

The image and interest of Interrail in Finland

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Passenger transportation by train has long traditions in many European countries. Although rail travelling is nowadays comfortable, ecological and easy in many European countries, the popularity of Interrail travel in Europe among young Finnish travellers has decreased significantly since its peak decades in 1970s and 1980s.

The objective of this research is to gain practical relevant knowledge for the marketing of VR (the Finnish Railways). The research pursues to discover the current brand image of Interrail, level of awareness and interest among young consumers in Finland. Moreover the research aims to find out the main determinants for choosing or not choosing Interrail travel and which factors could increase the interest. A quantitative research approach was selected for this study, because the aim is to recognize a business problem and test whether the presumptions set are valid. A survey was the selected research strategy and a questionnaire the chosen data collection method.

A strong brand consists of brand identity, image and personality. Brand's identity is seen for instance in its visible elements: name and logo as well as in its history, age and place of origin. Brand image brings along the perceptions of consumers. The brand personality extends image associations to particular personality traits and characteristics of a brand. For Generation Y uniqueness of a brand still plays an important role although they hold a critical attitude towards commercial campaigns.

Interrail was mentioned in every 4th open-ended response, which refers that Interrail as a brand is rather known among people aged 18-39 years. Interrail related responses revealed many positive associations towards rail travelling. Rail travel was seen as easy, convenient, comfortable and fast mode of transportation. Admiration of beautiful and different landscapes during the trip as well as experience of something new, adventurous and interesting were seen as essential parts of Interrail travel. Interrail was also associated as a social form of travelling. Many perceptions were greatly influenced by reference groups' experiences. Many respondents expressed their dream or intention to travel by Interrail in the future.

Young people aged 18-25 years (N896) expressed clearly that they are very interested (77 %) or somewhat interested (20 %) to try Interrail within next two years. The three most emphasized determinants for choosing Interrail were 1) Europe and its different destinations are interesting, 2) Interrail travel as a comfortable mode of travelling and 3) personal leisure time available. Those 18-25 year old (N27) who were not interested emphasized three main determinants for not choosing Interrail as 1) not having enough leisure time available, 2) flying is easier in Europe than rail travel 3) various other reasons such as time and cost constraints as well as life stage or other personal reasons.

Keywords

Interrail, Brand, Image, Interest, Generation Y & Z

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1 Introduction

Passenger transportation by train has long traditions in many European countries. Nowadays short connections between major European capitals, high speed rail network and comfort of modern rolling stock increases the popularity of both national and international rail travelling in Europe. Altogether 387 billion passenger-kilometres were travelled on national railway networks in EU-27 countries and 25 billion passenger-kilometres internationally cross borders. France, Germany, United Kingdom and Italy account for more than 70 % of all passenger-kilometres travelled both nationally and internationally in all EU-countries in 2013. (Eurostat Statistics Explained, Passenger Transport statistics 2011-2013.)

Europe is the most visited tourism region in the world according to UNWTO, World Tourism Organisation. International arrivals to Europe grew by 4 % in 2014 reaching over 580 million arrivals. (UNWTO press release no: 15006, Jan 27 2015). European countries are popular destinations also for Finnish tourists. The most visited neighbouring countries in 2014 were Estonia, Sweden and Russia which account for 55 % of all leisure trips made by Finns due to their close vicinity and good transport connections. Southern European countries Spain and Italy are Finns' favourite sun destinations and have increased their popularity with overnight visitations in 2014. Middle European countries have lost their popularity in 2014. Finns travelled to Germany and France less than previous year. Then again Poland and Hungary have increased their popularity significantly in 2014. (Statistics Finland 2014.)

Although rail travelling is nowadays comfortable, ecological and easy in many European countries, the popularity of Interrail travelling among young Finnish travellers has decreased significantly since its peak decades in 1970s and 1980s. This may be due to changed travel behaviour among Generations Y (born 1980-1996) and Z (born 1996 -) who are surrounded by countless travel options compared to earlier generations Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) who lived their youth when there were less options to travel abroad.

1.1 Background and research problem

VR's (the Finnish Railways) marketing has recognized a declining trend during the recent years as the number of youth passes sold in Finland has not increased despite of the yearly marketing efforts. VR sells two types of passes: the Interrail Global Pass, which is valid in all countries, and the country-specific Interrail One Country Pass. The passes are

available to different age groups and they can be purchased with different validity periods. I was asked to conduct a research of current awareness level and image of Interrail as well as to find out reasons for the decreased interest among young consumers in Finland. Fresh insight about the target segments opinions was considered important in order to examine whether used marketing activities and messages are still valid for this young generation. The main research problem is following: does the decreased interest derive from lack of knowledge and awareness or is the Interrail travelling not interesting anymore and if not, why?

1.2 Objective of the research and research questions

The objective of this research is to gain practical relevant knowledge for the marketing of VR. The research pursues to discover current awareness level and understand the perceived image of Interrail especially among the main target group of 18-25 years old consumers who belong to Generation Y and Z. Additional aim is to find out what is the level of interest towards Interrail in this target segment. Most importantly this research tries to reveal what are the main determinants among young people for choosing or not choosing Interrail. Moreover young consumer's opinions on activities that could increase the level of interest are inquired in this research. The subjects of the study are limited to young consumers that reside permanently in Finland. The research questions are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1 Research questions

1. How well Interrail is associated with rail travelling in Europe, and how Interrail is perceived among 18-39 years old? 2. What is Interrail Pass' (Global & One country) level of awareness among 18-25 years old? 3. How 18-25 years old reflect with Interrail's different image attributes determined for this research? 4. To what extent 18-25 years old agree or disagree with Interrail's current value propositions? 5. What is the level of interest to travel by Interrail within next 2 years among 18-25 years? 6. What are the main determinants why 18-25 years are interested in Interrail? 7. What are the main determinants why 18-25 years are not interested in Interrail? 8. To what extent 18-25 years agree or disagree with proposed factors that could increase their interest towards Interrail?
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1.3 Presumptions of the research

VR's marketing team made some tentative assumptions about reasons affecting the declining popularity of Interrail among young consumers in Finland. These assumptions are based on young generations Y and Z changed consumer behavior and the variety of

competing options they have in transportation and travel destinations. The presumptions are presented below (Table 2).

Table 2 Presumptions of this research

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18-25 years old in Finland are not interested about Interrail, because:• They are not aware of Interrail Pass options• Interrail is associated as uncomfortable, slow or expensive mode of discovering Europe• Flying is easier than the rail travelling• Europe is not an interesting destination anymore

1.4 Research methods

An applied research aims to find out knowledge which has practical and immediate relevance to businesses. Therefore the research subject is considered important and expected outcome should result informational and practical value for the business or solution to the problem under research. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 8-9.) Business researches are often applied researches as the objective is to help management to make decisions (Burns & Burns, 2008, 10). A marketing research can be used to understand consumers better and identify problems which are related to brand image (Malhotra, Birks & Wills 2012, 7, 12). A survey is a typical research strategy for business management and questionnaire a cost-effective data collection method to receive quantitative data (Saunders & al. 2009, 144).

A quantitative research approach was selected for this study, because the aim is to recognize a business problem and test whether the presumptions made are valid. Research and statistical analysis of data can discover objective perspective to such assumptions (Burns & Burns 2008, 15). VR's marketing expects results which can help them to identify the current image of Interrail and level of interest in order to make future decisions on Interrail's marketing activities to young consumers of 18-25 years and correct possible wrong approaches made subjectively based on general assumptions.

1.5 Structure of research

The following chapters introduce theoretical framework for this research. The second chapter will give an overlook to Interrail's history and product development as well as description of marketing activities in Finland. The third chapter discusses about marketing and brand as well as consumer behavior in tourism. The fourth chapter introduces research approach and methods for this study. The fifth chapter presents the results and the sixth chapter concludes the research and provides suggestions for VR's marketing.

2 Interrail – 43 years on the tracks

When thinking of tourism industry and passenger transportation in particular it is difficult to name spontaneously any other tourism product which has had such a long history and popularity as Interrail does. Interrail was first introduced in 1972 as a special anniversary rail ticket for young people under 21 years old. The International Union of Railways also known as UIC launched the ticket to celebrate its 50 year anniversary. The special offer was targeted to young people as a cheap way of travelling around Europe. For young Finnish travelers the first Interrail ticket costed 275 marks and it covered 22 countries during a travel period of one month. The travel season lasted from March until November. (The Finnish Railway museum 2015.)

The popularity of this special ticket was clearly greater than expected. During the first year total of 87 625 passes were sold to young travelers in whole Europe and about 13 % of passes were sold in Finland, which indicates that there was clearly a demand for this type of tourism product. Due to the first year's popularity Interrail became a permanent rail pass for young people in Europe and it has lasted as such already 43 years. (Kautto 11 March 2015.)

2.1 Independency on rail – the peak decade of 1980s

In the 1980s Interrail was trendy, the easiest and cheapest way to discover Europe. Many young Finns took also the opportunity to pack their back packs and hop on a train. Interrail was a rite of passage to adulthood and independency for many young travelers. (Suuronen 14 April 2015.)

“Interrail offered freedom, independency and adventure for youngsters – a cheap opportunity to go abroad and see many countries with one ticket. Interrail was nearly a must as there was no other comparable.” (Suuronen 14 April 2015.)

Although the experience was often exhausting, and people returned hungry and with empty wallets, they started to plan a new rail trip after a short recovery, Suuronen (2015) recalls. In terms of passes sold, the peak decade was the 1980s. During 1984 over 16 000 passes were sold in Finland to young travelers. After that the sales trend started to decline slowly (Figure 1).

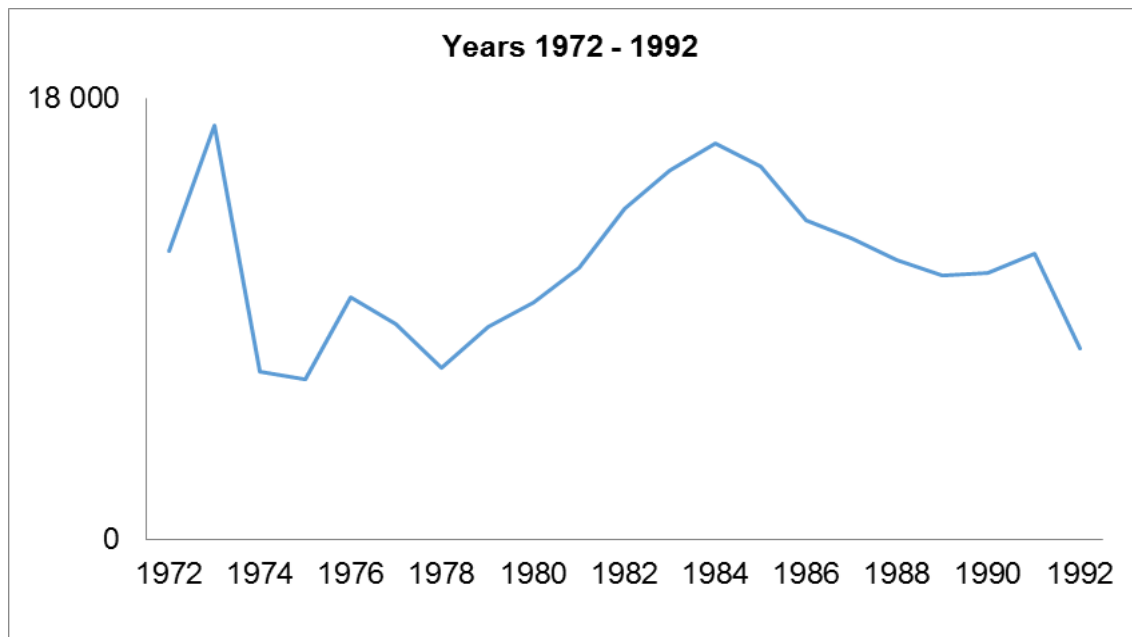


Figure 1 Number of youth passes sold, trend line of 1972–2013 (Kautto 11 March 2015)

Factors such as economic downturn of the 90s and weak value of Finnish mark in relation to ECU led to rise of pass prices in 1992–1994. Before joint currency Euro the pass price was determined in ECU's which was a basket of currencies among European Union member states. Each country set the rail pass price by using ECU's official exchange rate. (Suuronen 14 April 2015.) The amount of Interrail passes sold dropped significantly in beginning of the 90's as many young travelers decided not to travel (Figure 2).

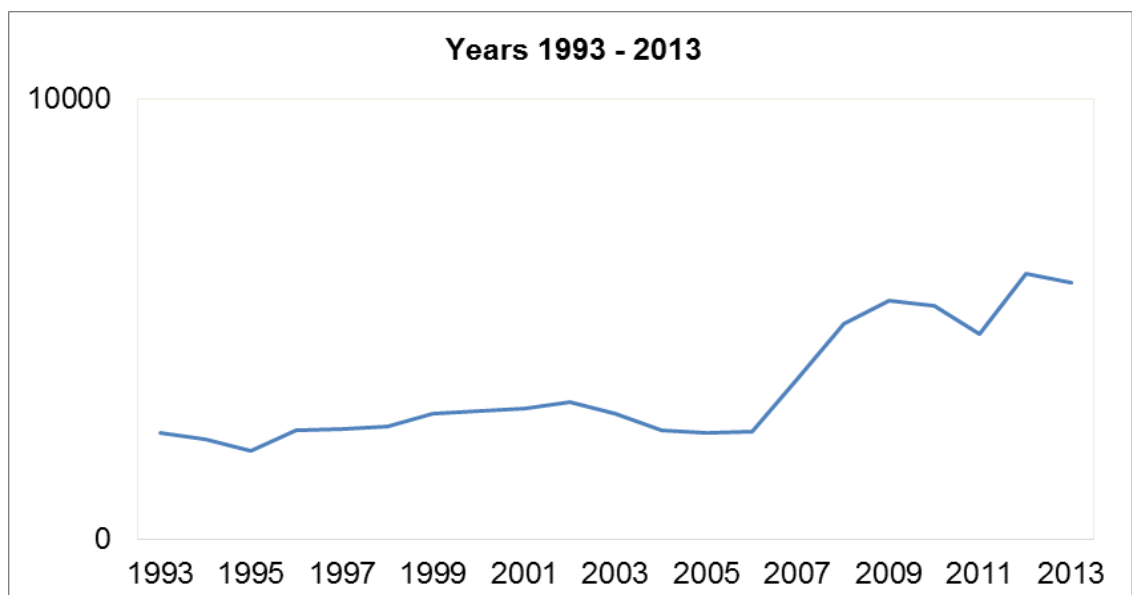


Figure 2 Number of youth passes sold, trend line of 1993–2013 (Kautto 11 March 2015)

The rate of unemployment among 15-24 years old was up to 33.6 % in 1993 and the pass price was as its highest ever costing 1890 Finnish marks (Statistics Finland 2014; Kautto 11 March 2015).

2.2 Interrail Pass changes and development

Interrail pass has undergone many changes in terms of product price, conditions and content. In 1976 the pass' age limit was raised to 23 years and in 1979 to 26 years. The Interrail+ferry combination pass was introduced in summer 1985. It included ferry trips with selected ferry lines for example Turku-Stockholm route with Silja Line (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Sample of Interrail Passes from different times (Kautto 11 March 2015.)

In 1991 Interrail+ferry ticket became unprofitable and it was ended. The sales of senior Interrail pass for men over 65 years and women over 60 years started 1979. However it was discontinued in 1984 due to lack of interest. In 1989 the Interrail pass was offered also to adults over 26 in Nordic countries and later on in Ireland and England as well. The adult pass was approved in all Interrail countries not until in 1998. The regional Interrail pass in 1994 made it possible to choose only selected countries for travelling in Europe. Children's special rate became available in 1998. Customer feedback on regional pass and its limitations led to development of the Global pass 1 month, 22 days, 10/22 days, 5/10 days and the One country pass which replaced regional passes in 2007. The Interrail

Global pass to seniors over 60 years was launched again in 2010. (Kautto 11 March 2015.)

Eurail Group, established 2001, is an organization that nowadays manages Interrail as well as Eurail which is a rail pass offered to non-European citizens or residents. Eurail Group aims to improve Interrail's brand and launch a more attractive offer available to all ages. Eurail Group provides wide range of options of Eurail and Interrail Passes. The Eurail Group is entirely owned by the participating railways and shipping companies. The purpose of Eurail Group is to raise the profile of these rail passes, to identify and address the challenges in marketing of European rail travelling, promote Europe as destination and make rail travel an ideal option of transportation. The focus of Eurail's operation among others is in product development (passes), research on traveler behavior and population dynamics, increasing competitiveness, improvement of strategic management and use of marketing tools for instance image and branding, development of new actions for marketing through media and promotion of the historical traditions and cultural diversity of Europe. (Eurorail Group 2015.)

Eurail Group introduces according to their Interrail Media Kit seven reasons to travel with Interrail which are freedom, flexibility, variety, environmental-friendliness, authenticity, extra benefits and discounts and meeting new people (Interrail Media Kit 2014). Interrail.eu is an online sales channel and official sales agent of Interrail Passes located in the Netherlands. It has been appointed by the Eurail Group G.I.E. The shop is a joint web-shop of 32 European railways. (Interrail.eu 2015.)

2.3 Interrail marketing in Finland

VR's yearly marketing efforts in modern medias have been quite successful, although sales of youth passes for under 26 years old has not reached the level of the 80s. In Finland VR uses commercial media to increase the buying interest of young people towards Interrail; banner and Facebook advertising are just a few to mention. Different kinds of online draws, raffles and photo competitions, tests and games have been also popular due to a valuable travel prize: an Interrail Global Pass trip in a 1st class coach. The marketing budget however is limited which is why VR plans Interrail campaigns as efficiently as possible. The media office proposes the right online channels which produce the best results in terms of impressions, contacts and clicks. The main campaign material and visual design is often planned and produced by Eurorail Group which diminishes material costs (Figure 4). (Tapanainen 25 July 2015.)



Figure 4 Interrail campaign and blog collaboration April 2015 (Tapanainen 23 November 2015.)

The concept of Interrail appeals to active, young people who create content in the social media. VR's marketing receives several inquiries from travel blog writers who would be willing to share their Interrail adventures online (Figure 4). These types of collaborations are part of VR's content marketing strategy. Experienced blog writers, with an adequate audience to reach enough potential young consumers, are considered valuable voices to communicate about the experience of Interrail. (Tapanainen 25 July 2015.)

3 Marketing, brand and consumer behaviour

The following chapters introduce marketing approaches and definition, tourism marketing and product as well as different aspects regarding a brand. The chapter will end with various themes concerning consumer behavior. Those are segmentation and generational cohorts, tourist purchase decision-making and determinants of tourist behavior.

3.1 Marketing approaches

Marketing has many orientations or approaches which have evolved and taken shape in time (Shiffmann, Kanuk & Hansen, 2012, 3). These orientations provide guidelines that lay foundation for organization's strategic marketing decisions and how different stakeholder's interests and wishes should be emphasized (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, 31). The broad scope of marketing encompasses also the field and study of consumer behavior, which is an essential core to successful marketing efforts to promote and sell products in tourism as well as in any other industry. Consumer behavior concentrates on understanding how different influences affect consumer decision-making and buying behavior. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 3.)

The orientation of production concept is based on speedy and inexpensive production and effective distribution channels. Consumer's main interest in this orientation is to obtain products cheaply regardless of product quality and special features. The product oriented concept in turn emphasizes constant development of excellence in product quality and features. Consumers are expected to be interested on high-class quality, performance and features. Business's aim is to produce versatile and superior products to the markets even if they were not able to meet actual customer needs. The selling concept is slightly more refined orientation compared to the previously mentioned concepts. The basic assumption is still that company decides which products to offer, but it aims to convince the consumers to buy them by using effective selling and promotion techniques. This may have negative consequences and word-of-mouth especially if a customer feels forced to buy something he does not necessarily need. A marketing concept is focused on customer-oriented perspective. It means that a company has good insight about target market's needs and wants. A company produces products or services that fulfill consumer needs and aim to customer satisfaction. Whereas selling concept pursues to gain profit through sales volume, the marketing concept acquires profit through customer satisfaction. The selling concept is typical for businesses with excess inventory. (Shiffmann & al. 2012, 3-4.)

