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**Knowledge Management in Tourism:  
Motivational Factors Among Helsinki Based Companies**

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**Abstract:**

City of Helsinki has identified knowledge management as a valuable tool for tourism companies to enhance their operations. This study aims to explore how Helsinki-based tourism companies perceive knowledge management and how these motivational factors influence the overall effectiveness and integration of knowledge management in the tourism sector. Theoretically, the range of motivations and knowledge management skills is extensive. However, in order to provide tourism companies with the necessary tools to develop their knowledge management capabilities, it is essential to first ascertain their current skill levels and motivational strategies.

Theoretical framework consists of the concept of knowledge management and motivation theories. Knowledge management is based on data management and information management. Data management is a base for all data-based management and information management. Data management is the processes which are used when handling information. Knowledge management is utilizing and creating value from the information and using it in decision processes conjointly with predicting future. Motivation is the internal or external drive that directs behavior towards achieving a goal and exists on a spectrum from intrinsic to extrinsic. Motivational climate influences individuals' motivation by emphasizing certain goals and behaviors, impacting their drive and engagement.

A survey was conducted to assess the company's maturity of knowledge management. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain insight into knowledge management and motivation in tourism companies. The data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis.

The findings of this research indicate that knowledge management practices in tourism companies exhibit considerable variation, whereas the underlying motivations for these practices appear to be more consistent. Knowledge management is valued for its personal benefits, such as professional confidence, smooth customer interactions, and business benefits. Motivations vary between internal to external and the superiors in companies set the motivational climate for knowledge management by allocating resources according to what they think is important. Using external data is common, but companies are hesitant to share their own data with others because they do not see benefits or good examples indicating untapped potential in data sharing.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge management, motivation, tourism, Helsinki

## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	5
1.1. Purpose of the Study .....	6
1.2. Previous Research.....	8
1.3. Helsinki as a Travel Destination.....	9
2. Empirical Framework: Helsinki .....	12
2.1 Knowledge Management in Tourism .....	12
2.2 Knowledge Management in Tourism in Finland.....	15
2.3 Helsinki, a Destination Guided by Knowledge Management.....	16
3. Theoretical Insights on Knowledge Management and Motivation .....	19
3.1. Data Management.....	21
3.2. Information Management.....	23
3.3. Knowledge Management .....	25
3.4. Motivation Towards Knowledge Management at Work .....	29
3.5 Self Determination Theory.....	32
3.6 Motivational Climate.....	33
3.7 Theory of Motivated Information Management.....	35
4. Data collection and Methodology.....	37
4.1 Empirical Setting.....	39
4.2 Survey .....	39
4.3 Interviews.....	41
4.4 Analytical Choices.....	43
4.5 Ethical Considerations .....	44
5. Analysis and Discussion .....	46
5.1 Knowledge Management in Tourism Companies in Helsinki .....	46
5.2 Maturity of Data-driven Management in Tourism Companies.....	53

5.3 Motivations to Practice Knowledge Management .....	57
6. Conclusion.....	62
6.1. Evaluation of the Research.....	65
6.2 Proposals for Future Research.....	67
References: .....	69
Appendix 1: Survey Questions .....	78
Appendix 2: Interview Questions .....	83

## 1. Introduction

Tourism and hospitality sectors have been adapting knowledge management to the practice (Musulin, Gamulin & Crnojevac, 2011, p. 1) for more than a decade now. And still, especially smaller operators might not know what it means, which leads them not using it effectively or at all. Big companies have already adapted knowledge management to their practices, but they are not using it to the full potential. To find out the reason behind the lack of interest and the lack of motivation to learn and adapt would give destination management organizations better tools to develop their destination through its companies. Knowledge management is currently a hot topic and a center of development in the destination management organization City of Helsinki. However, destination management organizations (DMO) can only go thus far without the engagement of the tourism companies and operators in the destination. Cooperation is a key element in development and the goal is to benefit everyone. The question is, why is adapting knowledge management in daily operations not motivating or seen as beneficial?

The world and working life are unpredictable due to changing political situations, climate change, personal events and crises, new trends, rapidly changing artificial intelligence and weather conditions. The implementation of effective knowledge management strategies could potentially mitigate these challenges. However, it is noteworthy that such approaches are not yet a common feature of tourism companies' strategic planning. The lack of implementation of knowledge management strategies by companies in the tourism sector may be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, there may be a perception that the value of such strategies is not fully recognized. Secondly, the learning process itself may be perceived as being too challenging and time-consuming, which in turn may result in a lack of motivation to engage with the necessary training.

The interest in this topic for me came from my personal experiences working in different tourism companies. I have previously worked in customer interface where knowledge management was not displayed for customer servants from the management. Only after I started working for destination management organization, City of Helsinki, I became familiar with this topic and my immediate assumption was that knowledge management must be a normal way of working for big companies, but not the small ones. Small

companies might not see the benefits as clearly as big companies, so they have not familiarized themselves with the topic.

### 1.1. Purpose of the Study

City of Helsinki has recognized knowledge management as an asset for tourism companies to develop their businesses and to gain more customers with less effort. Since this has been recognized, the Tourism and Destination Management Unit has encouraged tourism companies in Helsinki to adapt knowledge management in their daily processes while doing so themselves as well to show how it can be done. Some of the companies have been more interested in the topic and adapted knowledge management in their work, while some companies are not yet familiar with the terms and the basics of it.

The purpose of this study is to find out how Helsinki based tourism companies experience the concept of knowledge management; the benefits and difficulties in adapting it to their work. Their experiences are examined through motivation factors. Motivation as a defining factor was chosen because it defines how interested in a person is about the task, how well they accomplish it and if they are willing to learn new things (Mordue, 2021, p. 131) and develop their way of working. The interest in this topic came partly from the variety in familiarity of knowledge management among tourism companies in Helsinki. The data and knowledge in question are tourism-based information, such as hotel occupancy rates, flight or cruise information, event related information, or any information which is created by tourism or can be used in decision making in tourism companies.

Motivation is a key element when embracing new things such as knowledge management. It is not a standard in tourism field to use knowledge management as a part of a company strategy. This means that motivation is essential whether the companies or individuals are practicing knowledge management intentionally or not. This thesis studies the motivations behind practicing knowledge management in a company, developing business practices, and willingness to share knowledge and data to other companies and DMO's. The question is, what are the motivations of tourism companies, how could they be motivated or what kills the motivation.

The main research question is:

What motivates tourism companies to practice knowledge management?

Sub questions:

1. What kind of information tourism companies recognize as useful information or data when they optimize their processes and develop their business?
2. How does Helsinki based tourism companies experience the benefits in practicing knowledge management?
3. What does motivate or what would motivate tourism companies to share their data to other tourism companies and use data shared by DMO and other companies?

This thesis focuses on knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki, and therefore data, information, and knowledge related to tourism field are in the center of focus. The second focus is on motivation, where the interest is on the motivation factors to practice knowledge management. Whether the factors are already existing, or if they need to be created. With these topics this thesis aims to find a solution to the research questions mentioned above.

This thesis is written in close cooperation with the Tourism and Destination Management Unit at City of Helsinki. The unit is a local DMO which works to develop Helsinki as a destination by leading tourism companies into more sustainable, inclusive, and efficient ways of doing business. Knowledge management has been taken into more intense development during the last few years in the unit, and yet it is still difficult to involve some of the companies to the topic. If the unit would know the reasons behind the disinterest towards knowledge management, they could use a better approach and tools to motivate and help tourism companies to find their own way to use knowledge management in their business strategies. In other words, this thesis aims to give the Tourism and Destination Management Unit a better picture of how tourism companies could be motivated to practice knowledge management and what is the state of knowledge management in the companies.

## 1.2. Previous Research

Knowledge management is a far researched topic in different fields. Tourism sector is relatively wide and consists of several more detailed sectors such as marketing, accounting, customer service and sales. This is why in this thesis the concept of knowledge management in tourism is gathered from relevant literature and studies which may not be originally about tourism field. Motivation in its different forms is also extensively studied as well as motivation to learn, but the combination of these three is lacking research in tourism.

Helsinki as a topic in tourism theses is not new but the perspective has varied. Helsinki has been studied for example as a congress city (Harpf, 2013), a destination for Chinese visitors (Weiqun, 2011; Karvonen, 2018), as a cruise destination (Wanhatalo, 2009), and a city break destination for Viennese Students (Haavisto, 2016). Tourism companies in Helsinki have been researched, for example, about their views of responsible tourism (Haipus, 2012). The usefulness of research information about tourism industry has been studied from the point of view of nature tourism business (Leppänen, 2014). The result of that study was tourism research information is useful, but the information is not accessible (Leppänen, 2014). The usefulness of research information and willingness to learn new practices are big influencing factors in knowledge management in companies.

Organizational learning by using material provided by a DMO (Halminen, 2021) is a perspective to take into consideration when supporting tourism companies to implement knowledge management into their business.

Research about destination management organizations in Finland in 2023 revealed that knowledge management in DMOs is still in development stage (Moilanen, 2023) which aligns with the state of knowledge management in tourism companies in Finland. Because DMOs are responsible of managing the destination and educating the stakeholders (Björk, 2017, pp.142-143) it makes sense that tourism companies are not yet familiar with knowledge management. Many steps have been taken by DMOs to get to the next step in knowledge management. One of these is encouraging companies to digital transformation, because digitalization enables efficient data usage (Raulo, 2022) which is prerequisite for knowledge management. Different actors in public sector have mentioned digitalization in their strategies, for example, Finland's Tourism Strategy and Visit Finland's Strategy



(Raulo, 2022). The DMOs must understand the benefits and use knowledge management daily before they can move on to motivating tourism companies to adapt knowledge management to their strategies and operations. When DMOs write these goals in their strategies, the goals are taken seriously, and they are more likely to reach these goals.

### 1.3. Helsinki as a Travel Destination

Helsinki is a city where tourism development is led with knowledge and careful planning. Helsinki City Strategy 2021-2025 states “We will develop Helsinki into the smartest and most sustainable travel destination” (A place of growth, 2021). The Tourism and Destination Management Unit in Helsinki is following Helsinki’s Tourism and Event Programme to make this happen. The second goal, Helsinki being the most sustainable travel destination was achieved in October 2024, when Helsinki won the Leadership Award 2024 from Global Destination Sustainability Index Movement (GDS-Awards, 2024). This means that according to GDS-index, Helsinki is the most sustainable tourism destination in the world this year.

Local companies are at the core of tourism and destination development in Helsinki. In Helsinki’s Tourism and Event Programme for the years 2022-2026, locals and local businesses are mentioned already in the first page making sure they are benefitting from taken measures as well (City of Helsinki, 2022a, p.4). These target groups are included in the plan to avoid negative impacts on tourism and to maximize the benefits for everyone. Helsinki’s Tourism and Event Programme for years 2022-2026 has three main strategic goals: A. Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events, B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events and C. Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city (City of Helsinki 2022a, p.4). Already in the naming of the goals, there are many words to be found which benefit the locals as much as tourists, such as an attractive city for events, a pioneer of sustainable solutions and a functional city. Helsinki wants to be a sustainable destination and that also means creating happiness not only to the tourists, but also for the residents.

Globally tourism is a constantly growing industry, as it is in Helsinki as well. Before Covid-19 the growth of tourism was approximately 5 % every year and tourism is expected to reach same volume as before pandemic in the year of 2024 (Ministry of Economic

Affairs and Employment [TEM], 2022, p. 9). In Helsinki so far this has been true, and Helsinki has had record breaking overnight stays in recent years in the summertime. In 2023 there were about 4,1 overnight stays in Helsinki, which is 11,3 % more than the year before (Rudolf Statistical Database, 2024). In 2023 tourism brought about 1,5 billion euros to Helsinki as a direct tourism income (Visitory, 2024). Tourism income benefits other industries as well. From one euro a tourist spends in destination, approximately 61 cents go to other industries such as textile industry and food industry (TEM, 2022, p.9). Globally about 10 percent of all jobs are tourism related jobs (Konu, Pesonen, Reijonen & Alakoski, 2020). The tourism industry plays a significant role in providing employment opportunities and improving the quality of services in remote areas, smaller villages, and rural communities. It is a significant source of employment for young people, immigrants, and other demographic groups (TEM, 2022, p. 13 & 18). The nature of tourism-related jobs, which are primarily in the service sector, makes it challenging to relocate these roles to countries with lower labor costs (TEM, 2022, p. 13 & 18). The benefits of tourism can also be social. Big events often require tourism if there are not enough residents in the area. In this case tourism enables events for locals too, which brings entertainment and enrichment to their social life (Moisescu, Gică, Coroş, & Yallop, 2019, p.494). These factors collectively illustrate the importance of supporting and developing the tourism industry, as it has a significant impact on both tourists and locals. When implemented effectively, it can lead to mutual benefits for all stakeholders.

Visit Finland describes Helsinki as “the perfect combination of urban and outdoors, lively and laid-back” (Welcome to Helsinki region, n.d.). A good example of Helsinki being the combination of urban and outdoors is that it is common for locals to go berry picking with using the public transportation (Moilanen, 2020). Helsinki is the capital and the biggest city in Finland with nature in a short walking distance (36 syytä rakastaa Helsinkiä, n.d.) and it is the most visited tourism destination in the country (Markkanen, Anttalainen, Pesonen, Filenius, Sievers, 2022, p. 3; Statistics Finland, 2023). Helsinki-Vantaa airport has been voted the best in Europe in 2023 (Helsinki-Vantaan lentoasema palkittiin, 2023) so being the best at something is not a new thing for tourism in Helsinki. Helsinki City Strategy for years 2021-2025 states that the objective is to develop Helsinki into “the smartest and most sustainable travel destination” (Helsingin kaupunki, 2022, p. 56). This implies that the development mindset is shared by the city, the DMO and the tourism companies. This provides an excellent setting for the development and cooperation with

stakeholders. Helsinki has tourism companies varying in size, supply, and operators, which aligns with Visit Finland's description of Helsinki, and supports the claim that Helsinki has something for everyone. This makes Helsinki an interesting destination to study.

Helsinki's geographical location is contradictory in tourism context. Its position between Eastern and Western Europe makes it an ideal stopover destination, offering visitors the opportunity to experience a diverse range of cultures and destinations. (Leisti & Tiilikka, 2017). When it comes to neighboring countries, we also have a short distance and easy access to big cities such as Tallinn or Stockholm. The disadvantage about Helsinki's location, is that it is not ideal if we start to think about sustainability. If a tourist is not willing to fly, the entrance to Finland can be very difficult, require multiple stops and vehicles and it can take days (Visit Finland, 2024, p. 14). Also, now in 2024, the passageway to the East is largely blocked because of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. In February 2022 it was no longer possible to fly in Russia's airspace (Pietiläinen, 2022). This makes flying routes to Asia longer and more expensive, which means that Helsinki is not at the moment the most convenient stopover destination. In a way, both, the good and the bad, make Finland and Helsinki unique destinations because it is still a hidden gem, it is not on everyone's bucket list.

