

# **Tourism Marketing in Faroe Islands**

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## **Abstract**

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This thesis investigates tourism marketing in Faroe Islands. The objectives were to get to know Faroe Islands, its tourism and tourism marketing. More specific objectives were to investigate the perceptions of people about Faroe Islands and their marketing and development campaigns made by the official tourist board Visit Faroe Islands.

Faroe Islands consists of 18 small islands which are part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The islands are located in the Northeast Atlantic between Iceland and Norway. Tourism is a growing industry there and Visit Faroe Islands has been working on tourism marketing since 2012.

The methodological approach of the study was mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative research method features. The data was collected in a form of questionnaire, and it was distributed orally, on Facebook and on Instagram platforms. Data collection was implemented in October 2023 and the questionnaire received 58 responses.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to get data about perceptions of people about Faroe Islands and its tourism marketing targeting especially their marketing campaigns. The involved marketing campaigns were "Closed for maintenance", "Remote Tourism" and "Faroe Islands Translate". Hypothesis for the questionnaire was that many respondents do not know much about Faroe Islands but after getting to know Visit Faroe Islands' marketing campaigns the interest in Faroe Islands would increase.

Surprisingly, the questionnaire managed to get respondents who have visited Faroe Islands before and therefore have some experience of it. The overall rate of interest visiting Faroe Islands did increase but not significantly. The reason for that might be that many respondents were likely reached from a Facebook group implemented for people interested in Faroe Islands and therefore the rating was already high.

In conclusion, the opinions of respondents about marketing campaigns were rather positive but there were also comments expressing doubt and worry especially when it comes to the environment and local people. One of the aims of Visit Faroe Islands is to listen to the local people and take their view into consideration in their tourism marketing. Based on the results I acquired in this thesis, it could be beneficial to show this consideration more in their campaigns as well.

# **Key words**

Faroe Islands, tourism, tourism marketing, questionnaire

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Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii matkailun markkinointia Färsaarilla. Työn tavoitteet olivat tutustua Färsaariin, Färsaarten matkailuun sekä matkailun markkinointiin. Tavoitteena oli myös tutkia ihmisten mielikuvia Färsaarista sekä mielipiteitä Visit Faroe Islands organisaation markkinointi- ja kehitysprojekteista.

Färsaaret muodostavat 18 pientä saarta, jotka ovat osana Tanskaa. Saaret sijaitsevat pohjoisella Atlantin valtamerellä Islannin ja Norjan välissä. Matkailun suosio on kasvanut Färsaarilla ja organisaatio Visit Faroe Islands on tehnyt matkailumarkkinointia vuodesta 2012 lähtien.

Tutkimuksessa käytettiin erilaisia lähestymistapoja, jossa on kvalitatiivisia sekä kvantitatiivisia piirteitä. Dataa kerättiin kyselyn avulla, jota jaettiin suullisesti, Facebook ryhmässä ja Instagramissa. Datan keräys tapahtui lokakuussa 2023 ja kysely saavutti 58 vastausta.

Kyselyn tarkoitus oli kartoittaa ihmisten käsitystä Färsaarista ja Färsaarten matkailusta erityisesti kohdentaen heidän markkinointiprojekteihinsa. Kyselyssä käsiteltävät projektit olivat "Closed for maintenance", "Remote Tourism", ja "Faroe Islands Translate". Hypoteesi kyselylle oli, että monet eivät tiedä paljoa Färsaarista, mutta tutustuttuaan Visit Faroe Islandsin markkinointiprojekteihin, heidän mielenkiintonsa Färsaarista nousee.

Yllättävästi, kysely saavutti vastaajia, jotka ovat käyneet Färsaarilla ja heillä on siitä kokemusta sekä tietoa. Kiinnostus Färsaarille matkustamisesta nousi, mutta ei merkittävästi. Syy tälle voisi olla se, että moni vastaajista oli todennäköisesti tästä Facebook -ryhmästä, joka on tehty ihmisille, jotka ovat kiinnostuneita Färsaarista ja siitä syystä mielenkiinto Färsaarille matkustamisesta oli jo alkuun korkealla.

Lopuksi, vastaajien mielipiteet Färsaarten matkailuprojekteista olivat pääasiassa positiivisia, mutta siellä oli myös kommentteja, jotka ilmaisivat epäilystä ja huolta liittyen ympäristöön sekä paikallisiin ihmisiin. Yksi Visit Faroe Islands organisaation tavoitteista on kuunnella paikallisia ihmisiä mahdollisimman paljon mitä tulee matkailun markkinointiin. Ehdotuksena voisi siis olla, että he näyttäisivät tätä enemmän myös heidän markkinnointiprojekteissaan.

#### **Asiasanat**

Färsaaret, matkailu, matkailumarkkinointi, kysely

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#### 1 Introduction

Have you ever heard of Faroe Islands and its tourism? What about their tourism marketing and the campaigns and projects they have done in their marketing?

This thesis is written about tourism marketing in Faroe Islands. Tourism is a growing industry in Faroe Islands and this document will examine what kind of tourism there has been and especially what kind of tourism marketing there has been done to achieve growth in tourism. They have done several marketing campaigns in their tourism marketing and the perceptions of people about those will be examined in this document.

The research questions are:

- 1. What kind of tourism marketing there is in Faroe Islands?
- 2. What people are thinking about some of Visit Faroe Islands' development and marketing campaigns?

This document will introduce Faroe Islands generally and will continue discussing about marketing communication in tourism. After that the document will through some basics of research methods and will introduce the research method which has been implemented in this research which is a questionnaire.

Then, there will be shown the results of the questionnaire and analysis of it. The hypothesis of the research was that not many respondents know about Faroe Islands but the interest in Faroe Islands would increase after getting to know some of their tourism marketing campaigns.

The last chapter before references will be discussion of the conclusions and evaluation of validity and reliability of the questionnaire and this report. Evaluation of author's own learning and thesis process will be concluding the report.

#### 2 Faroe Islands

In this chapter there will be an introduction of Faroe Islands. There will be briefly introduced the islands' geography and climate, population and culture, history, and economics. After these, there will be an overview of tourism in general in Faroe Islands.

