

**Lund University**

# **Destination Image Perceived by Different Stakeholders**

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## **A Case of Fortress of Suomenlinna**



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2012/5/31

# Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Richard Ek for his support through all the way of my thesis journey, for whom always shed lights on me when I feel puzzled at what direction to go and for his understanding and trust on me.

Second, I would like to thank to my fellow students in my group that we support each other, have discussions and give valuable suggestions to each other.

Third, thanks to the participants and respondents in the interview and survey, which enables me to implement the empirical study and collect the data.

Finally, thanks to my family and friends who make me happy and concentrate on the writing.

Many thanks to all of you!

# Abstract

Destination image is a concept that can be interpreted in different ways. Image sender and receiver may perceive differently due to diverse information sources, motivations, and so on. This thesis is going to explore the destination image held by different stakeholders. From demand perspective, how tourists view the destination image; from supply aspect, how destination authority attempts to project and promote the destination image from a marketing perspective; and how the local residents view the place they reside and the impact of tourism in their own ways.

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies are implemented in this study. Semi-structured interview with the tourism manager in the destination displays a view of how the destination authority intends to project and promote the image to the market. Online content analysis is used to investigate the destination image perceived by tourists who have visited the site. A survey is conducted to local residents and tourists in order to capture the residents' image of the site compared to tourists. After the data analysis on three stakeholders, respectively, similarities and differences of image held by different stakeholders is discussed, especially the differences due to the diverse interests and goals make it challenging to create and present a consistent destination image. And this study is in hopes to address some managerial implications and recommendations for the destination and DMOs to create a consistent image towards marketing success.

**Key words:** destination image, different stakeholders, constructs of destination image, image congruence

# Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract .....	ii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Research aim .....	2
1.3 Research question .....	2
1.4 Significance of study.....	3
2. Theoretical Framework .....	4
2.1 Destination Image .....	5
2.1.1 Definition of destination image .....	5
2.1.2 Destination image and brand .....	5
2.1.3 Destination image formation process.....	7
2.1.4 Travel context and seasonality in tourism.....	10
2.2 Destination image perceived by different stakeholders .....	11
2.2.1 Destination image projected by marketers and received by visitors... ..	11
2.2.2 Residents' active and passive role in destination image study .....	13
2.2.3 A model involving multiple stakeholders of destination image and brand .....	15
2.3 Summary of theoretical part.....	18
3. Methodology .....	20
3.1 Research design .....	20
3.1.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods.....	20
3.1.2 The measurement of destination image .....	20
3.2 Data collection .....	21
3.2.1 Semi-structured interview .....	21
3.2.2 Online content analysis .....	22
3.2.3 Survey-questionnaire .....	24
3.3 Summary of method part .....	25
4. Analysis.....	26
4.1 An introduction to the study object .....	26
4.2 Destination authority's perspective through the semi-structured interview ..	28
4.2.1 Seasonality in Suomenlinna.....	28
4.2.2 The image of Suomenlinna perceived by tourists and residents .....	29
4.2.3 The image that destination authority attempts to project.....	31
4.3 Perceptions of tourists through qualitative content analysis.....	34
4.4 Local residents' opinions (compared with tourists) .....	38
5. Discussion .....	43
5.1 Similarities and differences on the destination image perceived by different stakeholders.....	43
5.2 Implications for the destination and DMOs.....	45

6. Conclusion .....	48
Reference .....	52
Appendix.....	56
Appendix 1 Interview Guide with Tourism Manager .....	56
Appendix 2 Questionnaire: Destination Image Perceived by Tourists in Suomenlinna .....	57
Appendix 3 Questionnaire: Destination Image perceived by Residents in Suomenlinna .....	59

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

In the last few decades, “tourism has become one of the most important sectors of global economy” (Ferreira et al. in Dominique and Ferreira, 2011: 306 ), and tourism industry is a wide economy relating to many other sectors directly or indirectly such as transportation, accommodation, recreation, commercial sector and so on, which makes a great economic contribution to the world. Tourism development has raised an increasing attention both in country level and local level.

Today, tourism has grown into a worldwide industry with tourist destinations throughout the world competing with each other to attract tourists. Due to the characteristic of substitutability, destinations are easily to become substitutes for others in the flourishing tourism market, since tourists to date are facing with a variety of choices in terms of holiday destinations (Pike, 2004: 95). Hence, how to attract tourists has become a constant battle for destination marketing organisations (DMOs) (Pike and Ryan in Ekinçi and Hosany, 2006: 127). All elements that will improve the destination should be taken into consideration, but destination image is one of the most important elements of a tourist destination, and it has become a critical factor to indicator the success or failure of tourism management (Dominique and Ferreira, 2011: 312).

Tourism is a series of human activities in search of what is extraordinary compared to one’s everyday life and environment (Stanciulescu, 2008: 1218). Stanciulescu (2008: 1218) argues that tourist destination may have a more comprehensive meaning compared to the traditional consumer products. The complexity of the destination is associated to the fact that destination is a mixture of specific tourism products and services such as transportation, shopping, catering (Agapito, 2010: 92). Stern and Krakover (in Agapito, 2010: 92) suggest that since a destination is a composite product, the image comprises of multiple dimensions. Today, the destination image is more likely to be interpreted as a perception on the whole experience perceived by tourists.

