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**FRAMING THE COOLCATION**

**How Marketing Communication Constructs Finland's Summer Tourism Identity**

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### Abstract

This thesis examines how Finland is represented as a summer destination in the era of coolcation – a growing climate-driven trend in which tourists seek cooler northern environments to escape rising temperatures and heatwaves. The study explores how climatic comfort, northernness, and coolness are presented in the context of Finland’s summer tourism identity. The study applies a qualitative visual discourse analysis to 30 social media publications produced by Visit Finland between 2019 and 2025. The analysis focuses on the interaction between visual and textual communication, symbolic narratives, affective representations, and destination identity construction. The theoretical framework combines destination identity theory, framing theory, and visual discourse perspectives. The findings show that coolcation is communicated primarily through symbolic and affective narratives emphasizing nature, water, spaciousness, tranquility, and environmental purity rather than through explicit climate discourse. Together, visual and textual elements position Finland as a climatically comfortable and emotionally restorative summer destination. The analysis also indicates that climatic comfort has become increasingly emphasized in more recent years. The study concludes that coolcation functions as a communicative and discursive phenomenon through which climatic attributes are translated into meaningful tourism experiences. Tourism marketing communication contributes to the construction of destination identity by framing northern environmental characteristics as attractive qualities in the context of a warming world.

Main research question: How does Finnish marketing communication construct and frame coolcation and Finland’s summer tourism identity?

Keywords: coolcation, destination identity, tourism mobility, marketing communication, framing, visual discourse analysis, climatic comfort, summer tourism

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism phenomena emerge and evolve in response to broad environmental, social, and cultural transformations. Increasingly, they are shaped by global issues that affect everyone, such as climate change, digitalization, and shifting consumer values, which continuously redefine how destinations are sought, represented, and imagined (Gössling & Hall, 2006; Hall, 2008). Climate change, in particular, has altered not only travel conditions and destination attractiveness but also the communication, narratives, and meanings conveyed through tourism discourse. As new travel motivations emerge, they are reflected not only in tourist behavior but also in the ways they are constructed and communicated through marketing, media, and public discourse (Dann, 1996; Crouch, 2011). Thus, destination communication and place branding play a central role in shaping how tourists value, perceive, and choose places (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

The concept of coolcation – traveling to cooler and less crowded destinations during the summer – has been identified as a new tourism phenomenon and a growing travel trend (Cambridge, 2024; Coolcation Nordic, n.d.). As southern destinations face challenges such as extreme heat, drought, and overtourism, northern regions like Finland are emerging as attractive “cool” alternatives (Coolcation Nordic, n.d.; Hospitality.today, 2024). In this context, destination identity marketing communication plays a crucial role in shaping how tourists perceive and form emotional connections with places. National tourism organization Visit Finland has increasingly emphasized the cool climate, pristine nature, and sustainable well-being as key elements of Finland’s summer identity (Visit Finland, 2022; Visit Finland, n.d.).

Understanding how such narratives and images are constructed and communicated through marketing communications provides insights into the cultural and symbolic processes shaping perceptions of Finland as a coolcation destination. This study examines how marketing communication constructs Finland’s summer tourism identity in the era of climate change by analyzing imagery, language, and emotional narratives. Using framing theory and visual discourse analysis, the study explores how narratives, symbols, and emotional appeals are employed in constructing Finland’s summer tourism identity. Particularly, how the meanings of coolness, northernness, and climatic comfort are represented and communicated in national tourism marketing communication. The study deepens understanding of how tourism marketing

communication both produces and reflects cultural perceptions of nature, climate, and national identity.

### **1.1 The emergence of the coolcation phenomenon**

Tourism is one of the global phenomena in which the impacts of climate change are manifested both rapidly and in multifaceted ways. Destinations, tourism services, and tourism mobilities are closely tied to climatic conditions: temperature, weather, seasonality, and their variations influence both the attractiveness of destinations and the tourists' behavior (Becken & Hay, 2012). Recent acceleration of global warming, prolonged heatwaves, and extreme weather events, particularly in Southern and Central Europe, have started significant shifts in tourism flows. According to CNBC (2025), an increasing number of tourists are reconsidering the timing and location of their summer holidays, and interest in cooler, northern destinations has grown. This development reflects not only tourism's adaptation to environmental change but also broader cultural and communicative shifts in how an "ideal" travel experience is conceptualized (Dogru et al., 2019; Gössling et al., 2021b).

The recently emerging phenomenon of coolcation – travelling to cooler destinations during the summer – offers a timely perspective through which to examine how environmental change intersects with tourism motivations, destination images, and the discursive structures of tourism. Coolcation is not merely about seeking more pleasant temperatures; it is also connected to values such as tranquility, authenticity, and well-being, which are shaped by both physical conditions and the meanings produced in tourism marketing communication. The phenomenon reflects a broader shift in how tourists seek alternatives to crowded and climate-burdened regions. The rise of Northern Europe, and particularly the Nordic countries, as "cool escape destinations" is already visible in consumer behavior, search data, and tourism industry reports (Cambridge, 2024; Euromonitor, 2023; Explore Finland Oy, 2024).

Coolcation provides a timely and relevant context for examining how climate-change-induced shifts in tourist behavior reshape the ways destinations are perceived, communicated, and selected. Although the phenomenon is new and still evolving, it offers a concrete example of how tourists respond to intensifying heatwaves and changing climatic conditions by seeking cooler, northern environments during the summer season. This makes coolcation a meaningful empirical lens through which to explore the intersections of climate change, mobility, and

tourism communication. Gössling & Hall (2016) emphasize that climate change alters not only the conditions of tourism but also how destinations are represented, what kind of images are associated with them, and how they are marketed. Within this framework, coolcation can be understood both as an adaptation to change, a concrete tourist response to heat, and as a discursive construction in which destinations are presented as cool, nature-oriented, and climatically pleasant alternatives (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar, 2012; Scott et al., 2019).

## **1.2 Tourism adaptation to climate change**

While the concept of coolcation is a relatively new phenomenon in tourism debate, its emergence is closely intertwined with long-standing research on climate change and its implications for tourist behavior and tourism mobility. Early studies, by Rutty & Scott (2010), anticipated phenomena aligned with what is now understood as coolcation. Examining Mediterranean destinations, they assessed whether summer temperatures could become intolerable for tourists and projected that by the end of the 2000s, 90% of the studied destinations would reach a point classified as “too hot”. This finding underscores the likelihood that tourists would increasingly favor destinations with cooler temperatures or adjust the timing of their holidays for more pleasant weather conditions (Rutty & Scott, 2010).

The concept of coolness in tourism further enriches the understanding of climate adaptation in both behavioral and cultural terms. The definition of coolness is context-specific and often extends beyond the notion of temperature itself. Kock (2021) conceptualizes coolness as both a symbolic and psychological quality that makes a tourism destination an attractive alternative for tourists. Kock (2021) identified four attributes: authenticity, rebelliousness – understood as deviation from established norms, originality, and vitality that define destinations perceived as cool.

Understanding the rise of coolcation requires situating it within broader patterns of climate-induced tourism mobility. Urry (2007) conceptualizes tourism not only as physical movement but also as socially and culturally mediated mobility, shaped by imaginaries, norms, and collective aspirations. Rising temperatures and heatwaves act as push factors, driving tourists away from southern destinations, while cooler northern regions serve as pull factors, attracting visitors seeking climatic comfort (Gössling & Hall, 2006). The coolcation phenomenon exemplifies this dynamic, representing how tourism behavior, cultural narratives, and

marketing communications intersect to shape destination choices. Northern destinations such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Scotland have gained prominence as summer alternatives, offering both physical relief and symbolic associations with nature, authenticity, and tranquility (Scott, Hall & Gössling, 2019; Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024).

During the summer of 2025, I observed that several accommodation providers and hotel chains had begun to promote their offerings as coolcation destinations. The increasing visibility of this phenomenon reflects the scale, rapid fluctuations, and emerging trends within contemporary tourism. The limited availability of scientific research on the topic further motivated my interest in examining it. The phenomenon represents a contemporary intersection of climate adaptation, mobility, destination branding, and tourists' behaviour, yet empirical studies are scarce. Existing studies, such as Pajunen (2025), provides preliminary insights into branding, but questions remain regarding global tourist perceptions, emotional responses, and affective marketing strategies.

Previous research (Gössling & Hall, 2006; Hall & Gössling, 2019; Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024) has broadly examined how climate change influences tourism demand, destination attractiveness, and tourists' thermal comfort preferences. However, studies that explicitly address coolcation remain limited due to the novelty of the concept. By situating coolcation within the wider field of climate-sensitive tourism research, this study contributes to filling a gap in the literature by demonstrating how an emerging behavioral trend is narrated, framed, and operationalized in destination marketing communication. While existing studies outline the climatic drivers underlying shifts in tourism flows, this study extends the discussion by analyzing how climate-related preferences are visually and narratively constructed in contemporary tourism marketing communication (Gössling & Hall, 2006; Hall & Gössling, 2019; Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024).

This study provides new insights into the communication of Finnish summer tourism identity in marketing communication through visual and textual narratives, examined from the perspective of the coolcation phenomenon (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Rose, 2016). By integrating research on national tourism marketing communication, climate change adaptation, and tourism mobility, the research extends previous findings on climate change-responsive tourism by offering empirical evidence on marketing communication and the development of an emerging tourism phenomenon (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall,

2006). Furthermore, it contributes to understanding how new tourism concepts, such as coolcation, are communicated to target audiences in the era of global warming (Salazar, 2012). The thesis is guided by the main research question: How does Finnish marketing communication construct and frame coolcation and Finland's summer tourism identity? Sub-questions: (1) What symbolic elements, narratives, and emotional appeals are used in Finland's summer tourism marketing to communicate coolcation and destination identity? (2) How do visual elements (images, colours, aesthetics) interact with textual communication to reinforce or nuance Finland's summer tourism identity? (3) How are place identity and notions of northernness and climate comfort represented and negotiated in Finland's marketing materials?

### **1.3 Theoretical perspectives on destination identity in the coolcation era**

This chapter introduces the theoretical and conceptual background of the study on destination identity, narrative, and visual place-making, destination marketing communication, and framing. These perspectives are applied to the analysis of Finland's tourism marketing communication and examined in relation to broader discussions on tourism mobility and climate-induced transformations in travel (Entman, 1993; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Destination identity has become central in contemporary tourism research as destinations seek symbolic and experiential differentiation in increasingly competitive global markets. Unlike traditional branding, destination identity refers not only to promotional messaging but to the meanings, values, stories, and emotional associations collectively constructed around a place. In the context of climate-induced changes in tourism mobility, the construction and communication of destination identity become particularly relevant. As temperatures rise globally, destinations positioned as climatically comfortable acquire new symbolic and experiential value (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014).

A distinction is needed between place identity and destination identity. Place identity refers to meanings embedded in the lived experiences and cultural practices of residents (Relph, 1976; Kalandides, 2011). Destination identity, by contrast, refers to how these places are interpreted, communicated, and commercialized from a tourism perspective (Kavaratzis, 2005). Therefore, destination identity can be understood as the market-oriented articulation of place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Massey, 2005). In this study, destination identity is the overarching

concept. The related concepts, such as place-making narratives, symbolic representations, affective place-making, and tourism imaginaries, operate as subcomponents that describe how identity is constructed through practices, communication, and tourist experiences (Campelo et al., 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

This theoretical grounding reveals that place identity is continuously negotiated, embedded in social relations, representations, processes of meaning-making, and influenced by selective storytelling rather than existing as a static and fixed entity (Massey, 2005). As climate change reshapes tourism mobility and travel preferences, tourism marketing communication increasingly draws on narratives of temperature coolness, nature-based well-being, and northern aesthetics, elements that align closely with coolcation as an emerging tourism phenomenon (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2019; Explore Finland Oy, 2024).

Destination communication encompasses all intentional and unintentional messages that shape perceptions of a destination, marketing materials, media narratives, public communication, and visitor-generated content (Kavaratzis, 2005; Pike, 2016). It operates both strategically and organically, connecting branding practices with broader cultural and societal discourses. Framing theory provides a crucial analytical lens for understanding how these meanings are structured (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997). In the context of coolcation, framing is used to communicate climatic comfort, well-being, and emotional refuge. Coolness becomes a symbolic and experiential construct: it conveys sustainability, calmness, safety, or relief from heat. By emphasizing certain interpretations, purity, freshness, and restoration, destination marketers guide tourists toward a preferred reading, while sidelining other dimensions such as environmental carrying capacity or regional inequalities (Hall et al., 2015).

Destination marketing communication is therefore a form of symbolic place-making (Kalandides, 2011; Campelo et al., 2014). Rather than merely reflecting identity, it actively constructs and negotiates it among institutions, residents, businesses, and tourists. Finland's tourism marketing communication, through its emphasis on cool, clean, and tranquil imagery, represents a strategic articulation of national identity aligned with wider Nordic cultural narratives (Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024). Framing theory supports the empirical aim of this study by providing tools to identify how coolcation is represented, which messages dominate, and how meaning is produced through both visual and textual marketing communications (Entman, 1993; Dann, 1996; Hall, 1997).

Place identity provides essential conceptual tools for understanding how Finland's summer image is articulated within the context of coolcation (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Massey, 2005). These theoretical perspectives elucidate how destinations communicate symbolic meanings and emotional associations, and how such meanings evolve as environmental conditions and tourist expectations shift (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Framing theory is employed to identify the narrative structures through which temperature preferences, comfort, safety, and authenticity are emphasized or downplayed in tourism marketing communication (Entman, 1993). Together, these perspectives form a coherent analytical framework that supports the study's research question.

#### **1.4 Understanding coolcation through qualitative visual discourse analysis**

This chapter introduces the methodological framework guiding the study and outlines how the chosen qualitative approach, visual discourse analysis, supports the examination of Finnish tourism marketing communication in the context of the emerging coolcation phenomenon. Visual discourse analysis is particularly well suited to examining coolcation, as the phenomenon is largely constructed, framed, and circulated through visual materials and publications. Tourism imaginaries linked to northern identity, climate, seasonality, and coolness are communicated globally primarily via images, making visibility a central site for meaning-making in tourism (Hunter, 2016; Scarles, 2010). The method enables the study to uncover how Finnish summer tourism is visually framed as both a desirable climatic refuge and an emotional alternative to overheated and crowded destination regions (Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). The methodology, therefore, functions both as an analytical tool and as a theoretical framework for understanding how tourism communication constructs cultural and climatic meanings (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The following sections detail the qualitative research design, the analytical process, the empirical data, and the ethical considerations guiding the study.

A qualitative research design guides this study because its purpose is to interpret how meanings, identities, and symbolic representations are constructed within Finland's tourism marketing communication. Rather than seeking generalizable patterns or statistical evidence, qualitative inquiry aims to explore cultural and communicative processes in depth, focusing on the interpretations, discourses, and meaning structures embedded in tourism marketing

communications (Decrop, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Qualitative methods, therefore, provide an appropriate framework for examining the socio-cultural and environmental narratives that shape how Finland's summer tourism identity is communicated in marketing communications (Decrop, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Fairclough, 2013).

Visual discourse analysis functions as the core analytical approach. After organizing materials through content analysis, the study applies visual discourse analysis to examine how meaning is constructed through images, colours, composition, and other semiotic features. This method makes it possible to investigate how Finnish tourism organizations visually communicate summer identity and how coolcation is framed as an appealing climatic and emotional alternative (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Methodological rigor is enhanced through Saldaña's (2021) coding framework: initial coding, thematic categorization, and interpretive synthesis. This structured process ensures analytical transparency and supports the integration of framing theory and visual discourse analysis, strengthening the interpretive validity of the findings.

The empirical data corpus consists of 30 publicly available marketing materials produced by Visit Finland between 2019 and 2025, a period reflecting both the emergence of the coolcation concept and broader shifts in tourism communication following the COVID-19 pandemic and the intensification of climate discourse. The data corpus includes images, videos, campaign slogans, and social media posts (e.g., Instagram, Facebook), all of which are central channels through which Finland's summer identity is communicated. The data corpus is purposive: materials were selected based on their thematic relevance rather than representativeness (Silverman, 2020). Inclusion criteria were: (1) summer-related marketing content, (2) explicit or implicit references to coolness, climate, or nature, and (3) representations of Finland as a refreshing, safe, or sustainable destination. Materials unrelated to these criteria were excluded. The data corpus includes 30 marketing publications, each documented with metadata (publication date, platform, theme). This systematic documentation supports transparency and replicability.

