and services offering customized creative tourism packages, through online or social media platforms. This can incorporate with governments to support creative tourism activities and involve with training local people on how to accommodate tourists (Marques, 2019, p. 174).

Furthermore, previous research in development of creative tourism attractions in Porvoo, Finland conducted by Lindroth et al. (2007) highlighted that the concept of creative tourism involves with create creativity for travellers' experience which this particular method is in creative tourism development. Moreover, the authors claimed that the roles of creative tourism in tourist attractions' development incorporate with innovative tourism partnerships and stakeholder for creating new tourism product ideas for attracting tourists to participate in creative tourism activities, resulting in host communities are able to earn income while engaging with the tourists. The initiation to establish creative tourism special district, proposing to collaborate with entrepreneurs and create jobs' opportunity (Nusraningrum & Pratama, 2019, p. 300; Jelinčić & Žuvela, 2012, p. 87), and develop urban areas and products related in tourism fields. In addition, tourist attractions should consider experiences, performances, and spaces integrating between tourism and creative industries in order to create demands of tourists (Wisansing & Vongvisitsin, 2019, p. 133; Lindroth et al., 2007). These actions allow host persons and travellers to have opportunities to exchange their cultures and skills (Richards, 2011, p. 1237).

Additionally, effective management for developing attractions depends on utilisation of destinations' natural and cultural resources, with local community services, and local government supports (Beritelli et al., 2007, p. 106). In addition, according to Pearce (1998) mentioned that the expansion of tourism areas has to consider the accessibility manners to approach tourist attractions, such as public transportations, designing urban areas by preserving historical zones, such as old building to appeal for tourists' attracting. This includes a study by Korez-Vide (2013, p. 197) that reveals that in European countries, creative tourism is one of the segments in sustainable tourism in terms of its micro tourism, which creates narrow impacts on tourist attractions because the tourist places have the capability to control the number of tourists, zoning tourist places, and time of visiting. Furthermore, tourist attractions require minor tourism resources which unnecessary to build new cultures and heritages, but utilising existing local authenticity to attract tourists, participating in creative activities and value co-creation with local communities.

1.3 Research gaps

The exiting research conducted on creative tourism in Rovaniemi City related to the potential transformations of the landscape in Lapland Region into certain creative tourism development through the collaborations of stakeholders in region, including tertiary institute, such as the University of Lapland, or hotels, and activities to provide chances for to tourists to participate (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 69). These activities include the winter events organized by local businesses, communities, and the university. For example, Gelter (2008, p. 64) highlighted that tourists are able to participate hands-on in sculpting ice into art designs, which enables participants to be self-creative and improve and exchange skills with the artisans or snow makers (Xu, 2024, p. 11; Qi, 2023, p. 2), and learn how to use the specific equipment to create art pieces and crafting techniques (Xu, 2022, p. 97). Moreover, other tourism activities provided educational experiences (Tomasi et al., 2020, p. 10) for visitors to integrate their well-being and environment (Willis, 2015, p. 42) through walking which enable participants to create their own arts with material that can be found in nature by drawing or writing through environmental observation (Soulard et al., 2021). Additionally, the University of Lapland can be one of tourism stakeholders in Rovaniemi to organize a photography in nature allowing participants to capture memories and narratives their expressions through the lens and photos (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 78).

A study by Richards (2019, p. 8) pointed out that most of tourist attractions in small communities or cities will experience failures in creative tourism development due to mimicking a large scale of destination development from the bigger cities through imagination that involved a wide range of people in creative class, such as experts in different career fields; tech, finance, or health who are assumed that have self-creativity to create ideas and solve the problems (Florida, 2004, p. 34), but should focus on the poor or low income household (Wilson & Keil, 2008). Thus, smaller cities should concentrate on fostering their own cultural uniqueness and ways of life, ensuring that developing in creative tourism will benefit local communities. Moreover, instead of promoting mainstreams of cultural tourism with crowding of tourists, the creative tourism attractions should provide experience-based activities to visitors, ensuring that society, culture, and economy positively impacted to local people. According to Richards (2020) urged that in order to successfully develop in creative tourism locations, the attractions have to do placemaking in creativity by incorporating with local resources, cultural meaning, and creativity which create clearer vision of the creative tourism attractions in perspectives and expressions of tourists.

The research gap in the contexts of creative tourism attractions development for enhance visitors' experience through creative activities in Rovaniemi City is discovered. The study will fill the gap in tourism strategy of Rovaniemi in terms of the city intends to establish tourist's meaningful and memorable experiences through the cultures and traditions of the Lapland Region provided by local communities (City of Rovaniemi, 2016, p. 7). This includes expected findings of this research will fulfil the objective of Rovaniemi City regarding the attraction's development through tourism-related activities offered by stakeholders in order to create capability tourism competitiveness, and socio-culture benefits from creating local products and services for selling to tourists (URBACT, 2023, p. 13).

1.4 Research objectives and questions

Hence, the main research question is that how developed are creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City, and how are they perceived by tourists? Then, the research aims and questions of this study are constructed as follows:

- i. To characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City. This will provide the means to answer the research question: How

developed are creative tourism attractions and activities within Rovaniemi City? In particular, through a qualitative analysis, the types of creative tourism attractions and activities will be reviewed in terms of what is already existing and what may be offered to tourists as part of future development by the actors of the tourism sector in Rovaniemi City.

- ii. To understand tourists' perceptions of creative tourism attractions' development and activities in Rovaniemi City. This will answer the question: How do tourists perceive the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City? Specifically, a quantitative analysis of surveys will provide insight into the profiles of tourists who take part in creative tourism activities and their perception of such activities.

1.5 Structure of the study

This research is structured in five chapters as follows: First, Chapter 1 will narrate the introducing background of creative tourism and related previous research, including the gaps in creative tourism attractions development in Rovaniemi City, before the aims of this research will be introduced. Next, Chapter 2 will present existing literature focused on the main concept of creative tourism, including the guidelines to develop creative tourism attractions and creative tourism activities for enhancing creative tourists' experience. It will also illustrate the theoretical frameworks, and the related research paradigms will be described. After that, Chapter 3 will present the research methodology to conduct this study, which is mixed-method research. On the one hand, a qualitative methodology will be utilised, with semi-structured interviews for collecting data from the key informants in public and private organisations relevant in tourism sectors.

On the other hand, a quantitative approach will be based on data gathered via physical and online questionnaires from tourists travelling and having experience visiting Rovaniemi city. Then, Chapter 4 will elaborate the findings from analysing qualitative data from content analysis and quantitative data from descriptive analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 will summarize and discuss the results, and the limitations from this thesis will be stated. To conclude, possible further research related to creative tourism attractions in Rovaniemi City will be suggested.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Creative tourism

Creative tourism represents a modern evolution in the tourism landscape, focusing on interactive experiences through engaging with authentic local culture and people (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2006, p. 2). Initially, Richards and Raymond defined creative tourism as tourist destinations providing hands-on experience in tourism activities, gaining learning experiences from the places they visit (Richards & Marques, 2012; Richards & Remond, 2000, p. 19).

Creative tourism is a merging of cultural tourism (Richards, 2009, p. 78), driven by creative tourists who seek more active tourist activities and opportunities for immersive participation at tourist destinations (Zuluaga & Guerra, 2021, p. 15), enabling them to harness and enhance their own creativity (Tan et al., 2014, p. 257). However, Richards and Wilson (2006, p. 1212) argue that cultural tourism only allow tourist to have passive observation while visiting destination's cultural heritages, festivals, or museums. Consequently, creative tourists are different from cultural tourists in that they are driven by a desire to gain knowledge and hands-on experience from their travel destinations (OECD, 2014), including enhancing their creative skills (Richards and Duxbury, 2021, p. 53). Furthermore, through engaging in creative tourism activities, tourists are able to generate revenue and add value to local communities (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 5).

Creative tourism activities have various perspectives, including its local communities, cultures, places, and identities, which are intangible and tangible perspectives (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 5). The multidimensional aspects of creative tourism involve with active participation of tourists that allow them to have hands-on experiences, which they are able to bring self-handmade souvenirs and mementoes (Piboonrungraj & Sangkakorn, 2013). In addition to learning experiences, tourists will learn about local cultures, histories, and social contexts and the technique for crafting and design local artifacts (Bakas et al., 2020). Furthermore, tourism activities aim to provide tourists for develop their own personal skills creatively and to enhance their creative individual expressions (Richards, 2021. p. 7) also include people from local communities with tourism activities to enhance sustainability and create genuine location-based tourism (Wisansing, 2021, p. 86).

2.1.1 Creative tourism development

The primary objectives of developing creative tourism are to promote sustainable tourism development (Duxbury et al., 2020) and foster the wellbeing of the local community (Richards, 2013). By achieving these goals, creative tourism serves as a destination designer, enabling the exchange of creative ideas and potentially expanding insights into local culture. This opportunity allows tourists to exchange knowledge and skills with hosts and local communities, which leads tourists to gain extensive experience (Tan et al., 2014; Richards, 2019, p. 8). Creative tourism development also enables local communities to expand their tourism products offered, allowing small entrepreneurs to become more proactive to create new products without extensively investing physical infrastructure while capturing visitors' attention through creative tourism activities (Petrova, 2022).

According to the standards for developing creative tourism, which were introduced by Greg Richards, Jutamas Jan Wisansing, Elena Paschinger, and Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organization), Thailand, or (DASTA) in 2019, emphasizes three main characteristics of tourist destination design for developing creative tourism comprise of:

1. Tourism data identification and assessment

Activities offered to tourists are carefully designed based on the unique features of the local culture. In addition, local storytellers and artists develop appealing stories of tourist attractions that they are able to inspire tourists to participate in tourist activities.

2. Creation of activities around the senses

One way to design activities through which the visitors actively learn in an enjoyable context is to invite them to share elements of their personal background, experiences, and knowledge. This can foster active participation in the activities. Besides, relying on the tourists' five senses – namely sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch – is an effective way to create a relatable and memorable experience. A fully successful creative tourism actor not only invites the participant to live an experience but also has a deeper and more durable impact on them: it enhances their own creativity.

3. Sophistication and targeted marketing

Creative activities give the impression that the visitor's creativity is stimulated effortlessly, as a result of which the participant comes up with original, innovative ideas throughout the process and which will gain in complexity even beyond the experience. This calls for

sophisticated approaches to be developed from the marketing and communication phase, with a crucial need to utilise creative tourism branding to attract the target audience, to a willingness to refine the proposed concept through continued improvement plans.

2.1.2 Creative tourists

The development of creative tourism encompasses promoting tourist experiences that are not only the engagement of travellers with local heritage and culture and the expression of creativity at particular destinations but also the travellers having a way to experience authentic interactions with locals and immerse and participate themselves in tourism activities (Interreg Europe, the European Union [EU], 2024). The Creative Tourism Network has stated that it is challenging to create a perception of those creative tourists as they desire to be such unique tourists. This is because the creative tourists are travellers who are searching for gaining tourism experience through hands-on activities, which they are able to learn from locals' cultural traditions, arts, and craftsmanship (Creative Tourism Network, n.d.).

Creative tourists comprise a wide range of needs and diverse characteristic profiles. Creative travellers pursue unique experiences in order to make them to become a better person, help them to grow with the meaning of life and personal significant (Agrawal, 2021, p. 68). Moreover, the tourists seek genuine engagement with activities that integrate the engagement of the creative practitioners and travelling mindset (Feeney, 2021, p. 44). Creative activities' participants can be international or domestic visitors, who they are experiencing as first-contact with identity of local culture. This includes local visitors, part-time residents, or artistic professionals searching for new sources of their inspiration and to enhance their talents from numerous characteristics (Salvado & Rolo, 2021, p. 127). Furthermore, creative tourists in creative tourism have their own extensive needs and characteristics (Tan et al., 2014, p. 257), follow:

1. Novelty-seekers: Tourists who are motivated to explore on unplanned trips and look for new destinations for the first time. They often engage with foreigners, allowing them to experience a wide range of other cultures, particularly when travelling abroad. Additionally, novelty seekers are less concerned about being comfortable during the trips because they are more focused on excitement from new travel experiences (Larsen et al., 2019).

2. Knowledge and Skills Learners: Travellers who are interested in creative and artistic development at certain tourist destinations provided them opportunity to participate through

creative or cultural activities, such as cooking classes, ceramic workshops, and paintings (Richards, 2020).

3. **Aware of Travel Partners' Growth:** Tourists who are influenced by companionships, such as partner, children, friends or family to visit recommend destinations, which they value memorable tourism experience and well-being (Vada et al., 2022).

4. **Aware of Green Issues:** Travellers who value and believe in sustainable tourism activities, demonstrating a greater level of social consciousness, such as nature protection and environmental impacts on the destinations they are visiting (Passafaro et al., 2015).

5. **Relax and Leisure Type:** Tourists who desire opportunity for relaxation, which away from stresses of their daily life and for enjoyment through participation in tourism activities (Yin et al., 2023).

2.1.3 Creative tourism activities

The variations of cultural tourism market impact on cultural tourism development (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999). This leads the destinations transform their traditional cultural tourism products to creative products (Wu, 2021). The potential of creative tourism is able to capitalise local cultures and traditions, knowledge, wisdom, expertise, and skills in different activities (Richards & Reymond, 2000, p. 18), follow:

1. **Arts, crafts, and design:** The development of tourism industry is influenced by promoting their arts. Due to the diversity and complexity of nations' artistic expressions, tourist perceptions of their cultural heritage and arts (Nargiza & Hadicha, 2019). Arts- and craft-based activities offered in creative tourism have possibility to promote understanding of local crafts and traditional practices. These activities are able to be held through workshop, for example snow and ice sculpting design events (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 69) or crafting workshop to create Himmeli sculpture from straw in Lapland region, Finland. The creative tourism activities provide visitors and local crafters to interact, while exchanging cultures and skills, allowing them to gain experiences and understanding one's value and identity (Huhmarniemi et al., 2021. p. 243). Moreover, local artists or crafters are expected to differentiate their designs to represent own's culture and to draw attention from visitors on top of that travellers have opportunity to make their own crafts, which taken home with them as souvenirs, creating sense of belonging between local culture and souvenirs (Bakas et al., 2020). However, crafters who own a souvenir shop might experience challenges in terms of

the viability of generating income from selling products, creative designing, product quality, pricing strategy, and awareness of cultural sensitivity (Kugapi et al., 2020). In addition museums can be art and craft artifacts' workshop venue to promote creative tourism, which foster creativity through numerous engaging activities, such as The Synaesthesia concert event held at Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art, Australia performing synaesthesia event to create multi-sensory experience to the audiences and displaying visual art to create immersive experience through sound and sight (Baixinho et al., 2020; Lehman & Reiser, 2014).