# 2.1 Geography and climate

Faroe Islands is a self-governing nation within the Kingdom of Denmark located in the Northeast Atlantic between Iceland and Norway (Figure 1, Faroe Islands Fo, s.a.).



Figure 1: Google Maps: Faroe Islands on the map

Faroe Islands consists of 18 small islands having total area of about 1,399 km². It is 113 km long and 75 km wide having only maximum of 5 km to the coastline from the mainland. The total length of the coastline is 1,100km. (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.) This is to say, Faroe Islands is a small nation where the sea is near wherever you go.

Faroe Islands has very typical climate for island destinations as it is in the middle of the ocean. The climate there is called subpolar oceanic climate (Climatestotravel, s.a.) which means that Faroe Islands are typically cold, windy, cloudy, and rainy throughout the year. The weather can be unpredictable and fluctuating because of variance in topography and altitude, changing oceanic currents and wind.

The average temperature during the summer is 12 °C and during the winter it is 3 °C. The summers are cool with many hours of sunlight (the longest period of daylight is 19 hours and 45 minutes) and the winters are mild and can have only five hours of sunlight (Faroeislands.fo, s.a.).

When considering traveling and the weather, the best time to visit Faroe Islands is typically during the summer months, from May to August. During the summers the weather is relatively stable, there is a lot of daylight, and the temperatures are less harsh for those that are not adjusted to colder conditions (Responsible travel, 2023).

# 2.2 Population and culture

The total population of the Faroe is 54,362 people (May 2023) and all islands are inhabited excluding one. (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.) The only uninhabited island is called Lítla Dímun which is 0,8 km² rounded by sheer cliff which makes it inaccessible (Adeel, A. s.a.). Almost half of the population is living in the capital, Torshavn. Faroe Islands has its own language, Faroese, but Danish is to be used at least in all official affairs.

The people of Faroe Islands are stereotypically considered a bit shy and reserved. On the other hand, Faroese people are also considered to be very polite, kind, and hospitable people. They respect traditions and are family oriented. Many people love nature, and they are relaxed with time-keeping. When it comes to tourists, Faroese people are very welcoming – they are proud of their country and are keen to show tourists what kind of country Faroe Islands is (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.). For instance, their welcomed attitude towards tourists can be seen from the experience called *Heimablídni* (translates into "home hospitality") where local people invite tourists to their homes to have dinner (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). This can be seen as an openness, even though it is not free of charge for tourists, since these homes naturally are offering this voluntary.

# 2.3 History and economics

Briefly about the history of Faroe Islands, archaeological excavations suggest that there has been people living in the Faroe Islands already in the year 300.

The oldest written information that can be found about the habitant of the Faroe Islands is through Dicuil which is an Irish scholar-exile at the court of Charles the Great in Achen, France. That is about a man who has visited Faroe Islands in the year 825 CE and who claimed that the Irish monks had been living on the island for the past 100 years but who were driven away by Northerners.

The Faroese Althing was formed around the year 900 CE which makes it the oldest existing parliament in the world today. In addition to the primary and secondary education, higher education in some institutions is free. The education system in the Faroe is considered thriving and exemplary (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.).

About economics, the main industry is fishing. It accounts for about 90% of exports and about 20% of GDP (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.) In addition to fishing, the tourism industry in Faroe Islands is well established and growing, which is the topic of this thesis.

# 2.4 Tourism in Faroe Islands

Faroe Islands has not been especially known as a tourist destination, at least not before. In 2012 and before, the tourism in the Faroes was notably lacking and there is not much data found (Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2022, 2023).

The lack of data on tourism prior to year 2012 may be indicative that tourism was not considered as economically important as it is today. After 2012 data related to tourism is more available, for example in 2013 there were total of 100,173 thousand accommodations (Figure 2). Comparing the number of accommodations in 2013 and 2022, the increase of accommodations has been continuous (if not considering the effect of global pandemic COVID-19). In 2022 there were already 228,757 thousand total accommodations which is doubling the number of accommodations from 2013. The probable reason for the considerable increase is the governmental reorganization of the tourist board after the establishment of Visit Faroe Islands in 2012 (Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2022, 2023). More about Visit Faroe Islands and their marketing can be found later in this document.



Figure 2: Total accommodations (Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2022, 2023)

According to the Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2022 and the survey they had conducted, the main reason to travel to Faroe Islands was the environment, the nature and the wildlife. Other reasons were visits of family, cultural events or islands' history and archaeology. (Visit Faroe Islands, Annual Report 2022, 2023 p.22)

Online accounts of ordinary people's experience with travel to the Faroe Islands can provide important information about how people currently experience the tourism to this location. These accounts can be used to improve tourism marketing further, and for this reason I have selected three online blog posts for closer inspection. The website *Guide to Faroe Islands* has collected top 13 travel blogs about Faroe Islands (Guide to Faroe Islands, s.a) and I will limit my search for personal online accounts to the travel blogs included in this list.

The first blog chosen is a blog called *The Common Wanderer* written by Mark and Mim. In their blog post "12 Incredible Things to do in the Faroe Islands (2023 Guide)" they write about their trip to Faroe Islands. The best things to do in Faroe Islands in their opinion are visiting the island of Mykines, seeing the endangered puffins, eating at the restaurant KOKS (the Faroe Island's first Michelin starred restaurant) and kayaking in the North Atlantic Ocean. They also mention hiking, seeing the Múlafossur and Fossá waterfall, walking through the old town of Torshavn as well as visiting other towns such as the isolated town of Saksun (Mark & Mim, 2023).

The second blog chosen is a blog called *Full suitcase* written by Jurga. In her blog post called "Faroe Islands Itinerary suggestions for 3-9 days (+map and practical tips) she has described Faroe Islands as "The Europe's best-kept secret, little known and unexplored". She mentions in her blog the village of Saksun, the waterfalls Fossá and Múlafossur and Mykines Island as well (Jurga, 2023). In addition to these mentions, it seems that Faroe Islands has a lot to offer with their 18 small islands, a lot of towns and villages, nature attractions such as waterfalls as well as a lot of hiking routes.