3.2 Definition of marketing function

The marketing as a function has also many definitions. The definition of Kotler & Armstrong (2014, 27) describes marketing as “the process by which companies create value for the customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.” The definition has been simplified into five stage marketing process. Firstly a company has to understand customer needs and wants as well as the market environment. Secondly it should create a customer-driven marketing strategy by choosing its target segment and appropriate marketing approach and value proposition to serve them. In the third stage a company needs to put the marketing strategy into action by making an integrated marketing program that concretizes the value to customers and builds customer relationships. The fourth stage of the process is about establishing and taking care of profitable customer relationships. All these four stages of the process have obviously variety of activities within them, but finally they lead to the fifth stage which is creation of value and customer equity to the company. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014, 27-28, 30-31, 34.)

3.3 Tourism marketing and product

Tourism marketing basically uses same marketing concepts and means as any other business. There are of course some industry related differences in the way marketing approaches and tools are being applied in tourism. For instance marketing objectives may differ from selling services and products such as hotel rooms or vacation packages to pure communicational goals such as promotion of city destinations and non-commercial tourist attractions. (Kolb 2006, 2.) The marketing mix of 4P's are used in tourism in industry specific way. Shortly described the “Product” should reflect specific needs and wants of tourism consumers. The “Price related strategies vary in different tourism organizations, but generally speaking they link for instance to level of service or to demand especially when a perishable service is in question. The “Place or distribution channels have an important role in many tourism companies and as they enable many options for instance the use of direct sale channels (internet, mobile) or intermediaries (online travel agents). The “Promotion” is similarly as to other industries a mean to communicate with target segment. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 162-170.)

Tourism industry offers mostly intangible services and experiences instead of physical or tangible goods (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 69-70). Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 51-52) discuss about tourism product from four different aspects, which are presented in table 3.

Table 3 Aspects of tourism product (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 51-52)

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tourism product is complex and multilayered2. Consumer buys an overall experience rather than clearly defined product3. Consumer is part of the production process in tourism4. The tourist experience is influenced by external factors |
|--|

The first aspect refers to the broad concept of tourism product. A tourism product can vary from one night city break to package vacation in popular sun destination. The product may contain both tangible and intangible elements. A hotel or breakfast are examples of physical elements whereas encounters with hotel or restaurant personnel are typical intangible elements. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 51.)

The second aspect takes into consideration the overall experience of a tourism product dividing it to three phases. An anticipation phase is the expectation phase of the trip, consumption phase is the holiday or travelling itself and last phase is memory phase, which is experienced after the trip. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 51.)

The third aspect means that a tourist plays a part when the product is being consumed. Person's own attitudes, mood and expectations have an impact on how the quality of the trip or service is experienced. Moreover one's own behavior influences either positively or negatively on everyone who participates on the same trip. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 51-52.) Human presence and interaction between customers and service employees brings along feelings and attitudes which influence the marketing of tourism services (Albanese 2004, 9).

The fourth aspect means that unseen factors such as weather alterations, strikes, terrorism etc. have major impact on the tourist experience. These factors may often be unpredictable and affect harmfully both the tourist and tourism service provider. Also local surroundings such as general pull factor, infrastructure, economic and social circumstances, are all factors that influence on overall experience of tourists as well as to success of the provider. (Albanese 2004, 10; Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 52.)

Albanese (2004, 10-11) discusses from business perspective the different challenges, which tourism providers need to understand and manage when offering and marketing products to consumers. These issues are related to intangibility and perishability of tourism products. Within the industry businesses such as hotels, airlines, railway companies and travel agencies are tied to an inventory, a certain amount of rooms, seats or travel packages to be sold. High fixed costs, especially in accommodation and transportation industries, are constant costs regardless of the amount of customers. Furthermore chang-

es in demand due to industry's seasonality make pricing decisions important competitive tool. (Albanese, 2004, 10-11.)

3.4 Brand

A brand is defined in short as an identification of product or service. It is usually recognized by its name and logo which are normally registered accordingly and protected by trademarks. A brand can be compared to a person who receives an identity when born. A brand can have also a long life span and evolve to a well-known name. Brand's name and logo are usually protected with laws and regulations that prevent possible imitations. A brand's sustainability can be renewed with many activities for example by introducing new products or executing a media campaign. The positive associations a brand possesses are shaped in consumers' minds and they form a competitive advantage for a brand. A strong brand is worth of customers trust and loyalty, although they have to be earned with every brand or purchase encounter. Good brand consists of a sure brand identity, positive image and unique personality. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 3-6.)

3.4.1 Brand identity, image and personality

A successful brand requires an identity that represents what the brand is all about. Brand's identity should be expressed in its product and service category, but also in its visible elements name and logo as well as in its history, age and place of origin. Although well and clearly defined brand identities create credibility and certainty to consumers, they might also hinder company's plans to extend the product range with differing innovations. Brand identity is a part of company's brand management as are also brand image and personality. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 6-7.)

Brand identity can be built and controlled internally by managers of a company, but brand image is formed in customers' or outsiders' minds. Brand identity creates base for brand image, whereas brand image brings along the perceptions of consumers and all distinct associations that a product creates among users and non-users. Companies' marketing efforts pursue to have an impact on brand image by using positive value propositions of brand's strengths. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 8.)

The image of a brand is shaped and performance attributes recognized when a product is taken into use by consumers who either recommend it or speak negatively about it. When a brand succeeds to create positive associations in consumers' minds, the name and logo are enough for consumers to recognize what the brand represents. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 9.)

Brand personality is linked to brand's image and identity, but it merges more profound perspectives to them. The brand personality extends image associations by describing brand's personality traits and characteristics. Moreover product user's personality has a significant impact on brand's personality. People tend to perceive a brand through the personality profile of a typical user. The personality traits are the way people associate themselves with the brands. The brand personality simply answers to the question of what kind of personality a brand has. The traits that describe a brand are more general in style instead of product or service specific. Often new brands and their personalities are led by user personalities and spokespersons, but in long-term consumers use brands with certain, established personality, to express their own style and personality. (Johansson & Carlson, 2015, 9.)

3.4.2 Brand's value proposition

The key focus of marketing is to satisfy customer needs and wants. In highly competitive environment where consumers are offered plenty of options to choose from it is important for companies to understand how to provide value for customers and communicate it accordingly. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 23.) A brand's value proposition consists of benefits and values that it promises for the consumer. Strong value propositions create advantage for companies in their target markets and differentiate one brand from another. From consumers perspective the value proposition provides a reason why to choose one brand over another. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 31.)

Kotler & Keller (2009, 23) discuss about three-phase value delivery process: choosing the value, providing the value and communication the value. The first one, choosing the value, refers to segmenting, targeting and positioning. Marketer should segment the market, choose a correct market target and create the product's value positioning for the targeted market. The second phase refers to value creation through product features and service development as well as pricing, sourcing, production, distribution and offering of the product. The third phase of value delivery process is communicating the value through advertising or other means to promote the product. Value delivery process is ongoing process starting before the product exists and going on after it has been bought by the target market. (Kotler & Keller (2009, 23.)

3.4.3 Brand uniqueness to young consumers

Van den Bergh & Behrer (2013, 140-141) discussed about claim-based differentiation or slogans and unique selling proposition as oldest principles of marketing. Ad claims as differentiation strategy started to be overused already in the 1960s when consumers be-

came more aware of marketers intentions. Young generations of today hold a critical attitude even towards creative image campaigns. However for the extremely marketing-wise Generation Y (born 1980-1996), the brand's unique positioning still has meaning as one of the factors that affect selection in the market of abundant number choices. Therefore uniqueness of a brand and perception that young consumers have, should be considered important when pursuing differentiation from competitors. (Van den Bergh & Behrer 2013, 141.)

A quantitative, international survey conducted by InSites Consulting recognized five elements for successful branding to Generation Y. Uniqueness was one of the elements discovered in this large-scale survey (N 4065) which studied views of young people aged 15-25 years on their most and least favorite brands. The study revealed also other brand characteristics which are important to young consumers: coolness, realness, self-identification and happiness. Characteristics related to coolness and uniqueness were creation of brand's specific style. Happiness was linked to positive, emotional brand experience that makes one feel happy. Coolness referred to brand's up-to-date position. Realness characterized that a brand should reflect a clean reputation and real and authentic feeling, unique. Self-identification was a brand one can identify with. The study concentrated to specific brand categories of clothing, mobile phone devices and sweet snacks. (Van den Bergh & Behrer 2013, 50-51.)

3.4.4 Brand communication

The shift from industrial to information-based and digital society has created even greater generational gap than ever before (Pendergast 2010, 6). The Generation Y has experienced a major change in a way people communicate and connect with new people compared to previous generations. From companies' and marketers' point of view, external influences and trends in market environment has created major shifts in consumer behavior. The way information is gathered and communicated by using digital technologies has changed how especially Generation Y exploits these technologies. Internet enables distribution of different forms of content and information which may either harm or benefit a brand. Individual consumers have received a position of being significant communicators instead only message receivers. Power of consumer to consumer communication including peer recommendations and criticism has taken its position in modern market environment. (Parment 2012, 31, 60-61.)

As new technologies have emerged and consumers have more access to information on brands and they are able to share their views and opinions with each other. It changes

also the practices of companies. Alongside the customer relationship management companies should adopt customer-managed relationships in order to interact with customers. The consumers should be involved with marketer's activities by using the new technologies which enable it. It is not enough anymore to rely on one-way approach and traditional marketing efforts only. Combining different means, such as platforms that enable interaction in social networks and communities or use of videos or blogs, may enhance traditional marketing efforts. Consumer-generated marketing is an approach that engages consumers to create their own brand experiences either uninvited or invited by the company. As uninvited, the exchange of experiences among consumers takes place in blogs or video-sharing and other digital environments, but as invited the company can empower consumers to participate in shaping of products and brand messages. (Kotler & Armstrong 2014, 39-40.)

Young people, members of Generation Y seek to be in control of everything instead of being passive receivers. The user-generated content is a familiar world to Generation Ys as they constantly want to edit and change their surroundings. Companies brand's image may change as they are shaped by these young consumers to the direction they want. Brand communication is more and more challenging for companies as young people tend to have faith even on unknown peers in social media more than companies' own brand messages. This makes word-of-mouth more effective source of information because opinions of friends matter. (Van den Bergh & Behrer 2013, 28-29.)

3.5 Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior in general can be defined as a way how consumers search for, buy, use and evaluate as well as dispose of products and services that they consider to satisfy their needs. Consumer behavior attempts also to acquire information on how individuals allocate their time and money when making purchase decisions. Questions such as what, why, when and where people consume are relevant in consumer behavior studies as well as finding out consumer's buying and usage frequency of products. Moreover how consumers evaluate the product quality and that influences on buying behavior in the future. (Shiffmann & al. 2012, 2.)

3.5.1 Segmentation and generational cohorts

Consumers are divided into different segments according to their similar needs and specific characteristics such as geographical (location), demographic (age, gender, income, education, marital status, occupation) characteristics. Other segmentation classifications are for instance psychological factors that include needs-motivation, personality and atti-

tudes and learning-involvement. The use-related segmentation includes usage rate or usage frequency of a product as well as awareness status and brand loyalty. Sociocultural segmentation takes into account also cultures and ethnic background, family life cycles and social class. The use of market segmentation with an appropriate marketing strategy helps both marketer as well as the consumer. The marketer recognizes target groups with common needs and can employ suitable marketing mix and also advertise more precisely whereas the consumers receives relevant information on appealing products. (Schiffman & al. 2012, 39-43.)

When considering age as demographic segmentation criteria, it is important to clarify differences between the concepts of age cohorts and generations (Parment 2012, 5). Parment (2012, 5) explains that age cohort and generation differ in their meaning since generational aspect takes into consideration changes in time periods which have had an impact on people's values, societal priorities and critical collective experiences for example great historical events and developments as well as political changes and the economic climate. People are representatives of their particular generation and share experiences which have been shaped by technology, media, social circumstances and events of their time (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2013, 12-13). There are also conceptual differences of generation and generational cohorts (Parment 2012, 19). According to Schewe & Meredith (2004, in Parment 2012, 18) generation refers to time span of approximately 25 years or a time it takes to a person to become an adult and have children. A generation is determined according to years of birth. Whereas the time line of generational cohort is influenced by the length of significant external events which take place during that time. (Parment 2012, 18.) Since chronological age does not consider the lived timespan it may influence for example on interpretation of research data. Same age group's attitudes or opinions may differ depending when the data was collected and to which generational cohort the respondents belong during that period. (Parment 2012, 7-8.)

3.5.2 Generation Y and Z

The birth years of Generation Y range from late 1970s even until 2002 in the literature. There are also several different sub labels or groups for this generation for example generation Why (born 1982-1985), millennials (Milgens: born 1985-1999), and iGeneration which is born 1999-2002 (Pendergast, 2010, 3). Van den Bergh & Behrer (2013, 7) define Generation Y or the millennials as people born between 1980 and 1996. The Generation Z, born in the mid-1990s to early 2000s, represent the generation after Generation Y (JWT-Intelligence 2015).

Generation Y has grown up in a world of many choices and opportunities. Members of Generation Y experience that countless choices in their lives is something normal in comparison to Baby Boomers (born 1945-1964) who had had less choices when growing up and who may even feel stressed about information overload around them. (Parment 2012, 27.) According to Parment's survey (2012, 27) on Generation Y, young people of this generation do not feel much frustration or insecurity about having plenty of choices. Actually 31.8 % of them like all the opportunities they have, and all the impressions they get, and which influence their choices. Interestingly 17.9 % of survey respondents claimed that they would like to have even more opportunities. Individuals of Generation Y are compelled to concentrate on the important choices of their lives. In consumption of low-involvement products good bargains do matter also to Generation Y as to any generation, but they utilize technology to compare prices in order to have more funds for purchases which have meaning to them both emotionally and for their individual self-realization. (Parment (2012, 17, 27-28.)

Individuals of Generation Y are characterized as confident, relaxed and conservative as well as well educated. They are also strongly influenced by friends and peers. (Pendergast 2010, 5-6.) Richards (2007, in Pendergast 2010, 11) describes results of a study by the World Student and Educational Travel Confederation that Generation Y as travelers explore more destinations, spend more on travel, book more over internet, are hungry for experience and information, are intrepid travelers, and travel in general more as well as get more out of their travel.

Generation Z is now the 12-19 years olds generational cohort. They are characterized as ethical consumers and progressive, optimistic and ambitious with intentions to change the world. They perceive digital technology as part of their normal, everyday life and use it more than any previous generations as they have learned to use it since they were toddlers. They are referred as the first true digital natives. They have grown in a world of tough times and appreciate active education because they know about risks of unemployment. In comparison to Generation Y, youngsters of Generation Z are into changing, creating and connecting when using internet as a tool make an impact. (JWT-Intelligence 2015; Van den Bergh & Behrer 2013, 12.)

3.5.3 Tourist purchase decision-making process

According to Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 72-73) the consumer behavior in tourism has various complex elements when purchase decisions are made.

The nature of tourism product or service, which was discussed in chapter 3.3, influences on the level of involvement in purchase decision as well on level of consumer commitment. Both are classified as high. The decision-making process is considered long since tourist behavior patterns during the purchase phase are non-routine and the consumer is strongly involved in the buying process before making a decision. The behavior patterns vary according to type of holiday, personal motives related to purchase occasion and position of family life cycle. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 72.)

Another element that adds the complexity is the high level of insecurity which is connected to the product's intangibility. The consumer may experience high levels of insecurity during purchase. An intangible product or service cannot be pre-tested before purchase and a need for decision reassurance is often required. The decision can therefore involve many people for example friends and family or help from the service provider or promotional material. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 72-73.)

The buying process has also a great emotional significance as it may have an influence on other people too. In addition a holiday may be a substitute for another high involvement product such as a car. The decision making-process is also influenced by reference groups (friends and relatives), which makes the understanding of behavior patterns challenging. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 73.)

The purchase of tourism product requires often planning and decisions are made long in advance. The consumer's mindset may change a lot from the moment of purchase decision to the moment of consumption of the product. Often the decision itself has a positive effect already as people try to picture what they want to experience in the future. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 73.)

The complex purchase decision process includes also a high level of information search. The emotional significance tied to the choice is often considerable. An extensive information search and consultation with other people, groups or organizations are part of the process before making decisions about the purchase. The entire process of information search and reflection of many opinions demonstrate the complex behavior related to choosing a tourist product. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 73.)

3.5.4 Determinants of tourist behavior

Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 62-63) present two types of determinants which classify tourist behavior. Firstly there are certain factors which determine whether a tourist will be able

to take a holiday or not. Secondly there are factors which determine the type of holiday a tourist is able to realize if first set of factors allow it. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2008, 62-63.)

Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 62) further divide the determinants into those which are personal to the tourist and to those which are external. Figure 5 presents some personal determinants which have an impact on types of trips a tourist may take or factors which may even prevent taking a holiday. Clearly these determinants are not as straightforward as seems. Individual differences exist in the way people stress different determinants in different times. Also individual attitudes, personalities, principles, fears and past experiences affect how these factors are processed. Moreover as time passes person's age, family situation and experience as tourist changes as does the emphasis on these determinants. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 63.)

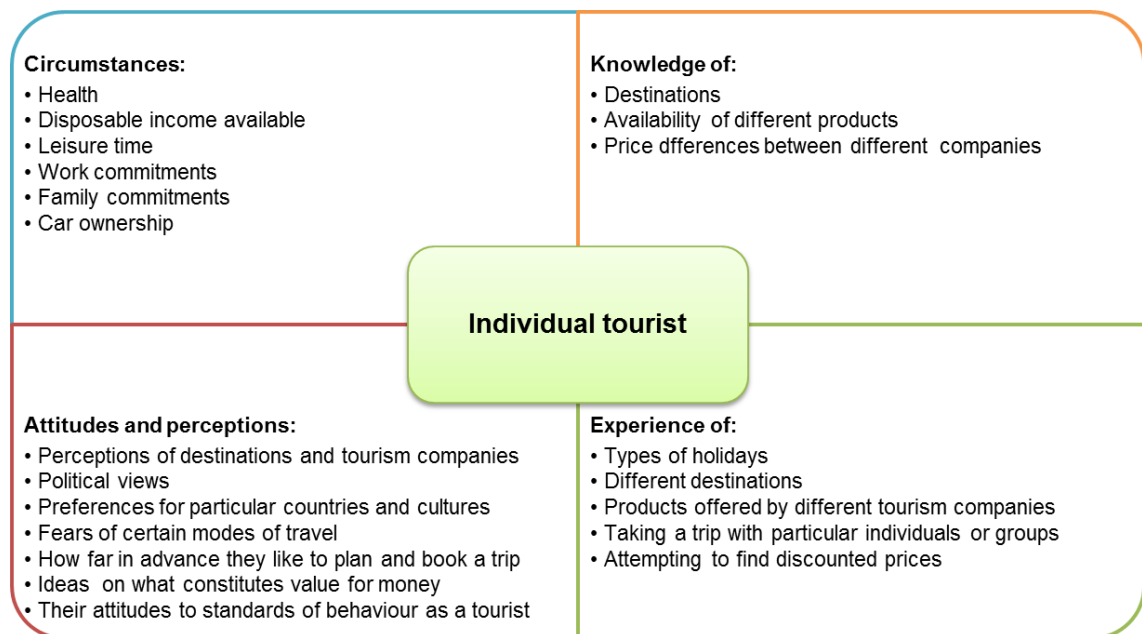


Figure 5 Personal determinants of tourist behavior (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 62)

External determinants, which have an impact on individual tourist, are views of friends and relatives, the marketing activities of the tourism industry and the influences of the media. Moreover national issues such as society-wide political, economic, social and technological factors are considered as external determinants. Global issues of politics, economics, social and technological factors are external as well. The personal and external determinants of tourist behavior are general in nature and represent different alternatives that exist. The level how much these determinants affect individual tourist's behavior depends on one's personality and lifestyle. Tourism industry may benefit of understanding how these factors influence on larger target groups when developing services. (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007, 63-65.)

4 Research approach

The purpose of this research is to find out information to a specific marketing problem. An applied research aims to solve practical problems in order to help management in decision-making process (Burns & Burns, 2008, 10). The following chapters will introduce the research approach, paradigm, method, design and strategy chosen for this study as well as planning and implementation process.

