

# **Nepal as a destination for Finnish travelers - Service design**

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Nepal as a destination for Finnish tourists: service design

Manoj Nepali  
Subash Rayamajhi  
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Nepali, Manoj; Rayamajhi, Subash

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Destination marketing is an important tool to attract travellers to the destination in this fast-growing economic sector of tourism industry. The main factor which should be considered during destination marketing is customer environment where the customer experience, product and prices act as the value cluster for the traveller. The second factor includes competitor environment where destination should keep itself most popular among its competitor destinations to attract a significant share of travellers. Thirdly, the economic environment should be dealt through strategic plan and agendas around alternative economic scenarios. Lastly, the technological environment should be considered, which includes website, social media, blogging, virtual visits, social networking and web communities. As travellers tend to use social media to discover destinations it is important to understand the role and importance of technology in the modern era of tourism.

During the research, Nepal was taken as the destination marketing point for Finnish travellers. Different tourism websites and blogs were used to study recent trends in the tourism sector globally. Service design methods were used in the research process, which includes personas, customer journey map, customer journey experience and benchmarking. The final product of the research was a business card.

The research revealed that Finnish people are interested to travel to Nepal. The research shows that easy accessibility of air transport, transportation and accommodation facility inside the country greatly influence the decision making of many travellers from Finland. The thesis also makes recommendations regarding aspects which should be improved in order to attract more tourists in Nepal, which are mainly related to advertisement promotion in global market and the availability of direct and cheaper flights. The research developed a leaflet for the promotion and branding of the Nepalese tourism sector, which can also be helpful for tourism business and tourism.

**Keywords:** Destination marketing, customer environment, technological environment, Service Design

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## 1 Introduction

Nepal is one of the developing countries in the world with unique geography, natural, cultural and religious diversity. The country has great potential of tourism and can create thousands of jobs and opportunities. Despite of great potential of tourism there is a lack of proper development and effective plan to develop tourism industry in Nepal. Nepal Tourism board is a national organization to develop tourism in Nepal with a brand “Naturally Nepal, once is not enough”. The tourism board is responsible to attract and develop Nepal as tourist destination. The board involves in international marketing through participating in international tourism fairs, maintain Nepal’s official tourism sites and organize domestic and international events to promote and introduce Nepal in global tourism market (Nepal tourism board 2016). In the global competitive market Nepal should be able to represent itself as unique and different destination to beat the competition. This is only possible through creating positive brand image for broad international audience. The Internet medium of social media, website, blogs and reviews are the effective and cheaper way of reaching to target audience and are effective to influence the travel decision. In our research we are mainly focus on potential Finnish travelers who can be attracted to Nepal as their destination and also finding out about different destination marketing elements and ideas which might help to promote and attract Finnish tourist to Nepal.

Finland is one of the well-travelled nations in the world. According to statistics Finland 15 Finnish residents between 15 to 84 age group made million trips. These trips include foreign leisure trips, domestic trip as well as business and professional tips. According to statics Finland abroad tips reached to 2.5 million on 2015 were mostly package tours (statistics Finland 2015). The strong economy of Finland including high level of income and lower unemployment status of the people contribute to frequent outbound travels. The cultural nature of Finnish people makes them open, warm, sincere and thus widely acceptable (world atlas 2016). The travel-oriented culture of the country makes Finland one of the potential travelers to Nepal.

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

The aim of the thesis is to research case destination as the potential travelling point for the Finnish travellers. The aim of the thesis is to achieve following objective:

1. Identifying the case destination and potential travellers
2. Motivational factors attracting Finnish travellers
3. Recent trend in tourism industry and different kind of packages they offer
4. Analysing different challenges and opportunity in the case destination and suggestion for the potential improvement in the area.

5. Creating an example of destination leaflet which can be used by potential visitors in the case destination

## 1.2 Research methods

The structure of thesis starts with theoretical background of destination marketing and destination management. The introduction of destination case Nepal is mention on the second phase of report and also potential competitor destination Vietnam is explained in the next phase. Different tourism statistics and data of both destinations are analysed in the research methodology of the report. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used for the research includes interviews with Finnish nationals, online surveys and tourist's blogs. We also studied about different packages and offering in other competitive market to understand the recent trend in tourism market. Service design method is used to understand the potential customer for case destination. Personas representing different segment groups following with customer journey map. The customer journey experience is the phase of report following with benchmarking which helped to find out the weakness and challenges in case destination. Finally the report is concluded in with the suggestion of potential improvements in case destination and the finding made during the whole thesis process.

## 2 Theoretical frame work

### 2.1 Destination marketing

Destination marketing is an important process of attracting potential visitors through marketing of destination by communicating values, vision and competitive attributes of the place. The process of destination marketing starts with "destination planning" process and following with "destination development" activities. The first step to destination marketing is to understand their potential visitors through their decision-making and travel planning process. (Destination marketing 2016)

Destination marketing is possible with the understanding of tourism system. According to Leiper (1995) there are three key elements to describe tourism system, which are geographical elements, tourists and tourism industry. Geographical element includes home region of tourist, transit route region and the tourist destination region. The home region is the place to generate market and creating motives for the potential tourists. Transit route region is between the home region and tourist destination region where tourist stays for a short period of time. Finally destination region where tourist intended to visit which is the most important element in the whole tourism system where not only physical equipment but the management and service provided will help to enhance their memorable tourism experience. (wang & pi-zam 2011)

Tourist is the most important part of tourism system without which there would be no tourism. Tourist is the main source to enhance the image of destination and help to improve tourism environment. There are mainly three types of tourist, which are leisure travelers, business travelers, and common-interest travelers, which can be categorized according to their activities in the destination place. Tourism industry is the part of tourism sector, which refers to the businesses and organization that help to create tourism products. These businesses include transport, accommodation and catering services, which are provided to its customers according to their taste and budgets.

(wang & pizam 2011)

There are five important factors that are driving factor of destination marketing and destination management, which are customer environment, competitor environment, the economic environment, the technological environment and social environment. The customer environment includes value of cluster, which is experience, product and prices. Similarly the competitor environment related to being more attractive destination than competitor by presenting itself as more popular and information source for the traveler. The economic environment includes the strategic plan and development agendas on volatile and uncertain economic environment. The technological environment includes the development of sophisticated tourism website and lastly social environment is related to blogging, web communities, virtual visits and social networking programs which are the most efficient mode of communication of traveler which affect the destination choices of travelers. (wang & pizam 2011)

There are five phases of travel experience that are pre-trip, travel to site, onsite activities, return trip and post trip. The travel experience is influenced by these phases where it is possible to create customer positive or negative values. (wang & pizam 2011)

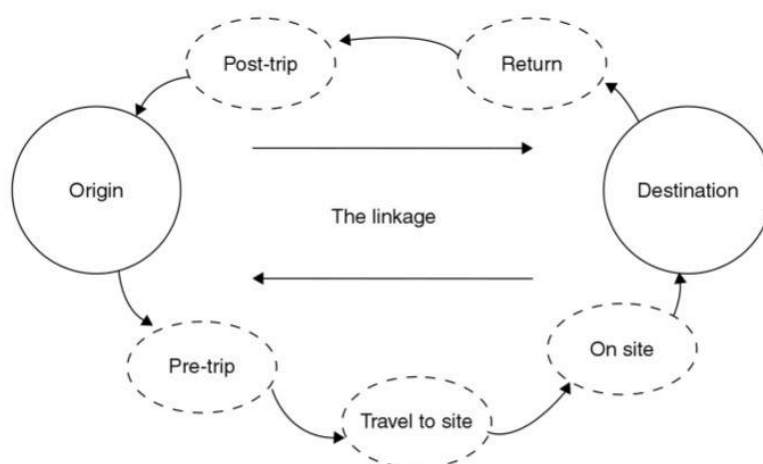


Figure 1. The phases of tourism experience

## 2.2 Tourism Destination Management

The process of competing to provide the highest quality of experience for tourists and to manage the impacts of tourism on host communities and environments is called tourism destination management. Destinations must present wonderful experiences crating values to travellers. A local tourism destination is a certain space tourists spend at least one overnight, which provides the support services and attractions. (Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

