

TRENDS FOR BUSINESS AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

KVARKEN DESTINATIONS



DESTINATION KVARKEN
Two countries, a world of contrasts



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TRENDS FOR BUSINESS AND DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

KVARKEN DESTINATIONS

Work Package 1: Research & Development | Activity: Trends

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Responsible Project Partner: Hanken Svenska Handelshögskolan

Authors: Patrick Latvasalo | Peter Björk

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Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
BA	Botnia-Atlantica Programme
BI	Business Intelligence
FOMO	Fear of Missing Out
GPS	Global Positioning System
IoT	Internet of Things
JOMO	Joy of Missing Out
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
TAIDA	Tracking, Analysing, Imagining, Deciding and Acting
VR	Virtual Reality

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1. Introduction

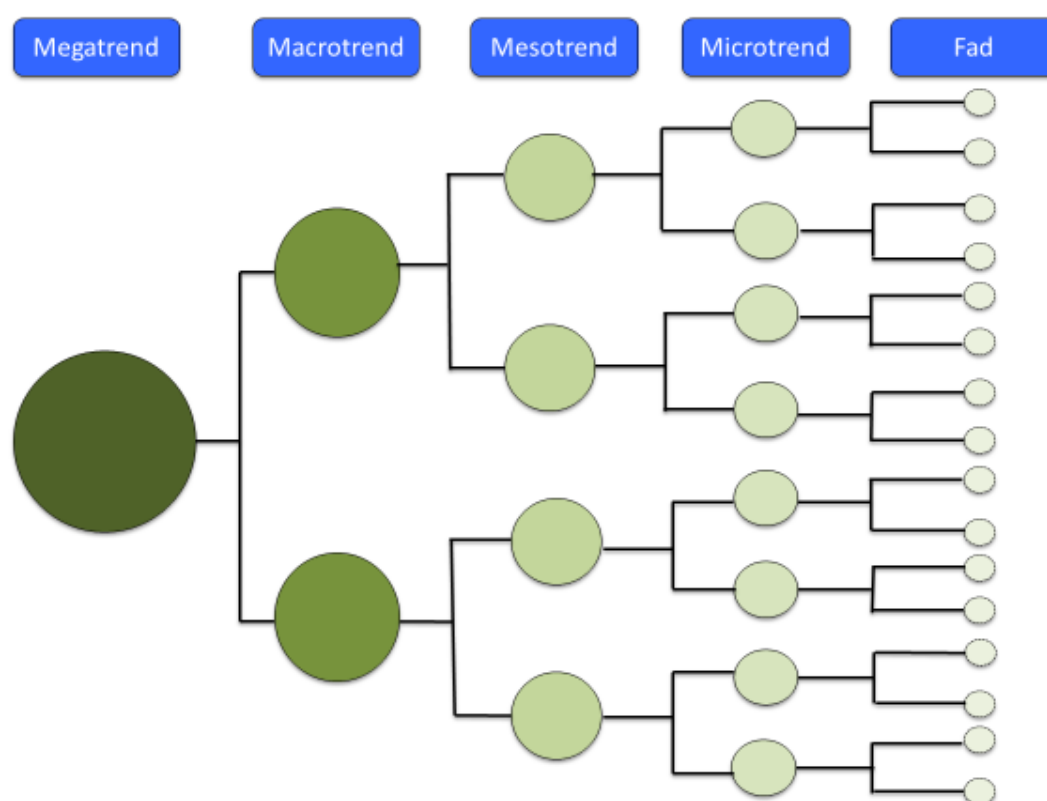
It is important for businesses and organisations to be updated about upcoming trends in order to take advantage of future opportunities, gain a competitive edge and to increase the chance of business success. The same is true for companies within the tourism sector, who needs to be prepared, proactive and provide an understanding of trends, especially as it is predicted that there will be a strong increase in tourism over the next 10 years as an effect of the world's economic and social climate (Moutinho & Vargas-Sánchez 2018: 1). This report will introduce and define the meaning of trends and their implications of trends for business and destination development. First, the different scale of trends is presented and defined. Thereafter, some examples of methods of forecasting and analysing trends are provided followed by a presentation of tools or processes that can be used for utilizing trend data in business and destination development. Subsequently, some main upcoming trends within tourism, consumer behaviour and digitalization are discussed with an emphasis on their impact on the tourism sector and the Kvarken region and its destinations. Finally, this report will conclude with a short summary of its most important content.

2. Trend definitions and scale types

Trends can be defined as “a pattern of gradual change in a condition, output, or process, or an average or general tendency of a series of data points to move in a certain direction over time, represented by a line or curve on a graph” (Business Dictionary 2019). These kinds of patterns can be found in different subjects and within different fields and industries, such as in tourism, consumer behaviour and digitalization. For example, within social media, a trend can be the stream of recurrently recurring themes and topics from the platform users and their activities on the channel (Budak, Agrawal & Abbadi 2011: 647), thus the topic is in this case “trending”. Trends are often tried to be predicted, but usually the type and scale of the trends are realized during or after they have already happened. However, it is still possible to rightly predict upcoming trends by searching for and analysing patterns and the change in them.

Trends can be categorized by their scale of impact from mega-, macro-, meso- and to microtrends (Global Trendspotter 2017). Furthermore, when something only lasts for a short period, then it is called a fad, such as diet and fashion fads, compared to trends that lasts for a longer period. Sometimes there is a relationship between the different scales of trends as, for example, a megatrend can create smaller trends in form of macro- or microtrends. The different scales of trends are illustrated in Figure 1. The different scales of trends will be presented and defined in the following sections.

Figure 1 – Illustration of different scales of trends.



2.1. Megatrends

Megatrends are large events that happen during a very long-time span and are often a reaction to previous "activities" during the recent or last century. These massive events have a great and wide impact on the whole world and society; thus, they have a great influence on how the future is shaped. The best solution is often to accept, adapt and embrace to these changes as it is nearly impossible to stop these larger trends from happening. Megatrends show the "big picture" from which it is possible to explore and follow into smaller trends that are usually a consequence of the megatrend. Examples of megatrends are climate change, urbanization and great advancements in technology, such as computers. (Global Trendspotter 2017).

2.2. Macrotrends

Macrotrends are the reactions from the bigger megatrends. Although they are in scale smaller than megatrends, they are still large in their scope and influence, covering a specific part of a bigger megatrend. The advancement in technology, such as computing is a megatrend, but the Internet, big data and artificial intelligence can be seen as its offspring and responses to this megatrend. By examining specific fields, areas and audiences it is possible to discover and analyse these kinds of macrotrends. Macrotrends can further on be divided, providing a beginning to even smaller trends. (Global Trendspotter 2017).

2.3. Mesotrends

Mesotrends are events located in between macro and micro trends. They can be considered as the link between these two different scales of trends. For example, social media is made possible by the invention of the Internet, which is a macrotrend. However, a specific well-known and used social media channel, such as Facebook, can then be considered as micro-trend. Social media is in this example the link between the Internet and Facebook and can thus be seen as a mesotrend. This example shows the logical relationship between macro and micro trends that the mesotrend connects together.