Qualitative visual discourse analysis is well-suited to examining how coolcation is conveyed through images, narratives, and symbolic representations. As tourism marketing communication relies predominantly on visual communication, this method enables a systematic investigation of how photographs, colour palettes, spatial compositions, and

accompanying textual elements construct a sense of northern coolness and climatic appeal. The empirical material, national tourism marketing materials, was selected to represent the visual and narrative strategies employed in promoting Finland as a coolcation summer destination. This approach facilitates the identification of implicit meanings, cultural values, and emotional atmospheres that shape the framing and communication of coolcation.

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

Following the introduction, the theoretical framework presents the interrelations between climate change, tourism mobilities, destination identity, and marketing communication, while defining coolcation as an emerging tourism phenomenon shaped by changing travel preferences and climatic imaginaries. The study draws on theories of place identity, framing, and visual discourse (Massey, 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016) to examine how a tourism destination communicates climatic comfort and northernness through marketing communication. The methodology chapter introduces a qualitative visual discourse analysis applied to Visit Finland social media materials. The empirical analysis investigates how symbolic elements, visual-textual communication, and representations of climatic comfort and northernness contribute to the construction of Finland's summer tourism identity. The empirical findings are presented thematically, demonstrating how climatic attributes, visual imagery, and emotional appeals are mobilized to position Finland as a coolcation destination. Finally, the discussion and conclusion chapters interpret the findings in relation to broader debates on tourism mobilities, responsible destination marketing communication, and climate-related transformations in tourism, while also reflecting on the ethical considerations and implications for future research.

## **2. TOURISM IN A WARMING WORLD: UNDERSTANDING THE COOLCATION PHENOMENON**

Tourism is closely intertwined with climatic conditions, which influence destination attractiveness, seasonality, and travel behavior (Becken & Hay, 2012). As climate change increasingly reshapes global tourism flows, rising temperatures and extreme weather events have contributed to growing interest in cooler northern destinations such as the Nordic countries. This trend reflects an adaptation to environmental change and the emergence of new cultural and communicative narratives about what constitutes an ideal travel and holiday experience (Dogru et al., 2019; Gössling et al., 2021b). This section explores the concept of coolcation in more detail and presents existing research on tourism adaptation to climate change.

### **2.1 The concept of coolcation**

Coolcation is a new tourism phenomenon and tourism concept. It is a combination of the words cool (cold) and vacation, meaning a holiday in a cooler destination, often to escape the heat waves either in one's home region or in previously established holiday destinations. The term was first defined in the Condé Nast Traveler blog in 2023 and has been confirmed, for example, by the Cambridge Dictionary. In addition to the temperature of the destination, the phenomenon is also associated with traveling during less crowded periods (Cambridge, 2024). Although still a new concept, the trend's rising popularity is already evident in consumer choices and tourist behavior: some tourists actively seek calmer and more unique destinations while avoiding overcrowded areas where climate change makes temperatures dangerously hot. Nordic countries and Scotland, for example, have been identified as coolcation destinations (Coolcation Nordic, n.d.; Hospitality.today, 2024).

The phenomenon reflects shifting travel motivations and destination preferences driven by rising temperatures, heatwaves, and a changing climate. Web analytics confirm the growing trend: searches for "cooler holidays" have increased by as much as 300% annually (Carl Friedrik, 2025; Iglu, n.d.; Euromonitor, 2023; Explore Finland Oy, 2024). The societal and tourism-related significance of the phenomenon is particularly pronounced in regions where climate change creates new opportunities for developing summer tourism. In Finland, both

national and regional tourism actors have in recent years emphasized cool climate, pristine nature, and tranquility as core elements of Finland's summer identity (Visit Finland, 2022; Visit Finland, n.d.). This raises an important question about how Finnish summer tourism is constructed, framed, and communicated in marketing communication in an era in which climate has become a central factor in destination competitiveness (Becken & Hay, 2012; Dogru et al., 2019; Gössling et al., 2021b).

From a theoretical perspective, coolcation describes how climate change simultaneously affects both the material-physical dimensions of tourism and the symbolic meanings attached to destinations. Moreover, a theoretical framework enables a comprehensive examination of how environmental and climatic conditions intersect with cultural meanings and destination identity, as conceptualized in (Figure 1) below. Gössling & Hall (2016) emphasize that climate change alters not only the conditions of tourism but also how destinations are represented, the images associated with them, and how they are marketed. They further highlight that climate change impacts the physical dimensions of tourism while simultaneously transforming the symbolic representations of places. Within this framework, coolcation can be understood both as an adaptive response to change, a concrete tourist reaction to increasing heat, and as a discursive construction in which destinations are branded as cool, nature-oriented, and climatically pleasant alternatives. This dual perspective underscores the significance of marketing communication, storytelling, and visual imagery in shaping tourists' perceptions of climate-related attributes, such as fresh air, natural coolness, and northern purity (Hall, 2008; Gössling et al., 2012a).

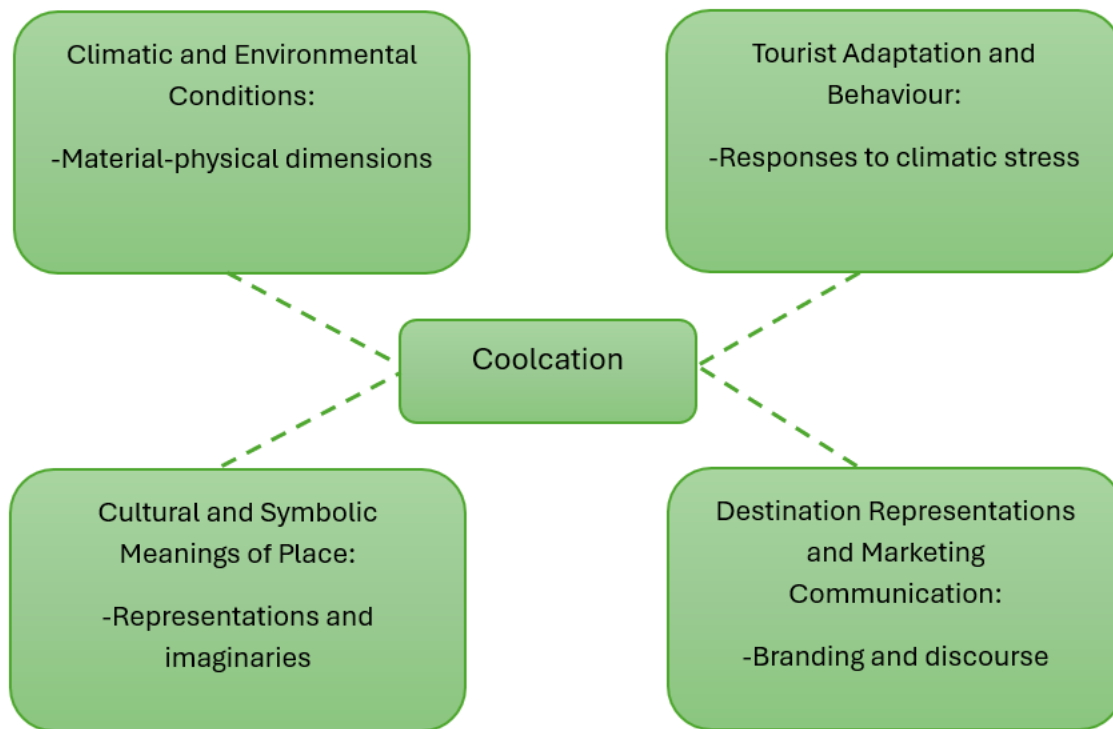


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of coolcation.

(Figure 1) Conceptualizes coolcation as an intersecting framework encompassing climatic and environmental conditions, tourist behaviour and adaptation, symbolic and cultural meanings of place, and destination representation and marketing communication. These dimensions do not operate as isolated factors; rather, they interact to shape how climate change is experienced, interpreted, and communicated within tourism contexts, giving rise to emerging tourism phenomena such as coolcation.

## 2.2 Tourism adaptation to climate change

Although coolcation is currently a growing and strengthening tourism trend, it is directly linked to climate change, which has been studied and projected for decades. Ruddy and Scott (2010), who examined whether Mediterranean destinations could become too hot during the summer months, anticipated trends aligned with coolcation-type tourism. They investigated tourists' perceptions of intolerable heat and found that by the end of the 2000s, 90% of the studied Mediterranean destinations would be classified as too hot during the summer. This, in turn, encourages tourists to favor cooler destinations or to travel during other seasons. Similar conclusions have been drawn by other researchers, such as Rosselló and Santana-Gallego

(2014). Ruddy and Scott (2010) emphasize, however, the importance of understanding tourists' climate-related preferences. By familiarizing themselves with these preferences, tourism operators can better develop their offerings to meet the expectations of different tourist segments.

Building on these early findings, Scott et al. (2012, 2019) developed a comprehensive framework illustrating how climate change and related policies impact tourism globally. They identified four pathways through which climate change may affect tourism: (1) direct climatic impacts on destinations, (2) climate-induced indirect environmental changes, (3) indirectly climate-related socioeconomic changes, and (4) adaptation and mitigation measures implemented outside the tourism sector. These pathways highlight the climate sensitivity of tourism and demonstrate that it is influenced not only by physical environmental conditions but also by economic and social contexts, including perceptions of safety, accessibility, and affordability (Scott et al., 2012, 2019).

Climate change has multifaceted and far-reaching impacts on both the present and future of tourism. According to Scott et al. (2019), climate change poses a significant risk to the global economy, particularly if warming exceeds two degrees Celsius. The Climate Vulnerability Index for Tourism (CVIT), developed by Scott et al. (2019), operationalizes tourism's sensitivity to climate change through 27 indicators across 181 countries. The index demonstrates that vulnerability is highest in countries where tourism constitutes a substantial share of GDP and in regions where significant tourism growth is projected. Compared to earlier indices, CVIT provides a more nuanced understanding of tourism's adaptive capacity by accounting for climate impacts, carbon mitigation efforts, and sector-specific resilience. These findings highlight the dual role of tourism: while it is highly exposed to climate change, it can also function as a vehicle for advancing sustainable development goals when strategically managed (Scott et al., 2019). The results of the CVIT indicators are consistent with the expert assessment conducted by the UNWTO (Scott et al., 2019).

According to Scott et al. (2019), the index improves upon previous tourism-focused indices by expanding the coverage of indicators related to climate impacts, carbon emissions mitigation, and the operationalization of tourism sector adaptive capacity. This makes the index particularly significant, as it provides insights into tourism's role as a mechanism for advancing sustainable development goals. As climate change influences tourism mobility and the attractiveness of

destinations, climatic comfort and environmental quality have become increasingly significant factors in destination appeal. In this context, the concept of “coolness” extends beyond temperature alone to encompass the symbolic, emotional, and experiential meanings associated with places. In a qualitative study, Kock (2021) identified four characteristics of “cool” destinations: authenticity, rebelliousness – understood as a deviation from established norms – originality, and vibrancy. These characteristics describe the qualities associated with destinations perceived as “cool” and suggest that destination attractiveness is increasingly shaped not only by experiential and symbolic value. From the perspective of coolcation tourism, such characteristics contribute to the growing appeal of northern destinations, where climatic comfort becomes intertwined with the tourism imagination, emotional expectations, and changing travel preferences (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2019).

Pajunen (2025) utilized Kock’s (2021) characteristics as a theoretical framework to examine Finland’s tourism brand and its potential as a coolcation destination. These characteristics can also be considered means to differentiate from competitors and enhance a destination’s attractiveness. According to Katarina Wakonen of Visit Finland, the country has successfully branded itself as a winter destination; however, attracting visitors during the summer months continues to require additional effort. Tourist interest in cooler holiday destinations does not automatically translate into Finland being selected as a primary choice. Finland has remained in the shadow of other Nordic countries, as only seven per cent of tourists staying in the Nordic region choose Finland as their destination (Koivisto, 2024).

Marketing communication and destination branding are central themes in climate-adaptive tourism. Goh (2012) notes that climate influences both the image and demand of destinations, while Kaim (2023) emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in shaping national tourism images. In particular, national-level destination branding requires strong cooperation among various local enterprises, with all actors working toward shared objectives. Such collaboration enables the desired destination image to be shaped, developed, and promoted (Kaim, 2023). In Finland, Visit Finland coordinates international marketing and communication in alignment with the Finnish Tourism Strategy 2025-2028 developed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. The central objective of the strategy is to foster economic growth in tourism while managing this growth sustainably from the perspectives of the environment, local communities, and the tourism industry. From the perspective of the coolcation phenomenon, it is particularly noteworthy that the strategy

highlights clean nature and climatic attractiveness as key competitive advantages (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2025). Pajunen (2025) highlights that the responsible and ethical utilization of ‘coolness’ attributes can strengthen Finland’s summer tourism identity without appearing to exploit environmental crises. In Visit Finland’s annual market reviews, in Spain’s 2025 market report, coolcation is identified and recognized as a distinct phenomenon, and the avoidance of extreme heat is highlighted as a significant factor influencing travel decisions. Summer travel from the Spanish market increased by 20% in 2025; among customer segments, growth was particularly strong for families with children (33%) and couples (20%) (Visit Finland, 2025).

Pajunen (2025) examines how perceptions of Finland as a coolcation destination vary. The study indicates that Finland has considerable potential and a favorable moment to develop a marketing strategy capable of reshaping the country’s tourism sector. At the same time, it identifies several uncertainties and challenges related to coolcation marketing. One key ethical concern is the risk that tourism marketing may be perceived as benefiting from or exploiting climate change and the environmental crisis. According to Pajunen (2025), this challenge could be mitigated by emphasizing broader experiential and destination-specific attributes, such as authenticity, nature, and well-being, rather than framing Finland solely through climatic advantage or “coolness.” In this way, coolcation marketing can be positioned in a manner that is perceived as more authentic and ethically sustainable (Pajunen, 2025).

After Pajunen’s (2025) study, it remains unclear how the coolcation message is perceived and what emotions it evokes among different tourist groups worldwide. The results highlight the risk that the concept may be experienced as threatening, as it can be indirectly associated with the climate crisis. Another perspective is Finland’s already established position as a winter tourism destination, which has created a strong perception of the country as cold even during the summer (Pajunen, 2025). Established effective and cognitive images are often deeply ingrained in consumers and tend to persist over time (Almeida-García et al., 2020). Pajunen (2025) raises the question of whether it is truly necessary to further emphasize coolness in marketing. According to her, additional research is needed to ensure that coolcation reaches the appropriate target audience and to better understand the associations the concept evokes, as well as which tourists are genuinely interested in a cool summer vacation. Insights from these research questions and findings can then be used to adapt communication strategies and more effectively target the groups actively seeking cooler holiday destinations.

### **2.3 Climate-induced tourism mobility**

To understand the emergence of the coolcation phenomenon, it must be examined within the broader context of the global transformations in mobility patterns resulting from climate change (Urry, 2007). This theoretical framework provides contextual grounding for explaining why climate and coolness occupy such a central role in Finland's current tourism communication. Understanding the influence and significance of these key themes enables us to perceive the interaction between micro-level marketing practices and macro-level changes in climate and the environment, mobility, and global tourism demand (Urry, 2007).

Gössling & Hall (2006) argue that climate functions as both a push and a pull factor in tourism mobility. Rising temperatures and prolonged heatwaves in southern destinations drive travelers to seek cooler climates, while northern regions and high-altitude destinations have become increasingly attractive due to their milder summer temperatures. This dynamic and mobility pattern has led to a regional redistribution of tourism, with countries such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Scotland becoming favored destinations during the summer months (Scott, Hall & Gössling, 2019). The phenomenon known as coolcation exemplifies this process of change and adaptation, whereby travelers consciously choose destinations perceived as “refreshing”, “close to nature”, and “authentic”. Coolcation reflects not only behavioral and practical adaptations to climate change but also broader global and cultural redefinitions of what constitutes desirable comfort and leisure (Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024).

Urry's (2007) mobility paradigm emphasizes that tourism is not merely a matter of physical movement but also encompasses the social and cultural meanings attached to and shaped by mobility. In the era of climate change, these meanings are being reconsidered, as both travelers and societies renegotiate and redefine them. Mobility is increasingly associated with environmental and ethical dimensions, as travelers seek destinations that align with both moral responsibility and physical comfort. This process of redefinition and repositioning highlights how climatic and cultural factors interact in shaping contemporary tourism behavior.