Before making any holiday plans or trips, tourists compare country's deals, offers and packages. Destinations should focus on basic elements, which attract tourists to travel to the destination. The services and quality of elements will determine the tourist's decisions to make the trip. Those elements are attractions, amenities, accessibility, human resources, image and price. (Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

The first and most important elements tourists focus to visit the destination. These can be categorized as natural (beaches, mountains, parks, weather), built (iconic buildings such as Eiffel tower, heritage monuments, religious buildings, conference and sports facilities) or cultural (museums, theatres, art galleries, cultural events). Destinations must focus on these sites and areas, which attracts tourists to the destination. (Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

These are the wide range of services and facilities supporting tourists stay with utilities, public transport and roads. Other include direct services such as accommodation, visitor information, recreational facilities and activities, guidance, operators, catering and shopping facilities. The destination should be accessible to large number of tourists through road transportations, air passenger services, and railway service or cruise ships. Tourists should be able to travel and move around conveniently within the destination. Arrival visa process, ports of entry and specific entry process should be focused for the accessibility of the destination.(Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

Availability of adequate hotel rooms for the travellers helps to extend their stay in destination. 24-hour check-in/check-out policy enables tourists to ease their travel without rushing for checking in on time especially for business tourist with scheduled trip to their destination. Increment of hotel business centres that provides full business support facilities to travellers makes their transactions effective 24 hours a day. For instance business-class rooms following the model of airline business lounge, advanced workspace and lighting, Internet accessibility, data ports, two-line cordless phones and private faxes. First launched in United States hotel chain in 1997 with these facilities, now runs such rooms in 29 countries. The result of this en-

hanced business-class rooms let guests to extend their stay and engage in tourism activities. (Niches for developing countries, 2001)

Tourism is the most interacting and intensive sector where skilled workforce is needed to deal with tourists. Hospitality shows the importance of the destination and tourists will be attracted to visit and experience the destination. Well-trained tourism employees who know how to deal with the responsibilities for the tourism growth to the destination are important. It delivers positive impacts for the destination's tourism reputation. (Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

Distinct character and image of the destination plays vital role in attracting tourists. Without the good reputation and image of the destination even though it has nice attractions and amenities, tourists must be aware of the destination's image. Image of destinations can be promoted via marketing and branding, e-marketing and travel media. Nice image of the destination includes uniqueness, sights, scenes, environmental quality, safety, service levels and friendly and welcoming people. Pricing is another vital element of the destination's competition with other destinations. It relates to the cost of transportation both ways to the destination. Also price of accommodation, attractions, food and tour services and shopping. Currency exchange is also one of the factor tourists decide to travel the destination. (Practical guide to tourism destination management, 2007)

### 3 Case Destination Nepal

Nepal is a land locked country situated between China in the north, and India in the east, west and south. Nepal is geographically diverse with three distinct ecological zones: plain lands of Terai in the south, hills and mountains in the middle, and Himalayas in the north. The country possesses different important places, which are the major attraction for tourists. It occupies eight of the ten highest mountains in the world. Lumbini, the holy pilgrimage for Buddhist, Pashupatinath temple, one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindu religion. The other attractions include national parks, and old palaces and temples of which most of them are UNESCO heritage sites. (Tourism in Nepal n.d)



Figure 2. Introduction to Nepal

Tourism plays important parts in Nepal's economy. It is one of the most important sources for foreign exchange and revenue and provides job opportunity for local community. The industry is helping to boom local businesses and creates direct and indirect economic benefit to local community. Nepal tourism statistics from Government of Nepal shows that 7,9,0118 foreign tourist travelled to Nepal in 2014. According to the statistics, top five countries to visit Nepal were India, China, U.S.A, Thailand and U.K. (Nepal tourism statistics 2014)

The main tourism sector includes wilderness tourism which include activities such as biking, bungee jumping, rock climbing and mountain climbing, trekking in different mountainous and hilly region of Nepal, mountain flights, ultra light aircraft flights, paragliding and hot air ballooning over the mountains of the Himalaya, exploring the waterways by raft, kayak or canoe and jungle safaris in terai regions. (Tourism in Nepal n.d)

Another tourism sector includes religious tourism. Nepal includes one of the most important pilgrims for world's hind and Buddhist religion. There are many temples and important sites of different god and goddesses, which is believe to be sacred places for Hindu religion. Similarly, Lumbini the birthplace of Gautama Buddha is the most sacred place for Buddhist religion. Swayambhunath, the monkey temple, Muktinath valley are other important religious sites for both Hindu and Buddhist religion. ( tourism in Nepal n.d)

Another important tourist culture and heritage sites. Capital Kathmandu is also known as city of temples and rich in cultural heritage. There are different UNESCO sites, which include ancient palaces and monuments. The museums in Kathmandu have collection of archaeological, historical and artistic important galleries of art and artefacts. Nepal is very rich in natural as well as cultural perspective, which is a major attraction for world tourist. (tourism in Nepal n.d)

### 3.1 Destination sites

Nepal consists of 10 World Heritage sites listed in UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Out of 8 comes under cultural sites and 3 come under natural sites. 7 cultural sites are situated in Kathmandu valley whereas are 3 of them are out of valley in another geographical part of country. Kathmandu valley is located in the foothills of the Himalayas, which consists of 7 cultural heritage sites of monuments and buildings that show the full range of historic and artistic treasures for which Kathmandu is world famous. The seven includes the Durbar Squares of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, the Buddhist stupas of Swayambhu and Bouddhanath and the Hindu temple of Pashupatinath and Changu Narayan. (UNESCO world heritage centre, 1992-2016)

Kathmandu Durbar Square is the place where God still exists. In the Kathmandu valley young Newari girls called Kumaris are worshipped as powerful deities. It used to be old royal palace of the former Malla and Shah dynasty. It is surrounded with spectacular architectural buildings and artistic craftsmanship over the several centuries. There is a huge statue of Hanuman the monkey God devotee of Lord Ram at the entrance of the palace. Patan is located about 5 km south of Kathmandu valley. This city is known for its rich tradition of arts and handicrafts. It is birthplace of master craftsman called Araniko (1245-1306) who was one of the key figures in the arts of Nepal, Tibet and Yuan Dynasty of China. The Durbar Square is tiled with red bricks and many temples and idols around this area. Patan is filled with wood and stone carvings, metal statues, ornate architecture including dozens of Buddhist and Hindu temples and over 1200 monuments. (Patan.com, 2007-2015)

Swayambhunath is also known as monkey temple. It is located in top hill in the west of Kathmandu city. It is one of the oldest religious sites founded about the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century where there is a religious tolerance between Buddhist and Hindus. Both of the religion worship and show respect equally like any other Gods and Goddesses. Bhaktapur Durbar Square is located about 13km east of Kathmandu and known as the old town and place of devotees. This site is highly visited site in the Kathmandu valley because of its unique cultural and traditional arts and architecture. It is home of historical monuments, craft works, magnificent windows, pottery, temples, beautiful ponds, rich local customs, religion, festivals and musical activities. Pashupatinath is Hindu's most sacred religious temple on the banks of Bagmati River in Deopatan, a village 3 km northwest of Kathmandu. Pashupatinath known as Lord Shiva attracts thousands of pilgrims each year from different countries. The temple is the powerhouse of Hindi spiritual energy and is celebrated as Lord of the beasts/animals. (Lonely planet, 2016)

### 3.2 Tourism statistics of Nepal

The latest statistics in 2016 of Nepal shows tourist inflow increased by 13% after the major earthquake stroked last year April 2015. It is a sign that Nepal's tourism industry is rising slowly back to its previous flow. The total numbers of international travelers visited during first six months were 313,512 compared to 277,992, same period year ago. (Tourism in Nepal, 2016)

Nepal's peak time for tourism industry is autumn season between September and November. Nepal has implemented on- arrival visa free-policy to increase Chinese tourists. Indian tourists increased by 37,62% to 54,224 in first six months. Tourists arrived from the US, UK and Sri Lanka rose 47,40%, 40,19% and 22% respectively in the first six months of 2016. The tourists from Korea, Japan, France and Bangladesh increased moderately. German tourists rose 158% to 9,673 but from Thailand, Myanmar and Australia remained negative growth. (Tourism in Nepal, 2016)

The Tourism statistics of Nepal shows that 50% of total travelers visited to Nepal for holiday pleasure, 12% visited for trekking and mountaineering, 13% were for pilgrimage, 4% was official visit, 2% for convention and conference, 7% were on other purposes and 9% of them were not specified.



