UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
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MASTER THESIS

AN ANALYSIS OF FINNISH TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE DESTINATION IMAGE OF SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

Destination image is an essential part of tourists' destination decision making and therefore it is relevant to analyse perceptions about the destination image attributes and overall destination image in the eyes of potential first-time or repeat visitors. This research is an analysis about the destination image of Slovenia perceived by Finnish tourists. A quantitative and deductive research approach and structured research methodology have been applied in order to measure and analyse the perceptions of Finnish tourists' destination image of Slovenia, which is the research purpose. The research purpose is supported with three hypotheses. A comparison was made between the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, and the ones, who have not. In addition, both groups' perceptions have been analysed separately as well. The research is based on an online questionnaire centralising around the perceptions about the common functional and psychological destination image attributes' list defined by Echtner and Ritchie as well as the primary and secondary overall destination images of the respondents. To test the hypotheses, statistical tests were conducted with the help of SPSS software program version 26.

The final amount of the respondents to the questionnaire as 223, with 122 Finnish tourists, who had not been to Slovenia, and 101, who had visited Slovenia. Although it was hypothesized that the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge of Slovenia's destination image, it was not possible to accept this hypothesis as there was no statistical confidence for that. For the second hypothesis, the results showed that there are significant differences in the perceptions about the destination image attributes and the overall destination image between the Finnish tourists, who had been to Slovenia, and the ones, who had not been to Slovenia, so this hypothesis was accepted. The Finnish tourists, who had been to Slovenia, evaluated the attributes and the overall destination image significantly better, excluding only one attribute, namely the coast with great beaches. Furthermore, their perceptions showed clear satisfaction with willingness to revisit Slovenia and recommend it as a destination to others, so the third hypothesis was accepted as well. The recommendations of this research are to enhance the secondary destination image of Slovenia in Finland and target both first-time and repeat visitors by promoting and emphasising the nature and active destination image attributes. In addition, as neither of the groups evaluated the sustainability attribute highly, the awareness about it should be increased as it is a fundamental part of the promoted destination image of Slovenia. It is recommended also to research Finnish tourists' perceived destination image of Slovenia more in detail and including the holistic components of the destination image to understand their perceptions better and more comprehensively.

Keywords: destination image, destination image attributes, Slovenia, Finnish tourists

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and due to the continued growth and emergence increasing number of new destinations, the competition between tourism destinations is becoming more strategic and profound (UNWTO, 2019). Destination image has been for long a frequently discussed research topic in tourism as it is a fundamental part of tourist's destination decision making process (Pike, 2002; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007). Destination image is a constantly evolving and broad concept, which makes it hard to be defined precisely. Furthermore, it is impossible to specify any exact destination image as the perceptions about a destination image are always alternating depending on the individuals, time and space. Regardless of the complicatedness of the destination image concept, it is very clear that destination image holds a strong potential effect in attracting tourists to a destination so there have been multiple research about the destination image concept (Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002; Pike, 2002). Destination image is an essential way to differentiate from other destinations as it has the power to change people's perceptions and make them act in favour of the destination, so it is a crucial part of the destination marketing. This is critical especially in the tourist's destination choice process, and therefore also with the success of the tourist numbers to the destination, especially with the increased competition between destinations (Dolnicar & Huybers, 2010; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007). Finally, when the tourist chooses to visit a destination, the satisfaction with the experience in relation to the destination image has an essential role in the revisit intentions of the tourist, so the destination image does not lose its importance even after visiting the destination (Pike & Ryan, 2004). In addition to only examining the destination image of the actual travellers, the importance of examining the destination image of potential travellers has been understated. Because of the intangible nature of many tourism products and services, positive destination images are a crucial way to compete. As it has been concluded that tourists who have a weak or neutral destination image, will likely not visit the destination, but this could be changed through enhanced destination image promotion. Therefore, the major objects of destination image marketing strategies are to reinforce positive images, to correct negative images or to create new improved images (Crompton & Fakeye, 1991; Lindblom, Lindblom, Lehtonen & Wechtler, 2017; Pike & Ryan, 2004).

Slovenia is an example of a destination that has prominently improved its destination image in the recent years. As Slovenia was one of the Ex-Yugoslavian countries, having declared independence in 1991, Slovenia's destination image as an independent country was built and introduced relatively recently. The first attempts of the destination image building were not very successful, until finally initiating a systematic destination image marketing approach with the '**I feel Slove**nia' brand in 2007, which established Slovenia's destination image focussing vigorously on the theme of nature and sustainable tourism (Konecnik Ruzzier,

2012; Konecnik Ruzzier & de Chernatony, 2013). Despite the current, systematic destination image marketing, the perceptions and knowledge about Slovenia's destination image might not be that clear for many people because of the short history of Slovenia as an independent country. Also, the small size of Slovenia does not necessarily imply the geographical and cultural diversity of the country as a destination. There have been few earlier analyses about the destination image of Slovenia, for example in the eyes of tourist experts and German tourists (Konecnik, 2002; 2003; 2005; Konecnik Ruzzier & Ruzzier, 2006), but there are still many other opportunities to analyse Slovenia's destination image, for example from the perspective of a more distant tourist market, such as a Northern European country.

In the current Slovenian tourism strategy for 2017-2021, Finland has been named as a potentially emerging market (Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, 2017). In order to formulate effective marketing strategies for the Finnish tourist market, it is essential to analyse the destination image perceptions, in the case with the Finnish tourists. Although more Finnish tourists are travelling to Slovenia nowadays than in the past, Slovenia still has a relatively unknown destination image in Finland and because of that, some Finnish tourists do not necessarily know how attractive destination Slovenia could be for them. This research thesis takes a better look into the process of destination image formation and components, and after analyses the perceived destination image of Slovenia among the Finnish tourists in relation to the earlier destination image theories. Ultimately, this research is attempting to designate and analyse the differing knowledge and perceptions of the Finnish tourists' destination image of Slovenia, depending on if they have visited Slovenia or not. If this difference exists, the Finnish tourist numbers could be increased through an enhanced promotion of Slovenia's destination image in Finland. Therefore, this research is the first attempt of trying to identify and analyse the Finnish tourists' perceived destination image of Slovenia, whether they have visited Slovenia before or not. It is also a meaningful destination image analysis from a more distant country perspective compared to the earlier destination image analyses of Slovenia's destination image from closer tourist markets. The research is carried out with the help of an online questionnaire and three research hypotheses, which will be explained more in detail in the methodology chapter, and the results are analysed later by using statistical tests.

The outline of the research thesis consists of four chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusions chapters. The first chapter after introduction is the literature review, which points out the earlier research related to the destination image concept by explaining its definition, formation and components. After that, the literature chapter explains the basic facts about Slovenia as a country, presents the background of the promoted destination images of Slovenia and the earlier destination image studies about Slovenia. In addition, this chapter gives some picture about Slovenia as a destination for the Finnish tourists and describes the reasoning behind their suspected potential interest. The second chapter introduces the methodology of the research, which justifies the chosen methods for the research approach as well as the research purpose and goals with the three hypotheses. The

methodology chapter covers further the primary and secondary data collection and analysis methods. Lastly, it also showcases the design of the questionnaire conducted in the research, the hypotheses testing methods and the limitations of the research that should be taken into account. The third chapter of empirical findings describes the results of the questionnaire and answers to the hypotheses. Intrinsically, the fourth chapter is a fundamental discussion chapter, which takes a deeper look into the findings and analyses them more profoundly by debating about the research objectives as well. The discussion chapter accompanies further with the future implications and generalisability of the research. Lastly, the thesis finishes with the conclusions of the research.

1. DESTINATION IMAGE LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes the earlier research and theoretical framework regarding the concept of destination image including its definition, formation and components. After that, the chapter introduces the background of Slovenia's destination image providing information about the basic facts of Slovenia, its promoted destination image, earlier research about that and the characteristics of Slovenia as a destination for the Finnish tourists.

1.1 Destination image concept

1.1.1 Destination image definition

Before defining what is a destination image, it is useful to briefly present the definition of a destination. According to UNWTO (2007) a destination is a central part for the tourists when deciding to go on a trip as destination is the place, that the tourist visits, and the physical space, where the tourist spends at least one night. In other words, travelling to a destination is the main aim of tourism. Moreover, all destinations have some destination attributes, such as accessibility, attractions, amenities, prices, images and human resources (UNWTO, 2007). As destinations compete with each other in tourist arrivals, destination image is an important part of that competition as it strongly affects the destination decision making of a tourist (UNWTO, 2019; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007).

Destination image is composed by ideas, thoughts, attitudes, impressions and beliefs that an individual has about a certain destination. These mental constructions include various subjects, such as the geographical location, political situation, overall atmosphere and environment. Furthermore, the individual reflections can be either positive or negative as well as true or false (Tegegne, Moyle & Becken, 2018). Destination image is generated from many different sources and it creates tangibility for the tourists, especially prior visit at the destination. Destination image has a very high importance in tourism marketing because tourism is an intangible service and cannot be experienced prior to purchase (Crompton & Fakeye, 1991). One of the first definitions of the destination image was formulated by Hunt

in 1975 as "an impression of people, places, climates and attractions" (Hunt, 1975, p. 1), and a few years after that in 1977, Lawson and Baud Bovy defined the destination image as "a combined expression of all the emotional thoughts, knowledge and prejudices about a particular destination" (in Jenkins, 1999, p. 2). However, Crompton's destination image definition from 1979 is still one of the most referenced, being "a sum total of all impressions, ideas and beliefs associated with a destination" (Crompton, 1979, p. 18). Later in 1991, Crompton and Fakeye described the destination image further with "accumulated ideas, expectations, impressions, beliefs and feelings towards a destination" and one of the latest definition by Kim in 2014 concludes it as "...a favourable image of the destination's attributes (e.g., beautiful landscape, shopping opportunities, cultural exchange, infrastructure, safety and activities)..." (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008, p. 264). Since the creation of the destination image concept in 1970s, it has been a frequently researched topic, for example between 1973 and 2000 there were at least 142 papers about the destination image concept (Pike, 2002).

As these definitions demonstrate, destination image is a complex concept with different interpretations and lacking an exclusive definition and conceptualization (Madden, Rashid & Zainoul, 2016; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007). Further, it can be characterized with multiplicity as destination image both affects and is affected by multiple factors from knowledge to feelings (Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002; Beerli & Martín 2004). Firstly, the national image of the country has certainly an effect on the country's destination image. This is an important side of the destination image and includes for example the political, economic, social and historical factors of the country (UNWTO, 1980). Still, no destination has an image that is shared similarly by all tourists. Destination image is often formed differently by individuals as it depends on their personal experiences and their gained information, like Crompton's definition with impressions, ideas and beliefs highlights (1979). Even though the destination image is built up individually by the tourist, some groups can share common perceptions through same interests, knowledge and experiences about the destination. Despite the external impacts, there are many internal factors that play an influential role in the individually formed destination image of tourists. The sociodemographic characteristics of the tourist, like age, education, gender, life situation and income, have been suggested as affecting the perceptions and destination images of an individual. The most crucial characteristics, that influence the perceptions and destination images, are believed to be the age and education of the tourist. As destination image is subjective to the individual, it makes the concept of destination image relativistic in nature and allows comparisons among destinations (Jenkins, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002). Regardless the individual images, destination images can often be shared by a group of people and these shared images tend to create stereotypes about the destination (Jenkins, 1999, p. 1-2). These stereotypical images of the destinations are often inaccurate and simplified. This can have some significant consequences in many other ways as well as some studies have argued that the individuals' personal destination images affect their evaluations about the perceived value, quality of services, satisfaction and loyalty too (Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012; Jenkins, 1999). At the same time, the destination image concept is dynamic as it can convert continually in time and space. The change in time is logical as destination image formation is a constant process and the change in space has been evidenced by some studies that found the positive correlation between closer physical distance and the destination image (Kislali, Kavaratzis & Saren, 2016; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002).

Effective destination images are well-communicated, distinctive, appealing, simple and believable so they should be based on reality of the destination. In order to make the destination image work, it should always start from the truth as implausible or disappointing destination images will have negative long-term effects on the tourists' destination choice making (UNWTO, 1980; Önders & Marchiori, 2017). Recognizable and positive destination images have the potentiality to affect the tourist's destination choice compared to unrecognizable and negative destination images (Di Marino, 2008; Lindblom, Lindblom, Lehtonen & Wechtler 2017). In addition, it was researched that destination image affects also the satisfaction with the destination and can lead to destination loyalty with revisiting and recommending the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008). To sum it up, destination image correlates strongly with the travel intention and it is characterized as a complex, multiple, relativistic and dynamic concept (Crompton & Fakeye, 1991; Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002; Önders & Marchiori, 2017).

1.1.2 Destination image formation

Just like there exist many definitions of destination image, there are also many theories about the destination image formation process. Earlier research papers highlighted that people tended to visit the destinations near their geographical spaces as they were mostly informed about these areas through friends, family and media (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). However, nowadays the world is much more globalized, and through the Internet, it is possible to provide information to anyone from any part of the world. Due to the availability of information overload, the destination image formation is a continuously evolving process. At the beginning in 1965, Reynolds portrayed the process of destination image formation as "the development of a mental construct based upon a few impressions chosen from a flood of information" (Reynolds, 1965, p. 69). This flood of information comes from promotional material (like travel brochures), other media (including newspapers, books and movies) as well as from friends, family and other people's opinions, even through word-of-mouth communication (WOM), and nowadays social media. Finally, when personally visiting the destination, the image is modified by the individual judgement based upon first-hand information and experience (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). The general framework of destination image formation model was defined by Baloglu and McCleary (1999). According to that, the destination image is formed by external stimulus factors and internal personal factors. The former includes the information sources and previous experience, while the latter is about psychological matters, such as values and motivations, as well as about socio-demographics, like the age and education of the tourist (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Furthermore, it has been researched that destination image perceptions are transforming before, during and after the trip (Martín-Santana, Beerli-Palacio & Nazzareno, 2017, p. 1).