The third blog chosen is a blog called *Wildjunket* written by Nellie Huang. In her blogpost "Travel Faroe Islands: A Detailed Guide and Itinerary" she mentions that Faroe Islands has the same kind of things as the neighbour countries such as the northern lights, hiking trails and many Scandinavian traditions but still, Faroe Islands is unknown for many. The features that make Faroe Islands a special destination to her are the islands' austerity and wildness and the fact that the islands are so small. She talks about kayaking, guided tour of Mykines, Vestmanna Sea Cliffs, horseriding and the home dining experience in her post (Nellie Huang, 2023). That home dining experience "Heimablídni" was also mentioned in Chapter 1 when talking about the typical attitude of Faroese people towards tourists.

In conclusion of the travel blogs examined here, the environment and the nature are the key characteristics what people mention about Faroe Islands. The pictures are often about the sea, the mountains, the architecture (Picture 1), and animals such as puffins (Picture 2) and sheep. Many people seem to admire the nature of Faroe Islands. It is often described as having a beautiful and astonishing nature. Based on the writings that can be found online for example the blog posts described above, Faroe Islands is not only seen as an unknown destination but as a destination that has a lot to offer to the visitors.



Picture 1: Picture by almassengale on Flickr, released under CC BY-ND 2.0 DEED



Picture 2: Picture by Stefan Wisselink on Flickr, released under cc-by-2.0

# 3 Marketing communication in tourism

Here will be an introduction of tourism marketing in general and overview of tourism marketing in Faroe Islands.

# 3.1 Tourism marketing

Briefly starting by defining what tourism means in this text. Tourism is a phenomenon where people move outside of their usual environment for personal or professional purposes. It has many aspects such as social, cultural, and economic (UNWTO.org, s.a.).

The term "marketing" has many definitions, and many authors have defined it in different ways. More than 200 definitions for the term are available from different authors. For example, "marketing" has been defined as communication, connection, management of the customer experience, brand building, growth, storytelling, and a contest for attention and the list just goes on. (Woolley, D. 2023). In this document I am going to use the definition by Dr Philip Kotler, which is as follows: "The science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit" (Stokes R. 2018).

What is tourism marketing then and how does it have its own category of marketing? First, tourism marketing is more about selling services and experiences, rather than goods. When looking at Table 1 which distinguish goods and services, for example goods are manufactured whereas services are performed. Secondly, after purchasing a product for example from the grocery store, the buyer gets the ownership of the product and the right to use at own convenience whereas when purchasing a service, for example a holiday package to Faroe Islands, the buyer gets only a temporary right of access at a prearranged place and time. A third difference could be for example that goods are delivered to the customers whereas for tourism services the customers will travel where the services are delivered. (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, Ranchhod 2009, 49) In my view these are the three key differences which separate tourism marketing from the general marketing of goods and local services.

Table 1: Key differences of goods and services (Middleton etc. 2009, p. 49)

Goods	Services
Goods are manufactured	Services are performed
Customer gets the ownership of the product and the right to use it	Customer gets a temporary right of access at a prearranged place and time
Goods are delivered to the customer	Customer will travel where the services are performed

#### 3.1.1 Characteristics of travel and tourism services

Characteristics of travel and tourism services are important factors for marketing. For example, seasonality is one of the characteristics in tourism industry. There are high and low seasons, and they must be considered in the marketing strategy. This is because in marketing it is important to be considerate about the timing and the content of the advertisement (Middleton etc, 2009, 50). Marketing can also be used as a tool to avoid *overtourism* during the high seasons by directing more resources to advertisement during the low seasons.

Another characteristic in travel and tourism services are the high fixed costs of service operations. Fixed costs are fees that need to be paid before a business can receive customers. For example, equipment costs, insurances, wages, salaries and of course, marketing budget are fixed costs. Fixed costs also need to be paid no matter what the number of customers at that time is. (Middleton etc, 2009, 50)

Tourism marketing can take a form of collaborative marketing. Often, travellers need to combine many tourism products such as transportation, accommodation, and cuisine. That said, tourism marketing is often combination of several tourism products which are often in relation with each other. This is the concept of interdependence. By doing this the tourist board increases the likelihood that tourists will choose a specific hotel and tourists are directed towards specific areas. The appeal of interdependence is convenience (Middleton etc, 2009, 51).

## 3.1.2 What to consider when marketing a destination

As discussed previously, the point of marketing is to reach potential customers and achieve success which usually means economical profit to the organisation. What are the possible marketing strategies to achieve these goals? What kind of marketing is the most appealing to potential customers?

First, when marketing a location, it is important to define what is special and unique in a destination. In other words, what makes it stand out from other destinations? These *unique selling points* could be for example unique features of nature, historical landmarks and special activities. (Revfine, 2023). Nowadays people have a lot of options to choose from when it comes to traveling, so demonstrating why traveling to this specific destination is worthwhile and more appealing than other options is relevant to successful marketing.

Secondly, it is important to define the target audience and market. Defining target audience helps to focus on a specific group of people and improves the quality of marketing. For example, deciding to market the destination to people who like to hike in the nature also evokes the attention of these outdoorsy people. Taking this approach creates different marketing strategies targeting groups that have different interests. For example, business travellers and students find different aspects of traveling appealing, and a successful marketing strategy acknowledges this (Revfine, 2023).

To improve the marketing year by year, it is important to utilize and analyse data from previous years. For that it is also important to create questionnaires and surveys asking for feedback and for what kind of reasons people travelled to that destination. When getting feedback, it is easier to decide on what kind of things need more focus in the coming years and which aspects need the most improvement. (Revfine, 2023)

A technique called *branding* helps marketing to make the destination identifiable and stand out from other destinations. Logos, colour schemes, slogans or other specific terminology are typical features of branding.

Tourism marketing involves many stakeholders, such as travel agencies, transport and accommodation providers and restaurants and such. It is not only how to get to the destination, but also where to stay and what to do. Involving all these stakeholders in the marketing creates trust: the customer knows that these stakeholders are available in the destination and the stay would be safe and taken care of.