The tourism industry is particularly susceptible to disruption in the event of a crisis. In recent times, we have witnessed how a range of factors, including armed conflict, geopolitical instability, natural disasters, and the spread of disease, can have a significant impact on the sector. Tourism industry is very susceptible to crises (Pforr, 2010; Konu, Pesonen, Reijonen & Alakoski, 2020) and just one crisis can stop travelling in the whole world, to a certain country or to a region overnight. Because tourism is affected by society and even a small imbalance can cause a big negative effect, tourism development must be done very carefully and considering potential problems and outcomes (Konu, Pesonen, Reijonen & Alakoski, 2020). This is where knowledge management will come to be very helpful. Being aware of all the variables, the decision making will be more rational and deeply considered. In the time of crisis, the one who is prepared will survive with less damage.

## 2. Empirical Framework: Helsinki

Helsinki City Strategy for years 2021 to 2025 states “We will develop Helsinki into the smartest and most sustainable travel destination” (City of Helsinki, 2021). One way of making Helsinki the smartest travel destination in the world is leading it with knowledge. Not only leading the whole destination, but also the companies leading themselves with knowledge. Knowledge management in tourism overall, in Finland and in Helsinki are examined in the following three chapters.

### 2.1 Knowledge Management in Tourism

Knowledge management is a relatively new term (Laihonen et al., 2013, p.5) in tourism industry, and this can cause a problem when mapping how tourism companies are using knowledge management in their daily processes. It can either be that they do not understand the subject at all, and they don't use data in decision making, or they might use knowledge management a lot, but they just do not know the term when they cannot link their actions to the term (Järvinen & Hirvonen, 2021, p.130) Tourism and hospitality sector has been relatively slow in adapting knowledge management to the practice (Musulin, Gamulin & Crnojevac, 2011, p. 1) compared to other industries. This is a well acknowledged status, and DMO's around Finland are trying to find ways to adapt knowledge management to businesses.

Knowledge and data in tourism field is shattered into platforms, companies, databases, and the list go on. This is the biggest reason knowledge management is crucial for competitiveness in the tourism field. Especially data management becomes useful in this situation. When a company consistently collects and analyzes data from diverse sources, access to it is faster and easier (Gordon, 2013, p. 64; Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 182) which is crucial in fast phase work environment. In, for example, customer service situations customers are expecting fast replies and truthful answers to their questions. The ability of a cashier, receptionist, guide, or customer service representative to verify information promptly enhances the quality of the service provided. The delivery of excellent quality is a key factor in gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage.

One issue in knowledge management in tourism industry is that there is too much information that could be implemented, but it might be hard to select which pieces of information are the ones we actually need in order to make decisions at a workplace. For example, there needs to be a balance between local and global knowledge (Baltoni, Cortese & Davide, 2006, p. vii). This does not only apply geographically, but also the balance should be in using the company's own knowledge together with other companies' knowledge within the same destination. This is hardly ever in balance because companies tend to use more their own data more than others' if they have their own data to use. To expand the circle of using only the company's own data it could be good to proceed step by step. The first two pieces of information a company should compare are their own data and the industry's data. When these two are a part of daily processes and implemented in management of the company, a wider understanding and information from other industries can be included with more ease and purpose.

In tourism industry in Finland knowledge management is used on different levels. Knowledge management can be used at a regional level, national level, destination level and in single companies, no matter the size (Järvinen & Hirvonen, 2021, p. 130). In this thesis the interest is to find out what is the level of knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki, and what are their motivations to practice knowledge management. Their motivations define how ready they are to learn new things and adapt new practices to their business. Of course, other levels mentioned before effect on the knowledge management in the companies as well. If, for example, a destination management organization is providing information, education, and support for developing knowledge management in companies, they are more likely to implement it in their businesses. If there is no pressure or support at all, it is likely that some companies do not see the value and maybe do not even ever hear about it.

One organization which can make an impact on tourism companies nationwide is Visit Finland. They have created a handbook of knowledge management for tourism companies, which is one way of making knowledge management familiar to them and guiding them in the beginning. In this handbook they represent eight examples of how knowledge management can be used for in tourism. These examples explain what data and knowledge can be used in specific needs. According to the book, different aspects of tourism information can be used to understand customers better and to update service offering, better customer understanding helps to target sales and plan operative actions,

understanding of tourism economics will support decision making, usage of data supports marketing, designing and service optimizing, environmental data contributes in creating sustainable business and risk control, health and safety data can be used in prevention and infrastructure planning and lastly, public data defines risk control and infrastructure optimizing (Business Finland, 2021, p.10-17). The company needs to locate their data needs, what information they already possess and how it can be used in knowledge management.

Business Finland states in their handbook of knowledge management that the goal in knowledge management is to recognize the features favoring the destination and how to influence on the traveler's decisions at the right moment (Business Finland, 2021, p. 24) from a DMOs point of view. This means optimal marketing at the right time for the potential visitor. A visitor needs different kinds of information in different parts of their journey. When they are only dreaming of travelling to Helsinki, opening hours are not such an important information to them as the weather or what kind of main attractions there are in the destination. If a company acknowledges this, they can optimize their marketing and improve their visibility to potential visitors at the right time (Business Finland, 2021, p. 24) by using the right words on their websites and by centralizing their marketing budget where it is most useful. Marketing is not only a process which can be optimized with knowledge management. It can also be used for example to make operations more sustainable and to support sustainability in the area (Arkema, Fisher, Wyatt, Wood & Payne, 2021, pp. 1-3). If there is leftover food from every event, maybe the amount of food should be considered again so there would not be food waste. Marketing and sustainable development are examples of processes where knowledge management can be used to optimize business operations, but possibilities are endless, and every process can benefit from it. One widely used information for planning is tourism demand forecasts (Hu, Li, Song & Law, 2022, p. 1). These forecasts are an essential tool for, for example, staff planning or food ordering. Weather forecasts could be used in the same way for planning the number of staff members, for example, in a bar with a big terrace, but it is not as widely used as demand forecasts.

It has been recognized that tacit knowledge is a part of organizational knowledge which makes it a component of knowledge management. Because tacit knowledge is individual by nature, the knowledge is held by individuals, and it might be hard to pass on. One main problem in passing on the tacit knowledge in tourism industry is a rapid employee turnover

(Musulin, Gamulin & Crnojevac, 2011, p. 4) for example due to tourism's seasonality nature. If tacit knowledge is not recognized there is a risk for vital information leaving from a company if only one person leaves to work somewhere else. In turn some people can bring enormous amount of information to a company if they have a lot of useful experience related to their new job role.

## 2.2 Knowledge Management in Tourism in Finland

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has stated in their Finnish Tourism Strategy that collaboration is the main theme in the Finnish tourism industry during the years 2022-2028. Collaboration is necessary for achieving a sustainable future and a tourism industry which benefits everyone (TEM, 2022, p. 7). Successful knowledge management also requires collaboration with each other. This applies also within a company but also with other companies and other DMO's.

Sustainable growth for Tourism: Southern Finland –project organized interviews with six tourism companies in order to find out the current state of knowledge management in the company, what challenges they might have and what kind of support they would like to have when developing their knowledge management processes. These six companies were from the cities of Turku, Espoo, and Helsinki. Everyone who answered the interview questions agreed that knowledge and data support decision making and enables better decision making. From the answers it could be interpreted that the companies see their own data and possibly their stakeholders' data more important than any other data (Tridea, 2022). Destination level data was seen as interesting data, but these companies did not know how or why to use that kind of information. The biggest challenge these companies experienced was inadequate resources. Interpreting data and creating useful information from it is hard work and requires time and human resources. Even though the company's own data was named to be the most important, there were four topics which were all seen interesting from the company's point of view. These topics were: customer understanding and customer flows, customer experience and processed data in a form which is easy to understand. Not all of these are only in the hands of one company. For example, customer experience is something where other stakeholders should be taken into consideration and collaboration because the customer is experiencing their whole trip, not just one part of it.

The fact that tourism companies wish for processed data means most likely that they do not know how to do it by themselves, or they do not have the resources to do it. When this is the case, it is a smart decision to ask for ready information and analyzed data. If the company does not have access to processed information and analyzed data and they do not have skills or resources to do it, there is a possibility that the data is interpreted wrongly due to incompetence, lack of time or a system that is incompatible with the original one (Gordon, 2013, p. 8). This is a serious risk, since the data is meant to be available for everyone, there are countless companies who can use the information, and there is no guarantee that all of them know what to do with it. Wrongly interpreted data can lead to wrong business decisions.

Finland is a small country, but destinations do not compete as much as one could think because destinations are very different from each other. This allows destination management organizations to work together rather than against each other. City of Helsinki has created DMO knowledge management community together with Visit Finland, which gathers people working in DMOs all around the country to develop knowledge management nationally. The aim of this community is to learn from each other and save resources by not overlapping with each other. This community shows how DMOs understand the value in networking and knowledge sharing while showing tourism companies that cooperation in a small destination like Finland, is advisable.

### 2.3 Helsinki, a Destination Guided by Knowledge Management

Different perspectives on knowledge management are countless. Detlor (2010) introduces three perspectives: the organizational, library perspective and personal perspective. These perspectives describe who produces the information and what is the goal when using the information. Whether it is the organization which aim to be more competitive and strategically successful, an information provision organization whose goal is to share information with others or individual person whose main goal is to use information to personal needs (Detlor, 2010, p. 103-104). From these perspectives City of Helsinki is the library organization when it comes to relations with tourism companies. One of the main goals of Tourism and Destination Management Unit is to make Helsinki an internationally attractive city for tourism and events (City of Helsinki, 2022a) together with stakeholders.



In order to achieve this goal, the services visitors use must be attractive as well. These services are in most cases offered by, for example, restaurants, hotels, museums, activity companies or transportation companies. City of Helsinki and the Tourism and Destination Management Unit are constantly trying to find ways to help tourism related companies to grow and develop to be more efficient, profitable, and popular. Sharing information with them and processing information ready for them is one way of doing it. The main tool for sharing tourism related information at the moment is DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights.

According to the vision of Helsinki being managed with easy-to-use information, City of Helsinki has created a new database, which contains relevant data especially for tourism field. The database is called DataLokki, and some of the data it contains is available for everyone for free. This database is a part of city's data strategy where it is stated that they want to stimulate the business life in Helsinki by sharing data to companies so they can develop their activities with data (Helsingin kaupunki, 2024 p.4) This action encourages companies towards knowledge management by giving them free data to work with. If City of Helsinki wishes to help local tourism companies to improve their knowledge management, the content they provide needs to be good quality, which in this case is quality of data and information. Quality of data means that the data City of Helsinki provides must be consistent, up to date, accurate, complete, and available when needed (Gordon, 2013, p. 7). The companies who are using the data must be able to trust the data in order to use it. Trust can be gained, for example, by being transparent and providing information where the data is harvested.

Most of the data DataLokki provides is not free and available for everyone. The data is available for a network called Helsingin tekijät which is for companies operating in tourism, events, and restaurant sectors in Helsinki area (City of Helsinki, 2024). The network is open for companies who are interested in developing Helsinki as a travel destination together with others. The aim of the network is to benefit the companies who have joined the network, but also the DMO. Close collaboration with companies allows the DMO to get rapid answers from the industry and it keeps the DMO up to date on what is happening in the field. As said before, DMOs main job is to create a good environment for companies to thrive, and this job cannot be done without knowing what the industry needs in any given time. The companies who are part of this network get wider access to DataLokki, and therefore they have more possibilities for business development due to

larger amount of relevant data. The members of this network are considered as forerunners in business development because they are more interested in topics such as knowledge management and green transition.

The use of knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki varies. There are a few companies who are using knowledge management on an advanced level, and then there are companies where the meaning of knowledge management is unknown. Because knowledge management in tourism companies is now only a rising trend, tourism companies might need to be motivated (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 186) to start familiarizing themselves to knowledge management. They need to know why it is beneficial for them, how it can be done and why they should use their time to learn about knowledge management.

When developing knowledge management on destination level in Helsinki, the role of Tourism and Destination Management Unit is to create prerequisites and possibilities for tourism companies to develop their business (Markkanen, et al., 2022, p. 3), Their vision is “Helsinki Travel and Tourism is managed based on easy-to-use information” (Markkanen, et al., 2022, p. 3), which creates the base on how they aspire to share information. The solution to easy-to-use information in this case is a software where the information is presented in dashboards in visualized form rather than raw data (Markkanen, et al., 2022, p. 8). Different visualizations make the information easier to understand for people who are not familiar with analyzing data themselves. The data is required to be easy to understand to make it accessible to various tourism companies because the receiver skill set can vary greatly. The data software is meant for Tourism and Destination Management Unit, their closest stakeholders who need the information, for example, for marketing, tourism companies based in Helsinki and media (Markkanen, et al., 2022, p. 11-12). Different groups have different set of information available based on licenses, for example, media can only use information, which is free of charge and has open access, when tourism companies can get more detailed information of their own group, company, or competition. Hence the information being easy to access, widely gathered and visually presented, is useful also for media or anyone.

### 3. Theoretical Insights on Knowledge Management and Motivation

In this thesis, theoretical framework consists of the concept of knowledge management and motivation theories. The concept of knowledge management is explained in order to understand the concept and to specify what it means in tourism context and to tourism companies. In this thesis, knowledge management is seen as the more advanced form of data management and information management which is why these theories are explained as well. Motivation theories are used to study motivation in the workplace and on a personal level in the knowledge management context. The concept of data management, information management and knowledge management are based on literature. In chapters 3.1, 3.2. and 3.3 the information is gathered from literature, reports and similar documents which are either national considering whole Finland or regional considering Helsinki.

The concept of knowledge management is advanced from information management, and because of that the concept of information management must be introduced in this thesis. The focus is on knowledge management and how it can be implemented in the tourism field. I chose to include data management because it is a base for all knowledge management. Without proper data management it is impossible for the company to practice useful and efficient knowledge management. This can be proven by several authors who have agreed that different types of information have a hierarchy where data is introduced as a base for other types of information. As an example of the hierarchy of data and knowledge management this thesis introduces theories from Sydänmaanlakka and Frické. Sydänmaanlakka (2012) suggests hierarchy growing as staircase (Figure 1.), and Frické (2019) introduces hierarchy as a pyramid (Figure 2.). Both hierarchies have similar structures setting the base with data and wisdom on the highest point. Sydänmaanlakka has one step more, intelligence, which he defines as “right information at a right time in order to make correct choices and decisions”, which sums up knowledge management quite well.

The highest valued information in both hierarchies is wisdom, which is based on all the data, information and experiences a person has, which makes wisdom an individual experience (Sydänmaanlakka 2012, p. 191). Two people cannot have the exact same database combined with exact same experiences, which means the wisdom in every person

is different. In this thesis, knowledge management is studied in companies, not in individuals, and this is why wisdom is excluded from the research.