Still, one of the most acclaimed theories about the destination image formation process was constituted by Gunn, who made a difference between the definitions of organic, induced and primary destination images. The organic image is built up with all of the transmitted information for instance via television, radio, books and newspapers or magazines or even

opinions of family and friends. It is mostly general information and also linked to the national image of the destination. As organic image is usually beyond the control of the destination's marketing efforts, in contrast the induced image is a more commercial reflection being formed by the promotional material and communication of the tourism organisations of the destination. The promotional material can be both verbal and visual, from which the visual aspects often draw more attention as they illustrate the destination's actuality (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Gunn, 1989; Tran Thi Ngoc, 2016). Induced image is based on mostly persuasive promotion of the destination image (Crompton & Fakeye, 1991; Gunn, 1989). Primary image is created only after a visit in the destination and it develops a more realistic, specific and complex image of the destination (Madden, Rashid & Zainoul, 2016; Gunn, 1989). It has also been shown that the tourists, who stay longer at the destination, form an even truer and better destination image compared to the short-stay tourists. Furthermore, when the pre-visit expectations of the destination image are fulfilled during the actual visit, the tourists are more satisfied and a positive destination image after the visit can in continuation lead to revisiting the destination in the future and recommending it to others (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Moreira & Iao, 2014). It is important to note that even an individual, who has not visited the destination, can possess a certain destination image based on the organic and induced images (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Some studies have also demonstrated that the primary image can enhance the prior positive image of the destination but if the tourist has a negative destination image before the visit, it can be hard to change that belief (Phillips & Jang, 2010).

In relation to the before mentioned organic, induced and primary images of the destination, Gunn further developed a seven-phase model about the destination image formation process. In each stage of the model, the destination image is transforming from the organic to induced and finally to primary image. The stages go followingly:

1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences **(the organic image)**.
2. Modification of those images by further information **(the induced image)**.
3. Decision to take a vacation trip.
4. Travel to the destination.
5. Participation at the destination.
6. Return home.
7. Modification of image based on vacation experience **(the primary image)**.

It can be seen in this sequence that the destination image is formed primarily in the first and second stages, and after it is reformed again in the last stage (Kim & Chen, 2015; Gunn, 1989). It has been studied that the most important matter is the initial image formation before the trip so the first stage of Gunn's model. The reason is that the subsequent stages follow usually only if the first stage has created a destination image that is interesting enough for the tourist to acquire more information about the destination and move to the second stage of the model. The seventh stage of the model is equally important for the revisit purposes

and its compliance depends on how the first time visit at the destination was experienced. The relation between the primary destination image and the actual experience can have either favourable or unfavourable consequences depending strongly on the satisfaction with the destination. A positive evaluation of the visit experience of the destination maintains or improves the positive destination image of the tourist. Conversely, a negative evaluation of the visit would deteriorate the earlier perception and change it into a more negative destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Jenkins, 1999; Huang & Hsu, 2009). However, commonly the primary image is more positive compared to the organic and induced images of people, who have never been in the destination before (Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). In many other research papers, the organic and induced images have been combined together as the secondary or naïve destination image, which is formed before visiting the destination. These research papers also concluded that after actually visiting the destination, the tourist forms a primary or re-evaluated destination image, which a more realistic image of the destination compared to the secondary destination image (Vitouladiti, 2013; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004). Many researchers also encourage making comparisons with the secondary and primary destination images (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007). To sum up the destination image formation process, the overall destination image is formed in several phases by multiple images, including organic, induced and primary sources. This thesis will focus on comparing the secondary destination images contrasted to the primary destination images to see if there are any significant differences between the perceptions of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, and the ones, who have not.

1.1.3 Destination image components

The attractiveness of a destination image is highly influenced especially by the destination image components. The reason, why tourists would choose one destination over another, is often because they regard that chosen destination as superior or unique compared to other destinations. However, like stated before, the characteristics of a destination image are complex and multiple. First of all, a destination image is a combination of attributes-related and holistic evaluations about the past, present and future. These evaluations include both cognitive and affective components. Cognitive components are more rational and related to physical and tangible attributes, whereas affective components are linked to emotional factors, such as feelings and motivations. Therefore, the cognitive components are more dependent on the individual's knowledge about the destination. After cognitive components, the affective components appear and they are based on feelings, which can be either positive, negative or neutral in relation to the destination image. Finally, cognitive and affective components become interrelated and further build up together the conative component, also known as the behavioural component, which is the probability of a trip intention towards visiting a destination within a certain time period. This includes also the probability of revisiting the destination or recommending it to others as the conative component is strongly

linked to the satisfaction and loyalty with the destination (Kim & Chen, 2015; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013; Ferreira Lopes, 2011).

Some researchers have asserted that the cognitive component has more initial power compared to the affective component as people usually acquire first information about the destination before starting to develop the emotional side of the destination image (Souiden, Ladhari & Chiadmi, 2017). On the other side, since both components are important in destination choice, the destination image promotion should not emphasize only the physical properties, but also evoke emotions to draw the individual's attention. More precisely, it is better to develop destination image promotion, that does not emphasize all the emotions that the destination could generate, rather focussing on the certain emotions a group of individuals are attracted to. That is one more reason why studying the destination image components of individuals or groups of people are significant in the destination promotion (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2007). Some studies have also shown that the cognitive and affective destination images are influenced by the individual's country of origin. Especially, if the cultural values of the destination are similar to the cultural values of the individual's country of origin, the individual is more likely to have more confidence in the destination (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2007). As depending on the cognitive knowledge about the destination image, the affective perceptions can be either favourable, neutral or unfavourable (Pike & Ryan, 2004; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2007). Additionally, favourable perceptions about the attributes in relation to the cognitive component have been shown to be leading to a more positive behavioural attitude towards the destination, which can further proceed to the creation of the conative component and the actual visitation of the destination (DiMarino, 2008).

Finally, the importance of conative component is continuously essential as repeat visitors bring a lot of benefits for the destination. First of all, the costs for attracting repeat visitors are considerably lower than for first-time visitors, and secondly, the repeat visitors are already aware about the destination attributes and values, which impacts on their behaviour as well. On top of all, the repeat visitors continue being word-of-mouth distributors for the destination and can become loyal to the destination (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Oppermann, 2000; Moreira & Iao, 2014). Satisfaction with the destination is a crucial requirement to attain repeat visitors, and the tourist's expectations before the trip do affect the overall satisfaction after the trip. If the experience is better than the expectations, the positive destination image gap can lead to higher level of satisfaction (Martín-Santana, Beerli-Palacio & Nazzareno, 2017). So, to sum up the relationships between the cognitive, affective and conative components, several studies have proved that the cognitive component affects both the affective and the conative components (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Önders & Marchiori, 2017). However, the affective component also affects the conative component and when the cognitive and affective components interlock together, the destination image is comprised by a mix of factual knowledge, individual beliefs, memories, meanings, evaluations and decisions (Giraldi & Cesareo, 2014; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Still, when separating the

components into the cognitive, affective and conative categories, all of them require different measurement scales, which makes it challenging to survey all three components in the same research (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Echtner and Ritchie, who had defined destination image together in 1991 as "the perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination" (in San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2007, p. 264; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), developed the framework of destination image components even further and deeper by creating a diagram model with three component dimensions (based on a similar framework of product image components). These dimensions include attributes to holistic components in the horizontal axis, functional to psychological components in the vertical axis and common to unique in the diagonal axis (shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1: The components of destination image
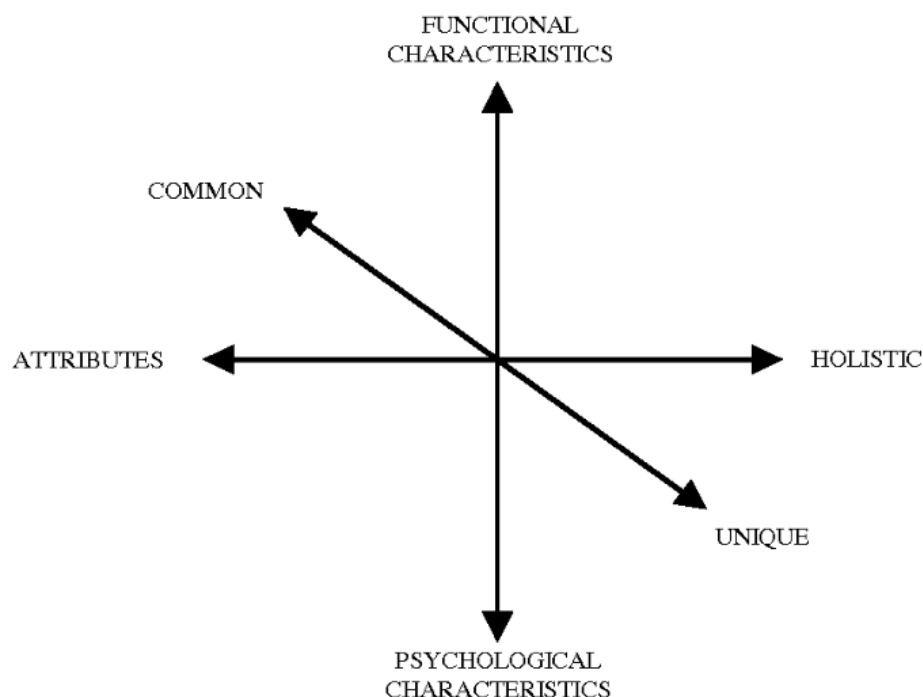
Source: Echtner & Ritchie, (2003).

The attributes and holistic based components are the main groups that can be categorised according to the other components in the model. For example, the functional components are tangible and therefore it is possible to measure and observe them. The functional components can be further divided between functional attributes and functional holistic components' categories. The former category includes for instance landscapes, attractions, service facilities and price levels of a destination. The latter category consists of measurable or physical mental pictures, for instance about the appearance of an attraction. The functional attributes are strongly linked to the cognitive perceptions about the destination image. The

psychological components in contrast to functional components are intangible, which makes them abstract and hard to measure. Examples for psychological attributes are atmosphere and service friendliness, while psychological holistic components arise from emotions and impressions about the ambience in different contexts, so they are related to the affective perceptions about the destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Lastly, Echtner's and Ritchie's model distinguishes between the common and unique components. Common components are features that exist in every destination, such as prices, landscapes and infrastructure, so comparisons between this type of attributes is possible. Still, a difference is made between common functional and common psychological components. Examples for common functional components are prices and climate, whereas landscapes and locals' friendliness belong to the common psychological components. Unique components are specific to a certain destination, for example the Eiffel tower in Paris and pyramids in Egypt, or even famous events, like St Patrick's day in Ireland. The unique functional components are more related to the physical environment, for instance Taj Mahal in India or Mt. Everest in Nepal, whereas an example for the unique psychological components could be the reggae music culture in Jamaica or the romantic atmosphere in Paris (Kislali, Kavaratzis & Saren, 2016; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). The unique components are a major aspect as they unquestionably affect in the destination choice process. Still, Echtner and Ritchie claimed that when people are less familiar with the destination, they usually form the destination image based on the attributes and common components. Respectively, if people are more familiar with the destination, they trust more on the holistic and unique components in their destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Furthermore, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) provided a list of 35 functional and psychological common attributes that are usually present in all destinations and the most commonly included attributes in several destination image theories. These 35 attributes are listed below:

FUNCTIONAL (physical, measurable)
Scenery/Natural Attractions
Costs/Price Levels
Climate
Tourist Sites/Activities
Nightlife and Entertainment
Sports Facilities/Activities
National Parks/Wilderness Activities
Local Infrastructure/Transportation
Architecture/Buildings
Historic Sites/Museums
Beaches
Shopping Facilities
Accommodation Facilities

Cities
Fairs, Exhibitions, Festivals
Facilities for Information and Tours
Crowdedness
Cleanliness
Personal Safety
Ease of communication
Economic Development/Affluence
Accessibility
Degree of Urbanisation
Extent of Commercialisation
Political Stability
Hospitality/Friendliness/Receptiveness
Different Customs/Culture
Different Cuisine/Food and Drink
Restful/Relaxing
Atmosphere (Familiar versus Exotic)
Opportunity for Adventure
Opportunity to Increase Knowledge
Family or Adult Oriented
Quality of Service
Fame/Reputation
PSYCHOLOGICAL (intangible, abstract)

These proposed attributes refer to the common and cognitive components of the destination image range from functional (e.g. scenery and transportation) to psychological ones (e.g. atmosphere and quality of service). In the middle are the attributes that can be perceived both as functional or psychological, such as cleanliness, crowdedness or accessibility (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Many other researchers have also attempted to define the most important destination image attributes, ranging from 10 to 43 attributes, but Echtner's and Ritchie's attribute list is one of the most recognized and implemented among the destination image theories (Madden, Rashid & Zainoul, 2016). It is recommended to analyse the perceptions of the overall destination image and the destination image attributes separately as the tourists might have a positive overall destination image, even if some of the destination image attributes would be evaluated negatively. Still, it is claimed that the tourist's satisfaction with several individual destination image attributes will lead to the satisfaction with the overall destination image perception. As a continuation, the satisfaction with both the destination attributes as well as with the overall destination image can further lead to the destination loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Rajesh, 2013). Therefore, it is worthwhile to identify the key destination image attributes that match with the preferences of the target tourists and try to emphasize those attributes in the destination image to be more appealing to the target tourists (Moreira & Iao, 2014). Some studies have shown that the importance of the destination

attributes varies as well. For some tourists at specific destinations, the most important attributes were related to the tourism facilities (such as accommodation, local transport, hospitability, price levels and communication), while in some other destinations the tourists evaluated the scenic beauty and food as the most important attributes (Tran Thi Ngoc, 2016; Rajesh, 2013).

To sum up all the destination image components, Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil (2007) created a model about the interactive system of the destination image components (shown in Figure 2). This model shows the levels of the destination image components and the arrows indicate how these levels are connected to each other. The inner levels have impact on the outer levels, but the outer levels have also impact on the inner levels. These impacts can be towards different directions, but finally all the levels combined together build up the holistic, overall destination image. The main conclusion of the model is that destination image is created through the interaction of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations and intentions.

Figure 2: Interactive system of destination image components

Source: Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, (2007).

This research thesis will focus on Finnish tourists' perceptions about the common functional and psychological attributes identified by Echtner and Ritchie. In addition, the thesis will observe about the cognitive and affective components of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, as well as the conative component of the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, to find out about their willingness to revisit Slovenia or recommend Slovenia as a destination. Lastly, the concentration will be on the overall destination image evaluated by the common attributes.