2. Gastronomy: Gastronomy as a food consumption is included in tourism experiences as an identity creation in destinations' cultures and societies (Richards, 2002, p.3). The creative activities involved in gastronomy are culinary workshops, which allow visitors to obtain experiences through various activities, such as food demonstration, tasting, consumption, cooking class, and visiting local farms and markets (Bastenegar, 2020, p. 27; Srihirun & Sawant, 2018, p. 29), or farming trails to learn natural ecology, for instance, domestic animals feeding (Tan et al., 2013). A study by Lee et al. (2015) on the annual Savour Stratford Culinary Festival, Ontario, Canada revealed that the festival allowed food tourists to do hands-on participation in candy, cheese, and chocolate production with local people. Nonetheless, the festivals involved diverse stakeholders' collaboration in public and private sectors to organise the event, such as restaurants, farmers, or food artisans, and local municipalities.

3. Nature-based: This type of activities allows visitors to natural, or areas protected areas (Balmford et al., 2009, p.2). The nature-based tourism activities, such as 1. Hiking allows tourist or visitors to practice physical skills through enjoyment and self-mastery (Mehmetoglu & Normann, 2013, p. 10). In addition, hiking also enhances participated tourist's well-beings and calm, as we as create interaction between tourists, local people, and nature (Acevedo-Duque et al., 2022, p. 17). 2. Nature photography: Photography becomes a linkage between tourists and tourism activity enabling tourist to capture memorable experiences of destinations they are visiting (Garrod, 2008, p. 346), which allows tourists to co-create with surrounding natures and learn the landscape performance through non-human actors as location's natures and cultures (Lund, 2023). Particularly, in norther hemisphere areas, such as Lapland regions, there are tour operating companies offer night photography workshops to visitors or their customers to photograph the Aurora Borealis. The participants will be able to learn how check the Sun activity, locations to spot the Northern Lights, and how to set and using the right cameras to take photos (Northern Lights Village Group, 2024).

4. Sports: According to UNWTO (2001) defined sports in a tourism perspective that is an activity of tourism which tourists actively participate or observe in sporting events. On the one hand, there are some sports related to natural resources, such as outdoor cycling, trekking, skiing including cross country skiing (Landauer et al., 2011), fishing, adventure. On the other hands, there are some sports are reliant to indoor resources, for example, indoor swimming, tennis, or sports hotels (Kurtzman, 2005; Hinch, 2003, p. 79). A study by Mascarenhas et al. (2024) revealed that the tourists who actively involved or participated in sports tend to have the most impressiveness of the experiences, especially joining with cycling tourism events. A sport participation leads tourists to have experiences on physical and mental through interaction with people and environments.

5. Digital Technology: The implementation of digital technologies in tourist destinations is able to promote co-creation through various stakeholders, such as city administration, creative experts, policymakers, and local people, to create and utilise digital technologies, for instance, augmented reality games or interactive mapping, for making the tourist destinations more attractive and creating engagement between local residents and travellers (Marques & Borba, 2017). Additionally, a study by Guo et al. (2021) on creating digital museums through digital content, such as videos of museum exhibitions, is able to stimulate multisensory feelings of tourists on digital museum experiences. Furthermore, the utilisation of advanced technologies, such as printing three dimensions (3D), virtual reality (VR), or augmented reality (AR) has the possibility to create experiences for tourists through different tourist visiting stages: before, during, and after. Ultimately, tourism-related businesses execute these advantages of technologies to enhance visitors' interactive experience, knowledge, and memories (Jung et al., 2017).

2.2 Tourist attractions

There has been controversially disputing over the terms of tourist attractions (TA) or visitor attractions (VA) (Edelheim, 2015, p. 6; Leask, 2009, p. 155; Fyall, et al., 2008, p. 10). According to UNWTO (2008, p. 10) defined the tourists that are the individuals who travelling with different travelling preferences, such as in their own countries or domestic tourists, travelling to or coming from other countries or called inbound and outbound tourists, which have overnight stayed away from their origin of residences. While visitors are the people who

travelling to the attractions for one day called day-tripper (Edelheim, 2015, p. 5), and these visitors also have significant roles as people who create marketing successes from operating attractions (Leask, 2009, p. 155). However, Johan R. Edelheim (2015, p. 5) claimed that a term as tourist attractions is significantly recognised worldwide. Thus, tourist attractions will be stated as a term using in this thesis, while the theories of visitor attractions will be elaborated in order to gain sufficient secondary data from existing literatures (Johnston, 2014. P. 621).

Tourist attractions are the specific physical places, including cultural tourism-related destinations that allow international, domestic and residents of the countries to visit. Those tourist attractions can be in different types of places, such as culture, museum, man-made, or natural attractions. This includes the purposes of attractions are to provide activities for tourists to leisure, entertain and education (UNWTO, 2000; Deloitte (1999, as cited in Edelheim, 2015, p. 16)). In addition, tourist and tourist attractions are able to contribute socio-economy by generating revenues and facilitating local's employment creations (VisitEngland, 2013, p. 2). According to Weidenfeld et al. (2016, p. 7) stated that there are various attractions that have their own characteristics to attract tourists to visit and participate through tourism activities, regarding

1. Natural attractions are considered to be a key component in nature-based tourism to draw tourists' attention, meet their expectations, and create experiences (Deng et al., 2002), with the particular characteristics and special features. The natural attractions consist of aesthetic and scenic landscapes, such as forests, lakes, mountains, or waterfalls (Alaeddinoglu & Can, 2011; Scott et al., 2006; Hudson, 1998), allowing tourists or visitors to be impressed with relaxation (Uduma-Olugu & Adebamowo, 2015) and do photography (Markwell, 1997, p. 154).

Moreover, tourists are able to be a part of ecotourism and biodiversity at the attractions by spotting local fauna and flora (Mittermeier, 2005, p. 8). This includes the opportunities for tourists to enjoy outdoor activities as recreation and improve physical health (Romagosa, 2018, p. 30) and mental health with hiking or skiing (Puhakka et al., 2016). However, some natural attractions are located at national parks or protected areas where the attractions have strict rules, regulations, and sustainable practices to create tourists' awareness (Pickering & Weaver, 2003, p. 7). In addition, the nature-based attractions should have suitable

infrastructures to facilitate and create appeal for tourists, such as visitor centres, trails, or observation points (Mandić et al., 2018).

2. Cultural tourism attractions offer various activities to tourists for visiting, experiencing, and learning from their different cultures (Richards, 2002, p. 1048). Those cultural attractions encompass either tangible or intangible resources (Marciszewska, 2005, p. 83; Munjeri, 2004, p. 16), enabling tourists or visitors to participate in leisure activities or enhance cultural experiences (Richards et al., 2020, p. 10). The characteristics of cultural attractions can reflect the local identities in terms of cultures and histories, such as languages, traditional arts (Richards, 2002), costumes (Lee & Lee, 2019, p. 8), or foods (Bessiere, 1998). This list also includes the attractions that can be enhanced as cultural learning destinations, allowing tourists or visitors to learn and comprehend locals' social and cultural dimensions through participating in cultural activities (Richards, 2018).

Furthermore, cultural attractions also represent the local sustainability, with persevering, identities, values of local communities (Kanoksilapatham, 2023, p. 487), and cultural heritages (Vafadari, 2008, p. 266). Additionally, visiting of tourist means that attractions are able to contribute revenue to communities by selling handicrafts (Upadhyay, 2020, p. 15), serving local food, organising local festivals or events (Garibaldi & Pozzi, 2018, p. 238), or exhibiting and selling arts at museum (Johanson & Olsen, 2010, p. 10; Stylianou-Lambert, 2011, p. 418). Ultimately, the cultural attractions can create tourism co-creation between local people and tourists (Özdemir et al., 2020, p. 156).

3. Event attractions, according to Connell et al. (2014, p. 284) stated that attractions hosted as events within tourist attractions, event organizers will use this type of attractions as tourism's strategic tools to promote and develop tourist activities. The key characteristics of successful event attractions are that the events are capable to interest and draw tourists or visitors' intentions to engage the events, such as festivals, business events, or sports (Getz, 2007, p.403). Moreover, the event-based attractions have to be designed to have uniqueness (Akgöz & Engin, 2016, p. 5; Getz, 2007, p. 404) through incorporating traditions (Stankova & Vassenska, 2024, p. 123), or local cultures and able to create memorable experiences for tourists (Richards, 2010). Besides attracting tourists, the event attractions can stimulate local economy by create employments, and generate revenue to local's tourist-related businesses, such as

hotels, restaurants, or retails, especially holding events during low-season of tourism (Connell et al., 2014, p. 291; Hodur & Leistriz, 2006, p. 63).

4. Retail attractions, according to Weidenfeld et al. (2016, p. 10) mentioned that attractions are in retailing stores or places including large shopping centres in the big cities, while in small cities or villages offering outlet shops or souvenir shops. The souvenirs and souvenir stores are an importance for tourist attractions (Swanson, 2014, 179), representing local culture identities of the tourism destinations as in tangible items (Elomba & Yun, 2017, p. 107), which products are made and designed locally to create memorable experiences (Swanson, 2014) as well as some shops Provide tourists with participatory experiences in the processes to craft the souvenirs, and tourists can take their own souvenirs to their origin destinations (He & Timothy, 2023, p. 154), through which tourists will comprehend local cultures and create a sense of ownership through the self-made souvenirs (Lv et al., 2024, p. 16).

While tourists can gain shopping experiences visiting the tourist attractions, the local retailers can earn income from tourists' expenditures (Lacher & Nepal, 2011, p. 27) and preserve their cultures and traditions in tangible products (Duan et al., 2023, p.13). Moreover, there are attractions provide tourist attraction activities as farm-based, focusing on rural concepts and activities (Busby & Rendle, 2000, p. 637; From, 1998, p. 356), such in Lapland region, Finland, tourists can feed reindeer and horses at local farm, learning information regarding sustainable tourism in animals at tourist attractions and herding farm animals from owners or herders (García-Rosell & Tallberg, 2021; Lapland Regional Council, n.d.).

Tourist attractions are the places, where they are purposed to represent local legacies, with cultures, natures, and values. Thus, the tourist attraction development therefore requires critical steps for tourism developers have to consider, from planning to promoting the attractions as following steps (Victoria State Government, 2023).

1. Initial planning and consideration: This step requires tourism stakeholders to consider what are the types of the attractions that needed to be created such as arts and media, food and drink, history and heritage, society and culture, or even sports (Fyall, et al., 2008, p. 19), by considering the quality and money valued for attract tourists to visit (Prebensen et al., 2013, p. 245), including how much budget, from public or private entities, needs to be invested and operating costs for establishing and running those attractions (Nawaz & Hassan, 2016, p. 586).

Moreover, the attractions have to benchmarking to create differentiation and specialty (Kozak, 2004, p. 57), with the locations must be chosen wisely to be accessible for tourists (Pedrana, 2014, p. 753).

In addition, attraction developers have to categorize the prospective target tourists or visitors' demographics (Ashworth & Goodall, 2012, p. 270) to ensure that operating attractions will be sustainable with a number of tourists' traffic, expenditures (Dolnicar, 2012, p. 22), and meet the needs of travellers (Morgan & Ranchhod, 2009), these can be analysed by implementing tourism marketing strategy analysis or financial forecasting (Sainaghi, 2019). This includes studying feasible plans that create tourist attractions will contribute benefits and impacts on local stakeholders in terms of economy, society, and environment (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2016, p. 88; Timothy, 1998).

2. Licensing and permits: The tourist attraction developers determine necessary licenses, registrations and permits to create tourist attractions (Kismilarsih et al., 2019). This is because the attractions require various resources used, safety concerns (Fuchs & Pizam, 2011, p. 307). trades and copyrights (Nanayakkara, 2011, p. 4), such as some attractions need to a large amount of land to build or construct the buildings and facilities to accommodate tourism purposes (Kytzia et al., 2010), some attractions need to have health and hygiene licenses to ensure serving food complying with the standardization (Yasami et al., 2020, p. 593), or some attractions involve with designs and tourism product trading, concerning of an intellectual property, for example souvenir design and selling (George, 2010, 387).

3. Attraction Development, Implement and Marketing: Approach the local government entities involving a tourist attraction establishment for requiring approvals (Brokaj, 2014, p. 112). Thereafter, the developers will implement the plans to create tourist attraction(s) by constructing building, facilities, and infrastructures (Mandić et al., 2018), including installations of safety features (Fuchs, & Pizam, 2011, p. 307). In addition, according to the increase of environment awareness, sustainable practices, such as waste management (Altinay & Hussain, 2005, p. 279), or energy conservation, considering implementing at tourist attraction as well (Gössling, 2000, p. 420). Furthermore, market strategies and promotions for tourist attractions, will be implemented through creation exhibitions and tourist activities to draw tourists or visitors (Sofronov, 2019, p. 118), with the local uniqueness (Zhao, 2023, p. 31), value-added, and experiences from visiting attractions (Prebensen et al., 2013, p. 256)

4. Evaluation: This process requires the attraction developers to create evaluation programs in order to acquire tourists' feedback and experiences from visiting the attractions, assess impacts of operating the attractions (Alegre & Garau, 2009, p. 68), and obtain opportunity to adapt the tourist attractions into the tourism's trends (Zhao, 2023, p. 31) in order to ensure that tourist attractions will be successful in a long-term operation and sustainability (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2016, p. 88; Carey et al., 1997, p. 429).

2.3 Destination development

Roger et al. (2023, p. 1) stated that the development of tourism destinations involves various components, including incorporation of stakeholders, strategic-making plans, creating tourism activities, aiming to sustainably contribute economy to local communities and meet the demands of tourist through managing tourist attraction, creating accessibility to the destinations, fostering human resource, promoting destination images and executing pricing strategy. This includes the development of tourism requires diverse stakeholders to involve in the developing activities, such as public organizations, private businesses, non-government sectors and local people and communities (Kozak and Kozak, 2015, p. 1).