2.4. Microtrends

Microtrends are the continued reactions from macro trends through the previous explained mesotrends. They are very "diverse and active" events that are often more easily grasped and understood compared to megatrends. Microtrends can be seen as trends that are closer to the people, and their effects can be better seen and studied. These trends are often a part of smaller areas such as new technologies, innovative business models or marketing and service innovations. As mentioned earlier, Facebook is an example of a micro-trend that is one of the biggest platforms on the social-media front. (Global Trendspotter 2017).

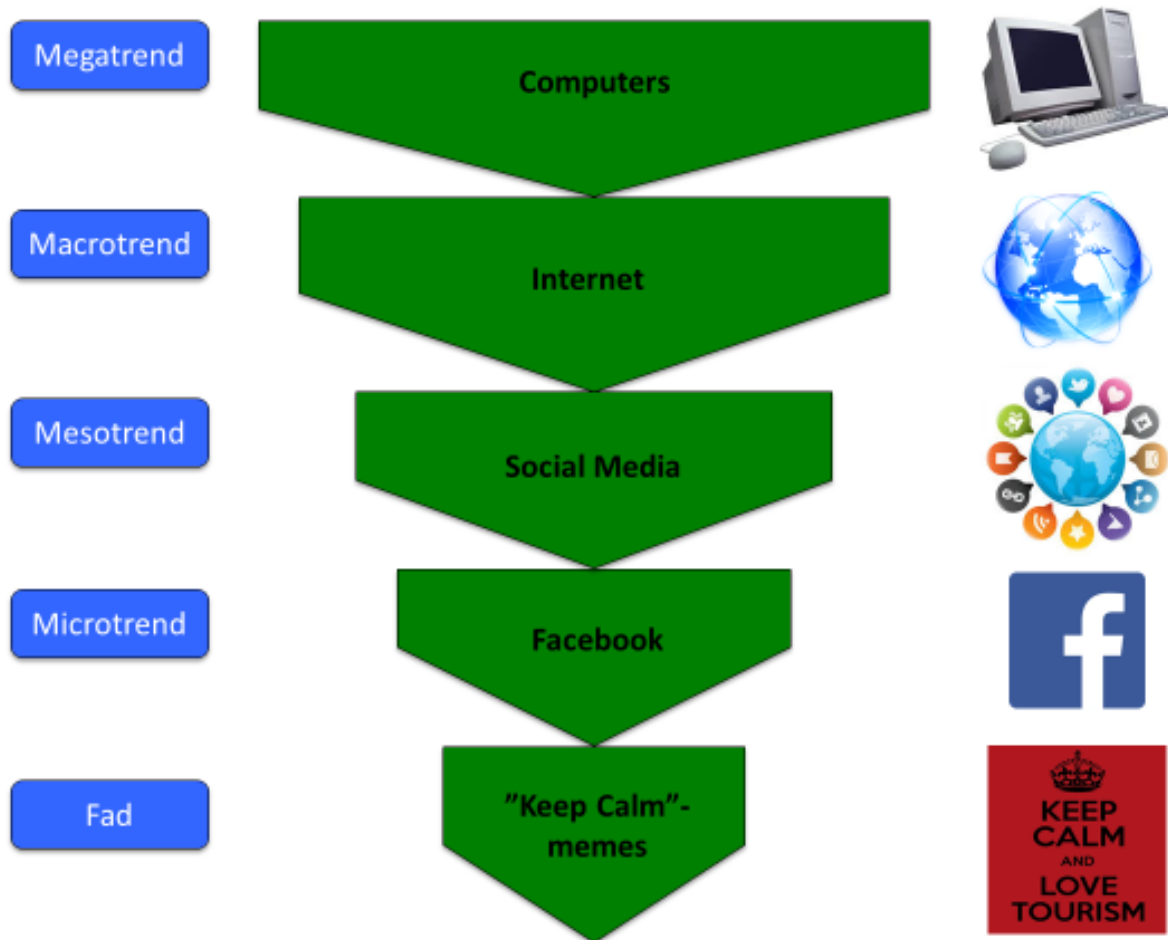
2.5. Fads

Lastly, there are fads that are not in particular trends as they only last for a short while, however they might still have a great impact (Global Trendspotter 2017). Nowadays, fads are usually driven, spread and amplified by social media in a rapid manner. Different fashion, diets and certain internet movements can be considered as fads.

However, even matters that were first considered as a fad can be grown into a larger trend slowly over time, for example social media was considered as a fad in its early stage until its impact increased and remained to a very large scale over a longer period of time (King 2018: 33). Nevertheless, some signs can reveal when a possible trend is only a fad; the service or technology is not being updated or up-to-date, the user numbers are declining, and the technology or service is difficult to use, and no improvements are being made (King 2018: 32-33).

Figure 2 is an illustration of the relationships between the different trend sizes from megatrends to fads. The example in this case concerns trends partly within advances in technology, digitalisation and consumer behaviour. First there was the megatrend of the invention of computers, which provided the possibility for the creation of the macrotrend that is the Internet. The internet paved way for the formation of the mesotrend concept of social media from which many microtrends in form of channels, such as Facebook, were established. Finally, Facebook is all the time full of coming and going fads, for example “Keep Calm”-memes, that circulates within and outside of the social media platform. It is important to keep in mind that the scale of a trend can grow and change due time.

Figure 2 – Example of the relationships between megatrends to fads.



3. Methods for forecasting and analysing trends

Trends will emerge and disappear, sometimes slowly and other times rapidly, changing the world and thus shaping and affecting organizations' business environment. These changes will happen no matter if business' desires it or not. Therefore, it is advisable and even critical for an organization's survival to try to predict and keep up with the times and upcoming trends that might have a significant effect on the business and its environment. In this chapter some tools and techniques for analysing and forecasting trends will be presented. Some of these tools or techniques are more suitable for certain type of organizations depending on their area of business and size of the organization. However, it is recommended to adapt some of these techniques to the business operations and strategy in order to increase the possibility of future business success.