1. 2 Slovenia's destination image background

1.2.1 Basic facts about Slovenia

Slovenia is a small country with a population of about two million and it is located in the corner of Central and Southern Eastern Europe. The neighbouring countries of Slovenia are Italy to the West, Austria to the North, Hungary to the East and Croatia to the South. The surface area of Slovenia is 20,273 square kilometres, which makes it one of the smallest countries in the world. The capital of Slovenia is Ljubljana with the population of 280,000 citizens. Despite the small surface are, the geography of Slovenia includes a diverse mixture of regions ranging from Alpine mountains to Pannonian lowlands and to 46.6 km of coastline by the Adriatic Sea. The highest peak of Slovenia is 2,864 m in the Triglav mountain, which is located in Triglav National park, the only national park in Slovenia, although about 60 % of Slovenia's surface area is covered by forests (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019a; Konecnik & Go, 2008; Omerzel Gomejelj & Mihalic, 2008). The ancestors of Slovenes are slavs but in the history Slovenia has been part many larger countries including Frankish and the Habsburg empires as well as the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. All these past periods have also had their own influence on the culture of Slovenia. Moreover, Slovenia is a relatively young country as it declared its independence just 28 years ago in 1991 after being part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This changed the state of Slovenia significantly as it transformed from the socialist regime into a market economy and became a more open nation internationally (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2015; Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019a; Konecnik & Go, 2008).

Tourism has had an increasingly growing trend in Slovenia during the past 10 years. This can be seen in the tourist arrivals and overnight stays. For example, comparing the year 2017 with 2016, the international tourist arrivals in Slovenia increased by 18,3 % and the international overnight stays by 16,8 %. Further, comparing the year 2017 to 2018 the tourism in Slovenia increased by 8 % as the international tourist arrivals ended up to 4,42 million (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019e). In 2018 the tourism industry contributed to 12.3 % of the total GDP of Slovenia (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). In addition, when comparing with the international tourist arrivals to Slovenia in 2009, they were only 1.82 million, so the amount has doubled in just eight years as in 2017 the tourist arrivals were already 3.59 million (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018). This indicates that the awareness and interest of Slovenia as a destination have grown remarkably during the last years. The three biggest tourist markets to Slovenia in 2018 were Germany (12,19 %), Italy (11,94 %) and Austria (9,05 %). Other remarkable markets were Netherlands (5,48 %), Croatia (4,72 %), Hungary (4,34 %), United Kingdom (4,21 %), Czech Republic (3,86 %) and Serbia (3,37 %). The share of Finnish tourists was 0,52 % with 23 022 tourist arrivals (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019e).

1.2.2 Slovenia's promoted destination image

Slovenia has created a strong destination brand during the recent years, and as a result the tourism numbers have increased enormously. The slogan of Slovenia's tourism brand promoted by the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) since 2007 is 'I feel Slovenia', which immediately targets emotions with the words feel and love. The slogan is often accompanied with the words: "Green. Active. Healthy.", as those are the types of holidays that Slovenia wants to inspire people for (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2018; Konecnik Ruzzier, Petek & Ruzzier, 2015). More specifically, green stands for the constant presence of nature, rich biological diversity and for the sustainable tourism principles in Slovenia. Active encompasses all the plenty, various outdoor and adventure activities that Slovenia as a destination offers. Healthy comprehends the wellness-side with first of all the healing thermal waters that Slovenia possesses, alongside with the excellent Slovenian cuisine from high-class local ingredients (Slovenian Convention Bureau, 2016).

Following this, some of the core characteristics of the current destination image are Green Slovenia and the strong thrive for sustainability and nature preservation. The reasons for this robust will to protect the nature is obvious as two thirds of Slovenia are covered by forests. The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism is a specifically designed tool to certificate tourism companies with the "Slovenia Green" umbrella brand in the national level, giving them recognition and making the tourists aware of the green businesses. It brings together all the efforts towards the shared aim of continuous sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia, as the guidelines say: be, act and promote green. The different Green Scheme categories include green destinations, accommodations, parks and travel agencies (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019c). Additionally, Slovenia has gained a lot of international recognition as well: in 2016 Slovenia was declared as the world's first green destination based on an assessment by Green Destination and in the same year Ljubljana, with the almost entirely car-free center, was chosen as the Green Capital of Europe (Hojnik, Ruzzier & Konecnik Ruzzier, 2019; Ljubljana Tourism, 2016). Furthermore, Slovenia as a country was awarded among the "World's Top 10 Sustainable Destinations" in 2018 in Internationale Tourismus-Boerse Berlin convention and recognised with the European Smart Tourism Award 2019 for outstanding achievements with sustainable tourism (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2018; European Capital of Smart Tourism, 2019).

Slovenia's tourism campaigns have always focused quite much on the affective component by trying to appeal emotions. However, one of the first campaigns of Slovenia, still during the Yugoslavia times in 1980s, was called 'Slovenia, my homeland' and it was directed almost more inwards than outwards (Konecnik Ruzzier & Petek, 2012), as it was often promoted just in Slovene language: 'Slovenija, moja dežela', which translates in English as 'Slovenia, my homeland' (shown in Figure 3). This campaign was greatly cherished by the Slovenes, but it did not reach the same attention abroad. The campaign demonstrated the love and care that Slovenes have for their country, but it had almost more political than

touristic impact as Slovenia was already yearning for the independence from Yugoslavia. However, this campaign is in the memories of many Slovenians and occasionally still recollected in some tourism promotion material. The symbol for the campaign was a linden leaf.

Figure 3: The early tourism slogan and logo of Slovenia

Source: govori.se, (2017).

After that, the next campaigns 'Tourism is people' and 'On the sunny side of the Alps' were more outward-oriented. In 1995, the symbol was changed to a bouquet of flowers with the new slogan of 'Slovenia - The Green Piece of Europe'. What has continuously been a part of Slovenia's tourism slogans, is the presence of nature, but Slovenia's destination image was still not systematic enough, probably after too many different slogans in a short time. The next slogan 'Slovenia invigorates' in 2003 was not capable of reaching that either as it was even hardly understood by either foreigners nor Slovenes. The changing campaigns were confusing and resembled rather advertising than establishing a credible destination image brand. Finally, '**I feel Slove**nia' in 2007 was the breakthrough campaign (shown in Figure 4) and together with all the earlier mentioned actions has positioned Slovenia as both an environmentally-rich and -friendly destination (Prešeren, 2016; Konecnik Ruzzier, 2012).

Figure 4: Slovenia's current tourism slogan and logo

Source: Slovenian Tourist Board, (2019).

When comparing the earlier destination image campaigns of Slovenia to the last one, significant differences can be noticed. The earlier campaigns were much more focussed on the functional qualities, while '**I feel Slove**nia' is identifies more as a holistic campaign. In

addition, the campaigns before were not systematic as they were frequently changing. The current campaign works systematically as an umbrella campaign for other Slovenia related tourism campaigns and gives consistency. The holistic approach covers a broader domain, including commercial, cultural and historical perspectives and strives for long-term strategy. 'I feel Slovenia' was created after a carefully designed large-scale project, which emphasized the identity of Slovenia as felt by the Slovenes themselves. The involvement and participation of relevant stakeholders and Slovenian inhabitants as well as the long-term orientation in the destination image branding of 'I feel Slovenia' are also related to the sustainable tourism concept, which takes into account the environmental, economic and social aspects (Konecnik Ruzzier & Petek, 2012; Konecnik & Go, 2008; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). The current strategic vision of tourism in Slovenia for 2017-2021 assembled by the Slovenian Tourist Board goes followingly: "Slovenia is a global green boutique destination for demanding guests who are seeking a diverse and active experience, peace of mind and personal benefits". Their latest digital marketing campaign of Slovenia is called: 'Slovenia. Make New Memories.'. Finland together with Denmark, as the only Nordic countries mentioned in the strategy, are identified as "other European markets to be promoted for", after the key markets of Germany, Italy, Austria, the UK and Ireland (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019b). More precisely, the key objectives for Slovenian tourism by Slovenian Tourist Board are: to increase Slovenia's recognisability and image as a tourist destination under the brand 'I feel Slovenia', the sustainable growth by increasing arrivals and overnight stays throughout the entire year, the geographic dispersion of flows across Slovenia (by implementing macro destinations), to increase consumption by extending the average duration of stay and consumption and to focus on high-end visitors seeking high-quality, diverse, and active experiences, peace, and personal benefits (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019d).

1.2.3 Earlier research about the perceived destination image of Slovenia

In 2001 a pilot research about Slovenia's general image as a tourism destination was conducted for 119 tourism representatives in ITB tourism fair. The purpose of the research was to make a comparison between the perceptions of tourist experts, who had visited Slovenia (28 % of the participants), and the ones, who had not (72 % of the participants). The interviews included both structured and unstructured questions based on the destination image attributes listed by Echtner and Ritchie. Perceptual and cognitive evaluations about 23 attributes were asked and the results of t-test showed that most of the mean value differences of the attributes were significantly more positively rated by the tourist experts, who had visited Slovenia. Some exceptions were the traditional events and the beaches, as they were rated better by the tourist experts, who had not visited Slovenia. The highest rated attributes were friendly people, beautiful nature while some of the lowest rated attributes were the quality of infrastructure and entertainment. Still, the main conclusion was that the tourist experts, who had visited Slovenia, had a significantly better opinion about Slovenia's

overall destination image than the tourist experts, who had not visited Slovenia (Konecnik, 2002; 2003).

Another research about the tourism representatives' perceived destination image of Slovenia was conducted in 2005 and now the comparison was made between the closer and more distant markets. The results concluded that there were significant differences in the perceptions of the destination image of Slovenia between the tourism representatives from closer and more distant markets as the tourism representatives from the more distant markets hold a less favourable destination image of Slovenia (Konecnik, 2005). In addition, in 2006 a research about Slovenia's competitiveness as a destination was conducted to the tourist expert stakeholders in Slovenia by rating different attributes. Even this research confirmed that there is need for improvement with destination image, perception and awareness as these variables were rated below 3 on the scale from 1 to 5 by the tourist experts. For example, the international awareness was rated only with the mean value of 2 in the 5-point scale (Gomezelj Omerzel, 2006).

Also, in 2006 a research about the perceptions of the German visitors versus non-visitors to Slovenia was conducted. According to that study and 402 German respondents, the previous visitation to Slovenia significantly improved the destination image awareness of the German tourists. However, the perception of Slovenia's destination image was hold quite neutral or slightly positive by both groups, still the destination image attributes were rated more positively by the visitors than the non-visitors. Also, the German visitors were significantly more likely to revisit Slovenia and recommend it as a destination compared to the German non-visitors. The most positive perceptions were related to the friendliness of the people, pleasant weather and to the natural attractions, such as mountains and lakes, while the most negative perceptions were related to the infrastructure, personal safety and accommodation (Konecnik Ruzzier & Ruzzier, 2006). Furthermore, in 2012 the Slovenian Tourist Board conducted a study about the destination brand '**I feel Slove**nia' perceived by the Italian, Austrian, German, British and Japanese tourist markets. The results showed that the perceptions of all of the markets included the natural attractions (mountains, lakes and the sea) and the friendliness of the people (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2012).

Already these earlier research papers have recognised that in order to boost the overall destination image of Slovenia, it is needed to identify the destination image gaps between tourists, who are familiar and unfamiliar with Slovenia as a destination (Konecnik, 2003). As the earlier study about Germans' perception of Slovenia's destination image did show significant differences between the visitors' and non-visitors' destination image perceptions with some attributes, it is interesting to test similar hypotheses with the Finnish tourists to see if there are any different or similar results related to the destination image attributes and the overall destination image perception. Also, in addition to a different country, this research is taking place 13 years after and after Slovenia's successful '**I feel Slove**nia' destination image campaign, which might have had some impact even on the non-visitors'

perceptions. Also compared to Germany, Finland is a more distant market to Slovenia and the awareness of Slovenia as a destination could be lesser-known because of that like the earlier studies have suggested (Gallarza, Gil Saura & Calderón García, 2002).

1.2.4 Slovenia as a destination for the Finnish tourists

There are many reasons why the characteristics of Slovenia as a destination could be attractive for the Finnish tourists. First of all, nature has always been very important for the Finnish people as Finland is the most forest covered country in Europe, while Slovenia is the third most forest covered country in Europe (Eurostat, 2018). Nature is something that can create a familiar, emotional connection for the Finnish people. The most visible difference with Slovenian nature is the Alpine mountains. Despite the fact that Finland has some small mountains in the North, they are a long distance away from the capital area of Helsinki and many Finnish people do not see mountains very often. Already enjoying the breath-taking mountain views and engaging in mountain activities, like hiking or biking, would be exclusive experiences for the Finnish tourists in Slovenia. Besides, as many Finnish people are into winter sports, there could be real potential in promoting Slovenia as a winter destination as well. Cross country skiing is highly popular in Finland and although Finland has plentiful of tracks for that, the landscape for cross country skiing by the mountains would be totally different in Slovenia. Similarly, with Alpine skiing, the mountains in Slovenia are much higher than in Finland and therefore many Finnish skiers would assumedly prefer skiing in the Alps than in Lapland in Northern Finland. According to an earlier survey, 27% Finnish people, who ski, travel to ski centres in Austria (Rantapallo, 2014). Especially for families who like to ski, Slovenia's easier and less expensive ski resorts could be competitive options to other Alpine skiing destinations.

In addition to the mountains, Slovenia has further other exquisite tourism attributes from the perspective of Finnish people. Due to the colder Northern European climate in Finland, warmer weather is definitely desired by many Finnish tourists. Slovenia as a beach destination could be an interesting novelty compared to the more traditional and popular destinations for the Finnish tourists, such as Spain, Greece or Italy (Statistics Finland, 2017). The rich gastronomy in Slovenia is another distinction and as Finland is not a wine-producing country, Finnish tourists could enjoy the less known Slovenian quality wine and visit the various vineyard regions that also serve delicious local culinary dishes. Finally, as wellness is a highly cherished indulgence among the Finnish people proved by the traditional sauna culture in Finland, the natural thermal spas could be appreciated by many Finnish tourists (Arranz, 2017).