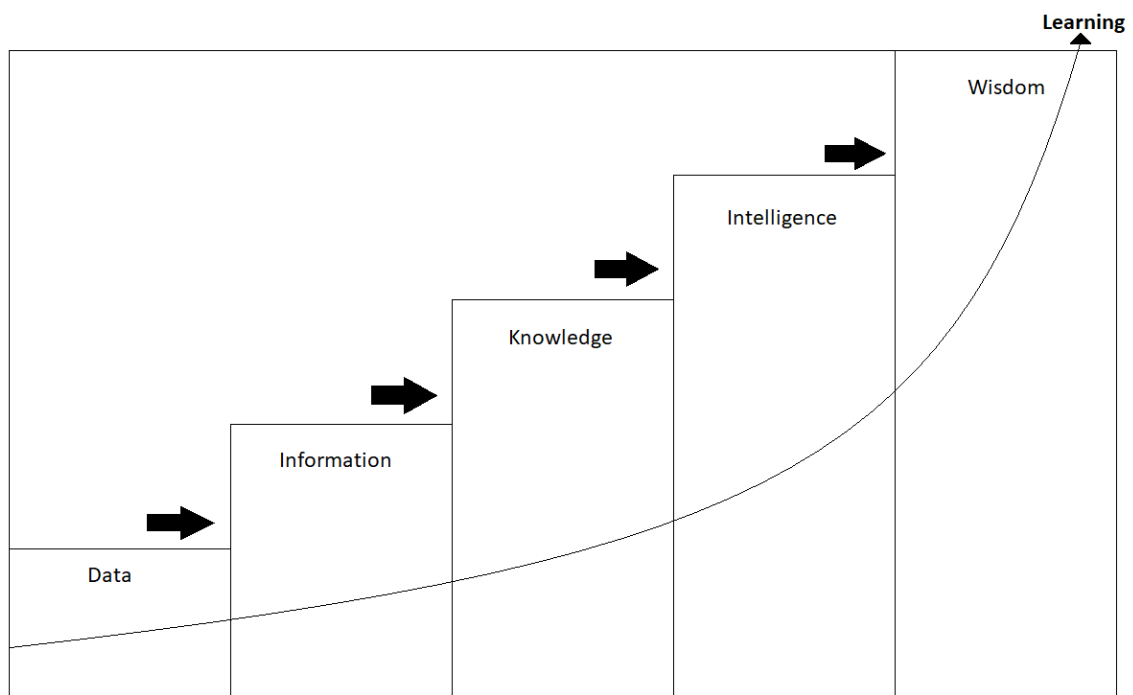


Figure 1. Sydänmaanlakka (2012), p. 188.

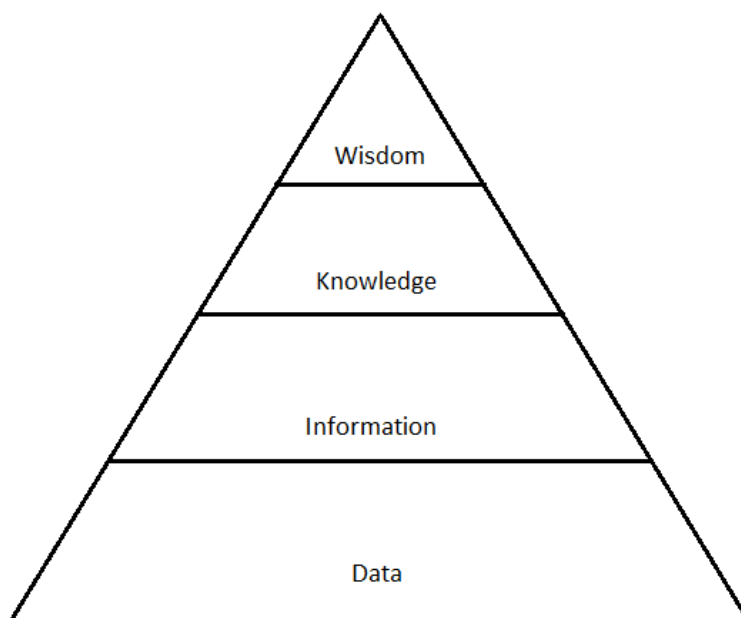


Figure 2. Frické, (2019), p. 33.

As stated before and shown in the pictures, data is the base of all the information. There is no information without data nor knowledge without information. The first three steps are same in both theories, thus both theories support the claim that data is the base for other information and knowledge-based functions. Next three chapters will explain data management, information management and knowledge management in more detail, followed by the motivational theories in knowledge management context.

### 3.1. Data Management

The difference between data and information is the quality of the data or information available. Detlor (2010) and others define data as “raw facts” such as a location, customer name or a unit price, when information gives more (Detlor, 2010, p. 105; Wilson, 2002; Gordon, 2013, p. 4; Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 187). This means that separate pieces of data are not informative before they are put together with other pieces of data or context and that creates information. An example of this is that if we have a five-digit number this number does not really say anything without a context. It could be the amount of money, date, postcode or personal identification number. When one of these contexts is compound, we have already more information than in the beginning, but it is a still piece of data as long as it is in a form that can be used to guide behavior. Let’s say that the digit was a date when our nearby store is closed. Now we have information on the opening hours, and we know not to go there that day. Actions based on information like this are knowledge management at its simplest.

One main thing about data is that it needs to be relevant, good quality and current for it to be useful for a company. High quality of data is essential for reaching goals such as better service quality, customer satisfaction and competitive advantage (Lee, Funk, Pipino & Wang, 2006, p. 9). If there is too big a mass of data, it is hard and expensive to manage and use, which can make knowledge management processes hard and slow. Unfit, outdated, and incorrect data can lead to wrong type or inefficient new innovations, angering customers or even increasing costs (Redman, 2008, p. 1) which is not a desirable outcome. Data and knowledge management are supposed to make daily tasks and decisions easier, cheaper, and better, not harder, more expensive, or worse. When assessing the quality of data, the assessment should also go beyond the data itself. The systems and protocols

which are used in data management should be up to date and valid for the purposes they are used for (Lee, Funk, Pipino & Wang, 2006, p. 27). Invalid systems and protocols do not support effective knowledge management.

Data needs to be stored and nowadays the place is in electric form in hard drives or online. The places data is stored are called databases. With using databases, there are multiple features which must be taken under consideration. For example, there must be a person who knows how to use and update the database. Everyone using the data in Europe must be familiar with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as well as company's own rules of sharing data. GDPR is a regulation of European parliament and of the council which states the protection of a person in means of regulating personal data processing and the free movement of personal data (The protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), Regulation 2016/679). If a company is small, it might not be possible to hire a person to maintain the database, which means the few employees or the entrepreneur has to have that skill, which can be a lot to ask among other duties. This might be a limiting factor when choosing whether to use a database or not and which database to use and maybe even this might affect the overall motivation to practice knowledge management if the best practices are not available.

Data is one of the main resources and assets in a company, because it offers the possibility to make strategic decisions. The purpose of data management is to create useful information (Gordon, 2013, p. 4) which can be used in information and knowledge management and in decision making. The data company possesses can be their own or retrieved from somewhere else. Own data can be customer information, partnerships, stakeholder related information or staff related information. Data which needs to be retrieved can be free, such as Rudolf Statistical database, or have for example a monthly fee, such as Forward Keys or Visa Destination Insights. Retrieved data could be tourism forecasts, accommodation statistics, weather forecasts, flight information or many other things.

In the future the goal is that everyone in a company understands knowledge management and knows how to include it in daily tasks. The understanding should be thorough and similar to everyone. One of the reasons why data management must be organization wide, is data input (Gordon, 2013, p. 61) which is often made by people who work in customer

service interface. This means when any of staff members insert data to the system, they all do it consistently. The places where and how to input data, how to name and label it and to whom it is shared must be standardized. As an example, when a customer comes to a hotel the receptionist marks into their profile which country the customer is from. When this piece of data is combined with quantity of overnight stays, gathered from a certain timeframe from all the hotels in the area, it becomes accommodation statistics, which can be used by, for example, DMOs, event organizers or any other company in the area. If there is a receptionist who does not care and writes down the same country every single time, it distorts the statistics.

### 3.2. Information Management

Information management emerged as a concept for the first time in 1970s due to the US Paperwork Reduction Act (Commission on federal paperwork, 1977, as cited in Detlor, 2010, p. 104). It was noted that the old way of storing and managing information was inefficient and costly, so there was a need for new processes. Another reason for the need of information management was the rapid development of technology (Laihonen et al., 2013, p.6) and as the result of new technology, new ways to store and share information advanced as well. For companies where information and skills are their biggest product, new ways of storing information were not enough, so they started to develop management and action models to optimize production (Laihonen et al., 2013, p.10). Nowadays it has been recognized that information is one of the most important competitive advantages in a company (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 175) and possessing and using information, the right kind of information, is crucial for success.

When information is used in decision-making processes and daily operations in a company the term information management can be used. This includes storing, producing, and sharing the information as well as learning and controlling information flows (Laihonen et al., 2013, pp.10-11; Käpylä & Salonius, 2013, p. 7; Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 176). Detlor defines information management as “the management of the processes and systems that create, acquire, organize, store, distribute, and use information” (Detlor, 2010, p. 103). Leskelä et al. (2019) adds managing dataflow to this list. Information management therefore means the processes which are used when handling information separating this

from data management by taking the management process a step further, to piece the data together, creating something new and using it.

There are two core issues why small companies do not practice systematic information management. It is still very common that they do not really know what information they possess, where it is located and how to use it (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 175-176). Often, they do not even know what they should know, or they have problems sharing all the useful information to everyone in the company (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 175-176) not to mention to their partners and other stakeholders. Another problem could be that managing information is costly and at least in the beginning it takes time, which of course is costly too. These difficulties are one part where destination management organizations are trying to help tourism companies, by offering base-level and advanced training in knowledge management for free.

Information management cannot be done without information resources. Information resources are intangible and can be a number of things such as skills, experience, databases, information network, market understanding, leadership models or basically any service activity (Laihonen et al., 2013, p.10; Quinn, 1994). These resources originate from different places, some of them can be bought or studied and some of them require good luck to get. Network and databases are examples of resources that could have a price tag on them. Joining a network can have a participation fee, and database could have a monthly access fee, but not always. One database without an access fee is the company's own database where the company stores information about its own operation. This information can be, for example, transactional information, documents, or reports including anything the company feels is valuable to store (Detlor, 2021, p. 103). Good luck is sometimes required when searching for skills and experience, because these can be gained from hiring a new employee and it is not guaranteed the person hired has the best possible knowledge for that job.

There are several perspectives to information management (Käpylä & Salonius, 2013, p. 7) which makes it a resilient field. According to Käpylä and Salonius intellectual capital management, data management, business intelligence, organizational learning and knowledge management are all their own perspectives to information management and all of them answer to different needs (Käpylä & Salonius, 2013, p. 7). This thesis delves more closely to two of these perspectives: data management and knowledge management,



focusing more on knowledge management. Frické suggests that using the terms information and knowledge as synonyms is not wrong, which aligns with Käpyläs and Saloniuss's statement of knowledge management being a perspective to information management. He is referring to information as "weak knowledge" and with that still distinguishes them as two different things (Frické, 2019, p. 37). Both information and knowledge management are recognized as challenges in tourism companies in Helsinki but because information management is part of knowledge management, in this thesis the focus is on knowledge management.

### 3.3. Knowledge Management

Information and data can both be stored on a computer and therefore their management is largely based on technology. When moving from managing data and information to managing knowledge, people are also involved, which makes data on a computer only a tool (Duhon, 1998, p. 12) in decision making. Sydänmaanlakka states that knowledge management is the management of people and change by 80% (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 186). That leaves only 20% for information technology, which often is seen as the center of knowledge management, when actually information systems are only tools to support the management of people. 20 % seems like a small percentage, but it is the base of knowledge management and decision making, so it cannot be neglected. Here the previously mentioned data management and information management are needed.

Knowledge management is an action of what to do with the information that is possessed (Leskelä et al., 2019, p.15) when data and information management are more of a process. The emphasis in knowledge management is on utilizing and creating value from the information and then using the information in decision processes (Laihonen et al., 2013, pp.10-11; Käpylä & Saloniuss, 2013, p.7; Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 185) conjointly with predicting future (Von Krogh, 2011, p. 403). Knowledge management includes for example gathering, analyzing, and distributing the data which can be processed and used for marketing, business development, and pricing etcetera (Järvinen & Hirvonen, 2021, p. 130). Creating new knowledge from existing information can lead to solving problems and creating new skills in order to perform better while facing new challenges (Alajmi & Aldaihani, 2022, p. 124). With using right knowledge-based tools, a company can for

example gain better understanding of their clients, their ecosystem (Markkanen, Anttalainen, Pesonen, Filenius & Sievers, 2022, p. 13-14), the impact of their actions and what can be expected in upcoming trends. On top of gaining knowledge, knowledge management is supposed to create competitive advantage for companies (Leskelä et al., 2019, p.9). Knowledge management unites technology, strategy, people, and information (Duhon, 1998, p. 9) and also involves socio-cultural and behavioral dimensions within the organization (Alavi & Denford, 2011, p. 105) resulting to better decision making and better leading.

Choo (1998) divides organizational knowledge into three categories. These three are: tacit knowledge, rule-based knowledge, and cultural knowledge. Tacit knowledge is something every employee and employer brings to the organization. They come with different backgrounds, experiences, and personalities. Tacit knowledge is also something people learn on the job and in work environment (Musulin, Gamulin & Crnojevac, 2011, p. 2). It is hard to explain how the knowledge is possessed or maybe even impossible to teach to someone else (Gascoigne & Thornton, 2013, p. 3). Rule-based and cultural knowledge is created at the workplace and varies between workplaces and sometimes even between teams. Rule-based knowledge determines how employees operate at work (Choo, 1998, p. 9). Examples of rule-based knowledge are routines, standard procedures, and mindsets (Choo, 1998, p. 9) toward work or customers. Routines could be that everyone changes their clothes first in locker rooms and always arrive five minutes early, procedures could be a customer service situation done in a specific way every time and mindsets and culture set the tone with employees talk to each other or about customers after they have left. The culture at the workplace is largely set by the company management. They set the tone for what kind of knowledge is valuable to possess and what kind of behavior gets praised (Leonard-Barton, 1995, as cited in Choo, 1998, p. 9). These policies and the culture in the workplace play an essential role in motivation to work. Not all employees have the same knowledge and premises so there is a possibility of segregating employees. If the company management is not aware of this, they might send out mixed signals, which may lead to valuable workers to leaving, because they are not feeling valued. This is why the company management needs to understand why knowledge derived from data is not the only knowledge and information they need, when creating a good place to work.

Introducing knowledge management into a company requires suitable platforms, willingness to learn, a motivated climate and most of all, a change in information culture.

Adopting knowledge management behavior in a company takes time, effort, and attitude change towards sharing and using information (Davenport, 1994). With small and new companies, it is easier to adapt to new tools and ways of working than in bigger or older companies who are set in their ways. It is easy to do things the familiar way instead of learning new ways to work. In the same way it is easier to teach six people new ways of working than to two hundred people, whose job description varies. The procedures are more complex the bigger the company gets, and knowledge management should be implemented in every part of the business to get the full advantage. The key to success is motivated climate and open-minded culture at the workplace towards change and learning.