Social media is undoubtedly a powerful tool for marketing, and investing in social media marketing is becoming increasingly important. Creating a website helps the marketing to put everything in one online space where to promote the destination and its unique selling points. Other platforms on social media can be third party platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Linkedln, Twitter and YouTube. Having content such as pictures and videos on these platforms helps the audience to create an image of the destination in their minds and increase the willingness to travel to that destination. Collaborating with online influencers who already have strong followings can increase the visibility of social media marketing; this can be especially beneficial for new marketing accounts with low engagement. Nowadays there can even be virtual tours and virtual travel experiences (Revfine, 2023). The summary of the features of effective tourism marketing can be seen below (Table 2).

Table 2: Features of effective tourism marketing (Revfine, 2023)

Features of effective tourism marketing				
Unique selling points				
Having a target market group				
Taking feedback into account				
Branding				
Taking interdependence into account				
Investing in social media				

# 3.2 Tourism marketing in Faroe Islands

"Unspoiled, unexplored, unbelievable"

Visit Faroe Islands (s.a)

Considering the increase in tourism during the past 10 years in Faroe Islands, which was noted in the introduction, it is relevant to think about what kind of role tourism marketing has had in it.

After the tourist board was reorganized by the government in 2012 and the founding of the Visit Faroe Islands -organisation took place, tourism has only increased. These events must have acted towards increasing tourism, indicative of successful tourism marketing. For this reason, I will take a closer look at the Visit Faroe Islands' marketing campaigns and analyse what made them effective in this chapter after introducing the tourist board Visit Faroe Island and their tourism marketing.

#### 3.2.1 Visit Faroe Islands

Visit Faroe Islands is the official tourist board for Faroe Islands and therefore it can be seen that a lot of marketing has been done by them. It is organised under the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

The objectives of Visit Faroe Islands are to develop and market the Faroe Islands as a tourist destination and that is why there will be a lot of focus on it in this document. Their mission is to work with three C's which are collect, coordinate, and commercialize (Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report 2022, 2023).

Acts that the Visit Faroe Islands have been taking to achieve the growth of tourism since 2012 has been that they started to market Faroe Islands more and started thinking of how Faroe Islands could differ from the similar destinations. This is when they invented the slogan "un-destination" which was followed by "unspoiled, unexplored, unbelievable" in the purpose of separating Faroe Islands from similar destinations. There are a lot of these kinds of slogans describing Faroe Islands such as unveiled, unplugged, unknown, untamed, and unstoppable. They also started branding Faroe Islands by launching films and campaigns which raised the global awareness. (Visit Faroe Islands, April 2016, 0:00-4:05)

Visit Faroe Islands has its own website where they offer lots of information to visitors or anyone interested. They offer information about Faroe Islands in general from many points of views such

as geographical, historical, cultural, and political information. For visitors they offer information for example about different activities such as sports, attractions such as churches, transport and accommodation options and tips before arriving to the islands. On the website they also share their marketing and development campaigns which will be presented in the next chapter, 3.2.2. (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.)

The organisation is also active on social media. They have social media channels on Instagram, Facebook, X (former Twitter), LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube. (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a.) Having a quick overview of their social media reach (Figure 3), they have most followers on Facebook and Instagram. On all the platforms they have thousands of followers excluding Pinterest, where they have 354 followers. This data has been gathered in 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 and it is to show how many people are interested in the tourism marketing of Faroe Islands by following their social media accounts.

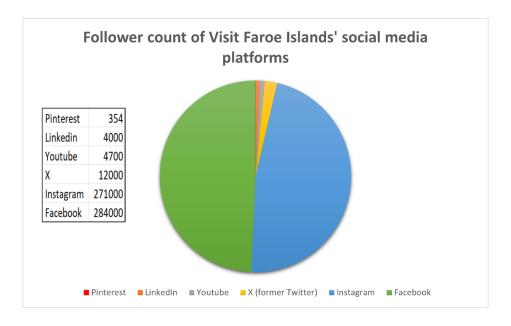


Figure 3: Follower count of Visit Faroe Islands' social media platforms in 10th of November 2023

They also publish annual reports about tourism. There can be found their goals and considerations of tourism and its marketing. In the annual report for 2022, two of their goals has been to put the Faroe Islands on the global map where it can be seen as a unique, interesting, and sustainable tourism destination. The second goal has been to put the focus on recovering from the recent years since tourism has been almost non-existent caused by global pandemic COVID-19. Recently they have also been focusing on extending the tourist season, trying to make Faroe Islands a year-round travel destination. Their choice of markets has been for example Nordic countries, Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Italy, France and nowadays also US because from these countries people do not have to travel from so far, taking sustainability into account. Their vision of tourism has been

that tourism shall become a new cornerstone of the Faroese economy and that tourism shall develop in a sustainable way with respect for the locals, environment, and the economy. This brings us to their strategy of tourism for 2030 where their main point is to achieve a balance between the well-being of locals and nature conservation and providing a good experience for the visitors. For the strategy 2030 they wish as many Faroese people as possible to participate in discussions that local people could have an effect of how tourism in their country develops. (Visit Faroe Islands Annual Report, 2023, 28)

## 3.2.2 Marketing campaigns in Faroe Islands

Visit Faroe Islands has introduced their marketing and development campaigns on their website. Here will be an introduction of five projects that they have been working on (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Marketing campaigns in Faroe Islands by Visit Faroe Islands

Closed for maintenance is a campaign where regular tourists are not welcomed to the islands during a specific timeframe. However, even though it is closed for regular tourists, it is "open for voluntourism" (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). It means, that Faroe Islands welcomes people who would like to volunteer in maintaining Faroe Islands. This maintaining includes building signs with instructions where to go, creating paths in well-trodden areas and constructing viewpoints that improves the

preservation of nature and birdlife sanctuaries to name a few (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). This marketing campaign will be also included in the questionnaire.