If Finnish people were more aware of these destination attributes in Slovenia, the tourism numbers could certainly increase. For Finnish tourists Slovenia could be a relatively affordable destination compared to many other popular destinations in Europe and at the same time, Slovenia could gain economic advantages in tourism revenues as Finnish people

have generally a medium or high income in The global comparison so they could be able to afford different tourism services and activities in Slovenia (Trading Economics, 2019). Furthermore, as a consequence of the respect for the nature, both Finland and Slovenia are continuously ranked as sustainably-oriented countries. As Slovenia is strongly promoting sustainable tourism image (Christ, 2018), it would be advantageous to target tourists from countries that share similar values about the importance of sustainability and Finnish tourists are familiar with many sustainable practices, which would be beneficial for the conservation of sustainable tourism in Slovenia (Lyytimäki, 2014). Lastly, Finnish tourists could be potential all-year round tourists in Slovenia, avoiding tourism peak during the summer time in Slovenia. The reasons for that are that Finnish tourists like to engage themselves into winter activities in the winter, and even autumn and spring seasons in Slovenia are warmer in temperature compared to the same seasons in Finland and could be attractive for Finnish tourists. Also, if the first hypothesis about new Finnish tourists' poor knowledge about Slovenia's destination image holds true, this can be an advantage as well as the induced images, based on the destination promotion, can be focussed on all-year round tourism instead of promoting only summer holiday season.

Lastly, taking into account the STB's key goals of tourism in Slovenia, enhancing the destination image promotion for the Finnish tourists could improve reaching the goals by increasing Slovenia's recognisability and image as a tourist destination in Northern Europe, increasing arrivals and overnight stays throughout the entire year, increasing consumption by extending the average duration of stay (as due to the fact of the longer distance between Finland and Slovenia, the Finnish tourists would probably stay at least for few days) and focussing on high-end visitors seeking high-quality, diverse, and active experiences, peace, and personal benefits (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019d). Taking into consideration the aforementioned arguments, it is relevant to study more about the Finnish tourists' perceptions of Slovenia's destination image.

2.   METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research method and justifies the research purpose and goals introducing the research hypotheses. The chapter also depicts about the primary and secondary data collection and analysis, questionnaire design, the hypotheses testing methods and limitations of the chosen methodology.

2.1 Research method

The quantitative research method was chosen for this research because of its effectiveness in measuring and analysing the Finnish tourists' knowledge and perceptions about

Slovenia's overall destination image as well as the common destination image attributes. The advantages of the quantitative research method are that it is less time-consuming and allows reaching a wider network and bigger number of respondents. As this research aims to make the bigger picture, quantitative research method is more suitable compared to qualitative research method (Rowley, 2014). In addition, the paradigm of this quantitative research is positivist, which is linked with generalisable results through the testing of hypotheses and theories with the empirical findings. The research approach is deductive in nature as the research is striving to approve or reject the hypotheses by analysing the measurable results derived from the research questionnaire based on the destination image theories presented in the literature review chapter (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). As according to the theories, the primary image of the destination is mostly more positive compared to the organic or induced images, this research is examining by comparing the destination images of Finnish people, who have been to Slovenia, and the ones, who have not. The research type is a survey as the research is conducted with a structured questionnaire, which is the most used destination image measurement technique (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003; Pike, 2002). The structured survey method is easy to manage and code, but it lacks the capability to capture insight about the holistic components, which would require unstructured survey method. Unfortunately, the disadvantage of unstructured survey method would be the limited ability for statistical analyses (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Rashid & Ismail, 2008).

2.2 Research purpose and goals

The research purpose is to make an analysis about the destination image of Slovenia perceived by the Finnish tourists, who have been and who have not been to Slovenia. By including both groups, it is possible to analyse both the secondary destination images of the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, and the primary destination images of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia. The research purpose is to expand the understanding about the perceptions prior visiting Slovenia and after the visit. According to the destination image theories, it is prospected that the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, have more positive destination images than the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia. As a consequence of the prospected destination satisfaction of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, this research could establish the position of Finnish tourists as a potentially emerging market as defined by the Slovenian Tourist Board (Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Republic of Slovenia, 2017). The research purpose is supported by the following three hypotheses:

H1: The Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge about the destination image of Slovenia.

H2: The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, have a significantly more positive image about Slovenia as a destination than the Finnish people who have not been to Slovenia.

H3: The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, would like to revisit Slovenia.

The goals of this research are related to the research hypotheses. The first research goal linked with the first hypothesis and it focuses solely on the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, by trying to find out about the strength of their knowledge about the destination image of Slovenia. The goal is to resolve if there exists weak knowledge about Slovenia's destination image, that could be demonstrated by the lack of information and with a neutrally perceived destination image. The second goal is to compare the secondary and primary destination images, and to observe if there are any significant differences between the perceptions of the Finnish tourists, who have not and who have been to Slovenia. The last research goal is about the satisfaction and loyalty in relation to the conative components of the destination image theory and it concentrates only on the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia. Regarding the satisfaction, the goal is to clarify if their experience was better, worse or as expected, and for the loyalty part, if they would be willing to repeat their visit or distribute positive word-of-mouth communication by recommending Slovenia as a destination.

The reasoning behind the research purpose is that the number of Finnish tourists in Slovenia at the moment is not that high but the problem could likewise be due to the lack of information about the destination image of Slovenia. If the Finnish people, who have visited Slovenia, have a positive destination image of Slovenia because of their previous travel experience there, it could mean that Slovenia could be a compelling destination for many more Finnish tourists. The hypotheses are supported with the theoretical framework of the destination image formation, which states that there are changes in destination image before and after visitation, so it is meaningful to separate the images of those individuals, who have visited the destination, from those individuals, who have not (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). If the hypotheses can be accepted with the results of the research, they could implicate that it would be worthwhile to increase the promotion of Slovenia's destination image in Finland to increase the awareness and establish Slovenia as an attractive destination choice for the Finnish tourists. If the hypotheses are rejected, it would probably not be notably profitable to enhance the marketing efforts of Slovenia as a destination for the Finnish tourists.

In order to be able to effectively analyse and develop Slovenia's destination image among the Finnish tourists, it is crucial to clarify some specific details about their current awareness as well. More broadly, the additional objectives of this research are:

- **Objective 1:** To identify the differences in perceived destination image of Finnish tourists, who have been and who have not been to Slovenia.

- **Objective 2:** To measure Finnish tourists' awareness about the sustainable tourism orientation in Slovenia.

- **Objective 3:** To find out about the potential interest of the Finnish tourists' travelling to Slovenia for the first time or repeating the visit.

The first objective is linked to the theoretical framework of destination image formation by comparing the secondary destination image (formed by the organic and induced images) to the primary images (formed after the visit), explained detailly in the literature review chapter (Gunn, 1989; Madden, Rashid & Zainoul, 2016; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). The second objective was chosen as sustainability is a strongly promoted attribute in Slovenia's destination image by the Slovenia Tourist Board (2019) and its meaning in the promoted destination image of Slovenia will be explained more in detail in the second part of the first chapter. In addition, environmental image affects the destination choice as well and can be competitive advantage in the destination image (Mihalic, 2000). The last objective is meant for the future implications to find out if it would be worthwhile to increase the promotion of Slovenia's destination image in Finland for both the first-time and repeat tourists.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

The secondary data collection was acquired mostly about existing destination image theories and about Slovenia's destination image. This information was retrieved from the scientific databases, such as from Science Direct, SAGE and Google Scholar. The retrieved literature included various research papers and articles about the theoretical framework of destination image (grey literature) as well as the relevant news, statistics, publications and earlier studies about the destination image of Slovenia. As there exist multiple research materials about the destination image concept, only the most acclaimed theories were reviewed for the base of this research. After a careful review, the most applicable destination image theories, in regard to the research purpose, were chosen for the theoretical framework of this research. Furthermore, to provide a better understanding about the background Slovenia's destination image, an overview of this was gathered by several sources including the promotional material of Slovenian national tourism board, statistical fact sheets and research papers about the perceived destination image of Slovenia.

In line with the quantitative research approach, the primary data collection is based on the questionnaire as the research instrument. The primary data collection is based on quantitative data through a structured and self-administered questionnaire. A structured methodology is good at specifying common attributes, usually in standardised forms, like semantic differentials or Likert scales. The advantages of a standardised structured method are that the responses are easy to code for interpretation and allow for comparisons. The structured

questions concentrate on Finnish tourists' perceptions or experiences of Slovenia as a destination and on the characteristics of Slovenia's destination image. In addition, the structured methodology can help to recognize if the perceived destination image of the Finnish tourists coincides with the promoted destination image of Slovenia (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2007).

The questionnaire was conducted to the Finnish people through self-selection sampling, which is part of the non-probability sampling methods, as the participants identify themselves if they want to take part in the research. This is the most suitable method as the sampling is conducted online through a web-based survey. Still, the participants have an equal opportunity to take part in the research (Bryman, 2012; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). The link for the survey will be distributed in social media, mainly by spreading the link to the questionnaire for example in different travel related Facebook groups. As it would have been impossible to study the total population of Finnish tourists, the aim is to get a sample size of at least 150 respondents and preferably from different age groups to make it as representative as possible and to see if there are any differences between the age groups' responses. The age limit is 15 years old, taking into consideration that younger people rarely make their own destination choices, which is a relevant factor in the research purpose and destination image concept. After the questionnaire data will be processed and analysed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software version 26, and the hypotheses are tested by using the statistical tests in the program.

2.3 Questionnaire design

The beginning of the questionnaire includes a description of the purpose of the survey and the assurance of anonymity as participants are often more honest when their identities are hidden (Bryman, 2012). The outline of the actual questionnaire can be divided into three sections: (i) general questions about the participants (age, gender and life situation), (ii) earlier experience of Slovenia as a destination and (iii) the knowledge and impressions about the attributes-based components of Slovenia's destination image, which is the main focus and the longest part of the questionnaire. The general questions about the demographics include only three questions as other questions were judged as unimportant by the author with this research subject. Earlier destination image theories have also stated that age is the most affecting variable, whereas other socio-demographic variables did not make that much difference (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). To find out about the earlier travel experience of Slovenia, the respondents are asked first if they have been to Slovenia and if the answer is yes, if they would revisit Slovenia and recommend it as a destination. The ones, who have not been to Slovenia, are be asked shortly what the reason has been for that, e.g. lack of interest or knowledge, distance or more interest in other destinations.

Finally, the 21 questions about the destination image components are reflecting the 35 common attributes (functional and psychological) listed by Echtner and Ritchie (2003). To get as high response rate as possible, the questions are asked only about the most relevant attributes of Slovenia's destination image judged by the author, to not have too long and complex questionnaire. Some attributes, such as the attributes about the political situation, urbanisation or standard of living are excluded from the questionnaire while other attributes, such as natural attractions and national parks are combined as they are assumedly reflecting similar opinions. Furthermore, one additional attribute is added about the sustainability. The reasoning behind this addition is due to the central part of green tourism in the promoted destination image of Slovenia (Slovenian Tourist Board, 2019c). The attribute questions are in the form of opinion statements that are asked to be rated in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 2 = disagree to 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree, while the middle was the neutral option 3 = no knowledge / no opinion. The statements can be seen below in Table 1:

Table 1: 21 statements of Slovenia's destination image attributes

Scenery/Natural Attractions + National Parks/Wilderness Activities	Slovenia offers a lot of beautiful nature.
Costs/Price Levels	Holidays in Slovenia have good quality-price ratio.
Climate	Slovenia has a pleasant climate for all-year round tourism.
Tourist Sites/Activities + Historic Sites/Museums	Slovenia offers diverse sightseeing places.
Sports Facilities/Activities + Opportunity for Adventure	Slovenia is a great destination for active holidays (e.g. hiking, biking, skiing and kayaking).
Local Infrastructure /Transportation	The infrastructure and transportation in Slovenia function conveniently.

(table continues)

Table 1: 21 statements of Slovenia's destination image attributes

Beaches	Slovenia's coast offers great beaches for swimming.
Shopping Facilities + Nightlife and Entertainment	The entertainment and shopping facilities in Slovenia are great.
Accommodation Facilities	There are sufficient accommodation facilities in Slovenia.
Cities + Architecture /Buildings	The cities in Slovenia are attractive.
Facilities for Information and Tours	It is easy to find information about Slovenia as a destination.
Cleanliness	The standards of cleanliness in Slovenia are high.
Personal Safety	Slovenia is a safe destination.
Ease of communication	Most of the Slovene people can speak good English.
Accessibility	Slovenia is easily accessible.
Hospitality/Friendliness/Receptiveness	Slovenes are friendly and hospitable.
Different Customs/Culture	Slovenian culture is interesting.
Different Cuisine/Food and Drink	Slovenian cuisine is delicious.
Restful/Relaxing + Atmosphere	The atmosphere in Slovenia is relaxing for holidays.
Quality of Service	The quality of service in Slovenia is high.
Sustainability	The offer of sustainable tourism in Slovenia is comprehensive.

Source: Adapted Echtner & Ritchie, (2003), own work.

The final question of the questionnaire is "what is your overall opinion about Slovenia as a destination?" and the replies are asked with a semantic differential scale, where 1 = very negative, 2 = negative, 3 = neutral / no opinion, 4 = positive and 5 = very positive. The questionnaire is conducted in Finnish language, but a translation of the questionnaire in English is provided in the Appendixes chapter at the end of the thesis. Finnish was chosen for the survey language as the participants are all native Finnish speakers, so this way is avoiding errors due to language barriers. The design of the questionnaire was aimed to be easily completed by the respondents to get as high response rate as possible (Rowley, 2014). The questionnaire was designed with Google Forms and the estimated time to fill the questionnaire is 2-3 minutes. The questionnaire was running for a total of seven days, between 4th and 10th October 2019.

2.4 Hypotheses testing

For testing the first hypothesis (**H1:** Finnish people, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge of Slovenia's destination image), the focus will be on specific replies. The first observed reply is to the question "what is the reason that you have not been to Slovenia", which has a reply option "lack of knowledge". If already this is chosen by most of the respondents, it would indicate poor knowledge of Slovenia's destination image. However, the other reply options, such as "lack of interest" or "other destinations have been more interesting" can also be consequences of the poor knowledge of Slovenia's destination image. Still, this question is just the starting point as the main focus to test this hypothesis will be with the Likert scale-based questions, which always include a neutral option indicating "I don't know / I don't have an opinion about this". If the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, often choose this option, it would refer to the assumption that they do not have a strong knowledge of Slovenia's destination image. The mean and mode values of the Likert scale points will be counted for every attribute and for the overall destination image to see if the mean and mode values are close to the value 3 (the neutral value). However, to be able to show statistically if the means are significantly close to the value 3, one-sample t-test will be conducted to see if the hypothesis can be accepted or not.