From a sociocultural perspective, the coolcation phenomenon reflects a transformation in how mobility and place are imagined and communicated (Urry, 2007). As Urry (2007) and Sheller (2018) emphasize, tourism mobility is simultaneously shaped by imaginary and collective visions that guide movement and aspiration. The coolcation phenomenon and its marketing

construct northern landscapes as sanctuaries from overheated cities, where an unhurried and tranquil lifestyle, combined with ecological awareness, defines the visitor experience. Viewed through this lens, climate-induced mobility is not merely a reaction to environmental change but also a cultural narrative that repositions northern destinations within the global tourism discourse. For Finland, this evolving context of tourist mobility provides a foundation for new forms of place branding and communication practices that align with the aesthetics of responsibility, sustainability, well-being, and coolcation (Urry, 2007; Sheller, 2018).

Coolcation can be understood and theorized as a form of climate-induced lifestyle mobility shaped by climatic imaginaries, affective atmospheres, and global inequalities in the ability to choose a refuge from extreme heat (Sheller, 2018). According to Adey (2017), such mobility patterns are not evenly distributed; the capacity to relocate to cooler climates is deeply tied to income, citizenship, race, and global mobility regimes. In this light, climate-induced tourism mobilities may reproduce existing socioeconomic divides and render cool climates exclusive resources available primarily to privileged travelers (Adey, 2017; Sheller, 2018).

Alongside the physical changes and developments in travel and tourist flows, mobility shaped by climate is increasingly influenced by various digital environments and platforms from which tourists seek inspiration and information, and on which they compare options when planning future trips. Thus, mobility in tourism is not manifested solely as the tourist's physical movement from home to destination, but also as the circulation of visual and symbolic publications and representations across online platforms (Urry & Larsen, 2011). According to Gretzel & Zhong (2016) and Hunter (2016), diverse social media platforms, travel websites, and search engines such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube provide a continuous, round-the-clock flow of curated images, videos, and other visual materials and narratives, irrespective of time and place, that significantly influence what travelers perceive as interesting, desirable, and climatically suitable destinations. Heatwaves and other extreme weather events receive extensive visibility in global media, and these online platforms function as key sources of information through which travelers both seek knowledge and inspiration and form atmospheric and aesthetic expectations for their forthcoming trips. On these platforms, users can specifically search for content that communicates climatic safety, coolness, and freshness (Gretzel & Zhong, 2016; Hunter, 2016).

Such digital mediation of tourism desire plays a significant role in the development of the coolcation phenomenon. Online search trends, destination marketing platforms, algorithms, and user-generated content circulate representations of the northern tourism region as calm, refreshing, and climatically stable alternatives to southern destinations suffering from heatwaves (Brouder & Ioannides, 2020; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2022). From this perspective, tourists' mobility decisions are increasingly intertwined with the affective power of images, visual materials, and their textual framing, which promise relief from climate-related stress. Consequently, various digital and social media channels function both as catalysts and communicative infrastructures for climate-adaptive tourism behavior. At the same time, they reinforce the symbolic allure of northern coolness and shape how coolness is sought, imagined, and enacted in the context of travel (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Brouder & Ioannides, 2020; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2022).

This chapter has demonstrated that coolcation is not merely a climatic or traveler-behavioral shift, but simultaneously a cultural and communicative construction. The following chapter introduces the theoretical lenses through which such constructions are produced, disseminated, and interpreted within tourism marketing communication.

### **3. COMMUNICATING THE COOLCATION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DESTINATION IDENTITY**

Tourism phenomena are shaped particularly by global and cultural narratives, environmental changes, and communication strategies, and are socially constructed through storytelling and imagery that assign meaning to places. This section discusses the theoretical and conceptual background of the study, focusing on destination communication, framing, and visual discourse in the context of Finland's tourism marketing communication (Entman, 1993; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Destination identity is a central theoretical concept in this study, understood as a socially and culturally constructed of meanings, narratives, symbols, and affective associations through which a place is represented and interpreted in tourism contexts (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014). It is operationalized through four interrelated analytical perspectives: narrative place-making, visually symbolic representation, affective place-making, and tourism imaginaries, which together explain how destination identity is constructed and communicated. Framing theory explains how aspects such as climate, seasonality, and northernness are selected and made meaningful in tourism communication (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997), while a visual discourse perspective focuses on how imagery, colour, composition, and aesthetics shape meaning and contribute to the construction of destination identity (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). Climate change, sustainable development, and tourism mobility provide a broader societal and ethical context within which the coolcation phenomenon emerges and gains meaning (Gössling & Hall, 2006; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

#### **3.1 Destination identity and place-making narratives**

Destination identity is presented as a central theoretical concept in this study because it enables an examination of how Finland is not only marketed as a tourism destination but also symbolically and emotionally constructed through marketing communication. Rather than treating destinations as fixed entities, destination identity theory emphasizes how meanings, values, and affective associations are actively produced and negotiated through narratives, images, and discourse (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014). This perspective is particularly relevant when investigating emerging coolcation tourism phenomena, which rely heavily on symbolic and experiential appeal rather than solely on tangible tourism products.

This chapter proceeds by organizing the concept of destination identity into four complementary perspectives: (1) the narrative perspective, (2) the visual-symbolic perspective, (3) the affective perspective, and (4) the perspective of tourism imaginaries (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Saarinen, 2019; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar & Graburn, 2014). Together, these perspectives enable a systematic examination of how identity is produced within tourism marketing and how coolcation becomes embedded in Finland's touristic identity.

The concept of destination identity has become central in contemporary tourism research, as destinations increasingly emphasize symbolic, narrative, and experiential differentiation to stand out in highly competitive global markets. Contrary to traditional product branding, destination identity refers more to the meanings, values, and affective associations that are collectively constructed around a tourism region or destination through discourse, visual representation, cultural practices, and visitor experiences (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014). In the context of tourism mobilities that are intensifying as a consequence of climate change, it is crucial to understand how destination identities are constructed and transformed, what and how marketing communications communicate, and how emotionally charged such communication is. This approach provides an effective lens for analyzing the emerging and developing phenomena of coolcation tourism (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014).

It is essential to distinguish between place identity and destination identity. Place identity refers to the meanings of a place as they exist and are constructed through local practices and the lived experiences of residents (Relph, 1976; Kalandides, 2011). Destination identity, by contrast, approaches identity specifically from the perspective of tourism and marketing communication, emphasizing how places are presented and commercialized for tourists (Kavaratzis, 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In this light, destination identity can be understood as the touristic and market-oriented articulation of place identity (Campelo et al., 2014).

In this study, destination identity is the central concept, referring to how the identity of a tourism region or destination is constructed through various meanings, symbols, narratives, and affective experiences. The other concepts discussed in this section – such as place-making narratives, symbolic representation, affective place-making, and tourism imaginaries – describe different dimensions and mechanisms involved in the formation of destination identity. As

such, they function as substructures of the destination identity concept and constitute integral components of it, illustrating how identity is constructed through practices, communication, and the experiences of tourists (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Saarinen, 2019).

A destination's identity is not merely a reflection of externally crafted marketing messages. Rather, it is a holistic and dynamic socially constructed process in which multiple actors – such as institutions, local communities, policymakers, tourists, and global cultural narratives – both influence and shape its formation (Kalandides, 2011). According to Cresswell (2015), from a constructivist perspective, places are not predetermined entities with fixed meanings; instead, they are spaces whose identities continuously evolve through both material and discursive practices. From the viewpoint of a tourism destination, this means that the formation of place identity is simultaneously grounded in physical features (such as climate, landscape, and cultural heritage) and symbolic elements (such as stories, emotions, legends, myths, and visual codes). Together, these meanings interact to create what tourists perceive as the “sense of place”, which shapes their motivations, expectations, and emotional engagement (Lew, 2017).

One of the most significant aspects of destination identity concerns the role of place-making narratives. These narratives shape how destinations are experienced and understood by highlighting certain features while simultaneously silencing others, thereby constructing interpretive frameworks that systematically promote a desired identity (Andriotis, 2018). According to Saarinen (2019), narratives commonly associated with Finland and other Nordic countries – such as “northern purity”, “Arctic coolness”, or “remoteness” – are not neutral descriptions but culturally embedded constructions that have been shaped, and continue to be shaped, by history, politics, and media. Such narratives often reflect broader imaginaries, positioning the North as a refuge of peace, cleanliness, and a benevolent climate. They become dynamic tools in the marketing communication of tourism regions and destinations, as they resonate with global tourism motivations and aspirations. In the case of coolcation, the narratives align with the need to seek climatic comfort, escape heat, and enable emotional restoration (Saarinen, 2019).

In this study, coolness is conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond meteorological temperature. It encompasses embodied thermal comfort, emotional relief, and symbolic meanings associated with tranquility, safety, and well-being. Coolness is thus understood as an affective and cultural experience that is narratively and visually

constructed within tourism marketing communication, rather than measured solely in degrees Celsius (Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014; Saarinen, 2019). Within this research, northernness is not approached as a neutral geographical descriptor but as a culturally produced discourse that assigns specific meanings to climate, nature, and ways of life. In tourism marketing communication, northernness often functions as a symbolic frame through which attributes such as purity, tranquility, remoteness, and climatic stability are articulated. These representations are historically and politically embedded and contribute to the construction of the north as a desirable and morally charged tourism space (Saarinen, 2019; Loftdóttir, 2019).

Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013) emphasize that destination identity emerges through the interaction of internal organizational culture, external stakeholders, and the symbolic representations created through marketing communication. For the national tourism organization Visit Finland, this means that identity formation occurs across multiple levels, including strategic brand identity frameworks, visual and textual marketing communication, and the stories shared by tourists themselves. According to Kavaratzis (2005), identity is further reinforced through a three-tiered model of marketing communication: (1) primary communication (the destination's tangible characteristics), (2) secondary communication (marketing materials), and (3) tertiary communication (media, word of mouth, and user-generated content). Together, these layers of communication shape how Finland is framed as a place in tourism marketing, and, in the context of coolcation, how Finland's climatic characteristics are transformed into elements of identity (Kavaratzis, 2015).

Symbolic representation is a significant factor in the formation of destination identity. Symbols – such as expansive landscapes, lakes, forests, tranquil urban environments, and cool-toned colour palettes – carry culturally constructed meanings that evoke expectations and emotions (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In visual material, these symbols often operate as condensed narratives: a misty lakescape at sunrise communicates peace or an unhurried morning; a green nature trail suggests fresh air or refuge from heat; and minimalist Nordic aesthetics, whether in street scenes or interiors, convey cleanliness and naturalness. According to Salazar (2012), such symbolic condensation is central to destination identity work, as tourism consumption is inherently anticipatory and imaginative. Tourists do not merely choose destinations or places; they choose the stories, identities, and emotions that are associated with – or that they hope to construct within – those destinations and places (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar, 2012).

Understanding of the concept of affective place-making has deepened in recent years. Affective place-making refers to the ways in which tourism regions and destinations evoke emotional responses and how these emotions shape the perceived and experienced identity of a place (Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014). Particularly in climate-related tourism identities such as the notion of coolcation, coolness is not merely a meteorological condition to be measured but also a bodily experience for the tourist – one that is associated with and embedded in feelings of comfort, calmness, safety, and relief from extreme heat. These affective qualities are incorporated both narratively and visually into marketing communication, where they constitute a key layer in the construction of the identity of a tourism region or destination (Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014).

Salazar & Graburn (2014) describe how the process of forming place identity is closely intertwined with broader tourism imaginaries, which refer to shared cultural visions of what destinations represent. These imaginaries circulate and exert influence globally through media, travel blogs, social networks, and international cultural flows, shaping expectations even before tourists arrive at the destination (Salazar & Graburn, 2014). In the context of the Nordic countries, such imaginaries often emphasize themes of unspoiled nature, climatic stability, and the aesthetic of “Nordic coolness”. These imaginaries have provided a highly fertile foundation for positioning Finland as an ideal coolcation destination, as they align with existing global representations of the North as pure, refreshing, and tranquil (Ryden, 1993; Varley & Semple, 2015).

The identities of tourism regions and individual destinations are also shaped by power relations and selectivity, as not all narratives are valued or represented equally. The processes of place-making and identity construction necessarily involve choices regarding which stories are told, who is authorized to tell them, and which aspects of the place are foregrounded – inevitably or intentionally leaving others in the background (Massey, 2005). While Finland’s tourism marketing communications may highlight nature, tranquility, and coolness, it may simultaneously downplay or overlook challenges such as overtourism, declining environmental carrying capacity, or regional inequalities. From a critical perspective, such choices reflect institutional objectives and strategic brand positioning. The framing of coolness may even carry implicit political dimensions, such as distancing the Nordic regions from perceived instabilities associated with warmer climates and their related phenomena (Massey, 2005).

In tourism marketing communication, the identities of tourism regions and destinations must remain systematic and deliberate, yet also flexible and responsive to shifting consumer preferences and global trends (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). As climate change prompts transformations in tourism mobilities – where tourists increasingly seek destinations with favorable climatic conditions – countries such as Finland have been compelled to construct identities that respond to this emerging demand. The coolcation phenomenon presents a significant opportunity to expand and reshape Finland’s tourism identity by integrating climatic comfort with existing narratives centered on nature, wellbeing, and the Nordic way of life. This development trajectory aligns with the view that destination identities are continuously negotiated rather than fixed or immutable (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

In particular, the interaction between environmental change and destination identity underscores the need to understand place-making as an ongoing process. As global tourism practices shift under pressures induced by climate change, tourism regions and destinations must strategically reinterpret their identity narratives in order to remain authentic and meaningful (Hall, 2019). For Finland, a key challenge lies in balancing responsible marketing communication that highlights climatic advantages while avoiding exploitative or crisis-centered framings. From a theoretical standpoint, this emphasizes the relational interplay between narrative construction, sociopolitical contexts, and material conditions (Hall, 2019).

In place and tourism studies, it is widely recognized that the relationship between these concepts is hierarchical and mutually reinforcing in nature (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014). Place-making narratives provide the narrative layer of identity, while symbolic representation materializes these narratives through cultural and visual codes (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Affective place-making adds an emotional dimension to identity (Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014), whereas tourism imaginaries establish the global and cultural framework through which these meanings are perceived and interpreted (Salazar, 2012; Salazar & Graburn, 2014).

In summary, the identities of tourism regions and destinations, together with place-making narratives, provide a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing how Finland’s marketing communications communicate coolness, climatic comfort, and northernness in its tourism marketing (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Cresswell, 2015). This framework highlights the

symbolic, narrative, and affective mechanisms through which the coolcation phenomenon is constructed within marketing communication (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014). The theory aligns with the aim of the study and enables an examination of how coolcation imagery is actively produced and disseminated through visual material and discourse. Combined with visual discourse analysis in the methodological section, destination identity theory provides a coherent conceptual basis for interpreting how Finland's national tourism organization employs coolcation-related imagery in its marketing communications.

Later in the empirical analysis, destination identity is examined by identifying how narratives, symbols, and affective appeals related to coolness, northernness, and climatic comfort are constructed in Visit Finland's marketing materials. Four analytical dimensions; narrative, visual-symbolic, affective, and imagery - guide the classification and interpretation of the data.

### **3.2 Destination communication and framing**

Destination communication and framing theory are utilized to explain how destination identity is strategically constructed and communicated. Framing theory provides a lens for identifying and understanding how specific interpretations of climate, comfort, and northernness are emphasized in marketing communication, while alternative interpretations are downplayed or excluded (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997).

The meanings associated with tourism regions and destinations are formed and materialized through processes of communication, branding, and storytelling, which in turn shape how destinations are imagined and experienced. Destination marketing thus operates as a form of place-making, framing interpretations and emotions while simultaneously excluding others. Destination communication plays a central role in how destinations are imagined, perceived, and valued in global tourism markets, before, during, and after the visit (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Pike, 2016).

Destination communication can be understood as the totality of all intentional and unintentional messages that shape perceptions of a destination, including marketing materials, media narratives, and visitor-generated content. It operates both strategically and organically, linking various branding activities to broader cultural, societal, and global discourses (Kavaratzis, 2005; Pike, 2016).