There are still several challenges about how to make knowledge management profitable and optimized for every purpose. These challenges could be finding the right data, distributing it effectively and analyzing it to a form which is useful for every purpose (Järvinen & Hirvonen, 2021, p. 130). This takes time and is a big investment which can delay or even prevent some companies adapting knowledge management to their business. The cost of information and the relationship with benefits and costs are an important factor affecting the decision whether to search information or not (Kuang & Wilson, 2020, p. 464). A company might want to use knowledge management in more extent, but they do not have the resources to it. Every company's needs differ and therefore same way of doing things cannot work everywhere. This is why it takes time in every company to find out the best way implement knowledge management into their workplace and their own work.

Besides creating an efficient and profitable company, knowledge management should also be used for creating a better workplace and well-being for employees. Alajmi and Aldaihani (2022) found a relationship between knowledge management and workplace happiness. When a team is led by suitable methods, clear goals, supportive teamwork, and positive mindset, it is easy to assume team members to be motivated and satisfied with their work. According to their study workplace happiness creates better job satisfaction (Alajmi & Aldaihani, 2022, p. 126), which means lower employee turnover, having satisfied employees and safer space to work. Successful knowledge management in the workplace boosts a culture which allows to create, share, acquire and learn knowledge with and from coworkers (Alajmi & Aldaihani, 2022, p. 135). This creates a positive cycle which nourishes creativity, motivation to work and happiness in the workplace. In an ideal situation knowledge management does not only apply to work related information, but also

personal information and positive observations of employees or coworkers. Examples of actions that can be made are mentoring, openness to new methods and development ideas which allow staff members to grow and thrive. Happiness has been identified as a significant motivator for enhancing performance, productivity, creativity, and engagement (Achor, 2012, p. 100) which suggests that fostering a positive work environment could be an effective strategy for improving employee satisfaction and overall performance.

Knowledge management and sharing information are things that make a big difference in employee well-being, especially in a time of crisis. Tourism field is sensitive to natural disasters, pandemics, and political decisions, which create an atmosphere of uncertainty. Uncertainty creates stress and disturbs effective working (Montani & Staglianò, 2022, p. 194), which can be eased with proper knowledge management and transparency. This does not apply only within a company. In time of crisis companies can support each other and sharing information can be more important than ever just to survive as a business or to keep customers and staff members safe.

Sharing information is one of the most important parts of knowledge management. When people share information, it boosts creativity, which is essential for creating new information and knowledge. One example of sharing knowledge in a company is training a new person to the job (Von Krogh, 2011, p. 406). The trainer and the trainee have different experiences about the job, and they could both be inspired by one another to change their performance to better than before. In order for this to work, both participants need to be motivated to receive and give out the knowledge they have. If one of these parties feels like the benefit from knowledge sharing is not mutual or is distributed unfairly, they become reluctant to continue sharing their knowledge (Von Krogh, 2011, p. 408). This statement can be implemented in knowledge sharing between companies as well. Existing networks are logical places to start sharing information between companies. Companies joining a network are joining a network for a reason which can be, for example, looking to learn from other companies, share their opinions, or acquire knowledge together with others (van Wijk, van den Bosch & Volberda, 2011, p. 478) During the interviews, it became clear that tourism companies were willing to share their information with others only if they got the same information back from others. Usually, they wanted the exact same information from others what they give out, but sometimes after some discussion they were willing to trade different types of information if the other company did not have the same information existing.

Knowledge management is not yet a standard practice in every tourism business and my presumption is that it is because people in companies do not know what it means and how it can be used to develop business. Learning new things like what knowledge management means and how it can develop the whole business requires time, effort, and motivation. It is understandable that learning something new and complex is not a top priority when running a business and day to day operations. However, since people are driven by motivation, understanding what inspires companies to explore knowledge management is important for DMOs, as it can help encourage businesses to engage with this valuable concept.

As can be seen from previous paragraphs, knowledge management is a vast concept, which can be implemented in numerous areas in business. This thesis focuses on knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki, and therefore information and knowledge related to tourism field and work are in the center of focus. This information can be, for example, flight information, cruise ship timetables, event calendars, hotel occupancy rates, weather information, and many other things.

### 3.4. Motivation Towards Knowledge Management at Work

Motivation is what drives people to do anything in life. Without motivation our world would not be as it is now. It impacts the task one is supposed to do, and it impacts the approach towards the task (Mordue, 2021, p. 131). Motivated employees and leaders perform better at their jobs than unmotivated staff members, and better job performance leads to more effective and efficient companies (Prayetno & Ali, 2020, p. 148). This is why employers should consider ways to motivate their staff when it is needed.

People are motivated to work by different things. Some go to work purely for money, someone is motivated by their coworkers, some by achievement, power, or fellowship. Some people need the work to be challenging to thrive and some like it simple and light without any responsibilities or constant difficulties. According to Fiske (2008) self-enhancement is a prime motivator (Fiske, 2008, p.6) and therefore in an ideal situation working would develop the person doing the work. Nonetheless, motivation varies between people, and ways to motivate varies between different companies and leaders.

Some companies are able to offer bigger salaries, bigger network, more challenges, more responsibility, better leadership, more variety in tasks and better benefits. Other companies can meet only one of these demands, another can meet more. In tourism in Finland one weak spot is that jobs are often part time, or seasonal. There is no possibility for employees to develop their skills in long term because the job will end rather soon. I have also noticed in my own behavior and others, that when contract period is about to end, the motivation for best possible performance decreases. This means that in short-term contracts, the feeling of achievement and success is very important for motivation and performance.

Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation means that the motivation comes from within the person themselves because they are interested in the matter (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 331; Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 17). Most of the time the drive for intrinsic motivation is to learn and develop in order to perform better and increase wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 17). Extrinsic motivation then again comes from outside of the person and is more related to rewarding or any consequence from action and avoiding punishment (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 331; Mordue, 2021, p. 131). Intrinsic motivation can be diminished or enhanced due to events which diminish or support the intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 18). One of these events diminishing motivation could be offering reward in a situation where it is not necessary from the motivation point of view. Supporting act of intrinsic motivation could be, for example, positive feedback from a superior (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 23) or coworkers. In a work environment, it is unreasonable to assume that every employee would be intrinsically motivated by every task every day. This is when extrinsic motivation needs to be applied. Rewarding controls behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 24), and in this case it makes an employee perform a task which they would not otherwise perform. Of course, personal thinking models effect how a person receives rewards. If a company offers performance-based rewards, some people get excited and perform better, when others experience it as controlling and maybe start to perform even worse than before or not change their behavior at all (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 27). To being able to motivate every employee in the company, employer or team leader should be aware of how their employees can be motivated or how motivated they already are. This requires team leaders and business owners to know their employees well enough to know what motivates them.

It used to be thought that people need control, supervision, and money to be motivated to work (Hautala & Lämsä, 2005, p. 80). Today we know better. Workplaces are more

focused on peoples' feelings and thoughts in order to make them feel like the job they are doing matters and they like doing it (Hautala & Lämsä, 2005, p. 80). It is essential to feel like the job matters to feel satisfied and proud of the work a person is doing. Porter and Lawler (1968) explain satisfaction in work to lead to better job performance. Satisfaction comes from internal or external rewards such as a feeling of accomplishment or a promotion (Porter & Lawler, 1968, p. 120). In conclusion, people who are satisfied with their work are also motivated, because the means of increasing satisfaction are the same ones which increase motivation. Good motivation leads to better quality of work and better quality leads the company to perform better.

High level of workplace stress causes reduced job performance (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud & Rockett, 2019). Extrinsic motivation, support and positive feedback from a leader can bring down the feeling of stress and enhance job performance (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud & Rockett, 2019). However, support and positive feedback are not always helpful if the problem is in the way of doing the work. By using knowledge management, an organization or a company can locate a problem, solve it, and make daily tasks easier for employees. Motivating leader works in collaboration with others and leads by example (Mordue, 2021, p. 10). McGregor (1960) introduced two theories, theories X and Y, of how managers view their employee's motivation and its effect on the management style. Theory X suggests that employees are not interested in working, developing, or performing well and they need micromanagement, targets, and indicators (McGregor, 1960, as cited in Mordue, 2021, p. 130). Theory Y has a more positive view of employees, and they are seen as motivated and initiative, which leads managers to collaborate and openly communicate with them (McGregor, 1960, as cited in Mordue, 2021, p. 130). Both management styles still exist, but it is safe to say that in most cases employees would prefer to be seen as in theory Y. Treating employees as capable individual, motivates them to perform as expected.

A leader in an organization has a huge influence on the motivation of employees. If the leader shows that they give importance and value employee engagement, the employees motivation will increase (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud & Rockett, 2019). One way of showing that a leader values their employees is to listen and to be open when employees express their dissatisfaction at work and give out development proposals. When employees can affect how the work is done and planned, it makes the work more inspiring and

motivating for them (Berlin, 2019, p. 27). This confirms the earlier mentioned theory Y to be more motivating and employee friendly than theory X.

It has been said in this thesis that in a company all employees should be educated about the benefits of knowledge management. If a person working in a company does not know why it is done and what the benefits are, they are not motivated to add anything knowledge management related to their workload. If the reasons and benefits are not enough to motivate, or they cannot be shared with the staff, they should be motivated in other ways. One way is to motivate through salary and bonuses. It is typical in the tourism field to pay salaries according to a fixed schedule. This kind of schedule does not give a lot of movement to rewards, and job performance does not affect the salary (Porter & Lawler, 1968, p. 121). Money is only one way of rewarding employees, but these fixed salary schedules are taking away one possibility to create job satisfaction, the possibility to motivate with money. Even though job satisfaction and motivation are enhanced with rewarding, the goal is not to reach the highest point of satisfaction but to find the relationship and balance between rewarding and satisfaction (Porter & Lawler, 1968, p. 121-122). This way employees stay motivated, productive, and satisfied. And this is not valid only for employees. Employers and business owners also need to be motivated; they just more often need to find the motivation within them.

### 3.5 Self Determination Theory

Self-determination theory explains the relation between cognitive factors and social relations towards motivation. The theory recognizes the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and emphasizes that intrinsic motivation comes from within of people (Ryan & Deci 2017, p. 14.) Even though intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are often separated into two, according to self-determination theory, they overlap and sometimes it is hard to recognize which one it is. This shows that motivation is actually more of a spectrum between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations rather than just one of these (Göhler, Hattke & Göbel, 2023, p. 547). Where the motivations settle on the spectrum, is determined by various factors, such as the person's sense of right and wrong, ego, previous experiences, or the social environment where the person lives. For example, our society



expects us to behave in a certain way, and it creates external motivation, which people often internalize (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 14.) thus it becomes intrinsic.

Wanting to learn what knowledge management means and how to implement it into a company's business model is in most cases a good example of internalized extrinsic motivation. The need for the company to thrive, to do better and better, and the owner to make more money is a social construct, which comes from the business world and society. It is a commonly accepted fact that business must be successful and growing, but often the need for that is not in the core of people before they learn it from society. The motivation to learn new things is in the core biologically (Ryan & Deci, 200, p. 56) but what they want to learn and why varies between people and therefore is not in the deepest end of intrinsic motivation as just the motivation to simply learn. The theory suggests that truly intrinsic motivations are the ones which are autonomous and everything else is affected by extrinsic motivators (Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 60-62). The most autonomous motivations are also the most motivating ones, and the more extrinsic the motivation gets, the less motivating it is (Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 63-64). Because work as a concept is a social construct and a way to earn money, we can assume that motivation to work and to develop a business is always on some level extrinsic.

Aiming for success as a business owner can be motivated by different things on different parts of the spectrum. The motivation can be avoiding punishment, such as loss of income due to bad service, or it can be that the person has identified as the best provider of their practice, when the value is in the action itself. The motivation toward business is likely to shift on the spectrum during the lifespan of the company and the person behind it (Ryan & Deci, 2000, pp. 62-63) because we learn new things all the time and new situations change priorities. Because of this, implementing knowledge management in the company's business model may not happen upon a request, but it might happen later, when motivations are in different order.

### 3.6 Motivational Climate

The term 'motivational climate' in this case refers to the attributes of a tourism business environment that influence the development of motivational beliefs among people working

in the tourism industry (Robinson, 2023, p. 96). Motivational climate in tourism regarding knowledge management determines a lot of what individuals think about knowledge management and knowledge sharing. If the climate suggests that knowledge management is not useful, less companies and people are interested in it and thus are not practicing it. If the climate supports knowledge management, but not knowledge sharing, the climate might primarily support own achievement over cooperation. This can lead to a situation where no one is sharing information, because they do not want to be the only ones sharing it without getting the same or more benefit themselves (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, Škerlavaj, 2014, p. 186). But if the motivational climate among tourism companies is positive and supports cooperation and knowledge sharing, it is more likely that they work together towards a common goal. This leads tourism companies to use knowledge management more likely in their daily work. If the social climate between tourism companies is very competitive, it is harmful for the motivational climate, and it discourages knowledge sharing even more (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, Škerlavaj, 2014, p. 186). The motivational climate now in Helsinki seems to be more on the “own survival over others” -mode instead of favoring cooperation and celebrating others success. This survival mode could be a relic of Covid-19 pandemic and it is time to leave it behind and focus on joint development where everyone is getting the benefits.

Motivational climate can vary on different levels in a destination. It can be viewed on destination level, on a sector level, on a company level, within different teams in a company and even on a personal level. The last two are called motivational microclimates if they differ from the ones mentioned before (Robinson, 2023, p. 93). Robinson (2023) suggests that motivational supports such as the behavior of an authority and peers shape the motivational climate (Robinson, 2023, pp. 93-94). The behavior of an authority and peers then again are shaped though their beliefs, society, community, and experiences (Robinson, 2023, p. 94). The goal of reaching beneficial knowledge sharing ecosystem in a destination requires all the motivational climates to be aligned. This can be reached with proper leadership and open discussion on the levels. Because authorities can shape the motivational climate, they need to show an example of how the motivational climate around knowledge management should be. One way how authorities such as DMOs or the leaders in companies can start to improve the motivational climate is to identify shared experiences that promote the wanted behavior (Robinson, 2023, p. 97) such as knowledge management.

Because knowledge management is answering to question: “What I can do with this information?”, it requires creativity and reasoning ability to really benefit from the process. The relation between knowledge sharing and creativity among coworkers is vastly researched topic in creativity research (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, Škerlavaj, 2014, pp. 172-173) but it can be also applied to knowledge sharing between companies. Many tourism companies in Helsinki are small, and they do not have a staff who would share knowledge with each other, so they could get the same benefit from sharing the information with their peers.

### 3.7 Theory of Motivated Information Management

This theory is mostly used on individuals, but the theory has features which fit business as well. Afifi and Weiner (2004) start explaining the theory with seeking information. An individual makes a deliberate choice to look for information from a specific source (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 170). This same decision needs to be made in the business world as well keeping information management in mind. Reliable information sources must be selected of all the information in the world. Sources must be up to date, trustworthy, relevant, and comparable.