There are different characteristic roles of stakeholders in developing tourism destinations. These include the government that will foster tourism management and create competitiveness through addressing policies, regulations, and security to create valuable contributions on economy, society, and environment through tourism activities in order to promote the destinations and be facilitators to incorporate among stakeholders (Handayani & Lazuardi, 2022). According to the study by Franco and Estevão (2010), the private businesses will be vital actors in tourism development for establishing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to integrate tourism experts and resources. Moreover, private sectors are considered to be one of the crucial contributors through monetary investments if subsidised by public sectors to establish offerings in tourism (Armenski et al., 2017, p. 396). In addition, due to flexible organisations, businesses can be significant parts in adopting and developing innovation in tourist-related goods and services to fulfil the expectations of tourists and business customers and maximise competitiveness in tourism marketing (Armenski et al., 2017, p. 387).

The destination management requires small-scale operations from all tourism-related stakeholders to execute their personal roles and responsibilities in tourism development (Fletcher et al., 2017, p. 136), ensuring large-scale of tourism destinations are followed its strategies and roadmaps for creating tourism competitiveness in terms of economy, society, environment, technology, politics, and culture (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003, p. 2). Fyall and Garrod (2019, p. 168) highlighted that particularly, heritage and cultural destinations must guarantee that developing tourism places are able to gain integration between local hosts and visitors, aiming to enhance their life quality, well-being and experiences.

According to UNWTO (2007, p. 28) urged that the destination managers incorporate crucial components in order to development tourism attractions, such as tourism products developments which include mixing resources of tangible, in particular, tourist attraction or infrastructure and intangible as culture, nature, or reputation. This includes tourism services and activities provided by local people that can generate experiences and satisfaction for tourists (Benur & Bramwell, 2015, p. 216; UNWTO, 2019, p. 10).

Moreover, the destinations implement marketing concepts, plans and strategies into tourism products to provide what tourists need through incorporating tourism organisations and stakeholders, from the national down to the local scales (Palmer & Bejou, 1995, p. 927) for creating tourism promotions and the destination's image branding to attract potential visitors (Wang, 2011; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2012). Furthermore, the development of events aims at enhancing tourism destinations to draw travellers. A study by Panfilux (2015) emphasised the impacts of organising events at tourism destinations: those events can create tourists' experiences and satisfactions, with the intention to spend more expenditures and extend their stays. Also, the cultural events can create positive perceptions from tourists, and local people can maintain their local heritages.

Besides cultural events, destinations are able to hold the events regarding arts, sports, education, and entertainment as well (Oklobžija, 2015, p. 87). Additionally, local hosts have to use their expertise with the support of local private and public sectors for enhancing capability at tourism destinations and tourist services (Aref et al., 2009, p. 670). This involves the tourism-related firms having to train their staffs to be skilled workers with decent attitudes (Thomas & Long, 2001, p. 238) to deal with the changes of tourism phenomena and serve various travellers' needs (Marin-Pantelescu & Lupu, 2001, p. 259).

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Theoretical approaches to creative tourism in tourism research

Botterill and Platenkamp (2012, p. 10) stated that tourism research is primarily involved in social research. In order to situate tourism research within fields of social science, this has to incorporate a wide range of academic disciplines, theories, methods, and philosophical perspectives. This research aligns with different paradigms for reflecting diverse assumptions concerning what reality truly is and how individuals come to understand it (Smith, 2017, p. 19). According to the theoretical background of this research, it appears to be based on the integration of constructivism (Smith, 2017, p. 28) and interpretive paradigms (Tribe, 2001). These paradigms concentrated on the approaches to comprehend the subjective experiences of persons, which in this context implies creative tourists through interaction and participation in cultural and creative activities.

Honebein (1996, as cited in Adom et al., 2016) argued that the constructivism paradigm emphasises how humans construct their knowledge and reality through social interactions and individual experiences and reflection on those encounters. In the concept of creative tourism, tourists are empowered to co-design their experiences by engaging with local culture, heritages, or crafts. In creative tourism, engaging with local culture, crafts, and heritage allows tourists to personalise their experiences. Thus, the perception of tourists on tourism destinations is likely formed by these engagements, emphasising the vital integrative contexts of humans and cultures and the ways of individuals actively shape the meaning of creative tourism.

The interpretive paradigm approach consists of with involvement of humans meaning making and understanding personal growth (Gichuru, 2017). This is related to creative tourists who search for participation themselves in local culture and artistic experiences in order to gain, exchange their experience, talents, and a profound comprehending with local communities. This approach underlines the subjective nature of these experiences, which tourists or visitors interpret their engagement in creative tourism activities via their own personal interpretation.

3.2 Creative tourism theory

This study is grounded by the concept of creative tourism, which it can improve tourist experience. The theoretical background is mainly based on the scholar studies by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond in 2000, who first introduced creative tourism concept. Their concept emphasizes the destinations allow tourists or visitors to participate with tourism activities, which the local people and travellers to exchange their knowledge, skills, and experiences. This theory also relates to the perspectives of various researchers who study creative tourism, such as Richards and Wilson (2006), Duxbury and Richards (2019), and Piboonrunroj and Sangkakorn (2013). Those majority of researchers have elaborated more comprehension of creative tourism and its contributions that may occur between stakeholders at particular destinations, as well as multidimensional aspects regarding tangible and intangible sources, sustainability, local communities, cultures, and heritages.

Furthermore, Zuluaga and Guerra (2021) and Duxbury et al. (2021), have emphasized the developmental processes of creative tourism, which based on their concepts that creative tourism purposes to integrate cultural tourism with creating tourism destination's engagement in order to transform passive participants to active participants and contributing community value creation and benefits. In addition, the creative tourism theories by OECD (2014), Richards and Duxbury (2019), and Creative Tourism Network (n.d.) also explained the characteristics of creative tourists that they demand of unique and hands-on experiences, while interacting or participating with local cultures and communities, from tourism activities.

Additionally, this research also discusses various conceptualisations of creative tourism activities that aim to enhance tourists' or visitors' experiences and promote understanding in local cultures at tourist attractions through arts and crafts, for instance, snow and ice sculpting (Miettinen et al., 2019), craft workshops (Huhmarniemi et al., 2019), and artistic and crafting designs for souvenirs' creation (Bakas et al., 2020), culinary workshops by Bastenegar (2020) and Srihirun and Sawant (2018). Moreover, Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013) and Lund (2023) illustrated nature-based activities like hiking and photography. Furthermore, creative activities related to sports, such as trekking in the nature (Landauer et al., 2011). Lastly, digital technologies are able to be implemented to create participation between tourists and destinations through augmented reality, or 3D technology (Jung et al., 2017).

Overall, this study's theoretical foundation outlines the fundamental concepts of creative tourism, the assessment procedures to do strategic planning for developing creative tourism, the explanation of characteristics of creative tourists, and the diverse range of creative activities, enabling tourist experience enhancements.

3.3 Theoretical framework

According to Figure 1 illustrates a theoretical framework, deriving from the concepts of creative tourism, tourists' attraction, and destination development based on literature reviews. To further understand the elements within this theoretical framework, it is important to consider that the development of creative tourism attraction is based on unique cultural landscapes at destinations, such as heritage sites, cultural practices, and local traditions (Richards & Wilson, 2007, p. 1). This includes having tangible resources, for example, local products/crafts or historical buildings, with intangible resources involve community's knowledge, skills, or arts (Duxbury et al., 2021, p. 5). It is also involving community engagement with tourism activities and deliver tourist experience. Then, the uniqueness of creative attractions and activities possibly draw creative tourists who have desire to participate with activities that provide them with new skills and knowledge, enable their own creativity and abilities, with more active engagement than passive observation, including demand of tourism practices with respect and preservation of local culture and environment (Tan et al., 2014, p. 257).

Therefore, to meet the needs of prospective creative tourists, key actors in tourism sectors comprise of public sectors that provide support and tourism infrastructure, and private sectors involved in providing tourism services and products (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 72). The incorporation between governmental and business entities ensures that developing attractions is successful by doing research and analyse tourist demand or tourism market (Ashworth & Goodall, 2012, p. 270), developing strategic plans to outline attractions' activities, concepts, or target tourists (Fyall, et al., 2008, p. 19), issuing necessary permits and licenses to meet legal requirements and maintain safety (Fuchs & Pizam, 2011, p. 307), implementing plans to action (Brokaj, 2014, p. 112), and evaluating attractions' feedback and performance for long-term improvement (Mathew & Sreejesh, 2016, p. 88). Additions, stakeholders also involve with developing creative activities, establishing workshops focused on local arts, crafts, and design, participating in local food preparation, cooking or tasting, engaging activities

combined with nature, including local sports or games, and implementing digital tools to enhance creative and cultural experiences (Richards & Reymond, 2000, p. 18).

As a result, there are possible outcomes from developing creative tourism attractions and activities, such as tourist attractions can enhance tourist experiences through active participations, create opportunities for tourists and locals to learn from each other's experiences (De Bruin & Jelinčić, 2016), contribute benefits to local community (Richards, 2013), and promote local unique creative branding and cultural identity (Huhmarniemi et al., 2021. p. 243).

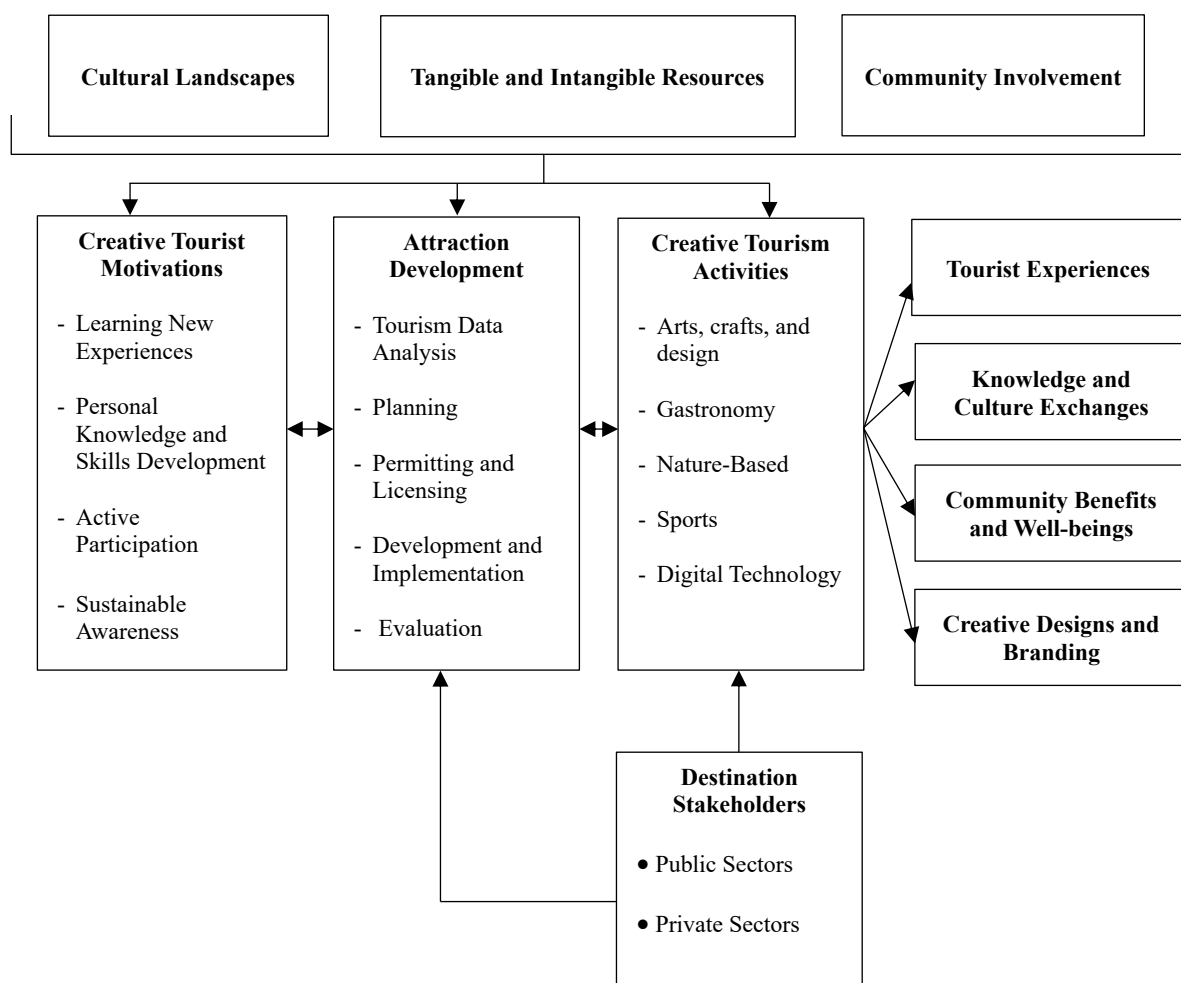


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of creative tourism attractions' development

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This study integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyse the gathered data, aiming to characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City and to comprehend perceptions of tourists on creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City. To answer the research questions, RQ1: How developed are creative tourism attractions and activities within Rovaniemi City? This helps to characterise the current state of existing creative attraction developments. It allows tourism stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities for planning and developing creative tourism, and they can use the findings to diversify tourism products and to leverage involvement of local communities for shared benefits. RQ2: How do tourists perceive the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City? The purpose of this question is to understand perception of tourists on creative tourism attractions offered in Rovaniemi. The insightful results can help tourism stakeholders to develop existing products and services or create the new ones that are able to cater to tourist demands and travel experiences. Therefore, the methods of qualitative and quantitative research are utilised in this research through the following steps.

4.1 Qualitative approach

In tourism studies, a study by Davies (2003) stated that qualitative research plays an importance role to emphasize human component by defining the context and acknowledgement in various activities in tourism phenomena, including to explore the areas that cannot be conducted by quantitative methods. However, qualitative approaches incorporate with quantitative approaches to enhance overall comprehending in tourism issues through various dimensions and methodologies integrations. In order to enhance the validity and reliability of the research method used, the triangulation technique is implemented to conduct qualitative methodologies to verify that research outcomes accord or at the very least, do not inconsistent with one another (Decrop, 1999, p. 160).