Remote Tourism is a project that was implemented during the global crisis COVID-19. The purpose was to organize virtual tours to those who would like or were planning to travel to Faroe Islands. What made the project special was that it was like a video game where virtual tourists were able to control the movement of the local guide in real time with their phones, tablets or computers. This was achieved with a live video camera where the player was able to see views and control whether to walk, run, turn, jump or even take a helicopter flight (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a) This marketing campaign will be included in the questionnaire.

Faroe Islands Translate was implemented when travellers in Faroe Islands wanted to learn Faroese but it was difficult because Faroese was not in Google Translate. Then they decided to create their own website which works like Google Translate but still, in a bit different way. When someone wants to learn a word or sentence, it can be typed, and the results will be shown as videos where random Faroese volunteer will translate it by sending a live translation. All the translations will be uploaded to the website which creates a translation database where can be seen many translations for a word or sentence (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). This will be the third project included in the questionnaire.

Google Translate was not only place where Faroese people thought that Faroe Islands is not included. Faroe Islands also wanted to have their beautiful land to be seen in the Google Street View. That is how Google Sheep View got created in 2016. The idea of this campaign was to get Google's attention of this matter and for getting that they used sheep equipped with 360 ° cameras and filming surroundings. Google Sheep View had success, since soon later Faroe Islands was found from Google Street View as well (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). Even though this marketing campaign received huge attention, it was not included in the questionnaire to maintain a suitable length of the questionnaire.

"Imagine the Faroe Islands" was an exhibition that was held by National Gallery in Faroe Islands in autumn 2022. What made it special was that all the images shown there were created by artificial intelligence based on thought "What if the greatest artists ever living had painted the Faroe Islands...?". "Greatest artists" were referring to for example Van Gogh or Monet. (Visit Faroe Islands, s.a). This marketing campaign was not included in the questionnaire.

Three of these marketing campaigns will be presented in the questionnaire which can be found from Research methods section and Results. Even though all the projects are unique for tourism marketing in Faroe Islands, there must be a selection of what to include in the questionnaire, so it

would not become too long. These marketing campaigns which were selected are Closed for Maintenance -campaign, Remote Tourism and Faroe Islands Translate. These were selected because Closed for Maintenance -campaign is an event which happens yearly which makes it relevant, Remote Tourism was a project implemented during COVID-19 which makes it "special" because those times in tourism industry were very different (UNWTO, s.a) and Faroe Islands Translate because it is something unique that is only for Faroese language.

# 4 Method description

In this chapter, there will be an introduction of research methods in general, then discussion of data collection for this research and then about a questionnaire which was formed for this research.

#### 4.1 Research methods

Research methods are methods to collect and analyse data. The aim is to gain information about specific subject and understand the phenomenon with the help of data results. The research process starts with defining the objective, managing the data and analysing the findings with following established frameworks and existing guidelines. The methods are often divided into three categories which are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. (Williams, C. 2007)

Quantitative research tests or confirms theories and assumptions through *numbers and graphs*. Used methods for this are for example observations recorded as numbers and questionnaires with close-ended or multiple-choice questions. Approaches could be for example in questions like "On scale 1-5, how satisfied are you with transport arrangement with the hotel?" Analysis will be statistical and mathematic and showed in graphs and tables (Streefkerk, R, 2023).

Qualitative research wants to understand concepts, thoughts, and experiences through *words*. Used methods for this are for example open-ended questions and observations explained and described in words in questionnaires or in interviews. Approaches could in be questions like "How satisfied are you with the transport arrangement with the hotel?". The difference is that there is not asked for rating like in quantitative research. Analysis will be summarized, categorized, and interpreted (Streefkerk, R, 2023).

It is also possible to conduct research that involves both types of research methods. This *mixed method* approach might have for example a question "how would you rate the transport arrangement with the hotel on scale 1-5" and after that there is an open-ended question asking for reasoning for the given score. This approach might give greater understanding of the subject (Streefkerk, R, 2023).

#### 4.2 Data collection

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate what kind of tourism marketing there is in Faroe Islands and what are thoughts of people of their marketing campaigns. As discussed before, tourism is a growing industry there and it is interesting to have a look at the marketing which appears to be successful.

In this thesis I will use mixed approach using both quantitative and qualitative research features. First, it is beneficial to observe and have research about what kind of tourism marketing there can be seen online and secondly ask other people about their thoughts and experiences in a form of questionnaire and analyse the responses.

#### 4.2.1 Questionnaire and its structure

A questionnaire is a research method which has a list of questions or items to gather data. The questionnaire has questions for example asking about respondents' opinions, experiences, or attitudes. This type of research method can also collect quantitative or qualitative information (Bhandari, P. 2023).

As a part of this thesis, a questionnaire was implemented to survey the opinions of respondents about tourism marketing campaigns of Faroe Islands. There was involved three marketing campaigns where two of them were presented in a form of video from Visit Faroe Islands' YouTube channel.

Not all campaigns were included in the questionnaire because it might affect the interest of respondent to complete the questionnaire. This is relevant to keep in mind because then obviously the replies of questions are only based on these campaigns.

The platform to create the questionnaire is Webropol. It involves 13 questions which are formed of background questions, ratings and open questions. Background questions are

- 1. Your age
- 2. Your gender
- 3. Your nationality
- 4. Your current employment status

Background questions might help the analysis of the results when seeing a little bit who the respondents are even though the questionnaire is anonymous.

In addition to background questions there are questions regarding experiences and thoughts of Faroe Islands before respondents could get to know about their marketing campaigns. These questions are

- 5. Have you ever visited Faroe Islands?
- 6. How would you describe Faroe Islands in one word?
- 7. How would you rate your interest to travel to Faroe Islands right now?

After getting to know a bit about respondents and their experiences about Faroe Islands, questionnaire moves on to the marketing campaigns. First marketing campaign to be presented is Closed for maintenance project where respondents are asked to watch a short video about the project. Questions relating to the video are as follows:

- 8. What are your thoughts of "Closed for maintenance" project?
- 9. Would you like to participate in that experiment?