4.1 Research paradigm

A paradigm sets particular framework of assumptions that consist certain philosophic beliefs about the world. Positivism is based on an assumption that the social reality in which we function is objective and external to individual. In other words the world is seen objective consisting of universal laws and causality. Quantitative research methods in scientific research depict the positivist paradigm. The positivist paradigm requires use of precise and objective methods which produce quantitative data. These methods include for instance experimental studies, structured questionnaire or interviews or re-analysis of secondary data. The researcher should not intervene with subjects of study. Positivist paradigm researches are based on control and hypothesis testing. They are usually rigorous, linear and rigid. The positivist paradigm has often been adopted in the field of business research where topics such as quality control, trend analysis, consumer attitudes or productivity management have been researched. The quantitative data must produce solid confirmation or proof and aim to explain events in surrounding world giving companies tools to predict and to control. The assumption of this approach is objectivity, reliability and generalizability. (Burns & Burns 2008, 13-15.) In consumer research quantitative methods borrowed from positivist research is used to predict and understand consumer behavior (Schiffman & al. 2012, 20).

The presumptions of this research were formed on basis of media and internal opinions and beliefs of consumers' changed perceptions on Interrail travelling. Quantitative research method was chosen for this research since opinions were not based on actual facts about the target segments' attitudes and perceptions. Burns & Burns (2008, 15) point out that people and even professionals of different business' often base their claims on subjective assumptions. Research and statistical analysis of data can correct biased opinions and find out objective perspective to such claims (Burns & Burns 2008, 15).

4.1.1 Limitations of positivist research paradigm in business research

Although use of quantitative and precise research methods associate to positivist paradigm, the positivist orientation can be truly valid only in natural sciences. Purely scientific research with fully controlled environment and rigid control of conditions enable accurate experimenting. This is rarely the case in business research especially when human behavior is being studied. Finding absolute truth of human behavior is tricky as people are influenced by their own perceptions and their ability to think and reflect their own behavior. Past experiences and expectations as well as needs and moods are factors that have an influence when people's opinions are being asked. (Burns & Burns 2008, 17.)

This research aims to find out young peoples' perception on Interrail today. Even though the chosen method acquires data with quantitative research method, the research is not conducted in rigorously controlled environment neither it is testing a hypothesis. In addition respondents' feelings, mood and past experiences will influence their perceptions. Therefore it can be stated that this research does not reflect a purely positivist orientation, although it uses its methods to study consumer behavior.

4.1.2 Marketing research

The focus of marketing research is to understand consumers and customers through information, to gain insight on consumers and what shapes them (Malhotra & al. 2012, 7). The American Marketing Association (2004) defines marketing research as follows:

Marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer and public to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications. (American Marketing Association, approved Oct 2004.)

On the basis of this definition Malhotra & al. (2012, 12) classify marketing research into two types of researches: problem identification research and problem solving research. Problem identification research can be used to recognize problems or future problems which may still be underlying and not easily identified. Typical researches in this category are for instance market potential, market share, brand or company image, market characteristics, sales analysis, forecasting or trend research. Problem-solving research can be conducted when solution models are being developed. Examples of problem-solving researches are segmentation, product, pricing, promotion or distribution researches. Prob-

lem-solving research may serve as continuation to problem identification research. (Malhotra & al. 2012, 12-13.)

A written research brief is mutual agreement between the research commissioner and the researcher. Its purpose is to communicate the perceived requirements for research project and it helps to avoid possible misinterpretations and misunderstandings, illogical actions and forgetfulness between the parties. A marketing research brief can include for example how information will be collected and how it should support decision making. It may also provide guidelines to plan and implement the research design. In addition it can define the parties who may benefit from research findings. If external research company is being considered to conduct the research, the brief may work as a tool of negotiation with different research providers. (Malhotra & al. 2012, 41.)

The research subject was briefed in January 2015 by a VR's marketing planner who plans and executes marketing activities of certain international rail products and services in Finland. The brief included following: background information and general assumptions of young consumers' changed travel behavior, sales development from 2012 until 2014, Interrail product description, target segment of the research and description of current situation and problem. The declining sales of Interrail youth passes in Finland was an evident signal to investigate Interrail's current image and future interest among people under 25 years old. This research aims to identify whether the problem lies in lack of awareness of the product or its image which classifies this marketing research as problem identification research.

4.1.3 Research design

Conclusive research is applicable for researches that aim to describe particular phenomena, to test hypotheses or to find out certain relationships. Descriptive research falls into the category of conclusive research design. Its objective in marketing is to describe specific market characteristics or functions. Descriptive research is useful for variety of researches in marketing related problems. It can be applied for instance for studying different variables in the markets, consumer perceptions on product or company image or for studying interest levels or consumer profiles. It is essential in descriptive research design that there is a good understanding of what kind of information is needed. This means that research questions and possible hypotheses are also clearly defined. (Malhotra & al. 2012, 89-91.)

Descriptive research can be further divided into cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. Cross-sectional design can be either single or multiple cross-sectional. In single cross-sectional design only one sample of participants is used within the target population and data is collected only once from this particular sample. In multiple cross-sectional designs there can be two or even more samples of participants but data is still collected only once. Longitudinal design refers to a fixed sample of population from which the data is collected in series of researches during certain time period. The aim is to form a long-term view about subject of research. (Malhotra & al. 2012, 89-91.)

This research is descriptive in nature as it aims to understand consumer perceptions and image of Interrail. The selected design supports a single cross-sectional design as there is only one sample and the data is collected only one time. The strategy and data collection method are described in detail in the following chapters.

4.1.4 Research strategy

Survey is frequently used as research strategy for business and management research. Survey is suitable for descriptive research as it pursues to answer questions of who, what, where, how much and how many. For business research it offers a cost-effective way to obtain large amount of quantitative data. Survey as strategy is simple to comprehend in general. Results are easy to interpret since surveys are one of the most popular mean to gain an understanding about surrounding events and phenomena and therefore used by many organizations or institutions to describe people's opinions and behavior. Survey strategy as data collection method enables to find out possible reasons for certain relationships between variables or even build models of these relationships. If a representative sampling is possible for a survey, the results can be even generalized to entire target population. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 144.)

4.1.5 Questionnaire planning

Questionnaires are an effective way to collect data for surveys. Moreover questionnaires often produce data which can be structured for comparison and analyzed by using statistical methods. For a successful survey the planning of the questionnaire should be done with care. (Saunders & al. 2009, 144-145.) The questions can consist of open-ended or close-ended questions. To open-ended questions respondents can formulate answers in their own words and to close-ended they can choose an answer from predetermined options. Open-ended responses produce richer data but can be more burdensome to code and analyze. Close-ended questions are simpler to analyze, however the answers are limited to those given in the questionnaire. The phrasing of the questions should be care-

fully planned so that it does not lead respondents to answer in specific way. An interesting, clear, objective and easy to complete questionnaire motivates respondents to respond to surveys. The sequence of the questions should be also structured logically. Particularly the opening question needs to be interesting enough to keep the participant continuing with the questionnaire. The demographic questions are best set at the end of the questionnaire. (Schiffman & al. 2012, 28-29.)

A preliminary questionnaire draft was presented to VR marketing in March 2015. After some corrections were made by VR's marketing planners and Haaga-Helia's thesis supervisor, it was submitted into Webropol. The test questionnaire link was sent to VR's marketing for proof reading. A key visual with a train infographic and partial map of Europe was designed by a VR's marketing planner (Figure 6).



JUNAMATKUSTAMINEN EUROOPASSA
KYSELY

Kyselyssä selvitetään nuorten aikuisten (18-39 v.) mielikuvia ja kiinnostusta junamatkustamiseen Euroopassa. Vastaajalla ei tarvitse olla henkilökohtaista kokemusta junamatkustamisesta Suomessa tai Euroopassa.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen kestää n. 10 minuuttia. Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä niitä yhdistetä yksittäisiin vastaajiin. Tutkimuksen onnistumisen kannalta olisi tärkeää, että vastaat kaikkiin kysymyksiin.

Vastaa kyselyyn 22.4.2015 mennessä ja osallistu arvontaan!
Kaikkien yhteystietonsa jättäneiden kesken arvotaan n. 1 000 euron arvoinen junamatkalahjakortti Eurooppaan. Arvonta on vapaaehtoinen. Kaikki yhteystiedot poistetaan järjestelmästä arvonnän jälkeen. Lisätietoja arvonnasta saa kyselyn lopussa.

Kysely tehdään Haaga-Helian YAMK-opinnäytetyönä VR:lle.

Seuraava -->

7% valmiina

* Kysymykseen on vastattava.

Figure 6 Cover letter of the questionnaire (corrected cover letter 15th April*)

The questionnaire consisted of a cover letter (figure 6), which included a general introduction to the topic and a draw of a rail voucher (1 000 €) as an incentive to participate. However the introduction did not reveal the actual topic: Interrail travelling. When questionnaire's purpose remains disguised, it may disclose more truthful answers (Schiffman & al. 2012, 29). *) To be noted at this point, a correction was made to the cover letter on 15th April, a week after publishing the questionnaire. The age group of 18-39 years was added to the cover letter's introduction since the background question about age was predeter-

mined to birth years of 1976-1997. The change was made due to internal and external feedback.

The questionnaire made for this research consisted of nine main questions related to research topic, five demographic classification questions (gender, year of birth, area of residence, occupation and education) and two questions about rail travel frequency in Finland (long-distance and commuter rail travelling). In addition all respondents were asked whether they belong to VR's Veturi loyalty program. The questionnaire is presented in the appendix 1.

The first research question (Q1) was an open-ended question about perception and image of rail travelling in Europe. Interrail was not mentioned in order to receive understanding of Interrail's spontaneous awareness. The following question (Q2) measured the awareness level of Interrail Global Pass' and One Country Pass' with predetermined response options. The third question (Q3) was constructed with seven-point semantic differential scale, which presented selected bipolar adjectives about Interrail's image. The opposite adjectives both positive and negative were positioned at each end of the continuum. Semantic differential scale serves well when respondents are asked to reflect their feelings about certain product or company. When using semantic differential scale, it is good to change position of positive and negative attributes from left to right end of the continuum in order to avoid biased responses. (Schiffman & al. 2012, 29.)

For the fourth question (Q4) five-point Likert scale was used to measure attitudes towards different Interrail value propositions, which communicate Interrail's benefits. Likert scale consists normally of set of attitude statements, which can be derived from different sources like newspapers (Burns & Burns 2008, 473). In this survey VR's Interrail webpages were used as source for the statements. The survey respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements. The fifth question (Q5) was an intention scale to measure how interested the respondents were to travel by Interrail within next two years. Behaviour intention scale is an attitude scale as well. It is useful when respondents' future intentions are measured. The intentions measured can relate to for example buying interest or intentions to recommend a product. (Schiffman & al. 2012, 29.)

The sixth question (Q6) was an open-ended question asking further reasons why Interrail is not interesting from those who in previous question responded "not likely interested" or "not at all interested". The seventh and eight (Q7 + Q8) questions were multiple response questions with predetermined response options. The response options consisted of both personal and external determinants which influence one's travel decision regarding Inter-

rail. Q7 was directed to those who in previous question answered not interested and Q8 to those who were interested in Interrail. The last question's (Q9) purpose was to measure which activities could add the level of interest towards Interrail. The question was constructed with five-point Likert scale and consisted of different kinds of statements.

The questionnaire included a draw of a first class Interrail Global Pass worth of 1000 euros. The draw was in the last page of the questionnaire and participation was on voluntary basis (Figure 7). After sending the form, a "thank you for your responses" confirmation signed by VR and Haaga-Helia appeared onto screen.

Figure 7 Draw of Interrail Pass in the end of the questionnaire.

The user friendliness and functionality of the questionnaire was tested with different web browsers (Internet explorer, Safari, Google Chrome) as well as with both PC and mobile devices to make sure the questionnaire worked both visually and technically as planned.

4.2 Implementation process

The following chapters will describe random sampling and non-probability sampling as methods and how they were used in this research. This chapter discusses also how different medias of VR were used in order to reach respondents as well how the questionnaire was tested.

4.2.1 Sampling method

In statistics population means the entire group of subjects of interest in a specific situation (Stopher, 2012, 6). A survey can be directed to every unit in the population or choose a sample from the population. When all the units of the population are surveyed, the survey is conducted to a census. (Fricker 2010, 195.)

In survey sampling there are two broad categories probability-based sample also known as random sampling and non-probability sample. Simple random sampling belongs to category of probability-based sample. "Mathematically, simple random sampling selects n units out of a population of size N such that every sample of size n has an equal chance to be drawn" (Fricker 2010, 199). Non-probability sample or also known as convenience sample represents the opposite of probability sample. In convenience sample a unit included in the sample cannot be set in advance or the respondent's participation into survey is based on volunteering. An example of non-probability sample is an online survey which is put on a web page for potential respondents to choose whether to participate or not. Non-probability samples are easy to construct, but they do not create a base for statistical inference. Yet responses from non-probability sample can be applied for various matters such as identifying issues or defining alternatives. Judgment sampling belongs to non-probability sampling category. It means that a researcher selects a suitable sample based on his or hers judgement. (Fricker 2010, 199-200.)

The main subjects of interest were all 18-25 years old people living in Finland. Obviously it was not possible to reach every person in the population, because it would require a mean to identify all members of the population. It was decided to use VR's own medias to invite respondents to the survey since those medias had the best potential to reach 18-25 years old target group. Thus the main sampling method was a non-probability sampling or more precisely a judgment sampling. However Veturi loyalty program customer base enabled the use of random sampling in this research.

4.2.2 Testing of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent via e-mail to Haaga-Helia students for testing on 30th March. A convenience sample was used as Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences' lecturers forwarded the questionnaire link to some hospitality and tourism students. Twelve students completed the questionnaire by 7th April. The test response data was input into SPSS Statistics software (Version 22). The test responses of question Q2 did not show correctly in SPSS data sheet. Therefore a modification to Q2 was made by using another question type in Weppol questionnaire tool in order to fix the problem.

4.2.3 Invitations to online survey

VR's marketing has several own medias to reach its customers. The company website vr.fi is visited about 1.5 M times monthly, Veturi loyalty program has customer base of more than 700 000 registered customers, VR's Facebook site has over 90 000 fans and Twitter @VRpalvelu is followed by over 7 000 followers (Vieri 30 March 2015; VR Group 2015).

All previously mentioned medias were used to collect data for the research and invite potential respondents to answer the questionnaire. External mediums were also considered in order to improve the quality of the data and reach specifically non-train users. Contacted medias however were not interested to publish an online questionnaire due to their strict content policy. The data was collected within a period of 8th April till 22nd of April 2015.

Veturi loyalty program was expected to be most accurate in reaching young people within the age group of 18-25 years. A simple random sampling was used to draw a sample of 6 157 e-mail addresses among over 80 000 registered 18-25 years old. The draw was executed by Veturi's CRM analyst on April 7th.

The Veturi newsletter consisted of a short introduction to the survey subject followed by a link to the questionnaire. The newsletter was sent on the 8th of April and it reached 5822 e-mail addresses out of the total 6157, which means 335 e-mails were either incorrect or bounced back for some other unknown reason. Altogether 27.6 % of receivers opened the message and 500 (31 %) persons opened the questionnaire link. Preliminary assumption based on previous surveys made by Veturi was that an approximately 10 % would react to online questionnaires. This goal was successfully exceeded.

VR's Facebook and Twitter sites had approximately 7 000 fans and followers in the age group of 18-25 years during the research period. The questionnaire link with an introduction was posted on Facebook and Twitter on the 8th of April. In order to reach greater amount of young people, the questionnaire was boosted with some additional advertising in Facebook. The Facebook post reached 14 968 persons in Facebook and it was liked, commented and shared altogether 106 times. The questionnaire link was clicked 635 times (Figure 8). The activation percentage of the Facebook post was extremely good at 11 %. The social media samples were convenience samples since respondents could not be randomly determined.

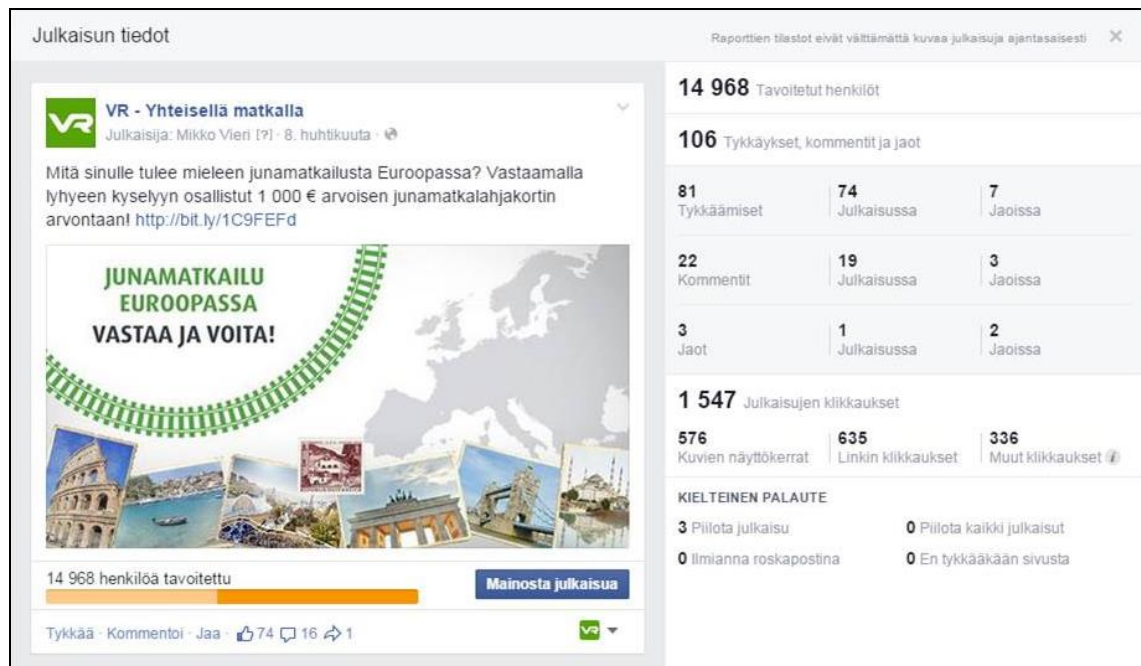


Figure 8 Social media report on activity rate questionnaire post (Vieri 2 June 2015)

As mentioned before vr.fi site has monthly visitor amount over 1.5 M but age targeting is not possible for digital browsers. The sampling method of VR's website was also a non-probability sampling method as the respondents' participation was based on volunteering. The questionnaire was published in the news section of VR's front page from 8th of April until 22nd of April. The questionnaire link gained total of 646 unique visits.

According to Webropol's report the questionnaire's URL-link was downloaded 2165 times out of that amount 1355 respondents (62.6 %) completed the entire questionnaire during data collection time frame. The data of twelve test responses of Haaga-Helia students were joined to final set of responses in SPSS Statistics analyzing tool.

5 Results

The following chapter will introduce the results of the research. Firstly the respondents' background demographics are described, then after that the results of spontaneous perception of rail travelling in Europe and themed topics associated with Interrail. The awareness levels of both passes are introduced separately, followed by evaluation of image attributes related to Interrail. Interrail's value propositions and level of interest are described next. Finally the determinants for choosing or not choosing Interrail travel are introduced and the factors that could increase the level of interest.

5.1 Description of survey respondents

Appendix 2 presents all the respondents' demographic characteristics and other background information asked in the questionnaire in detail. The main characteristics of the respondents are described below.

81 % of the respondents identified themselves as female and 19 % as male. The survey was mainly aimed to 18-25 year old people, which is why they represented the biggest age group with a share of 68 %. The share of 26-33 year old's was 18 % and 34-39 year 14 %. The respondents represented all educational levels (comprehensive school 4 %, high school 28 %, vocational college 18 %, university of applied sciences total of 22 %, university degree 28 %). 56 % of the respondents were students and 21 % were employees. Nearly 50 % told that they travel by long distance train 2-6 times a year. 31 % reported that they travel by commuter train 2-6 times a year and 39 % even less than that. 82 % identified themselves as Veturi loyalty program customers.