The concept of framing, originally developed by Goffman (1974) and later refined by Entman (1993), provides a useful analytical tool for understanding how meaning is produced and disseminated in destination branding. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting and highlighting certain aspects of perceived reality to promote a particular interpretation or evaluation. Originating in communication and media theory, the concept refers to the way messages emphasize specific facets of reality in order to influence audience understanding (Entman, 1993). In the context of tourism, framing reveals which values, symbols, and emotions are accentuated in the representation of destinations (Dann, 1996; Hall, 1997). It illustrates how destination marketers construct interpretive frames that shape tourists' perceptions of a destination's identity, authenticity, and desirability (Hall, 1997; Pike, 2016).

In tourism marketing communication, framing functions as a tool through which destination marketers highlight selected symbolic elements while downplaying others, thereby guiding tourists' emotional and interpretive responses (Dann, 1996; Hall, 1997). In the context of coolcation, framing plays a central role in how northern coolness is communicated. The metaphor may evoke symbols of sustainable and responsible lifestyle choices, a climatic refuge, or an environment that reinforces emotional tranquility. Such framing directs the tourist's attention toward particular meanings associated with climate, seasonality, and well-being, while simultaneously overlooking others (Entman, 1993; Hall et al., 2015). Climate- and well-being-frames often emphasize purity, safety, comfort, and relief. These narratives have gained increasing significance in tourism marketing communication as climate change reshapes patterns of mobility (Hall et al., 2015).

Several scholars emphasize that destination communication operates as a symbolic method of place-making, in which meaning is actively and intentionally produced rather than passively reflected (Kalandides, 2011; Campelo et al., 2014). Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013) argue that destination communication is not merely a marketing activity but a deliberate process of meaning-making among institutions, businesses, communities, residents, and visitors. The interactive construction of a tourism area involves multiple voices and symbolic representations through which its meaning is continuously negotiated rather than fixed. Within this process, communication does not merely describe a pre-existing identity but helps to create and reshape it through strategic narratives and symbolic imagery (Campelo et al., 2014). According to Tervo-Kankare & Hall (2024), the "cool", "clean", and "tranquil" images conveyed in Finland's

summer tourism campaigns reflect a particular articulation of Finnishness and northern identity that aligns with broader cultural meanings of nature and well-being.

Framing offers a valuable perspective for examining how national and regional tourism organizations communicate the coolcation phenomenon. Through frame theory, it is possible to explore how Finland's summer tourism communication promotes coolcation not only as a climatic alternative but also as a symbolic narrative of emotional refuge, environmental responsibility, and cultural distinctiveness. The theoretical strength of framing lies in its capacity to connect micro-level communication practices, such as slogans, imagery, and tone, with macro-level cultural discourses of identity and sustainability (Hall, 1997; Pike, 2016).

Framing theory (Entman, 1993) provides a framework for examining how information is presented and structured to advance particular interpretations. Frames highlight certain aspects of reality, assigning them meaning and thereby shaping audience understanding. In tourism marketing communications, framing can serve to define problems, for instance, by emphasizing or downplaying specific issues such as climate change as an underlying factor behind the coolcation phenomenon. It can also guide causal interpretation, explaining tourist motivations and desires; moral evaluation, identifying which behaviors or values are promoted and whether ethical tourism practices, environmental responsibility, and respect for nature are acknowledged; and treatment recommendation, referring to the suggested actions or experiences, such as visiting Finland during the summer season (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997; Pike, 2016; Tervo-Kankare & Hall, 2024).

Framing theory guides the subsequent analysis by identifying the dominant frames through which Finland's summer tourism is represented, such as climatic refuge, emotional restoration, and sustainable well-being. These frames are examined through both visual materials and their accompanying textual descriptions (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997).

### **3.3 Discursive and visual construction of destination identity**

A discursive and visual perspective is essential because tourism marketing communication operates through multimodal meaning-making processes, in which images, aesthetics, and textual elements interact. On social media channels, these multimodal processes manifest as layered expressions of marketing communication, reinforcing the intended messaging. The

perspective of visual discourse allows for an understanding of how visual representations influence the construction of destination identity and the emotionally charged geographic spaces associated with visitor experience (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).

Tourism communication, whether on the national, regional, or corporate level, is inherently discursive and visual in nature. Through a discursive approach, it is examined how language and imagery construct tourism areas and destinations as meaningful and desirable places. The understanding that places are socially and discursively constructed has become a fundamental perspective in tourism studies and cultural geography (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). In tourism studies, discourse does not refer solely to language but to broader systems and structures of meaning. The concept encompasses images and visual publications, symbols, narratives, and cultural assumptions which, collectively and individually, shape how destinations are represented and understood (Foucault, 1972; Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005).

Visual discourse perspective examines how visual elements produce meaning within wider cultural and ideological contexts, treating images and other visual materials as socially constructed matters rather than neutral depictions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Rose (2016) and Machin & Mayr (2012) emphasize that visual discourse analysis provides tools for examining how images, symbols, and spatial representations influence the production of meanings. According to them, visual discourse analysis pays attention to images, colours, symbolism, and composition as instruments of persuasion and identity formation. Urry & Larsen (2011) highlight that visibility is never neutral but is imbued with ideological assumptions and cultural values that shape how destinations are perceived, recognized, and interpreted.

In place identity, visual materials and elements function as a central tool through which destinations communicate identity, authenticity, and emotional appeal (Stylidis, 2020). In destination marketing communications, visual elements are understood to serve two primary functions. They appeal to tourists on an emotional level while simultaneously conveying ideological values such as authenticity, purity, or safety (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2022). The Finnish “cool north” coolcation imagery, characterized by untouched nature, tranquil lakes, minimalist aesthetics, soft light, spatial openness, and solitude, constructs a distinctive emotional geography in which nature and the environment are not merely a backdrop for experiences but function as moral and affective resources. Reflecting this perspective, Finnish

tourism communication can be interpreted as a discursive practice that frames coolness not only as a matter of temperature but also as an ethical and cultural code (Valtonen & Törrönen, 2012; Moisio & Paasi, 2013).

Critical discourse perspectives highlight the power embedded in visual representations, demonstrating how they shape which identities, values, and experiences are foregrounded and which are marginalized (Said, 1978; Hollinshead, 2004). Critical tourism research emphasizes how northern destinations are often embedded within discourses of remoteness, purity, and “northernness”, which can reproduce cultural hierarchies and forms of exoticization (Loftsdóttir, 2019). Such imagery is connected to, and frequently intersects with, broader narratives of ecological superiority and whiteness that shape how Nordic landscapes are communicated and consumed. These discursive practices are significant in the context of the coolcation phenomenon, in which Nordic aesthetics and cool climates are marketed as desirable and morally superior alternatives to overheated global destinations (Edelheim, 2015; Saarinen, 2020).

A visual discourse perspective is utilized later in the study to analyze how visual elements, such as colour palettes, spatial composition, lighting, and depicted activities, reinforce or nuance the textual framing of comfort and destination identity (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).

### **3.4 Sustainable destination identity in tourism marketing under climate change**

The sustainable destination identity perspective situates coolcation within the broader context of climate change and ethical tourism communication. This approach enables a critical examination of how climatic advantages are framed as sustainable and responsible choices in tourism marketing (Font & McCabe, 2017; Gössling & Higham, 2021). The root causes of the coolcation phenomenon lie in climate change, and Finland has positioned itself as a destination committed to responsible and sustainable tourism. Rather than focusing on the destination country’s internal objectives and strategies, this section examines how meanings related to sustainable destination identity are produced, framed, and disseminated through marketing communication narratives.

Climate change affects tourism increasingly and in multifaceted ways. It influences, for example, how tourism is discussed, what is thought about it, how it is perceived, and how it

appears; in other words, climate change shapes our overall understanding of tourism. As climate change transforms global travel behavior, sustainability and responsibility have become central elements of destination marketing communication (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Font & McCabe, 2017). However, this communication is often contradictory and complex. A key tension lies in the paradoxical nature of tourism itself: destinations and regions seek to highlight their green and sustainable achievements and their commitment to responsibility, while simultaneously depending on a carbon-intensive tourism industry (Gössling & Hall, 2006).

Recent research has highlighted that effective sustainable destination identity requires, above all, authenticity and transparency (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Transparency both demands and challenges organizations to be honest and open about their operations, decision-making, and communication. It entails that a company or tourism destination shares information about its sustainability goals, achievements, and challenges in a manner that is assessable not only by consumers but by all stakeholders. Travelers increasingly expect concrete evidence of responsibility, such as measurable indicators, certifications, and clear reports on social and environmental impacts, rather than broad or vague promises. A lack of authenticity and transparency, such as marketing perceived as greenwashing, can undermine the credibility of a company or destination, erode tourists' trust, and leave lasting reputational damage. Moreover, transparency is essential in relation to partners and supply chains, as a responsible brand is built upon the sustainability and ethical integrity of the entire value chain. Transparent practices strengthen stakeholders' fundamental trust, demonstrating that responsibility is not merely a marketing message but an integral part of the organization's culture and strategy (Buffa & Martin, 2021; Campelo et al., 2014; Merli et al., 2019).

According to Tervo-Kankare & Saarinen (2018), for Finland, this challenge and paradigm manifests in balancing its image as an untouched natural paradise with the realities of global travel flows. The "climate-friendly" and "cool" narratives employed in Visit Finland's marketing campaigns strategically connect the country's climatic characteristics to the global discourse on responsibility and sustainable development. Tervo-Kankare & Saarinen (2018) point out that, rather than framing sustainability through openly moral communication, Finnish tourism marketing tends to embed it within aesthetic and emotional symbols, such as tranquility and silence in nature, clean air, and the openness of space, which subtly evoke a sense of ecological awareness. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the broader paradigm of green, or sustainable and responsible, branding, in which environmental values become cultural

commodities (Hartmann et al., 2005). Through this lens, one can examine how environmental and nature-based narratives are integrated into the construction of a destination's identity, how they are employed in branding, and what kind of potential they create in mediating between authenticity, marketing, and global transformation (Hartmann et al., 2005; Tervo-Kankare & Saarinen, 2018). Climate-oriented destination identity can very easily slip into "climate washing", whereby destinations emphasize climatic benefits and advantages, such as cooler temperatures, while downplaying or ignoring the environmental costs associated with long-distance travel. This highlights a tension between promoting cool climates as responsible and sustainable alternatives and addressing the carbon-intensive modes of mobility that nonetheless make such tourism and travel behavior possible (Gössling & Higham, 2021).

In the subsequent analysis, this theoretical perspective is utilized to examine how sustainability and responsibility are discursively and visually integrated into the marketing of Finland's summer tourism, and how climatic advantages are framed as ethical and desirable choices within the coolcation narrative context.

### **3.5 Summary of theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework integrates five complementary perspectives through which Finland's tourism marketing communication can be analyzed in relation to the construction of the coolcation phenomenon. Destination identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014) provides the central theoretical concept through which Finland's summer tourism marketing communication is examined and how the destination identity is constructed. Framing theory (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997) provides a theoretical perspective and tools for identifying interpretive structures and dominant narratives of destination identity within marketing communication. Destination communication (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) explains how destination identity is communicated and negotiated through marketing practices. Visual discourse perspective (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012) extends this by examining how visual elements generate affective and ideological meanings. Finally, the sustainable destination identity (Font & McCabe, 2017; Buffa & Martin, 2021) and the climate-induced tourism mobility (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006) situate the theoretical frame within the ethical and environmental context of climate change, illuminating the macro-level conditions that render the coolcation phenomenon socially and economically significant. The relevance of the theoretical frameworks to the research questions is presented (Table 1) in Appendix 1.

Together, these theoretical perspectives are presented below in (Figure 2), which provides a coherent framework for examining how the coolcation phenomenon is constructed in the marketing communication of Finland’s summer tourism. Destination identity provides the central conceptual foundation, while framing theory and visual discourse perspective further specify how visual meanings are emphasized and subsequently communicated through social media marketing communications. The context of sustainability and climate change situates these themes within broader socio-economic transformation. Within this framework, coolness emerges as both a symbolic and material discourse shaping representations of place and anticipated tourism experiences. This integrative approach provides the conceptual foundation for the subsequent empirical analysis.

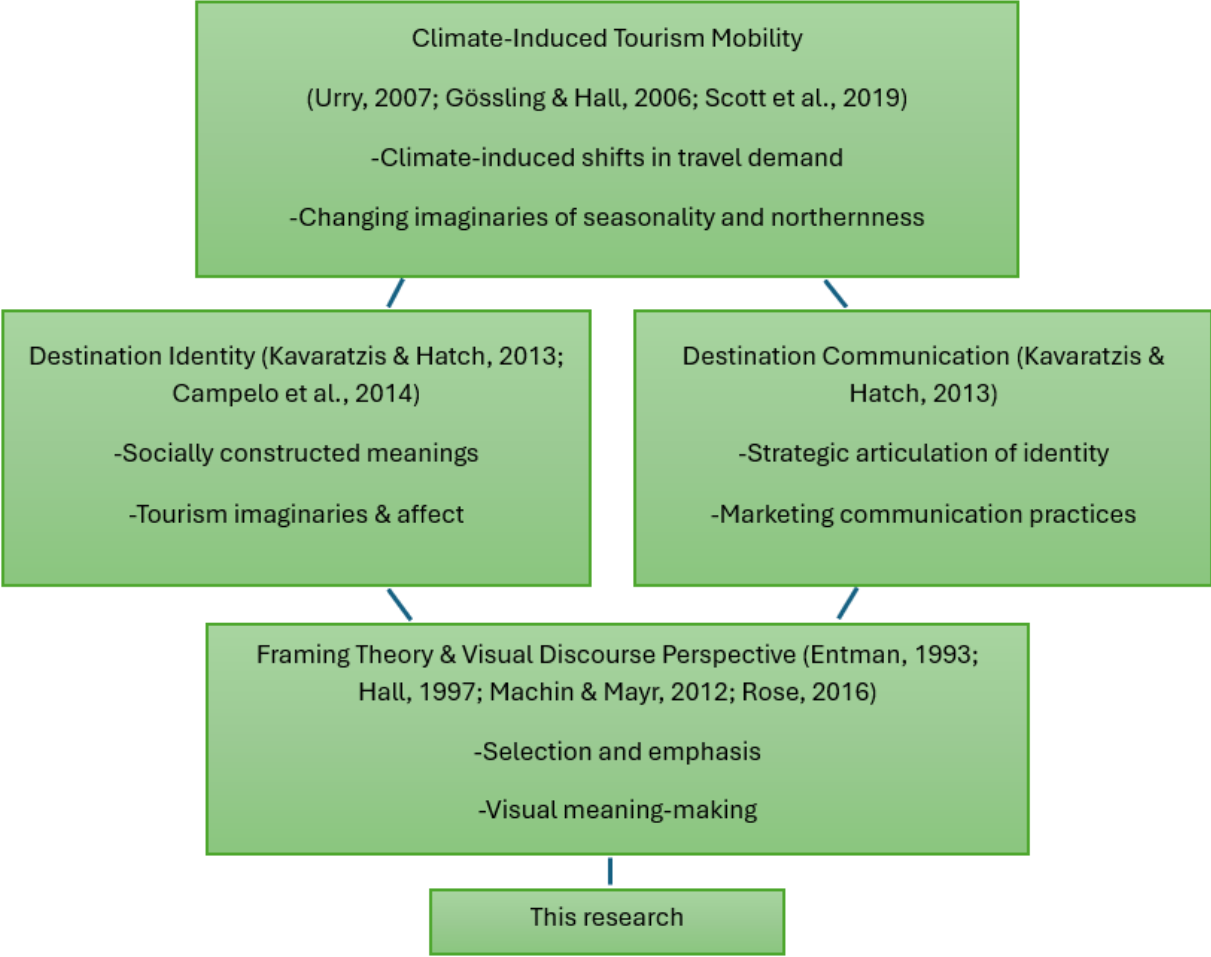


Figure 2. Theoretical concepts informing the research questions.

This study focuses on the representational level of marketing communication and examines how meanings related to coolcation and destination identity are constructed and framed within a marketing communication context. The study does not address or evaluate the effectiveness or performance of Visit Finland's tourism marketing communication, nor does it examine tourists' experiences.