Theory of motivated information management assumes that the information management process is automatic and mindless in an individual (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 171). Business information management also has the same limitations of cognitive and emotional factors because a person has made the decisions on what information to use and from which point of view the information is reviewed. Kahneman (2012, as cited in Kannengiesser & Gero, 2019, p. 4) divides thinking into two systems. System one is automatic, fast, experience-based and does not require working memory. In everyday language system one could be referred to as intuition. The second system is the opposite of the system one: it is controlled, slow, rule-based and it working requires memory (Kahneman, 2012, as cited in Kannengiesser & Gero, 2019, p. 4). It is common for people to use their system 1, because it allows them to make fast decisions, move forward and it does not take a lot of energy. However, at work people are expected to use system two, because then they can use their education and work-related information when doing their job instead of just doing what is easy and fast. Of course, over time, these two overlap to

some extent because of their experience on the job. In the business world a decision, development, recruiting or any other process might take hours, days, or weeks to complete. Long projects and processes require system two because this system can focus on the topic for long enough (Kannengiesser & Gero, 2019, p. 4-5). In a conclusion, individual aspects, emotional factors, and preferences can affect a person's decision making at work, but when the person is using the second thinking system, it is unlikely that they make decisions impulsively rather than based on knowledge.

The theory is divided into three phases. First interpretation phase, second evaluation phase and lastly a decision phase (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 171). The interpretation phase starts with uncertainty, because the information needed is not available (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 171-172). The feeling of uncertainty is the drive and motivation to search for information. In a company, the feeling of uncertainty can emerge, for example, from not knowing from where their customers find them, who their customers are, why they choose the exact company or how they are placed compared to their competitors. Evaluation phase goes two ways: expected outcomes and the trust in one's abilities to find needed information (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 175-176). In this phase the one who is seeking information will decide how important it is to find the information and how fast. If an individual trusts their abilities to find the information and a negative outcome can be expected, there might not be a rush. In the decision phase a person can go three ways. They can either seek relevant information, avoid relevant information, or cognitively re-evaluate the situation (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 181). Seeking of information can be done in numerous ways. It could be asking questions, reading books, contacting a professional, searching from Google, going to school and many more. Avoiding information can be done in an active or passive way (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 181). Active avoidance is when an individual actively avoids information when it is coming their way (Witte, 1998, p. 437). If an individual knows there is some information they need, but they are not doing anything to reach the information, and it is not coming to them automatically, it is called passive avoidance. In the business world avoidance can be harmful for the company because development, customer service and business activities all require information to function well. Re-evaluating the situation means that the information management process altogether is cancelled, because the individual changes their original agenda, removing the feeling of uncertainty that way (Afifi & Weiner, 2004, p. 183). This can happen for example if an individual solves the

problem by using the earlier mentioned Kahneman's system one, or if they decide the original matter is not priority at the moment.

When it comes to organizational teams, the willingness and motivation to learn how to process and adapt information is the key (Sydänmaanlakka, 2012, p. 186), to developing knowledge management in the organization. If the consensus in the company is that knowledge is power, and the power should be kept in the company, sharing information with other companies or DMO's is unlikely. In these situations, the company should ponder whether they want to use information, tools and ideas invented by others. If not, it should be reviewed why not, whether it comes from a negative point of view or positive. If the answer is yes, it is a fair question to ask why this company is entitled to use others' information, but others are not allowed to use theirs.

#### 4. Data collection and Methodology

This thesis employs a combination of survey and interview methods for data collection. The interview participants were experts in the field of tourism in Helsinki, as well as representatives from local tourism companies, who also completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to 140 tourism companies of which twelve answered the questionnaire. Of these twelve companies I interviewed seven. At first the research was supposed to be executed only with the quantitative survey, but due to the small number of answers I decided to add interviews to get a better understanding of knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki. At the same time, I decided to add motivations as part of the research, because of my interaction with tourism companies, the motivations behind knowledge management in tourism companies were not clear to me or to the City of Helsinki. When I added the interviews, I planned the research to be executed with mixed methods, but due to only few answers, this thesis is fully a qualitative study.

Qualitative research applies in cases where the outcome cannot be counted from the data (Saldana, 2011, p. 3). The goal of qualitative research can be almost everything (Saldana, 2011, p.4) such as motivations, learning habits or the relations between two or more people. It was selected for this thesis firstly because answers to the questionnaire were limited and secondly, I was eager to learn more than quantities based on a few

questionnaire answers. Qualitative research allows for a more suitable range of tools to study motivations and attitudes towards knowledge management. Qualitative research typically is flexible humanistic research which tries to understand the object of the study (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). This thesis had two objects: knowledge management in tourism companies and the motives of the person who practices knowledge management in a tourism company. I used abductive reasoning in my theory, which means that I looked for the best explanation that can be concluded from the material (Douven, 2021). This was the best option, because there was not too much material due to the small number of answers in the questionnaire and only a few interviews.

Motivation research is a term for various qualitative research methods which has been popular research type in consumer research (Kozinets, 2010, p. 2), but it can also be used to study other groups. The aim in motivation research is to find out why the motivation differs between individuals and why people behave in the way they behave (Motivation Research: Definition and Techniques n.d.). Ideally, study would discover something the interviewee does not fully comprehend themselves, thus the motivations are not clear and visible (Masud, n.d.), which means that motivation research discovers conscious and unconscious motives (Motivation Research: Definition and Techniques; Masud, n.d.). When talking about motivations at work, the presumption is that most of the motivations are conscious and set by a superior.

The companies who answered the survey and interviews differ with each other with their operations and number of staff widely. There are companies with one part time entrepreneur to multi locational chains working in different parts of the tourism field. Whilst I cannot make assumptions regarding one specific business activity such as accommodation, I can see similarities that are valid for the whole tourism industry. Similarities like what databases they use, what is the ratio of using their internal data versus external data or how well they know the term knowledge management. I have coded interviewees to numbers from one to seven to keep their anonymity when referring to their quotations. In the following chapters I introduce the empirical setting of this research and both research methods: survey and interviews.

## 4.1 Empirical Setting

In this study the request for the research came from City of Helsinki in January 2023. The Tourism and Destination Management Unit had just started using a new knowledge management platform, DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights, and during spring 2023 Helsingin tekijät -network was supposed to integrate their information to the system. First the aim was to find out what kind of information tourism companies are willing to share with City of Helsinki and with each other, how they can be motivated to do so and what kind of agreements must be disclosed.

In Sustainable growth for Tourism: Southern Finland -project one target was to find out what kind of data tourism companies would need and be willing to share with others. After organizing a workshop around the subject, it was clear that tourism companies were not yet ready to share meaningful information from their own companies to others or to use most of the relevant information available. Participating in this workshop was one of the reasons for me to choose this topic for my thesis. Tourism companies cannot be motivated to participate in destination level data sharing and knowledge management if the prejudices and difficulties for them are not understood. Tourism companies need to be aware of the benefits and the importance of knowledge management in development in order to get motivated.

## 4.2 Survey

The survey used in this thesis was compiled in the Sustainable growth for Tourism: Southern Finland -project in cooperation with multiple tourism professionals. It was published in November 2023. The aim of the survey was to assess the maturity and activities of the company's data-driven management. The survey gives feedback of the maturity of the company's data-driven management to the person who answers the survey. The feedback report will provide information to the regional organizations as well as the company which answers the survey. This survey has been divided into two sections: the company's business expertise and ability to make decisions and the company's actions in knowledge management. It starts with a few background questions and continues with

eight questions about the company's understanding of data-driven management and data, sixteen questions about what information they collect/monitor in the company, nine questions about how information is processed in the company, eight questions about analyzed data used in strategic decision-making (yearly decision-making), seven questions about analyzed data used in operational decision-making (hourly/weekly/monthly decision-making) and one question about how much they utilize data in the company's decision-making process. The questionnaire is designed to be beneficial to the company who answers it and also the DMOs who can, based on the outcome of the survey, offer better support and training for tourism companies in the area.

Based on the answers, the survey classifies the company in one of these levels: Start, Ready, Steady or Go. The company who gets Start-level understands the concept of knowledge management and the company has started to develop knowledge management in the company. Ready-level means the company has started to use knowledge management. Company who gets the Steady-level is already advanced in knowledge management and their decision process is based on it. A tourism company that meets the requirements of the GO level is a pioneer in managing by using information. When a company has completed the survey, it calculates their level and gives tips on how to get to the next level. For example, on Start-level the tips are links to sources where they can learn more, it asks questions like “what kind of services and products should you develop or where should you do your marketing in order to get more visibility?”. On the Steady-level the tips are also more advanced such as “Connect the company's strategic development and data strategy.”. The point is to give feedback and tools to develop, no matter what stage the company is in.

There were only two answers before I started to distribute the survey to the tourism companies in January 2024. Before this, the survey was distributed, for example, in LinkedIn and in Visit Finland website but it did not reach as many answers as hoped. I sent the survey by email to 140 tourism companies operating in Helsinki. In my email I attached the link to the survey, explained what the survey is for, what they benefit from answering it and who will use the answers and for what. In the beginning of the questionnaire there is a short explanation of the survey, the topic, the collection of data, and the processing of the personal data given in the survey. At the end of the survey the responder will have to click and agree on the terms of use. These emails were not very successful either, and as a result I only got 10 answers, resulting in a total of 12 answers.



The difficulty of getting answers to surveys such as this one, is not new information to DMOs and the problem is nationwide.

### 4.3 Interviews

The interviews were thematic semi-structures interviews. Thematic means, that the discussion has pre-given theme, which determines the whole interview (Hirsjärvi, & Hurme, 2022). When interviewees know the theme, it is easier to stay in the topic and gather data explicitly for that topic, which in this case was knowledge management and motivation. In semi-structured interviews everyone gets the same questions, but the situation is more like a conversation than just questions and answers (Hirsjärvi, & Hurme, 2022). The questions are there to guide the conversation, as well as reminding the interviewer what the goal of the conversation is. This allows the interviewer to get an answer to everything they wish for, but also to get a wider understanding of the conversation with additional questions related to that specific interview.

Half of the interviews in this research could also be considered as expert interviews. The people who I interviewed were the same people who answered the survey. When the survey was sent to a company, they were asked to forward it to a person who is in charge of knowledge management in the company and therefore knows most about the subject. In other words, they were chosen based on their professional expertise on knowledge management. Based on the titles and job descriptions of interviewees it can be assumed that the people were the experts in the topic from their own company's' point of view. An expert interview is not about the person who is interviewed but about the knowledge, expertise, and interpretation they have about the research topic (Hyvärinen, Nikander, Ruusuvaori & Aho, 2017). The first half in interviews and the survey was about knowledge management when the second part was more personal while the topic was as personal as motivations, it was about professional motivation and how they overlap with personal motivation.

When I sent the survey to tourism companies in January 2024, I asked the person to answer to be the one who is in charge of data, analytics and knowledge management in the company. Based on this request I interviewed the people who are most familiar with

knowledge management from each company. There were altogether twelve companies who answered the questionnaire, and seven of them agreed to the interview and the interviews were conducted in April 2024. These seven all work with knowledge management on different levels. Their job titles were Sales Director, Service Manager, Tourism Expert, Operations Manager and Commercial Manager and two Entrepreneurs. The variety of the titles anticipates variety in the job description and therefore variety also in the answers to my questions. The length of the interview varied between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes depending on how long answers the interviewees gave and how enthusiastic they were about the topic. The interviews were conducted in Finnish and present questions were in Finnish because everyone was used to operating in Finnish. It is easier to give out thorough answers in one's native language rather than some other language. Almost all of the interviews were made using Microsoft Teams, except one, which was conducted face to face.

The interview questions were sent to the interviewees about a week before their interview, giving them several days to familiarize themselves with the questions and ponder their answers. In these question papers that they got, it was explained how the conversation is meant to be relaxed and conversational. Some researchers suggest the interviewer to internalize their role more as a listener rather than being equal part of the conversation (Jennings, 2010, p. 171), and I followed this suggestion by mostly just reacting to what had just been said or asking supporting questions, rather than explaining my point of view to the matter. Interviews and the questions papers they got beforehand were divided into two sections: knowledge management and motivation. This allowed the interviewee to clearly focus on the two main topics separately. The first part included questions regarding, for example, the knowledge and data management in the company, how they use the data, what tools they use, how they define knowledge management and what kind of data they use in the company. The second part, which was labelled as motivation, questions were more about the individual I was interviewing. Including questions like "What motivates you to practice knowledge management in your company?", "Have you seen direct benefits from knowledge management in your business?" and "What benefits should you receive in order to share your company's data with regional organizations or other companies?".

When starting the interview, I asked everyone if they had time to look through the material, and everyone answered yes more or less. The point of sending the questions in

advance was to get better and well thought out answers instead of surprising them with hard questions which they could not answer. It was mutually beneficial and hopefully engaged them even more with the topic. I got feedback from most of the interviewees that either the interview or the pondering beforehand was a learning moment for them and it gave them tools and motivation to continue further with their knowledge management practices. For example, one of the interviews started with the assumption that they were not doing knowledge management in the company at all. As the interview proceeded, they made discoveries that after all they are doing a lot, they did not just know it because they were not thinking that team meetings, gathering customer feedback or updating sudden changes to staff was knowledge management. It was great to see how this person got more and more inspired by the topic as we continued because they were learning a lot during that interview.

Microsoft Teams offers automatic transcription as a tool when recording meetings. I tried this tool to save time and try a new tool. This transcription had to be examined together with the recording to make sure there were no misunderstandings between the automatic transcription and what was actually said. After this examination I simplified the material by deleting all filler words, sounds and repetition of words. Because one interview was conducted face to face, this I had to transcribe it, and I did so with leaving out repetition and filler words and sounds. Because all of the interviews lasted about an hour, there was approximately 7,5 hours' worth of recording and more than 200 pages of transcription before simplifying the material. After this I was able to move forward to analysis.

#### 4.4 Analytical Choices

I chose to use thematic analysis together with content analysis to study the motivations to practice knowledge management. Thematic analysis involves identifying themes in the data that are relevant to the research question (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 174–180). With thematic analysis I was able to find similarities and differences between companies, and content analysis gave more information why those similarities and differences exist. Content analysis aims to create a verbal and coherent description of the subject under study, which in this case is knowledge management in tourism companies and motivations

towards it. The outcome of content analysis is an organized display of the information gained (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, p. 104.) from the interviews.

I started my process with the interviews by preliminary grouping and divided the answers in two. This grouping followed the structure of the interviews, and first two groups were knowledge management and motivation. After this I continued grouping answers thematically depending on what I wanted to find out from the material each time. These groups were, for example, personnel related usage of knowledge management or forecasting future with data. In the questionnaire I was intrigued to see quantities how many companies are using the data in each way mentioned, what their maturity in knowledge management is and if the answers reflect the results from the interviews. I was able to use content analysis with the survey as well, because last two questions were open questions, and I analyzed those using content analysis. Those last two questions were not mandatory to answer, so there were not many answers, and I was not able to analyze them by counting or grouping.

#### 4.5 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics must be taken into consideration in every step of the research. If the basic rules are not followed, the research can be considered as not reliable. The basics of responsible conduct of research are reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability (TENK, 2023, p. 11). All these basic principles were followed in this research process. In the making of this thesis, I did not present others work as my own, and I have given credit to other researchers for their work.