Figure 9 presents 18-25 year old people (N 927) by residence. The respondents represented nearly all the provinces except for Ahvenanmaa. 26 % informed to live in Uusimaa, 12 % in Pirkanmaa, 10 % in Varsinais-Suomi, 9 % in Pohjois-Pohjanmaa, 6 % in Keski-Suomi and 5 % in Pohjois-Savo, Pohjois-Karjala and Lapland. The rest of the 10 smaller provinces accounted altogether 21 % of respondents' home provinces.

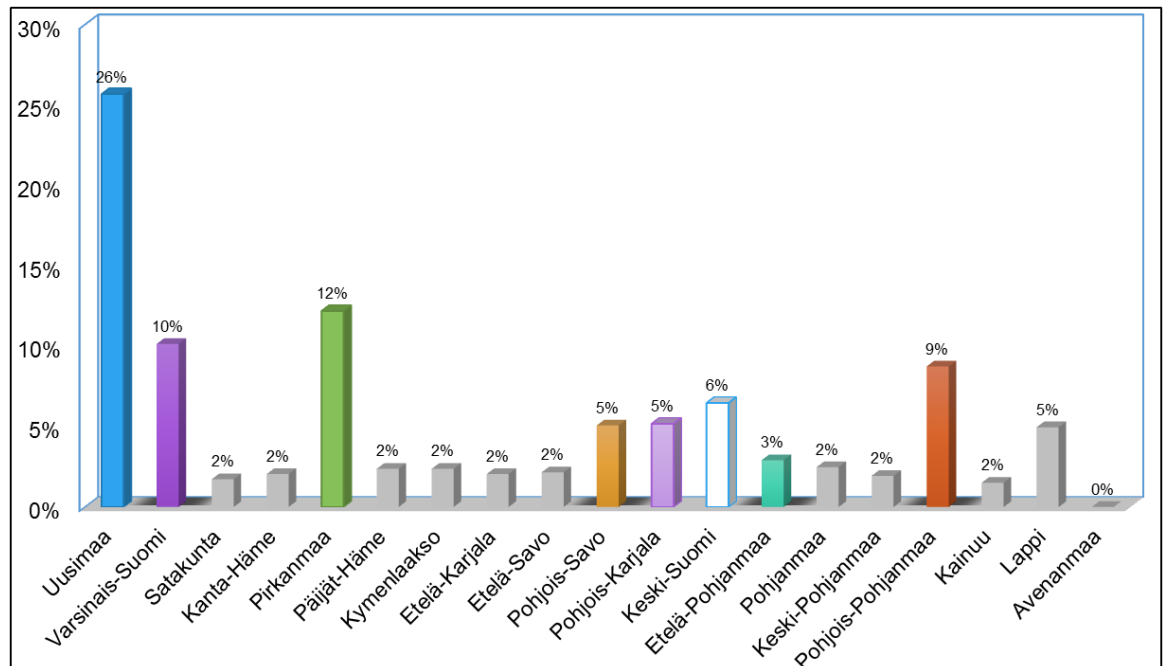


Figure 9 Respondents by residence: 18-25 years old (N 927)

5.2 Perception of rail travelling in Europe

The first open-ended question (N1355) aimed to find out the 18-39 years old respondents' spontaneous perception of rail travelling in Europe, whether they had experience of rail travelling in Europe or not. In other words Interrail was not introduced as a subject of study yet. This was a conscious decision to test spontaneous awareness of Interrail as a brand and as a form of travelling. The Interrail related responses were further analyzed with the help of Webropol's text mining tool. The responses received from Haaga-Helia students (N12) during testing of the questionnaire are not included in these results.

The analysis was started with a help of a word cloud, which illustrates the most mentioned words in all the responses. Train and Europe were the most repeated words to start a sentence, which explains their frequency. Easiness was 4th most mentioned word and the first descriptive adjective in all the responses. Interrail was the 7th most mentioned word and it was correctly spelled. (Figure 10).

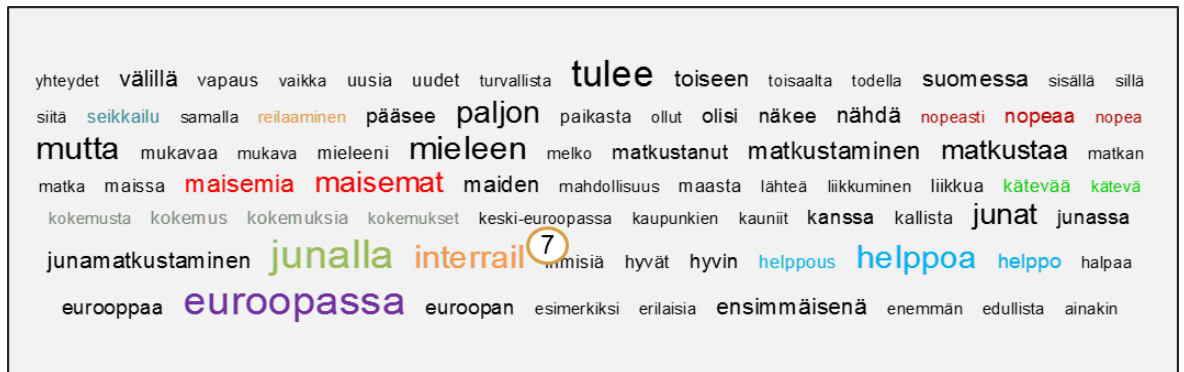


Figure 10 Word cloud of most mentioned words

Word map in figure 11 represents words that are frequently found in the same responses. Background colors and lines between the words show which words appear in the same context. The map outlines the connections only roughly. The word map connects travelling by train, speed, easiness and scenery in various answers.

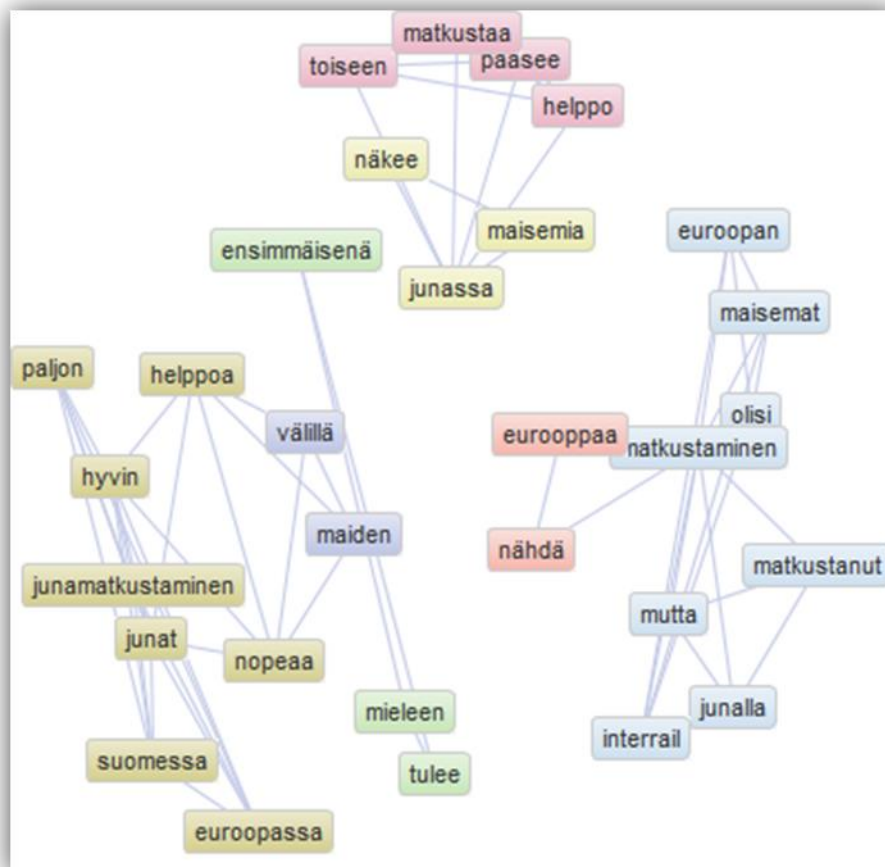


Figure 11 Word map

The data was further arranged by grouping selected neutral, positive and negative attributes which were mentioned more than 20 times. The most used word in all the responses was "train", which was mentioned nearly in 600 responses out of the 1355 answers. Inter-

rail and its Finnish synonyms “reilaus, reilaaminen, reili, raii” were mentioned altogether 353 times. This means that more than every 4th respondent (26 %) associated Interrail into rail travelling in Europe. It is important to note that single attributes do not reflect positive, negative or neutral content of the response. They are sporadic words extracted out of context (Figure 12).

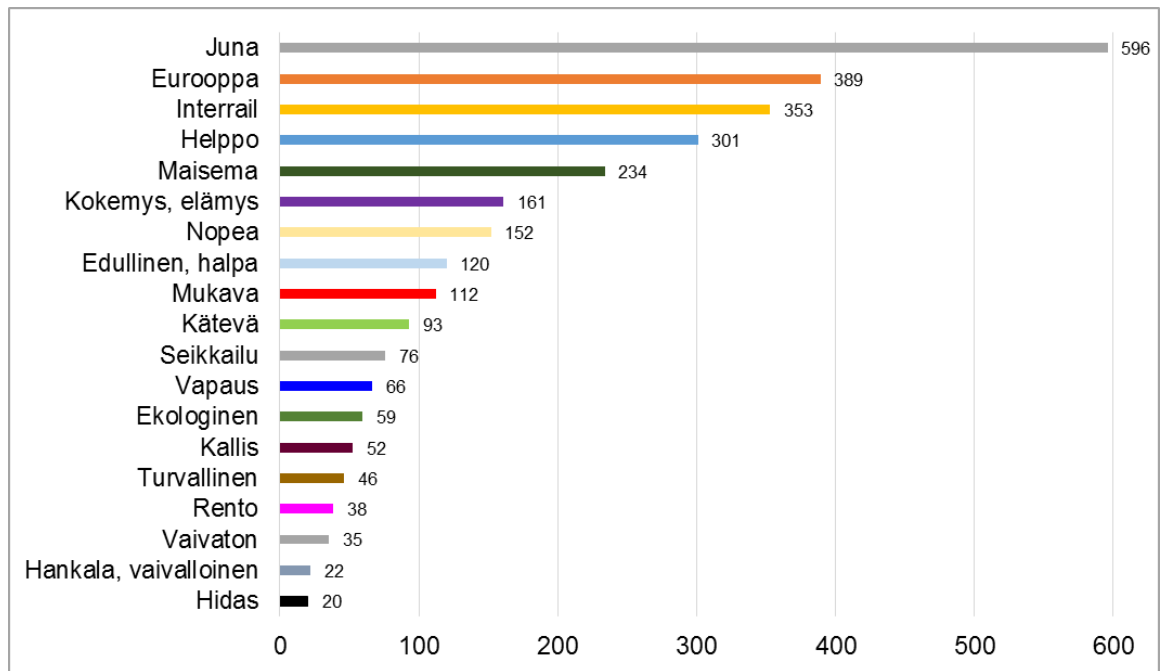


Figure 12 Words mentioned more than 20 times (N 1355)

All the open-ended responses produced rich data of perceptions and image of rail travelling in Europe. The responses related to Interrail were selected for further analysis. Sample of open-ended responses is found in appendix 3.

5.2.1 Six main topics associated with Interrail travelling

Six different main topics on perceptions of Interrail travelling were recognized in the open-ended responses (Figure 13). The themes are easiness of rail travelling, travel scenery and travel experience, people and the social aspect, reference groups' influence and dream of Interrail.

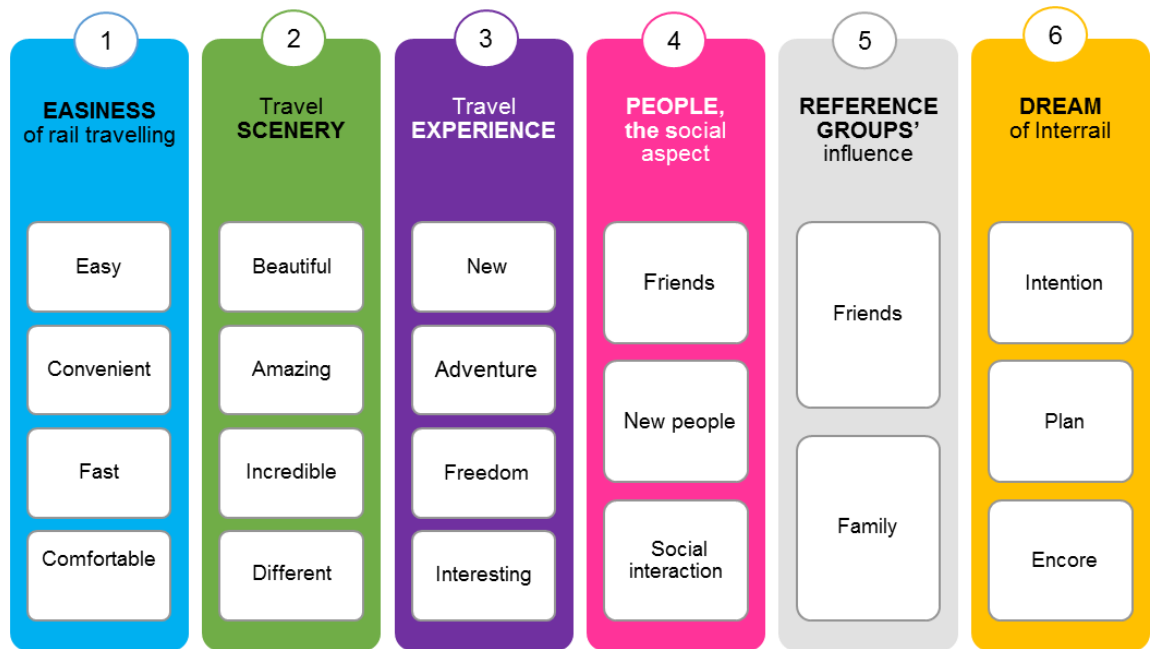


Figure 13 Grouping of main topics

Following chapters describe these themes and respondents' views in detail.

5.2.2 Easiness of rail travelling

Easiness and convenience were the most used words, when the respondents described their views about rail travelling in Europe. Especially those with experience of Interrail, found travelling by train easy and fast. Their opinions included also the quality of travel comfort onboard, which was mostly considered premium especially in western European railways. Travelling by train was described also comfortable and fluent or effortless. Some respondents spoke also well of the extensive rail network in general or knew specific train types or national railway companies by name. Travelling cross-borders between different countries was seen easy and smooth as one respondent described "...high speed trains, extensive rail network, easy transfer between countries, high quality trains."

A few respondents with less or none experience had also positive views about rail travelling in Europe. A respondent who had never travelled outside of Finland told that "...thought of travelling by train in Europe sounds interesting and easy mode of travelling from one country to another." Another respondent said "although I do not have much personal experience, I think it is convenient, fast and pretty easy and fluent..."

A few also criticized or mentioned the poor quality of rail travelling in Eastern Europe. A respondent contemplated in his response concerning easiness of rail travelling..."on the other hand I think of the condition of tracks which varies East to West course for example

high speed trains in France compared to old and slow track sections in Poland.” The criticism concerned among other things the lack of air-conditioning, ventilation and restaurant services onboard.

5.2.3 Travel scenery

The second topic that emerged in multiple responses was scenery: different, beautiful, amazing and incredible landscapes, which one can see during the trip. The responses implied to either passing landscapes while onboard train or scenery seen in various new destinations visited. Mostly respondents mentioned landscapes without detailed explanation but some described scenic routes and places while travelling across Austria and Switzerland, the Alps, Italy and Croatia.

The respondents also brought up one of Interrail’s main advantages “one can see many destinations during a trip.” The fact that rail travelling enables admiration of beautiful scenery unlike other forms of travelling was also pointed out “something you can’t experience while flying” and “no need to worry about the car, one can just sit and enjoy the scenery while the train will take you to your destination.” A few respondents described their feelings and memories of Interrail with more sentimental tone of voice: “...rapidly changing scenery (lots of different fields), summer, sunshine and loads of different people. A rainy day and drops of rain running down the window, an excitement of adventure, joy.”

Overall travel scenery and different landscapes was a topic that was strongly associated to Interrail as well as to rail travelling in general.

5.2.4 Travel experience

The open-ended responses revealed that essential part of Interrail is the experience itself. The experience was determined in many ways. It was described with different adjectives: new, interesting, amazing or great experiences. Some respondents described in general how much one can experience during an Interrail.

Freedom and adventure were often mentioned in connection with experience: “Interrailing, tasting freedom, collecting new experiences, a leap to unknown. In short adventure.” A respondent with recent experience of Interrail described “Interrailing, new experiences, freedom...top of my mind are the interesting experiences, which you cannot have in Finland.”

The respondents with none experience reflected their friends' opinions. "Interail comes top of my mind and my friends' experience of it. Sounds amazing and different way to see Europe," thinks one respondent. Another respondent, who told that Interrail is popular among his/hers friends' said: "...in short time one can see and experience a lot, travel planning is easier compared to for instance to travelling to remote countries."

5.2.5 People - social aspect of Interrail travel

People, social relations and interactions appeared in a number of responses. Many respondents recalled their past Interrail trips accompanied by a girlfriend, boyfriend, best friend or friends. As one respondent disclosed "...I travelled with my girlfriend for a month visiting altogether nine countries. We stayed in local hostels, ate local food and had the best summer ever." Another remembered it as "...wonderful adventure with few good friends without worries. We laugh at stupid things and we are happy."

Meeting, seeing or interacting with new or different kind of people on the road was another often repeated topic. One respondent phrased it: "It is nice to rail through Europe, see different landscapes and meet different nationalities..." Another respondent who had recently returned from an Interrail trip stated: "I chatted with tens of people from all over Europe in the train."

Shared travel experiences with friends, meeting and seeing new people was an important and often mentioned subject in many responses. It became quite obvious that social aspect of travel was a significant part of the overall travel experience.

5.2.6 Reference group influences

Fourth topic dealt with perceptions of those who had not experienced Interrail and but had been influenced by their reference groups: friends or relatives. One respondent said: "I have heard of my friends' rail trips and everyone has recommended rail travelling in Europe." Other respondent continues with same style..."I have not travelled by train within Europe, but my friend has been railing. She thought it was a great experience and recommended it to me." Friends' recommendations of Interrail repeated in several responses.

Relatives or parents (mom or dad) were another influential source of perceptions. The images received from a previous Interrail generation varied from something nostalgically great to old fashioned. The attitudes greatly depended on how this reference group had described their past experiences of Interrail and the travel comfort related to this mode of travelling. As one respondent described his image: "The first impression occurs me are

the Interrail stories, which my parents, friends' parents and even teachers at school narrated when I was little. For some reason I get the impression of 70's and 80's instead of present day. It is not that common anymore to travel by train in Europe." Another respondent shared: ..."My mom railed after high school with her friend – I remember especially well her stories about adventures in Eastern Europe during the cold war."

Moreover friends' and relatives' experiences and stories seemed to have a positive impact on interest to try Interrail themselves. One respondent answered: "Many of my acquaintances and relatives have been on Interrail and I plan to do it myself too. Same positive impact was reflected in other responses even though the past stories were from previous generations: "My mom travelled with her friend on Interrail in the 80's. It was a really great experience and I plan to experience something similar with my husband."

Reference group influence emerged in many responses. Overall the positive attitude toward Interrail came up mostly when respondents referred to their friends as source of recommendation. Parents' past stories on Interrail raised more contradictory perceptions on Interrail: some of them got a positive influence and other's felt that it was a mode of travelling from the past.

5.2.7 Dreams and intentions to travel by Interrail

Many respondents clearly expressed their dream or intention of experiencing Interrail in the future. Some had already travelled by Interrail and wanted to go again: "Interrail-trip which I did with my boyfriend in the summer after graduating high school, occur to me first. I am dreaming of going again soon." Those who had not travelled by Interrail revealed their dream or intention to experience it. Many of them had heard from their friends' experiences which was the reason for dreaming of it too. One respondent commented: "Interrail culture comes to my mind first. I have not railed yet, but my friends have shared many stories and I have read about it in books and internet. I am dreaming of travelling around Europe by train one day."