4.1.1 Data collection

This qualitative method determines the samples for collecting data, consisting of two samples from public sectors: educational institutes and two Private sectors: a souvenir shop, and a destination management company (DMC). In this study, the non-probability sample is

employed to select research participants from a group of focused populations (El-Masri, 2017, p. 17) and the purposive sampling technique is used to determine the particular persons who fulfil the required characteristics to be recruited in research (Gideon, 2012, p. 67).

A semi-structured interview is used as a research tool to collect the data, allowing an interviewer to prepare questions beforehand and providing opportunities to explore in-depth topics related to experiences, perspectives, or sensitive questions regarding emotions from participants, interviewees and also known as key informants (Whittaker, 2012). This is because this method enables an interviewer to develop on-the spot questions and chances for key informants to address their individual aspects and feelings (Kallio et al., 2016). In addition, key informants are valuable sources of obtaining information, which frequently implemented in ethnographic study due to those key informants have individual skills and specific roles in society (Marshall, 1996, p. 92).

The semi-structure interviews are designed in this study which aligning with the research aim that is to explore the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City and the research question that what are the current developments in creative tourism attractions and activities within Rovaniemi City? Based on previous studies regarding creative tourism, tourist attractions development, and tourist perceptions, the question guides are formulated in semi-structured interview for collecting the data from interviewing relevant persons in public and private sectors. The interview questions are given in Appendix 1, each consisting of 4 sections included Section 1: Basic personal profiles of a key informant., Section 2: The roles and responsibilities of the organization in tourist attractions development in Rovaniemi City., Section 3: The current situations are in developments of creative tourism attractions and creative activities through arts, crafts, and design, gastronomy, nature-based, sports, digital technology and additional activities for engaging tourist participations in Rovaniemi City., and Section 4: The guidelines of creative tourism attractions development and creative activities in Rovaniemi City in the future for engaging tourist participations.

To begin with interviewing, researchers need to familiarize the questions of the interviews to reach research aims and answer to the research questions (Smith, 2017, p. 131). According to study by Johnson et al. (2019) illustrated methods to approach recruited key informants through 1. In-person interview which allow an interviewer to have an opportunity to do a face-to-face meeting with an interviewee at their workplace, living place, or familiar environments.

2. Phone calling interview which researchers use a mobile phone to interview respondents, and 3. Skype (video) interviews which allow interviewers to have chances to meet interviewees in face-to-face through particular online platforms such as Skype or Zoom (Oliffe et al., 2021).

During conducting of interview, a researcher has to use precise and clear language to avoid misunderstanding and confusion and ensure that a researcher's questions are organized orderly and logically, will not be leading, ambiguous or offensive. This includes refraining from making judgements on regarding favourable or adverse perspectives. Additionally, using follow-up questions to gain more responsiveness and resolve ambiguities to more capture participants' actual meanings. Moreover, before closing the interview, asking add-on questions allowing interviewees to share their further point of views (McGrath et al., 2018; Rowley, 2012).

Furthermore, involving recording methods enable researchers to capture the detailed data from participants (Knott et al., 2022, p. 4). This includes notetakings which grant interviewees to efficiently spot, and recall data (Burnett et al., 1998, p. 377), voice recording via devices allowing researchers to replay interviewees' responses (Smith, 2017, p. 134). Lastly, the final stage of the interviews is included ensuring interview's reliably recorded data in order to effectively transcribe from data before approaching the data analysis in the following step (Easwaramoorthy et al., 2006).

4.1.2 Data analysis

Qualitative data in this study will be analysed through content analysis. This is because content analysis is a methodological technique in social science for researchers to create valid and reproducible deduction in texts, or non-written material, such as images, maps, sound, or symbols, which those data will provide new profound comprehensions, enhance understandings in specific circumstances (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 24; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 258). A study by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) illustrated the processes of content analysis consist of:

1. Data preparation: Diverse types of data will be converted into written texts for doing systematic content analysis.

2. Identifying the units of meaning: Particular themes will be determined for coding texts that related to the research questions.

3. Develop coding and theme: A specific theme will be addressed to identify expressions for creating coding. In this stage, participants will be converted into coders.

4. Transcribing the codes of content: The transcripts of interviews will be analysed according to approach research questions.

5. Confirming the accuracy and consistency of the analysed data: According to Krippendorff (2013, p. 286) pointed out that reliability is a guarantee that the findings for specific research are able to be replicated, and validity is an affirmation that the claims taking place from the research are validated in fact. In addition, reliability is a compulsory prerequisite for validity (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 272).

6. Results Reporting: Once the data are codified, the research findings, extended explorations and contributions will be written up for the readers (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 376).

The content analysis was utilised to assess the collected data from interview. The participants data were individually assigned as coders, then, transcribing from audio recorders for analysing obtained data and categorising different themes of content. Therefore, the samples of qualitative analysis are listed in a Table 1.

Table 1. Samples of public and private sectors in Rovaniemi City

Code	Sector	Organization
P1	Private	Private tour guide and souvenir shop
P2	Public	Educational institute
P3	Public	Educational institute
P4	Private	Destination management company

Based on Table 1, the participants were interviewed both face-to-face and via Microsoft Teams from February to April, and each interview lasts for approximately 30 - 60 minutes. After participants accepted to participate in this study through emails, and prior to the interviews, a researcher stated and presented a letter of consent (see Appendix 3), presenting the details of this research and providing information regarding confidentiality, well-being, the option to discontinue participation at any point and asked permission to audio record conversation using an iPad during the interview, then requested each participant sign the consent.

Throughout the interviews, most participants showed their relaxation and engagement, responding openly to questions about their involvement in creative tourism activities. The researcher created warm, welcoming atmospheres, allowing participants to become familiar with an interviewer and research questions. P2 and P3, who have experience in creative tourism studies, provided rich and detailed data. However, P1 and P4, who are in tourism businesses, needed further clarifications of the questions in order to answer correctly; therefore, the interviewer had to give more explanations. The interviews of P1, P3, and P4 were held in person, where participants could freely select the most convenient locations where participants feel comfortable, respected, and heard. In contrast, P2 required an online interview conducted via Microsoft Teams. This method enabled a researcher to ensure that the internet connection was stable, and the environment was distraction-free.

Interestingly, after finishing interviewing with P4, the participant invited a researcher to participate in free-of-charge tourism activities, which were an Aurora hunting tour, actively learning to take great pictures of this natural phenomenon, feeding reindeer at night, and cooking sausages at a private campfire (Laavu), which this opportunity allowed the researcher to experience genuinely participatory activities offered by a local tour company.

4.1.3 Reliability and validity

This qualitative study will prioritise reliability and validity to strengthen its findings (Golafshani, 2003) to use to support positivist paradigms and interpretivist concepts in quantitative research (Seale, 1999, p. 466). These reliability and validity include credibility, which consists of methods to gain trust with research participants and be able to obtain insights and rich information by spending sufficient time in the research fields and avoiding creating bias and noise in each research process (Ruane, 2005, p. 71); from collecting data, analysing methods, and interpreting the findings, and employing a triangulation method through various techniques to sort out reliable data from documents, observations, or interviews in order to gain credibility and minimise creating bias from merely one research method (Ahmed, 2024, p. 2).

4.2 Quantitative approach

A quantitative approach is a research method for gathering numerical data to respond specific research questions. The main objectives of conducting quantitative research are to measure

variables and hypothetical analysis with various statistical techniques (Apuke, 2017, p. 41). Traditionally, quantitative methods are used to demonstrate experimentations, surveys, or relevant studies (Knapp, 1998, p. 5). Furthermore, the quantitative research is utilized to analyse diverse study schemes and statistical processes, allowing researchers are able to recognize trends and identify the areas that need to be enhanced or improved. Additionally, employing quantitative methods enable researchers to explore correlation between research approaches and the findings of study. Moreover, the results of quantitative approaches are able to provide potential methods for future research through addressing strengths and weaknesses in present studies (Plonsky & Gass, 2011).

4.2.1 Data collection

The street survey, on-site, and e-survey methods are implemented to conduct the surveys with tourists travelling in Rovaniemi City or had experienced visiting in Rovaniemi City. The characteristic of street, on-site and e-survey that are the methods used by researchers to carry out with requesting respondents on street or at tourist attractions, including using internet and online-based to complete the questionnaires through e-mail or website based (Van & Jankowski, 2006, p. 436; Veal, 2006, p. 235; Evans & Mathur, 2005, p. 198), or a Quick Response (QR) code survey (Faggiano & Carugo, 2020).

A population in quantitative research is the targeted group of humans that researchers desire to conduct the research (Hossan et al., 2023, p. 211). In addition, the techniques used to derive samples from a large group of population called sampling (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010, p. 50). Therefore, the population of this research is selected by tourists visiting in Rovaniemi City. According to the tourist statistic of Rovaniemi City, Rovaniemi accommodated tourists, accounting for 597,000 travellers in 2023 (City of Rovaniemi, 2024). Thus, simple random sampling technique in probability method is employed to determine the samples of this study. This is because the simple random sampling, in which samples in populations will be equally selected (Noor et al., 2022, p. 79).

This quantitative study employs questionnaires that are the significant research tool in tourism study for collecting empirical data, such as sentiments from targeted subjects which are representatives of particular populations Smiths (2017, p. 75). In this study, questionnaires are designed align with a research objective that is to examine perceptions of tourists through

developing of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City and a research question that is what are tourists' perceptions in creative tourism attractions' development and activities in Rovaniemi City?.

The components of this questionnaire are constructed into four sections (see Appendix 3), which include 1. Basic characteristic profiles, 2. Tourist behaviour, 3. Perception levels, and 4. Additional opinions of respondents. These questionnaires include closed-end questions and open-end questions that are integrated to form question types for responses from tourists in Rovaniemi City. The characteristics of closed-end questions are designed for research samples to mark their desired answers presented on a questionnaire that can be a single or multiple questions. On the other hand, the open-ended questions allow participants to write their own responses (Smiths, 2017, p. 77).

Thus, Section 1: Basic characteristic profiles from tourist comprise of gender, age, education, occupation, monthly income, marital status, country of origin, travel companions, including alone, friends, group tour, family, or a partner (Zhao et al., 2018, p. 373)., Section 2: Behaviours of tourists involving purpose of travel (Brown, 2005, p. 482), visiting frequency, visiting duration, and travel spending per trip (Veal, 2006, p. 250). Section 3: The perception levels of a tourist participating in creative tourism activities in Rovaniemi City. The Five-Likert Scale (Dimitrov, 2011, p. 10) is used to measure tourist's perception levels divided into five levels, from 1 to 5 points as follow: Strongly Agree 5 Points, Agree 4 Points, Moderately Agree 3 Points, Disagree 2 Point, and Strongly Disagree 1 Point.

2.2 Data analysis

This study employs descriptive analysis to measure viables through diverse statistic methods that used to compute, explain, and conclude gathered data. Descriptive statistics comprise of 1. frequency, 2). percentage, 3. mean, and 4. standard deviation. According to Larson (2006, p. 76) stated that frequency consists of two main types, which include 1. Raw count or absolute frequencies are from counting the numbers of valid cases in each group and 2. Percentage or relative frequencies are from converting numerical data from frequency. Therefore, frequency and percentage are used to measure basic characteristics profiles from tourist, such as gender, age, education, occupation, monthly income, marital status, country of origin, travel companions, including alone, friends, group tour, family, or a partner and of tourists'

behaviours involving purpose of travel, visiting frequency, visiting duration, and travel spending per trip. 3. Mean that is derived from the methods the sum of all values that divided by the number of response or N. The symbol used to represent mean is \bar{x} or so-called x-bar. 2. Standard Deviation (SD) is to measure the spreading range of numbers presenting average space from the mean for comprehending the distribution of data and SD is often described alongside with the mean. Thus, mean and standard deviation are implemented to measure perceptions of tourists through developing of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City. Principally, descriptive statistics are displayed in numerical forms, such as written texts, tables and diagram pictures (Veal, 2018, p. 499; Vetter, 2017, p. 1798; Larson, 2006, p. 77). Ultimately, the collected data from questionnaires will be statistical analysed with the Statical Package of Social Science (SPSS), Version 28 (Veal, 2006, p. 297).

4.2.3 Reliability and validity

For testing the reliability of research instruments in quantitative research, such as questionnaires (Watson, 2015, p. 6), the internal consistency or homogeneity will be tested by using various methods, such as the Kuder-Richardson, the split-half technique (Ruane, 2005, p. 68), correlation, and Cronbach's alpha. In this method, the items will be divided into two sets to test the value of the coefficient to determine the value of Cronbach's alpha, presenting a number from 0 to 1; generally, the index's results from 0.7 or higher, or 0.8 or higher, are satisfactory for indicating a research instrument's reliability (Heale & Twycross, 2015, p. 67; Ruane, 2005, p. 70), or more than 0.9 is suggested (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011, p. 54), and details are presented as Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability analysis

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	Remark
1. Arts, crafts, and design	5	0.826	Highly reliable
2. Gastronomy (food)	5	0.826	Highly reliable
3. Nature-based	5	0.965	Highly reliable
4. Sport	5	0.898	Highly reliable
5. Digital Technology	5	0.948	Highly reliable
Total	25	0.956	Highly reliable

According to Bujang et al. (2024, p. 7) indicated sufficient minimum subjects to execute pilot test, therefore, 30 samples were conducted determining reliability analysis of this study and the total coefficient values of Cronbach's alpha is 0.956 which is highly reliable to justify reliability of the questionnaires (Wahyudi, 2019, p. 83).

4.3 Research ethics

Research ethics is implementation of ethical concepts into the methods of study, including research designing, carrying out, analysing, interpreting, and publishing the findings. The main objectives to take moral principles into account of responsibility through ethical behaviours of researchers that aiming to protect persons, society, and environments and provide practical research conduction to a global humanity (Love, 2012, p. 2) and codes of conduct and ethical execution align with the codes of conduct of research associations, educational institutes and also ethics committees (Veal, 2018, p. 109). Conducting research at the universities in Finland aligns with the guidelines from publishing document called Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland in 2023 by Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The main purposes of this document are to guide researchers with the best research practices and to enhance responsible research conducting and highlight alleged misconducting of research with the actions of research integrity (RI) violations, including research fabrication, falsification, plagiarism and neglect to do appropriate research methods (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, 2023).