The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures mentions necessary permits and consent as one part of ethical research (TENK, 2023, p. 13). In this research I have used some internal information at City of Helsinki, to which I had a permit from the tourism director as long as I work in the organization. All the interviewees and people who answered the survey had given consent for the information they provide. Before the interviews the interviewees were informed that participating in the interviews is voluntary, and that they do not have to share information they are not comfortable sharing. In the beginning of every interview, I asked if it is okay for me to record the interview to get the

transcription, and everyone agreed. After the interview I promised to keep anonymity of their own and the company, neither of which are mentioned in this thesis. Their names, company names or any other personal information are not available for anyone else than me. In this thesis their businesses are defined in a general way therefore their identity is not evident. The interviewees were given my contact information, and they were all given the possibility to contact me if they have something to add or comment after the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Microsoft Teams except for one interview where I visited the interviewees office. In every Teams meeting there were only two people attending, me and the interviewee. All the interviews happened behind closed doors, and no one else has heard the conversation except the people attending the interview. The recordings and transcriptions of the interviews are stored on one computer where logging in requires a password. The computer is private and not in communal use. The material will be deleted once this thesis is published, and I am the only one who will have access to the raw material.

The questionnaire was published before I decided to include it in my thesis, so they have not directly given their permission to use the information for this particular thesis. In the end of the survey there is a link to terms of use of survey tools of Visit Finland and City of Helsinki. Those terms include for example following sentences: “A representative of a regional organization registered for the service can create surveys, review survey results, and, if necessary, share access to the survey results with other regional tourism development organizations or Visit Finland Academy coaches if training has been ordered for the region.” and “One should not provide confidential content because the number of users of the Service is large.”. People who have answered the survey have agreed to Visit Finland and their stakeholders to use the results to plan suitable development measures for companies in the area. City of Helsinki is a stakeholder of Visit Finland, and the results of this thesis are used for the previously mentioned purpose.

My own position working for City of Helsinki influences this research. The advantages I have due to my position are numerous. I have access to the survey results and other files mentioned in this thesis and I have gained understanding about knowledge management from professionals. The survey was also passed on by my coworkers, but also through the communication channels the Tourism and Destination Management Unit uses, such as LinkedIn. When I was searching for companies to interview, I got their contact information through my position in the company. When I was booking the interviews, I can assume

that some companies agreed to be interviewed more easily, because they know my name or because I presented myself as a part of the unit. When the advantages are clear, there are some disadvantages as well. With the information I have gained from my experience created assumptions, which might have affected my analysis, my way of interviewing or the selection of companies who I sent the invitation to interview.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

Three main themes in the survey and interviews were: knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki, maturity of data-driven management in tourism companies and motivations to practice knowledge management. Within these three main themes I was able to find three sub-themes from each which support the main theme. The first chapter: knowledge management in tourism companies in Helsinki includes: defining knowledge management which reveals what tourism companies know about knowledge management, internal versus external data which discusses the data sources used by the company and knowledge management practices which explains how tourism companies use data and knowledge in management. The second chapter maturity of data-driven management in tourism companies consists of the answers from the survey and the maturity is examined through the following themes: using and collecting data, decision-making and motivational climate. The motivations to practice knowledge management are explored through personal motivations, motivating personnel, and motivating by sharing information. These themes reveal the main topics discussed in interviews and survey.

### 5.1 Knowledge Management in Tourism Companies in Helsinki

One of my presumptions was that some tourism companies use knowledge management in their day-to-day work, but others do not know what the term means. This got confirmation during the interviews. Especially hotels have adapted knowledge management very well already years ago in their business model when other type of tourism companies may only now learn that weekly team meetings are part of knowledge management. There was only

one company representative who said in the interviews that knowledge management is not familiar term for them at all, but others had heard about it at least a couple of years before. This confirms knowledge management being relatively new term in tourism industry (Laihonen et al., 2013, p.5) at least in this group. Four out of seven answered that they remember hearing about knowledge management for the first time within a five-year period. Interviewee number 2 had used the term “managing with numbers” more than 10 years ago for the first time, when it meant similar activity as knowledge management means now. Two of them had heard about it for the first time in school and one had never heard about it before or at least paid attention.

Everyone answered that knowledge management is important and useful, but their more extensive explanations varied even though most likely they would all agree with each other. The explanations included: yes, because it helps to concentrate resources to right things, yes, because it helps to keep the main focus where it should be, yes, because it is very hard to make the right choices without information, yes, because organization is vulnerable if only one person possesses all the information and yes, because it is prerequisite for making decisions. The companies who have done knowledge management for years disclose knowledge management being the prerequisite for decision-making. Others did not see it as that crucial for business, but for the most part they are heading that way.

One interviewee who was not familiar with knowledge management at all said that they do not use knowledge management in their business. Later in the discussion they told me how they track the traffic on their website, from where the people come to the website. After locating the origin of these visitors, the marketing budget could be concentrated on the areas where it would be most effective. This is an illustrative example of how knowledge management processes are not always acknowledged, yet knowledge management activities are still undertaken, even though they are not explicitly labelled as such. This finding supports the claim made in the theory section of this thesis that sometimes companies do practice knowledge management, they just do not know it or do not count those things as knowledge management. This is why the practical approach in examples is needed, to make knowledge management easy to approach and understand and through that implement it to business.

### ***Defining Knowledge Management***

In the beginning of the interviews, I asked the interviewees to define knowledge management and to explain their job descriptions related to knowledge management. The answers to defining knowledge management can be summarized in three quotes from the interviewees 2 and 3: “Managing with knowledge is the beginning of all wisdom and action”, “Decision making based on numbers” and “data can be used to justify why anything is done”. The things they do related to knowledge management in their job are, for example, data collection and analysis, decision making, pricing, shift lists, customer surveys, knowledge sharing to stakeholders and to others in the company, business development and the budget allocation. Many of the tasks they described were very practical, which reflects the practical nature of the tourism business. The practical aspects are easier to understand and implement to practice.

Everyone who I interviewed had a very practical attitude towards knowledge management. It could be seen for example when interviewees pointed out that good examples boost motivation and inspire to try the methods some other company has tried and succeeded. They want to know that it is actually useful and that they are not wasting their time if they try to benefit from it. That is why they need to see the tangible advantages of it in order for them to consider it a valuable tool for their practice and it to be worth trying. Even though the practicality is the best way to understand knowledge management, sometimes companies think about it too complicatedly and therefore they consider it to be harder than it actually is. This could be seen, for example, when we talked about the tools they use for knowledge management. In the material I sent beforehand to them, I gave examples of tools which were: a system of some kind, a single piece of information, analysis method and team discussion. During the discussion, it became evident that the majority of them had not previously considered a team discussion to be a tool for knowledge management. This can be a reason for team meetings being highlighted in the answers. Other tools they mentioned were, for example, training, booking systems, marketing data, sales data, deliveries, PowerBI, reports and excel sheets. Most of these tools are mainly used for analyzing internal data, when there are different tools and systems to collect and analyze external data.

### ***Internal Versus External Data***



Examples of external data which the interviewed tourism companies use are:

Benchmarking Alliance, MyReputation, Forward Keys, and the data City of Helsinki provides such as DataLokki – Helsinki Destination Insights. When we talked about external data, most of the sources they mentioned were paid services as the ones mentioned before, and if they did not use any paid services, then it was DataLokki or Congress Calendar which is provided by Finland Convention Bureau. Even though according to the interviews most of the companies use more internal data than external data they see the importance of external data as well. According to interviewee number 1 “External data enriches thinking towards future and present” which is in the core of the statement from Baldoni, Cortese and Davide that there needs to be a balance between internal and external data (Baldoni, Cortese & Davide, 2006, p. vii). Using only internal data can slow down business development and new inventions because the internal data does not challenge thinking and the way to work in the same way as external data in relation to internal data does.

Before the interviews I had a presumption that it is easier for a company to use their own data, so they would always start practicing knowledge management with their own data. This turned out to be false, because if a brand-new company wants to start managing their company with knowledge, they do not have anything to work on. Thus, the new companies are the ones who use the most external information and when the company exceeds a certain point in collecting their own data, their own data becomes the one they use more than external data. The average percentage of the relation between internal and external data among interviewees was 75 % internal data and 25 % external data except in the companies which were founded less than three years ago. Two of the companies I interviewed were new and they had almost the opposite view on the matter. One of their experiences of the relation is about 60 % of external data and 40 % internal data while the other said that they use only their own data. Interviewee number 1 uses more external than internal data and justified their use of mostly external data in the following way: “The broader the understanding of one’s operating environment, the more it makes decision-making and actions easier in one’s own operations”. The need to understand the Tourism Industry is common for every company who works in the business. The new companies just need to rely on that information more than on their own, because their own data is not as comprehensive as in companies who have been operating longer.

After small and new companies said they use more external data than internal, they also pointed out that they do not have time or resources to analyze the data by themselves. There is always a risk, for example, of wrongly interpreted data (Gordon, 2013, p.8) when the company does not have skills, resources, or time to analyze external data. But if they do not have their own data to use, the risk is even higher, because they cannot compare the external data with their own. This is why it is crucial that companies like these can get easy access to quality data and either instructions on how to use them or already analyzed data (Lee, Funk, Pipino & Wang, 2006, p. 9), which can be used without further analyzing. This is something where City of Helsinki is taking a role as a library organization (Detlor, 2010, p. 103-104) by sharing data for free for everyone, and more information for stakeholders, who are part of their networks (Markkanen, et al., 2022). Interviewee number 7 said that they appreciated the “motherly attitude” of the City of Helsinki towards the tourism companies in Helsinki, encouraging them to try knowledge management and to share information rather than gatekeeping it. The small companies get the biggest benefit from DataLokki because it might be the only data source they have. But still big companies can also find information they do not measure by themselves. Three out of seven times Tourism and Destination Management Unit was the source where the interviewees had heard about knowledge management for the first time. After these findings it is safe to say the unit has a quite a big impact on the development of knowledge management in the tourism industry in Helsinki.

### ***Knowledge Management Practices***

One of the interviewees mentioned human resource management and the wellbeing of personnel when I asked about the knowledge management in their team. They track, for example, their sales personnel performance which can reveal that the problems where a superior should pay closer attention to. The importance of human resources was also highlighted in discussions about the value of knowledge management in a business context. This is an unsurprising observation, given that all tourism businesses ultimately serve customers, and their personnel are their main resource. In a business like this, it is crucial that personnel are part of the knowledge management, and they know why it is done, how it is done and who is responsible for each section of knowledge gathering and

management. Involving personnel in data input is a key for getting quality data (Gordon, 2013, p. 61) and motivating staff to work towards a common goal.

The question number eight: “How do you involve employees in knowledge management or what role do employees have in data-driven management and data production?” was asked to find out how transparent knowledge management is in the companies and whether the processes produce reliable data and information. I noted that the lower the hierarchy and the smaller the company, the personnel were better involved with knowledge management and business development. For example, one interviewee said that their principle is to always explain what they do and why to make everybody feel included. Another had bad experiences from before and is now dedicated to sharing knowledge whenever they see a possibility for that. Bigger companies recognize the challenge in that now all of the information is not disseminated from management to lower levels as it should. Most of the time the interviewees did not have much to say to this question or confused the question with internal communication, and they did not answer the question exactly. This can be a sign that employees are not actually included in knowledge management in day-to-day processes, or it is not recognized and therefore not explained to them.

The answers about refining knowledge out of data varied, but the one which was most often mentioned was making decisions based on data. They base their decisions, for example, on experience, collected data and comparison with competitors. Staff surveys are used to improve the community and motivation at the workplace and customer surveys are used to improve the customer experience. One interviewee pointed out that before it is even possible to create knowledge out of data, the data needs to be easy to read. Files and charts which are difficult to read do not leave too much room for imagination or comparison if all the effort goes into just understanding the data. This might be one reason for small companies to not collect much data. They do not have the time to first collect the data, then create easy to read charts, and after that start analyzing what they can do with the information in front of them. For this reason, entrepreneurs who work alone are mostly relying on information, which is easy to access and they, in most cases, just process it in their heads. This could be the perfect way if there are no resources for other options, and maybe there is not even a need for anything else. Although this approach may appear to be an effective method for processing limited information, it carries the potential for conflating data with emotional responses. When information and feelings are intertwined, it can lead to an individual's own subjective interpretation of the information, which may

not be an accurate representation of the facts. This presents a risk, but it is sometimes unavoidable when resources are limited.

It is common to use tourism demand forecasts to anticipate (Hu, Li, Song & Law, 2022, p. 1) the numbers of visitors. According to the interviews the main reason for forecasting the future with data was indeed anticipating the number of visitors, but not with pre-made tourism demand forecasts. They usually compound their own data, and public data. The factors interviewees cited included pricing, human resources, marketing and opening hours, as influencing their decision-making in relation to forecasting. All of these are related to the number of visitors. Forecasting was done for example with information about events in the city, the forecast about visitors in Helsinki related to their own visitors, weather forecasts, the number of visitors on their website, and competitor analysis. Furthermore, in the event of an exceptional situation, such as a building renovation, forecasting is conducted to ensure an optimal customer experience.

I was able to find one piece of data which all the interviewees collected. It is customer feedback. Companies collect it verbally and through questionnaires. The value of customer feedback is well understood, and many interviewees said that they have changed or upgraded their processes due to the feedback they have received. Another thing that was common in almost all the interviews was human resources such as shift planning, which was mentioned in the survey as well.

The last question in the interviews was “What benefits should you receive in order to share your company's data with regional organizations or other companies?”. This question was asked in these interviews because about two years ago Sustainable growth for Tourism: Southern Finland –project organized a workshop where tourism companies were invited to discuss about sharing data to each other. After the workshop it was clear that the majority of the companies were not ready to share their data with others and they were not able to say what kind of data they could get from others which would be useful for them. They did not see the benefit of exchanging data especially if they are not themselves the party who benefits the most. These interviews did not reveal improvement on this topic. The majority of answers concluded that they want to get the same information they provide, and other information would need to be reviewed case-by-case. It is easy to ask back the same provided information because the use of this data is obvious: comparison which can give

assurance to company's own decisions. This answer reveals that the potential in exchanging data has not yet been recognized in tourism companies.

## 5.2 Maturity of Data-driven Management in Tourism Companies

The first part of the research was conducted with the survey and only twelve companies answered. For this reason, this thesis does not create an overall picture of the maturity of data-driven management in tourism companies in Helsinki. These results are more indicative and do not represent the whole industry. The volume of the answers indicate that knowledge management is either hard, obscure, or not interesting, because not many companies answered a 10-minute questionnaire.

The twelve companies who answered the survey are distributed to the maturity levels followingly: two companies are at Start, one at Ready, eight at Steady and one at Go. The ones that I ended up interviewing are on all levels, mostly on Steady level. The fact that I was able to get answers of all levels allows this thesis to have wider perspective and more variety in answers. I have a presumption that companies who are familiar with knowledge management are more willing to answer these questionnaires than the ones who are not. This is why I think most of the answers are on level Steady, and not distributed evenly. There must be more companies on every level, but most likely only a few on level Go, and most of them on the three others.