## **4. VISUAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TOURISM MARKETING COMMUNICATION**

This chapter discusses the methodological framework guiding the study and the related ethical considerations. It provides a rationale for how the selected qualitative method, visual discourse analysis, enables the examination of Finnish tourism communication within the context of coolcation. The methodological approach is grounded in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, which assume that social realities, such as the identities of tourism regions and destinations, and climate-related narratives, are constructed through images, language, and representations. Within this paradigm, tourism is not merely a system of economic and physical practices but also a symbolic and communicative field in which destinations, experiences, and identities are socially and culturally constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2015). This method functions not only as an analytical tool but also as a theoretical structure embedded in tourism marketing (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The chapter proceeds by outlining the overall study design, data collection, and analysis methods, and concludes with a discussion on study ethics, transparency, and the responsible use of technology in qualitative research.

### **4.1 Data collection and data selection strategy**

The empirical material, described in Appendix 2, consists of 30 publicly available marketing posts produced by Visit Finland between 2019 and 2025, emphasizing the period when the coolcation concept emerged in marketing communications. This period is also significant as it reflects tourism mobility and post-COVID-19 transformation in tourism marketing communication. At the same time, climate- and sustainability-related themes gained increasing global prominence in tourism discourse, which in turn contributed to the emergence and development of the coolcation phenomenon.

The data collection process was conducted in two phases. First, a broad screening of Visit Finland's official marketing communication channels on Instagram and Facebook accounts. A retrospective review of Visit Finland's official social media account from 2019 to 2025 indicated that the organization maintained continuous activity, publishing content on a weekly basis throughout the entire period under examination. However, not all of these posts were suitable for inclusion in this study, as a substantial proportion consists of collaborative

campaign posts, reposted content from private individuals and companies, or other current informational announcements. During this preliminary phase, several hundred summer-related posts from the examined period were reviewed to identify material potentially associated with the coolcation phenomenon. The screening focused on identifying both visual and textual content referring to climatic comfort, coolness, northernness, nature-based experiences, representations of Finland as a refreshing and safe travel destination, and sustainability.

Second, based on the predefined thematic selection criteria, relevant materials were purposively selected and systematically archived for analysis. The selection criteria were as follows: (1) a clear emphasis on summer tourism, (2) the presence of themes related to climate, coolness, northern identity, nature, or sustainability, and (3) the construction of Finland's identity as a refreshing, climate-resilient, safe, or emotionally restorative destination.

It is important to emphasize that coolcation does not manifest through a single standardized visual imagery. Rather, the phenomenon encompasses diverse forms of tourism marketing communication associated with cooler, less crowded, and climatically comfortable destinations. Consequently, the material selection was applied flexibly to include both nature-based and urban tourism content, enabling a broader qualitative examination of how coolness, northernness, and climate-related meanings are constructed within the marketing communication of Finland's summer tourism (Cambridge, 2024; Coolcation, n.d.).

The data selection strategy is purposive rather than representative (Silverman, 2020), as the objective is not statistical generalization but the identification of information-rich cases that illuminate how the coolcation phenomenon is constructed within Visit Finland's national tourism marketing communication. Data lacking thematic relevance or any discernible connection to climate framing were excluded from the analysis. The relationship between each post and the main research question and the sub-questions is presented in Appendix 3 (Table 2 and Table 3). The final data corpus of 30 publications, listed in Appendix 4, was considered appropriate for achieving thematic saturation in relation to the research questions, as well as for ensuring the reliability of the study.

While some visual materials of the data corpus were originally produced by private individuals, they are examined and analyzed in this study exclusively as part of Visit Finland's selected, curated, and disseminated marketing communications. The study and analysis do not focus on

user-generated content as a participatory or user-driven practice, but on how such materials are framed and recontextualized within official destination marketing communications. This study does not analyze user-generated content (UGC) published by users themselves. The data corpus does not include paid partnerships or influencer posts that have not been directly produced by Visit Finland's official tourism organization. While such materials form part of the broader tourism discourse and contribute to it, they fall outside the analytical scope of this study, which focuses specifically on institutional tourism communication within the coolcation context (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

#### **4.2 Analytical strategy: qualitative content analysis**

This study employs a qualitative research design, as it aims to interpret how meanings, identities, and symbolic representations are constructed within Finland's tourism marketing communication. Qualitative methods are particularly suited to examining how visual imagery and language convey broader cultural, social, and environmental discourse, rather than producing statistical generalizations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). In the context of tourism research, qualitative methods are particularly valuable for examining cultural meanings and symbolic representations embedded in communication (Decrop, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The analytical approach is theory-informed and abductive in nature. Existing theoretical concepts, framing theory (Entman, 1993) and visual discourse analysis (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012) guided the interpretation of the empirical material, while remaining open to the themes emerging from the data.

Qualitative research is well-suited to the purpose and topic of this research, as it seeks to gather information with the aim of providing a descriptive understanding of the subject under examination. In qualitative inquiry, descriptive data constitute research knowledge that highlights perceptions, symbolic meanings, and diverse perspectives. Through qualitative methods, the research topic can be explored in greater depth, revealing the nature of coolcation communication within Finland's summer tourism marketing (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 18; Hirsijärvi et al., 2009). Moreover, qualitative research enables the inclusion of a human perspective, offering insights into both the research context and the users of tourism services (University of Jyväskylä, 2021).

Finland's summer tourism marketing communication is strongly grounded in the imagery and meanings derived from natural elements and the climate, which are integral to Finnish culture. Visual marketing materials and pre-existing data corpuses can be utilized and analyzed in multiple ways. Such approaches include, for instance, traditional methods used in historical research or the quantification of data through content analysis (Eskola & Suoranta, 2015). According to Alasuutari (2011, pp. 95-96), the use of pre-existing materials and documents requires a critical evaluation of sources to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the information they contain. Content analysis provided a structured and systematic approach for handling diverse materials including images, texts, and visual campaigns. It enables the identification of themes, recurring meanings, and communicative strategies that reveal how the concept of coolcation and the image of Finland in summer are constructed within tourism marketing (Eskola & Suoranta, 2015).

The coding process before content analysis was conducted manually through close reading and careful visual examination of the material. A structured coding table was created in Microsoft Word to document codes, thematic categories, and analytical observations. This approach enabled systematic comparison across the different posts while preserving flexibility for the refinement of interpretations. All 30 selected posts were archived in their original form at the time of data collection. This included screenshots of visual posts as well as documentation of the accompanying textual content and relevant metadata (date, platform, and URL). The data were securely stored in a password-protected digital archive to ensure data integrity, transparency, and analytical traceability throughout the research process (Silverman, 2020).

Qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018) was employed as the initial structuring method. The purpose of this phase was to systematically organize the material and identify recurring thematic patterns across the 30 selected publications. The analysis proceeded in three stages: (1) Familiarization with the data: All publications were reviewed multiple times in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of recurring motifs, visual styles, and narrative emphases. (2) Preliminary coding: both visual elements and accompanying captions were coded using a theory-informed coding framework (Alasuutari, 2011). The initial coding categories were derived from the research questions and the theoretical framework (e.g., coolness, climatic comfort, northernness, safety). At the same time, the coding structure remained open to additional subthemes emerging inductively from the material. (3) Thematic grouping and refinement: The codes were compared, consolidated, and organized into broader

thematic categories. This process enabled the identification of dominant communicative patterns and recurring symbolic elements across the data corpus. This phase ensured the systematic treatment of the material and analytical coherence prior to the subsequent, more in-depth interpretative analysis (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018; Alasuutari, 2011).

Following the thematic structuring, visual discourse analysis was applied to examine how meanings are constructed at deeper symbolic and ideological levels (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). This phase focused on the analysis of visual composition and framing, representations of climate and landscape, the symbolic use of light, water, space, and atmosphere, constructions of northern identity, the relationship between visual imagery and accompanying captions, and implicit contrasts between heat-affected destinations and cooler northern environments. Drawing on framing theory (Entman, 1993) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013), particular attention was paid to how certain aspects of reality were foregrounded while others were backgrounded, and how these communicative choices contributed to the construction of Finland as a destination characterized by climatic comfort, emotional restoration, and sustainability. This two-phase analytical process enables a systematic, yet interpretative understanding of how the coolcation phenomenon is discursively produced within institutional tourism marketing communications (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

### **4.3 Visual discourse analysis**

Visual discourse analysis is particularly well suited to examining the coolcation phenomenon, as the concept is primarily constructed, disseminated, and legitimized through visual media. Tourism imaginaries related to northern identity, climate, seasonality, and coolness are communicated globally mainly through images rather than text, making visual presentation a primary site of meaning-making (Hunter, 2016; Scarles, 2010). In this regard, analyzing visual discourses enables this study to demonstrate how coolness is framed in Finnish summer tourism communication as both a desirable climatic destination and an emotional refuge from overheated tourism regions.

Through visual discourse analysis, it is possible to develop a precise and detailed understanding of how meanings, narratives, and values are constructed and conveyed to travelers through images, colours, composition, and other visual elements in marketing materials. That is, to

examine how Finnish tourism organizations communicate their summer tourism identity and the coolcation phenomenon by creating desirable identities, experiences, and values through visual representations (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). As outlined in section 4.2, qualitative content analysis provided a preliminary framework for organizing and coding the empirical data (Schreier, 2012; Krippendorff, 2018). Building on this foundation, visual discourse analysis (VDA) was utilized to systematically interpret the symbolic, cultural, and ideological meanings conveyed in marketing communication materials for summer tourism in Finland (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). VDA enabled an in-depth understanding of how visual and textual elements jointly construct the coolcation phenomenon and Finland's destination identity.

According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2021), a visual frame refers to a recurring representational pattern that highlights particular meanings, such as climatic comfort, coolness, and environmental purity, while simultaneously marginalizing others. According to Mayr & Machin (2012), visual discourse is understood as a broader system of semiotic choices, conventions, and power relations that shapes how Finnish nature, climate, and cultural identity become visible in tourism marketing communications. By identifying these visual frames and discourses, the analysis reveals how coolness is constructed both as an environmental and a cultural narrative.

Visual discourse analysis enables the simultaneous examination of both visual and textual elements and interprets how symbols, colours, composition, and text construct meanings and values. Therefore, visual discourse analysis is particularly significant for understanding how Finland's cool and environmentally conscious brand narratives are constructed in marketing communications. (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). When analyzing tourism communication on social media platforms, it is important to emphasize that visibility and repetition are shaped not only by marketing choices but also by platform-specific algorithmic logics. Although platform-specific algorithms shape visibility, this study focuses on the curated marketing communication content itself, acknowledging algorithmic mediation without analyzing it (Bucher, 2018).

The analysis focused on the 30 selected posts from Visit Finland's Instagram (@ourfinland) and Facebook (@Visit Finland I wish I was in Finland) accounts, including images, videos, and textual captions. Both visual and textual components were examined to capture the integrated

communication strategies used in marketing Finland as a refreshing, climate-conscious, and culturally distinctive destination. This builds directly on the content organization and coding described in section 4.2, where materials were archived, coded in a Word document, and systematically documented with metadata (publication date, platform, URL), and below (Table 4) illustrates the three-stage analytical procedure.

Table 4. Overview of the VDA procedure.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1. Initial coding	Identification of recurring visual and textual elements related to coolness, climate, northerness	Systematic mapping of the empirical material
2. Thematic categorization	Grouping codes into broader patterns and frames	Reveal dominant visual and narrative themes
3. Discourse construction	Interpreting patterns using framing theory and VDA	Understanding how Finland’s summer tourism identity and coolcation narratives are socially and culturally constructed

The analytical stages of visual discourse analysis were:

1. Initial coding: Visual and textual elements were manually coded in a Word table, documenting recurring symbols, colours, compositions, and textual narratives. Initial codes captured representations of coolness, northern identity, climatic comfort, nature motifs, human presence or absence, and sustainability themes (Saldaña, 2021; Rose, 2016).
2. Thematic categorization: Initial codes were grouped into broader visual and discursive frames, such as “the cool north”, “the serene north”, and “nature as restorative”. Both visual motifs and associated textual narratives were examined to assess reinforcement, tension, or complementarity between image and language (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).
3. Discourse construction and interpretation: The identified frames and patterns were interpreted using framing theory (Entman, 1993) and sustainable destination identity perspectives (Font & McCabe, 2017; Buffa & Martin, 2021). This stage examined how visual and textual elements jointly constructed experiences, values, and ethical positioning, including climate-friendly narratives, authenticity, and cultural identity. Special attention was paid to how “coolness” functions as both an environmental and

cultural narrative within Finland's tourism discourse (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Although the primary focus of the study is on published marketing materials (images, videos, and other visual posts), it is important to note that visual discourse analysis does not preclude the examination of the textual elements associated with images, such as captions, slogans, or brief promotional descriptions. By analyzing both visual and textual components, the study provides a comprehensive depiction of the integrated communication employed in Finnish summer tourism marketing to construct the coolcation phenomenon. It enables an understanding of how Finland positions itself as a desirable destination amid changing climatic conditions and evolving tourist behaviors and expectations. This clear methodological focus strengthens the reliability of the study and its argumentative rigor (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012). To support the visual interpretation while respecting copyright restrictions, illustrative AI-generated images were produced by the researcher. These images do not constitute empirical data but serve as analytical visualizations based on patterns identified in the original material.

Overall, visual discourse analysis enabled a multi-layered interpretation of Finland's summer tourism identity and the coolcation phenomenon by integrating visual, textual, and cultural dimensions. It facilitated an understanding of how symbolic meanings, narratives, and values are communicated to tourists and reinforced across dominant marketing channels, thereby complementing the organizational and coding procedures described in section 4.2 (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Entman, 1993).

It is noteworthy that the empirical material is based on a selected set of marketing posts, which inevitably reflects certain curatorial and analytical choices. While the data corpus provides a coherent and relevant basis for examining the construction of coolcation, it does not aim to represent the entirety of Finland's tourism marketing communication. The analysis is therefore interpretative in nature, and the thematically identified discourses: climatic comfort, tranquility, and northernness, emerge through the interaction between the empirical material and the applied theoretical framework. Consequently, the findings should be understood as one possible reading of how coolcation is communicated, rather than as an exhaustive or definitive account. To support the interpretation of the findings, the following chapter 5 includes visual illustrations based on the key themes identified in the analysis. These images are not part of the empirical data but serve as analytical visualizations that aim to make the symbolic, affective, and

discursive dimensions of the findings more accessible. The prompts used to generate the images created by Canva are provided in Appendix 5.

#### **4.4 Ethical considerations, reliability, and validity**

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility and trustworthiness replace the traditional criteria of validity and reliability. Rather than aiming at replicability, this study seeks to produce a theoretically grounded and analytically transparent interpretation of how meanings are constructed within Finnish tourism marketing communication (Alasuutari, 2011; Entman, 1993; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Credibility is strengthened through a systematic and staged analytical process, as described in section 4.2. The analysis proceeded through initial coding, thematic categorization, and discourse construction, allowing meanings to be identified, grouped, and theoretically interpreted in a transparent manner. All stages of data selection, coding, and interpretation are documented to ensure analytical clarity and to create an audit trail (Alasuutari, 2011). The aim is not statistical generalization but an in-depth understanding of discursive patterns and representational strategies within the selected material (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

The study adheres to the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) and the ethical standards for social sciences research established by the University of Lapland. Regarding public data and copyright considerations, it is acknowledged that: (1) the empirical material is publicly available, and therefore informed consent is not required; and (2) copyrighted material (such as logos or images) is used solely for analytical purposes in short excerpts, with full attribution to the original source. This approach respects intellectual property rights while enabling critical visual discourse analysis. With respect to data integrity and transparency, the following measures are taken: (1) all data sources and stages of analysis are documented to ensure reproducibility and transparency; and (2) the materials do not contain any personal or confidential information (Alasuutari, 2011; TENK, 2019; University of Lapland, 2025).

In visual research, ethical considerations also concern identifiability. While individuals may appear in the marketing materials, they are presented as part of organizational campaigns rather than as private people. Therefore, the analysis focuses on representations and discursive constructions rather than on identifiable individuals, namely, how individuals are portrayed as

part of tourism marketing in relation to the coolcation tourism phenomenon. This reduces ethical risk and aligns with established guidelines for internet-mediated research (Association of Internet Researchers, 2020).