Figure 3 Statistics of travellers from Europe to Nepal

The latest statistics data published by Nepal tourism board on July 2015 shows that 24097 travelers from France visited to Nepal was 25%, the highest number of European travelers to Nepal. 18028 German travelers visited to Nepal. 19% of the total travelers visited from Europe. 12320 Netherlands travelers are another major nationality to visit Nepal is 12% of the total European travelers to Nepal. Similarly, other European nationality were Spain with 13110, Norway 2551, Sweden 3854, Italy 10347, Denmark 5150 and Switzerland 6447 travelers, which was 14%, 2%, 4%, 11%, 5% and 7% respectively. There were only 61 travelers from Finland who registered themselves for mountain climbing permission. From the statistics data just 37 travelers from Finland visited Pilgrim Lumbini during the period of one year.

### 3.3 Accessibility in Nepal

There is only one international airport in capital city of Kathmandu, Nepal. Currently there are no direct flights to Kathmandu. The most direct option is via Istanbul with Turkish airlines might take total flight of 12 to 14 hours. The new transit from Doha, Qatar offers the cheapest flight to Nepal from Finland is just around 296€. During the review from different international travel sites like trip adviser, lonely planet and direct hotels offering reveals there is wide variety of hotels and hostels which offers rooms less than 7 dollars/ 10 dollars per night inclusive private bathroom and hot water. During tracking to different popular destinations like Annapurna base camp, Sagarmatha base came were travelers need to stay in small hotels and lodge which offers rooms less than 1dollar per night. According to the review the hotel facility was decent and comfortable. (Lonely Planet, 2016)

Nepal is one of the easiest destinations for travel visas. The travelers have facility of on arrival visa at the international airport in Kathmandu. Passport must be valid at least six months, two passport photos and visa fee is needed on arrival. Visa can be obtained for 15, 30, 90 days which cost 25 dollar, 40 dollar and 100 dollar respectively. Comparing to other travel destinations it is easier to extend visas for longer period and multiple visas can be obtained to travel to Tibet, Bhutan and India. (Lonely Planet, 2016)

There are no trains and metros for long distance and short distance travel in the country. The efficient mode of transportation is buses for long distance and meter taxis and rental bicycles, motorcycle for inter-city travel. These means of transportation are comparatively cheaper than domestic flights within the country. After arriving in Kathmandu airport, pre-paid taxis are available inside the premises of airport and free pick-ups are available according to the hotels packages offered. Auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws are common mode for short distances in most part of Terai regions and are available in some part of old Kathmandu towns. Motorcycles are one of the popular and mostly used modes of transportation of local people in the country. (Lonely Planet, 2016)

Nepal is considered as one of the safest country for travelers. The religious nature and their natural kindness make the country hospitable and friendly to the visitors. During long days trekking and hiking it is safer to travel in a group or pair and hire a guide due to tricky mountain areas where travelers might get lost or injured. The other safety reason is altitude sickness and frostbite in high altitude mountains of which travelers should be aware of and should prepare themselves. (World Nomads nd)

During our research we tried to analyze a different destination country Vietnam which is the competitor destination for Nepal. Firstly we researched about the tourism sector in Vietnam. Secondly, marketing strategy of Vietnam and other facilities for tourist, this helped us to understand the factors making Vietnam a popular destination point for travelers. The research would help to benchmark the case destination and competitor destination.

#### 4 Competitive destination Vietnam

Vietnam is situated in Southeast Asia with area of 329,560 sq km. The country has boarder with china, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. The total population of the country is 94,515,000. Hanoi is the capital of the country with 3,977,000 inhabitants. The country evolved through the past history of conflict and war to the self confident and fastest growing economies. (Vietnam national administration of tourism, 2015)

Vietnam is famous for its natural beauty with different kind of flora and fauna. The mountain range of country with tropical ever green forest and the red river delta with more than 213 species of mammals, 262 species of birds and 10,500 species of plants throughout the country. Vietnam has more than 54 ethnic groups with different culture and customs. There are different festivals and rituals carried out during these occasions. There are also different games and completion like rice cooking competitions, dieu sao(kiets flying), the game of dragon snake, human chess, bamboo swings which are popular among travellers. (Vietnam national administration of tourism, 2015)

The country is also popular for its traditional fine arts and architecture. The traditional folk painting and bamboo made handicrafts are other famous travel facts of Vietnam. The country is also popular for its food and spices, some of them are tet food made of glutinous rice, mung bean and pork, spring roll, silky lean meat paste, snail dish, grilled green rice la vong, grilled fish pies, rolled rice pancake, lang son roasted pork, ho tay fried shrimp cake and other different kind of food which are also popular among foreigners. (Vietnam national administration of tourism, 2015)

#### 4.1 Accessibility in Vietnam

There are three main international airports in Vietnam. Noi Bai(HAN) airport is in capital city of Ha Noi. Tan Son Nhat(SGN) is the largest and most busiest airport in Ho Chi Minh city. Da Nang(DAD) is other important airport in Central Vietnam. Vietnam Airlines offers direct flights from Paris, Frankfurt and London. The transit flights are cheaper compared to direct flights on offer which ranges from 600 to 800 euros according to review from different travel websites ( Lonely Planet, 2016). There is more option for travelers to enter the country with different optional flights according to the budget and preferred transit routes

On arrival visa is possible for travelers on airport costing 25 dollar for one month and three month single entry visas. In case of multiple visa for one month which costs 50 dollar. The on arrival visa process takes longer time and can be tiring so travelers are suggested to apply the visa beforehand from their home country in Vietnamese embassy. The extension of visa should be applied on time and can be difficult process. (Trip advisor, 2016)

There are many options for travelers from budget guest house to world class resort. The main cities offer 3 to 6 star facilities for travelers. The cheapest hotels range from 19 euros per night. The hotel provides meeting facilities for business travelers, spa, pool and fitness and other services for travelers. Most of the hotels in the tourist destination are expensive compare to other regions. There are many nice and cozy restaurants which offer different kinds of Vietnamese delicacies. Street foods are also very popular among travelers. (Lonely Planet, 2016)

The railways are the most efficient way to travel which connects most of the cities and provinces including cultural, societal and tourism destinations from the North to the South of the country. Most of the tourist's destinations are linked with bus routes and are cheaper mode of transportation. The other mode of transportation is motor-taxis, rental cars, rental bicycles and motor cycles. The popular tourist destinations like Halong Bay and many other local villages and tropical mangroves are linked with Vietnam's waterway and possible to cruise around. (Vietnam national administration of tourism, 2015)

Petty crimes like pick pocketing are common in busy streets which can be avoided through keeping valuables in hotel and hostel's safety box. The number of severe crimes is very less but travelers need to be careful about the belongings during their trip. The travelers need to be careful of road accidents which are very common in Vietnam. It can be avoided through reliable companies. It is not suggested to drive cars or motorbikes for travelers in lack of road and traffic rules. (Vietnam online, 2015)

#### 4.2 Tourism statistics of Vietnam

The latest statistics of Vietnam from September 2016 shows that there is continuous increase of travels in Vietnam. The total numbers of international travellers visited during nine months were 7,265,380 is an increase of 25.7% comparing to the same period last year.