The questionnaire begins with background questions such as the name of the company, what city they operate in and what is the revenue of the company. After those, the questionnaire questions are set to find out company's understanding of knowledge management. The questions about this topic consider for example planning for future, decision making, their resources, if they have enough resources or competence to practice knowledge management and whether their management encourages to knowledge management or not. This part of the questionnaire can be seen as the base for the knowledge management in the company. If the company does not do any of the things asked in this part of the questionnaire, their knowledge management cannot be advanced and systematic.

### ***Using and Collecting Data***

Half of the companies have systematically set measurable goals and indicators to all of their business areas, which was the most optimal answer. Four of the answers were the second optimal answer, which means most of the companies have set measurable goals at least to the most crucial business areas. Only two of the companies plan their operations on all of the given time frames, and there was no time frame which all of them uses. Most popular time frame is annual, which got eight of the answers, and the second is monthly, which got five answers. There were companies who plan only monthly, only quarterly, only annual, or only in one-to-three-year time period. Nine of the companies have either defined their data needs to the most important business areas or they have systematically defined their data needs to all their business areas, so most of them know quite well what kind of data they should acquire. Only one company answered there that they have not defined their data needs and they are not collecting data.

Question number 21 has 26 yes/no/I do not know questions on whether the company collects or follows a specific data or information. There were two answers where everyone answered yes: they all follow their cash flows and sales information. The information most of them collect or follow are sales margins, job satisfaction, accidents, energy consumption, events, customer data, and marketing. The least collected or followed are employee efficiency, marketing campaigns of the local DMO, and general tourist information. Two out of three are external information which a company does not collect themselves. The fact that these are not popular aligns with the findings I made in the interviews. If a company has their own data that they can use, they are more likely to use that, than external data.

About processing data to information and information to knowledge there were 10 yes/no/I do not know questions, and all of the answers distributed more or less evenly with the same number of yes and no answers. There were two noticeable exceptions. The claim: “We interpret the analyzed information with the company's staff” had the most yes - answers, nine out of twelve. Most of them go through the information with their staff, and this was repeated in the interviews as well, since team meetings were mentioned in almost all the interviews. There was also one part where everyone answered either no, or I do not know: “The company sells its own data for use by others (including access, right to use data)”, so no one sells their data to others. This questionnaire does not ask about giving

data to others for free, but this question indicates, that no one does that, at least in a large scale.

### ***Decision-making***

Seven of the companies answered that knowledge management has significant or very significant effect on their decision-making. Rest of them answered that it has moderate or small effect, but no one answered that knowledge management would not have any effect. This can be seen as a good thing, because it means everybody who answered do know that knowledge management should be used in decision-making at least on some level. All of the companies use information from the company's operating environment in their business. The answers of the environment information usage were distributed quite evenly between rarely, sometimes, and often. No one answered always, which is not surprising since as I found in the interviews that it is the most common to use more of company's own data than external data.

The last part of the questionnaire considers how information is used in decision-making in the companies. The first question of this part is "How much do you utilize data in the company's decision-making?". The most optimal answer would have been that they are fully data driven, but no one chose this option. Majority, eight of them answered that data is an important part of every decision along with other factors, so the second-best option. Three answered that they tend to ignore the information obtained from the data and one answered that they do not use any data in decision making. The last answer is in contradiction with the question number 16 where everyone said that knowledge has at least a little effect on their decision making. Next two questions are about using analyzed information in planning in different time periods: hour, week, month, and year. Most of the companies answered yes to all of the questions. There were only 1-3 no-answers in all of them, except two questions, so the answers were consistent. Whether they use analyzed information to prepare for demand annually was answered yes eight times and whether they develop their staff annually was answered yes six times. These two were the least developed areas using analyzed information. There was no area in which everyone would have answered yes. Everyone except one company is using analyzed data for human resources, which makes it the most popular area to use data in decision making. This outcome is not a surprise in service-oriented tourism industry.

The last two questions were open questions, and it was not necessary to answer them and only half of them did. This can indicate that the question was hard, or they did not have an answer to the question, someone even wrote that they do not know how to answer the question. One theme rose from the answers about acquiring data for company's decision-making: the lack of skills and easy-to-use data. The data they have is fragmented, they do not have skills or systems to analyze it to be in the most useful form or they do not know from where to acquire data. This results in the data not being systematically used. The answers to last question about company's knowledge management development continues the same course as the previous question. When the skillset and systems are not as good as they need to be, the difficulty is in making the data useful. They need to get the basics in order so they could get the full potential out of data.

### *Motivational Climate*

On the questionnaire the questions number 18, 19 and 20 define the motivational climate in the company. Firstly, if the management in the company values and is invested to knowledge management, they allocate resources to the development. If there are no resources such as time, skills, or data available, it indicates that it is not a priority. Five of the companies said they do not have enough resources, one said they do not know, and six said they do have enough resources. Those who said they have enough resources answered 4 out of 5, so not the best possible situation. This indicates that even the companies who are advanced in knowledge management still do not have all the needed resources, and they can develop their processes even further.

Only one company answered that their management encourages employees enough to use data and information in their problem solving. Five companies said that they do encourage but not enough, three were not sure and one said that they are not encouraging at all. This reveals the difference in microclimates between companies (Robinson, 2023, p. 93). If management encourages to knowledge management, they most likely offer resources such as time and examples. But if the company management does not see knowledge management as important, the climate for motivated information management is not optimal (Robinson, 2023, p.93-94), and if they do not encourage employees to do knowledge management, their business will not develop in that area. Management can encourage also by giving more resources to employees. One resource they can provide is a



software for managing business information which makes processing information easier. Five out of twelve companies answered that they have a software for that.

In the outcome of this survey, it needs to be noted, that there are questions which ask about, for example, energy consumption or employee satisfaction. A company which does not have fixed office or staff, has to answer that they do not collect this kind of information, which lowers their points thus rates them less advanced in knowledge management. There is no possibility to answer that they do not consume any energy, so they do not collect the data.

### 5.3 Motivations to Practice Knowledge Management

As stated earlier in this thesis, motivation research ideally discovers conscious and unconscious motives, which interviewee does not fully comprehend themselves (Motivation Research: Definition and Techniques; Masud, n.d.). This was identified to a limited extent during the interviews. In several interviews when we talked about intrinsic motivations, they recognized their need for success or the need for being understood. It was rewarding to be able to identify the motivations for them when it clearly was a moment of realization. However, this did not happen in every interview, and it is impossible to know if they identified some of their unconscious motives before or after the interview.

Motivation research seeks an answer to why motivations differ between individuals. During this research, it was clear that personal experiences, job description and personal characteristics are in a big role in defining personal motivations. Although the answers might have been similar in some of the questions, the difference in enthusiasm towards the subject was clearly visible. Presumably, people who work directly with numbers and knowledge management are better aware of the subject and more interested in it than people whose job description is wider or does not consider knowledge management at all. This might be due to internalized extrinsic motivation. A person learns about the importance of knowledge management and then over time when they work with the subject, it becomes part of their internal motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p.14). Regarding of personal experiences, I noted, that sometimes, different experiences might lead to

similar motivations. In one case where the interviewee had a bad experience in their old workplace where employees were not involved in knowledge management and working there was a chaos, the same time another had been working with knowledge management for years, so they had implemented in their work over time. Now they both are very motivated to lead with knowledge and involve their employees in decision making and business development, but from different premises. Personal characters which effect on whether they were interested in the topic were easy to spot, since a few of them noted that they are interested in everything new such as knowledge management, because they are curious in nature. Curious people are excited about new things which data and information can reveal constantly. This creates a positive cycle which keeps them interested.

### ***Personal Motivations***

Sometimes it was clear in the interviews that the interviewee did not separate the motivation towards work and the motivation towards knowledge management hence knowledge management is an important part of their daily job. This finding separates the companies to the ones where knowledge management is adapted in the daily work and to the ones where knowledge management is still seen as a tool to use at work rather than part of the work. In the case of private entrepreneurs, they also did not separate internal and external motivation to work, because they themselves are the company. If an entrepreneur does not have motivation to work at all, the company does not exist or operate. They want to increase their income as an entrepreneur, but also as a private person, which is the same for them. Entrepreneurs provide an excellent illustration of the diverse motivational profiles that can be observed among individuals, as postulated by the self-determination theory. It would appear that the significance of knowledge management has yet to be fully internalized, although this is likely to change in the near future. Just at different phases for everyone.

The answers about personal motivations to practice knowledge management varied from personal motivations to business development, and I did not hear two answers which would have been the same. This supports the statement that not everyone can be motivated using the same tools. The ones who highlighted personal and intrinsic motivations mentioned inquisitive personality, learning, the feeling of accomplishment, gaining confidence in the work, presenting themselves as professional and that knowledge

management is a lifestyle. The answers which were more based on business and extrinsic motivation concentrated on reporting, presenting, and justifying decisions, making the business profitable, growing business, reaching goals, saving time and being efficient.

Some of the answers overlapped with both personal and business points of views on motivation. For example, using knowledge management to make customer experience smooth and functional makes the situation smooth and functional for the employee as well. This creates a better environment for the customer, but also for the employee. Customers can see and feel the difference between a person who is comfortable at work and a person who is not. So, if everything works smoothly, the employee is satisfied with their work, which creates a better customer experience, which can only be a good thing for the company. Here the intrinsic motivation to be comfortable at work creates a good outcome for the business, hence the motivation to create a comfortable environment can also be an extrinsic request from a superior.

As stated before, the feeling of accomplishment creates satisfaction (Porter & Lawler, 1968, p. 120), and it motivates to perform even better to get the feeling again. This means self enhancement, which is a prime motivator (Fiske, 2008, p.6) and it does not differ from the statement when talking about knowledge management. Learning, self-development, the feeling of success and realization of new ideas were often mentioned during the interviews. Hence, knowledge management is something that is easy to adopt to be an intrinsic motivation. Interviewee number 2 said knowledge management is a lifestyle which sums it up being as relevant in work environment as in personal life and revealing knowledge management to be a multifunctional tool also outside of work. It seems like when a person learns the practices and benefits of knowledge management, they immediately get the first feeling of accomplishment which makes them want to learn more.

The feeling of accomplishment as a motivation factor to practice knowledge management was repeated in most of the interviews. Accomplishments also boost confidence so it could possibly become a self-repeating cycle, where a person is motivated to do knowledge management more and more. When I asked the question number 11 “Have you seen direct benefits from knowledge management in your business?” I mostly wanted to know two things: if the company is already in a positive cycle and getting motivated by the knowledge management they are already doing and also what are their accomplishments. Without an exception, they have seen direct benefits from knowledge management in their

businesses. Sometimes they had found out they are doing something wrong; their presumption of their customer profile was wrong; they were directing their marketing budget to wrong places, and they have found a grievance at the workplace. After collecting information and analyzing it the companies have been able to fix these problems and offer their customers better service. For example, in the case where they found out who their actual customers were, they offered more information in the customers' native language which resulted in better feedback and customer experience. If the problem was the lack of visibility and customer flows on the website, by creating better visibility in search engines they were able to get more feedback and more people found their website. One more thing that was highlighted as rewarding was sharing information with coworkers. Interviewee number 2 is in a superior position and said that "It is very motivating for a team leader when you enable an eureka moment for an employee and you see them gain confidence due to their accomplishments with knowledge management".

### ***Motivating Personnel***

One of the knowledge management defining quotes from interviewee number 3: "Data can be used to justify why anything is done" exposes one aspect of motivation as well. The need to justify the work they have done to someone such as superior, or to the management. Already this reveals that motivation at work cannot be fully internal. Ideally motivation should be internal, but as self-determination theory suggests, usually it is somewhere between internal and external. At a workplace, the best situation is a mix of internal and external motivation depending on a task. It is not possible that a person has the same level of intrinsic motivation to execute every task at work, so they either need varying amount of motivation from a superior, or just complete the tasks with varying outcomes.

Intention to increase motivation among employees was possible to see from the answers even though I did not ask about it directly. For example, they highlighted of giving positive feedback to employees which supports their intrinsic motivations (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.23), employee surveys to identify their well-being and their commitment towards their work and giving them as much information as needed for them to do their job as well as they can. Interviewee number 4 said that their employees have reported that positive feedback is important for work motivation, as it makes them feel recognized. It was great

to notice employee motivation being an important topic, because the support from superiors in different forms creates better motivation (Foy, Dwyer, Nafarrete, Hammoud & Rockett, 2019). One of the interviews highlighted the involvement of the employees regarding knowledge management by mentioning that they always discuss customer feedback with customer service representatives. This allows them to adapt their behavior according to the feedback if it is something they can affect. If the feedback is something the customer service representatives cannot influence on, at least they know why the company makes bigger changes due to feedback they have gotten. A motivating leader leads by example (Mordue, 2021, p. 10) and the involvement of the staff increases their motivation because it creates a sense of working together towards a common goal.

### ***Motivating by Sharing Information***

The motivational climate in the context of sharing information and practicing knowledge management can be seen from what benefits interviewees from sharing data. The findings were that tourism companies do not usually see the benefit in exchanging data if they are not getting back the same data they are giving out. The mindset behind this can be about not wanting to give benefit to others and wanting to be the biggest or only beneficiary themselves. If the exchanged data needs to be the same data from both sides, this rules out the companies whose business is different because they might not have the same data available. For example, if a hotel wants to exchange data about the costs of their breakfast, only companies who offer breakfast for their clients are considered as worthy to exchange data. From a DMOs point of view the ultimate goal is that everyone can work together towards a common goal, which in Helsinki are A. Helsinki is a vibrant and internationally attractive city for tourism and events, B. Helsinki is an international pioneer and provider of solutions in sustainable tourism and events and C. Helsinki is a smart destination and a functional event city (City of Helsinki, 2022a, p.4). These strategic goals require cooperation over the tourism sectors and thinking common good instead of how my company can benefit from others.

The answer which repeated several times in interviews was exchanging data with others need to be examined case by case whether it is worthy or not. Even though this must be true, it also reveals that the companies do not really know yet what kind of information they would want from one another. The ones who knew what they want mentioned

information that helps to predict future, gives marketing possibilities and some kind of information which can be used to improve customer experience, or their business model. None of these interviewees wanted information that they could use against each other or to steal their customers, even though it seems to be the fear in giving out information to others. Companies in Helsinki are now in a situation where almost no one is sharing information to others (Černe, Nerstad, Dysvik, Škerlavaj, 2014, p. 186) because they do not want to expose their competitive advantage, which is understandable. The exception to this is hotels, who share their information to Benchmarking Alliance, where other hotels can see anonymized data, if they pay for the service. This problem of companies not sharing data is still largely unresolved and an idea of, for example, a data ecosystem is not appealing to companies at all.