This study is conducted by applying the ethical principles into research processes, such as research construction, gathering data and methods of data storage and management, conducting analysis, and writing interpretation and publication. The fundamental objective to conduct research ethically in this research rely on the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK which integrate with the concepts of Belmont Report (Barrow, 2022) as following methods: 1. This study strongly determines the respect of person. In the qualitative approach, the author verbally contacts key informants in order to inquire a permission for an interviewing to collect with explanation of research details. Then, a letter of consent will be presented to clarify the objectives and potential contributions from the findings with the details regarding the personal information of respondents must not be disclosed, and it will be stored and handled confidentially. In quantitative approach, in face-to-face method,

participants will need to sign a consent form (see Appendix 2) before completing the questionnaire and provided opportunities to ask concerning the research details and in on-line methods, focused respondents will be informed the aims and benefits of this research through messages presented on website. 2. The author prioritises maximising benefits for participants concerning safety and well-beings which include minimising any forms of harm during the interview and survey processes, and 3. The author concerns the fairness and equity in the processes of conducting this research that align with good research practices by recruiting participants from public and private sectors that relevant to this study in developing creative tourism's destinations and activities and tourists travelling in Rovaniemi City.

4.4 The utilisation of an artificial intelligence-based tool

This research utilised a language model called QuillBot with a paid subscription to correct grammatical errors in written texts, as illustrated in Figure 2. QuillBot is an essential program, aiming to help its users, or especially students, to proofread or correct grammar and restructure or paraphrase written texts, particularly in English. Although this program seems to be useful, users must be aware of the correctness and reliability of contexts, especially with familiarity with vocabularies and terms (Fitria, 2021).

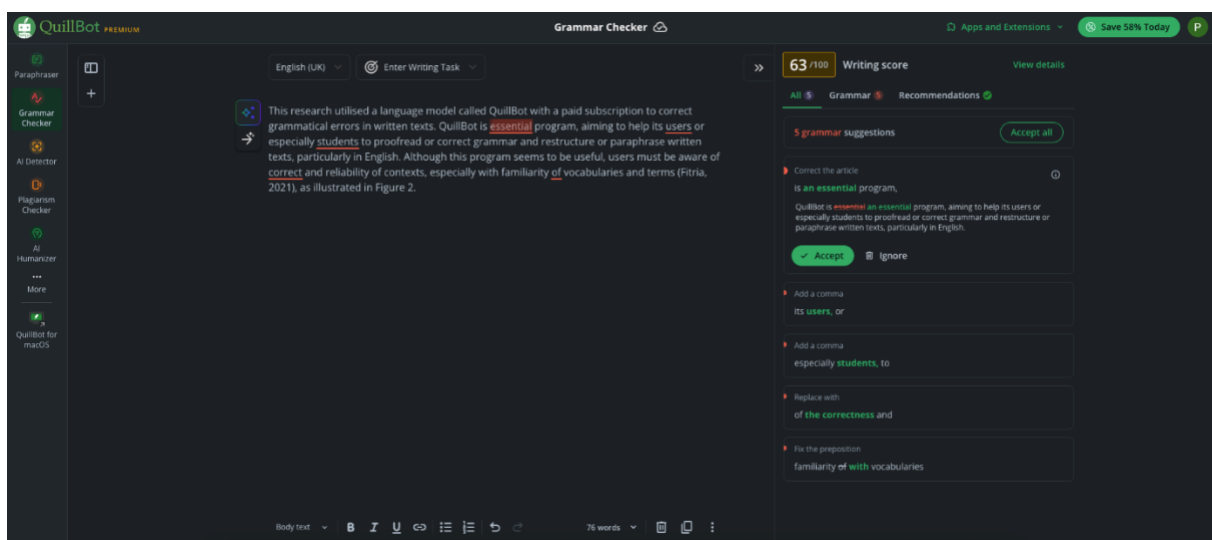


Figure 2. The demonstration of using QuillBot to proofread texts

Source: <https://quillbot.com/grammar-check>

5. RESULTS

5.1 Qualitative analysis results

These qualitative analysis results were acquired through in-depth interview methods with samples from public and private entities related to tourism industry in Rovaniemi City. The semi-constructed interview was used as a research tool to obtain data consisting of 3 sections. In Section 1, interviewees were asked regarding their personal background, such as occupation title and years of experience, including their roles and responsibilities related to tourism sectors. In Section 2, the interviewing participants were questioned about the current situations of creative tourism attraction developments and creative activities, such as arts, crafts, and design; gastronomy (food); nature-based activities; sports and digital technology; and collaboration between stakeholders within Rovaniemi. Lastly, in section 3, the development guidelines for creative tourism attractions incorporated surveyed opinions to engage tourist participation and challenging or successful factors to create potentially creative activities in Rovaniemi City, including the methods to reach sustainability approaches.

According to basic personal profile data from respondents, there is a clear division between participants with practical, tourism-industry-focused roles and responsibilities, with those who are in academic and administrative positions. P1 and P4 provide information of their roles that are based on their work experience. P1 mentions various roles as the owner of souvenir shop, restaurant and private tour operator, demonstrating insightful involvement in tourism industry approximately 12 years in tourism sectors of Rovaniemi, with responsibilities in selling souvenir products, guiding tours, and providing general assistance to tourists. P4 identifies the role as an economist for 40 years and an economic advisor at a destination management company for many years, responsible for analysing the feasibility of tourism-related businesses in order to determine whether they are or are not potential in return on investments. In the other hand, P2 and P3 state their professional titles related to academic careers up to 25 years. P2 manages and leads organisation and P3 cites the roles of teaching and conducting research. They also have had experienced in study and conduct research regarding creative tourism focusing on arts, crafts, or design in Rovaniemi and Lapland region.

P1: "I have experiences in tourism for 30 years, but exactly 12 years in Rovaniemi."

P4: "I am an economist for 40 years. So, I have to calculate what it's good to do or not good to do and what kinds of investment for tourism companies"

P2: "I've been leading many projects where we have been developing crafts routes, like travel routes, where tourists can enjoy doing crafts"

P3: I am a vice of department head. I've been at this organisation for 25 years related to art education."

Given the existing development of Rovaniemi's creative tourism attractions and its activities, all participants acknowledge that there are presences of arts, crafts, and design, however, there are different views on their significance for tourism, with some participants mention that those activities are still underdeveloped and lack of connection with the tourists. P1 cites that there are some art galleries, such as "Korundi Art Museum", and a place located in the city centre called, "LAURI Handicrafts & Guesthouse" where tourists can observe or participate in crafting. However, in terms of community-driven craft activities are not prevalent. This is because most art or craft related activities are run by private companies. Moreover, the participant also mentions a creative activity called ice-sculping organised by professors from a university many years ago. In contrast, P4 emphasises that while Rovaniemi has an art museum and displays pieces of art, the participant believes that art is not a primary reason for tourists to visit Rovaniemi, even though there are souvenir made from woods or reindeer horns selling to tourists. Tourists might acknowledge that there are local artists producing arts, but it is not famous enough to draw tourists, especially ones from abroad.

P2 states that there are some organisations, such as "Taito Lappi" (Taito Lapland Crafts Association) focusing on promote arts and crafts, not only in Rovaniemi but whole Lapland region. This organisation also has a crafts centre where visitor can learn how to make local crafts, view exhibition, and purchase local products and "Sami Duodji" concentrating promote arts, crafts, and designs produced by indigenous Sami people. In addition, there is a local shop called "Mainoa CRAFT & DESIGN" located at a shopping centre in Rovaniemi where the place offers local materials and instructions for tourists to create their own crafts. P3 cites there are possibilities for tourists to participate with arts, crafts, and design activities at "Santa Park" where they can make their own crafts, and other places where artists and craftsmen

present their artworks as well. However, these activities considered to be small scale in tourism services of Rovaniemi, which most tourists willingly pay more larger scales activities.

P1: "In Rovaniemi, they have art museum at Korundi. Also, there was an ice sculpture event many years ago organised by professors from university."

P4: "We have a very good art museum showing arts and paintings. Tourists from other counties need more contact because they don't know about this in Rovaniemi."

P2: "There's an organisation called Taito. It's an organization that promotes arts, crafts and design in the whole region."

P3: "So there are some tourism services that invite tourists to into the craft studios. For example, if I visit the Santa Park, there is possibility to make small crafts."

Most participants agree that there is availability of local food in Rovaniemi, but they indicate a gap in providing tourists with participatory hands-on food related activities to enhance travel experience. P1 and P4 mentions that tourists have opportunities to taste local foods, such as salmon soups, reindeer or bear meats, but they are only served at certain restaurants. P2 also mentions that formal cooking classes are not widely famous for tourists. However, there is a gastronomy-related activity which can create tourist experiences at open fire huts called "Laavu" where local people or guides are able to demonstrate how to cook sausages and prepare food around fire. In addition, P1, P2, and P4 emphasise there are limited activities allowing tourists to participate in local food preparation, not many cooking classes or hands-on food experiences available for tourists.

P1: "People are coming to eat like the salmon soup, reindeer, or wild animals, like a bear. But we don't have this business here that you can come here and make your own food."

P2: "They organize tours which you can cook, but mostly it's very like cooking sausage cheese around fire."

P4: "I suppose that kind of traveling business we don't have yet."

All participants agree that nature-based activities are significant for developing creative tourism in Rovaniemi. P1 mentions that there are guided tours involved in these activities, especially during the winter season due to safety concerns. The participant also cites there might not have local guides from Finland who participated in nature-based activities. Most guided tours working with private companies come from outside the country. P4 states that the aurora hunting, skiing, and hiking represent nature-based activities as well, and tourists typically travel with private companies. The participant provides examples with a private tour in the forest by taking international tourists who came from a crowded city. Tourists earned positive experiences that they could experience a real peaceful forest in Lapland area, and opportunities to feed reindeer food.

P2 also highlights a creative activity, for example northern lights photography. Some touring companies organise tour and workshops to tourists for taking attractive aurora pictures with special techniques. P3 also highlights several creative activities have been developed for local nature tours integrating with some kind of arts as well, such making forest wooden spoons or using clays to sculpture forest memories. However, local nature-based activities are not widely practiced because traditional activities, such as snowmobile or husky sledging in the forest are still dominating travel preferences.

P1: "There is a hiking safari with companies and see the iced waterfall."

P4: "Aurora hunting is one part of that. There is a private place to see the reindeers and give food to them. There is no light, no sound, in forest here"

P2 "I think in nature nature-based tourism relates to creativity photography with northern lights which you can learn to take pictures."

P3 "We have proposed activities where a group of participants could make their own wood spoon in the fire or use clay to print some of the forest memories."

The participants mention a range of sport activities available in Rovaniemi, included traditional sports and a culture-related sport activity. P1 and P4 cite that Rovaniemi offers various sports activities for tourists, in the wintertime, such as skiing, ice swimming, ice skating, or in summertime, such as biking and hiking the forest as well. The participant also

mentions that there are skiing schools where tourists can participate, including attend hockey games. Usually, there are not always that tourists participating sport activities in Rovaniemi, will local guide participated with. In addition, P2 mentions that there is creative tourism related to sports called “Alvar Aalto Walking Tours”. This activity is organised to allow tourist to walk with a local guide observing Rovaniemi’s architectural designs, city planning, including learning history of the city. P3 also includes that there are physical activities, such as ice fishing or berry picking can be sports related.

P1 “For wintertime, ice swimming, skiing. In the summer, you go to biking and hiking in the forest.”

P4 “Yes only skiing and hiking. I’m not sure about the local guides”

P2 “This kind of all the walking tours called Alvar Aalto seeing famous architect because you learn about the architecture, history of the buildings and the city plans.”

P3 “So, fishing, picking berries are understood as eco-culture. But it's a physical activity at the same time.”

All participants acknowledge that there are the uses of general digital technology related to tourism. However, the interviewees provide different notions of digital technology’s advancement and integration to enhance tourist experiences. P1 states that there are destination management companies in Rovaniemi can offer 3D illustration of tourism experiences on their website. Conversely, P4 mentions that there can be lack of interactive 3D maps or mobile applications focused on creative activities. However, the participant adds that there is a digital map allowing cyclists to check their biking routes in Rovaniemi. Moreover, P2 introduces that there upcoming digital technologies related to tourism are now being developed. This includes the Faculty of Arts at University of Lapland is currently developing an online channel allowing audiences to virtually participate with a Santa Claus. In addition, Taito Lappi also offers online material, enabling participants to learn how to create their own crafts as well.

P1 “In 3D, I guess there are companies have it on their own website.”

P4 “I suppose that they don't have interactive maps that people can click or drag to see 3D maps. But I suppose that there are maps for tourists to check their biking routes.”

P2 “We have developing digital products that you can meet Santa Claus, and Taito Lappi has material online, where you can learn to do some of the traditional crafts.”

Most participants identify a wild range of targeting groups travelling to Rovaniemi and opportunities to participate in creative activities. However, there is a contrasting view that the city lacks a strong target group in creative tourism. P1 cites that the targeting groups are tourists all over the world, who visit to Rovaniemi to experience local food, winter activities, including visiting museums. P2 includes that visitors who obsess with photography of the Aurora, as well as groups that want to learn about Rovaniemi's architectures. In addition, P4 mentions that the primary target group for tourism in Rovaniemi is people who are wealthy. This is because travel expenses in Finland and Rovaniemi are quite high-priced. In contrast, P3 states that Rovaniemi has no targeting groups merely to participate in creative tourism's activities because most primary tourists travelling to Rovaniemi to experience Santa Claus tourism.

P1 “They need to go to museums, have a good food, and go to safari.”

P2 “Not only northern lights, but also the groups can walk and see all these architectures.”

P4 “They need to be people who have money to spend. Because Finland and Rovaniemi are quite expensive place to visit.”

P3 “We have a problem for not having the target group of tourists who will be interested of creative sectors. So many like Santa Claus tourism.”

Participants consistently highlight utilisation of nature environments in Rovaniemi is a key factor for creating uniquely creative tourism experiences. P3, and P4 mention that the natural phenomena, such as the Northern Lights and the Midnight Sun can be unique attractions in Rovaniemi as well as local arts, food, especially salmon or reindeer menus, winter sports and arctic environments. P1 and P2 include the cultural attractions offering local crafts and arts or Finnish Sami's culture which cannot be found elsewhere.