To test the second hypothesis (**H2:** Finnish people, who have been to Slovenia, have a significantly more positive image about Slovenia as a destination than the Finnish people who have not been to Slovenia) for attribute-based statements, two pairs of means (non-visitors vs. visitors) have to be compared for every attribute statement by using the independent samples t-test procedure. It has to be taken into consideration that the sample sizes from both groups have to be representative enough, at least more than 50 respondents from both groups and the difference between the groups should not be too big. The p-values will help to show if the difference between the two groups are statistically significant or not. To be able to use t-test method, it is assumed that the research population has a normal

distribution, which should be the case in a large enough population, with the minimum of 30 respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). The mean values of the Likert scale for every attribute will be compared between the two groups. The mean values will be compared attribute by attribute and the same comparison will be made with the last question about the overall destination image mean value. If the mean values of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, are statistically significantly higher than the mean values of the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, the second hypothesis can be accepted.

To test the last hypothesis (**H3:** The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, would like to revisit Slovenia), there is a question about this in the questionnaire, which will be evaluated to see if the majority of Finnish tourists who have been to Slovenia have visited or would visit there again or not. This hypothesis is linked to the conative component of the destination image, meaning the probability to revisit and recommend the destination after visiting the destination. The result for this hypothesis is evaluated by observing the amount of affirmative answers to the questions "would you revisit Slovenia" and "would you recommend Slovenia as a destination". The other answer options to the question about revisiting are "maybe" and "no" and for the question about recommending "no" and "partly yes, partly no". The only answers totally against this hypothesis would hence be the "no" replies. Still, to be able to accept the last hypothesis, the proportion of affirmative responses should be more than 75 % percent of the total answers with the statistical confidence.

2.5 Limitations of the research methodology

As the research uses the structured method in the questionnaire, it is eliminating the benefits that an unstructured method could bring. In this case, these benefits could include a better understanding regarding the unique and holistic components of the destination image. The most complete research method for destination image analysis should include both structured and unstructured methods. This is a typical drawback of many destination image analyses. However, the unstructured method is difficult to conduct in reality as it varies depending on the respondents writing skills and would be very hard to be analysed statistically (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). In addition, a longer questionnaire with more statements about the destination image attributes would obviously provide more information, but with a longer questionnaire design it would be likely that less respondents would have the time and energy to complete it and the higher number of respondents is needed in a quantitative research. Further, it could be argued that a seven-point Likert-scale would permit more details about the perceptions, but the difficulty with that could be the response selection if the respondents do not have strong opinions, as in this case it is hypothesized with the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia.

3. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter describes the respondent profile of the survey and questionnaire results regarding the destination image attributes. These results will also reveal step by step if the hypotheses can be accepted or rejected.

3.1 Description of respondents' profile

The final total amount of the respondents, who completed the whole questionnaire, was 223, which is above the aim of 150 respondents. Moreover, the distribution of respondents was quite equal as out of respondents 122 (55 %) had not been in Slovenia and 101 (45 %) had been in Slovenia. The response amounts from different age groups were 31,1 % in 15-30 years old age group, 20,3 % in 31-45 years old age group, 33,3 % in 46-60 years old age group and 15,3 % in over 61 years old age group. Almost one third with 31,4 % of the respondents were male (70 respondents) and a bit more than two thirds with 68, 6 % of the respondents were female (153 respondents). The amount of the respondents with student status in the questionnaire was 17,5 %, working status 71,3 %, unemployment status 2,2 % and retirement status 12,6 %. After a brief inspection, there appeared to be no significant differences correlating with the socio-demographic factors of the respondents, not even between gender or different age groups, which is defined as the most crucial characteristics influencing the destination image perceptions (Jenkins, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004). As the demographics did not seem to have any particular differences in the perceptions of Slovenia's destination image, they are only presented as an aggregate respondent information in this research.

3.2 Finnish tourists' knowledge and secondary destination image of Slovenia

The Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, were asked about the reason for that and, when rounding up the mean values, out of the 122 respondents for 35 % the reason had been the lack of knowledge and for 10 % it had been the lack of interest, whereas 50 % said that other destinations had been more interesting and 5 % said it was because of the bad connections or distance (as shown in Figure 5). Therefore, the biggest reason had been that other destinations were more interesting. In relation to the first hypothesis, these results are not directly answering to the question about the knowledge of Slovenia's destination image by Finnish tourists, who have not been in Slovenia. The direct reason for that would have been the "lack of knowledge". However, it is assumed in destination image theories that lack of interest to the destination is often due to a weak knowledge of the destination image and that could be the case in these results too (Lindblom, Lindblom, Lehtonen & Wechtler 2017).

Figure 5: Reasons for not visiting Slovenia (%)
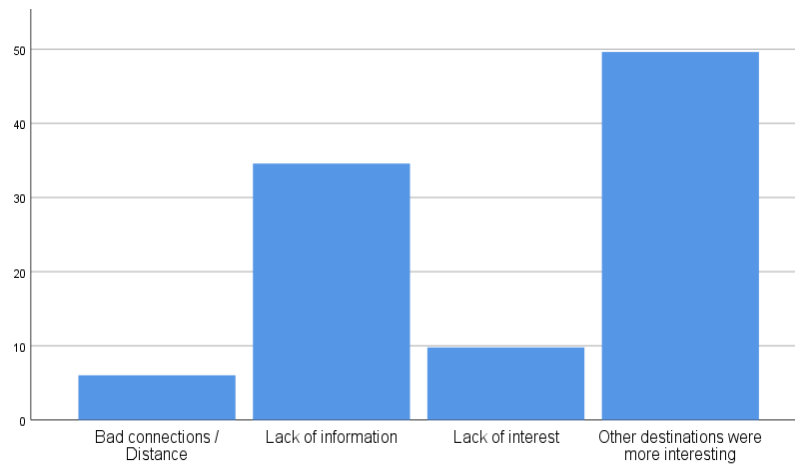
Source: own work.

Also, in this case the biggest reason was not directly the lack of interest to Slovenia as a destination, rather the stronger interest in other destinations. Still, this can be due to the better-known destination images of other destinations.

Figure 6: The mode values of the attributes and overall image of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia
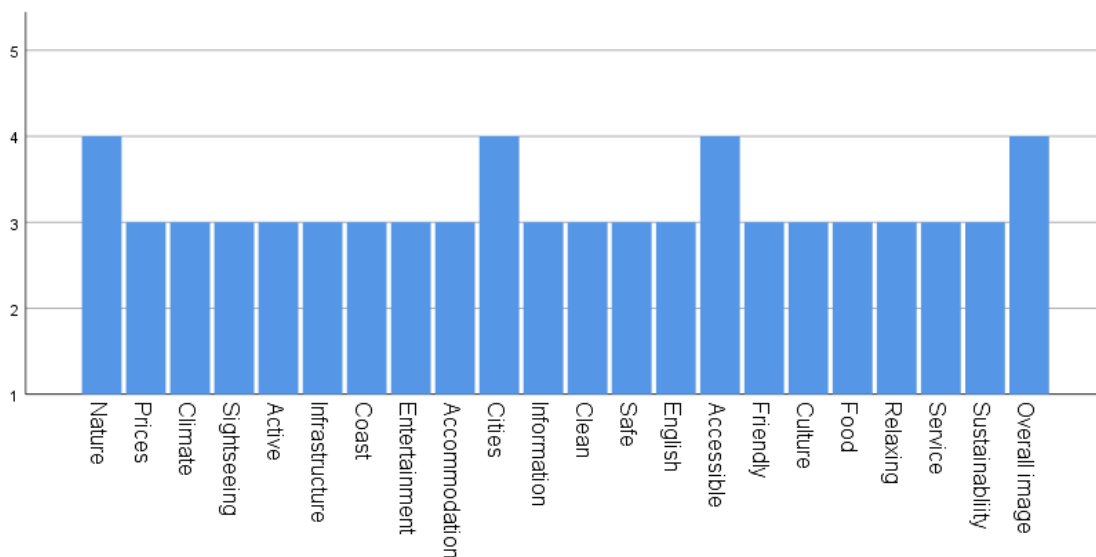
Source: own work.

When analysing the opinion statements and counting the mode values individually for each attribute, it can be seen that out of the 21 opinion statements, the mode had the value 3, indicating "neutral / no knowledge", for all except three attributes (shown in Figure 6). These attributes are beautiful nature, attractive cities and easy accessibility with the mode value 4,

which indicates a more positive attribute value. In addition, the mode value for the overall image is the value 4, indicating also a positive overall secondary destination image of Slovenia by the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia.

Furthermore, when checking the mean values for the attributes and overall destination image, the means are ranging from 3,97 to 2,84 (as shown in the Figure 7). The worst evaluated attributes were the locals' English skills (2,84), the offer of sustainable tourism (2,93) and the high quality of service (2,95), being the only attributes evaluated with the mean value below 3. Conversely, the best evaluated attributes were about the beautiful nature (3,97), great destination for active holidays (3,80) and good quality-price ratio (3,79). These three attributes compounded with the attribute of attractive cities, with the mean value of 3,74, are the only attribute means that cannot be rounded up to the value 3.

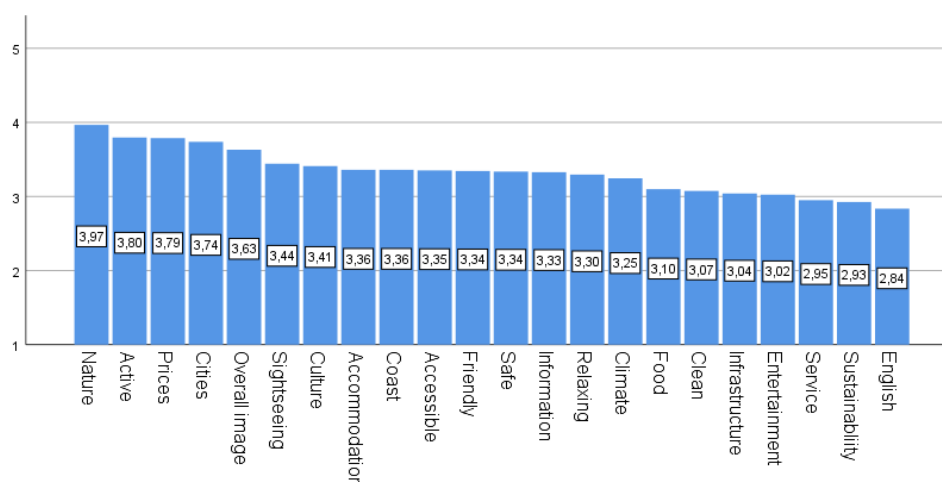*Figure 7: Mean values for the attributes and overall image of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia*

Source: own work.

The easy availability of information about Slovenia as a destination was evaluated as 3,32, which is slightly above the neutral opinion. However, none of the mean values of the attributes exceeded the value 4, which prevents the conclusion that the destination image of Slovenia would be clearly positive. From the graph it can be seen that the functional destination image attributes on the left side of the graph are somewhat better rated than the psychological destination image attributes on the right side of the graph. Nonetheless, the mean value for the overall destination image was 3,63, which is indicating towards a more positively than neutrally perceived secondary destination image.

Finally, when counting the total mean value of all destination image attributes and the overall destination image, the overall mean value becomes 3,33 with the standard deviation of 0,739

and standard error mean of 0,067 (as shown in Table 2). As the total standard error mean is very small, it makes the total mean value more accurate.

Table 2: One-sample statistics

	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Nature	3,97	0,812	0,074
Prices	3,79	0,774	0,070
Climate	3,25	0,719	0,065
Sightseeing	3,44	0,834	0,075
Active	3,80	0,812	0,074
Infrastructure	3,04	0,608	0,055
Coast	3,36	0,783	0,071
Entertainment	3,02	0,787	0,071
Accommodation	3,36	0,617	0,056
Cities	3,74	0,801	0,073
Information	3,33	0,904	0,082
Clean	3,07	0,706	0,064
Safe	3,34	0,819	0,074
English	2,84	0,672	0,061
Accessible	3,35	0,935	0,085
Friendly	3,34	0,701	0,064
Culture	3,41	0,888	0,080
Food	3,10	0,661	0,060
Relaxing	3,30	0,626	0,057
Service	2,95	0,495	0,045
Sustainability	2,93	0,563	0,051
Overall image	3,63	0,741	0,067
Total	3,33	0,739	0,067

Source: own work.

In order to test the first hypothesis, the total mean value is used for the one-sample t-test. The result can be seen in Table 3, showing that the total mean value is significantly different from the test mean value of 3, which would indicate the neutral destination image perception or lack of strong knowledge about the destination image. However, as the total mean value is significantly 0,33 higher than the neutral mean value, the destination image is perceived slightly more positively than neutrally by the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia.

Table 3: One-sample t -test

t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
5,199	0,000	0,33455

Source: own work.

So, based on these empirical results, the first hypothesis (**H1:** The Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge of Slovenia's destination image) cannot be accepted. This is also supported with the mean value for the overall destination image being 3,63, which is also closer to the value 4 and positive destination image than the neutral value of 3. Although, the level of the knowledge does seem to be close to neutral with several destination image attributes, the overall destination image cannot be stated as statistically significantly neutral, which indicates that Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, still have some knowledge about Slovenia's destination image, and therefore the first hypothesis is rejected.

3.3 Comparison between Finnish tourists' secondary and primary destination images of Slovenia

The second hypothesis is analysed by comparing the mean values of the attributes between the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, and the ones, who have not, with the help of independent samples t-test analysis. Already when firstly looking at the means of the attributes, it can be seen that the mean values are in general worse evaluated by the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, compared to the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia (as seen in Figure 8).