3.1. Trendwatching

Trendwatching (Kairos Future 2018: 6) is an activity where either an individual or an organization is watching out for possible upcoming trends within their field. The individual trend watchers are persons that reporting about or exploring and creating new trends in their field of interest. These reporters frequently read about new upcoming trends and forward this news, for example, through their blog or social media platform of choice, such as Facebook or Twitter. The explores, in the other hand, are persons that can be found in the front lines of the upcoming trends as they the ones creating these trends or a part of the beginning process. These persons might, for example, create new kinds of technology or tools during or outside of their work that is a solution to some local issue they are facing. This solution might be the starting phase of a global trend. These individual persons can be a little bit both of reporters and explores, and they do not always represent a company or organization. In contrast, organizational trend watchers are larger organizations, such as governments, consulting firms, research or non-profit organizations that scan, research and report on different kinds of trends (see Kairos Future 2018: 6). They do this in a similar fashion just like the individual reporters or explorers but in a much bigger scale and larger operations. (King 2018: 14-15)

There is a great advantage for businesses and organizations for following these trend watchers within their field of business. The business might gain information and data about new upcoming technology or concepts that will have a significant effect on their line or area of business and understanding of how the landscape will be shaped in short- and long-term (Kairos Future 2018: 6). This information will of course arrive to the general public in due time, but then the trend is new no more and a lot of the positive gains of being in the fore front is lost. Thus, it is important for organizations to follow their key players, be them individuals or organizations, in order to be up-to-date on emerging trends within their area of business and reacting to these trends in good time. (King 2018: 15)

There are several ways, tools and techniques for following trend watchers. When the organization has recognised their suitable and matching trend-watchers, individuals or organizations, it is advisable to decide on how these will be followed in order to make the process as efficient as possible. If one is only following a few trend watchers, it might be enough to basically regularly visit the trend watcher's website where the information is available either for free or for a fee, in case of if it is a consulting firm. However, for following more trend watchers more automated and time-efficient methods are necessary, such as subscribing to receive their content. Recommendable methods

are using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds, subscribing to trend watchers email list, follow them on social media, and set up Google alerts. First, subscribing to a trend watcher's email list is a great option if you are following only a few of these, in order to avoid clutter the inbox. Second, RSS feeds is more suitable if following several trend watchers. In order to subscribe to a websites RSS feed, an RSS feed reader is necessary, either on the computer or a mobile device. There are many of these services, mostly paid ones or partly free, such as Feedly, Digg or Newsblur, so choose according to the organisation's preferences. Third, following trend watcher's social media channels, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn is a way to get the latest news through shorter messages that can often be read more in depth through a provided link. Fourth, a Google alert can be set up for specific Google searches of interest and relevancy in order to receive alerts of new content that is available, for example, a link to a blog or a news site. (King 2018: 20-23)

3.2. Monitoring

Another method of forecasting emerging trends is monitoring. This is a process in which the organisation scan and organise the information and data that comes from the organisation's surrounding (Boon, Rusman, van der Klink & Tattersall 2005: 207). This can simply be done through reading news sites relevant to the business, attend to conferences or seminars about new technology or trends, and to listen and observe the customers and the business surrounding (King 2018: 22-23). One can also conduct consumer surveys in where early adopters are interviewed in order to obtain vast amount of demographical and geographical consumer data that can compared to other regions and help companies to investigate changes in consumer values and behaviour (Kairos Future 2018: 7). Moreover, the business environment can also be monitored and analysed, for example through the SCEPTICAL framework that is suitable for a business environment in where tourism providers operate (Moutinho & Vargas-Sánchez 2018: 2). This framework contains influencing factors from social, cultural economic, technical, international, communications and infrastructure, administrative and institutional, and legal and political areas; thus, the framework will provide a morrehensive understanding of potential opportunities and threats that might affect the future (Moutinho & Vargas-Sánchez 2018: 2-13). The challenge of monitoring is that the data gathered is large and vast, thus data overload is imminent if the collecting and organising of data is not done in a systematic and structured way, and data is left unfiltered (Boon, et al. 2005: 207).

3.3. Opinion of experts

Sometimes it is necessary to get more in-depth knowledge about trends and their effect on a specific area of business or on a certain company and their operations. In these instances, a more qualitative technique could be appropriate in order to predict extraordinary changes of a larger scale (Lee, Song and Mjelde 2008: 1086) or unexpected trends that are impacted of decision making within tourism (Gelter 2017: 8). Interviewing experts is a way to gain understanding on how experts within a specific area see the future and what decisions or operations are recommended to take (Kairos Future 2018: 7). With a group of experts, using e.g. the Delphi method (Dalkey and Helmer 1963), it is possible to gain well thought-out opinions from varied perspectives that finally contributes into a well-rounded conclusion for the probable outcomes for upcoming events affecting the organisation and its future. Particularly, in situations where there is not enough data, it could be more appropriate to get the experts opinion, even though there is always the risk of encountering expert biases arriving from the experts' background (Boon, et al. 2005: 207).

3.4. Trend analysis

If a lot of statistics, historical and quantitative data is available, it is possible to use this past data through mathematical and statistical techniques, such as time-series models, and predict the future trends (Boon, et al. 2005: 207). This quantitative method is based on the supposition that the past trends are continuing according to the same manner than before, thus the data is quantified and the pattern is followed to the future (Lee, Song and Mjelde 2008: 1085). However, it is always possible that the trend will break and not follow the past behaviour, thus making this method unsuitable for realistically forecasting future trends. Especially for areas such as digitalization and technology, the approach is not very appropriate as technology might take a great leap or unexpected turn that is not foreseen or indicated at all from previous history or trends (Gelter 2017: 9).

3.5. Scenario construction

If one is to combine both quantitative and qualitative data, it is possible to use scenario construction. Scenario construction is a method where one is creating different possible future scenarios from the information and data available from various sources. These different scenarios are described in an imaginative manner; thus, some scenarios might seem unreal and would never happen. Nevertheless, the method is a way to investigate thinkable alternative futures that provides the organisation the opportunity to reflect how well their current and future position could succeed in this probable future. Normally there are scenarios that are most likely to happen, worst case pessimistic scenarios, and positive best-case scenarios from the point of view of the organisation associated to the future change in trends. (Boon et al. 2005: 207)

4. Utilizing trends in business and destination development

When the organisation has observed their environment and forecasted some possible emerging trends it is advisable to analyse what kind of impact these changes might have on the business and its surrounding. Furthermore, it is critical for the management to consider what decisions must be taken now or in the coming years in order to make, well in advance, adjustments to strategies that correspond the possible future trends. By being well prepared in ahead of time the organisation can somewhat control their future and utilize and exploit the trends to their advantage. In the following chapter, a few ways of utilizing trends in business and destination development are presented and discussed.

4.1. Statistics and business intelligence

Statistics and business intelligence (Gelter 2017: 8) tools or systems are efficient ways for organisations to utilize as support in various parts of the business for different purposes. Business intelligence (BI in short) can be defined as “business management term used to describe applications and technologies which are used to gather, provide access to analyse data and information about an enterprise, in order to help them make better informed business decisions.” (Ranjan 2009: 61). These tools or systems can help the management in decision-making of both daily and more demanding business matters by providing critical and relevant information about the subject and its background. BI systems are capable of collecting, analysing and transforming the data into a more concise form in an effective way, thus providing the organisation a gained value through information utilization (Ranjan 2009: 61). To further support the decision-making and making it more organized and relevant to a specific part of the business operation, e.g. the marketing department, data marts are used. These are a collection of gathered and organized material specific to a certain department needs (Inmon 1999) which are used to help the management in that part to direct and plan decisions according to historical data of past trends. These data marts should be found in every part of the organisation in order to make the business to competitively thrive.