Second project which were presented to the respondents is Remote Tourism -project. Respondents are asked again to watch a short video before replying to the question which is

10. What are your thoughts of the "Remote Tourism" project?

Third project to be presented is Faroe Islands Translate. Respondents are not asked to watch a video for this one but read the explanation and look at the image attached. Question regarding that is

11. What are your thoughts about this idea?

The two last questions of the questionnaire are concluding the questionnaire and are as follows:

- 12. After getting to know these projects, how would your rate your interest to travel to Faroe Islands now?
- 13. Any comments that you would like to add?

All the questions are mandatory to respond except the last one which is asking about additional comments.

#### 5 Results

This chapter introduces the results of the questionnaire and analyses them further. The questionnaire was created to have research about perceptions of people when it comes to tourism marketing in Faroe Islands, especially targeting the marketing campaigns.

# 5.1 Hypothesis

The aim was to get at least 50 responses to the questionnaire. The background of respondents was thought to be mostly Finnish people because it was shared to friends orally and with a link shared on Instagram. There was also a small hope to also get responses from other nationalities who would know a bit more about Faroe Islands and this was thought to be received from the Facebook group. Hypothesis was that most respondents do not know much about Faroe Islands which is based on the readings and the way of Visit Faroe Islands' marketing.

Before receiving any responses, hypothesis was that most people would react very positively to marketing campaigns of Faroe Islands and after seeing those, the interest to travel to Faroe Islands would increase.

Questionnaire was open for respondents for one week and four days, from 16<sup>th</sup> of October to 27<sup>th</sup> of October of 2023. It was shared for friends and family, on personal Instagram and on a Facebook group which is for people interested in Faroe Islands.

Target groups that were thought to be received were young adults which most likely are friends or people responded through Instagram link. Older respondents were thought to be received from a Facebook group where also international responses could be received.

## 5.2 Questionnaire results

Questionnaire received 58 responses. Respondents are in five different age groups where the largest age group with 47% (27 out of 58) is between the ages 18 and 25 and second largest with 19% (11 out of 58) is 56 years old or older. 14% (8 out of 58) are between 46 and 55 years old and 10% (6 out of 58) are between 26 and 35 or 36 and 45 years old. There are no respondents under 18. (Figure 6). If not considering the age group under 18 years old, it can be said that the biggest age groups amongst the respondents are the "tail ends", young adults from 18 to 25 years old and older people aged 56 or older.

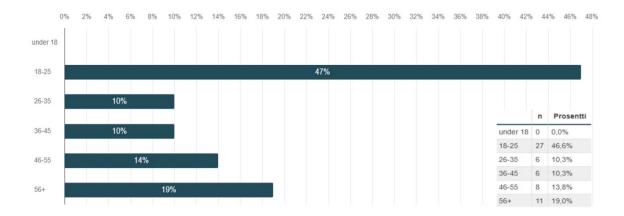


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents in different age groups (Respondents n = 58)

37 of the respondents are female and 20 are male, 1 respondent selected option "something else" when it comes to the gender question.

Questionnaire had a success of receiving responses internationally. 45% of respondents are Finnish and 52% are from other nationalities. Questionnaire reached two respondents from Faroe Islands as well (Figure 7). There are responses from many different nationalities, all the way from Australia to Europe and to US and Canada. While some nationalities are singular such as Icelandic and Taiwan, there are small nationality groups from Australia, German and US. There were altogether 21 different nationalities.

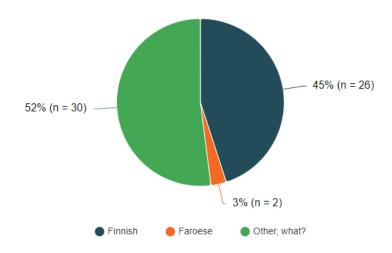


Figure 7: Distribution of respondents in different nationalities (Respondents n = 58)

Questionnaire reached many students (43%) but also people who work full-time (41%). The questionnaire reached 12% (7 out of 58) respondents who are retired. Other 12% are employed part-time, 3% (two out of 58) are unemployed and 2% (1 out of 58) has selected option "something

else". The employment status -question had a possibility to select many options because for instance students might be employed part-time or even full-time.

"Have you ever visited Faroe Islands?" is an important question because there can be seen if respondents already have some experience of Faroe Islands. The results can be seen from a table 3 below.

Table 3: Responses to a question "Have you ever visited Faroe Islands?" n = 58

Have you ever visited Faroe Islands?	Amount	Precent
No	35	60.3%
Yes	21	36.2%
I live there	2	3.5%

60% of the respondents (35 out of 58) have not visited Faroe Islands what means that they do not have the actual experience of the islands. However, there are 23 respondents where two of them are living on the islands who has the experience of the islands.

The sixth question asking about description of Faroe Islands in one word received similar responses. For many respondents the word "nature" came to their mind and adjectives which describe Faroe Islands (and possibly their nature) positively such as "beautiful" and "amazing" and other adjectives expressing positive thoughts. Also, a word "cold" and "small" has been responded several times. In addition to those, there are also descriptions such as "unknown" which was one of the predictions before distributing the questionnaire. That is the Faroe Islands might be unfamiliar for the respondents. Based on these responses it can be said that many respondents see Faroe Islands in a positive manner.

The seventh question asking about interest traveling to Faroe Islands can be analysed in comparison with the question 12 asking the same but after seeing the marketing campaigns. This will be analysed later in this document, after analysing the comments that people have left about the marketing campaigns.

The first project presented is Closed for maintenance project. Many respondents described the project as interesting, good, and great idea. Other adjectives that respondents have used are smart and clever, necessary, and important. Almost all the comments are rather positive but there

are also comments which question the project a bit more. Some respondents have written that if it can really help and it is only targeted for young people for example people with disabilities might not be able to take part. One has said that it should not be necessary to have people outside of Faroes to help with maintaining paths etc, but, perhaps, as this being a marketing campaign, it gives visibility to people outside of Faroes. One has also said that would like to have a bit research of what locals are thinking about the project. After giving answers to that open question, respondents had a question whether they would like to join. 54% of respondents said yes, 22% said no and remaining 24% said that they do not know.