The reflection also extends to the interpretation and reporting of findings. The study seeks to analytically examine how tourism imaginaries are constructed without reinforcing stereotypes or normalizing particular representations as self-evident (Alasuutari, 2011). A reflexive stance is maintained throughout the study process, including analytical memo writing and continuous theoretical engagement. As Pink (2021) emphasizes, visual analysis requires awareness of the researcher's interpretative role; therefore, reflexivity is treated as an integral component of analytical rigor. The artificial intelligence tool Grammarly is used solely for language refinement and grammar checking. Analytical interpretation, coding decisions, and theoretical framing remain entirely the responsibility of the researcher. This ensures academic independence and maintains the human-centered nature of qualitative research (Alasuutari, 2011; TENK, 2019; University of Lapland, 2025; Pink, 2021).

## **5. CONSTRUCTING THE COOLCATION MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The analysis is guided by the main research question and three interrelated sub-questions, each addressing a distinct dimension of coolcation marketing communication from a complementary perspective. The first sub-question emphasizes symbolic and affective representations, the second examines the interplay between visual and textual elements, and the third explores how northernness and climatic comfort function as elements shaping destination identity. Together, these analytical perspectives provide a multi-layered understanding of how coolcation is constructed and framed within Finnish tourism marketing communication.

### **5.1 Symbolic and affective dimensions of coolcation marketing communication**

This section examines the first sub-question: *What symbolic elements, narratives, and emotional appeals are used in Finland's summer tourism marketing to communicate coolcation and destination identity?* The analysis identifies recurring symbolic motifs, storytelling patterns, and affective cues in visual marketing materials, highlighting how visual and textual elements jointly construct destination identity through the coolcation narrative (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Rose, 2016; Entman, 1993).

Across Visit Finland's summer marketing publications from 2019 to 2025, four central discursive themes recur and emerge prominently, reflecting broader discursive constructions of Finnish summer tourism: (1) nature as the foundation of identity, (2) water, purity, and freshness, (3) peace and spatial openness as an emotional counterpoint to heat and crowding, and (4) happiness and everyday well-being.

Nature is depicted in several posts 1, 5, 9, 10, 21, 26 as a significant and central foundation of Finnish identity. The identities of Finnish individuals and communities are represented as deeply rooted in green forests and shimmering blue lakes, portrayed as extending timelessly beyond the horizon. The accompanying descriptions are structured in a rhythm that intertwines mythology reminiscent of the national epic Kalevala with statistical and empirically measurable facts. Nature, as an essential component of Finnish identity, is constructed as something transmitted from one generation to the next, warranting protection through a conscious pause in the present moment to affirm its existence while simultaneously safeguarding it for the

future(Massey, 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Urry & Larsen, 2011). Finnish identity is thus articulated not only at the level of the individual but also collectively. Extensive water resources, diverse forests, national parks, and the world's cleanest air are represented as accessible to all Finns. These resources that the visitor is also invited to experience throughout the country.

Water, purity, and freshness emerge as central discursive themes in the marketing communication of summer tourism in posts 2, 6, 12, 15, 17, 24, 28. A dominant and cross-cutting motif is the world's purest Finnish water, which is portrayed as being at its most enjoyable during the summer months. Among the thousands of lakes, there is a place where everyone can cool down peacefully on a hot summer day, either alone or together with family and friends. Water is frequently associated with the sauna, whose cleansing and relaxing experiences are further intensified by immersion in clean and refreshing lake water (Anderson, 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011). In addition, water is framed as the setting for various activities, such as canoeing, fishing, sailing, or boating. Even with these activity-centered representations, space is repeatedly created for moments of pause and observation, as well as for the enjoyment of water's purity and freshness. Water thus functions as both a climatic and experiential signifier, establishing a coherent alignment with theoretical perspectives on the construction of environmental meaning in the marketing communication of place identity (Rose, 2016; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). These findings are visualized below (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Calm and refreshing morning swim with friends. Illustrative visualization based on patterns identified in Visit Finland marketing materials, generated by the researcher using Canva.

Peace and spatial openness, positioned as emotional counterpoints to heat in posts 4, 7, 19, 27, 29, are represented as multifaceted elements embedded in everyday life, the environment, and society in Finland. Spatial openness constitutes one of the most pervasive and sustaining discursive themes throughout the data corpus, depicted as accessible across the country, from natural landscapes to urban environments (Massey, 2005; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Particularly during the summer season, the near-continuous presence of natural light is framed as enabling the recharging of personal energy and facilitating detachment from daily schedules and concerns. Clean, diverse, and biodiverse natural environments are portrayed as offering moments of tranquility at all hours of the day, ensuring profound relaxation and even experiences described as magical (Anderson, 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Expansive, uncrowded landscapes and urban green spaces communicate peace and freedom, generating affective impressions of spaciousness and serenity. Natural light, the accessibility of forests, and quiet environments are emphasized both visually and textually. Finland is thus presented as a site of emotional restoration and a refuge from densely populated or overheated regions. These representations illustrate how visual discourse and framing foreground particular dimensions of place while implicitly positioning Finland in comparison to other destinations (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Entman, 1993). Finland itself is discursively

constructed as something everyone needs at least a little in their lives, thus echoing the framing of the “Why not escape to Finland” reel video (post 27, 2025):

We all need a bit of Finland in our lives, so here’s an ASMR journey for you. The world might be chaotic, but in Finland you can find moments of calm, serenity, and quiet. Here, wandering in forests and connecting with nature is the ultimate therapy. Our air and water are the cleanest in the world, and we want to keep them that way. Finns are known as the happiest people in the world. It might have something to do with a culture that appreciates authenticity, fairness, and being humble. When we need to let off steam and keep our heads cool, we head to the sauna and go ice swimming. There’s nothing like an ice plunge to give you clarity and to remind you of your inner strength. Take a deep breath, and listen. Doesn’t Finland sound good? (post 27, 2025).

Notably, the Reels video visually depicts summer landscapes exclusively, despite the textual reference to ice swimming.

Happiness and everyday well-being in posts 9, 11, 19, 20 constitute the fourth of the central discursive themes. Happiness is strongly intertwined with nature, which is portrayed during the summer season as existing in its full potential: bright and seemingly endless summer nights, tranquility, relaxation within the gentle embrace of the summer landscape, unhurriedness, and presence in the moment – experienced either alone or together with loved ones – are depicted as central sources of happiness. These elements are further framed as integral to everyday well-being, particularly in contexts where nature is proximate and accessible around the clock. Nature is positioned as a key constituent of Finnish happiness, while visitors are simultaneously invited to experience its serenity and enchantment. Happiness is symbolically linked to nature, open space, and the rhythm of seasons, illustrating how symbolic and affective dimensions are co-constructed in marketing materials through the interplay of visual and textual elements (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Rose, 2016). This nature-based identity is explicitly linked to Finnish happiness, as articulated in the following passage:

What makes us Finns happy? Well, for one, it’s finding peace in summer months like this. Pausing to marvel the beauty around you, the stillness of a lake’s reflection. In those moments when you don’t need anything, you can suddenly have everything (post 9, 2021).

In the analyzed materials, Finnish summer tourism marketing communication places a strong emphasis on symbols of nature, tranquility, and the openness of both natural and urban spaces.

A unifying characteristic across the images is the use of cool yet natural colour tones, predominantly composed of soft palettes of blue, green, and natural light (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). Visual representations frequently feature forests, lakes, coastlines, and expansive landscapes, most often depicted without large crowds or intensive human activity. These natural elements function symbolically to communicate coolcation not only in a climatic sense, but also as part of a broader experiential quality associated with freshness, calmness, and escape from congestion, heat, and stress in natural environments and urban settings alike (Anderson, 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011). The recurring absence of crowds and imagery associated with mass tourism reinforces an implicit contrast between Finland and more densely populated or overheated summer destinations, without explicitly naming these alternative locations (Entman, 1993; Kavartzis & Hatch, 2013).

From a narrative perspective, the marketing materials draw on stories of tranquility, reconnection, balance, and presence, in which travel is portrayed as slow-paced and oriented towards fostering a connection with oneself and with the surrounding environment, framed by the rhythms of nature and the seasons (Hall, 1997; Entman, 1993). The Finnish summer is constructed as a time for calm activities, outdoor well-being, and immersion in nature, experienced either independently or in small groups, such as with family or friends. Intensive consumption or fast-paced activity is neither visually represented nor articulated in the accompanying texts. Rather than foregrounding climate change explicitly, the marketing materials present cooler temperatures, mild and pleasurable summer weather, and fresh air as inherent attributes of the destination. This narrative positioning aligns with the coolcation phenomenon by presenting cooler temperatures and fresh environments as desirable elements of summer tourism (Urry, 2007; Scott et al., 2019).

Emotional appeals and narratives play a central role in reinforcing these stories and broader marketing communication. The visual imagery and its accompanying language evoke feelings of relief, calmness, freedom, and safety by appealing to and evoking or activating the tourists' desire to seek and experience comfort and emotional restoration during increasingly hot summers, potentially outside destinations that may have previously been familiar. Coolness is conveyed affectively rather than technically. It is sensed through atmosphere, colour palettes dominated by greens and blues, soft and natural lighting, and visual cues of spaciousness associated with silence and openness (Andersson, 2014; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).

These emotional dimensions contribute to the construction of Finland's summer identity as both a climatically comfortable and emotionally restorative destination (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

In summary, the symbolic elements, narratives, and emotional appeals identified in the marketing communication materials present coolcation as an attractive and meaningful form of summer tourism. Finland is not marketed or positioned solely as a climatically cooler alternative, but as a destination that offers a distinctive and meaningful summer tourism experience grounded in nature, tranquility, and Finnish identity. These symbolic and affective dimensions demonstrate the selective framing of coolness, northerness, and restorative experiences, providing the foundation for analyzing visual and textual patterns in subsequent sections (Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). This analysis provides the foundation for the examination of visual and textual forms of marketing communication in the following section.

## **5.2 Visual-textual interplay in constructing Finland's summer identity**

This section addresses the second sub-research question: *How do visual elements (images, colours, aesthetics) interact with textual communication to reinforce or nuance Finland's summer tourism identity?* by analyzing the empirical material. Rather than treating text and imagery separately, they are analyzed as an integrated communicative formation through which destination identity is produced (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

It is essential to emphasize that the textual content is not examined as an independent linguistic artefact, but as an integral part of the overall visual marketing communication. In line with visual and multimodal discourse approaches (Hall, 1997; Rose, 2016), meaning is understood to emerge through the interaction of different representational modes rather than from isolated textual or visual elements. Captions, on-screen text in videos, descriptions, emojis, and hashtags contribute to the emotional tone and ideological framing of the posts, reinforcing values such as closeness to nature, authenticity, and local culture within the coolcation framework. Textual and visual elements mutually reinforce one another, shaping meaning, ideological positioning, and affect. Through this holistic marketing communication, Finland's summer tourism identity is produced and constructed as both a visually appealing and discursively coherent entity (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Entman, 1993).

Textual elements (Entman, 1993) function as significant guides and anchors for the interpretation of visual posts. On-screen text in videos subtly directs viewers' attention toward those aspects that the publication seeks to foreground. Similarly, captions frequently articulate explicit qualities that are not self-evident but are visually present in the posts, such as references to “clean water, the world’s cleanest air, or a refreshing dip on a hot summer day” in posts 12, 17, and 24. Without such textual descriptions, expansive lake and shoreline landscapes, uncrowded forest trails, and urban streets could be interpreted in multiple ways, each according to the viewer’s own perspective. In these posts, text transforms sensory impressions into discursive claims, rendering environmental purity and climatic comfort – such as freshness, coolness, and spacious natural and urban environments – explicit components of the visual communication. This anchoring function and interpretive guidance are particularly significant on social media platforms, where content is globally accessible to diverse audience segments (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). These findings are visualized below (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Breathe the world's cleanest air. Illustrative visualization based on patterns identified in Visit Finland marketing materials, generated by the researcher using Canva.

For example, in post 12, the text overlaid on the image states, “Finnish water is the purest in the world”, while the visual is further complemented by the caption, “There are many reasons to fall in love with Finland. This is one of them”. Here, visual serenity becomes articulated as

both a national resource and a symbolic marker of destination identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

In Visit Finland's posts, captions and video descriptions oscillate between affective and informative modes. Informative textual elements often include combinations of statistics, lists, and factual claims in posts 23, 24, and 26, which reinforce the visual and confer credibility and authority upon the visual content. Affective textual elements, by contrast, foreground embodied experience, emotions, and moods, such as happiness, calmness, or relief from high temperatures in posts 9, 19, and 27. It is essential to emphasize that these modes are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are frequently combined to produce a persuasive and emotionally resonant destination identity.

From a visual perspective, the data corpus is characterized by an aesthetic dominated by cool and natural tones, most notably shades of blue and green, combined with natural light. These colour palettes visually communicate and evoke a pleasant summer environment and climate, as well as notions of purity and freshness, which are further reinforced through captions and hashtags. For instance, in beach-related posts, warmer hues are balanced by expansive open spaces extending beyond the horizon, wide bodies of water, and open skies. This visual composition distinguishes Finnish summer landscapes from stereotypical Mediterranean beach destinations often associated with heat, density, and crowding. Such wide visual perspectives and colours palettes support the coolcation narrative by translating coolness into the level of composition and colour.

Together, text and image can produce composite communicative formations that also contain informative qualities (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In post 24, the claim of having the cleanest air is foregrounded, and this statistical fact is elaborated in the caption through descriptions of sensory perceptions, spatial coordinates, and aspects of everyday well-being, including improved sleep quality, bodily comfort, and the luxury of Finnish everyday life. In this interaction, the relationship between image and text does not frame climatic comfort solely in terms of temperature, but rather as a multisensory phenomenon connected to well-being and health (Entman, 1993; Anderson, 2014). According to post 24, tourists can even take this clean Finnish air home as a souvenir in their lungs. When text functions informatively and is combined with a visually serene image, the two together generate affective associations of calmness, purity, and climatic comfort. These thematically identified discourses further

resonate with global discourses surrounding heat, air pollution, and overcrowding in other tourist destinations, even though such issues are not explicitly referenced (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

In some posts, marketing communication more explicitly constructs and foregrounds contrasts between different tourism destinations and compares them to one another, a process that is further reinforced by the visual characteristics of the image or video. The expression “Beach holiday, but make it cool” in post 28 explicitly plays with established global tourism imaginaries by bringing together familiar and recognizable symbols of summer beach holidays, while situating them within a Finnish climate and environment (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar, 2012). The caption thus does not merely describe the image; rather, it actively challenges conventional notions of a beach holiday by positioning Finland as a desirable coastal destination in contrast to destinations affected by climate change (Scott et al., 2019; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). These findings are visualized below (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Northern beach holiday. Illustrative visualization based on patterns identified in Visit Finland marketing materials, generated by the researcher using Canva.

Through captions, visual content can be reformulated and redefined, encouraging tourists to question what a summer holiday entails and where it should take place. This aligns with broader discussions of climate-induced tourism mobility (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et

al., 2019), where climate comfort increasingly shapes tourism imaginaries and destination choice. In some textual descriptions, subtle comparisons to other tourism destinations are also present, such as in post 10.

Up here in the north, we don't have rainforests, but, for us, June is the month we marvel the abundance of green. The lushness of nature and the overpowering scent of blooming trees and flowers is what early summer is all about (post 10, 2021).

In most posts, there is a subtle implication of the enjoyability of the Finnish summer without explicitly referencing, for example, climate change. Swimming in natural bodies of water is framed as particularly pleasurable on a hot summer day in post 17, whereby references to rising temperatures are downplayed, while Finnish lakes are emphasized as a solution to hot summer conditions. A visual reel video depicting a plunge into cool water, rendered in natural colour tones, functions as an indirect textual frame, illustrating how climate change can be communicated in marketing through experiential means, akin to a form of adaptation strategy (Entman, 1993; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Beyond climatic and thermal comfort, captions play a central role in constructing local identity, national culture, and cultural heritage. Forests and lakes are explicitly named as some of the most significant sites of Finnish identity formation in post 1, anchoring these themes within a broader historical, national, and cultural narrative that extends beyond the visual landscape itself. While the image alone may communicate nature, tranquility, and spatial openness, the accompanying text frames the landscape as a symbol of national memory and identity, as well as a site of belonging. Forests and lakes are explicitly framed as central to Finnish identity, extending visual imagery of nature into cultural and historical discourse (Campelo et al., 2014). Similarly, more rhetorical and dialogic questions contribute to the construction of destination identity in post 27, appearing both as opening phrases – Escape to Finland – and as on-screen text throughout the Reels video – “Doesn't Finland sound good?” These textual elements invite and encourage the viewer to participate in meaning-making rather than remain a passive observer (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). References to sensory experiences – such as throwing water onto the sauna stove, the lapping of lake water, the call of the loon, the movement of plants in a light summer breeze, the crackling of a campfire, and birdsong – allow the visual sensory experience to extend beyond what is seen. In this way, Finland is positioned

as an emotionally safe place, and the destination's identity is constructed as culturally distinctive (Anderson, 2014; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Kavatzis & Hatch, 2013).