The answers were consistent between the last two questions. Companies did not really know what kind of information they want from others, and they were not very interested in the knowledge City of Helsinki provides. Except the small business owners, who did not have tons of their own data. They did find, for example, DataLokki and summaries the Tourism and Destination Management Unit makes biweekly very motivating and helpful. Especially it motivates to stay up to date with tourism data and the state of the industry, which continues to support the claim that one interviewee made: knowledge management is a lifestyle.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out how Helsinki based tourism companies experience the concept of knowledge management; the benefits and difficulties in adapting it to their work. I wanted to discover ways how to motivate tourism companies to practice knowledge management in their own operations but also to discover what would motivate them to share their data with the destination and other companies. Their experiences were searched through motivation factors. Thus, relevant research question was what motivates tourism companies to practice knowledge management. The answer to this research question is searched through three sub questions: What kind of information tourism companies recognize as useful information or data when they optimize their processes and

develop their business, how does Helsinki based tourism companies experience the benefits in practicing knowledge management and what does motivate or what would motivate tourism companies to share their data with other tourism companies and use data shared by DMO and other companies.

The research contained two stages, survey of the maturity of the company's data-driven management and interviews about knowledge management in the company and their personal motivations towards knowledge management. The survey was conducted first, and interviews were added to the research when I noted that I am not going to get enough answers to the survey. Interviewees were chosen among the companies who answered the survey. The analysis after interviews and the survey included thematic analysis and content analysis, from where I was able to compile the answers to research questions.

Tourism companies acknowledge that data and information is the base of business and decision-making. To recognize what knowledge management is and how it can be implemented in business, they need successful examples of practical use of knowledge management. When explaining knowledge management and training it to tourism companies, DMOs need to use detailed information and practical examples of what practices or data to use. The fact that not all the interviewees knew that team meeting can be considered as knowledge management, indicates that knowledge management is seen harder than it actually is. As a conclusion, tourism companies can be motivated by supporting them and giving them spectacular, but practical and approachable examples about benefits of knowledge management, to which they can relate. Of course, because tourism businesses are seeking for beneficial business, they need to see the advantages in knowledge management which need to be higher than the costs.

Tourism companies find both internal and external data useful for optimizing processes and business development. Internal data that they use includes, for example, website traffic, customer surveys, sales data, and shift lists. Tourism companies also find customer feedback, sales performance, and human resource data crucial for optimizing processes and improving business operations. Alongside with internal data they value external data sources such as benchmarking services, reputation management tools, and data provided by City of Helsinki. The use of external data by other stakeholders varies between companies, mostly according to their operating time. If a company is older than a couple of years, they have a lot of internal data and their motives to use external data differ from new

companies, who use more external data than internal. Despite of this the motivation to use external data is most of the time the same: forecasting future. What comes to sharing data with others, tourism companies are not seeing the potential in sharing data with others, so this research did not reveal a comprehensive answer to what motivates them to share their data with others. The majority of answers concluded that they want just to compare their own data, but not much more. This reveals that the potential in exchanging data has not yet been recognized in tourism companies even though it has been recognized in DMOs. Based on the findings they could be motivated when they see the benefit from it, which they are not seeing yet. Ideally in the beginning the benefit must be something tangible like more customers, money, or data exchange. It can be seen from the answers, that when a person starts to practice knowledge management, it creates a positive cycle, and I assume that sharing data with other would be the same once the process is started.

Personnel is an important resource in a company also from knowledge management point of view. They possess knowledge, collect information, and they can make the difference in customer service when needed. Everyone interviewed who has staff said that they involve personnel in knowledge management process but in bigger companies they cannot be sure whether everyone in the company is actually collecting data as agreed. All companies who answered the survey collects data of sales, marketing, and events. The key seems to be easy access data which can be used for forecasting future and making decisions based on those forecasts.

The motivations can be divided into two different perspectives: personal and business-related motivations, as previously referred as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. As intrinsic motivations they mentioned for example feeling professional and being able to be sure of the decisions they make when they use information in their decision-making. Most often mentioned motivation was also intrinsic, self enhancement in different forms. For people who work in customer interface going through the day or client interaction smoothly is clearly a place where the use of knowledge management implementation is valued. As business related motivations they listed for example getting better visibility in marketing, anticipating customer flows to create better customer experience, and discovering their real customers. All these things are beneficial for customer satisfaction and therefore to revenue which is why they were considered as business-related motivation even though some motivations can at the same time be personal and business-related, in a case of a private entrepreneur, for example. There is no need to make motivations to



practice knowledge management its own category, because it was either seen as part of business-related motivations, or it was seen as a lifestyle when the motivations are internalized into the core of self-development.

Tourism companies are motivated to practice knowledge management due to the need for success, the desire to be understood, and the realization of the benefits of knowledge management. Motivated employers should lead by example by utilizing knowledge management and encouraging their staff to do the same. Company management has the power to set the motivational climate towards knowledge management, however, more than half of the companies that participated in this research do not have that positive climate. Management in these companies do not offer adequate resources or encourage personnel to use knowledge management. Conversely, companies do track their staff wellbeing and are aware of the strengths in their team. Personal experiences, job roles, and individual characteristics play significant roles in defining these motivations, with those directly involved in knowledge management showing more interest. Additionally, the feeling of accomplishment, learning, and self-development are strong intrinsic motivators, while business-related motivations include justifying decisions, improving customer experience, and achieving business goals.

Destination management organizations such as the City of Helsinki are in a key role, as interviewee number 7 said, taking a motherly attitude towards developing knowledge management in tourism companies. They can influence on the motivational climate in the tourism field towards knowledge management subsequently resulting to more positive climate in the companies. Right now, half of the companies do not have enough resources or knowledge management enabling software, which is a clear statement from the field that it is not a priority. Given the enthusiasm of company representatives who do practice knowledge management, it seems reasonable to posit that this is a rising trend which will, over time, be adopted by other tourism companies.

## 6.1. Evaluation of the Research

One way to assess the reliability of qualitative research is the way of how researcher has explained the research process to the reader (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 231-233)

and this is why the process is explained in chapter four. Another way is to evaluate the research is evaluate the chosen study method. In case of interviews, people tend to give out answers which are self-serving and flattering (Fiske, 2008, p.17) which might distort the outcome. Alternative research method could have been, for example, observing, but a lot of knowledge management can happen in persons head, which would not be possible to observe. Knowledge management is not always visible, it is also thinking processes, and small decisions throughout the day. The interviews were chosen over observing because the chosen topic is sensitive and involves trade secrets. One goal of the interviews was also to talk about knowledge management with tourism companies and give them an opportunity for new ideas and questions.

Interview as a research method has many flaws despite being one of the most popular forms of research (Hirsjärvi, & Hurme, 2022). The researcher's values and beliefs shape the research already from the beginning (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018) and therefore research is always one perspective and not the absolute truth. I am not a trained interviewer and there is always a possibility that I have directed the conversation too much, or not enough and these might have affected the answers interviewees gave. My role at the City of Helsinki has a considerable influence on my interviewing approach, given my familiarity with the tourism sector in Helsinki. My preconceptions about the companies I interview may have influenced the outcome of the interviews. The interviewer's position and approach towards the subject inevitably influence the outcome of an interview (Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006). This is a fundamental aspect of the interview process that is not unique to this research.

Interviewees were told their answers are anonymous which makes for more relaxed environment to answer interview questions. All the interviews were conducted within two week -period, which allows me to compare the answers in the same time context. The questionnaire was available for a longer period, but the people who answered the questionnaire were the same people I interviewed. The results of the survey and the interviews were compared to each other for each company and the answers were not in conflict with each other despite there being sometime between answering the survey and interviews. This is why I was comfortable to use the survey answers in this research.

The results of this study cannot be fully generalized to the whole tourism sector in Helsinki, because the sampling was small. However, the companies interviewed are

heterogenous within the field, so some conclusions can be made regarding the future support DMOs can give to the tourism companies. There are many possible reasons why the sampling was only 12 companies out of 140 the survey was sent directly to. Maybe it was sent to someone who was not qualified to answer, the introduction might not have been appealing enough, maybe it took too long to answer, and they never finished it even though they started to answer or maybe the topic was seen too difficult to answer. The questionnaires and invitations to interviews were only sent by email. To seek for more answers, I could have called to every company and asked them to answer, which could have had a bigger effect.

During this research I have noticed that knowledge management as a term is intractable if the concept is not already familiar. Therefore, using a different name instead of knowledge management or more practical description, the topic might have been more approachable. Anyway, the survey in this form is not the best way to collect answers about knowledge management from companies. Interviews allowed dialogue, and interviewees were given the possibility to ponder their answers together with someone which was needed in many cases in order to understand the topic. On the other hand, the chance to discuss the topic advocates group interviews, but since knowledge management is largely seen as trade secrets, the group discussion would not be a safe environment for companies.

## 6.2 Proposals for Future Research

Since knowledge management is getting more and more popular in the tourism field and tourism companies, it would be beneficial to study companies who already use knowledge management in their daily practices. How they use and benefit from shared data, how they get shared data and who they share their data with and why. These insights might inspire the companies which do not have knowledge management in their strategy to add it there and start working accordingly. The tourism field can also be separated into more specific fields like, hotels, marketing, restaurants, product development etcetera. These specific fields could be examined individually. More careful investigation of the differences between small and mid-sized companies and their daily practices of knowledge management could be an interesting point of view for what the smaller companies can do better or is it even possible for them to follow what bigger companies do.

Because motivational climate about sharing information is at the moment running in circles and is not motivating companies to share their knowledge, it would be useful to study the reasons why it is that way and how the climate could be changed into a more favorable one for sharing. The motivational climate could be studied at a destination level, company level, on tourism sector level or in companies.

As mentioned in previous chapter, knowledge management used for employee satisfaction and happiness would be one suggestion for future research. Most likely many companies do not even know what they could do for their employees with knowledge management, so a survey about possibilities would be interesting. A case study, for example, would be interesting: a study of a company which does not use knowledge management to improve their employee satisfaction, and then re-evaluation after they have implemented knowledge management into their process. The interviewees could be the employees and their perspective, but also the superior.

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## Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Here the survey is presented starting from the question number 13. The first twelve questions cover background information such as the name of the person answering, the company they work in, what their revenue is and what is the main industry the company operates in. The answers to these questions have been left out from this research, since there were too few answers to use this kind of information without risking the anonymity of the company.

### Understanding of data-driven management and data within the company

13. Have measurable goals been set for the company's business operations? (choose one answer)

- We have not set goals and metrics
- We have set goals, but have not defined metrics for them
- We have set goals, but measure them sporadically
- We have set measurable goals for the most important areas
- We have systematically set goals and metrics for all business areas

14. Over what time periods do you plan the company's operations? (choose multiple answers)

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually
- Medium-term (1-3 years)
- Long-term

15. Has the company defined what data you need and collect to support decision-making?

- We have not defined data needs, nor do we collect data
- We collect data, but have not selected it based on needs

- We collect data sporadically based on availability
- We have defined data needs for the most important areas
- We have systematically defined data needs for all business areas

16. What impact does data-driven management have on the company's decision-making?

- No impact
- Small impact
- Moderate impact
- Significant impact
- Very significant impact

17. Do you utilize information from the company's operating environment (e.g., produced by regional tourism organizations, Visit Finland, and Statistics Finland) in your company's operations?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

18. The company has enough resources/expertise to develop data-driven management

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

19. The company's management encourages employees to consider information and data and their use in problem-solving.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

20. Does the company use software for business intelligence (BI) management? BI refers to software that analyzes data from various sources and presents insights, e.g., on dashboards, charts, or other reports to support decision-making or planning.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

What information is collected/monitored in the company?

21. Does the company collect/monitor information on the following matters?

Question	Yes	No	I don't know
Company customer data (e.g., purchase data, location data, preferences, customer reviews, search data)			
Tourist information of the company's location area (e.g., number of tourists, nationalities, spending, target group needs)			
Company's marketing metrics (e.g., website and social media analytics)			
Marketing activities of the regional organization/Visit Finland			
Cash flow			
Sales data, payment data			
Profit margin of individual products or services			
Employee job satisfaction			
Employee efficiency and performance			



Energy consumption			
Water consumption			
Staff and customer accidents/near misses and hazardous situations			
Competitor comparison			
Seasonal variations			
Events			

How is data processed in the company?

22. Which of the following actions does your company take?

“Data analytics here refers to the use of technologies or software to analyze data to produce insights, trends, and perspectives to support decision-making, with the aim of improving business operations. Data can be obtained from internal or external sources.”

Question	Yes	No	I don't know
Our company purchases data from others (including access, usage rights to data)			
We systematically store collected data (e.g., in a customer relationship management system)			
We process data from multiple sources together			
We process data into trackable metrics			
We present data using a visual tool (visualizing key company metrics in a regularly updated view)			
We interpret analyzed data with the company's staff			
We share the company's data (e.g., with sales channels, service providers, or customers)			
The company sells its own data for others to use (including access, usage rights to data)			
Our own staff performs data analytics			
Our company purchases data analytics from another company			

## How is data utilized in decision-making?

23. How much do you utilize data in the company's decision-making?

- We do not use data for decision-making
- Data usually does not add value to decision-making
- We sometimes tend to overlook data insights
- Data is an important part of every decision along with other factors
- We are completely data-driven

24. Is analyzed data used in the following strategic decision-making areas (annual decision-making):

Question	Yes	No	I don't know
Making investments			
Segmenting target groups			
Forecasting demand			
Pricing decisions			
Developing product offerings			
Developing personnel			
Choosing sales channels			
Developing environmental friendliness			

25. Is analyzed data used in the following operational decision-making areas (hourly/weekly/monthly decision-making):

Question	Yes	No	I don't know
Staffing			
Purchases and procurement			
Managing the reservation calendar (availability)			
Short-term pricing decisions			
Marketing and campaigns			

26. What needs do you have for acquiring data and understanding necessary for company decision-making?

27. What other needs do you have for developing data-driven management in the company?

## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

The responses will remain anonymous in the thesis, meaning that the respondent or the company represented by the respondent cannot be identified from the answers. The thesis will involve interviewing 6-12 tourism companies. The interview will be approximately one hour long, and it is hoped to be a relaxed and conversational session.

### Knowledge Management:

1. What is your role at work in relation to knowledge management?
2. How do you define knowledge management in your work?
3. Where and when did you first hear about data-driven management?
4. How important/useful do you consider knowledge management in your company? Why?
5. What tools do you use for knowledge management, and how do you choose the appropriate tools for each situation? (Tools can include: systems, individual data, analytical methods, team discussions, or others?)
6. Do you use data for future forecasting? If so, how and for what purposes?
7. How do you turn data into information and wisdom/conclusions?

8. How do you involve employees in knowledge management or what role do employees have in data-driven management and data production?
9. How much of your own internal data vs external data do you use?

Motivation:

10. What motivates you to practice knowledge management in your company?
11. Have you seen direct benefits from knowledge management in your business?
12. Does the potential benefit/results you've seen motivate you, which your company has gained as a result of knowledge management? If yes, why, and if not, why not?
13. Does the tourism data distributed by the City of Helsinki motivate you to further develop your operations based on data/ knowledge? If yes, why, and if not, why not?
14. What benefits should you receive in order to share your company's data with regional organizations or other companies?