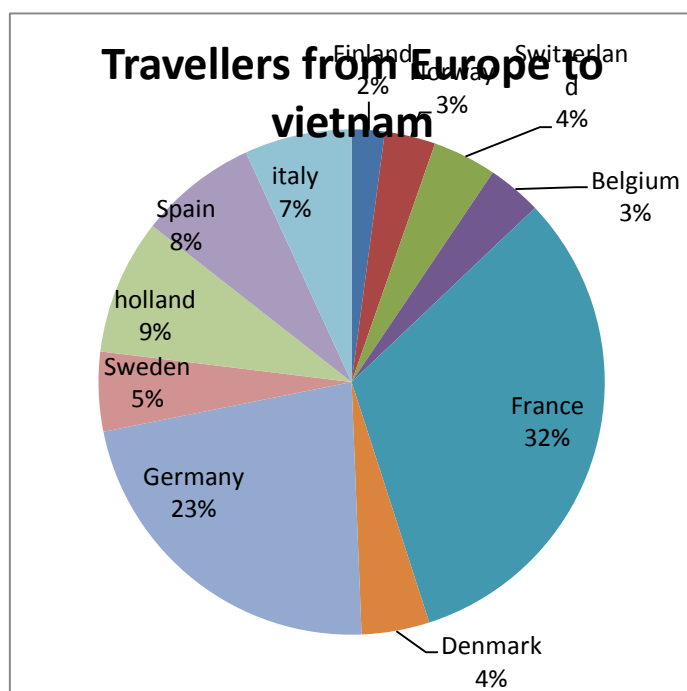


Figure 4 Statistics of travellers from Europe to Vietnam

The total number of European travellers visited to Vietnam was 55,8964 out of which 11760 travellers were from Finland was just 2% of total European travellers to Vietnam and also the lowest percent comparing to other European countries. France occupies the biggest percentage of travel to Vietnam during this period which is 32% with the total number of 1,79,613 travellers. Similarly Germany comes on second with 125,620 travellers is 23% of European travellers to Vietnam. The other countries are Holland with 9%, Spain 8%, Italy with the also increase compare to the same period last year. The total number of travellers visited from Finland was 11,760 was just 2% compare to the total number of European travellers visited to Vietnam.

#### 5 Research methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used as researched method for collecting and analysing data. . The qualitative research approach was done through; group and individual interviews of potential tourists and frequent tourists and observation of recent travel trends. The qualitative method helped to understand underlying reasons and motivation to develop ideas and hypotheses for the potential market in the research.

Quantitative research was more related to quantification of data. The quantitative approach for data collection were online survey of tourist related agencies, paper surveys, face to face interviews and observation of international tourist trends worldwide. We used Internet as one of the important source to gather information about tourist opinions and views on their experiences. We used Internet blog and online websites to know about different kind of packages they offer for the tourists.

### 5.1 Blogs reviews

According to tourist survey conducted trip advisor among the tourist visited in Kathmandu is given below.

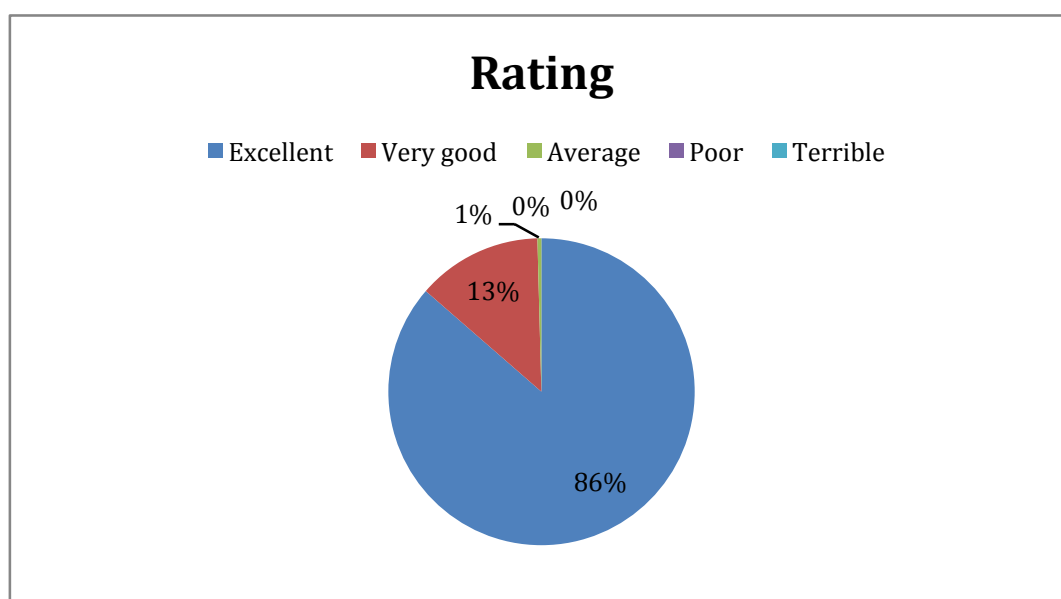


Figure 5 Trip Advisor ratings from travellers

The diagram illustrate 86% of the tourist from different nationality participate in the survey marked Nepal as excellent travelling point, likewise 13% commented as very good and only one percent of participant marked as average destination for travel. There was no any poor or terrible experience marked during the survey. According to the lonely planet Nepal travel guide, it will provide all the information and guidance during the stay to the destination. It shows Nepal is a land of snow peaks and Sherpa's, yaks and yetis, monasteries and mantras. It takes to the heart of Nepal by providing amazing travel experiences and best planning advices. It includes planning chapters, Kathmandu, around the Kathmandu Valley, and Kathmandu to Pokhara, The Terai & Mahabharat Range, Trekking Routes, Biking, Rafting, Kayaking, Understand and Survival Guide. (Nepal travel guide, 2016)

It provides the information about hotels and hostels with the wide price variation from cheap hostels to five star international hotels. It includes peaceful and pleasant garden and accom-

modation for less than 15 dollars/12€ per night inclusive private bathroom and hot water. Also shows popular and famous sights, activities, restaurants, transportation, tours, shopping, entertainment and events. Lonely planet ranked Nepal as fifth out of ten countries in the world to visit in 2017. (Nepal travel guide, 2016)

During our research on offering in the current tourism market we find out the following packages for the travelers from different countries.

Country	Tour package	Inclusive	Exclusive	Duration	Price
Nepal	Nepal Hiking Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Two days hiking in the Himalayas</li> <li>-Targeted for family vacation</li> <li>-Private car pick up and drop off facility</li> <li>-Guided tour and sight-seeing</li> <li>-Three star hotel with breakfast, lunch and dinner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Entry visa</li> <li>-Internal airport tax</li> <li>-Drinks and tips</li> </ul>	6 days	USD 650
Spain	Spanish Luxury Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accommodation</li> <li>-Airport transfers</li> <li>-Internal transportation</li> <li>-Guided tours and activities</li> <li>-24x7 support service</li> <li>-Breakfast and lunch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Personal expenses</li> <li>-Tips to the guides and driver</li> </ul>	12 days	USD 250-1000 per person upon star of hotel
Turkey	Istanbul, Troy, Ephesus, Pamukkale, Bursa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Professional tour guide</li> <li>-Private car transportation</li> <li>-Breakfast</li> <li>-Necessary entrance fees and free return airport transfer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Drinks and tips</li> <li>-Personal expenses</li> </ul>	10 days and 9 nights	Euro 1321
Vietnam	Vietnam Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Journey from North to South</li> <li>-English speaking guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-International flights</li> <li>-Travel insurance</li> <li>-Vietnam visa</li> </ul>	14 days	USD 1730 for 2 persons

		-Three star hotel -Breakfast and meals -Private car transportation -All necessary fees, boat trips and excursions	-Beverages and tips -Personal expenses		
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Table 1 Tour packages for different countries

The above table shows the current trend of tour packages offered by different countries in tourism industry. The table shows tour packages with inclusive and exclusive services and facilities, duration of the trip and total price. Nepal hiking tour includes two days hiking in the Himalayas and other facilities including pickups and accommodation. The duration of the trip is 6 days which costs USD 650. Comparing to other country's packages like Spain, Turkey and Vietnam, it is much cheaper and offers more value. The above table shows that the packages offered from different countries have similar services like accommodation, meal service, transportation, entry fees and guided tour. The main difference is on the duration and price of the whole package.