In Visit Finland's posts, textual elements consistently guide interpretation by linking visual representations to broader narratives of Finnish culture, environmental purity, and climatic comfort, while simultaneously activating climate-related meanings. Analyzing text, images, and reel videos as an integrated system of meaning enables the concept of coolcation to be understood not only through what is shown but also through how it is described, named, articulated, and emotionally framed (Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).

### **5.3 Representations of northernness, climate comfort, and place identity**

This section examines the third sub-question: *How are place identity and notions of northernness and climate comfort represented and negotiated in Finland's marketing materials?* The analysis interprets northernness and climatic comfort as discursively constructed attributes of destination identity rather than as neutral geographical conditions (Kavatzis & Hatch, 2013; Hall, 1997).

In Visit Finland's summer tourism marketing communications, northernness and Finnishness together construct a complementary destination identity that forms the central thematically identified discourse of the marketing message. Northernness is not framed as a challenging or restrictive condition; rather, it is presented as an appealing destination characterized by a cool climate and as a place where northernness itself is valued as cultural heritage and as a living Finnish tradition (Campelo et al., 2014; Kavatzis & Hatch, 2013). This experiential dimension of northernness is also made accessible to tourists, who are invited to engage with and experience it during their summer trips (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Through selective framing (Entman, 1993), northernness becomes associated with simplicity and harmony between humans and the environment. Northernness is visually articulated through recurring aesthetic and spatial signifiers. Expansive and diverse natural landscapes, low population density, and uncongested urban environments contribute to the construction of an identity grounded in simplicity, environmental balance, and authenticity (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). Northernness is associated, in particular, both visually and discursively, with natural light, environmental purity, and a sense of maximal natural landscapes in posts 4,

8, and 11, which are repeatedly represented through their unique experiential qualities rather than as geographically fixed attributes (Massey, 2005). Such elements positively contribute to the formation of a summer tourism identity in which Finland, through its natural and urban destinations alike, is positioned as a place of calmness and purity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Together with simplicity, environmental and natural balance, and authenticity in posts 4, 7, and 10, these characteristics generate an image of a place where life is lived in close coexistence with the environment. The absence of large crowds in the visual imagery, along with the limited emphasis on intensive activities, further reinforces perceptions of spatial freedom and abundance, positioning Finland as a summer destination where tourists are not subjected to climatic stress or spatial congestion (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Anderson, 2014). This representation aligns with destination identity theory, where place identity emerges through the interplay of cultural narratives, environmental features, and communicative practices (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014). Northernness is not merely shown, it is narratively positioned as a core part of Finnish identity, traditions, and everyday culture (Massey, 2005; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). These findings are visualized below (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Enjoying the city's greenery. Illustrative visualization based on patterns identified in Visit Finland marketing materials, generated by the researcher using Canva.

Climatic comfort is increasingly emphasized as a central attribute of destination identity in the most recent empirical materials published between 2023 and 2025. Even in the earliest

publications from 2019 to 2022, references to coolness are present; however, these are articulated primarily through the coolness of water and through visual representations of light and shadow. In contrast, more recent publications from 2023 to 2025 in posts 17, 27, and 28 explicitly portray Finland as a climatically comfortable destination and as an alternative to overheated tourist regions. This shift aligns with broader global discursive developments in which northernness has been rebranded in response to specific challenges posed by climate change (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019). In contemporary marketing communications, clean air, mild or pleasant summer weather, and cool temperatures are no longer framed as neutral environmental background conditions; rather, they are actively constructed and foregrounded marketing attributes that resonate with current and emerging tourism preferences, such as the concept of coolcation (Entman, 1993; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Climatic comfort is also conveyed in a subtle manner through high-quality visual marketing imagery, which nevertheless forms a coherent and credible narrative as a whole. Through visual discourse (Rose, 2016; Machin & Mayr, 2012), climatic comfort becomes embodied and affective rather than technical. Rather than being represented through statistical data or concrete temperature measurements, climate is communicated through cues mediated by the environment and the human body. People are depicted wearing light summer clothes and, when necessary, cooling down by swimming in pleasantly refreshing pure water. Similarly, certain activities are portrayed with light layered clothing, allowing participants to relax in lush shade while enjoying expansive landscapes. Such representations construct an image of northern climatic comfort that simultaneously normalizes and even renders desirable cooler and milder summer conditions (Anderson, 2014; Machin & Mayr, 2012). This narrative shapes perceptions and definitions of what is considered desirable and attractive in summer tourism and in the construction of destination identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Destination identity is constructed through a narrative alternation between the uniqueness of everyday life and the experiential qualities of the environment. Finland is portrayed as a distinctive, even exceptional, yet easily approachable place in which extraordinary nature-based experiences are presented as an integral and continuous part of everyday life. Nature and the urban environment are depicted as being in close proximity and effortlessly accessible. This interplay reinforces what destination identity theory describes as the co-construction of identity between place, residents, and visitors (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Massey, 2005; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Campelo et al., 2014). This is illustrated, for example, through representations of

shared moments among friends and family alongside everyday routines in posts 16, 18, and 30, in which there is a seamless transition to summer cottage shorelines for sauna rituals or to forest paths for breathing what is described as the world's cleanest air. Unique experiences are also offered by minimalist, aesthetically refined, and uncongested urban settings, which are framed as sites of distinctive urban culture. Together, these narratives reinforce a destination identity grounded in cultural heritage and living Finnish traditions, thereby enhancing the credibility of the coolcation experience within the Finnish context (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014; Massey, 2005; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Destination identity is not presented as a static concept. Across summer marketing materials from 2019 to 2025, a clear shift can be observed toward a stronger emphasis on discursive themes of environmental awareness. The analysis suggests a gradual shift in the marketing materials from a general nature-based summer imagery toward more explicit references to climatic comfort in posts published after 2023 (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Massey, 2005; Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall, 2016).

Through framing processes (Entman, 1993), northerness and climatic moderation are repositioned as strategic assets in a changing tourism landscape. This shift suggests that climatic comfort is increasingly emphasized as a component of Finland's summer tourism identity, one that also reflects broader transformations in tourism mobility (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019). At present, Visit Finland's marketing communications have constructed a summer tourism destination identity in which climatic comfort and northerness, together with emotional security and well-being, form a coherent and integrated whole. Through the interplay of visual imagery and textual narrative, the summer climate is framed as a cultural attribute and an experiential phenomenon, positioning Finland as a climatically comfortable summer destination.

#### **5.4 Summary of key findings**

This section examined how the coolcation phenomenon is constructed and communicated in the marketing communications of Finnish summer tourism through visual and textual discourse. The analysis of Visit Finland's social media materials from 2019 to 2025 indicates that coolcation is communicated in marketing not only through climatic references, but above all

through broader experiential and cultural narratives that are grounded in Finland's destination identity.

First, the findings demonstrate that coolcation is communicated through recurring symbolic and affective discursive themes. Nature, water, spatial openness, and happiness function as central motifs that structure representations of Finnish summer tourism. These elements construct an image of Finland as a destination characterized by environmental purity, tranquility, and emotional restoration. Rather than explicitly addressing climate change (Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall, 2006), the marketing materials present cooler temperatures, fresh air, and uncrowded landscapes as desirable experiential qualities, implicitly contrasted with destinations experiencing extreme heat or high levels of density.

A second key analytical finding indicates that the coolcation narrative emerges through the interaction of visual and textual communication. Images, colour palettes, and aesthetic compositions convey atmospheric impressions of freshness, tranquility, and spatial openness, while captions and texts embedded in both video and photographic content guide interpretation by framing these impressions through references to environmental purity, cultural identity, and climatic comfort (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997). Through this interaction, visual and textual elements together form a coherent communicative system that reinforces Finland's summer tourism identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014).

Third, the findings illustrate how northernness and climatic comfort have been strategically incorporated into destination identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Rather than being presented as geographical limitations, these characteristics have been repositioned as attractive qualities within the context of a warming climate (Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall, 2006). More recent marketing materials increasingly emphasize moderate temperatures, clean air, and mild summer conditions, suggesting a gradual shift towards positioning Finland as a desirable coolcation destination.

Taken together, these findings address the main research question by demonstrating how coolcation is constructed and framed through symbolic, visual, textual, and place identity-based representations within Finnish tourism marketing communication. Overall, the findings indicate that coolcation marketing communication frames Finland as a climatically comfortable, nature-based, and emotionally restorative summer destination. Through selective framing and visual

discourse, northern environmental characteristics are presented as attractive elements within Finland's destination identity resources that resonate with broader discussion on climate-related changes in tourism mobility (Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Kavartzis & Hatch, 2013; Urry, 2007; Scott et al., 2019). These findings will be further discussed in the following chapter on the theoretical implications of coolcation marketing communication.

## 6. DISCUSSION

This study examined how the coolcation phenomenon is constructed and communicated in Finland's summer tourism marketing discourse through both visual and textual modalities. By analyzing social media marketing published by Visit Finland between 2019 and 2025, the study explored how symbolic themes, the interaction between visual and textual elements, and the concept of northernness contributed to the construction of Finland's summer tourism identity. The findings highlight that coolness, climatic comfort, and environmental purity are not merely isolated climatic attributes, but rather central conceptual elements in shaping Finland's destination identity.

This chapter addresses the main research question: *How does Finnish marketing communication construct and frame coolcation and Finland's summer tourism identity?* – by bringing together the key findings of the analysis. In doing so, it reflects on three interrelated analytical dimensions: the symbolic and affective narratives used to communicate coolcation, the interplay between visual and textual communication, and how northernness and climatic comfort are represented as part of destination identity. These perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of how coolcation is communicated through symbolic, emotional, visual, and place identity-based representations. Rather than emerging as a singularly defined concept, coolcation is constructed through the interplay of recurring narratives, visual-textual communication, and representations of northernness and climatic comfort. These dimensions illustrate how Finland's summer tourism identity is shaped through marketing communication as a coherent, multi-layered, and contextually situated phenomenon (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

### 6.1 Theoretical implications of coolcation marketing communication

From a broader perspective, the findings are consistent with established discussions on the impacts of climate change on tourism mobility. Previous research (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019) has demonstrated how climate change increasingly influences travel decision-making and the seasonality of tourism, for instance, as rising temperatures affect the attractiveness of traditional summer destinations. The findings of this study suggest that Finnish tourism marketing communications do not explicitly frame climate change as a problem; rather,

it implicitly positions Finland as a desirable destination in a warming climate. Through narratives that emphasize cool air, clean water, and nature, moderate summer temperatures, and spacious environments, marketing communication aligns with emerging tourism imaginaries that value climatic comfort and the overall quality of the environment (Urry, 2007; Campelo et al., 2014). From this perspective, coolcation appears less as a direct reference to climate discourse and more as an experiential narrative that is connected to broader climate-related shifts in tourism demand and patterns of mobility (Urry, 2007; Scott et al., 2019).

Second, the findings highlight the role of destination identity in the development of coolcation marketing communication. Destination identity theory (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014) emphasizes that place identities are socially constructed through narratives, symbols, and communicative practices. In the analyzed materials, Finland's summer identity is built through recurring symbolic motifs, such as nature, water, spatial openness, and happiness. Together, these elements position Finland as a destination associated with tranquility, emotional restoration, and environmental purity. Within the data corpus, northernness is not presented as a fixed geographical location; rather, marketing communication rearticulates it as an attractive experiential quality that differentiates Finland from other tourism destinations (Hall et al., 2015). This strategic articulation of identity suggests that climatic moderation and environmental purity are becoming increasingly integrated into the narrative of Finland's tourism brand (Kalandides, 2011; Campelo et al., 2014).

Third, the findings contribute to discussions on the framing of tourism marketing and visual discourse (Entman, 1993). The analysis demonstrates how meaning is constructed through the interaction between visual imagery and textual elements. Images dominated by natural landscapes, cool colour palettes, and tranquil nature and urban environments evoke sensory impressions of freshness, calmness, and spatial openness, while accompanying captions simultaneously guide interpretation by explicitly linking these visual cues to narratives of purity, well-being, and climatic comfort. From a framing perspective (Entman, 1993), this process involves the selective emphasis of certain attributes while others remain implicit. Climate change is rarely addressed directly; instead, climatic comfort is communicated through experiential and affective cues embedded within visual representations. This finding supports previous research suggesting that visual discourse plays a significant role in shaping tourism imaginaries and destination perceptions (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016).

In summary, the findings suggest that coolcation functions as a narrative bridge between environmental conditions and tourism experience. Rather than focusing on climate as a technical or scientific phenomenon, marketing communication translates climatic attributes into sensory and emotional experiences that are meaningful to tourists (Bissell, 2010; Anderson, 2014). Coolcation is communicated through climatic comfort, landscape, colour, and spatial openness, rather than through explicit references to temperature, thereby reinforcing the role of visual and discursive meaning-making (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). This experiential framing enables climate-related attributes to be interpreted as part of a broader marketing narrative and tourism discourse centered on well-being, authenticity, and connection to nature as integral components of the travel experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar, 2012).

Overall, coolcation marketing communication in Finland operates at the intersection of climatic imaginaries, destination identity construction, and visual framing practices. By selectively emphasizing environmental purity, tranquility, and pleasant summer conditions, tourism marketing communication helps position Finland as a climatically comfortable and emotionally restorative summer destination (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014; Entman, 1993). At the same time, these representations participate in broader tourism imaginaries and mobility discourses in which tourists increasingly seek destinations associated with climatic comfort, environmental quality, and relief from overcrowded or overheated environments. In this sense, coolcation marketing communication does not merely promote a destination, but also contributes to the symbolic reconfiguration of desirable tourism mobilities in the context of climate change (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019).

This study contributes both theoretical and empirical value to tourism research. From a theoretical perspective, it engages with and extends the existing discourse on climate-induced tourism mobility by conceptualizing coolcation not merely as a behavioral trend but as a discursive and interactive phenomenon in which destination marketing practices play an active role (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Scott et al., 2019; Gössling & Hall, 2006). By integrating destination identity theory, framing theory, and visual discourse analysis, the study demonstrated how climatic conditions are constructed as symbolic and affective meanings within tourism marketing communication (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Entman, 1993; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Rose, 2016). From an empirical perspective, the study provides insight into how Finland's national tourism marketing produces and communicates the coolcation phenomenon through

social media content, emphasizing the significance of visual and textual interplay in the development of destination identity in a warming climate.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

This study examined how the coolcation phenomenon is constructed and communicated in Finnish summer tourism marketing communication. By analyzing Visit Finland's social media posts, the study explored how symbolic narratives, visual-textual communication, and representations of northernness contribute to the construction of Finland's tourism identity. The findings indicate that coolcation is communicated less through explicit climate discourse and more through symbolic and affective narratives emphasizing nature, water, spacious landscapes, and happiness. Together, these discourses position Finland as a destination associated with environmental purity, tranquility, and emotional restoration (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Anderson, 2014), while simultaneously reflecting broader climate-related shifts in tourism demand and mobility (Urry, 2007; Scott et al., 2019).

The analysis demonstrates that visual and textual elements operate together as an integrated communication system. Visual imagery evokes sensory impressions of coolness, freshness, and spatial openness, while captions and textual descriptions in reel videos guide interpretation by linking these impressions to broader narratives of cultural identity, well-being, and climatic comfort (Entman, 1993; Rose, 2016). Through this interaction, tourism marketing communication constructs a coherent destination identity in which the distinctive characteristics of the northern environment are framed as attractive experiential qualities and, ultimately, as experiences to be lived by the tourist (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Campelo et al., 2014).

The findings of the study also suggest that Finnish tourism marketing has, in recent years, increasingly incorporated climatic comfort as a more explicit element. In the earlier marketing materials within the data corpus, emphasis is placed on closeness to nature, presented both as an integral aspect of Finnish identity and as an experience to be shared with tourists. In contrast, more recent publications place greater emphasis on moderate temperatures, clean air and environment, and their calming and restorative qualities for the visitor. This shift indicated a growing alignment between tourism marketing narratives and broader climate-related

transformations in tourism mobility (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019).