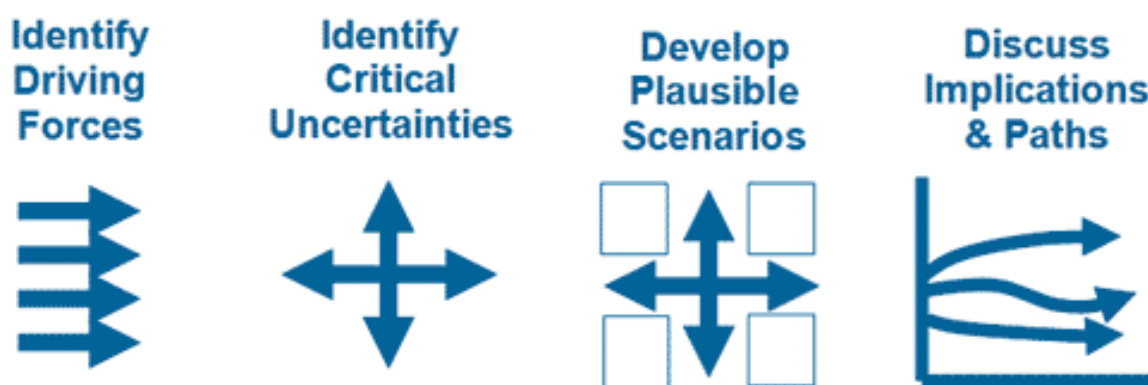
In the context of trend analysis and utilization in a business setting, BI helps in revealing trends and identifying the key factors of these changes. Through BI one is able to extract important information from the external environment and of upcoming trends. The information acquired through BI can minimize uncertainty in strategical decision-making (Zeng, Xu, Shi, Wang & Wu 2006: 4722), which is important for decisions that concerns trends and the future. In this manner a BI system works like a crystal ball that shows the best course of actions for the company to take. Furthermore, BI reveals the current position of the organisation in different areas and their relation to competitors and the external environment. This kind of information is very valuable nowadays as it is important for organisations to efficiently being able to gather relevant information about changes and quickly respond and adapt to these changes. BI provides other benefits as well to companies as the trend data can provide information on consumers changing demands, thus BI provides data to be used in product or service development for suitable products for the near future. These benefits can give a business the necessary competitive edge in the fast and ever-changing global business environment. (Ranjan 2009: 62-65)

4.2. Scenario planning

It is important for organisations that they are aware and have good knowledge about their surrounding world to be able to create strategic maps that helps in business development and navigation towards a prosperous future (GGP 2019). By utilizing information about the business environment and probable forthcoming trends in constructing different future scenarios it makes it possible for organisations to do some scenario planning (Gelter 2017: 8). Through the process of scenario planning, companies can plan their business strategies according to the distinctly constructed scenarios. Scenario planning can be defined as the process of identifying a definite amount of uncertain but realistic future settings followed by a discussion of the change, impact and managerial implications these futures have on the business and its environment (Mariton 2016, Peterson, Cumming & Carpenter 2003: 359-360). After this process the business can better prepare to different future scenarios and develop and make appropriate policies and decisions based upon these. If one is conscious about what could happen then it is more possible to prepare and deal with it if or when it happens.

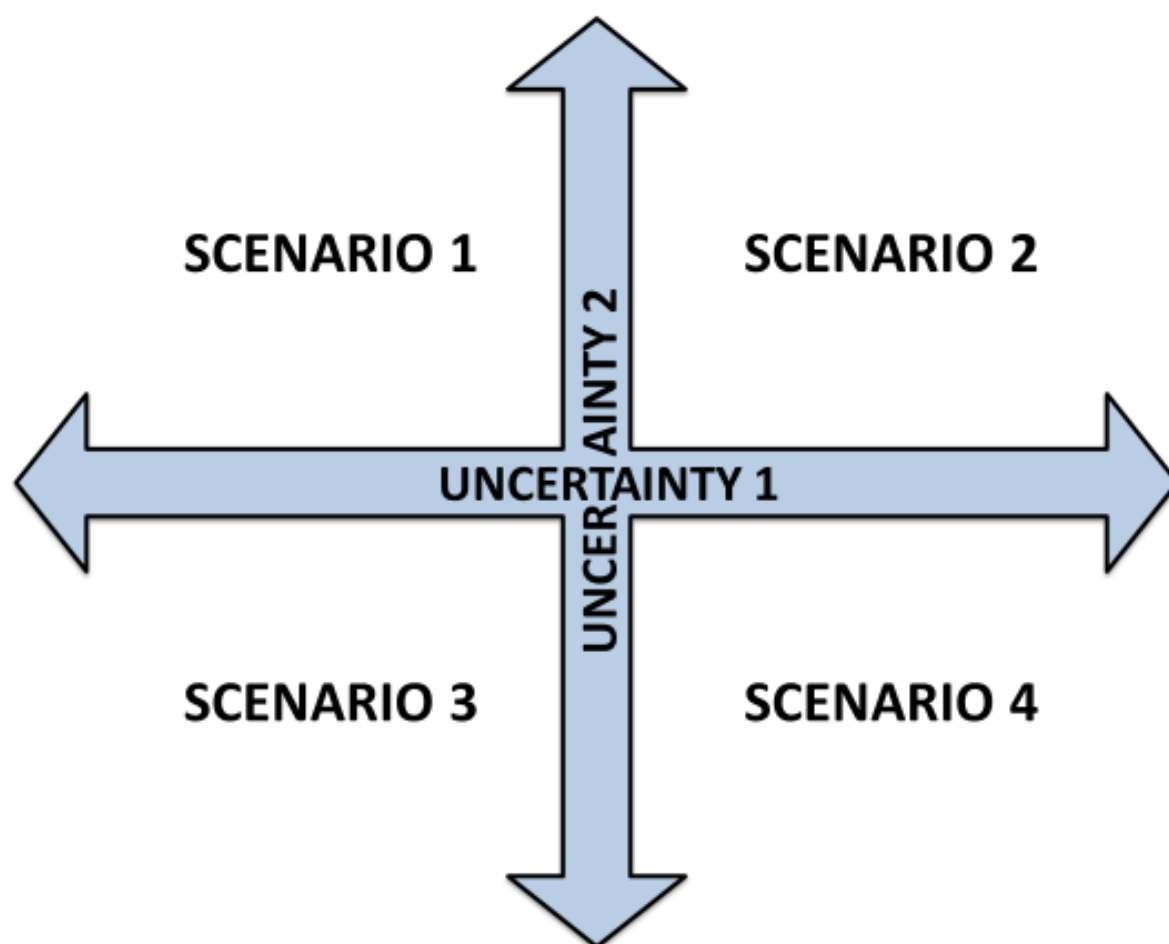
Even though scenario planning requires some work, time and effort, it is still very valuable and recommendable for organisations to do. Scenario planning supports businesses long term strategy and helps to direct them the right way (Mariton 2016). It is especially advantageous in instances where there are great and a lot of uncertainties from the environment and future (Peterson et al. 2003: 359). Without scenario planning the business is exposing itself to increased risks, costs and lost opportunities. A simple example of scenario planning could be a farmer that uses the process to forecast and plan according to different scenarios of weather from bad to good, thus predicting the sales and investments of the business and making decisions based on these propositions (Mariton 2016). There are several different approaches to scenario planning depending on the aim and purpose of the organisations and its intentions, but most of these approaches are qualitative in nature (Peterson et al. 2003: 360). This suggests that, scenario planning is quite an appropriate method to continue with in cases of uncertain trend prediction and analysis, such as expert opinion consultation or scenario construction, as these methods provides with several different thinkable futures in where the organisation can find itself in. The scenario planning process is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 – Illustration of the scenario planning process and its four essential steps (Mariton 2016).