Figure 8: Mean value differences regarding the common functional and psychological attributes
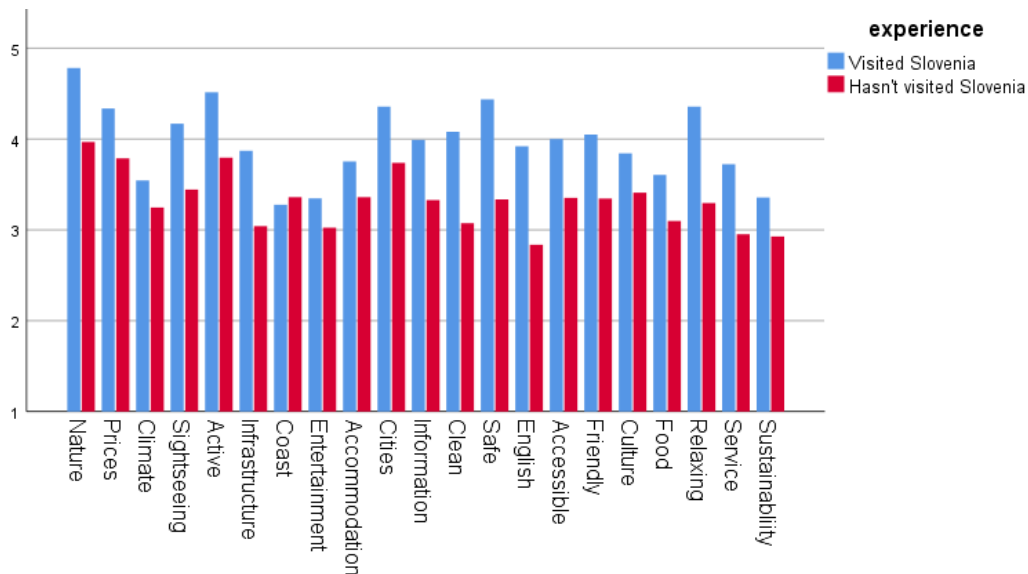
Source: own work.

However, there is one exception with the attribute about the coast with good beaches as this statement is slightly better evaluated by the Finnish tourists, who have not been in Slovenia

(3,36 versus 3,28). A possible explanation could be that the Finnish tourists, who have been in Slovenia, might not consider Slovenia as a beach holiday destination after realizing that the coastline is not that long compared to many other coastal destinations and especially during the summer months the beaches can get quite crowded because of that.

Although there are significant differences with the mean values, it can still be seen that both groups have given the highest evaluations for some same attributes, such as the beautiful nature, quality-price ratio and great destination for active holidays. The same is with some of the lowest evaluated attributes, such as the quality of infrastructure and transport, entertainment and shopping facilities and the offer of sustainable tourism.

To be able to accept or reject hypothesis, the p -value should be compared to the level of significance. The most commonly used level of significance is 0.05 and it is chosen for this study as well. When the level of significance is lower than the p -value, the hypothesis is rejected but if the p -value is lower than the level of significance, the hypothesis is accepted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). In this case, the independent samples t -test shows that the difference of means was significant with 20 out of the 21 attributes (as can be seen in the Table 2).

Table 2: Independent samples t -test

	F	Sig.	*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference
Nature	32,204	0,000	9,048	0,000	0,815	0,090
Prices	3,706	0,055	5,616	0,000	0,550	0,098
Climate	10,729	0,001	2,734	0,007	0,299	0,109
Sightseeing	0,159	0,691	6,543	0,000	0,726	0,111
Active	1,364	0,244	6,894	0,000	0,720	0,104
Infrastructure	11,146	0,001	8,907	0,000	0,830	0,093
Coast	0,058	0,810	-0,801	0,424	-0,083	0,104
Entertainment	4,669	0,032	3,099	0,002	0,322	0,104
Accommodation	8,564	0,004	4,111	0,000	0,392	0,095
Cities	0,578	0,448	6,073	0,000	0,619	0,102
Information	8,633	0,004	5,861	0,000	0,662	0,113
Clean	4,065	0,045	9,832	0,000	1,005	0,102

(table continues)

Table 2: Independent samples t -test

Safe	2,751	0,099	10,910	0,000	1,100	0,101
English	13,011	0,000	10,352	0,000	1,085	0,105
Accessible	4,557	0,034	5,249	0,000	0,648	0,123
Friendly	0,314	0,576	6,935	0,000	0,705	0,102
Culture	0,520	0,471	3,628	0,000	0,432	0,119
Food	21,762	0,000	4,920	0,000	0,506	0,103
Relaxing	3,544	0,061	12,062	0,000	1,061	0,088
Service	42,421	0,000	8,620	0,000	0,772	0,090
Sustainability	14,501	0,000	5,545	0,000	0,430	0,078
Overall image	5,444	0,021	9,347	0,000	0,844	0,090

Source: own work.

The only attribute, which did not have any significant mean difference was the coast with good beaches with a negative t -value of -0,801 and the p -value of 0,424, which is clearly higher than the level of significance of 0,05. However, when the significance level is raised to 0,01, the mean differences of two more attributes become insignificant. These attributes are about the pleasant climate for all-year tourism as well as the great entertainment and shopping facilities. The p -value for the climate attribute was 0,07, while for the entertainment and shopping facilities attribute the p -value was 0,02.

The biggest mean difference of 1,1 was with the safe destination attribute and other biggest mean value differences were with the locals' English skills (1,085), relaxing atmosphere for holidays (1,061), standard of cleanliness (1,005), functioning infrastructure and transport (0,83) and beautiful nature (0,815). On the other hand, the smallest mean value differences were with the coast with good beaches (0,083), pleasant climate for all-year tourism (0,299), great entertainment and shopping facilities (0,322), sufficient accommodation (0,392), offer of sustainable tourism (0,43) and interesting culture (0,432).

Also, the mean difference of 0,84 for the overall destination image value was significant between these two groups. Below the distribution of both groups' opinions for this question can be seen (in the Figure 9). The most chosen options by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, were the positive and very positive destination image options (4 and 5), while for the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, the most chosen options were the neutral and positive destination image options (3 and 4). The mean value of the overall

image for the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, was 4,48 and for the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, the mean value was 3,63.

Figure 9: Differences in responses about the perceived overall destination image of Slovenia
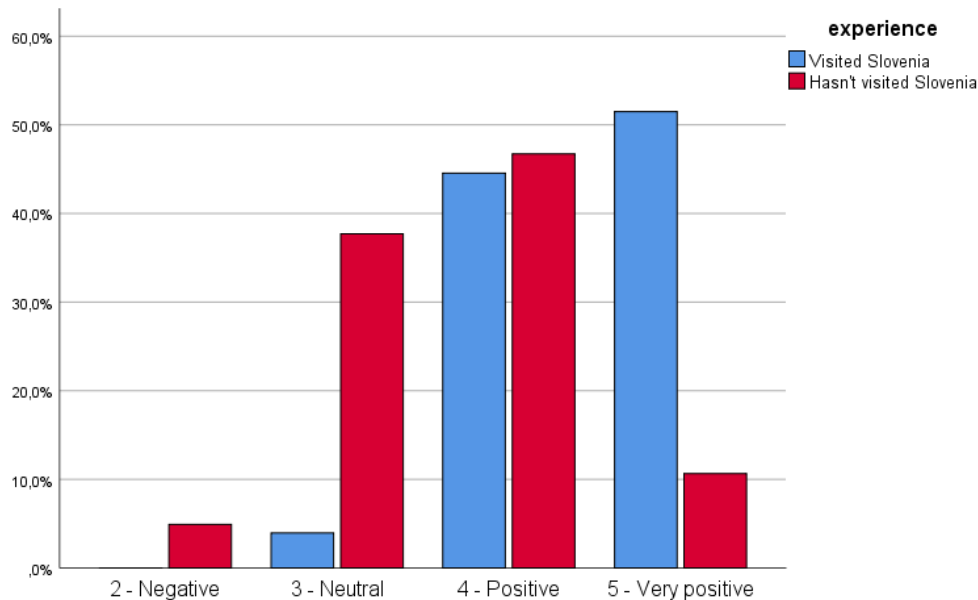
Source: own work.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis (**H2:** The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, have a significantly more positive image about Slovenia as a destination than the Finnish people who have not been to Slovenia) can be accepted as there were significant differences in almost all attributes, with only one exception, as well as in the perceptions of the overall destination image between the Finnish tourists, who have been in Slovenia, and the Finnish tourists, who have not been in Slovenia. Hence, the primary destination image of Slovenia was significantly more positive than the secondary destination image.

Lastly, in relation to the research objective regarding Finnish tourists' awareness about the sustainable tourism orientation in Slovenia, it does not seem to be very strong by either of the groups (as seen in the Figure 10). Almost 80 % of the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, chose the option 3 indicating no knowledge or opinion, and more than 60 % of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, chose that option as well. The option 5 of strongly agreeing with the statement was chosen only by four respondents, who have been to Slovenia and by one respondent, who has not been to Slovenia. Furthermore, the option 1 of strongly disagreeing was chosen by three respondents, who have not been to Slovenia. However, even with the sustainable tourism offer the difference was significant between the respondents, who have been to Slovenia, and the ones, who have not

Figure 10: Responses about the perceived offer of sustainable tourism in Slovenia
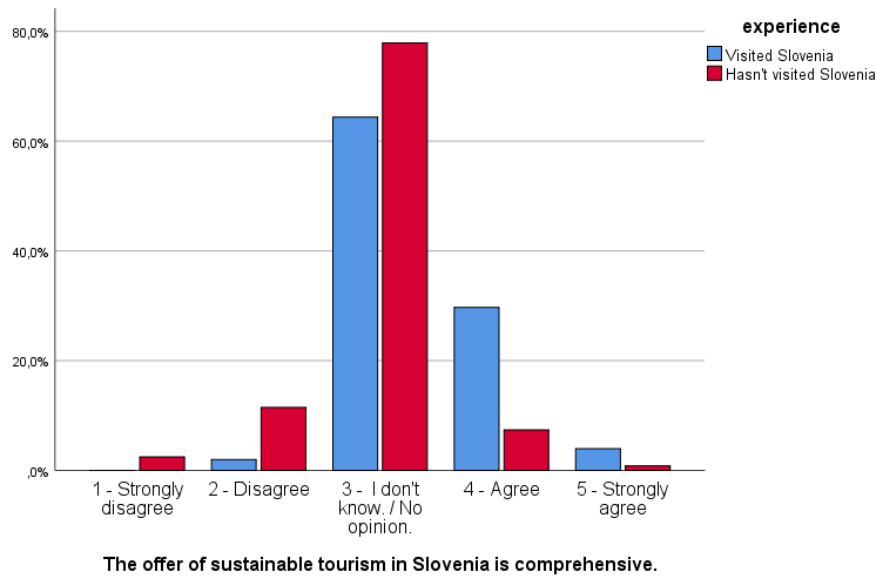
Source: own work.

Finally, to sum up the comparison between the Finnish tourists, who have not, and the ones, who have visited Slovenia, the perceptions about the destination image attributes and overall destination image were significantly better evaluated by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia.

3.4 Finnish tourists' primary destination image and willingness to revisit Slovenia

The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, were asked if their visit in Slovenia had been better, worse or the same as their expectations. Out of the 101 respondents, 82 % replied that their travel experience had been better than they had expected, 18 % said it had been as expected, while none replied that it had been worse than expected. Furthermore, 95 % said that they would recommend Slovenia as destination and 5 % said that they would partly recommend Slovenia, while 0 % said that they would not recommend Slovenia. Lastly, 93 % said that they would revisit Slovenia, 7 % said that they would maybe revisit Slovenia, and nobody said that they would not revisit Slovenia (as seen in the Figure 11). All of these questions are interrelated to each other and the results are evidencing that interrelationship as the replies can be seen as consistent with each other. These three questions are part of the conative component of the destination image, which indicates the satisfaction and loyalty for the destination (Kim & Chen, 2015; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013).

Figure 11: Willingness to revisit Slovenia
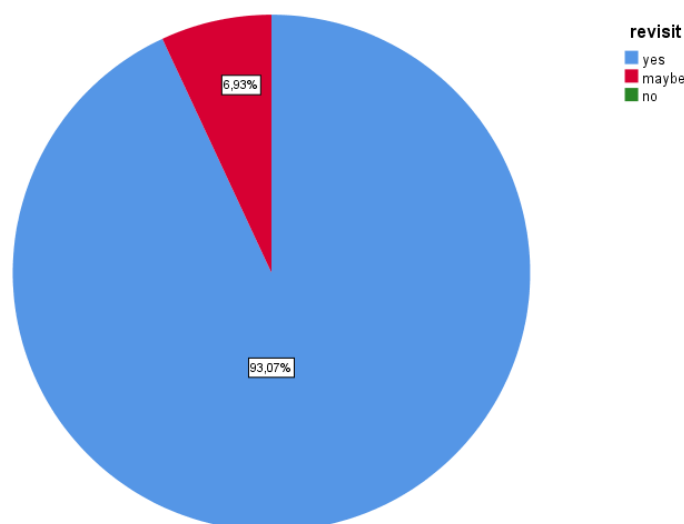
Source: own work.

From these results, it can be seen that there was no dissatisfaction with the overall travel experience to Slovenia as nobody has chosen the negative options of not being willing to revisit or recommend Slovenia as a destination. Also, nobody's experience was worse than their expectations, which indicates that disappointment was not expressed by the Finnish tourists, who visited Slovenia. However, the fact that most of the respondents said that their travel experience was better than their expectations could also indicate that their expectations about Slovenia as a destination were not that high prior the visit. This would also support the first hypothesis about the weak secondary destination image of Slovenia and refer to the results of the second hypothesis, which showed that the Finnish tourists, who had not visited Slovenia, evaluated the attributes generally lower than the Finnish tourists, who had visited Slovenia.

To test the hypothesis, one-sample binomial test is conducted as the respondents have chosen only between two choices (seen in Table 4). To be able to really show the Finnish tourists' willingness to revisit Slovenia, the amount of affirmative responses has to be significantly dominant compared to the amount of unsure responses and the percentage should be more than 75 % to indicate the majority of the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia. As it can be seen from the table below, the binomial test indicates that the proportion of affirmative replies of 0.93 is higher than the test level 0.75 with statistical confidence. According to these results, the last hypothesis (**H3:** The Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, would like to revisit Slovenia) can be accepted as a strong majority expressed their willingness to revisit Slovenia.

Table 4: One-sample binomial test

	Amount	Observed prop.	Test prop.	Sig. (1-tailed)
Yes	94	0,93	0,75	0,000
Maybe	7	0,07		

Source: own work.

Furthermore, the highest evaluated attributes by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, were the beautiful nature (4,78), great destination for active holidays (4,51) and safe destination (4,44). Respectively, the lowest evaluated attributes were the coast with good beaches (3,28), great entertainment and shopping facilities (3,35) as well as the offer of sustainable tourism (3,36). Lastly, the mean value for the overall destination image was 4,48, which is between positive and very positive destination image perceptions. A general overview of the mean values for the attributes and for the overall destination image can be seen in the Figure 12.