The second project presented is Remote Tourism -project. This project did not receive as positive comments as the previous one, the opinions of respondents varied. Some thought that this is an interesting and clever idea and nice for those who cannot travel there physically. On the other hand, some respondents wrote that they would prefer traveling to Faroe Islands physically than virtually. Some described the project a bit weird and too much and did not support the idea that you could control a virtual guide especially with the "jump" command. That was argued to be inhuman.

The third project presented in the questionnaire is Faroe Islands Translate. Respondents described this idea creative and helpful, smart, and again, great marketing idea. While this one also gathered some positive comments, it also gathered a bit of doubt. Some said that translations in video format seems innovative and passionate participating from locals while some doubted its usability. Some wrote this being unnecessary since Faroese do speak English as well.

Lastly, the questionnaire closes with by asking respondents if they are interested in traveling to Faroe Islands. This same question was also presented in the beginning of the questionnaire before presenting the marketing projects, the question number seven.

Respondents were asked to rate the interest in scale one to 10. One was not interested at all and 10 was interested. Before getting to know the marketing campaigns, the average rating was 7.2 and the median 8.0 (Figure 8). It can be said that the interest level is rather high already.

# 7. How would you rate your interest to travel to Faroe Islands right now? Vastaajien määrä: 58

Minimiarvo	Maksimiarvo	Keskiarvo	Mediaani	Summa	Keskihajonta
1,0	10,0	7,2	8,0	418,0	2,9

Figure 8: Interest to travel to Faroe Islands before n = 58

Comparing that the seventh question had an average rating as 7.2 and median as 8.0 (Figure 8) 12<sup>th</sup> question had an average 7.6 and median 8.5 (Figure 9). The average has risen, but not much. The increase in ratings can also be seen from the sum, which was 418.0 in Figure 8 and 441.0 in Figure 9.

12. After getting to know these projects, how would you rate your interest to travel to Faroe Islands now? Vastaajien määrä: 58

Minimiarvo	Maksimiarvo	Keskiarvo	Mediaani	Summa	Keskihajonta
1,0	10,0	7,6	8,5	441,0	2,8

Figure 9: Interest to travel to Faroe Islands after n = 58

In conclusion of these ratings, the interest in travel to Faroe increased from average rating of 7,2 to 7,6 by the end of the questionnaire. However, the increase is not very much, and the reason could be that many of the respondents were already interested in traveling to Faroe Islands before taking the questionnaire. The results make sense since one of the main sources of collecting responses was from a Facebook group implemented for people interested in Faroe Islands.

Last question allowed respondents to add any comments that they would like to say. Out of 58 respondents, 32 of them left an additional comment. Some wrote that Faroe Islands is a beautiful place and looking forward to visiting. Some wrote that the projects presented were interesting and raised their interest of traveling to the islands. As all the responses can be divided into positive and perhaps into critically thinking categories, some wrote that their interest to travel to Faroe Islands did not rise, it even decreased and some of the comments mentioned the fear of Faroe Islands getting too touristy. One of the comments also mentioned the *tradition of whaling* which might affect the decision whether to travel there at all. In addition, some of the respondents wrote that they already knew about the marketing projects, so there was nothing new that would increase their interest.

# 5.2.1 Comparisons between respondents

In comparison of the two largest age groups (18-25 and 56+) that responded to the questionnaire, there can be seen the following patterns.

The majority of younger age group are Finnish and none of them have visited Faroe Islands. In older age group there is none Finnish respondents and 9 out of the 11 respondents from this age group have visited Faroe Islands. The results of the question which asks to describe Faroe Islands in one word, it seems that older age group has described it in very positive adjectives whereas

replies of younger age group have been rather neutral (Table 4). This probably can be explained as that older age group have more experience of Faroe Islands than younger age group because most of them have visited Faroe Islands.

Table 4: Descriptions of Faroe Islands in the questionnaire

18-25	56+	
Nature	Beautiful landscapes.	
Small	special	
Nature	Lovely	
Rolling hills.	Extraordinary	
cold	Beautiful	
Vaikuttaa kauniilta paikalta	Magnificent	
cold	Stunning	
Nordic	Going to visit in April 2024	
Cool place	Hidden jewel	
small	Mesmerizing	

In addition to this observation, the interest rate of older age group to travel to Faroe Islands had a minimum rate of 8 whereas of younger age group it is one. This might be because older people know more about Faroe Islands and they also have more interest than younger age group which might not have that much of an experience or knowledge about Faroe Islands. Also, older age group left more additional comments talking about their experiences and thoughts than younger age group.

Then, to compare those who have visited Faroe Islands and those who not and analysing the comments which they have left about marketing campaigns, there cannot be seen as clear distribution as it can be seen from the age groups and descriptions. Both groups have left positive comments about the campaigns but there can be seen critically thinking comments in both groups as well. This is to say, it seems like whether or not the respondents have been at Faroe Islands previously does not appear to have any effect on the impressions given by the marketing presented by Visit Faroe Islands.

It is important to analyse especially the replies of respondents who does not have visited Faroe Islands. That is because they do not have previous experience and the marketing campaigns presented in the guestionnaire might give them the first impression of Faroe Islands and therefore

there can be seen their authentic thinking without having some else knowledge which might affect their opinions. Looking at the additional comments that they have left might give some perception what kind of impression they got from getting to know the marketing campaigns. There are 17 additional comments that the group without any experience of Faroe Islands has left. These comments can be categorized into ones who are perhaps more interested visiting Faroe Islands and into ones which are not interested in visiting Faroe Islands.

Some respondents left comments like "I am more interested in Faroe Islands after this survey", "Seems like a beautiful and interesting place to visit" and "I love how creative they got with the marketing strategies. It's something I've never seen and that raised my interest a lot!". Someone also stated in their comment that they liked the marketing videos as a part of the questionnaire and would consider going to Faroe Islands. Based on these responses, it seems like the marketing campaigns raised the interest of respondent who has not yet visited Faroe Islands.

However, there are also comments expressing the worry of Faroe Islands becoming too crowded and touristy. Some stated that they even feel less interested visiting Faroe Islands because of the feeling that locals of Faroe Islands are not considered when doing marketing. The worry of visits bringing harm to the locals and environment has been expressed in the additional comments.