## 5.2 Interview

The interview was taken from Finnish citizens with various age groups. The interview was taken personally and also through social media by sending questioners. The questions contain 10 questions, which are mainly related to the choices and requirements for travellers to visit Nepal. The respondent was from different educational background, work, gender and age living in different parts of Finland.

The following table shows the segments respondents.

Gender	Age group	Percentage
Male	15-65	40%
Female	20-55	60%
Other	0	0

Table 2 Interview of Finnish people according to the age groups

The interview results shows that most of them were familiar with Nepal as the mountainous country but have a very few knowledge about the other interesting facts. Most of them like to travel to Nepal someday to see the mountains. The people are unknown about the other destination point in Nepal rather than mountains. Most of them liked direct flights and maximum of one transit during their long distance travel. The interview shows that they are also inter-

ested in local arts and history of the destination. Most of them like to travel in packages and expect punctuality in service offering. The interview shows that most of them use Internet and social medias for gathering information about the destination and some of them likely to travel because their friends and families recommended them.

According to Buchanan (1992, 16) the subject matter of design is potentially universal in scope, because area of human. The concept of service design is generally to design of systems and processes targeted for providing holistic service to the user. According to Moritz (2005, 23) the concept of service design is holistic, multi-disciplinary, integrative field helps to innovate or improve services to make them more useful, usable, desirable for clients and efficient as well as effective for organization. (Marc 2012, 23)

The research is aim to develop and identifying services, which helps to improve and attract Finnish travelers to Nepal. The service design process for research is carried out through different service design processes.

### 5.3 Personas

Persona is used in the research as to represent significant portion of people in the real world, which represent our key target and segment groups. The representation of persona is best on qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. It helps to understand the expectations and needs of travellers and designs the services to attract on the destination. To make it more clearly we have taken two personas for our research. The first one represents the leisure traveler age group from who is pensioner and love to travel to new places and expect cheaper flights. The second persona represents age group from 20-35, who is focus on adventure during their travel.

Jakko Koskela



How often do you travel and where?

- Very often and try to find new destinations
- Within Europe but nowadays outside Europe

Where did you travel recently and how did you like it?

- Estonia 3days(2015), Excellent trip self planned
- Brussels 4 days (2015), First class organized
- Albania, Kosovo & Macedonia 1 week (2015), cruise and went well

Do you know about Nepal?

- Yes, been in India so close by neighboring country

Would you like to travel someday?

- Yes                      No                      Maybe
- Yes

#### ABOUT

- Name: Jakko Koskela
- Age: 66 years old
- Profession: Pensioner, Lt.col. (Ret.)
- Interests: Travelling

#### INTERESTED IN AND WHY?

- Nature: No, live in city
- History: Yes, good to know about other nation's history and places
- Culture and arts: No, only museums
- Adventure: No, enough adventures when in Finnish army

#### NEEDS/EXPECTATIONS

- Price: Important
- Service: Good and exotic. Never been in all-inclusive trip.
- Package: Self travelling
- Accessibility: Had one-day trips, one-month trips by cruise. Price matters, duration of trips, prefer direct if possible. Cheaper flights with transits don't matter.

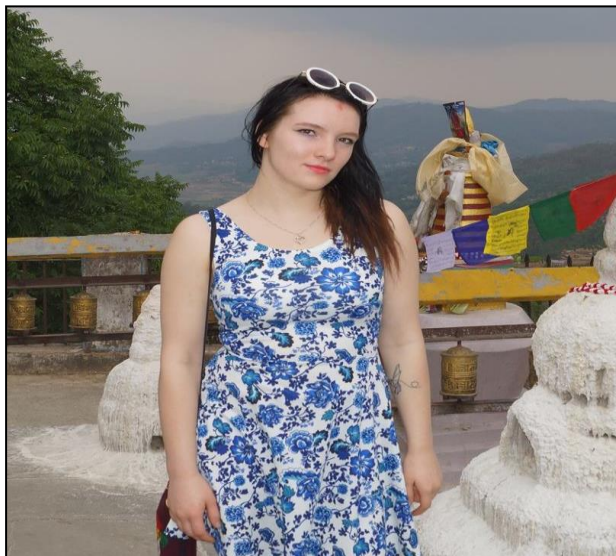
#### MODE OF TRAVELLING

Leisure traveler

#### MODE OF SEARCH

Websites, Recommended by friend

Rebekka Jääskeläinen



How often do you travel and where?

- Couple times in a year
- Within Europe and outside Europe

Where did you travel recently and how did you like it?

- Estonia, Nepal, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic
- Huge cultural shock
- Nepal is very crowded, different varieties of food and vegetarian paradise
- All those countries are nice in their own ways

Do you know about Nepal?

- Totally unknown before going to Nepal

Would you like to travel someday?

- Yes                      No                      Maybe
- Yes and will recommend others

#### ABOUT

- Name: Rebekka Jääskeläinen
- Age: 20 years old
- Profession: Student/Work at HUS
- Interests: Travelling, music, reading

#### INTERESTED IN AND WHY?

- Nature: Yes, beautiful, relaxing and peaceful
- Adventure: love adventure sports like bungee jumping, paragliding, skydiving, tracking, mountain climbing etc.
- History: Kind of
- Culture and arts: Yes, interested about people's lifestyle and learn about culture.
- Adventure: Yes, try new things and it's exciting

#### NEEDS/EXPECTATIONS

- Price: Depends upon which part of world and country. Europe is expensive than Asia.
- Service: Good
- Package: Depends upon price and what it includes
- Accessibility: Depends upon holiday and flight ticket price

#### MODE OF TRAVELLING

- Adventure traveler

#### MODE OF SEARCH

- Youtube videos, Googling, Websites

## 5.4 Customer journey map

### Customer journey map travelling to Nepal

Persona	Goal
Rebekka Jääskeläinen	Interested in adventure tourism

desire for travel ⇒ explore destination ⇒ selecting vacation ⇒ book flight ⇒ arrival on location ⇒ activities on destination ⇒ stay ⇒ experience of travel activities ⇒ travel home ⇒ feed back & review

Touch points	-find out About Adventure	-Discuss with friends -magazines -online sites	-Discuss with friend - search online reviews and details	-book cheapest flight and hotels	-arrange activities -transportation to destination -on arrival visa	-adventure sports -hiking -rafting -bungee	-hotel -guest house -hostels	-satisfied -dissatisfied	-pack up -plan for transport to airport	-post about good or bad experience -write a blog
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Table 3 Customer journey map