The scenario planning process consists essentially of 4 steps; identifying the driving forces, identifying the critical uncertainties, developing a variety of probable scenarios, and discussing the consequences of these scenarios (Mariton 2016). A suitable way to go through this process is to create and organize a workshop through which the contributors discuss and brainstorm together through each step. First, the large trends or changes of the future will be discussed and listed, including their potential impact on the organisation. Second, the two of the most impactful trends or changes for the company will be chosen. Third, create a matrix of these two uncertain changes on an axis and generate four likely scenarios that could happen in the future (see Figure 4). Fourth, discuss what impact and implication every scenario has on the organisation and reassess or create a strategy for your business that considers all scenarios. This process can be further continued by testing and evaluating the scenarios to the business strategy in order to discover weak points that might have been missed (Peterson et al. 2003: 360). The aim is to have at least 4 most probable scenarios and the appropriate solutions to these scenarios.

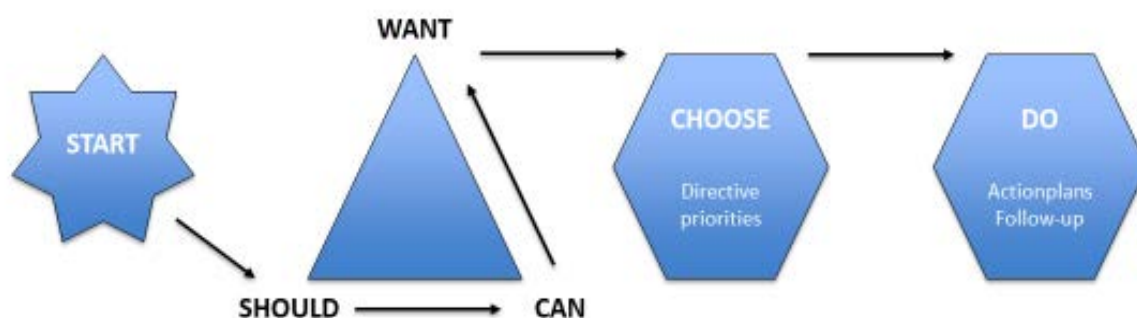
Figure 4 – A scenario planning matrix with two uncertainties and four scenarios.



4.3. The TAIDA process

The TAIDA process is another version and method for scenario planning (Gelter 2017: 8). This method was created by Kairos Future (GGP 2019) and it is more advanced and goes even a bit further compared to the standard scenario planning process by including an acting phase in the end. The framework has been used for many projects in different areas for the past decades, helping both public organisations and private businesses through extensive workshops (Lindgren & Bandhold 2013: 47). The TAIDA framework and the steps of the thinking process is illustrated and described in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Illustration describing the thinking process of the TAIDA framework (GGP 2019; Kairos Future 2019).



The TAIDA process follows the fundamental idea of scenario planning with a few adjustments and changes throughout the process. TAIDA is an acronym of Tracking, Analysing, Imagining, Deciding and Acting, which are also the phases of the five-step process (Kairos Future 2019). The process begins with tracking in where one is tracing for critical changes and signs of threat and opportunities from the environment. These changes, trends, signs and their possible consequences are then analysed in order to then create probable scenarios from these. This is then followed by imagining the positive opportunities in these future scenarios and by the creation of desired visions of the organisation in these scenarios. After this it is time to decide on the strategies that are taken and tested with the aim to realise the visions and goals, and plan on how the possible threats are met. The final step is to concretise the long-term plans and strategies by making short-term objectives, taking acting and follow up on these in order to complete the first steps of the plan. (Kairos Future 2019; Lindgren & Bandhold 2013: 47; see also GGP 2019)

5. Upcoming trends affecting the tourism sector

Some main possible future trends within tourism, consumer behaviour and digitalisation affecting the tourism sector and Kvarken Destinations are presented and discussed in this chapter. This chapter will begin with presenting the tourism trends, followed by consumer trends and finally the upcoming trends within digitalisation. These are trends that might have a large impact on Kvarken as a destination and its tourism sector in the following years, thus it is advised that the destination management organisations and companies take these trends into consideration when planning and outlining their future business strategies.

5.1. Tourism trends

Tourism trends are referring to trends that are happening within the tourism sector and having an impact on tourism. The tourism trends can be of different scales like in any other area, influencing on a global, country- or destination- and region-specific level. In this report some of the tourism trends that are having the most likely impact on Kvarken destinations are being explored. These trends will be examined and discussed from a global, country (Finland and Sweden) and destination/region perspective in order to discover their effect on Kvarken Destinations. The following tourism trends will be discussed in this chapter; “Climate change – destinations change”, “The global and conscious traveller”, “Togetherness, even digitally”, “New customers bring new times”, “Time-saving Internet-smorgasbord”, “Consumer empowerment and importance and value of reviews”, and the “La Dolce Vita” trend.

Climate change - destinations change

The climate is changing all around the world and can be considered as a global tourism megatrend. This change is affecting the world on an economic, social and environmental level (Svensk Turism 2018: 16-17, 25). Many places are experiencing extreme weather and changes in temperature (Gelter 2017: 10). These changes also affect the destinations and their tourism in positive or negative ways as some traditional sun vacation destinations might become unbearable hot and some destinations might become new sun vacation paradises with suitable temperature and weather. This shift in temperature, weather and climate changes destinations and creates new ones. For the Nordic countries, Sweden and Finland, this change in climate can already be felt and experienced. The summers are hotter, and the winters are becoming unpredictable on when they begin or end or how much snow will fall. This has a great effect on the time and duration of the high- and low-season, thus adaptation is required from tourist destinations and companies in order to prosper or even survive. Finland and Sweden are, in the context of tourism, often known for their snowy and arctic destination Lapland, which is the most popular travel destination for foreign tourists. However, the changes in climate brings challenges to this destination as one of the destinations main selling point, snow, is not certain, thus the change have severe consequences on the destination. In contrast, destinations farther south of Lapland are experiencing a gradual change in temperature, which starts to make the destinations an appropriate alternative for a summer vacation in the nature. The Kvarken archipelago can offer a summer vacation in a relaxed atmosphere, exciting activities and tolerable temperature in an environment surrounded by beautiful nature and wildlife. This change in climate can in this case provide the Kvarken destination an advantageous setting and opportunity for future tourism development.