Dreams or intentions to travel often included friends and sociality. One respondent disclosed following: "Normally my first thought would be flying when travelling to Europe, but I have been dreaming of Interrail-trip, which I would like to do with my friends. Thus I would familiarize better with European rail travelling."

5.2.8 Less occurred associations

The subject of environmental-friendly or ecological form of travelling did not occur as much as one could have assumed. These subjects were mentioned less than ten times out of all 353 Interrail-related responses.

Other forms of travelling were brought up by a few respondents. One respondent said: "Interrail is cheaper and more ecological compared to flying by plane." Another respondent who had already taken two Interrail-trips in Europe points out the stress related to travelling by a car: "Travelling is easy and liberates for example from stress of driving a car." Different comments favoring train instead of flying were said in few responses. One respondent commented: "A possibility to see more and also cities that are not flown to from Finland." Another one said: "On the way it is easy to stop over ex-tempore in interesting destinations unlike for example with flying." To see more different places and travel scenery in comparison to flying were also brought up.

5.3 Level of Interrail Pass awareness

The level of awareness was measured of both Interrail Pass types: the Global Pass which is valid in all Interrail countries and the One Country Pass which is valid for a selected country. The predetermined awareness response options were *I have tried (1)*, *I have considered trying (2)*, *I know by name, but I have not tried (3)* and *I do not know nor have I tried (4)*.

Among the 18-25 years old 12.1 % had already tried Interrail with the Global Pass. The share of those who had considered of trying was 46.8 % which is nearly half of all respondents. 21.3 % recognized the pass by name but had not tried it and 19.8 % had never heard of the Interrail Global Pass. The results of other age groups are somewhat different. Among 26-33 years old 22.4 % had tried the Interrail Global Pass, 25.6 % had considered of trying, 23.2 % knew the product by name, but had not tried it and 28.8 % did not know the pass by name nor had tried it. Among oldest age group 34-39 years 13.2 % had tried the pass, and 9 % had considered of trying. Nearly 43 % of 34-39 years was aware of the pass name but had not tried it and 34.9 % did not recognize product name (Figure 14).

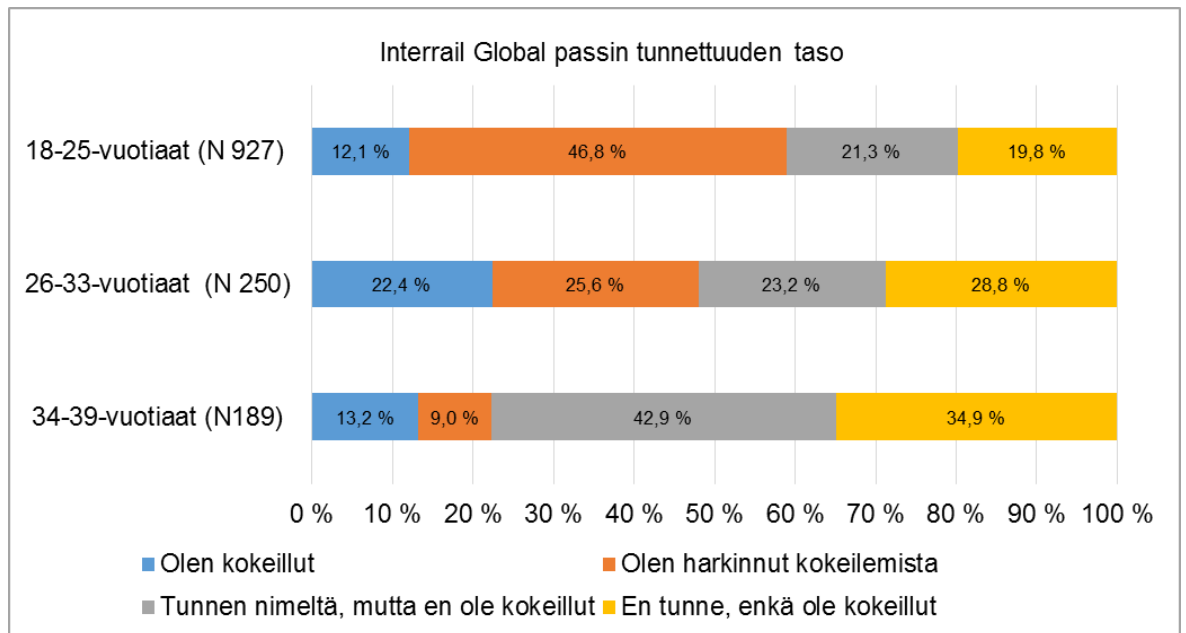


Figure 14 Interrail Global Pass level of awareness

The figure 15 below shows the results of the One Country Pass' level of awareness. Among 18-25 old only 2.6 % had tried the pass and 27 % had considered of trying it. 42.2 % recognized the product name, but 28.3. % did not recognize the pass name at all. The share of experimenters of the One Country Pass was 4 % among 26-33 years old, 22.8 % of this age group had considered of trying the One Country Pass, 41.2 % knew the pass by name and 32 % did not know the pass at all. Of the 34-39 years old 2.6 % had tried the pass, 10.1 % had considered of trying it, 40.7 % recognized the pass by name but had not tried, and nearly half 46.6 % did not know the pass name at all.

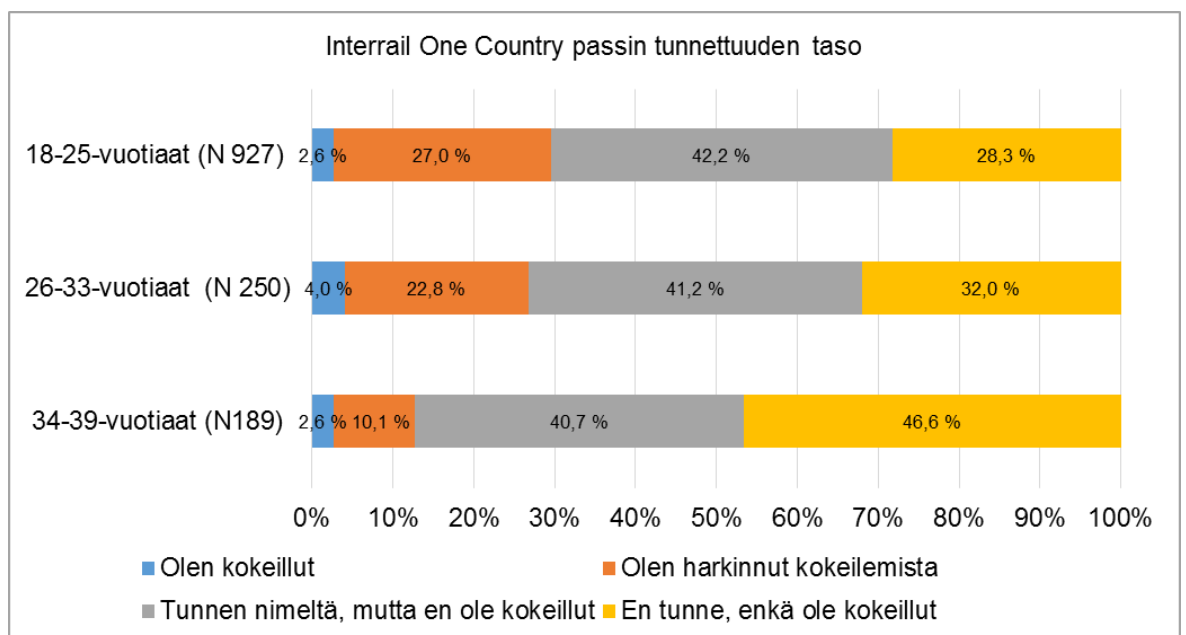


Figure 15 Interrail One Country Pass level of awareness

5.4 Image of Interrail

Twelve predetermined image attributes of Interrail were measured with seven-point semi-otic differential scale. The scale consisted of a set of adjectives and their opposites. The survey respondents were asked to judge the attributes on the basis of their own travel experience or on pure perception. The positively nuanced attributes were positioned on the left end of the scale (1) and their opposites on the right end (7). Four selected positive attributes were set on purpose to the right end of the scale in order to prevent respondents on always agreeing the positive. Those attributes were *fast*, *inexpensive*, *memorable* and *popular*.

When comparing the bipolar attributes, all the age groups associated Interrail strongly with “experiential” and “ecological”. Interrail was also thought popular among all age groups (Figure 16).

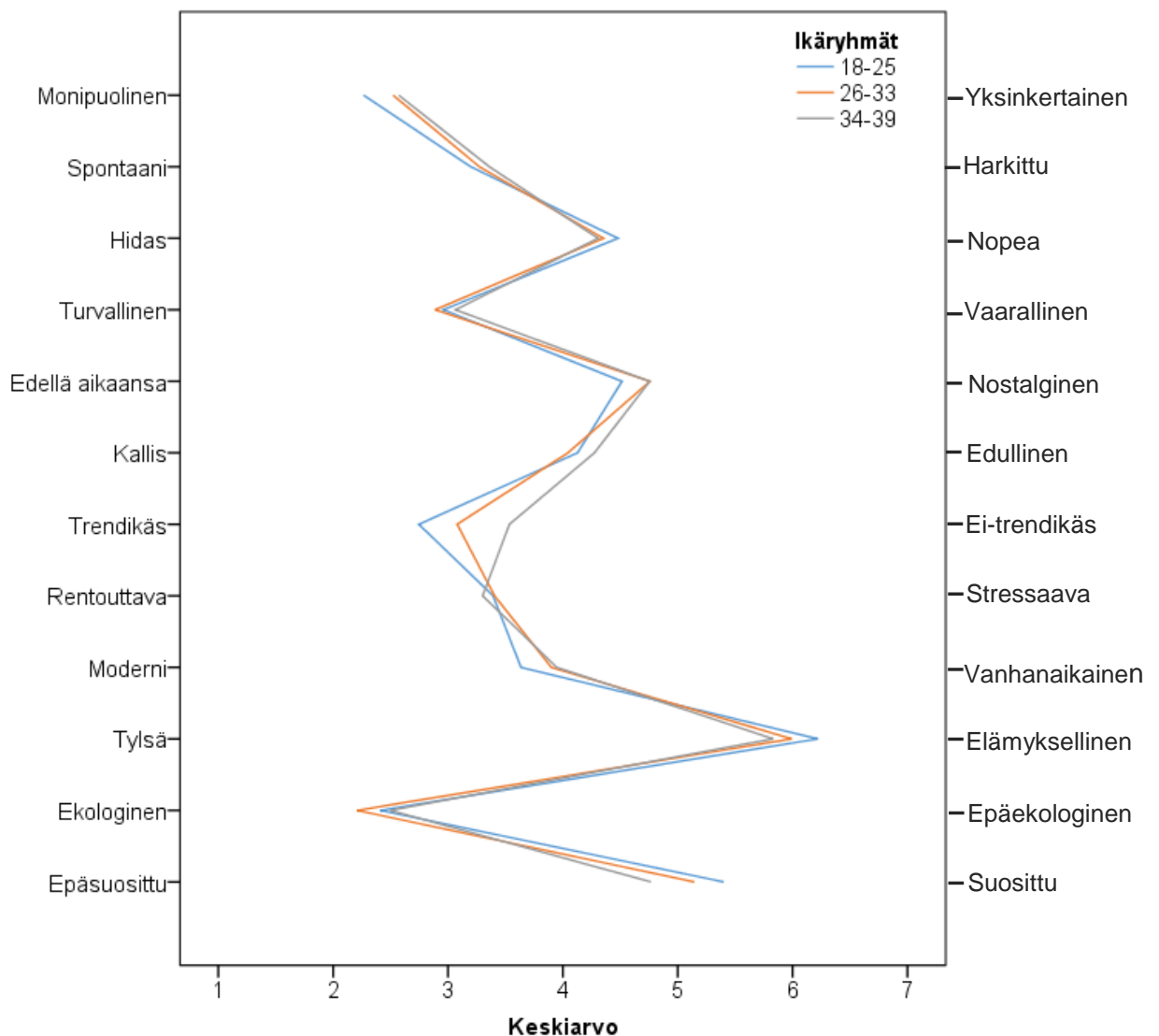


Figure 16 Image attributes of Interrail

Overall there was not a lot of difference in perception among all age groups. However the 18-25 years olds perceived Interrail slightly trendier than older age groups. The meaning of price (expensive vs. inexpensive) positioned in the mean (4) among all age groups. Modern vs. old-fashioned was also positioned in the mean (4) among older age groups, but 18-25 years evaluated the image slightly more towards modern.

5.5 Evaluation of Interrail's value propositions

Opinions of Interrail's six different value propositions were measured with five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = strongly agree). The survey respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each statement. The appendix 4 shows percentage shares of each response option among the main target group of 18-25 years old and the means of all age groups are shown below in figure 17.

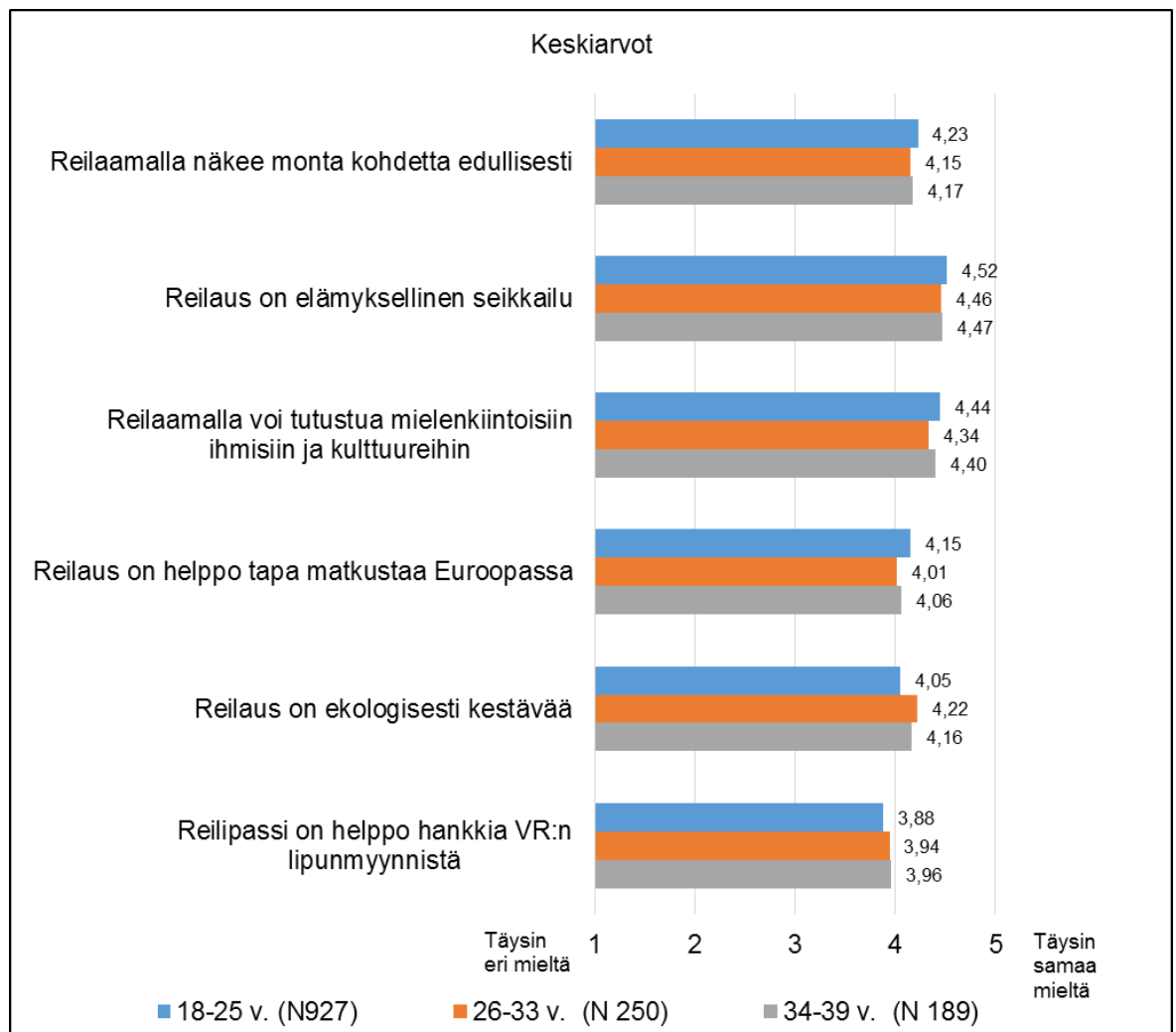


Figure 17 Value propositions of Interrail

The mean of the first statement *“Interrail is a budget way to explore Europe's many destinations”* exceeded four among all age groups. The mean among 18-25 years old respondents was the highest 4.23. Among 18-25 years 48.4 % of respondents strongly agreed and 38.7% somewhat agreed with the statement. The mean of 26-33 years old was 4.15 and 34-39 years old 4.17.

Nearly 73 % of 18-25 years respondents strongly agreed and 18.2 % somewhat agreed with the statement *“Interrail is a memorable experience”*. The mean within this age group was 4.52, the highest of all statements. The mean among age groups 26-33 years was 4.46 and 34-39 years 4.47.

“On Interrail you can get to know interesting people and cultures” this statement reached the mean of 4.44 among 18-25 years old. Nearly 66 % within this age group strongly agreed and 24 % somewhat agreed with the statement. The 26-33 years old respondents' mean reached 4.34 and 34-39 years olds' 4.40.

With fourth statement *“Interrail is an easy way to travel in Europe”* the share of 18-25 years who strongly agreed with this statement was 46.2 % and the share of those who somewhat agreed was 37 %. The mean of 18-25 years old was 4.15. The 26-33 years olds had a mean of 4.01 and 34-39 years olds 4.06.

Of 18-25 years old 37.8 % strongly agreed and 40.3 % somewhat agreed with statement *“Interrail is ecologically sustainable”*. 14.2 % neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The mean of 18-25 years old was 4.05. The other age groups reached higher means with this statement, among 26-33 years the mean was 4.22 and among 34-39 years old 4.16.

The last statement *“Interrail Pass is easy to purchase at VR booking office”* was the only statement which stayed under the mean of 4 in all age groups. The mean among 18-25 years old was 3.88, the lowest among all age groups. 36.6 % strongly agreed and 26.5 % of 18-25 years old somewhat agreed with the statement. 29.5 % neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The mean among 26-33 years was 3.94 and among 34-39 years 3.96.

5.6 Level of interest to travel by Interrail

The survey respondents were asked to evaluate their level of interest to travel by Interrail within next two years. The response options in the question were *very interested, some-*

what interested, not likely interested, not at all interested and I do not know. Figure 18 below presents the levels of interest in all age groups.