This study contributes to contemporary discussions on tourism mobility and the multi-layered impacts of climate change on tourism demand, practices, and emerging phenomena. It advances tourism research by demonstrating how coolcation can be understood not only as a climate-related tourism trend, but also as a communicative and discursive phenomenon shaped by destination marketing practices. By integrating visual discourse analysis with destination identity theory, the study highlights the role of marketing communication in transforming climatic attributes into meaningful tourism experiences (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Rose, 2016).

From an ethical perspective, the findings highlight several tensions related to the role of marketing communication in shaping climate-related tourism practices. While portraying Finland as a climatically mild and emotionally restorative destination responds to evolving patterns of tourism mobility driven by climate change (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019), it may simultaneously contribute to the reconfiguration and potential intensification of tourism flows toward northern regions. This raises concerns regarding the environmental, social, cultural, and economic carrying capacity of these destinations, as they are increasingly positioned as refuges from climate-related pressures already intensifying elsewhere (Urry, 2007; Gössling & Hall, 2006; Scott et al., 2019). The marketing discourse constructs, both visually and textually, an image of the traveller as a person seeking authenticity, comfort, and emotionally restorative experiences beyond the crowded spaces of mass tourism, even though, institutionally, the marketing communication remains embedded within tourism marketing and destination branding practices (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Salazar, 2012; Campelo et al., 2014).

Moreover, the analysis illustrates that climate change is communicated largely implicitly through experiential and affective narratives, rather than being addressed explicitly. Through framing processes (Entman, 1993; Hall, 1997), certain climatic advantages, such as coolness, freshness, and spatial openness, are selectively highlighted, while broader structural and societal challenges associated with climate change remain in the background. From the perspective of destination marketing communication and destination identity construction (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013), this suggests that climate-related meanings are translated into

culturally and emotionally appealing narratives, raising questions about the overall transparency and responsibility of such communication practices and their relation to place identity.

More broadly, the findings reflect the fundamental paradox of tourism, in which mobility both responds to and contributes to climate change (Gössling & Hall, 2006). While coolcation marketing communication aligns with evolving travel behaviors and imaginaries shaped by global warming (Urry, 2007; Scott et al., 2019), it may simultaneously reinforce carbon-intensive travel practices that underlie the phenomenon itself (Gössling & Hall, 2006). This underscores the need for more critical and ethically informed approaches to destination marketing communication, in which the communication of climatic benefits is balanced with considerations of responsibility, sustainability, and the broader impacts of tourism development (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

The study's findings should be considered in light of certain limitations. The empirical data are confined to official social media content produced by Visit Finland, representing the perspective of official national tourism marketing communication. Future research could be expanded to examine marketing communication produced by regional tourism organizations, private tourism businesses, or user-generated content. Comparable cross-national research could also be extended to other northern destinations, such as the Nordic countries and Scotland, which are known to attract coolcation tourism (Coolcation Nordic, n.d.; Hospitality.today, 2024). In addition, comparative studies of northern destinations could provide further insight into how comfort and well-being narratives are constructed across different tourism contexts.

Overall, the study highlights that coolcation marketing communication positions Finland as a climatically comfortable, nature-based, and emotionally restorative summer destination. As climate change continues to influence travel patterns and preferences, understanding how destinations communicate their climatic advantages may become increasingly important for tourism development and destination branding (Urry, 2007; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Scott et al., 2019).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Theoretical frameworks relevance to the research questions

(Table 1) Summarizes the key theoretical perspectives guiding this research and illustrates how each perspective contributes to addressing the research questions.

Table 1. Relevance of the theoretical frameworks to the research questions.

Theoretical Perspective	Key Concepts / Focus	Representative References	Relevance to Research Questions
<b>1. Destination Identity</b>	Socially constructed meanings: narratives, symbols, affective associations, and tourism imaginaries	Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013); Campelo et al. (2014)	Provides the central theoretical concept through which Finland's summer tourism marketing communication is examined. Explains how destination identity is constructed.
<b>2. Framing Theory</b>	Selection, emphasis, interpretation of climate, northernness, seasonality	Entman (1993); Hall (1997)	Explains how specific aspects of reality (e.g., cool climate) are strategically highlighted and framed in marketing communication.
<b>3. Destination Communication</b>	Strategic communication; identity construction; narrative place-making	Kavaratzis & Hatch (2013)	Clarifies how identity is communicated and negotiated through marketing practices.
<b>4. Visual Discourse Perspective</b>	Visual meaning-making; imagery, colour, composition, representation	Machin & Mayr (2012); Rose (2016)	Provides the perspective for a later analytical lens for how visual elements construct meanings and reinforce destination identity.
<b>5. Sustainable Destination Identity &amp; Climate Context</b>	Climate change; sustainability; tourism mobility; coolcation	Gössling & Hall (2006); Urry & Larsen (2011)	Situates the coolcation phenomenon within broader socio-environmental transformations shaping tourism demand and marketing communications.

## **Appendix 2. Description of the empirical data corpus**

The empirical data of the study consist of 30 publicly available summer tourism marketing publications released by Visit Finland between 2019 and 2025 on their social media platforms, Instagram and Facebook. The publications include still images, image carousels, and short reel videos, accompanied by captions and hashtags, as well as on-screen textual descriptions in the videos. The majority of the empirical material was collected from Instagram, as captions and descriptive texts were no longer available on Facebook for posts published before 2024.

The selected empirical material represents a broad empirical corpus of marketing communication related to summer tourism in Finland, with particular emphasis on nature-based experiences, expansive landscapes, everyday leisure practices in Finnish society, and affective states characterized by tranquility, climatic freshness, natural light, and a sense of spatial openness in both urban and natural environments. The publications depicted lake landscapes, forests, archipelagos, diverse urban culture, and Finnish sauna culture, most often framed through narratives of simplicity, authenticity, everyday Finnish life, and wellbeing.

The data corpus was selected using a purposive selection strategy, with emphasis on publications that contribute to the construction of Finland's summer tourism identity and the emerging phenomenon of coolcation tourism. The publications were not treated as individual case studies; rather, the material was analyzed thematically as an interconnected corpus, in which recurring visual motifs, textual descriptions, and affective appeals were examined across posts. All publications form part of Visit Finland's official tourism marketing communication and were analyzed in their original public context. Individual images are not reproduced in this study; instead, they are examined thematically through visual and discursive interpretation. This approach aligns with established practices in qualitative and visual discourse analysis, where meaning is understood to emerge through patterns, repetitions, and shared symbolic associations rather than through isolated artefacts.

### Appendix 3. Mapping of research questions and empirical data corpus

(Tables 2 and 3) Illustrate how the empirical material informs the main research question and the three complementary sub-questions. For reasons of readability, the empirical data corpus (n=30) is divided into two separate tables, with (Table 2) presenting posts 1-15 and (Table 3) presenting posts 16-30. The tables demonstrate that most publications simultaneously address multiple analytical dimensions, thereby evidencing the integrated nature of symbolic, visual, and place-based meaning-making in the marketing communication of tourism regions and destinations.

Table 2. Mapping of research questions and empirical data 1-15.

<b>Post</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Main RQ</b>	<b>SQ 1: Symbols, Narratives &amp; Emotional Appeals</b>	<b>SQ 2: Visual-Textual Interaction</b>	<b>SQ 3: Place Identity, Northernness &amp; Climate Comfort</b>
1	Instagram	2019	X	X	X	X
2	Instagram	2019	X	X	X	X
3	Instagram	2019	X	X	X	
4	Instagram	2019	X	X	X	X
5	Instagram	2019	X	X		X
6	Instagram	2019	X	X	X	X
7	Instagram	2020	X	X	X	
8	Instagram	2020	X		X	X
9	Instagram	2021	X	X	X	X
10	Instagram	2021	X	X		X
11	Instagram	2021	X	X	X	X
12	Instagram	2021	X	X	X	X
13	Instagram	2021	X	X		X
14	Instagram	2022	X	X	X	X
15	Instagram	2022	X	X	X	X

The overlap between the sub-questions is intentional and methodologically justified, as meanings associated with coolcation tourism and destination identity are constructed primarily through the interaction of narratives, visual imagery, and representations of place, rather than through discrete communicative elements.

Table 3. Mapping the research questions and empirical data 16-30.

<b>Post</b>	<b>Platform</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Main RQ</b>	<b>SQ 1: Symbols, Narratives &amp; Emotional Appeals</b>	<b>SQ 2: Visual-Textual Interaction</b>	<b>SQ 3: Place Identity, Northernness &amp; Climate Comfort</b>
16	Instagram	2022	X	X	X	
17	Instagram	2022	X	X	X	X
18	Instagram	2022	X	X	X	X
19	Instagram	2023	X	X	X	X
20	Instagram	2023	X	X	X	X
21	Instagram	2023	X	X		X
22	Instagram	2023	X	X	X	X
23	Instagram	2024	X	X	X	X
24	Instagram	2024	X	X	X	X
25	Facebook	2024	X	X	X	X
26	Instagram	2024	X	X		X
27	Instagram	2025	X	X	X	X
28	Facebook	2025	X	X	X	X
29	Facebook	2025	X	X		X
30	Instagram	2025	X	X	X	X

## Appendix 4. Empirical data corpus

Post 1. Visit Finland. (2019, May 24). *One of the most important birthplaces of the Finnish identity are the deep green forests and the glittering blue lakes* [Instagram post]. Instagram.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bx2EoZOgIPS/>

Post 2. Visit Finland. (2019, May 29). *Summer, sauna and taking a dip in a lake is just perfection* [Instagram post]. <https://www.instagram.com/p/ByDRwkg8qY/>

Post 3. Visit Finland. (2019, June 11). *Helsinki is buzzing with happy energy* [Instagram post].

Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BykuNFAhN7m/>

Post 4. Visit Finland. (2019, June 14). *With round-the-clock sunlight, cottage life is the best way to recharge your batteries* [Instagram post]. Instagram.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/ByscqMeAjap/>

Post 5. Visit Finland. (2019, June 18). *Did you know that Finland is one of the world's richest countries in its water resources?* [Instagram post]. Instagram.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/By3HNBGBKBy/>

Post 6. Visit Finland. (2019, July 29). *Late night dips in pure water lakes. Need we say more?* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/B0gVNH0g6RM/>

Post 7. Visit Finland. (2020, June 24). *A moment of forest therapy taking in the multitude of summer smells* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CB0P3lgDLJY/>

Post 8. Visit Finland. (2020, June 29). *More hours of light mean there's more time to appreciate surrounding landscapes* [Instagram post]. Instagram.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CCBIEj6jTsS/>

Post 9. Visit Finland. (2021, June 7). *What makes us Finns happy?* [Instagram post].

Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CP0WVV9jIIo/>

Post 10. Visit Finland. (2021, June 9). *Up here in the north, June is the month of green abundance* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CP5pxDeAKM8/>

Post 11. Visit Finland. (2021, June 25). *How does happiness relate to Midsummer?*

[Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CQiV3hiNoal/>

Post 12. Visit Finland. (2021, July 14). *Finnish water is the purest in the world* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CRTIO83jTZh/>

Post 13. Visit Finland. (2021, August 4). *Our nature is free and available to everyone*

[Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CSJp7c1jAg4/>

Post 14. Visit Finland. (2022, May 25). *The long summer evenings with friends and family are on the horizon* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd-kJ61gAgj/>

Post 15. Visit Finland. (2022, June 22). *This time of the year is best enjoyed by the water* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CfGkPsgASVv/>

Post 16. Visit Finland. (2022, July 8). *Just like nature, a city can also bloom in the summer!* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cfv0USyrjak/>

Post 17. Visit Finland. (2022, July 15). *Swimming in the clean natural waters on a hot summer day* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CgBdozoA8Q9/>

Post 18. Visit Finland. (2022, July 20). *Who knew you could travel up north for some sizzling beach life?* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CgOt7sBLhDM/>

Post 19. Visit Finland. (2023, March 27). *Golden sunsets, tranquil moments, and total relaxation* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CqSPFP8AJD0/>

Post 20. Visit Finland. (2023, March 31). *Who else is waiting for the summer days in Finland?* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CqcbgcjKhqg/>

Post 21. Visit Finland. (2023, May 22). *Nature is not merely a backdrop; it is an essential part of our well-being* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CsimxQ6MMWf/>

Post 22. Visit Finland. (2023, June 2). *Longing for an escape from the city?* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cs-xKthoOAE/>

Post 23. Visit Finland. (2023, July 16). *Hop on board unforgettable cruises on Finland's waters* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9fTnCOMDkP/>

Post 24. Visit Finland. (2024, April 26). *Breathe in the magic of Finland: World's purest air* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6OEAWHty-w/>

Post 25. Visit Finland. (2024, June 13). *Finland's Archipelago – the world's largest with over 50,000 islands!* [Facebook post]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=861915132637653>

Post 26. Visit Finland. (2025, July 1). *Health benefits of spending time in forest* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C84AeLRM8Db/>

Post 27. Visit Finland. (2025, March 12). *We all need a bit of Finland in our lives* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHGUSDmtNcd/>

Post 28. Visit Finland. (2025, March 26). *Beach holiday, but make it cool* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHp9tpItAxx/>

Post 29. Visit Finland. (2025, June 5). *Stairway to heaven* [Facebook post]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1121230660039431>

Post 30. Visit Finland. (2025, July 8). *Postcard from Helsinki* [Instagram post]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DL1gF-MMB20/>

## **Appendix 5. Prompts for analytical visualizations**

### **Image 1**

First prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media. Background: a Finnish summer landscape (lake + forest + sky), with soft lighting. Central element: one person or a small group (not active), sitting on a pier or by the shore. Embedded elements around: calm water surface, sauna (cottage), boat, light on the horizon. Colour scheme: natural light, green, blue.

My observations: The overall look is very similar to Visit Finland's marketing images. In the background on the horizon, there are tall, sharp mountain peaks, which are not typical of Finnish landscapes. The forest in the background looks like a single species. The 4 people on the pier all look identical and are sitting in the same positions.

New prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media. Background: A Finnish summer landscape in the Finnish Lakeland (lake + dry pine forest + sky), with soft lighting (morning or evening). Central element: two people sitting on a pier in different positions (not active, different genders), with some items/objects such as a towel and a backpack. One person is calmly swimming next to the pier. Embedded elements: calm water surface, sauna building, light on the horizon. Colour scheme: natural light, green, blue.

Result: Image 1.

### **Image 2**

First prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media. Background: Finnish Lapland, the Pallas fells, and the nightless night in July. A peaceful fell landscape and two people hiking (clothing and equipment). Text on the image in thin white letters: "breathe the world's cleanest air". Colours: natural light, green, blue, stone.

My observation: Good overall image, but half of the sky is dark with stars.

New prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media. Background: Finnish Lapland, the Pallas fells, and the midnight sun in July. A peaceful fell landscape and two people hiking (clothing and equipment). Text on the image in white letters: "breathe the world's cleanest air". Colours: natural light, green, blue.

Result: Image 2

### Image 3

First prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media.

Background: Nallikari beach in Oulu in a wide perspective, sunset “golden hour” in August. A few people on the beach (different ages), spaced apart, and text on the image: “northern beach holiday”. Colours: natural light, yellow, red, sand, water.

My observation: Good overall image, but some people are wearing full winter gear and clothes.

New prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media.

Background: Nallikari beach in Oulu in a wide perspective, sunset “golden hour” in August. A few people on the beach (different ages, in summer clothing, some sitting, some standing), spaced apart, and text on the image in thin white letter: “northern beach holiday”. Colours: natural light, yellow, red, sand, calm water.

Result: Image 3

### Image 4

First prompt: Could you create a realistic-looking marketing image for social media. Overall look: urban nature in Helsinki. Background elements: a typical cityscape, a café, a few people sitting at café tables, calm atmosphere, no crowds, spacious feel, sunny weather, some shade from trees, people wearing light clothing. Foreground: a park, a few people having a picnic. Colours: natural light, green.

My observation: Good overall image, but the café awning contains several words in Russian.

New prompt: Change the text on the awning to Finnish “kahvila”.

My observation: Canva changed the awning text to “café”.

Result: Image 4.