P1 “It’s local arts, food, nature, the Northern Lights, and the Midnight Sun.”

P4 “The winter experience is more important.”

P2 “The local heritage, local crafts or arts, Sami people that you cannot experience in somewhere else.”

P3 “Rovaniemi is a place where there are arctic nature and the city culture.”

All participants agree that there are presences of collaborations between tourism stakeholders in Rovaniemi. However, there are differences in assessment of its effectiveness and supports in creative tourism attractions’ development. P1 cites that there are some collaborations between governmental sectors, such as City of Rovaniemi and private businesses, particularly in developing tourist attractions, activities, and tourism infrastructures. P4 also mentions the Rovaniemi city council is a key influencer in the planning process and guiding attraction developments to create collaboration between local communities and private companies, such as the project to develop lands surrounding Santa Claus Village for establishing local restaurants and animal-based activities.

P2 states that the government collaborates with tourism businesses and communities through the organisation called “Business Rovaniemi” which promotion campaign called “Rovaniemi Artic Design” aiming to support local designers and local communities, including visitors. P3 includes that previously, there was a substantial funding from central government for development creative tourism activities in Rovaniemi, but the funding was provided only once and was not recurring. However, recently, some local governments have budget to hire local artists to create their artworks presenting at tourism attractions in the city.

P1 “They want to develop for example, the market square for skiing, roads for bicycle.”

P4 “The city council owns the land where could be in Santa Village, for new restaurants, places for Husky firms.”

P2 “There is Business Rovaniemi, or Arctic Design Rovaniemi. So, they try to promote design and design companies in Rovaniemi.”

P3 “Some village associations give money to hire artists, to make public artworks, that can be shown along skiing tracks or village centres.”

Following Rovaniemi City's development guidelines for creative tourism offerings and activities designed to involve tourists, the participants have different perspectives on which creative tourism attractions or activities are the most important to develop in Rovaniemi. P1 and P4 believe that increasing participatory activities allowing engagement between locals and tourists, including develop nature-based activities that allow tourists to “feel the nature”, such as hiking or fishing, art galleries, and local food experiences. P2 and P3 include arts, or crafts are also important, as local communities can find opportunities to earn income through creative tourism by creating and selling their products, thus this can provide economic sustainability for local artists and preserve cultural heritage.

P1 “More galleries, local food, more activities.”

P4 “Especially kinds of nature. For tourists who are coming to North of Finland to feel the nature.”

P2 “These arts, design are really important. We need to make products that also are something that benefits to local people.”

P3 “I think that the focus must be in developing services.”

The participants identify main reasons for success ranging from enhancing natural environment, successful partnership, and service experiences, including integrating digital tools and hindering factors that related to environment issues, effective collaboration, marketing, and tourist mindset. For successful factors, P1 mentions unique natural environment, and the appeal of local culture and cuisine. P2 stresses that Rovaniemi should place creative tourism attractions, such as a craft centres in high-traffic tourist areas and encourage tourism companies and local producers to integrate creative tourism packages into tourist's programs. P3 includes that collecting feedback from participants in craft-based

service experiment focusing on the potential for meaningful and high-quality creative tourism experiences. The participant also mentions digital platforms and contents can be tools to promote creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi.

In terms of challenging factors, P1 underlines that the unpredictable weather, which can affect outdoor activities, the difficult local people to generate income from certain creative tourism activities, and lack of proper collaborations. P2 also mentions that marketing is a significant challenge because of disconnection between local producers and tourists. Additionally, P3 highlights that Rovaniemi has offered mass-tourism products and services, and this should be a tourism campaign focusing on changing tourist perceptions to engage more with local culture.

P1 “In the wintertime, you can go skiing. In the summer, you go to bicycle or bike in forest, hiking in the forest, staying nighttime, but the weather is hard to say.”

P2 “Take the shop to the location where you don't have to look for it. Tourism companies that offer creative tourism moments could be kind of included in those packages.”

P2 “Include digital tools to solve challenges in marketing and that tourists would at least even know that these services exist.”

P3 “Rovaniemi doesn't include this idea that would be a place where you come to practice culture or participate culture.”

There is a consensus on the significance of environmental responsibility, with suggestions included practical measures and education, promote sustainable practices. P1 emphasises the needs for educating locals and tourists regarding respecting the environment and sustainability of creative tourism activities, for example hiking to the forest for picking up berries. P2 advocates for sharing knowledge about sustainable practices with local communities. Furthermore, P3 suggests that encouraging tourists to longer stays in order to reduce number of air traffic.

P1 “Tourists want to pick up the berries. I teach them not to litter into the forest.”

P2 “Somehow creative tourism, I think it has already at least some sustainable contents because it is kind of supporting communities, and natural materials.”

P3 “I think that creative tourism itself is already environmentally, very responsible tourism. If people would stay longer, and they would be more less troubles”

5.2 Quantitative analysis results

These quantitative analysis results were obtained from data collection from samples as tourists who had experiences travelling in Rovaniemi with survey methods. There were 226 questionnaires collected through onsite or street survey in Rovaniemi city and online survey from social media channels, such as WhatsApp or Rovaniemi’s tourism pages on Facebook. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts with closed-ended questions, with a Likert 5-point scale questions and an open-ended question for conducting descriptive analysis using Frequency, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation.

Based on basic characteristic profile results, respondent characteristic data were analysed in each category as presented in Table 3. The majority of tourist samples are females, indicating that women are more likely to participate in tourism activities. The dominant age groups between 25 to 44 years old suggest that creative tourism in Rovaniemi is particularly attracting to young and middle-aged adults, who might need to seek out new experiences. Most respondents graduated with a master’s degree and working as a private company employee, suggesting tourists are well-educated and employed, indicating that developing creative tourism in Rovaniemi may attract tourists with a medium to high socio-economic status. The income distribution shows that most tourists earn income from 1,000 to 2,000 euros per month, which aligns with the profile of their education and employment, showing that these tourists have sufficient disposable income to travel and willingly spend on creative tourism activities. Tourists who are married and single possibly engage in creative tourism activities as part of their leisure travel. The original countries of respondents indicate a diversity of tourist groups, with a notable number of onsite participants, from France, Finland, and the UK, and a large number from Thailand participating in online surveys, highlighting Rovaniemi attracts both domestic and international tourists.

Table 3. Overview of tourists' demographic characteristics

Categories	Frequency (N = 226)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	30	13.3
Female	191	84.5
Prefer not to say	5	2.2
Age		
under 18	5	2.2
18-24	11	4.9
25-34	62	27.4
35-44	73	32.3
45-54	44	19.5
55 and above	31	13.7
Education Level		
High School	25	11.1
Vocational Training/College	47	20.8
Bachelor's Degree	67	29.6
Master's Degree	72	31.9
Doctorate	13	5.8
Other	2	0.9
Occupation		
Student	28	12.4
Government Official	16	7.1
Private Company Employee	86	38.1
State Enterprise Employee	14	6.2
Self-employed	21	9.3
Unemployed	11	4.9
Retired	15	6.6
Other	35	15.5
Monthly Income (in Euros)		
Less than €1,000	32	14.2
€ 1,000 - € 2,000	56	24.8
€ 2,001 - € 3,000	47	20.8
€ 3,001 - € 4,000	25	11.1
More than € 4,000	42	18.6
Prefer not to say	24	10.6
Marital Status		
Single	84	37.2
Married	123	54.4
Divorced	4	1.8
Widowed	1	0.4
Prefer not to say	14	6.2
Country of Origin		
Onsite		
Australia	2	6.5
Denmark	1	3.2

Finland	6	19.4
France	9	29.0
Germany	3	9.7
Italy	3	9.7
Japan	2	6.5
South Korea	1	3.2
United Kingdom	4	12.9
Online		
Australia	6	3.1
Austria	2	1.0
Cayman Islands	1	0.5
China	2	1.0
Denmark	1	0.5
Finland	15	7.7
France	15	7.7
Germany	12	6.2
Hungary	1	0.5
India	2	1.0
Italy	2	1.0
Japan	1	0.5
Lithuania	2	1.0
Malaysia	1	0.5
Mexico	1	0.5
Netherlands	5	2.6
New Zealand	1	0.5
Norway	3	1.5
Philippines	1	0.5
Poland	1	0.5
Singapore	2	1.0
Spain	2	1.0
Sweden	3	1.5
Switzerland	1	0.5
Thailand	101	51.8
Ukraine	1	0.5
United Kingdom	7	3.6
United States of America	3	1.5

Analysis of tourist behaviour reveals in Table 4 that the most common travelling companion to Rovaniemi is family, indicating creative tourism can provide engaging experiences for families travelling in Rovaniemi. The most primary purpose of travel is to enjoy leisure, which developing creative activities can meet the tourists' demand. A majority of tourists are visiting Rovaniemi for the first time, suggesting that Rovaniemi is successful to draw new tourists. Moreover, most respondents stay in the city for 1-3 days, implying that Rovaniemi might develop creative attractions and activities for their short trips. Additionally, the spending data

reveals that most tourists have moderate budgets, which align with income levels they earn, observed in Table 3.

Table 4. Overview of tourist behaviors

Categories	Frequency (N = 226)	Percentage
Travel Companions		
Alone	27	11.9
Partner	57	25.2
With friends	36	15.9
Family	88	38.9
Group tour	18	8.0
Purpose of Travel		
Leisure	189	83.6
Business	16	7.1
Education	5	2.2
Visiting family/friends	15	6.6
Meeting/Conference	1	0.4
Other	0	0.0
Frequency of Visits		
1 st visit	150	66.4
2 nd visit	29	12.8
3 rd -5 th visit	22	9.7
More than 5 th visits	25	11.1
Duration of Stay		
Less than 1 day	12	5.3
1-3 days	120	53.1
4-7 days	71	31.4
8-14 days	11	4.9
More than 14 days	12	5.3
Travel Expenses		
Less than € 500	69	30.5
€ 500 - € 1,000	82	36.3
€ 1,001 - € 2,000	43	19.0
More than € 2,000	32	14.2

The key results of tourist perception analyses for each creative tourism attraction in Rovaniemi in Table 5 reveals that most respondents perceived that nature-based activities and sights in Rovaniemi are the most appealing among other attractions. Visitors are highly contact with natural landscapes, with a strong appreciation for sustainability elements and collaboration with local guides. Tourists also perceived nature-based activities in Rovaniemi as a vital role to enhance destination's identity and experience.

Sports-related attractions also receive favourable impressions, activities such as cycling, skiing, ice fishing, and ice swimming are considered to enhance the tourist experience. This includes participation in local sports events is perceived to have more understanding of Finnish culture. The respondents suggest that Rovaniemi has to improve adequate infrastructure and facilities for sports activities, and they note that having opportunities to interact between locals and tourists while participating in these activities can build a sense of community and cultural understanding.

The implementation of digital technologies in creative tourism shows a moderately strong response, with tourists believing that using technology, such as 3D museums and augmented/virtual reality, can improve creative tourism. Moreover, tourists see digital technologies as a platform to virtually explore attractions in Rovaniemi, and they are open to using technologies such as augmented reality, virtual tours, or digital storytelling as part of their creative tourism experience. This includes interactive applications and websites' developments that are considered to be important for attracting tourists to visit Rovaniemi in person.

Most of the respondents agreed with the significant role of arts, crafts, and design in enhancing the tourist experience, as tourists value hands-on experiences, especially those allowing them to create something themselves, such as crafts or souvenirs, indicating that tourists enquire about personalised and immersive experiences. Tourists also appreciate if they have opportunity to interact with local artisans, which helps them to understand more about local cultures and arts, and they believe that integrating arts-based activities can reflect local identity.

While respondents perceived relatively low food-related creative attractions in Rovaniemi, they expressed interest in cooking classes and tasting events, where they can interact with local chefs. However, tourists have slightly less enthusiasm compared to other activities, suggesting there is potential for greater improvement. Furthermore, tourists appreciate food as a cultural expression but may expect more variety or depth in these experiences, including strengthening the authenticity and participatory elements in culinary activities could enhance overall food tourism experience.

Table 5. Perception levels in creative tourism attractions' development

Creative Tourism Attractions	Measurement Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Arts, Crafts, and Design	Tourists should have opportunities to participate in hands-on workshops, such as souvenir designs and crafting.	3.566	1.032
	Interactions with local artisans or designers provide understanding of Rovaniemi's culture and tradition.	3.779	1.048
	Using of arts, crafts, and design as tourist attractions in Rovaniemi represent the region's cultural identity.	3.956	0.988
	Self-made arts, crafts, and design will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.	4.013	0.931
	Tourists should have opportunities to participate in hands-on workshops, such as souvenir designs and crafting.	4.000	0.948
	Interactions with local artisans or designers provide understanding of Rovaniemi's culture and tradition.	3.566	1.032
	Total	3.863	0.989
2. Gastronomy (Food)	Rovaniemi offers various unique places for tourist to participate in local food workshops or events.	3.358	1.095
	Food-related creative activities organized by locals, such as local food tasting or cooking classes are interesting.	3.841	1.088
	Creative food workshops or events provide chances for tourists to engage with local chefs to exchange knowledge and experience.	3.854	1.029
	Gastronomy Attractions in Rovaniemi are representative of the local culinary heritage.	3.650	1.049
	Creative food activities will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.	3.850	0.991
	Rovaniemi offers various unique places for tourist to participate in local food workshops or events.	3.358	1.095
	Total	3.711	1.050
3. Nature-based	Nature photography or hiking in creative tourism attractions can enhance the tourist experience.	4.513	0.796
	Participation between local guides and tourists in nature-based activities can create tourism values and experiences.	4.429	0.798

	Tourists' creativity and wellness enhanced by visiting the unique natural landscapes in Rovaniemi.	4.442	0.782
	The integration of environmental sustainability in creative nature-based activities enhance tourists' new experience.	4.314	0.813
	Nature-based attractions will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.	4.527	0.743
	Nature photography or hiking in creative tourism attractions can enhance the tourist experience.	4.513	0.796
	Total	4.445	0.787
4. Sports	Nature cycling, skiing, iced fishing, or iced swimming in the river can enhance the tourists' experience.	4.549	0.766
	Participation in local sports events and activities creates more understanding of Finnish culture.	4.252	0.935
	Rovaniemi has efficient infrastructure and facilities for creative sports activities to accommodate tourists.	3.863	0.968
	Interactions between tourists and locals during sports-related activities can create a sense of local community and cultural comprehension.	3.991	0.947
	Sports attractions in Rovaniemi will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.	3.907	0.991
	Nature cycling, skiing, iced fishing, or iced swimming in the river can enhance the tourists' experience.	4.549	0.766
	Total	4.112	0.921
5. Digital Technology	Using digital technology to promote attractions, such as 3D museums, or augmented/virtual reality technologies can enhance the creative tourism in Rovaniemi.	3.947	1.070
	Using creative digital technologies allows tourists to virtually explore tourist attractions in Rovaniemi.	3.956	1.066
	Rovaniemi should offer technology-based creative activities for tourists to participate in virtual art creation, or digital storytelling.	3.704	1.183
	Rovaniemi should develop various engaging and innovative applications or websites to attract tourist.	4.102	1.017
	Participation in attractions in Rovaniemi through digital technologies and creative activities will encourage them to visit in person.	3.942	0.967

Using digital technology to promote attractions, such as 3D museums, or augmented/virtual reality technologies can enhance the creative tourism in Rovaniemi.	3.947	1.070
Total	3.930	1.060

5.3 Empirical results comparison

The empirical results of qualitative and quantitative research approaches in this study show both similarities and a differentiation in Rovaniemi's creative tourism attractions and activities development. In terms of similarities, both stakeholders and tourists emphasise nature-based activities in Rovaniemi as the most significant. Stakeholders highlight that there are availability and uniqueness of natural attractions, such as the Northern Lights and Midnight Sun, as well as activities such as nature hiking and photography, and tourists rate nature-based attractions the highest regarding its appeal, appreciating their potential for enhancing creativity and wellness. In regard to potential of arts, crafts, and design in Rovaniemi's tourism sector, stakeholders mention venues and activities, such as art museums and craft centres, and recognise the opportunity for tourists to engage with local art and crafts, and tourists agree that these components can enhance their experience and represent cultural identity of Rovaniemi, although they also point out a need for Rovaniemi to create more hands-on opportunities.