The global and conscious traveller

The consumers' values and habits are changing. Globalisation have made it easier to travel and see the world which has made people better informed and more conscious of their choices and consumption. The global consumer is well-travelled tourist who have experienced and seen a lot of different places; thus, they are expecting something personal and extraordinary from their next destinations (Gelter 2017: 10). Moreover, the past experiences have made these consumers more conscious about their choices in consumption and travelling as they strive to be as ethical and sustainable as possible by caring about animal-welfare and environmental issues (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 4, 18-24). For these global and conscious travellers, the Nordic countries can offer something new and exciting as most often all other travel destinations have already been visited and explored. Especially, Kvarken can provide something new, special and even more extraordinary compared to the usual and popular travel destinations in the arctic regions of Nordic countries, such as Lapland, which are often the only places foreign tourists visit when they travel to the Nordic countries for vacation. However, while these tourists visit the destination, the destination and its companies have to ensure that they also show that their business have ethical, sustainable and conscious policy and practices of doing business.

Togetherness, even digitally

Advancements in technology and today's society has affected people's relationships. The global and digital age have created a rift between friends, partners and families. This development in relationships are starting to show signs of people desiring to find this human connection again. There is a growing belonging of wanting to do things together, share things to each other, tell stories, sympathies and network with new people (Gelter 2017: 11). However, digitalisation and technology are here to stay, and it can also be used for helping people to connect again and improve the relationship through authentic and smooth digital communication and interaction (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 5, 25-27). In the future people can remotely and conveniently, no matter the location or distance, share, create and experience their tourism activities together digitally during their travel. The Nordic countries have very cheap, fast, advanced and reliable internet connections which provides a good foundation for a future of digital interactions. Furthermore, the nature that Kvarken Destinations have available to offer provides a harmonious environment full of activities that brings people together.

New customers bring new times

The customers' needs, values and priorities can drastically change from generation to generation. The generation X has been followed by the millennials, who are now being followed by generation Z. Each generation differs from each other in fundamental ways which also means that these new customers comes with different expectations and requires the destination meet these new needs and expectations too. These new customers are self-determined, they want to realise and fulfil their own potential, and they appreciate networking and establishing new contacts, to name a few of their key characteristics (Gelter 2017: 10-11). Even older generations, such as baby boomers, are setting up new trends for the future by more often preferring a life alone and by embracing an independent lifestyle (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 6, 62-67), which can also be shown in their way of travelling

and how they behave as a tourist. It is estimated that 25% of today's young adults in US will have lived a single life when they turn the age 50, and this trend is predicted to only increase by the years spreading to other cultures and countries (Angus and Westbrook 2019:62-63). The Nordic countries, Kvarken destinations and its tourist companies might have something to offer to these new customers, but it will still be a challenge to get to know the preferences of the younger generations, provide them with appropriate choices and to successfully attract these new customers to the destination.

Time-saving Internet-smorgasbord

Digitalisation have been shaping consumers' purchasing preferences and habits. The trend is that consumers decide to more often look at convenience, efficiency and time-saving aspects when choosing a product or service. Time is considered as a premium and valued resource and companies that can provide a service with these factors will heighten the standard for everyone else and consumers will start to expect this level of service from all other companies too (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 57-61). This is also true for tourist destinations and their offered services. When booking the future vacation, consumers want to do this online on their platform of choice with all selections, extras and add-ons effortlessly and conveniently available by just a simple click (Gelter 2017: 10-11). Technology and web page development know-how is a resource that the Nordic countries and their companies usually excels in. However, even with this prerequisite, Kvarken Destinations and its companies are still facing the challenge of creating globally competing websites and booking systems that are smooth and convenient to use for the future traveller.

Consumer empowerment and importance and value of reviews

With the shift in power between companies and consumers, the customer reviews are becoming more and more important. Consumers are influenced and trusting to other consumer's opinions and they demand value for their money (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 34). Customers today find value in reviews as these make their choices easier and better evaluated. More than 95% of travellers read reviews before they book a trip (Kairos Future 2018: 34) and they usually invest a lot of time in reading and submitting this feedback as this knowledge provides them empowerment that consumers are nowadays desiring after (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 37). For businesses reviews can be used as a marketing tool and a channel of communication with the customers and it has become very critical for companies to answer all reviews, especially the negative ones in order to create trust through fast, transparent and good communication (Kairos Future 2018: 34-37). Some of the most common review platforms in the tourism industry today is Google, Yelp, TripAdvisor and Facebook (Kairos Future 2018: 35). Same as in the previous trend discussion, the Nordic countries and its companies have well established prerequisite for the technology infrastructure part of reviews and social media communication, but the know-how and skill might be lacking. Especially smaller tourism companies in Kvarken Destinations are having to prepare and train themselves for utilizing reviews and social media for their benefit.

La Dolce Vita trend

As a logical continuation of empowerment of consumers and search for convenience and comfort, the tourist customers are starting to demand high service quality even in places and situations where it has not been very common. The travellers are desiring to upgrade their vacation to the next level by adding a touch of luxury to their tourist travels, stays, activities and experiences. This change in demand for quality, accessibility, convenience and comfort within tourism services and experiences are sometimes called the “La Dolce Vita” trend (Gelter 2017: 11). One example of the effects of this trend is the movement and rise of “glamping”, which is the combination of glamour and camping where one is experiencing the real nature but without sacrificing comfortability (Glamping.com 2019). As it has been stated earlier, Nordic countries have the potential to fulfil the conditions of convenience, accessibility and comfortability on the digital front with well-established Internet infrastructure and connection that makes it convenient for tourists to be connected in the location and experience the nature the authentic and non-polluted environment. More so, Kvarken Destinations and its companies have the possibility to offer some of their more demanding customers luxury experiences in the nature of Kvarken that are made of very high service quality.

5.2. Consumer trends

Consumer trends in this report are referring to trends that are related to changes in consumer behaviour. Same as with the tourism trends, consumer trends can come in different scales and sizes of impact, influencing on a global or only on a local level. In this subchapter, some major consumer trends that might also impact the tourism sector are being presented in short. These trends will be shortly explored and discussed from the perspective of the tourism sector and Kvarken Destinations. The consumer trends discussed in this chapter are the following; “Back to the basics”, “The search for JOMO”, “The rise of self-sufficient consumers” and “Desire for a plastic waste-free world”.