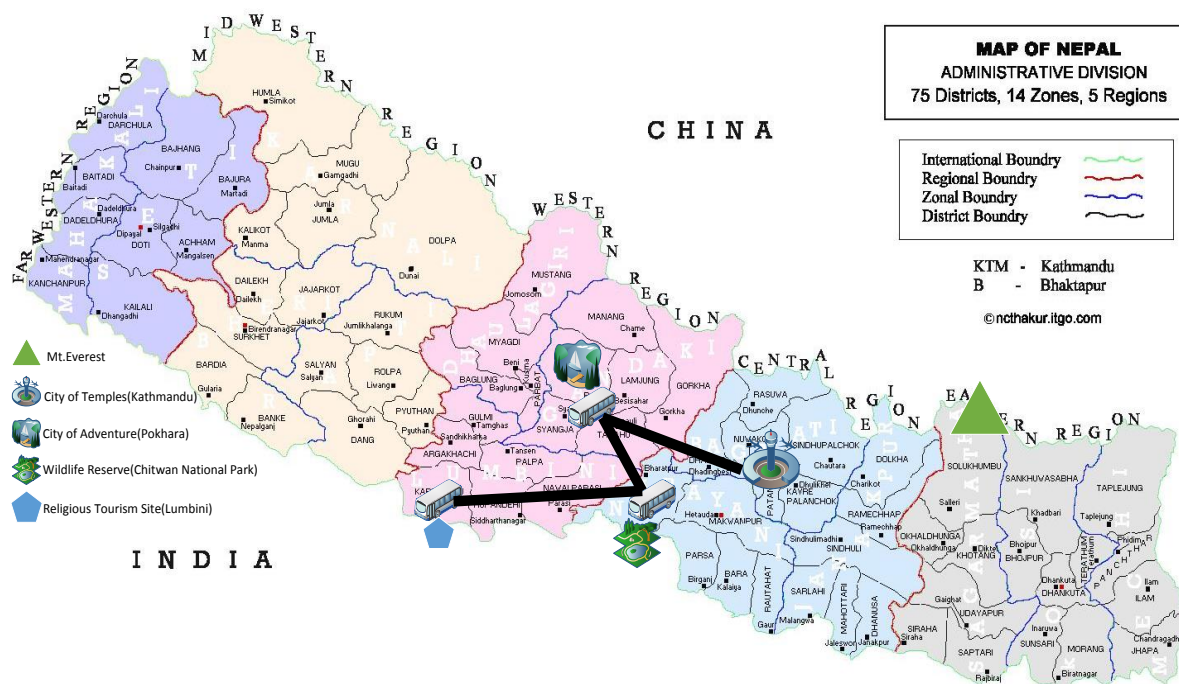
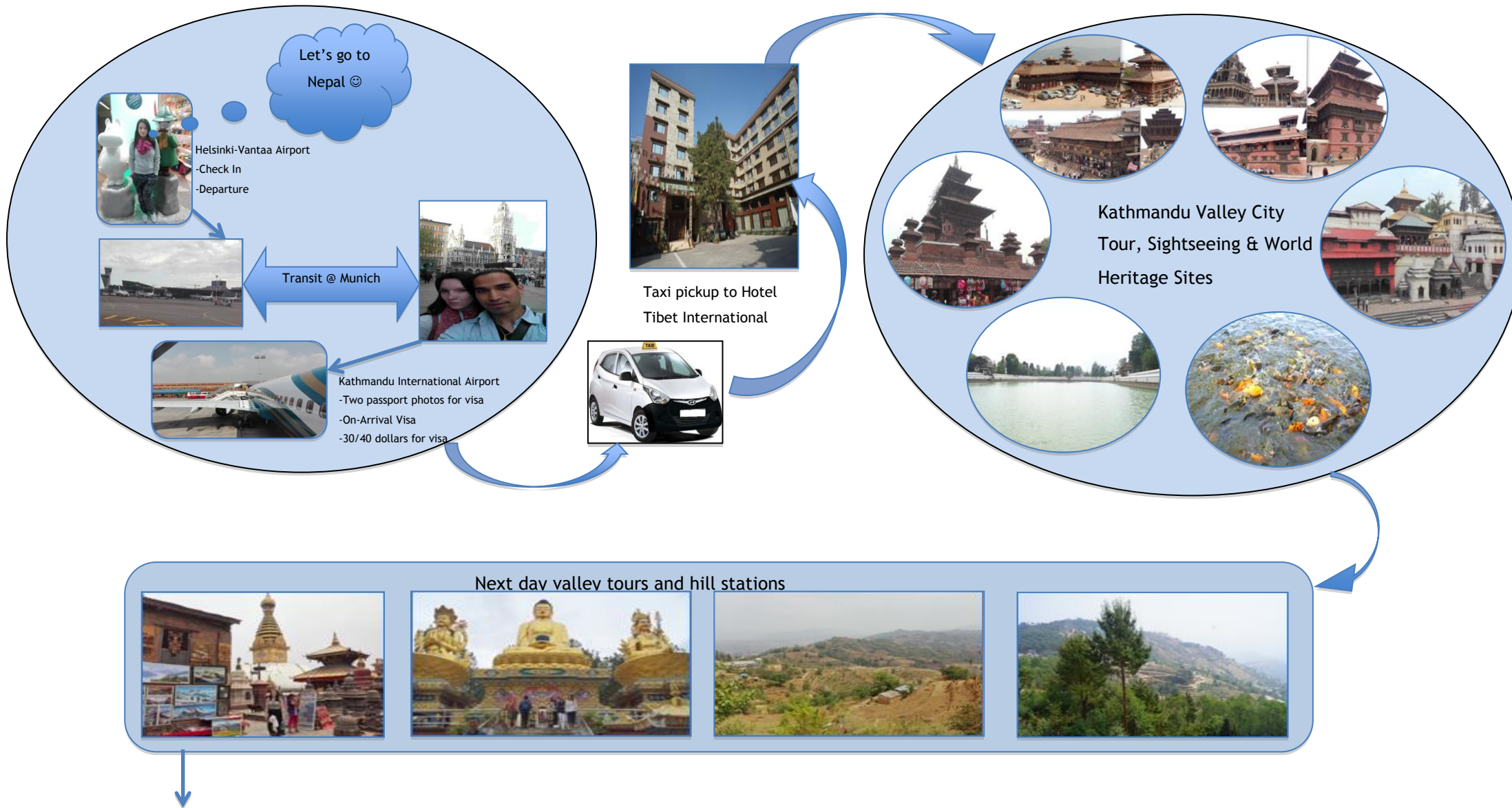
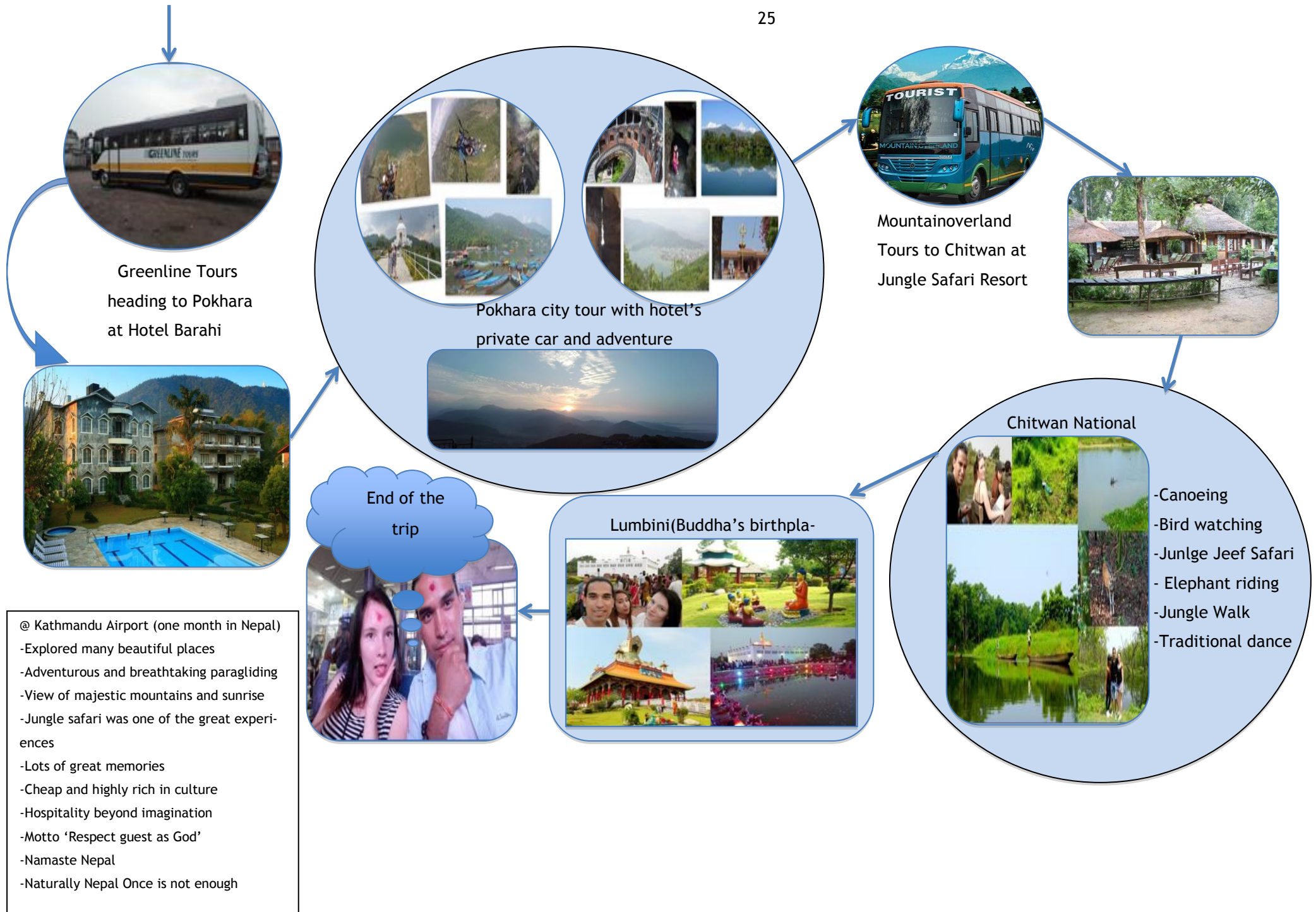