For gastronomy, both indicate there is a possibility for development. Stakeholders note that there is availability of local food but lack participatory food-related activities or events, and tourists rate gastronomy as the lowest among the creative tourism attractions, suggesting a need for more engaging culinary experiences. According to the implementation of digital technologies, stakeholders discuss the use of 3D illustrations and the development of online platforms for virtual experiences. This aligns with tourists' expressions that they are interested in interactive digital tools, virtual exploration, and digital storytelling. However, there is a differentiation reveals that while stakeholders acknowledge the availability of sports activities, tourists specifically point out the need for improved infrastructure and facilities to support these activities.

6. DISCUSSIONS

The purposes of this research are to characterise the current development of creative tourism by conducting interviews with tourism stakeholders and to understand the perceptions of tourists regarding each creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City through the use of questionnaires. Following these discussions, the results of this research provide valuable comprehensions of the development of creative tourism attractions and activities, as detailed below.

According to the qualitative approach's findings, tourism stakeholders acknowledge that there are existence of arts, crafts, and design destinations and activities in Rovaniemi, such as an art gallery, the Korundi Art Museum, or a craft centre, LAURI Handicrafts & Guesthouse. This includes some organisations called Taito Lappi, Sami Duodji, and Mainoa CRAFT & DESIGN that they actively promote local arts, crafts, and designs, allowing visitors to learn and participate in traditional craft making, or ice sculpting events that used to be held. This aligns with the study by Richards and Raymond (2000, p. 18), which emphasised that creative tourism destinations have to provide opportunities for visitors with immersive activities to learn and gain experiences, even from the organising of tourist events (Miettinen et al., 2019, p. 69). Even though the fact that there are many private companies running art and craft activities, those places still lack local communities' integration. This contradicts with a previous study by Duxbury et al. (2019, p. 5) emphasised the importance of community involvement can create authentic and engaging experiences with tourists.

Based on the quantitative findings, respondents generally agree that developing tourism attractions regarding arts, crafts, and design could be significant tourism sectors for developing creative tourism experiences in Rovaniemi, especially when the city strongly presents its own traditional and cultural identities. This is explained by Huhmarniemi et al. (2019, p. 243), who studied crafting workshops in the Lapland region, that creative tourism is able to gain understanding in local values and identities. However, tourists have perceived that Rovaniemi has less uniqueness and creativity in current arts, crafts, and design attractions, as well as limited opportunities for doing hands-on workshops with local artisans. Nevertheless, tourists also agree that self-made arts, crafts, and designs can enhance their experiences and possibly create Rovaniemi's image as a creative tourism destination. According to the study by Bakas et al. (2020) and Duan et al. (2023, p.13), travellers who have chances to create their own

souvenirs and take tangible products back to their origin countries can also create a sense of belonging as well.

Regarding the creative gastronomy in Rovaniemi, the stakeholders recognise that there are local and traditional dishes, such as salmon soup or unique ingredients in the Lapland region, for example, reindeer or bear meats. This aligns with Richards (2002, p. 3), which emphasised that integration of local cultural and societal identity with food consumption at tourism destinations can enhance tourist experience. Although there is an open-fire hut called Laavu where tourists and local guides have an opportunity to demonstrate food preparation to tourists, it is a limited activity, and tourists can mostly passively experience local foods at specific restaurants. This contrasts with Piboonrungraj and Sangkakorn (2013) pointed out that creative tourism advocates for active participation, learning, and the creation of personal memories. In addition, Rovaniemi still lacks cooking workshops or events, enabling visitors to actively participate in local food preparation. This finding also aligns with the perception of tourists that Rovaniemi has not fully presented its local food and places to actively participate yet. It contrasts with the ideas of creative tourism that participation in local food preparation, cooking or tasting with local people can create hands-on experiences in food-related activities (Bastenegar, 2020, p. 27; Srihirun & Sawant, 2018, p. 29).

In accordance with nature-based attractions that are possible to be developed due to Rovaniemi having unique natural resources and landscapes. This aligns with the studies by Scott et al. (2006), Deng et al. (2002), and Hudson (1998) highlighted that development of nature-based tourism can attract tourists to visit and experience new special characteristics and features of natural attractions with aesthetic and scenic landscapes. The popular creative activities, such as integrating arts into nature tours and hiking, allowing participants to make wooden spoons or clay sculpting, and tourists can experience the Northern Lights, with an opportunity to join photography workshops which are organised by local tour companies, learning special techniques on how to capture beautiful pictures of the Aurora Borealis. Those activities in line with Mehmetoglu and Normann (2013, p. 10) mentioned that hiking can create interaction between local people, tourists and surrounding nature. This includes nature photography workshops that can enhance tourists' extraordinary experiences (Garrod, 2008, p. 346).

However, there are lacking local communities participating in nature-based activities suggested that Rovaniemi will miss an opportunity to directly contribute benefits for

themselves. This finding somewhat contradicts to concepts of creative tourism, which is the need for integration of local communities in order to have knowledge exchange between tourists and hosts (Richards, 2013; Tan et al., 2014; Richards, 2019). Moreover, tourists have opinions that nature-based activities can enhance their creativity and well-being, and inclusion of local people and guides in recreational activities in nature will foster values and experiences in creative tourism. This finding correlates with Zuluaga and Guerra (2021, p. 15) stated that tourists have opportunities to actively participate in engaging tourism activities, enabling them to create their own creativity (Tan et al., 2014, p. 257), personal skills (Richards, 2021. p. 7) and improve their lives better in terms of quality, wellness, and individual experiences (Garrod, 2019, p. 168).

Based on sports attractions in Rovaniemi, stakeholders acknowledge that there are sports-related activities offered to tourists both in summer and winter, such as biking or hiking in the forest, as well as swimming in icy water, ice skating and skiing. Rovaniemi has skiing schools where tourists can learn how to ski safely and obtain joyful experiences. These qualitative findings align with quantitative responses from tourists that they need Rovaniemi to develop sports attractions and facilities that can attract visitors to visit and allow them to join sports events. According to a study by Connell et al. (2014, p. 284) indicated that organising events can function as a marketing strategy for showcasing and enhancing tourist attractions and draw attention for tourists to make decisions to visit (Getz, 2007, p. 403).

It also includes a walking tour around the city called Alvar Aalto, allowing participants to have physical activities and learn local architectures, especially building design, from local guides. This activity is in accordance with tourists' perspectives that engaging with sports activities in Rovaniemi can possibly help them exchange and understand more in Finnish cultures. As a study conducted by Mascarenhas et al. (2024) pointed out, tourists who attend sports events tend to have immersive experiences from physical and mental improvements, including active learning from different cultures (Richards, 2002, p. 1048).

Qualitatively, the interviewees suggest there are implementations of digital technologies in Rovaniemi which tourists are able to engage with, such as the use of 3D technology by destination management companies illustrating accommodation design and the development of an online channel allowing tourists to virtually meet with Santa Claus. Yet, there is the existence of a digital map indicating cycling routes which is only used by cyclists. However,

interactive digital technology developments and actual implementation are in the early stages for drawing and enhancing tourist experience. This highlights a potential gap for tourism businesses to develop digital tools for engaging between local tourism attractions and potential visitors (Marques & Borba, 2017).

According to perspectives of tourists, they indicate that Rovaniemi should offer technology-based creative activities, such as digital storytelling or arts and designs through digital platforms and also mention that these developments can lead tourists to visit physically. These results align with research by Jung et al. (2017) suggesting that utilising smart technologies in tourism, such as AR, VR, or interactive maps or museums, can create tourists' virtual experiences and attract them to visit attractions physically.

Regarding a target group in creative tourism in Rovaniemi, the findings indicate that the majority of tourist groups visit winter tourism attractions, such as Santa Claus Village or skiing resorts. However, Rovaniemi lacks certain tourists who are looking for visiting cultures and traditions, attractions, and participatory activities with local communities, such as local crafts, arts, and Finnish Sami culture. Thus, Rovaniemi shows deficiencies in promoting creative tourism activities (Petrova, 2022) and attracting the creative tourists seeking to interact with different cultures, learn new skills, and improve well-being (Tan et al., 2014, p. 257). Moreover, although there are incorporations between stakeholders, such as local governments and private businesses, for developing tourism attractions, activities, and infrastructure in Rovaniemi, they are still missing a tangible corroboration with local communities. This finding contradicts the core concept of creative tourism that developing creative tourism activities must include local communities (Duxbury et al., 2019, p. 5).

In addition, the uniqueness of Rovaniemi's natural and cultural resources are a key factor in creating distinctive creative tourism experiences in the future. Tourism stakeholders utilise natural resources, with integration of creative tourism activities, for example nature photography, or craft making from eco-friendly material. Therefore, in order reach sustainability practices in tourism, these hands-on activities have to include local communities for benefit them economically (Richards, 2013) and create awareness of local nature protection for tourists as well (Passafaro et al., 2015).

7. SUMMARY

7.1 Conclusion

Creative tourism attractions in Rovaniemi were investigated in this study through qualitative and quantitative methods to understand perspectives of stakeholders and the tourist's perceptions. The data suggests an opportunity to foster creative tourism within the city, highlighting the existing strengths, prospective opportunities, and what needs to be done to improve tourist engagement and experience through creative tourism attractions and activities.

According to qualitative analysis, it is clear that Rovaniemi has uniqueness, both cultural and natural resources that can be a foundation of achievement in creative tourism offerings. From interviewing with stakeholders from public and private sectors revealed varied insights regarding current attractions and activities and the direction in which creative tourism could see further development. Although participants pointed to existing attractions and activities in Rovaniemi about arts, crafts, design, gastronomy, nature-based, sports, and digital technologies, there is evidence that integration into engaging, participatory tourist experiences remains limited. For example, there are arts and crafts available, but they tend to be merely retail or observational experiences rather than offering hands-on or immersive activities for tourists. Is it similar to gastronomy, offering traditional cuisine but lacking cooking workshops or interactive food-related activities or events that could extend cultural exchange between locals and visitors.

Nature-based activities have become the most developed and promising segment of creative tourism in Rovaniemi. The city possesses unique landscapes and time-bound natural occurrences, such as the Aurora Borealis or Midnight Sun. This is including peaceful forests offering tourists experiences, combining recreation, wellness, and self-creativity. Creative activities such as photography tours, hiking, and forest-based craft making were underlined as authentic ways of providing tourists with an in-depth experience of the local setting. Sports activities also presented potential to develop, especially when they included cultural narratives or local guidance as well. Furthermore, digital technologies are an increasingly significant segment, with stakeholders acknowledging that they have the potential to promote creative tourism through online workshops, virtual storytelling or experiences. However, actual implementation remains at a beginning stage, requiring further development to utilise digital tools as an effective means of creativity and tourist engagement.

The finding also underlined the importance of stakeholder involvement and collaboration between public institutions, private businesses, and local communities, even though Rovaniemi has existing fragmented or project-based initiatives rather than its sustainability and strategy in creative tourism development. It is suggested that concrete developments can also occur with consistent funding and clear roles; this could lead to the possible growth of creative tourism attractions and ensure that local people benefit sustainably in economy and culture from tourism.

Moreover, while Rovaniemi attracts domestic and international tourists who conventionally visit the city, especially during wintertime, there is a noticeable gap in drawing visitors specially interested in creative tourism. This emphasizes the importance of implementing targeted marketing and creative tourism product development, communicating that Rovaniemi has unique artistic or culinary activities allowing prospective tourists to engage. Additionally, it is considered that development creative tourism attraction is an environmental responsibility practice due to natural resources and materials are used in tourism offerings which also create ecological awareness for tourist, but only show respect local culture and tradition, and support local economies.

Based on the quantitative results that can support these insights through the affirmation of values of creative experiences in Rovaniemi. The tourists agreed creative tourism, particularly nature-based activities, can enhance their travel experiences. This also included their strong expression that they are interested in engaging with the local culture through arts or crafts, cooking, sports, and innovative digital applications. While tourists mostly perceive creative tourism as nature-based and sport-related, Rovaniemi should initiatively develop and promote local arts, crafts, and gastronomy attractions and participatory activities.