That is to say that even though many respondents seem to be excited about the marketing campaigns and Faroe Islands, there are a few but essential comments that might not be that supportive when it comes to the marketing campaigns. Keeping in mind that the marketing campaigns which were presented were very short introduction on what there have been done in Faroe Islands' tourism marketing might also influence the first impressions of respondents.

# 6 Discussion

In this chapter, there will be conclusion of the results of the questionnaire and the report, evaluation of report's validity and reliability, suggestion for the future marketing and discussion of the author's learning process while writing the report.

#### 6.1 Conclusions

In conclusion of the results, there were respondents who were excited about Faroe Islands and then there were respondents which were quite neutral with their responses and then the respondents who were thinking about the projects a bit more critically.

It is necessary to say that the way this questionnaire was distributed has its impact. A lot of admiring comments came from the Facebook group which can be expected because of their already existent interest and perhaps excitement of Faroe Islands. However, there were also respondents who has not visited Faroe Islands but after seeing the marketing campaigns, it raised their interest, but also on the other side, there were respondents in which marketing campaigns did not affect their interest in traveling to Faroe Islands.

It can be argued that marketing campaigns of Faroe Islands divide opinions. With this research sample, opinions were rather positive but also involved a bit of doubt and worry. Nevertheless, whether respondents had visited Faroe Islands or not, it seemed like there were not clear distribution of the opinions of the marketing campaigns. Amongst these three marketing campaigns which were presented it seems like that the most supporting comments received the Closed for maintenance -campaign, then Faroe Islands Translate and lastly, Remote Tourism -project. The thoughts of Closed for maintenance -campaign could be summarised in a sentence "Great way to maintain the land". For Faroe Islands Islands Translate the summarised thought could be "Innovative idea but the usability of it is questionable". For Remote Tourism -project the summarised thought could be "Great for those who cannot travel there physically but the project itself seems to be a bit too much."

However, this questionnaire did not illustrate any strictly negative attitudes towards Faroe Islands or their tourism marketing and the comments about marketing campaigns were more supporting which is perhaps a testament to successful marketing. Another testament for successful marketing could be the increasing numbers of visitors a year by year.

As a reminder the research questions were:

1. What kind of tourism marketing there is in Faroe Islands?

2. What people are thinking about some of Visit Faroe Islands' development and marketing campaigns?

It can be argued that this thesis answered to those questions. Theory part went through what kind of tourism marketing there is in Faroe Islands for example discussing about the objectives of Visit Faroe Islands and by analysing questionnaire results of what are the thoughts of respondents of Visit Faroe Island's development and marketing campaigns answered to the second question.

## 6.2 Validity and reliability

There are a lot of things that need to be taken into consideration when thinking of the results. The questionnaire reached a broad range of respondents with different backgrounds. There are respondents from different age groups, nationalities, employment statuses and most importantly some respondents that have experience of Faroe Islands and some who does not. These influence on what kind of thoughts and opinions respondents have. The questionnaire was distributed basically to two target groups which are people that knows Faroe Islands and people who does not and that can be seen from the results. Also, the selection of marketing campaigns has its impact because for some respondents, the presented marketing campaigns has been everything that they've seen about Faroe Islands so far.

If evaluating the validity of the questionnaire it can be argued that questionnaire is rather clean, professional, and easy to follow. (Questionnaire in its original format can be found from appendices.) One thing that would have been improved in the questionnaire would have been that videos are uploaded to the platform. Unfortunately, Webropol does not have that feature, so it had to be asked the respondents to copy the links and watch videos in YouTube. For the questionnaire it was important to keep it simple and concise, so the marketing campaigns had to be selected and it might affect the presentation of marketing if thinking the marketing in Faroe Islands as a whole. However, including all the marketing campaigns might have affected the number of respondents. The questionnaire did not need any more questions, but perhaps asking directly "Are you more interested in Faroe Islands after seeing these marketing campaigns?" would have been easier to evaluate than the ratings and it would have been more direct question also to the respondents. However, the results of the questionnaire corresponds to the responds that the questionnaire was designed to get.

When it comes to the literature review, it consists of the sites and reports of Visit Faroe Islands, website articles, books, and blog posts. The blog posts as references might be questionable when

thinking of that this is a thesis, but on the other hand, they are legit sources of the experiences of people traveling in Faroe Islands and therefore reliable sources.

# 6.3 Suggestion

It seems that Visit Faroe Islands has done a lot of work when it comes to tourism marketing in Faroe Islands. Visit Faroe Islands have discussed in their reports that one of the most important objectives are that locals are in good terms when it comes to the tourism marketing of their land. However, some respondents in the questionnaire mentioned their worry of the locals and perhaps Visit Faroe Islands would express more in their marketing videos that locals are considered when doing marketing.

# 6.4 The process and learning

This thesis process has been a long journey. The first challenge was to decide the subject of the thesis, which was not an easy choice. It was important to choose a subject which is interesting to write about so that there would be motivation to write.

Once I decided to write something about Faroe Islands because I was curious about this known as mystical place, the subject formed quickly with the help of my thesis coordinator as tourism marketing in Faroe Islands. Writing about their marketing felt to be a good choice because the material can be found online, and the research can be done remotely. First, I was interested to travel to Faroe Islands by myself, but I could not find time for that unfortunately.

This whole process has taught me a lot. I think I have had many challenges during the writing process for example academic writing, writing about relevant things and find relevant sources. However, I think I have overcome these challenges and managed to write this thesis in a good manner.

Publishing the questionnaire and getting responses for that was exciting thing for me. I was curious of what kind of comments the questionnaire will receive. I also enjoyed the process of writing even though sometimes I found it challenging. I did not expect that a single sentence would need to be edited multiple times before it is in its final form.

I believe that I have gained a lot of time and project management skills that would become beneficial in work-life. In addition to that, studying in English has improved my language skills a lot and perhaps will open international doors in the work-life in the future.

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# **Appendices**

# **Appendix 1. Tourism Marketing in Faroe Islands Questionnaire**