Figure 12: Mean values for the destination attributes and overall destination image of the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia
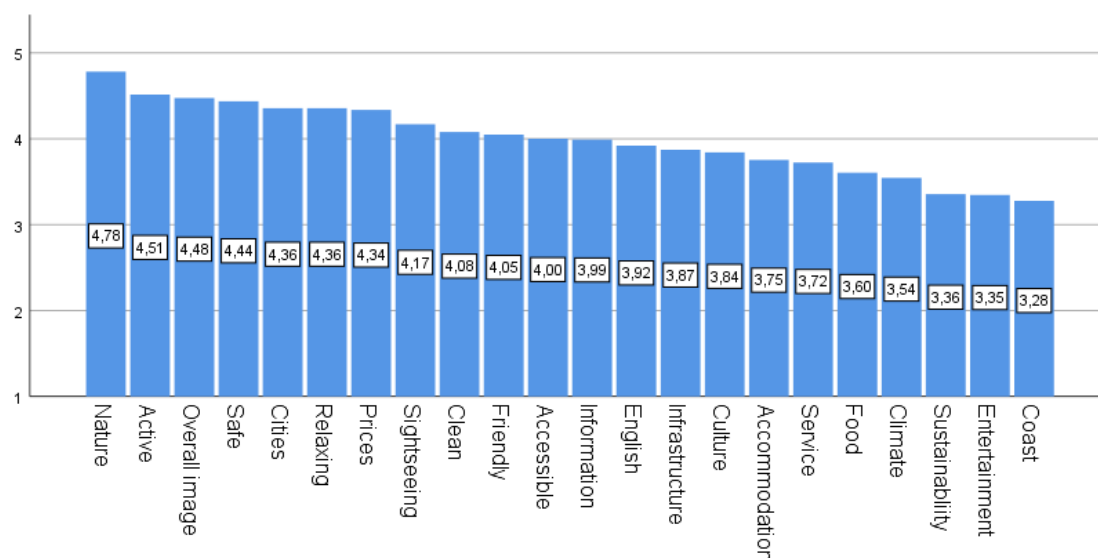
Source: own work.

The mean values are ranging from 4,78 to 3,28 and out of the 21 destination image attributes, the mean values for 10 attributes were between the scale of 4-5 and for 11 attributes between the scale of 3-4. None of mean values for the attributes was lower than the neutral value of 3, so in the general overview there are no negative perceptions about the destination image attributes by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia. Also, it can be seen from the graph that both the functional and psychological destination image attributes are rated in a similar range, so there are no major differences between the perceptions of the functional or psychological attributes.

When looking at the mode values of the destination image attributes rated by the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, it can be seen that the dominating mode for 11 out of 21 attributes, has been the mode value 4 (as seen in the Figure 13). Furthermore, the mode value was 5 for six attributes (beautiful nature, diverse sightseeing, great destination for active holidays, attractive cities, safe destination and relaxing atmosphere) and for the overall destination image. Moreover, the mode value was also 3 for four attributes (pleasant climate for all-year tourism, coast with good beaches, great entertainment and shopping facilities and offer of sustainable tourism). These mode value results indicate towards positive perceptions about Slovenia's destination image as well.

Figure 13: The modes of the attributes and overall image of the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia
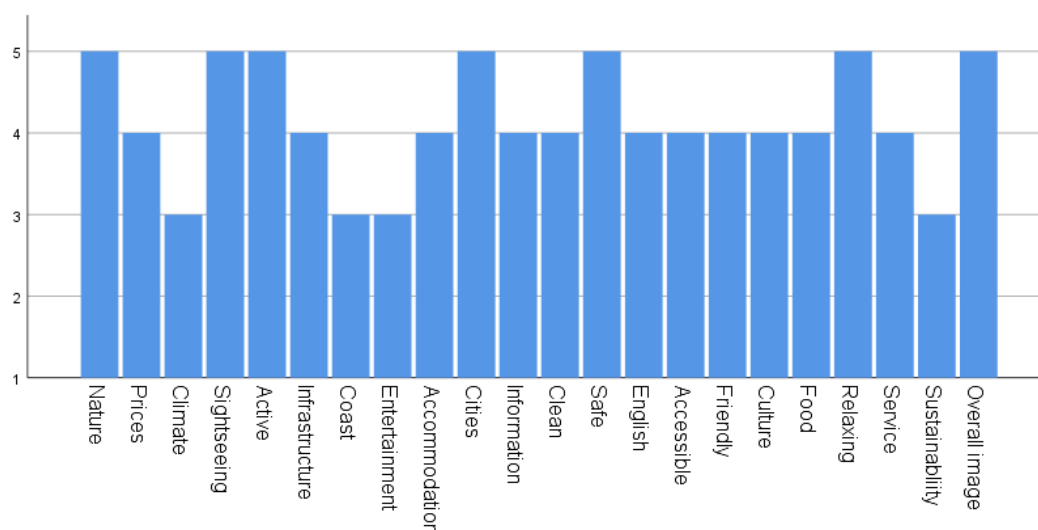
Source: own work.

Finally, to sum up the empirical findings: based on the research results, the second and the third hypotheses were accepted, and the first hypothesis was rejected. The results showed statistically reliable evidence to support the second and third hypotheses, while the support for the first hypothesis was not as statistically evident, so it was not possible to generalise the statement that Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge of Slovenia's destination image.

4. DISCUSSION

This chapter construes the results of the questionnaire by critically discussing about the empirical findings and structuring the answers for the research objectives as well as the

generalisability of the research. Lastly, the discussion chapter provides suggestions for future implications based on the analysis.

4.1 Finnish tourists' overall destination image of Slovenia

Regarding the first objective of the research about identifying the difference in perceived destination image of Finnish people, who have been and who have not been to Slovenia, it has been proved that there are significant differences in the attributes and in the overall destination image. This research strengthens the earlier studies about the destination image of Slovenia as there can be seen some similar results. For example, in the research about the tourist experts' perceived destination image of Slovenia in 2001, the tourist experts, who had not visited Slovenia, rated the beaches better than the tourist experts, who had visited Slovenia, and the same phenomenon was evidenced in this study. However, also in the earlier studies the overall opinion was also better among the tourist experts, who had visited Slovenia, than among the ones, who had not. The same was with the research in 2006 between the German tourists, who had visited Slovenia, compared to the German tourists, who had not visited Slovenia. The beautiful nature has been always one of the highest rated attributes in the earlier research analyses of Slovenia's destination image and this research had similar ratings about it too. This is a good indicator that the '**I feel Slove**nia' brand is leading in the right direction with the focus on the nature theme. Also, as seen in the mean values of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, the functional destination image attributes were a bit better evaluated than the psychological destination image attributes (in the Figure 6) and this is supporting the theories about the cognitive and affective destination image components. The cognitive components are based on rationality, and therefore linked to the functional attributes, while the affective components, which are formed by emotions and feelings, are more related to the psychological attributes. As the affective components seem to be more neutral, this is indicating also that the knowledge of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, might not be that strong as before developing the affective component, the cognitive component should be so advanced that the tourists start to feel something towards the destination too (Kim & Chen, 2015; Beerli & Martín, 2004). The difference with this can be seen in the mean values of the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, as their perceptions about the psychological attributes indicate about a favourable affective component, rather than a neutral or unfavourable one (in the Figure 11).

When taking a look at the second research objective about the awareness about the sustainable tourism orientation in Slovenia, it is interesting to note that despite the strongly promoted direction of sustainable tourism in Slovenia's destination image, both groups in this research have evaluated the offer of sustainable tourism as quite neutral. The mean value for the sustainable tourism attribute with the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, was more negative than positive with the mean value of 2,92 and the mean value with the

Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, was rather just a bit above neutral with the mean value of 3,31. These results are surprising as Slovenia is visibly perceived as country with beautiful nature, but the sustainable tourism orientation is not observed as an implication with that. This revives a question about the reason why it is so lowly evaluated even by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia. It could be due to the earlier expectations of not perceiving Slovenia as a sustainable destination prior the visit and not changing the perception even during and after the visit, or it could be also due to the lack of comprehension about the sustainable tourism concept. To be able to understand this matter and the underlying reasons better, a deeper research about this topic should be conducted, and it would be interesting to study if this perception is the same in other countries as well. A distinction could be made with the closer and more distant countries to understand if the sustainable tourism offer is perceived better by the closer countries compared to the more distant countries.

When analysing the results with the third objective about finding out the potential interest of the Finnish tourists' travelling to Slovenia for the first time or repeating the visit, two points should be discussed. Firstly, for targeting the first-time visitors can be a bit harder due to their perceived destination image. Although it was proved that they have some knowledge, the perceived destination image of Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, does not seem to be either strongly negative or positive, so in order to transform it into a more positive destination image, some actions should be taken. There are still some benefits with a more neutral destination image as it could be changed into a positive destination image, easier than a negative destination image, with the help of an enhanced destination image marketing. Another benefit is also that if the secondary destination image is not very positive, the actual travel experience can be better than the initial expectations about it, which would lead to a satisfaction with the destination. Besides, although the destination image was perceived as neutral for many destination image attributes, the best evaluated attributes were related to the beautiful nature, active holidays and price level. As it is easier to attract with the attributes that are already positive, Slovenia could exploit this knowledge and enhance the promotion of Slovenia as destination for active holidays in the beautiful nature for the Finnish tourists, who would visit Slovenia for the first-time. According to these results, there could be some improvement with the beliefs about locals' English skills and quality of service, so more attention to these attributes should be paid to change those perceptions to more positive ones. As the psychological attributes were evaluated a bit lower than the functional attributes, it would be advisable to focus more on the feelings as in order to build up the behavioural conative component to visit a destination, the affective component should be strong together with the cognitive component (Kim & Chen, 2015; Beerli & Martín, 2004). A major challenge comes through the competition with other interesting destinations, which can make it harder to attract new Finnish visitors if they are more aware of and interested in other destinations.

Secondly, the conative components of the Finnish tourists' primary destination image of Slovenia show clearly satisfaction for Slovenia as a destination as none of the attributes nor the overall image was evaluated with the mean value below 3. This is valuable information as it proposes that those Finnish tourists could become loyal to the destination and they could be targeted for repeat visit. At the same time, they can distribute positive word-of-mouth of Slovenia as a destination (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Oppermann, 2000; Moreira & Iao, 2014). As the attributes about the beautiful nature and active holidays were the highest evaluated also by the Finnish tourists, who have visited Slovenia, the same destination image promotion as for the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, could be used for both target groups. This strengthens the earlier speculation that nature is regarded as highly important in Finland and as Slovenia has a lot of natural attractions, the Finnish tourists seem to be the most interested in engaging with the activities in the nature in Slovenia. This is a desired outcome as it shows that the Finnish tourists' interests coincide with the strategic visions of '**I feel Slove**nia' destination image brand. Neither of the groups evaluated the entertainment and shopping facilities or the coast with great beaches highly, so it would not be very beneficial to promote holidays in Slovenia only for these purposes. Also, neither of the groups gave high evaluations for the quality of the infrastructure and transport, so this attribute could require some improvement in Slovenia. Furthermore, the mean values about the pleasant climate for all-year tourism were not very highly evaluated either (3,25 and 3,54), which makes it a bit harder to promote the all-year holidays in Slovenia. However, as the mean values were not negative either, it could be worth to try promoting Slovenia also as a winter destination and to see if some Finnish tourists would start to consider Slovenia as a winter destination for skiing or thermal spas afterwards. This enhanced marketing strategy would likely work better with the Finnish repeat visitors than the first-time visitors as the mean value was higher (3,54), the costs of attracting repeat visitors are lower and they are already more aware about Slovenia as a destination (Lau & McKercher, 2004).

4.2 Generalisability of the research results

As the questionnaire was distributed through social media, it is limiting the respondents, who were able to participate in the survey, to only the Finnish people with access to Internet and social media, in this case mostly to Facebook. Also, the sample size of 223 is still a small proportion of the total 5,5 million population of Finland, so this sample is not truly generalisable to the entire Finnish population. In addition, the questionnaire did not ask the region of the questionnaire respondents, which makes it impossible to know if, for example, most of the respondents are from the capital area of Helsinki or equally from all regions of Finland, as the responses between distinct regions could also differ to some extent. The distribution of age groups was quite balanced and there was no one dominating age group with the respondents. However, when taking into account the gender, females are more represented in this questionnaire and outnumbered the males as the amount of the female respondents was more than half of the amount of the male respondents. Despite these

limitations, it can still be stated that the results of this research thesis offer some generic insight about the Finnish tourists' perceptions of both the secondary and primary destination images of Slovenia based on the evaluations of the common functional and psychological destination image attributes as well as the perceived overall destination image evaluations. Therefore, the results of this research thesis can be regarded as directional to some extent with Slovenia's destination image marketing in Finland.

4.3 Suggestions for future implications

As this research was purely a structured quantitative analysis, it does not provide a deeper understanding of Finnish tourists' perceptions regarding the holistic and unique destination image attributes of Slovenia. Therefore, if an enhanced destination image promotion strategy would be planned, it would be useful to conduct also a mixed method or qualitative research including unstructured and open-ended questions as well. Otherwise, it could be useful to investigate about the biggest competitors for Slovenia as a destination from the viewpoint of the Finnish tourists. However, this research gives some meaningful insight and suggests that it is profitable to increase the destination image promotion of Slovenia in Finland for both first-time and repeat visitors. At the same time, as the sustainability attribute is a crucial part in the destination image and tourism that Slovenia wants to promote, so it should be actively part of the promotion, especially as its role in Slovenia's destination image was not highly evaluated by the Finnish tourists, so that should be intended to change. The sustainable destination image can even become a competitive advantage for Slovenia (Mihalic, 2000) if the Finnish tourists consider environmental issues as important. As this research is the first conducted analysis about the Finnish tourists' perceived destination image of Slovenia, it would be recommendable to conduct another similar study after an enhanced destination promotion to see if the results would differ, especially with the secondary destination image of the Finnish tourists, who have not visited Slovenia, and with the overall perception about the sustainable tourism attribute in Slovenia. Periodical studies about the perceptions of the revisiting Finnish tourists could provide even more insight about the development of the satisfaction with the destination, if the destination image would improve, worsen or stay the same after various visitations in Slovenia.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to acquire insight on the Finnish tourists' perceived destination image of Slovenia as Finland has been identified as a potentially emerging tourist market for Slovenia, but there have been no earlier studies about their perceptions regarding Slovenia's destination image. The research was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire. Three hypotheses were tested and two of these were accepted, while one was rejected. The hypotheses' results showed that the primary destination image of Finnish tourists, who have

been to Slovenia, is significantly more positive than the secondary destination image of Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia. This was proved with 20 opinion statements about functional and psychological destination image attributes as well as with the overall destination image. Furthermore, it was not possible enough to prove that the Finnish tourists, who have not been to Slovenia, do not have a strong knowledge about Slovenia's destination image as the evaluations were not purely neutral. Finally, the Finnish tourists, who have been to Slovenia, showed an evident willingness to revisit Slovenia and recommend it as a destination. Along with these hypotheses results, the empirical findings showed that the sustainable tourism offer in Slovenia was not perceived as comprehensive by the Finnish tourists, despite the promoted sustainable destination image and the international acknowledgements that Slovenia has received for the sustainable tourism orientation in the recent years.