Figure 6 Customer journey map

# Customer journey of Rebecca Jääskeläinen from Finland to Nepal





#### 5.4.1 Customer journey experience

A customer journey is a series of linked events that marks defining experience of the key needs of a customer who is in search of a satisfactory product or service. It helps to predict customer behavioral pattern and used for understanding and addressing customer needs and touch points. This customer journey map is the experience taken from one of the author of this report who visited to Nepal recently. The persona has no knowledge about Nepal and totally unknown how the country would welcome her presence. Word of mouth has been applied for the mode of searching about travelling. Lots of research and places has been searched via Internet to make the travel successful. Lists of places have been marked on the notebook according to the duration of the stay for one month. One of the associates who worked in the front desk of Hotel Tibet International in Kathmandu made the trip convenient.

The duration of the flight was 15 hours with two transits at Munich Airport and Oman Airport. Transits can be tiring and boring when one does not know where to go and what to do during the interval of next flight. This persona explains transits depend upon the duration of the holiday. In this case number of transits does not matter a lot and the flight fare was cheaper with two transits than one transit. At Munich got chance to utilize the time to explore the old town and local delicacies. The access to the old town was fast and easy with train. All the exit points and information were mentioned nicely for the traveller's convenience. The service airport provides is satisfying. Oman airport disappointed a lot because of delay in flight to Kathmandu.

Tribhuvan International Airport is the only international airport in Nepal and small in size compared to other international airports. Nepal has facility of on-arrival visa at the airport so getting visa was not difficult process. There is electronic machine to fill the application for visa and photo is taken through the machine and forwarded to the immigration database. For the safety purpose two-passport size photos is recommended beforehand in case of machine does not work. Visa can be paid through dollar and euro. The only modes of transportation in Kathmandu valley are buses, meter taxis and minibuses. The fares depends upon the distance of the destinations means farther the distance higher the price and vice-versa. Kathmandu valley is divided into three metropolitan areas Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu where eight of the UNESCO sites are located. The access for these sites is easily connected with buses and taxis.

Meter taxis can be negotiated and travel will be more convenient when the price is already negotiated and later there will be no argument with the fare. Sometimes the meter taxis try to charge more when foreigner is travelling alone. All the World's cultural heritage sites are easily accessible with reasonable fares, cheap food and beautiful views and artistic temples

and monasteries. The city welcomes travellers heartily and the hospitality provided feels as a home. The city was destroyed badly due to earthquake that stroke the country and life and coming back to normal slowly. The rate of tourism seems increasing and the smile in the faces of the people will bring eagerness in any traveler to communicate with them. The people speak broken English to communicate and help in any case with sign language and guide to the destination desired. The friendliness and politeness is the key characteristics of Nepalese stereotypes.

There are two options to reach Pokhara by air and roadways. There are many travel agents, which provides facilities of bus services to the travellers. The local buses will take longer time than tourist buses. Tickets can be booked online or get straight through the ticket offices. Tourist buses provide Ac service and stops at public toilets on the half way to the destination in case of emergency. The distance of the flight is faster than bus but the roadways provides nice view of valleys and snake road passing through hills. The city is rich in its beauty and nature. The lake is the main attraction and the majestic view of the mountains and hills will make the day. The hotel provided good service with the facilities of lunch style buffet breakfast, swimming pool, attached bathroom and toilet, Internet facility, hot water and tour guide office.

As staying at the hotel there was discount for the hotel customers. The tour operator settled the one-day car ride with reasonable price of 80 euros whole day tour with all the important sites. All the sites are bit scattered so public transportation might take longer than having private car. The main part of the trip was paragliding the thrilling adrenaline adventure. The experience of flying in the sky for half an hour will take to the next level of enjoying the nature. Pokhara as a city welcomes the traveller in a great hospitality. Lot of restaurants with typical food, drinks and traditional dance show will add up the travel in a satisfying level. Most of the travellers start the journey to the mountains hiking for days to enjoy the scenic beauty and majestic mountains. The sunrise viewpoint is the last and utmost thing, which can't be missed. The morning sunrise welcome the day with full of energy to explore the city for the rest of the day. Pokhara is a city with heavy rainfall almost everyday between 12 noon till 15 pm there is heavy rainfall. So it is suggested not to make any out door plans during these hours.

The next destination was into the wilderness in the national park is natural world heritage site. Due to the heavy rainfall other night the roads were blocked in three places due to landslides. In this case there is facility of another highway to reach to the destination. It is recommended to travel Nepal in the suggested best month of the year by lonely planet in Jun-Sep, Mar-Apr and Oct-Nov. The geographical structure is plain and even so easily accessible for all age groups people and disabled. Chitwan was in two nights and three days package

with breakfast, lunch and dinner included with elephant riding, canoeing, bird watching, jungle walk, jungle jeep safari and sun downer. Chitwan is the hottest part of the country. The hotel and resorts will pick the every guest from the last final stop of the destination which other city's do not have unless agreed upon the deal. The traditional dance from Tharu society welcomes the travelers on the first night. The cheap foods and beverages at the bank of river with sunset will sum up the day in a relaxing friendly environment.

Lumbini was the last destination of the trip with 2 days and one night in the hotel providing ac service 24 hours and back up generator in case of rolling blackout. The main attractions around the city are within the walking distance. The taxis and rickshaws with the price of 10/15 euros can provide the city tour easily. The place is full with monasteries from different part of the world such as from Germany, China, Austria, Korea, Thailand, India and so on. It is easily accessible for all kind of age group people and disabled people with wheelchairs because of its plain geographical structure.