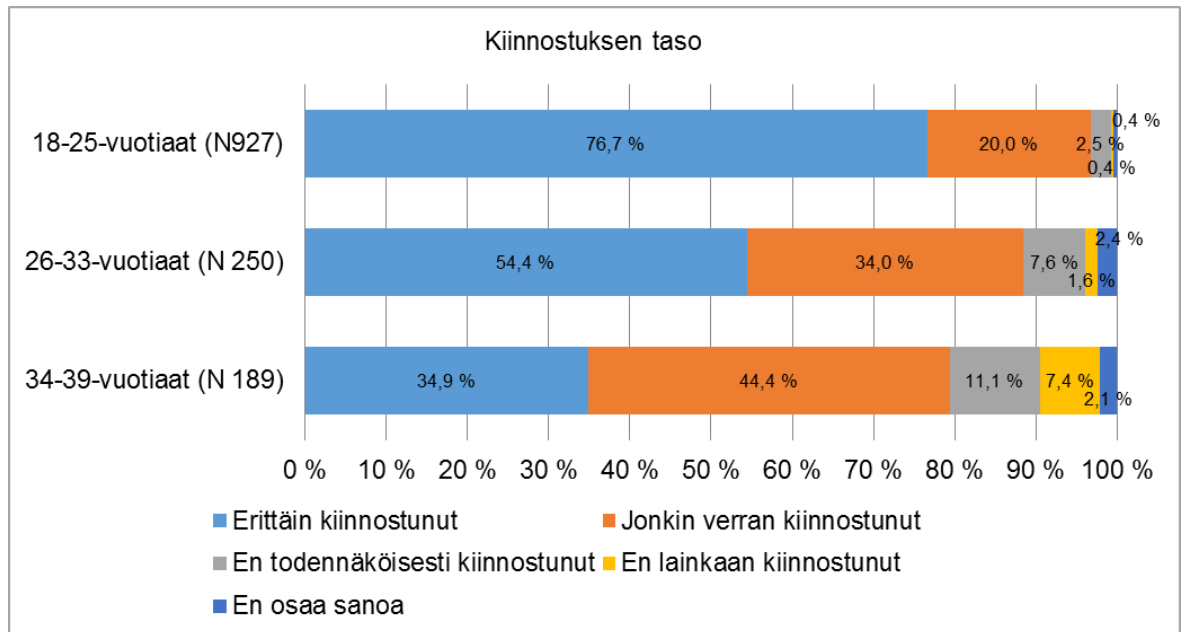


Figure 18 Level of interest to travel by Interrail

76.7 % of 18-25 years old were very interested to travel by Interrail within next two years. The share of somewhat interested was 20 %. The share of those 18-25 years old who were not likely interested was 2.5 % and not at all interested was as low as 0.4%. The level of very interested among 26-33 years old was 54.4 % and somewhat interested 34 %. The share of not likely interested was 7.6 % and not at all interested 1.6 % among 26-33 years old. The 34-39 years old respondents expressed being very interested to travel by Interrail with a share of 34.9 % and somewhat interested with share of 44.4 %. The share of not likely interested was 11.1 % and not at all interested 7.4 % within this age group. Also the share of uncertain with I do not know responses was a bit higher within 26-33 years (2.4 %) and 34-39 years old respondents (2.1 %) compared to 18-25 years old (0.4 %).

5.7 Main determinants for choosing Interrail

The survey respondents, who were very interested or somewhat interested in travelling within next two years, were asked to choose three main reasons why they would like to travel by Interrail. The multiple-response question had ten predetermined options and one open ended response option (other, what?) from which the three reasons were to be chosen from. The case percentages of all three age groups are shown in the figure 19. The

case percentage demonstrates how many respondents within each age group had chosen the particular response option.

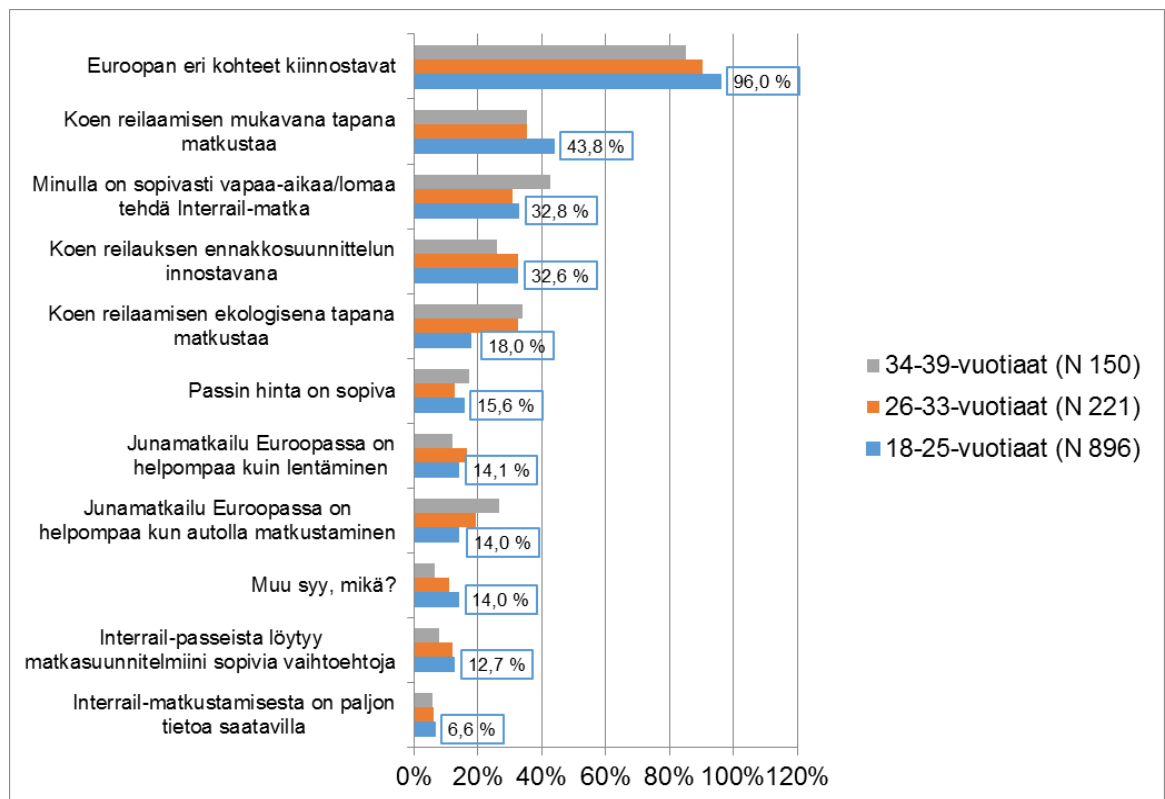


Figure 19 Main determinants for choosing Interrail

When looking at the three most chosen response options of 18-25 years old (N896), the first determinant for choosing Interrail was *Europe and its different destinations are interesting* (96 %). The second most important reason with 43.8 % of cases was *I consider Interrail travel as a comfortable mode of travelling*. The third reason for choosing Interrail with 36.8 % of cases was *I have enough personal leisure time available or vacation to travel by Interrail*. The 26-33 years old (N221) had same first two response options, but third most important determinant for them was *I consider preplanning of the Interrail trip inspiring* (32.6 %) and because *Interrail is an ecological mode of travelling* (32.6 %). The oldest age group of very interested and somewhat interested respondents of 34-39 years old (N150) chose also *Europe and its different destinations are interesting* as the first determinant for choosing Interrail. The second was *I have enough personal leisure time available or vacation to travel by Interrail* (42.7%) and the third determinant was *I consider Interrail travel as a comfortable mode of travelling* (35.3 %).

5.8 Main determinants for not choosing Interrail

The survey respondents, who were not likely or not at all interested in travelling within next two years, were asked to choose three main reasons why they would not travel by Interrail. The question consisted of ten predetermined response options, which were formulated as opposites to the reasons of those who were interested. The response option consisted also an open-ended response option (other, what?). The case percentages of all three age groups are shown below in figure 20.

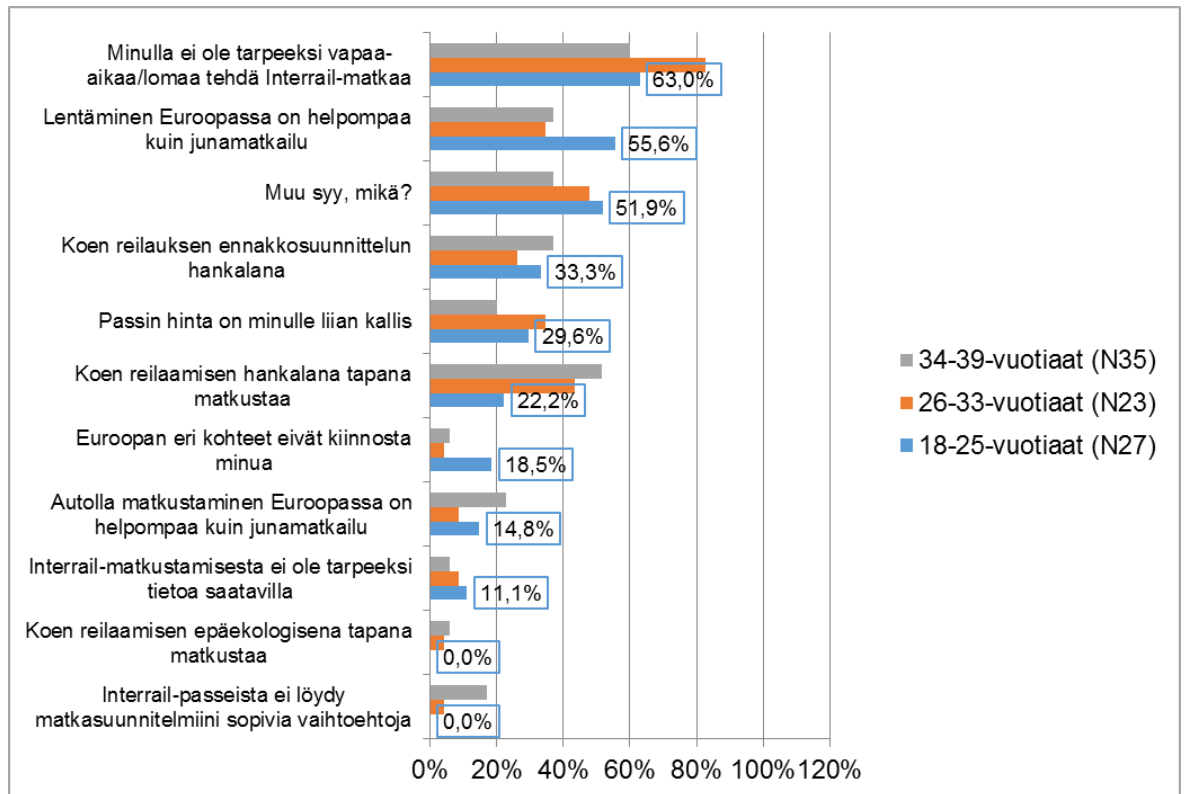


Figure 20 Main determinants for not choosing Interrail

The first determinant of 18-25 years old, who were not likely or not at all interested (N27), for not choosing Interrail was *I have not enough personal leisure time available or vacation to travel by Interrail* (63 %). The second determinant was *Flying in Europe is easier than rail travel* (55.6 %). The third determinant was the open-ended option with 51.9 % of cases. The answers consisted of various reasons such as other expenses related to Interrail travelling, travel stress, planning and scheduling of the trip. In addition insecurity of rail travel, changes and incidents which may happen on the way, need for travel in comfort and Interrail is not suitable form of traveling for a mother, were mentioned as reasons for not to travel by Interrail. The 26-33 years old (N23) chose the same first determinant *I have not enough personal leisure time available or vacation to travel by Interrail* (82.6 %), the second determinant was open-ended option (47.8 %) and third was *I consider Interrail*

travel as an inconvenient mode of travelling (43.5%). The oldest age group 34-39 years old (N35) shared the same first reason as the other age groups. The second most selected option they chose was *I consider Interrail travel as an inconvenient mode of travelling* (51.4 %). The third determinant consisted of three evenly emphasized options with 37.1 % of cases in each: *flying in Europe is easier than rail travel*; *I consider preplanning of an Interrail trip troublesome* and the open-ended option *other reason, what*.

5.9 Reasons why Interrail is not interesting

The 18-25 years old survey respondents who were not likely or not at all interested to travel by Interrail within next two years (N27) were asked with an open-ended question why they were not interested to travel by Interrail.

The respondents described in their responses various reasons for why Interrail travelling is not appealing for them. Some responded that their own resources like money or time or both were not enough for rail travelling. In addition some said that Interrail was too expensive form of travelling. There were also respondents who had already experienced Interrail and felt that it was no longer interesting for them. For some, the mode of travelling itself was not interesting because flying was seen as a faster way of reaching a destination. Also the thought of physical exertion and the stress of travelling were reasons why this mode of travelling does not appeal some. There were also a few respondents who explained that their hobby or life stage determined their use of leisure time and travel habits. Some felt that lack of courage and possible dangers during the trip were obstacles for trying out Interrail travel. Examples of responses:

- “I feel that I do not have the need to experience it. Time used for travelling is also long. I rather travel speedily to a destination.”
- “Considering the costs, it is as expensive as flying.”
- “I am not interested to carry heavy back pack around tired, sweaty and feet blistered.”
- “I got other things going on, and I was on Rail two years ago.”
- “I have a baby coming, so I am not going to have own time”
- “I am more excited about camping and bike touring and tranquility of Northern countries rather than the bustle of Middle Europe.”
- “I am too afraid to experience it alone.”
- “I am afraid to get robbed.”

5.10 Evaluation of factors to increase the interest

All the survey respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with different factors that could increase the level of interest towards Interrail. The eight different factors were measured with five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 neither agree nor disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = strongly agree). The appendix 5 shows in detail the percentage shares of 18-25 years old respondents. The means of each statement are shown in figure 21.

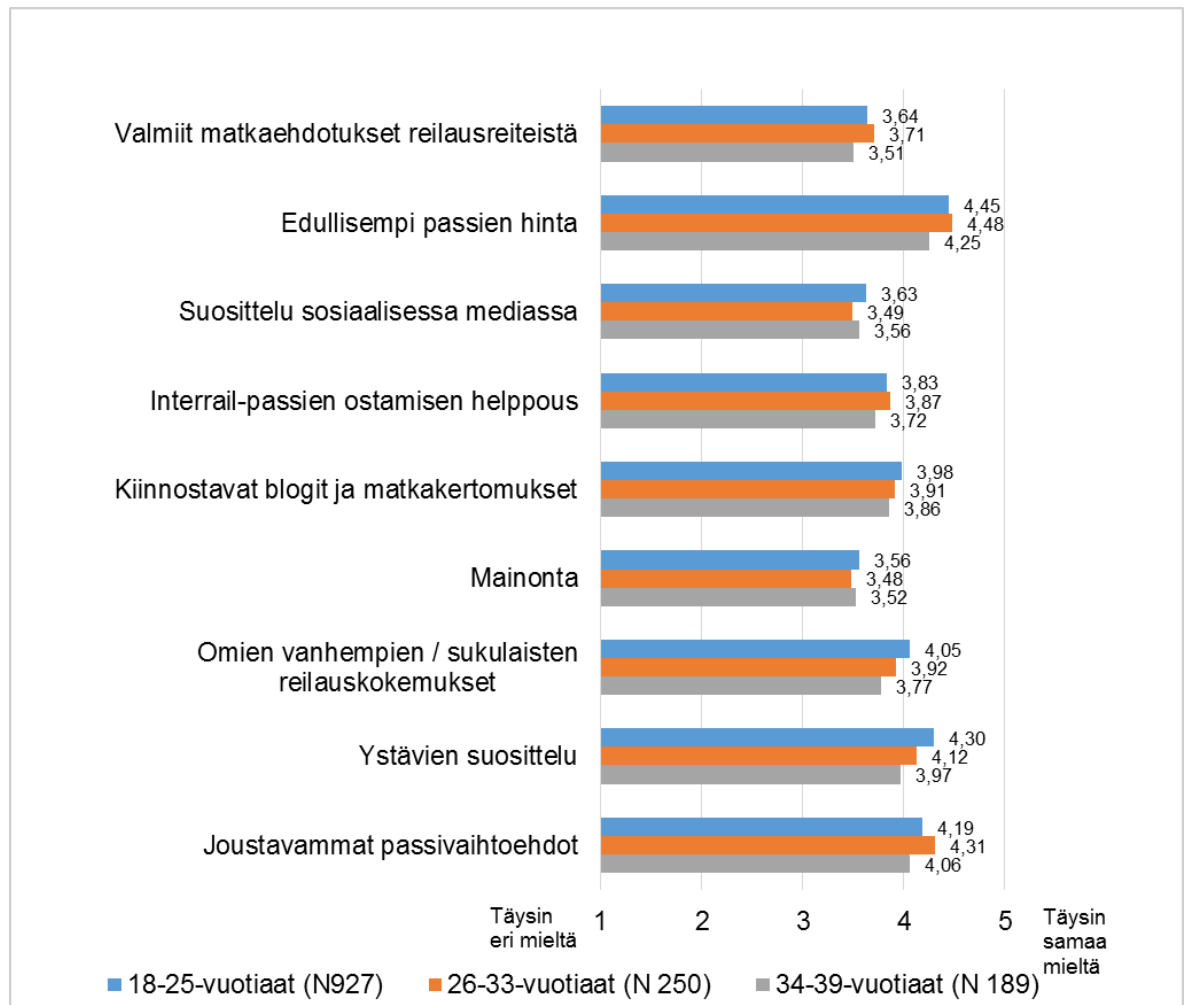


Figure 21 Factors to increase the level of interest

The first factor was “*Tailored route proposals for the trip.*” The mean among respondents aged 18-25 years was 3.64. Nearly 24 % strongly agreed with this factor and 38 % somewhat agreed with it. 21.4% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and 13.1 % somewhat disagreed with the factor. The mean of 26-33 years old respondents was 3.71 and of 34-39 years old it was 3.51.

The factor *“Cheaper pass prices”* exceeded the mean of four in all age groups. Of 18-25 years 64.3 % strongly agreed and 22.4 % somewhat agreed with this factor. The mean of this age group was 4.45, highest of all statements within this age group. Among 26-33 years old the mean was 4.48 and among 34-39 years old it was 4.25.

16.1 % of 18-25 years old respondents strongly agreed with the factor *“Recommendation in the social media”* and 44.9 % somewhat agreed with it. 27.3 % neither agreed nor disagreed with the factor. The mean reached the value of 3.63 among 18-25 years old. The respondents aged 26-33 years had a mean of 3.49 and 34-39 years had a mean of 3.56.

“Easy purchasing of Interrail Passes” was strongly agreed by 26.4 % and somewhat agreed by 42 % of 18-25 years old respondents. 22.2 % neither agreed nor disagreed with the factor. The mean of 18-25 years old reached the value of 3.83. Among 26-33 years old the mean was 3.87 and among 34-39 years old it was 3.72.

“Interesting blogs and travel stories” reached a mean of 3.98 among 18-25 years old. The share of those 18-25 years old who strongly agreed with the factor was 31.9 % and of those who somewhat agreed with it was 47.1 %. The share of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the factor was 10.7 %. Among the 26-33 years the mean was 3.91 and among the 34-39 years old it was 3.86.

12.4 % of 18-25 years old strongly agreed that *“Advertising”* could raise the interest towards Interrail. 47.5 % somewhat agreed and 26.6 % neither agreed nor disagreed with the factor. The share of those 18-25 years old who somewhat disagreed with the factor was 11.1 %. The mean in this age group was 3.56. The mean was even lower among 26-33 years old (3.48) and 34-39 years old (3.52).

The share of 18-25 years old who strongly agreed with the factor *“Interrail experiences of parents or relatives”* could raise the interest was 37.2 % and the share of those who somewhat agreed with it was 42.4 %. The share of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with this factor was 12.2 %. The mean of 18-25 years old was 4.05. Among 26-33 years old respondents the mean was lower 3.92 and among 34-39 years even lower 3.77.

“Recommendation of friends” reached the second highest mean 4.30 of all factors among 18-25 years old. 48.9 % strongly agreed with this factor and 40.1 % somewhat agreed with it. The mean among 26-33 years old was 4.12 and among 34-39 years it was 3.97.

The factor "*More flexible pass options*" had a mean of 4.19 among 18-25 years old. 46.6 % of this age group strongly agreed and 33.7 % somewhat agreed with the factor. 14.1 % neither agreed nor disagreed with the factor. The mean was 4.31 among 26-33 years old and it was 4.06 among 34-39 years old.

5.11 Credibility of the research findings

A discussion of credibility of research findings is in order when a quantitative research has been conducted. When research subjects are humans and data collection method a questionnaire, there is reason to find out the credibility of the data and whether the results show correct or true values of behavior (Burns & Burns 2008, 410). As stated in chapter 4.1.1 a purely scientific research requires a controlled environment and rigid control of conditions, which are rarely possible in research of human behavior (Burns & Burns 2008, 17). The concepts of reliability and validity are two methods used to measure credibility of the results (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 231).

5.11.1 Reliability of the research

The concept of reliability refers to consistency and stability of results, in other words the results can be replicated in another occasion (Burns & Burns 2008, 410). According to Hirsjärvi & al. (2009, 231) the reliability of a research or measurement is in its ability to deliver non-random results. There are various methods to revise reliability. If two researchers discover same results, the findings can be assumed to be reliable. Also if the same subject of research is researched in different occasions and same results are found, the findings are assumed to be reliable. (Hirsjärvi & al. (2009, 231.)