Based on the empirical findings and the discussion of this research, the recommendations have been suggested about enhancing the destination image marketing for the Finnish tourists with the emphasis on active holidays in the beautiful nature. This marketing strategy focussing on these attributes can attract both the first-time and repeat visitors as this research showed evidence about the positive perceptions towards these attributes. In addition, it is substantial to add attention towards the sustainable tourism orientation in Slovenia as this was rather neutrally recognized by both groups. A subsequent suggestion is to conduct a new survey about the perceived destination image afterwards to see if the enhanced destination promotion has had any impact on the evaluations.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (summary in Slovene)

ANALIZA DOJEMANJ FINSKIH TURISTOV PODOBE SLOVENIJE KOT DESTINACIJE

Podoba destinacije je ključnega pomena v procesu odločanja turistov za obisk destinacije. Zato je relevantno analizirati percepcijo posameznih značilnosti določene destinacije in celotne podobe destinacije v očeh potencialnih obiskovalcev, ki prihajajo prvič ali pa se vračajo.

Namen te raziskave je analiza dojemanj finskih turistov o podobi Slovenije kot destinacije. Uporabljen je bil kvantitativen in deduktiven pristop ter strukturirana metodologija. Raziskovalna naloga je podprta s tremi hipotezami. Narejena je bila primerjava med finskimi turisti, ki so obiskali Slovenijo in tistimi, ki je niso. Poleg tega sta bili percepciji obeh skupin analizirani tudi posamezno. Raziskava temelji na spletnem vprašalniku, ki raziskuje dojemanje psiholoških in funkcionalnih značilnosti podobe destinacije, definirano po Echtner-ju in Ritchie-ju. Za testiranje hipotez je bil izveden statistični test s pomočjo programa SPSS, verzija 26.

Skupno je vprašalnik izpolnilo 223 oseb, od tega 122 finskih turistov, ki so že bili v Sloveniji in 101, ki Slovenije še niso obiskali. Za prvotno hipotezo, ki pravi, da tisti Finci, ki Slovenije še niso obiskali, nimajo obširnega znanja o Sloveniji, ni bilo statističnega dokaza. Druga hipoteza je bila potrjena, saj so rezultati pokazali, da je med dojemanjem Slovenije kot destinacije, razlika med Finci, ki so že obiskali Slovenijo in med tistimi, ki Slovenije še niso obiskali. Finci, ki so v Sloveniji že bili, so posamezne značilnosti in destinacijo kot celoto ocenili veliko bolje, kot tisti, ki Slovenije niso obiskali. Izjema je bila le ena značilnost, - in sicer obalni del Slovenija. Raziskava je prav tako pokazala, da je med turisti pripravljenost ponovno obiskati Slovenijo in jo priporočiti še drugim – s tem je bila potrjena tretja hipoteza.

Rezultati te raziskave kažejo, da bi bilo potrebno stremeti k izboljšanju sekundarne podobe Slovenije kot destinacije na Finskem. Priporočljivo bi bilo promovirati Slovenijo kot aktivno destinacijo in izpostavljati naravo. Ciljna skupina so tako Finci, ki se v Slovenijo odpravljajo prvič, kot tisti ki se vračajo. Nobena od analiziranih skupin namreč ni poudarila trajnosti, na katerem temelji promovirana podoba Slovenije kot destinacije. Zato bi bilo potrebno povečati razpoznavnost Slovenije kot trajnostne destinacije. Pred sprejetjem ukrepov, pa bi bilo potrebno še natančneje in s holističnim pristopom raziskati posamezne lastnosti podobe Slovenije kot destinacije.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire draft (translated into English)

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT SLOVENIA'S DESTINATION IMAGE

This questionnaire is part of a master's thesis. The participation is anonymous, and the given answers will be used only for the thesis to find out about the perceptions of Finnish tourists' destination image of Slovenia. The questionnaire includes few general questions and after 21 opinion statements about the destination image of Slovenia. It takes only few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your answers!

1. What is your gender?

a) Male
b) Female

2. What is your age?

a) 15-30
b) 31-45
c) 46-60+
d) 60+

3. What is your life situation?

a) Student
b) Employed / Working
c) Unemployed
d) Retired

4. Have you ever been in Slovenia?

a)   Yes, I have. *(please move to the question 6)*
b)   No, I haven't. *(please move to the question 5)*

5. What has been the reason that you haven't visited Slovenia?

a) Lack of interest
b) Lack of knowledge
c) Other destinations have been more interesting
d) Bad connections / Distance

Please move to the question 9.

6. How did Slovenia answer your expectations as a destination?

a) It was better than I expected.
b) It was as I expected.
c) It was worse than I expected.

7. Would you revisit Slovenia?

a)   Yes.
b)   Maybe.
c)   No.

8. Would you recommend travelling to Slovenia?

a)   Yes, I would.
b)   No, I wouldn't.
c)   Partly yes, partly no.

Please evaluate the following opinion statements as below:

1 = I strongly disagree. 2 = I disagree. 3 = No knowledge. / No opinion. 4 = I agree. 5 = I strongly agree.

9. Slovenia offers a lot of natural scenic beauty.
10. Holidays in Slovenia have good value for money.
11. Slovenia has a pleasant climate for all-year round tourism.
12. Slovenia offers diverse sightseeing places.
13. Slovenia is a great destination for active holidays (e.g. hiking, biking, skiing and kayaking).
14. The infrastructure and transportation in Slovenia are functionable.
15. Slovenia has good beaches for swimming.
16. The entertainment and shopping facilities in Slovenia are great.
17. There are sufficient accommodation facilities in Slovenia.
18. The cities in Slovenia are attractive.
19. It is easy to find information about Slovenia as a destination.
20. The standards of cleanliness in Slovenia are high.
21. Slovenia is a safe place to visit.
22. Most of the Slovene people can speak good English.
23. Slovenia is easily accessible.
24. Slovenes are friendly and hospitable.
25. Slovenian culture is interesting.
26. Slovenian cuisine is delicious.
27. The atmosphere in Slovenia is relaxing for holidays.
28. The quality of service in Slovenia is high.
29. The offer of sustainable tourism in Slovenia is comprehensive.

30. What is your overall opinion about Slovenia?
1 = very negative
2 = negative
3 = neutral / no opinion
4 = positive
5 = very positive

Thank you very much!

Appendix 3: One-sample *t*-test

4

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nature	122	3,97	,812	,074
Prices	122	3,79	,774	,070
Climate	122	3,25	,719	,065
Sightseeing	122	3,44	,834	,075
Active	122	3,80	,812	,074
Infrastructure	122	3,04	,608	,055
Coast	122	3,36	,783	,071
Entertainment	122	3,02	,787	,071
Accommodation	122	3,36	,617	,056
Cities	122	3,74	,801	,073
Information	122	3,33	,904	,082
Clean	122	3,07	,706	,064
Safe	122	3,34	,819	,074
English	122	2,84	,672	,061
Accessible	122	3,35	,935	,085
Friendly	122	3,34	,701	,064
Culture	122	3,41	,888	,080
Food	122	3,10	,661	,060
Relaxing	122	3,30	,626	,057
Service	122	2,95	,495	,045
Sustainabliity	122	2,93	,563	,051
Overall image	122	3,63	,741	,067

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean values	22	3,3345	,30653	,06535

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Mean values	5,119	21	,000	,33455	,1986	,4705

Appendix 4: Independent samples *t* -test

Group Statistics

	experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
nature	Visited Slovenia	101	4,78	,438	,044
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,97	,812	,074
price_level	Visited Slovenia	101	4,34	,667	,066
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,79	,774	,070
climate	Visited Slovenia	101	3,54	,911	,091
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,25	,719	,065
sightseeing	Visited Slovenia	101	4,17	,813	,081
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,44	,834	,075
active	Visited Slovenia	101	4,51	,730	,073
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,80	,812	,074
infrastructure	Visited Slovenia	101	3,87	,783	,078
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,04	,608	,055
coast	Visited Slovenia	101	3,28	,763	,076
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,36	,783	,071
entertainment	Visited Slovenia	101	3,35	,754	,075
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,02	,787	,071
accommodation	Visited Slovenia	101	3,75	,805	,080
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,36	,617	,056
cities	Visited Slovenia	101	4,36	,701	,070
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,74	,801	,073
information	Visited Slovenia	101	3,99	,755	,075
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,33	,904	,082
clean	Visited Slovenia	101	4,08	,821	,082
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,07	,706	,064
safe	Visited Slovenia	101	4,44	,654	,065
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,34	,819	,074
English	Visited Slovenia	101	3,92	,891	,089
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	2,84	,672	,061
accessible	Visited Slovenia	101	4,00	,894	,089
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,35	,935	,085
friendly	Visited Slovenia	101	4,05	,817	,081
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,34	,701	,064
culture	Visited Slovenia	101	3,84	,880	,088
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,41	,888	,080
food	Visited Slovenia	101	3,60	,873	,087
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,10	,661	,060
relaxing	Visited Slovenia	101	4,36	,687	,068
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,30	,626	,057
service	Visited Slovenia	101	3,72	,826	,082
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	2,95	,495	,045
sustainable	Visited Slovenia	101	3,36	,593	,059
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	2,93	,563	,051
overall_image	Visited Slovenia	101	4,48	,576	,057
	Hasn't visited Slovenia	122	3,63	,741	,067

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
nature	Equal variances assumed	32,204	,000	9,048	221	,000	,815	,090	,637	,992
	Equal variances not assumed			9,530	192,269	,000	,815	,086	,646	,984
price_level	Equal variances assumed	3,706	,055	5,616	221	,000	,550	,098	,357	,743
	Equal variances not assumed			5,695	220,613	,000	,550	,097	,359	,740
climate	Equal variances assumed	10,729	,001	2,734	221	,007	,299	,109	,083	,514
	Equal variances not assumed			2,675	188,364	,008	,299	,112	,078	,519
sightseeing	Equal variances assumed	,159	,691	6,543	221	,000	,726	,111	,507	,944
	Equal variances not assumed			6,558	215,122	,000	,726	,111	,508	,944
active	Equal variances assumed	1,364	,244	6,894	221	,000	,720	,104	,514	,926
	Equal variances not assumed			6,964	219,517	,000	,720	,103	,516	,923
infrastructure	Equal variances assumed	11,146	,001	8,907	221	,000	,830	,093	,647	1,014
	Equal variances not assumed			8,701	186,443	,000	,830	,095	,642	1,019
coast	Equal variances assumed	,058	,810	-,801	221	,424	-,083	,104	-,289	,122
	Equal variances not assumed			-,803	215,159	,423	-,083	,104	-,288	,121
entertainment	Equal variances assumed	4,669	,032	3,099	221	,002	,322	,104	,117	,527
	Equal variances not assumed			3,111	216,291	,002	,322	,103	,118	,526
accommodation	Equal variances assumed	8,564	,004	4,111	221	,000	,392	,095	,204	,580
	Equal variances not assumed			4,011	184,877	,000	,392	,098	,199	,585
cities	Equal variances assumed	,578	,448	6,073	221	,000	,619	,102	,418	,820
	Equal variances not assumed			6,149	220,288	,000	,619	,101	,420	,817
information	Equal variances assumed	8,633	,004	5,861	221	,000	,662	,113	,440	,885
	Equal variances not assumed			5,961	220,980	,000	,662	,111	,443	,881
clean	Equal variances assumed	4,065	,045	9,832	221	,000	1,005	,102	,804	1,207
	Equal variances not assumed			9,694	198,505	,000	1,005	,104	,801	1,210
safe	Equal variances assumed	2,751	,099	10,910	221	,000	1,100	,101	,901	1,298
	Equal variances not assumed			11,140	220,736	,000	1,100	,099	,905	1,294
English	Equal variances assumed	13,011	,000	10,352	221	,000	1,085	,105	,878	1,291
	Equal variances not assumed			10,087	182,953	,000	1,085	,108	,873	1,297
accessible	Equal variances assumed	4,557	,034	5,249	221	,000	,648	,123	,404	,891
	Equal variances not assumed			5,271	216,423	,000	,648	,123	,405	,890
friendly	Equal variances assumed	,314	,576	6,935	221	,000	,705	,102	,505	,906
	Equal variances not assumed			6,836	198,271	,000	,705	,103	,502	,909
culture	Equal variances assumed	,520	,471	3,628	221	,000	,432	,119	,197	,666
	Equal variances not assumed			3,631	214,012	,000	,432	,119	,197	,666
food	Equal variances assumed	21,762	,000	4,920	221	,000	,506	,103	,303	,708
	Equal variances not assumed			4,795	183,309	,000	,506	,105	,298	,714
relaxing	Equal variances assumed	3,544	,061	12,062	221	,000	1,061	,088	,888	1,235
	Equal variances not assumed			11,957	204,754	,000	1,061	,089	,886	1,236
service	Equal variances assumed	42,421	,000	8,620	221	,000	,772	,090	,595	,948
	Equal variances not assumed			8,244	156,933	,000	,772	,094	,587	,957
sustainable	Equal variances assumed	14,501	,000	5,545	221	,000	,430	,078	,277	,583
	Equal variances not assumed			5,518	208,801	,000	,430	,078	,277	,584
overall_image	Equal variances assumed	5,444	,021	9,347	221	,000	,844	,090	,666	1,022
	Equal variances not assumed			9,567	220,181	,000	,844	,088	,670	1,018

Appendix 5: One-sample binomial test

Binomial Test

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (1-tailed)
Revisit intentions	Group 1	yes	94	,93	,75	,000
	Group 2	maybe	7	,07		
	Total		101	1,00		