7.2 Practical implementations

This study has provided actionable guidance for enhancing creative tourism attractions and activities development in Rovaniemi that align with both stakeholders' insights and tourist expectations, following these practical implementations. Rovaniemi should establish creative hubs or craft centres where they are located in high-visibility and accessible locations. These places will allow tourists or visitors to participate in immersive activities with local or Sámi

people for making souvenirs from local materials, such as wood or reindeer horns. Moreover, the city could enhance its gastronomy in creative tourism by incorporating local restaurants, culinary institutes or schools, and food producers to offer cooking workshops or foraging tours, including storytelling from chefs and local food makers that can share and exchange culinary cultures with participants. These programmes are able to provide opportunities for visitors learning how to find local ingredients for cooking traditional dishes, such as reindeer meats or salmon soup.

Regarding the significant demand for nature-based activities, Rovaniemi should offer various creative activities, for example, nature photography workshops during aurora seasons or art-making in the forest using natural materials, involving local guides and communities to provide local narratives that enhance the visitor experience. Furthermore, sports-related activities can be developed. For instance, skiing tours with local guides providing storytelling about Lapland area, architectural walking tours featuring the programme organised by Alvar Aalto, or organised themed winter events that combine local tradition with sport, such as snowshoeing across lakes for physical movement or ice fishing. The city could also develop online workshops for teaching participants to create their own souvenirs with Lapland arts and design with Taito Lappi or local people, and interactive applications or platforms offering virtual tours, such as virtually meeting Santa Claus Village, could create tourist engagement that may lead them to visit Rovaniemi physically in the future.

The finding emphasises the necessity of developing more substantial and sustained collaborative efforts between local governments, tourism-related businesses, educational institutes, and especially communities. This corporation can establish the Rovaniemi Creative Tourism Council or working groups that facilitate funding. Joint projects and information exchange in order to enhance co-creation tourism programmes, crossing in different sectors, such as combining crafts activities with nature tours or local food tasting. Rovaniemi could promote tourism marketing for targeting niche groups derived from mass tourists that are interested in unique culture, creativity, and sustainability through social media platforms, travel blogs, and creative tourism video content. Illustrating to them that the city is one of the destinations offering engaging and artistic experiences with opportunities to participate with local artists, chefs, and guides. Finally, sustainability practices should be implemented in all creative tourism activities at any destinations. These actions can include using eco-friendly materials in workshops, educating tourists on environmental impacts, especially in the Arctic

region, and creating creative tourism packaging, ensuring local communities have opportunities to engage with tourists and earn revenues from organising creative activities.

7.2 Limitations of the study and future research

This study has several constraints during the research execution that should be noted. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small, and data collection from those participants visiting Rovaniemi was only in the winter season. Therefore, the collected opinions might not offer an incomplete view of the diverse range of tourists who travel to Rovaniemi across all seasons. If conducting research in different tourism seasons, one may obtain more tourists' perceptions of their experiences and influences. The future research that may cover its limitations is aiming to gather data from all seasons for providing a more comprehensive understanding of how seasonality affects tourist experiences from engaging creative tourism attractions and activities.

Secondly, the study merely focused on tourists visiting Rovaniemi upon data collection, from February to April 2024, which may have led to the bias in the sample selection. This could attract tourists truly engaging in creative tourism. Therefore, in the future, using broad sampling techniques or longitudinal studies for studying tourists' perceptions in different stages, ranging from before, during, and after their visits and experiences in creative tourism activities, in order to ensure that there is a more balanced and representative data set.

Finally, this research experienced limitations with collaborations for tourism stakeholders. Even though utilising some semi-structured interviews will provide insightful data on developments of creative tourism in Rovaniemi, a larger number of research participants could offer a more profound understanding of tourists and locals' behaviours and experiences. Thus, the future research to deal with this constraint is to use more ethnographic methods, such as observing tourists, visitors, or local people participating in creative activities to capture the complexity of tourists' emotional and cognitive responses during engaging with creative tourism.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Semi-structured interview

Interview

Research Title: *Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City to Enhance Tourist Experiences*

For Private Organisation

Interview Descriptions:

1. This study is conducted by Mr. Phutthachon Anurak, a master student of Tourism, Culture and International Management program at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, under the supervision of Professor Markku Vieru.
2. This interview aims to characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City for engaging tourist participation.
3. This interview is carried out following the guidelines in research ethics by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The researcher prioritises the respect of the respondents, maximises the benefits and minimises any harmful actions for a participant's well-being, and guarantees equity and fairness. The gathered data will remain confidential throughout the interview and research processes, and the sensitive data will not be disclosed without the official consent of a respondent.
4. The definition of creative tourism introduced by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond states that creative tourism is a method to transform cultural-based tourism into more interactional and engaging experiences for tourists via hands-on participation in tourism activities to exchange culture, knowledge, experiences, and skills with local hosts.
5. This interview consists of three sections as follows:
 - Section 1: Basic Personal Profile
 - Section 2: The current state of the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation
 - Section 3: The guidelines for the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation.

Thank you for your time

Section 1: Basic Personal Profiles

- Job Title:
- Years of Experience in the Position:
- Roles and responsibilities:

Section 2: The current state of the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City

- Could you describe current creative tourism attractions or activities about
 1. Arts, crafts, and design
 2. Gastronomy (food)
 3. Nature-based
 4. Sports
 5. Digital technology
- Who are the targeting groups?
- What makes these attractions unique for creating tourist experiences?
- Do businesses collaborate with governments and communities?

Section 3: The guidelines for the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation

- Which creative tourist activities or attractions are most important to develop, and why?
- What are challenging and successful factors:
- What will creative tourism look like in the future, such as new attractions and digital tools?
- How to make creative tourism more environmentally responsible?

Interview

Research Title: *Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City to Enhance Tourist Experiences*

For Public Organisation

Interview Descriptions:

6. This study is conducted by Mr. Phutthachon Anurak, a master student of Tourism, Culture and International Management program at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, under the supervision of Professor Markku Vieru.

7. This interview aims to characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City for engaging tourist participation.

8. This interview is carried out following the guidelines in research ethics by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The researcher prioritises the respect of the respondents, maximises the benefits and minimises any harmful actions for a participant's well-being, and guarantees equity and fairness. The gathered data will remain confidential throughout the interview and research processes, and the sensitive data will not be disclosed without the official consent of a respondent.

9. The definition of creative tourism introduced by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond states that creative tourism is a method to transform cultural-based tourism into more interactional and engaging experiences for tourists via hands-on participation in tourism activities to exchange culture, knowledge, experiences, and skills with local hosts.

10. This interview consists of three sections as follows:

Section 1: Basic Personal Profile

Section 2: The current state of the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation

Section 3: The guidelines for the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation.

Thank you for your time

Section 1: Basic Personal Profiles

- Job Title:
- Years of Experience in the Position:
- Roles and responsibilities:

Section 2: The current state of the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City

- Could you describe current creative tourism attractions or activities about
 1. Arts, crafts, and design
 2. Gastronomy (food)
 3. Nature-based
 4. Sports
 5. Digital technology
- Who are the targeting groups?
- What makes these attractions unique for creating tourist experiences?
- Do governments collaborate with businesses and communities?

Section 3: The guidelines for the development of creative tourism attractions and creative activities in Rovaniemi City to engage tourist participation

- Which creative tourist activities or attractions are most important to develop, and why?
- What are challenging and successful factors?
- What will creative tourism look like in the future, such as new attractions and digital tools?

How to make creative tourism more environmentally responsible?

Appendix 2. Letter of Consent



LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND

LETTER OF CONSENT



Dear

My name is Phutthachon Anurak. I am Master student at University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland under the supervision of Professor Markku Vieru. You are invited to participate in my master thesis study entitled *Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City to Enhance Tourist Experiences*. The purpose of the study is to characterise the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City. The result of the study will be published as part of my master thesis. The thesis is conducted as part of the master's degree programme in Tourism, Culture and International Management (TourCIM).

By signing this letter, you give consent to use the interview material confidentially and exclusively for research purposes. The research follows the principles for responsible conduct of research dictated by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The data will be handled anonymously. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw your permission even after signing this document, by informing the below mentioned contact person.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, if you would need further information regarding the study and the use of the research data.

Sincerely,

Phutthachon Anurak

TourCIM Master student

I give consent to use the interview as data for the purpose mentioned above.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Appendix 3. Questionnaires

1. Onsite questionnaire

Questionnaire

Research Title: *Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City to Enhance Tourist Experiences*

For Tourists

Questionnaire Descriptions:

1. This study is conducted by Mr. Phutthachon Anurak, a master student of Tourism, Culture and International Management program at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland, under the supervision of Professor Markku Vieru.
2. This survey aims to understand tourists' perception on the development of creative tourism attractions and activities in Rovaniemi City.
3. This survey is carried out following the guidelines in research ethics by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The researcher prioritizes the respect of the respondents, maximizes the benefits and minimizes any harmful actions for a participant's well-being, and guarantees equity and fairness. The gathered data will remain confidential throughout the interview and research processes and the sensitive data will not be disclosed without the official consent from a respondent.
4. The definition of creative tourism introduced by Greg Richards and Crispin Raymond states that creative tourism is a method to transform cultural-based tourism into more interactional and engaging experiences for tourists via hands-on participation in tourism activities to exchange culture, knowledge, experiences, and skills with local hosts.
5. This questionnaire consists of four sections as follow:
 - Section 1: Basic Characteristic Profiles
 - Section 2: Tourist Behaviours
 - Section 3: Perception Levels in Creative Tourism Attractions' Development in Rovaniemi City
 - Section 4: Additional Opinions

Section 1: Basic Characteristic Profiles

Instruction: Please mark ✓ into for the most correct answer.

1. Gender: Male Female Other / Prefer not to say

2. Age: under 18 18-24 25-34
 35-44 45-54 55 and above

3. Education Level: High School Vocational Training/College
 Bachelor's degree Master's degree
 Doctorate
 Other (please specify): _____

4. Occupation: Student Government Official
 State Enterprise Employee Private Company Employee
 Self-employed Unemployed
 Retired Other (please specify) _____

5. Monthly Income (in Euros): Less than €1,000 €1,000 - €2,000
 €2,001 - €3,000 €3,001 - €4,000
 More than €4,000 Prefer not to say

6. Marital Status: Single Married
 Divorced Widowed
 Prefer not to say

7. Country of Origin: (please specify) _____

Section 2: Tourist Behaviour

Instruction: Please mark ✓ into for the most correct answer.

8. Travel Companions:

- Alone Partner
 With friends Family
 Group tour

9. Purpose of Travel:

- Leisure Business
 Education Visiting family/friends
 Meeting/Conference
 Other (please specify): _____

10. Frequency of Visits to Rovaniemi:

- 1st visit
 2nd visit
 3rd-5th visit
 More than 5th visit

11. Duration of Stay in Rovaniemi:

- Less than 1 day 1-3 days 4-7 days
 8-14 days More than 14 days

12. Travel Spending per Trip (in Euros):

- Less than €500 €500 - €1,000
 €1,001 - €2,000 More than €2,000
-

Section 3: Creative Tourism Attractions' Development in Rovaniemi City

Instruction: Please mark ✓ into the box that best matches your perception level as described below:

- 5 is Strongly Agree
 4 is Agree
 3 is Moderately Agree
 2 is Disagree Agree
 1 is Strongly Disagree

Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City	Perception Levels				
	5 Strongly Agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly Disagree
1. Arts, Crafts, and Design					
1.1 The arts, crafts, and design attractions in Rovaniemi are unique and creative, enhancing tourist experiences.					
1.2 Tourists should have opportunities to participate in hands-on workshops, such as souvenir designs and crafting.					
1.3 Interactions with local artisans or designers provide understanding of Rovaniemi's culture and tradition.					
1.4 Using of arts, crafts, and design as tourist attractions in Rovaniemi represent the region's cultural identity.					
1.5 Self-made arts, crafts, and design will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.					
2. Gastronomy (Food)					
2.1 Rovaniemi offers various unique places for tourist to participate in local food workshops or events.					
2.2 Food-related creative activities organized by locals, such as local food tasting or cooking classes are interesting.					
2.3 Creative food workshops or events provide chances for tourists to engage with local chefs to exchange knowledge and experience.					
2.4 Gastronomy Attractions in Rovaniemi are representative of the local culinary heritage.					
2.5 Creative food activities will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.					

Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City	Perception Levels				
3. Nature-based	5 Strongly Agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly Disagree
3.1 Nature photography or hiking in creative tourism attractions can enhance the tourist experience.					
3.2 Participation between local guides and tourists in nature-based activities can create tourism values and experiences.					
3.3 Tourists' creativity and wellness enhanced by visiting the unique natural landscapes in Rovaniemi					
3.4 The integration of environmental sustainability in creative nature-based activities enhance tourists' new experience.					
3.5 Nature-based attractions will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.					
4. Sports	5 Strongly Agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly Disagree
4.1 Nature cycling, skiing, iced fishing, or iced swimming in the river can enhance the tourists' experience.					
4.2 Participation in local sports events and activities creates more understanding of Finnish culture.					
4.3 Rovaniemi has efficient infrastructure and facilities for creative sports activities to accommodate tourists.					
4.4 Interactions between tourists and locals during sports-related activities can create a sense of local community and cultural comprehension.					
4.5 Sports attractions in Rovaniemi will enhance tourists new experience of Rovaniemi as a creative tourism destination.					
5. Digital Technology	5 Strongly Agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly Disagree
5.1 Using digital technology to promote attractions, such as 3D museums, or augmented/virtual reality technologies can enhance the creative tourism in Rovaniemi.					
5.2 Using creative digital technologies allows tourists to virtually explore tourist attractions in Rovaniemi.					

Development of Creative Tourism Attractions in Rovaniemi City	Perception Levels				
5. Digital Technology	5 Strongly Agree	4	3	2	1 Strongly Disagree
5.3 Rovaniemi should develop various engaging and innovative applications or websites to attract tourist					
5.4 Rovaniemi should offer technology-based creative activities for tourists to participate in virtual art creation, or digital storytelling.					
5.5 Participation in attractions in Rovaniemi through digital technologies and creative activities will encourage them to visit in person.					

Section 4: Additional Opinions on Creative Tourism Attractions Development in Rovaniemi City

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Thank you for your time

2. Online questionnaire

Survey Link

CHECK ME OUT



**Thank you for your
time and support**