The stability in quantitative research means that research is repeated similarly or with new measures which measure the same thing. However replicating a research is difficult or it can be costly and therefore it is not always possible. There are different kinds of methods to revise consistency. Internal consistency refers to logicity by measuring two things in two different ways. The correlation between measurements verifies reliability. In split-half method the questionnaire can be divided into two parts. In research one can use two versions of questionnaire or vary the sequence or the parts. (Kananen 2015, 274.)

Cronbach's Alpha is one method to measure internal reliability especially in use of attitude scales. The alpha level shows if the items are measuring the same construct. If there are items that do not measure the same construct, they can be identified and removed. The alpha is a good method for identifying coherent subscales in a long questionnaire and a longer scale can be divided into subscales. An alpha of 0.8 or above is considered as

highly acceptable for assuming homogeneity of items and an alpha of 0.7 is considered as the limit of acceptability. (Burns & Burns 2008, 417.)

In terms of reliability a Cronbach's Alpha technique was used to test internal reliability of the 5-point Likert scale questions in the Interrail survey. The reliability of items in Q4 (value propositions) and in Q9 (factors to increase the interest) were tested with help of SPSS Statistics 22 analyzing tool.

In Q4 the scale produced an alpha of .921, which indicates highly acceptable for an attitude scale. None of the items needed to be deleted (Table 4).

Table 4 Cronbach Alpha data for six items (Q4 value propositions)

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std dev	N of variables	
SCALE	25,23	26,580	5,156	6	
Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Items (value propositions)					
Reilaamalla näkee monta kohdetta edullisesti	21,03	18,750	,777	,631	,906
Reilaus on elämyksellinen seikkailu	20,73	18,292	,849	,791	,896
Reilaamalla voi tutustua mielenkiintoisiin ihmisiin ja kulttuureihin	20,81	18,572	,823	,755	,900
Reilaus on helppo tapa matkustaa Euroopassa	21,12	18,297	,799	,646	,903
Reilaus on ekologisesti kestävä	21,14	19,152	,756	,574	,909
Reilipassi on helppo hankkia VR:n lipunmyynnistä	21,33	19,446	,644	,422	,924

Reliability statistics

N of Items = 6

N of Cases = 1366

Alpha = .921

The internal reliability of Q9, the scale produced an alpha of .871 which is also highly acceptable for an attitude scale. All the items in Q9 were measured and none of them were removed (Table 5).

Table 5 Cronbach Alpha data nine items (Q9 factors to increase the interest)

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std dev	N of variables
SCALE	35,38	37,395	6,115	9

Item-Total Statistics					
Items (factors to increase the interest)	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Ystävien suosittelu	31,16	29,999	,657	,525	,852
Omien vanhempien/sukulaisten reilauskokemukset	31,39	30,427	,554	,437	,862
Mainonta	31,84	30,480	,594	,424	,858
Kiinnostavat blogit ja matkakertomukset	31,43	29,559	,645	,455	,853
Interrail-passien ostamisen helppous	31,55	29,951	,617	,408	,856
Suosittelu sosiaalisessa mediassa	31,79	30,027	,618	,456	,856
Edullisempi passien hinta	30,95	29,600	,670	,608	,851
Joustavammat passivaihtoehdot	31,19	29,961	,631	,568	,855
Valmiit matkaehdotukset reilausreiteistä	31,74	30,212	,494	,263	,869

Reliability statistics
 N of Items = 9
 N of Cases = 1366
 Alpha = .871

Due to time restriction for conducting the research, the questionnaire versions or the splitting-method were not options for this research. The reliability of this research leans to the great amount of respondents (N1366) and good reach of main target group 18-25 years old people around Finland through VR's own medias and social medias. Interrail's image and interest for young Finnish people has not been studied recently, so there are no comparable results to indicate reliability. Replication of the research is always an option of course, but it may be time consuming. However the administration of the questionnaire through VR's own medias, good response rate and consistent results on attitude scale indicate that the results can be assumed to be reliable and to serve their purpose for VR's marketing.

5.11.2 Validity of the research

The concept of validity refers to measurements, or research method's ability to measure what it is intended for. There is always a risk that measurements and methods used do not reflect the same reality that the researcher believes he or she is studying. The questions asked in the questionnaire may be falsely understood by the respondents and the researcher still analyzes the findings according to his or hers own reflection. Thus the results cannot be held valid and credible. The measurement may distort the results. (Hirsjärvi & et al. 2009, 232.)

There are different perspectives to evaluate validity. External validity means the extent to which the results of a sample can be generalized to a population. The population validity refers to the responses of the sample's participants and whether those responses represent an accurate assessment of the target population. Convenience sample is less likely to show population validity compared to random selection. (Burns & Burns 2008, 426-427.) Internal validity refers to the level of control to what extent the conditions within the experiment are controlled. Internal validity may be influenced by study's design, administration of the study and the extent to which a researcher considers alternative explanations for any causal relationships. Content validity is the extent to which the content of a measurement presents the intended content to be studied. (Burns & Burns 2008, 427-428.)

The research questionnaire was carefully planned, reviewed and proof-read in several occasions. The questionnaire also appeared professional and instructed in detail with well-phrased questions what is expected from the participants of the study. Moreover the questionnaire was pretested with Haaga-Helia students and results inputted into SPSS Statistics in order to find possible mistakes. The pre-test provided results which reflected the intended content and topic of the study, which confirmed the content validity. The questionnaire was also professionally administered in various VR's mediums, which also showed credibility among respondents as well as increases the internal validity. In terms of quantity and geographical representativeness, the sample represented well the main target group of the study: 18-25 years old people (N927) from all provinces of Finland except for Ahvenanmaa. Therefore it could be stated that the external validity is at good level despite the fact that convenience sampling method does not provide complete population validity. Random sampling was also used in this research which improves to some extent the validity of the results.

6 Conclusions

VR's marketing wanted to identify a problem, which may have led to sales decline, by conducting a research on Interrail and find out its level of awareness, image and interest among the main target group of 18-25 years old people. Moreover VR's marketing wanted to gain fresh insight about the main determinants for young people for choosing or not choosing Interrail as a mode of travelling. VR was also interested of the factors what could increase the interest for young people to travel by Interrail. The objective of this survey was to obtain practical knowledge for future planning of Interrail marketing in Finland. The following chapters will summarize the findings and suggests some development activities for VR's marketing.

6.1 Summary of findings

Interrail or its synonym (reilaus, reilaaminen, reili, raili) was mentioned in every 4th open-ended response (about 26 %), which refers that Interrail as a brand is comparatively known among people aged 18-39 years. Interrail related responses revealed many positive associations towards rail travelling. Easiness and convenience were the most used adjectives of the respondents. Moreover train was seen as comfortable and fast mode of transportation. Admiration of beautiful, amazing and different landscapes during the trip as well as experience of something new, adventurous and interesting were seen as essential parts of Interrail travelling. Interrail was also associated as social form of travelling accompanied by friends or meeting new people during the trip. Perceptions were greatly influenced by reference groups' experiences. The positive perceptions were received from recommendations made by friends who had experienced Interrail and shared their travel stories. Contradictory perceptions were formed from Interrail stories heard from parents or other representatives of previous generations. Therefore some felt that Interrail is just a blast from the past as a form of travel referring to old trains or historic events their parents experienced while on Interrail. Then again some perceived their parent's travel stories inspiring and wanted to experience Interrail too. Many respondents expressed their dream, wish or intention to travel by Interrail someday.

Environment friendliness occurred surprisingly only in a few Interrail related responses. More often rail travelling was compared to other forms of travelling. Rail travel's benefit compared to driving a car was that it is a stress-free form of travelling. Possibility to see more and visit spontaneously different places was seen as advantages of rail travelling compared to flying.

Although most of the associations were positive about Interrail and European rail travel, a few criticized rail travel as troublesome, unsafe and expensive. Also the trains' condition and service level was not seen as satisfactory. Individual respondents felt that Interrail was continuously moving around and does not leave much time for visiting destinations or big cities properly.

Interrail's image attributes were strongly associated with experiential, ecological and popular. 18-25 years old respondents perceived it also as trendy form of travelling, more than the older age groups. The image perception of price (expensive vs. inexpensive) seems to indicate that respondents did not have a clear understanding of how much an Interrail pass costs. Also the respondents were indecisive about modern vs. old-fashioned which may be because of lack of experience, since majority of respondents had not experienced Interrail.

Awareness of Interrail Global Pass among 18-25 year old is on a very good level. Nearly 50 % had considered trying Interrail Global Pass and 12 % had already tried the pass. The awareness of One Country Pass among 18-25 years old was on somewhat lower level: about 27 % had considered of trying the pass and only 2.6 % had travelled with the pass. However nearly 30 % of the respondents did not know Interrail the One Country Pass at all.

The results show that all Interrail's value propositions are credible and valid for the respondents. Interrail's brand communication in Finland at VR's web page is still relevant for young consumers, especially slogan: "Interrail is a memorable experience". Easy to purchase at VR's booking office did not reach very high score. Many of VR's regional booking offices have been closed down over the years and purchase in Finland is possible only from a ticket office. Eurail's web shop interrail.eu is another option for purchasing a pass online.

18-25 years (N896) old people expressed clearly that they are very interested (77 %) or somewhat interested (20 %) to try Interrail within next two years. The three most emphasized determinants for choosing Interrail were 1) Europe and its different destinations are interesting, 2) Interrail travel as a comfortable mode of travelling and 3) available personal leisure time or vacation to travel by Interrail.

Those 18-25 year old (N27) who were not at all interested (0.4%) and not likely interested (2.5 %) emphasized the following determinants for not choosing Interrail: 1) not having enough leisure time or vacation available to travel by Interrail, 2) flying in Europe is easier

than the rail travel 3) various other reasons for example time and budget constraints, some had already experienced Interrail, other hobbies, life stage, lack of courage, insecurity and travel stress during the trip. All the emphasized determinants in both groups (interested and uninterested) were personal in nature and based on peoples' attitudes, perceptions, principles and knowledge as well as past experiences of travelling. The factors that would increase the level of interest the most would be 1) cheaper pass prices, 2) friends' recommendations and 3) more flexible pass options.

To conclude, based on these results it can be said that Interrail as such is quite well-known brand in Finland among young adults. The current rail travel's image in Europe is quite positive and overrules some of the presumptions made about Interrail being uncomfortable, slow or expensive. On the contrary Interrail and rail travel was seen as easy, convenient and even fast. The price image was somewhat unclear as image attributes indicated indecisive result, but in the end respondents expressed that cheaper pass prices would increase their interest. Flying was perceived easier and cheaper among those who were not interested in travelling by Interrail, yet the number of uninterested respondents remained very small. Europe and its many destinations were considered the main determinant for choosing Interrail, which disproves the assumption that Europe is not interesting destination for young people anymore.

According to the survey results it seems that the decreased interest in terms of passes sold does not derive from current level of awareness or the lack of knowledge. Interrail seems to be a known mode of travelling and intentions to try Interrail travel are extremely high among 18-25 years old. However if these intentions do not transform into actions, a further investigation of motivational factors for young travelers of Generations Y and Z, is suggested. Especially finding out what are the obstacles and factors related to Interrail's purchase-decision process are interesting topics for further research.

6.2 Suggestions for VR's marketing

The Interrail brand and products are mainly developed and promoted by Eurail Group which also provides the main promotional materials for participating countries in order to maintain the uniformity of brand's visual design and logos. In other words VR cannot directly impact the pricing decisions or flexibility of pass options, which were two of the factors that could increase the interest.

VR's marketing however can make a difference on how to use different marketing activities to promote Interrail Passes (Global Pass and One Country Pass) to different age

groups in Finland. The marketing activities are mostly directed to young people of 18-25 years, members of Generation Y and Z. These generations have grown up in a world of abundant number of options to consume. They are witty users of digital and mobile devices as well as active in producing content. VR has already invited young people to spend time with Interrail related brand activities and to interact digitally through modern platforms. These campaigns have been successful among the young target group. Four proposals are suggested to VR's marketing to renew Interrail' marketing in Finland.

- Customer service with an Interrail specialist in the social media
- Use of Veturi customer base for targeted e-mails of Interrail
- Content generation and streaming to digital OOH mediums
- Use of data driven advertising model and retargeting

As discussed in theoretical part of this research, tourism product and purchase decision-process is often complex and influenced by many factors. Assistance is often needed from the companies as well. Although Generations Y and Z are excellent in information search and trust their friends' opinions, they may require responses to more detailed questions about the product and travelling in Europe. VR has social media customer service in the Facebook that helps customers every day from 7 am till 10 pm. The team consists of several customer service professionals. VR could launch a separate Interrail service on Facebook, a specialist to answer questions about Interrail and rail travelling in Europe. This specialist should have a good knowledge of Interrail travel, destinations, routes and use of Passes, ticket reservations in European railways etc. The expert could also help Interrail travelers during their trip.

Veturi loyalty program has a large customer base of 18-25 years old people around Finland. Targeted e-mails according to special segmentation criteria have been proved to be more effective method to increase opening rates and interest towards specific subjects. Targeted e-mails to 18-25 years old could provide better results in increasing the buying interest towards Interrail. E-mails could include different communicational approaches to different customer groups in order to measure the results. The six main topics revealed in this research could serve as source of content for the e-mail communication. Veturi offers different kinds of partner offers to the customers and an Interrail related partner could be for example a low-cost-airline for combining flight discounts to European capitals with a purchase of Interrail One Country Pass. This could increase the sales of One Country Pass, which is an inexpensive option for touring around in the destination country.

Travel consideration-phase of Interrail is often in the spring. As already discussed earlier VR has used different kind of photo and social media campaigns to inspire young people

to travel by Interrail. Digital OOH (Out-of-home) media offer many digital screens for advertising in the major city centers in Finland. Nowadays streaming consumer generated content through these digital medias is quite popular. Young people are very mobile in the streets and shopping centers. To be able to see for example friend's recommendations or regards from Interrail trip could provide unique brand experiences in a public place and in a big screen.

Data driven advertising model and retargeting activities combine consumers' internet and mobile behavior with the content of company's own homepage and shows specific banner advertising according to consumers' interest. This observation helps marketer to recognize for example purchase intentions of consumers. Observation techniques and the privacy issues related to them are complicated, and therefore not explained here in detail. The main idea however is to display Interrail related banner advertising to those who have shown interest towards the subject by browsing in the Interrail related web pages.

During this writing process of this thesis, VR announced that it is closing 13 ticket offices in Finland. Interrail Passes are printed onto a special paper, which means that they have to be bought either from a ticket office in Finland or ordered online from interrail.eu web shop. The customer service launch in Facebook is therefore a very feasible suggestion, and does not require unreasonable investments. Anyhow these are just a few suggestions made for VR's marketing and they still need further development in order to put in practice. All of them except for use of OOH mediums are low-cost and efficient measures to improve Interrail marketing. Use of OOH is suitable for seasonal campaigning however it needs a good key concept and idea of an advertising agency in order to have good reception.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Kysely junamatkustamisesta Euroopassa

Q1 Mitä ajatuksia sinulle tulee ensimmäiseksi mieleen junamatkustamisesta Euroopassa?

Junamatkustuksella Euroopassa on pitkät perinteet ja liikkuminen maiden välillä on kätevää lyhyiden välimatkojen takia. Voit vapaasti kertoa ajatuksiasi, vaikka sinulla ei olisikaan kokemusta junamatkustuksesta Euroopassa.

(Avoin, 300 merkkiä)

Q2 Kuinka hyvin tunnet Suomessa myytävien Interrail-passien vaihtoehdot?

- a) Interrail Global Pass (Kaikki Interrail-maat)
- b) Interrail One Country Pass (Valittu Interrail-maa)

Vastausvaihtoehdot:

- ☐ Olen kokeillut
- ☐ Olen harkinnut kokeilemista
- ☐ Tunnen nimeltä, mutta en ole kokeillut
- ☐ En tunne enkä ole kokeillut

Q3 Alla on mainittu erilaisia ominaisuuksia. Valitse vastapareista se, mikä parhaiten kuvaa käsitystäsi Interrail-matkustamisesta. Voit perustaa näkemyksesi omakohtaiseen kokemukseesi tai puhtaaseen mielikuvaan.

Kohdista vastauksesi liikuttamalla liukusäädintä.

Monipuolinen 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Yksinkertainen

Spontaani 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Harkittu

Hidas 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Nopea

Turvallinen 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Vaarallinen

Edellä aikaansa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Nostalginen

Kallis 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Edullinen

Trendikäs 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ei-Trendikäs

Rentouttava 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Stressaava
Moderni 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Vanhanaikainen
Tylsä 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Elämyksellinen
Ekologinen 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Epäekologinen
Epäsuosittu 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Suosittu

Q4 Arvioi seuraavia väittämiä, jotka kuvaavat Interrail-matkustamista. Kuinka samaa tai eri mieltä olet väittämien kanssa?

5 Täysin samaa mieltä 4 Jonkin verran samaa mieltä
3 En samaa mieltä enkä eri mieltä 2 Jonkin verran eri mieltä 1 Täysin eri mieltä

Reilaamalla näkee monta kohdetta edullisesti
Reilaus on elämyksellinen seikkailu
Reilaamalla voi tutustua mielenkiintoisiin ihmisiin ja kulttuureihin
Reilaus on helppo tapa matkustaa Euroopassa
Reilaus on ekologisesti kestävä
Reilipassi on helppo hankkia VR:n lipunmyynnistä

Q5 Arvioi miten kiinnostunut olisit kokeilemaan Interrail-matkustamista seuraavan kahden vuoden aikana?

() Erittäin kiinnostunut
() Jonkin verran kiinnostunut
() En todennäköisesti kiinnostunut
() En lainkaan kiinnostunut
() En osaa sanoa

Q6 Kerro lyhyesti muutama syy, miksi et ole kiinnostunut Interrailista?
(Hyppy: Q5 => Ei todennäköisesti kiinnostuneille sekä Ei lainkaan kiinnostuneille)
(Avoin)

Q7 Valitse vielä alla olevasta listasta kolme sinulle tärkeintä syytä, miksi et lähtisi Interrail-matkalle? (Hyppy: Q6 => Ei todennäköisesti kiinnostuneille sekä Ei lainkaan kiinnostuneille)

- ☐ Minulla ei ole tarpeeksi vapaa-aikaa/lomaa tehdä Interrail-matkaa
- ☐ Passin hinta on minulle liian kallis
- ☐ Euroopan eri kohteet eivät kiinnosta minua
- ☐ Interrail-matkustamisesta ei ole tarpeeksi tietoa saatavilla
- ☐ Interrail-passeista ei löydy matkasuunnitelmiini sopivia vaihtoehtoja
- ☐ Koen reilauksen ennakkosuunnittelun hankalana
- ☐ Koen reilaamisen hankalana tapana matkustaa
- ☐ Koen reilaamisen epäekologisena tapana matkustaa
- ☐ Lentäminen Euroopassa on helpompaa kuin junamatkailu
- ☐ Autolla matkustaminen Euroopassa on helpompaa kuin junamatkailu
- ☐ Muu syy, mikä?

Q8 Valitse alla olevasta listasta kolme sinulle tärkeintä syytä, miksi olisit kiinnostunut Interrail-matkustamisesta (Hyppy Q5 => Erittäin sekä jonkin verran kiinnostuneet)

- ☐ Minulla on sopivasti vapaa-aikaa/lomaa tehdä Interrail-matka
- ☐ Passien hinta on minulle sopiva
- ☐ Euroopan eri kohteet kiinnostavat minua
- ☐ Interrail matkustamisesta on paljon tietoa saatavilla
- ☐ Interrail-passeista löytyy matkasuunnitelmiini sopivia vaihtoehtoja
- ☐ Koen reilauksen ennakkosuunnittelun innostavana
- ☐ Koen reilaamisen mukavana tapana matkustaa
- ☐ Koen reilaamisen ekologisena tapana matkustaa
- ☐ Junamatkailu Euroopassa on helpompaa kuin lentäminen
- ☐ Junamatkailu Euroopassa on helpompaa kuin autolla matkustaminen
- ☐ Muu syy, mikä?