### 5.5 Benchmarking

The Benchmarking is used as a tool in research is for competitive analysis of different destination. There are two proposes for benchmarking which are competitive benchmarking and strategic benchmarking. Competitive bench marking evaluate the data to identify the position in marketplace. Likewise strategic benchmarking helps to show the strategic position and performance in the marketplace. There are different steps involved during benchmarking which stars with

1. Step preparations and planning
2. Data collection
3. Data analysis
4. Reporting

Country	Nepal	Vietnam
Accessibility/ Airlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One international airport</li> <li>-Poor infrastructure</li> <li>-No direct flights from Europe</li> <li>-Shortest journey takes 12/14 hours</li> <li>-Cheapest fair from Finland 592€</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Three main international airports</li> <li>-Good infrastructure and quick service</li> <li>-Direct flights from Paris, Frankfurt and London</li> <li>-Shortest journey takes 14/18 hours</li> <li>-Fair ranges from 600/800€</li> </ul>

Hotel & Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cheapest stay costs 1\$</li> <li>-Hotel services are cheap</li> <li>-Varieties of food options</li> <li>-Decent and comfortable services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cheapest stay costs 19\$</li> <li>-Services are relatively expensive on star hotels</li> <li>-Street food, spices food, tet food are popular among travelers</li> <li>-Expensive services</li> </ul>
Destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-8 cultural sites</li> <li>-2 natural sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-5 cultural sites</li> <li>-2 natural sites and 1 mixed site</li> </ul>
Visa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Easy On- Arrival Visa</li> <li>-15,30,90days costs 25,40,100 dollars respectively</li> <li>-Multiple visa facilities</li> <li>-Easy to extend visa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy On-Arrival Visa</li> <li>- One month visa cost 25 dollars</li> <li>-Single entry visa facilities for 3 months</li> <li>-Difficult for extending visa</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No trains and metros</li> <li>-Buses are only mode of public transportation to travel long distances</li> <li>-Popular mode of transportation are buses, meter taxis, rental bicycles and motor cycles</li> <li>-Cheap travel fares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Easy to travel within provinces via train</li> <li>-Buses are available in most of the travel destinations</li> <li>-Other mode of transportation includes rental cars, bicycles and motor cycles</li> <li>-Water transportation like ferries, cruises are available</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Alone tracking on mountain routes should be avoided</li> <li>-Public transportation are not of safety standards</li> <li>-Minor road accidents are common</li> <li>-Belongings should be taken care of during travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Minor crimes like pickpocketing is common</li> <li>-Personal belongings should be taken care during travel</li> <li>-Valuable items should be kept in hotel and hostel's safety box</li> <li>-Travelers should be careful of road accidents</li> </ul>

Table 4. Benchmarking of Nepal and Vietnam

The table above shows different tourism aspects, which affects travel decision process of traveller. We can see that the accessibility of airlines is better than Nepal with three main international airports while Nepal has only one. Hotel and restaurants are cheaper in Nepal

than in Vietnam. Services are relatively expensive on star hotel in Vietnam than in Nepal. There are ten UNESCO world heritage sites in Nepal whereas there are eight in Vietnam. Both countries has visa on arrival facilities therefore there is no worrying about visa process. Extension of visa in Nepal is easier than in Vietnam. There are different means of transportation options in Vietnam than in Nepal. Vietnam has ferries and cruises but travel fares in Nepal are cheaper than in Vietnam. Minor crimes like pickpocketing is quite common in Vietnam whereas solo hiking on mountains might be riskier and is not recommended. Minor road accidents are common in Nepal during landslides and flood so suggested months of travelling are recommended to explore Nepal. Personal belongings should be taken care during travel and kept in hotels safe in both countries.

## 6 Conclusion

The report shows that Nepal has great potential for attracting Finnish tourist. Despite of great potential in tourism sector there is a lack of appropriate and effective way of promotional activities in the current industry trends. With the poor marketing strategy of tourism sector in Nepal, it is unknown destination in global market. Interview results shows that Finnish are not well informed about Nepal. The result shows that proper destination marketing approach in the Finnish tourism market will significantly increase the number of Finnish travelers to Nepal. The proper communication channel and affordable packages including airlines fare and overall cost of accommodation and food will make the travelers safer and popular. Based on our research results we suggested the following areas of improvement in Nepal tourism sector and a leaflet example for potential travelers:

### 6.1 Accessibility

Direct flights should run to Nepal or shorter transit flights with cheaper prices. There should be occasional discounts and packages to attract more tourists. Domestic flights should be more efficient and should use modern methods for ticketing process confirmation number via phone or on-line. Automatic teller machines in some airports helps business travellers to insert a frequent flyer card, select seats and obtain boarding passes. It saves lot of time during travel and will be more satisfying to travel customers.

Airport facilities must be taken into consideration for the convenient of travelers. During the research Nepal airport was mentioned as one of the 3<sup>rd</sup> worse airport in the world. The technology used is old and outdated. Airport should include business centres with Internet access, exercise facilities, day rest rooms booked on a hourly basis, extended shopping options and short tours.

During our research we find out that Nepal's airport and other destination points are not friendly for disable travelers. Most of the hotels and accommodation facilities don't provide

any special attention for such visitors. Becoming a disable friendly will help to create a brand image attracting more travelers to the destination.

Transportation plays vital role in the development of tourism for the transfer of travellers from one destination to other destination. The important means of accessibility to connect the entire nation is in bad condition. The road needs to be black topped and maintain well. Especially in the monsoon season when there is heavy rainfall roads are affected and to reach the destinations are bit challenging. The public transportation needs to be clean and facility of pressing the button for the stops should be implemented.

## 6.2 Marketing and advertising

### Traveling packages

Nepal tourism industry should offer different package travels including flight, accommodation and other recreational activities from where travelers can choose according to their preferences. Our study shows that Finnish travelers are much more likely to travel in packages and are very conscious in quality and punctuality of services.

Easy accessibility of Internet should be available for the travellers. Nepal tourism sector should provide fast Internet facility for travellers. Travellers should be encouraged to share their experience to others through social media and blogs. People are greatly influenced by the experience of their friends and families that affects the travelling decision of the traveler. The social media is the cheapest, easiest and effective way of influencing and advertising in the modern technological society.

Nepal tourism sector should market itself through different kind of advertising campaign in social media and other travelling website. The advertisement should be unique and stand itself from other competitor. The marketing should be simple but communicative and can attract the attention of the potential travellers. The advertisement should be focused on the target groups who can be potential travellers.

## 6.3 Leaflet

The below leaflet is develop as an example to attract potential travellers who might be interested to travel to Nepal.



**Location:** Southeast Asia border with China and India  
**Currency:** Nepali Rupee  
**Accessibility:** By air and land, On-Arrival Visa

**Flights Details:**  
 Turkish Airlines 14 hrs  
 Qatar Airlines 20 hrs  
 Finn Air 12 hrs

**Complaints & Safety Contacts:**  
 Police contacts: 100  
 Lost and found cell:  
 +9979860312211  
 Other complaints: NTB  
 +97714256909

**Attractions & Activities:**  
 Mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, nature tours, culture tours, white-water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, mountain flights, jungle safaris, bird watching, paragliding, ultra-light aircraft, bungee jumping, rock climbing, medication, cave tours.

**Packages:**

**6 days Nepal Hiking Tour**

- 1500e with flights & accommodation
- Private car on arrival and departure
- Guided tour and sightseeing
- All necessary entry fees
- 3 star hotel breakfast, lunch and dinner included
- Hiking and wildlife reserve

**16 days Everest Base Camp Trek**

- 2000e with flights and hotel
- Provides lifetime great adventure
- Private car pickup and drop off
- Three meals with snacks
- Expenses for guides and porters
- Necessary permits and national fees

**10 days Adventure Activities**

- 1200e with flights and hotel
- Paragliding
- Bungee jumping
- Rafting
- Permits and fees
- Three meals a day



**NATURALLY NEPAL**

Once is not enough



This leaflet example explains brief description of Nepal's location, country's currency and accessibility to the country. It shows the flight details and duration from which airlines that fly in Nepal. Furthermore it mentions the important contact details for complaining and safety purposes. It gives the important contacts of police in case of emergency, lost and found section and enquiries. It explains what Nepal provides for travellers such as popular attraction points and adventurous activities to explore and enjoy the duration of entire stay at the destination. It focuses on the packages mentioning about the offer given to the travellers. Packages includes hiking, base camp trek and adventurous tour with useful information and offerings. It offers flights with hotel packages in a reasonable price and provides all the facilities and services with all necessary permits and fees. The main theme of the leaflet is mentioned below which is 'Naturally Nepal once is not enough'.

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