Back to the basics

Consumers have started to more often re-evaluate their spending habits. They are in the search of more simple and authentic things and experiences that helps them to express their individuality (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 3). This movement from generic things and materialistic ideals can especially be seen in consumers from developed economies. Like in the previously mentioned “La Dolce Vita” trend (Gelter 2017: 11), these consumers are interested in services, experiences and products that are unique and of higher quality, and which offers a distinct status to the person consuming it. This trend can be discovered within different sectors such as food, accommodation, culture, art and travel. This trend has appeared in the form of different phenomena such as glamping, locavores, craft spirits and homemade beer, artisan beauty and all-natural products (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 13-17). Even though these trend patterns are mostly seen in developed economies, they will start to appear and inhabit emerging economies too in the future once these economies are developed further (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 13-17), meaning that this trend will only spread and grow. For the tourism sector, this change is very important to take into consideration when developing and adjusting tourism services. The experiences offered must meet these new ideals and values in order to satisfy the authenticity, individuality and simplicity

seeking customers. Kvarken Destinations with its local companies and beautiful nature have great potential to meet these demands.

The search for JOMO

For a long time, the feeling of “fear of missing out”, or FOMO in short, has been controlling many peoples’ lives. This is often seen as a consequence of social media where everything happens and is shared rapidly. If one is to miss out on something there, then is a fear of being left out of the belonged social community or group. This feeling of FOMO can be very stressful at times; thus, some people have started to decrease the time they are “online” or on the phone and the number of things they share on social media and instead they try to focus on themselves, “offline” activities and by experiencing the real life happening before them (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 3, 38-41). This new kind of mindset is called “joy of missing out”, JOMO for short, and it is the countermovement to FOMO, in where one is deciding to disconnect oneself from social activity and media for the favour of enjoying one’s personal time and life (ExperienceJOMO 2019). People with this mindset have purposefully planned a disconnection for a time of self-reflection and reduction of stress by appreciating their self-time and well-being, and by being quite selective of their choice of activities (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 3) For example, one might take more enjoyment of going to cafés without WIFI and browsing for items in-store compared to browsing for them on web store sites (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 39). Nevertheless, this mindset, that is more common with millennials, does not mean a complete isolation from social activities, but more of a personal limit and set of boundaries of social interactions. Furthermore, the JOMO movement is quite beneficial for the tourism sector as travel and travel experiences helps with the disconnection and these activities also support the JOMO mindset and way of living (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 44). These people are looking for travel solutions that enables them to spend time at their own pace, which is solution that Kvarken Destination and its companies might be able to offer them.

The rise of self-sufficient consumers

The technology, products and services today let consumers to be more self-sufficient and take care of themselves without outside help, for example using an application on the phone. Many see this more often as a value-added factor and even luxury instead of a deprivation of service as this allows flexibility, versatility and possibilities for the consumer to personalize and plan their experiences as they see fit (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 2, 45). This trend is most prevailing in hype products within luxury goods, food, nutrition, wellness, beauty and fashion, where the consumers want to cut out the middle-man and cancelling out the noise of labels and branding that tries to control and direct them to a certain product (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 45-46). These consumers are starting to be aware of the way brands, social media and influencers promote products and services that might not be suitable for them despite the promises. They are looking for transparency that provides them with control of their own life and consumer choices. Similarly, like the movement of JOMO and sustainable thinking, people are looking to simplify their life and consume ethically and environmentally-friendly; thus, simultaneously taking a self-care and healthy approach to their consumption. For the tourism sector this trend might indicate that self-made and planned trips will become more popular in the future and the middle-man, such as travel agencies, are cut out of the equation, if possible. The companies and organisations in the Nordic countries and Kvarken Destinations must provide the freedom and choice in their offerings that caters to and satisfies these self-sustaining consumers.

Desire for a plastic waste-free world

Environmental, sustainable and green thinking and awareness has been growing for years. This movement is becoming even more important in the future as consumers are pushing for a plastic-and waste-free world (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 4, 51). There are several factors contributing to the pollution of the environment, but plastic waste is one of the major ones that is getting into the spotlight. Consumers are no longer only vocally demanding companies within all industries to take responsibility of the environment as they are now also protesting with their wallets and choosing conscious eco-friendly services and recyclable products (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 4, 53). Therefore, companies should nowadays put more emphasis on sustainable policies of their business if they want to stay competitive and satisfy their customers. Plastic as a packing material is not the problem per se, but it is how we use it and dispose it after use that is not optimal for sustainability (Angus and Westbrook 2019: 56); thus, companies should help their customers with recycling and to make eco-friendly choices. As mentioned before, this demand is concerning all industries, including the tourism sector. The Nordic countries have established well-functioning infrastructure for recycle processes and their companies are often found in the forefront of green technology and mindset. Even Kvarken Destinations and its companies in the region should be well aware of this movement and have policies that reflect this trend.

5.3. Digitalization trends

Digitalization trends in this report are referring to trends that are related to changes in technology and digitalization. Same as with the tourism and consumer trends, digitalization trends can come in different scales and sizes of impact, influencing on a global or only on a local level, although they can usually grow and spread fast. It is important for companies to adapt to today's and tomorrow's technology in order to survive and gain or maintain a competitive advantage. In this subchapter, some major digitalization trends that might also influence the tourism sector are being presented in short. These trends will be shortly explored and discussed from the perspective of the tourism sector and Kvarken Destinations. The digitalization trends discussed in this chapter are the following; "IoT to Big Data to AI", "Smart, advising and convenient wearables", "Future disruptive potential of Blockchain-technology" and "360 video, VR and AR enhancing marketing activities and customer experiences".

IoT to Big Data to AI

According to Gilan (2019) the three biggest trends now within digitalisation are IoT (Internet of Things), big data and AI (artificial intelligence) as all these three trends are logically interconnected with each other (Svensk Turism 2018: 60; see also Gelter 2017: 19, 34-37, 76). With IoT, Internet of Things, everything is connected online. Every machine, device, household items or even houses are going to be online 24/7, thus creating a lot of data. This data can be collected, stored and analysed using efficient big data management systems providing great value to people, businesses and societies. The data will be especially valuable as a "power" source for artificial intelligent. By utilizing and connecting big data and AI technology, it is possible to create and manage advanced automatic procedures that computers will do for us in a more accurate, rapid and efficient way that would ever be possible for people to do (Gilan 2019). These trends and the impact they will have on our society and every industry is predicted to be very significant. Even the tourism sector will be changed by these technologies (Gelter 2017: 34)

as there is a lot of valuable data that can be collected from tourists that will in the end help companies to create efficient automatic systems that improves their offered services and enhances the experiences for the tourists. For example, AI can provide a customized and personalized 24/7 customer service that fits the customer's current needs according to the travel preferences and history (Kairos Future 2018: 31-34). IoT, Big Data and AI are large technological concepts that are certainly playing a big role in the future travel industry; therefore, it is critical for Kvarken Destinations to include these in the planning and decision of future scenarios.