Q9 Arvio kuinka paljon alla olevat väittämät voisivat mielestäsi lisätä Interrail-matkustamisen kiinnostavuutta? (Hyppy Q5 => En osaa sanoa)

5 Täysin samaa mieltä 4 Jonkin verran samaa mieltä

3 En samaa mieltä enkä eri mieltä 2 Jonkin verran eri mieltä 1 Täysin eri mieltä

Ystävien suosittelu

Omien vanhempien/sukulaisten reilauskokemukset

Mainonta

Kiinnostavat blogit ja matkakertomukset

Interrail passien ostamisen helppous

Suosittelu sosiaalisessa mediassa

Edullisempi passien hinta

Joustavammat passivaihtoehdot

Valmiit matkaehdotukset reilausreiteistä

Vastaa ystävällisesti muutamaan taustakysymykseen.

Q10 Sukupuoli

1 (___) Nainen

2 (___) Mies

Q11 Syntymävuosi

Alasvetovalikko syntymävuosista: 1976 - 1997

Q12 Asuinalue

Alasvetovalikko: maakunnat (21 kpl, tilastokeskus 2015)

Q13 Koulutus

1 (___) Peruskoulu

2 (___) Lukio

3 (___) Ammatillinen oppilaitos

4 (___) Ammattikorkeakoulu (AMK)

5 (___) Ylempi ammattikorkeakoulu (YAMK)

6 (___) Yliopisto / korkeakoulu

Q14 Ammatti

1 (___) Työntekijä

2 (___) Opiskelija

3 (___) Toimihenkilö

4 (___) Ylempi toimihenkilö

5 (___) Johtaja

6 (___) Yrittäjä

7 (___) Työtön

8 (_____) Muu mikä?

Kerro vielä muutama taustatieto junamatkustamisestasi Suomessa.

Q15 Kuinka usein matkustat junalla pääkaupunkiseudun lähiliikenteessä?

- 1 (___) päivittäin tai lähes päivittäin
- 2 (___) 1-3 kertaa viikossa
- 3 (___) 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa
- 4 (___) 2-6 kertaa vuodessa
- 5 (___) harvemmin
- 6 (___) En ole koskaan matkustanut junalla

Q16 Kuinka usein matkustat kaukoliikenteen junalla Suomessa?

- 1 (___) päivittäin tai lähes päivittäin
- 2 (___) 1-3 kertaa viikossa
- 3 (___) 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa
- 4 (___) 2-6 kertaa vuodessa
- 5 (___) harvemmin
- 6 (___) En ole koskaan matkustanut junalla

Q17 Kuulutko VR:n Veturi-asiakasohjelmaan?

- 1 (___) Kyllä
- 2 (___) En
- 3 (___) En osaa sanoa

Appendix 2. Description of survey respondents

		Percentage	N	Total
Gender				
	Female	81,1 %	1108	
	Male	18,9 %	258	1366
Veturi Loyalty program				
	Veturi-customers	81,6 %	1115	
	Non-customers	15,2 %	207	
	Does not know	3,2 %	44	1366
Age groups				
	18-25 years	67,9 %	927	
	26-33 years	18,3 %	250	
	34-39 years	13,8 %	189	1366
Education				
	Comprehensive school	4,0 %	59	
	High school	28,0 %	382	
	Vocational college	18,0 %	240	
	Bachelor of University of Applied Sciences	21,0 %	290	
	Master of University of Applied Sciences	1,0 %	12	
	University degree	28,0 %	383	1366
Occupation				
	Employee	21,3 %	295	
	Student	55,9 %	764	
	Official	6,2 %	85	
	Higher Official	3,3 %	45	
	Executive	0,3 %	4	
	Entrepreneur	1,1 %	15	
	Unemployed	8,3 %	114	
	Other, what? (retired, homemaker)	3,2 %	44	1366
Travel frequency by long distance train				
	Daily or nearly daily	1,0 %	14	
	1-3 times a week	5,9 %	80	
	1-3 times a month	29,1 %	398	
	2-6 times a year	49,9 %	682	
	Less frequently	13,6 %	186	
	Never travelled by train	0,4 %	6	
Travel frequency by commuter train				
	Daily or nearly daily	6,0 %	82	
	1-3 times a week	6,7 %	91	
	1-3 times a month	14,7 %	201	
	2-6 times a year	31,2 %	426	
	Less frequently	38,9 %	531	
	Never travelled by train	2,6 %	35	

Appendix 3. Sample of open-ended responses

"Mieleen tulee ensimmäisenä interrail-reissu Euroopassa. Silloin kätevin kulkuneuvo on juna, jolla matkat tahtuvat nopeasti ja mukavasti!"

"Junamatkustaminen Euroopassa on mukavaa, vaivatonta ja helppoa. Olen ollut Interrail-matkalla Euroopassa, jolloin nautin junamatkustamisesta. Useat junat olivat hyvin nopeita ja taittoivat matkat mukavasti ja nopeasti. Junaviihtyvyys oli huippua ja viihdyin hyvin kaikilla matkoillani."

"Omia kokemuksia ei ole paljoa, mutta luulen että se on kätevää, nopeaa, aika helppoa ja sujuvaa, paljon vaihtoehtoja, paljon nähtävää, minun mielestäni ainakin erittäin kiinnostavaa olisi lähteä interreilaamaan."

"En ole koskaan matkustanut junalla Suomen ulkopuolella, mutta ajatus Euroopan junamatkustuksesta kuulostaa kiintoisalta ja helpolta kulkukeinolta maasta toiseen. Intereilaaminen voisi olla avaava kokemus, mikä ei varmasti unohtuisi."

"Interrail kokemukset tulevat mieleeni. En ole itse käynyt, mutta olen seurannut blogeja ja lukenut juttuja lehdistä interrailaamisesta Euroopassa. Junamatkustaminen itsessään on niin helppoa ja mukavaa, että voisin hyvin kuvitellakin matkustavani uusiin maihin junalla! Nukkuminen junassa on helppoa."

"Interreilaaminen ja nopeat luotijunat, kattava rataverkosto ja helppokulkaisuus maiden välillä. Laadukkaat junat."

"Tein juuri kahden viikon pituisen interrail matkan Euroopassa. Junalla liikkuminen oli todella kätevää Tanskassa, Saksassa, Hollannissa, Belgiassa ja Ranskassa. Juttelin junissa kymmenien eri puolilta Eurooppaa olevien ihmisten kanssa. Lisäksi junalla matkustaminen tuntui helpolta ja turvalliselta."

"Ensimmäisenä tulee mieleen sen helppous (Interrail). Toisaalta tulevat mieleen ratojen vaihtelevat kunnot itä-länsisuunnassa (esimerkiksi Ranskan luotijunat verrattuna Puolan vanhoihin ja hitaisiin rataosuuksiin)."

"Reilaaminen, seikkailu, ekologisuus, kokemuksellisuus sekä upeat maisemat, joita muulla tavalla ole välttämättä mahdollista nähdä. Lisäksi tietenkin vapaus!"

"Interrail, reppureissaus, maisemat, monta hienoa maata ja kaupunkia yhden reissun aikana."

"Matkustin viime kesänä Euroopassa Interrail Global Passilla. Ensimmäisenä tulee mieleen Alppien läpi matkustaminen Saksasta Itävallan kautta Italiaan. Uskomattomia maisemia, joita Suomen sisällä junalla matkustaessa ei näe!"

"Interrail-kokemukseni perusteella junamatkailu Euroopassa oli sujuvaa ja erittäin helppo tapa liikkua paikasta toiseen. Matkalla näkee mitä erilaisempia maisemia!"

"Reilaaminen, vapauden maistaminen, uusien kokemusten kerääminen ja hyppääminen tuntemattomaan. Lyhyesti sanottuna seikkailu".

"Reilaus, uudet kokemukset, vapaus. Olen käynyt 3 vkon reilireissulla vuosi sitten, ja päällimmäisenä mieleen jäivät mielenkiintoiset kokemukset, joita ei Suomen puolella voi kokea."

"Interreil tulee ensimmäisenä mieleen. Ja kavereiden kokemukset siitä. Kuulostaa upealta ja erilaiselta tavalta nähdä Eurooppaa."

"Interrailaaminen on ollut suosittua kavereitteni keskuudessa ja lähimmät mielikuvat siitä itselläni koskevat helppoutta ja nopeutta. Lyhyessä ajassa ehtii nähdä ja kokea paljon ja matkan suunnittelu on helpompaa, kuin esimerkiksi kaukaisempien maiden matkailussa."

"En ole koskaan matkustanut junalla Suomen ulkopuolella, mutta ajatus euroopan junamatkuksesta kuulostaa kiintoisalta ja helpolta kulkukeinolta maasta toiseen. Intereilaaaminen voisi olla avaava kokemus, mikä ei varmasti unohtuisi."

"Interrail matkustaminen reppu selässä ja uusien kokemusten kerääminen

"Interreilaaminen ja seikkailu. Se on suhteellisen vaivatonta, turvallista ja mukavaa. Suhteellisen lyhyessä ajassa voi nähdä monen monituisia paikkoja Euroopassa ja tuntea itsensä enemmän eurooppalaiseksi. Ihana seikkailu muutaman hyvän ystävän kanssa ilman huolia."

Tein juuri kahden viikon pituisen interrail matkan Euroopassa. Junalla liikkuminen oli todella kätevää Tanskassa, Saksassa, Hollannissa, Belgiassa ja Ranskassa. Juttelin junissa

kymmenien eri puolilta Eurooppaa olevien ihmisten kanssa. Lisäksi junalla matkustaminen tuntui helpolta ja turvalliselta.

Euroopan halki on mukava reilata, vaihtelevien maisemien vuoksi ja kohdata eri kansalaisuuksin ihmisiä. Jää mukavia muistoja, sekä valokuvia ym.

Interrail, ennakoluuloton matkustaminen myös yleisten turistiryksien ulkopuolella ja uusiin ihmisiin tutustuminen.

Junamatkustamisesta Euroopassa tulee ensimmäiseksi mieleen vuonna 2013 tekemäni InterRail Euroopan ympäri. Matkasin lähes kuukauden tyttöystäväni kanssa käyden yhteensä yhdeksässä eri maassa. Yövyimme hostelleissa, söimme paikallista ruokaa ja vietimme elämämme parhaan kesän! (tähän mennessä)

Yleensä matkustaessani Euroopassa tulisi mieleeni käyttää lentokonetta, mutta olen haa-veillut interrail-matkasta, jonka haluaisin toteuttaa ystäväni kanssa. Täten tulisi tutustuttua paremmin eurooppalaiseen junamatkustamiseen.

”Reilaaminen, maisemat ja erilaiset ihmiset.”

”Juna matkustamisesta Euroopassa minulle tulee mieleen, reilaaminen parhaan ystäväni kanssa. Istumme junassa, katsomme kauniita maisemia auringon laskiessa samalla. Nau-ramme tyhmillä jutuilla ja ollaan onnellisia. Juna matkustaminen on vaan helppoa ja nope-aa.”

”Interrail, ennakoluuloton matkustaminen myös yleisten turistiryksien ulkopuolella ja uusiin ihmisiin tutustuminen.”

”Olen kuullut kavereiden reilausreissuista ja ovat kaikki suositelleet junalla reissaamista Euroopassa”

”Mieleen tuli ensimmäisenä Interrail. En ole itse matkustanut junalla Euroopan sisällä mut-ta eräs ystäväni on ollut reilaamassa. Hänestä se oli hieno kokemus ja suositteli myös minulle. Ajattelin, että ensireissaajan on hyvä suunnitella etukäteen reittiä ja missä aikoo yöpyä.”

"Ensimmäisenä mieleeni tulevat äitini kertomukset Interrailistaan. Äitini reilasi lukion jälkeen ystävänsä kanssa - erityisen hyvin ovat mieleen painuneet seikkailut kylmän sodan aikaisessa Itä-Euroopassa."

"Ensimmäinen mieleen tuleva asia on InterRail. Useat tutuistani ja sukulaisistani ovat käyneet reilaamassa, ja itsekin suunnittelen vielä tekeväni niin. Mieleen tulevat myös kansainväliset junat, yöjunalla matkustaminen, paikallisten kanssa matkustaminen sekä kauniit maisemat."

"Unelmoin interrail matkasta Euroopassa ja se tuli ensimmäisenä mieleen. Olen matkustanut junalla vähän Suomen ulkopuolellakin, ja pidän junalla liikkumista Euroopassa mukavana ja helppona. Jos olisi aikaa ja rahaa enemmän kiertäisin mieluusti vaikka koko Euroopan ympäri junalla!"

"Äitini matkusti ystävänsä kanssa Interraililla kahdeksankymmentäluvulla. Se oli kuulemma oikein hyvä kokemus. Suunnittelin itsekin kokeilevani mieheni kanssa vastaavaa."

Mielikuvani on että junamatkustaminen Euroopassa on kohtuullisen helppoa ja vaivatonta ja etenkin interrail-lipulla matkustaminen on kätevä tapa. Monet ystäväistäni ovat olleet interraililla ja aion itsekin ehdottomasti mennä heti kun aika antaa myöten.

"Ensimmäisenä tulevat mieleen interreilaus-tarinat, joita vanhemmat ja kavereiden vanhemmat ja jopa opettajat koulussa kertoivat kun olin pieni. Jostain syystä ensimmäisenä tulee mieleen 70- ja 80-luku, eikä nykyaika. Nykyään ei ole yhtä yleistä matkustaa junalla Euroopassa."

"Kun ensimmäisen kerran tapasin anoppikokelaani viime kesänä, hän paljasti, että on käynyt 70-luvulla reilaamassa. Esitteli siinä poikaystäväni noloimpien kuvien lomassa ne reilikuvat, joita miehenikään ei ollut nähnyt. Yllättäen alettiinkin haaveilla yhteisestä reilireissusta. Parisuhde koetukselle."

Interreilaus. Kaikki kavereiden äidit kertovat, kuinka ne nuorena matkustelivat junalla ympäri Eurooppaa ja tekis itsekin mieli lähteä interreilaamaan.

"Junamatkustamisesta mieleen tulee ensimmäisenä Interrail-reissu, jonka tein ylioppilas-kesänä poikaystäväni kanssa. Haaveissa olisi päästä reilaamaan pian uudelleen."

"Etenkin InterRail on halpa ja nopea tapa nähdä Eurooppaa. Eurooppa tuntui kuukauden reilin jälkeen huomattavasti pienemmältä. Matkan varrella on myös helppoa pysähtyä extempore mielenkiintoisen oloisissa kohteissa (toisin kuin esim lentäessä)."

"Helppous, ekologisuus. Rennompaa ja halvempaa kuin lentäen. Reppureissaaminen ja reilaaminen. Junalla matkustaminen tekee matkastakin ikimuistoisemman kuin esimerkiksi lentokoneessa istuen, maisemat ja ihmiset jäävät paremmin mieleen."

"Junamatkailu Euroopassa on parasta lomailua, mitä tiedän. Olen jo kaksi kertaa kiertänyt Eurooppaa Interraililla ja kova kuume on jo kolmannelle reissulle. Matkustaminen on helppoa ja vapauttaa esimerkiksi autoilun tuomasta stressistä. Junalla myös pääsee moniin kaupunkeihin."

"Halvempi ja ekologisempi tapa interreilata (kuin lentokoneella lentäminen). Olisi ihanaa päästä junamatkalle Eurooppaan: kaikki maisemat vaihtuisivat silmien edessä. Junassa pääsisi jopa liikkumaan matkan aikana ja olisi muutenkin rentouttavaa."

"InterRail on huikea kokemus, koska myös matkan maisemat, kuten Itävallan ja Sveitsin välillä ja Kroatiassa tulee nähtyä. Junamatkailu Keski- ja Etelä-Euroopassa on todella paljon hauskeempaa kuin lentäminen - kunpa se näkyisi selkeämmin hinnassa."

"Interreilaus. Helppoa. Mahdollisuus nähdä enemmän ja myös kaupunkeja, joihin ei lennetä Suomesta."

"Helppo ja mukava tapa liikkua. Interrail. Ei tarvitse huolehtia esimerkiksi autosta kun voi vain istua ja nauttia maisemista junan viedessä perille. Halpa ja ympäristöystävällinen matkustuskeino."

"Interrail sekä helppo ja nopea liikkuminen paikasta toiseen saaden samalla uusia kokemuksia ja nähden uusia maisemia joita ei esim. lentäen tule nähtyä!"

"Yleensä matkustaessani Euroopassa tulisi mieleeni käyttää lentokonetta, mutta olen haaveillut interrail-matkasta, jonka haluaisin toteuttaa ystäväieni kanssa. Täten tulisi tutustuttua paremmin eurooppalaiseen junamatkustamiseen."

"Junamatkustamisesta mieleen tulee ensimmäisenä Interrail-reissu, jonka tein ylioppilas-kesänä poikaystäväni kanssa. Haaveissa olisi päästä reilaamaan pian uudelleen."

"Ensimmäiseksi tulee mieleen Interrail-kulttuuri. Itse en ole vielä "reilaamaan" päässyt, mutta olen kuullut siitä paljon tarinoita ystäviltä ja lukenut kirjoista ja netistä. Haaveilen vielä jonain päivänä kiertäväni Euroopan pääkaupungit junalla."

"Ei ole kokemusta, mutta tulee ensimmäisenä mieleen interrail-reissu, josta olen haaveillut pitkään. Vaikea sanoa, miten junat ja kulkuyhteydet muualla vaihtelevat Suomeen verrattuna ja onko esim. Itä- ja Länsi-Euroopan välillä suuria eroja. Junalla pääsee kätevästi eteenpäin ja lähes joka paikkaan."

"Haluaisin lähteä matkustelemaan Eurooppaan ja nimenomaan junalla. Niin paljon kuullut tarinoita reilaus reissuilta, että olisihan se itsekkin päästävä!"

Appendix 4. Value propositions (% of 18-25 years)

Reilaamalla näkee monta kohdetta edullisesti (N 927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	3,6
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	5,9
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	3,3
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	38,7
Täysin samaa mieltä	48,4
Total	100,0

Reilaus on elämyksellinen seikkailu (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	5,4
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	1,6
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	1,8
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	18,2
Täysin samaa mieltä	72,9
Total	100,0

Reilaamalla voi tutustua mielenkiintoisiin ihmisiin ja kulttuureihin (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	4,4
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	2,7
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	3,0
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	23,9
Täysin samaa mieltä	65,9
Total	100,0

Reilaus on helppo tapa matkustaa Euroopassa (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	4,2
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	5,7
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	6,9
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	37,0
Täysin samaa mieltä	46,2
Total	100,0

Reilaus on ekologisesti kestävä (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	3,2
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	4,4
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	14,2
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	40,3
Täysin samaa mieltä	37,8
Total	100,0

Reilipassi on helppo hankkia VR:n lipunmyynnistä (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	4,0
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	3,7
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	29,2
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	26,5
Täysin samaa mieltä	36,6
Total	100,0

Appendix 5. Evaluation of factors to increase the interest (% of 18-25 years)

Ystävien suosittelu (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,5
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	3,2
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	5,3
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	40,1
Täysin samaa mieltä	48,9
Total	100,0

Omien vanhempien/sukulaisten reilauskokemukset (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	3,2
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	5,0
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	12,2
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	42,4
Täysin samaa mieltä	37,2
Total	100,0

Mainonta (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,4
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	11,1
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	26,6
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	47,5
Täysin samaa mieltä	12,4
Total	100,0

Kiinnostavat blogit ja matkakertomukset (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,5
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	7,8
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	10,7
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	47,1
Täysin samaa mieltä	31,9
Total	100,0

Interrail-passien ostamisen helppous (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,0
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	7,3
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	22,2
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	42,0
Täysin samaa mieltä	26,4
Total	100,0

Suosittelevat sosiaalisessa mediassa (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,6
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	9,2
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	27,3
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	44,9
Täysin samaa mieltä	16,1
Total	100,0

Edullisempi passien hinta (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,7
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	2,9
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	7,7
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	22,4
Täysin samaa mieltä	64,3
Total	100,0

Joustavammat passivaihtoehdot (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	2,0
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	3,5
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	14,1
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	33,7
Täysin samaa mieltä	46,6
Total	100,0

Valmiit matkaehdotukset reilausreiteistä (N927)	
	Prosentti %
Täysin eri mieltä	4,0
Jonkin verran eri mieltä	13,1
En samaa enkä eri mieltä	21,4
Jonkin verran samaa mieltä	38,0
Täysin samaa mieltä	23,6
Total	100,0