Smart, advising and convenient wearables

The relevant and valuable data for big data management and artificial intelligent must be originated from a source somewhere. One of the most important data sources for the tourism sector is the tourists themselves. The challenge has been to obtain this data from tourists in convenient ways, but nowadays smartphones and other smaller devices have brought many new technologies to our fingertips in the form of smart wearables that collects data from tourists and help them on their travels (Kairos Future 2018: 22). These function as miniature computers included with tech such as Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, GPS (Global Positioning System), Gyro, VR, AR and more. New kinds of mobile devices and wearables are being released to the market, such as smart watches, glasses, bracelets and clothes, that are making their even more convenient and comfortable to wear compared to smartphones and other devices (Gelter 2017: 15). At first these smart wearables were used to complement the smartphones and their applications, for example within exercise and navigation, but their use will be broadened in the future, for example for valuable big data collection, AI utilization, blockchain transactions, and augmented and virtual reality experiences, as they simultaneously can work independently without another device. The smart wearable technology has a trend to become even increasingly smaller in the future with the invention of smart contact lenses (Gelter 2017: 15) or even with Nano-technology, which are miniature computers or chips injected inside the human skin. These smart wearables are very significant for the tourism sector as they can be used in several beneficial ways, such as providing valuable information or enhancing the experience (Kairos Future 2018: 23-24), for both the tourist companies, the destination organisation, the tourists and even for the residents. Therefore, it would be advisable for Kvarken Destination to investigate the possibilities that these smart wearables have to offer the destination and tourism business.

Future disruptive potential of Blockchain-technology

While crypto-currencies, such as Bit coins, has been a quite controversial topic, the technology behind it might have very disruptive potential on transaction mechanisms and business models. Blockchain-technology is a secure and digital infrastructure and database of transactions that is built on decentralized trust without third parties in between and it can be used in several other areas than transactions, such as for tracking, distribution, verification and accounting (Gelter 2017: 61, 91). It can either come in the form of a public blockchain that is an open network for everyone used mostly for monetary transaction or it can come in the form of a private and closed blockchain for invited participants that want to share and manage internal, assets or a supply chain (Kairos Future 2018: 29). This technology can, for example, help the end-user in a supply chain, such as a restaurant, to trace back the product to the source, e.g. farmer, for more important information without having to go through and stop on every part of the databases within the supply chain (Kairos Future 2018: 28). Sometime in the future blockchain-

technology can make it even possible for scenarios of convenient and safe automatic payments where the customer goes into a clothing store, tries on a shirt, and directly exit the store with the shirt in hand (Gilan 2019). During this scenario, the customer has automatically made the payment transaction in a secure way without the hustle and extra steps of requiring going to the counter, giving the card or cash and making the payment. As for all other industries, blockchain-technology might have great impact on the tourism sector as it can change business models and the way transactions are conducted in the industry. This trend might move very rapidly; thus, the tourist companies in Kvarken Destinations should follow its development closely and look for tools and applications that might help in utilizing this technology in everyday business and development of one's services.

360 Video, VR and AR enhancing marketing activities and customer experiences

Text, pictures and video has often been used as media to market products and services. However, new tools and ways, such as 360-degree videos, Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), are introduced for companies to utilize in their marketing activities that let the potential customers to check out the experiences more closely and to obtain a better perception of the services in beforehand (Kairos Future 2018: 37). Technologies like VR and AR were mentioned earlier in conjunction with smart wearables and IoT as they function well together and complete each other as well. With AR it is possible to lay over digital images or information on real-life experiences through a screen, glasses or lenses (Svensk Turism 2018: 61; see also Gelter 2017: 15). This real-life enhancement can be utilized and experienced on the location of the destination. Through the use of 360-degree videos it is possible to let viewers to explore a place or experience on their own terms by choosing the preferred angles in the video (Gelter 2017: 84). This can be a more immersive and efficient way to sell a destination than just through plain text or pictures, as 360 videos can also be converted to VR-experiences that can be posted and shared on social media channels, such as YouTube and Facebook (Kairos Future 2018: 37). Moreover, with VR it is possible to go even further by creating and building whole new virtual worlds of either imaginative or realistic locations that can be experienced through virtual reality headsets from the comfort of one's home (Kairos Future 2018: 38, see also Gelter 2017: 15-16, 91). The possibilities that these technologies provide for the tourism sector and Kvarken Destinations can be quite substantial as tourist companies, such as hotels and resorts, can for example let their customers to visit and explore the premises and rooms before they book (Gelter 2017: 85). On the spot this technology can for example provide additional information and guidance for tourists that are walking on a nature path on their own. It is expected that AR and VR technologies popularity will continue to grow; thus, they will be even more accessible and available for consumers in the future (Kairos Future 2018: 40).

Even though many of these digitalization trends and their technologies provide faster and more efficient and cost-effective ways of doing things, it is still very critical to remember that technology is not the solution, but only a tool for human goals and interaction (Gilan 2019). Even if technology has changed the environment and a lot around us, people have still not changed much inside and their physical needs remain the same. Therefore Gilan (2019) emphasizes that businesses must find a good balance between physical and digital in order to serve their customers in the best way possible. It is important for companies to explore and find the blind spot between the digital and physical dimensions. For example, Amazon are constantly striving to find this sweet spot between these two realms in order to better serve their customers and to maintain a competitive advantage in the market.

6. Summary

This paper focuses on to provide an understanding of tourism trends and their implications for business and destination development by defining the meaning of trends, introducing the different scale of trends, presenting methods of forecasting and analysing trends, demonstrating tools, frameworks and processes for utilizing trends, and by discussing some main upcoming trends within tourism, consumer behaviour and digitalisation with an emphasis on the tourism sector and Kvarken Destinations.

Trends are defined as a recurring pattern that is changing or developing towards a general direction during a certain frame of time. These trends can come in various sizes of scales, from mega to microtrends to fads, depending on their rate of impact on the world and duration of time they last. It is important for businesses to keep up with the times and predict upcoming trends in order to gain or maintain a competitive advantage, therefore, this report presented tools and techniques for analysing the business environment and forecasting possible trends, such as trendwatching, monitoring, opinion of experts, trend analysis and scenario construction. Furthermore, the report demonstrated three ways of utilizing the forecasted trends in business and destination development by either using them in statistics and business intelligence, for scenario planning, or for a the TAIDA process, which is an advanced framework of the regular scenario planning. These processes or frameworks help the company to see the possible impact the trends might have on the business and its environment and they support the management in the decision-making process and in creating or adjusting business strategies for both the short- and the long-term. The paper is concluded with discussions of some major potential trends within tourism, consumer behaviour and digitalisation. These are trends that might have a large impact on Kvarken as a destination and its tourism sector in the following years, thus it is advised that the destination management organisations and companies take these trends into consideration when planning and outlining their future business strategies or when creating their own scenario planning matrix to help them in their future business decision-making.

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