Although destination image has been studied since 1970s, there is still lacking of a consensus of the conception of destination image (Gallarza, 2002: 59). Many scholars come up with definitions as “impressions”, “understanding”, “mental constructs” etc. of a destination (Gallarza, 2002: 60). For example, many authors define the image as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people associate with a destination (Crompton et al. in Dominique and Ferreira, 2011: 307). Bigné et al. (in Dominique and Ferreira, 2011: 307) define destination image as the subjective interpretation of

reality by tourists. Since destination image is a mental/ subjective perception and evaluation of a destination, just as Reynolds claims “often, of course, the word ‘image’ is used as equivalent to reputation..., what people believe about a person or an institution, versus character, what the person or institution actually is” (Govers et al., 2007: 15), it is most likely that there is a contrast between the image perceived by people and the reality of the destination.

Destination image perceived by tourists is influenced by many factors such as information sources (media, books, friends, relatives and so on), past experiences, cultural backgrounds, so there must be many versions of destination images perceived by consumers. The destination image held by tourists can be formed both before and after visitation of a place, Phelps (in Dominique and Ferreira, 2011: 310) defines primary image as image formed after visiting the destination while the secondary image as the image built before visiting to the destination. And previous image (secondary) will be affected and modified after the actually visiting to the destination (Echtner and Ritchie in Govers et al., 2007: 15).

Today, due to the fierce competition among global destination, for destination developers and marketers, building a positive destination image to the target market in order to achieve competitive advantages to attract more tourists and improve the customer loyalty (Baloglu and McCleary in Garc ía, 2012: 647). So destination management organisations (DMOs) are making great efforts to promote the destination image to achieve a competitive advantage.

## **1.2 Research aim**

The aim of this thesis is divided into two parts: (1). to explore the destination image perceived by different stakeholders; (2). to discuss whether the destination image held by different stakeholders matches the marketing theory of the congruence of destination image.

## **1.3 Research question**

In order to achieve the above research aim, the main research question is what the destination image is perceived by different stakeholders. Considering three stakeholders involved in this study, the main research question can be divided into three sub-questions:

1. What is the destination image that destination authority of Fortress of Suomenlinna intends to project?
2. What is the destination image of Fortress of Suomenlinna perceived by tourists?
3. How do local residents regard the image of Fortress of Suomenlinna?

## **1.4 Significance of study**

Destination image has become an important area for destinations throughout the world to compete with each other in order to raise the awareness and recognition among tourists and potential tourists from destination marketing organisations (DMOs)'s perspective. For tourists, destination image influences the purchase decision process and the chance of re-visitation and word-of-mouth recommendations. From local residents' aspect, destination image held by outsiders affect the social reputation of the place where they reside, besides, what do locals think of the destination influence their attitude towards the development of the destination.

Destination image is an interesting topic because of its multidimensional, the purpose of this study is to explore the destination image perceived by three different stakeholders and discuss the similarities and differences among these three stakeholders, especially the differences caused by diverse interests among different stakeholders. The importance of this study is not only in the theory but also in practice. In tourism literature, there is a lack of empirical studies involving perspectives of destination marketers, tourists as well as local residents, which allows the author to compare the similarities and differences in terms of destination image. From practical perspective, the results of this study are in hope to provide valuable information for other destinations and DMOs driven from the empirical study and provide some managerial implications and recommendations to help destinations towards creating and presenting a more consistent and accurate image from destination marketing perspective.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

Destination image study was pioneered by John Hunt, Edward Mayo and Clare Gunn in the 1970s, and since then, destination image research has been a hot topic in the tourism field (Pike, 2004: 93). And the main topics of destination image has been covered in the research include the conceptualization of destination image, the destination image formation, the measurement of destination image, destination image change over time, influence of distance on destination image, active and passive role of residents in image study and destination image management policies such as positioning and promotion (Gallarza et al., 2002: 58). From so many topics in destination image study, it proves to be a rather complex and multifaceted issue, however, it is so important to do the research on destination image, and destination image involves many stakeholders/ actors. Tourist destination is a complex system, involving a set of interaction between tourists and local residents, which indicates that the strategies for marketing and development of destination should take into account of both stakeholders (Agapito et al., 2010: 91). Due to the characteristics of tourism products and services such as intangible, substitutable, and high risk, image of the destination seems to be the only thing to compete, besides, Hunt believes that the image perceived by tourists affect the viability of the destination(Pike, 2004: 94). In destination marketing theory, destination image/ brand image has the potential to achieve customer loyalty (tourists' re-visitation) and the word-of-mouth promotion (García et al., 2012: 650). For tourists, destination image transfers presentation of a destination on the minds of potential tourists and "give him or her a pre-taste of the destination" (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991: 10). From consumer behavior perspective, destination image is vital importance because it affects the destination choice and tourists satisfaction (Gallarza et al., 2002: 59). For local people, they have image about their place of residence and as a destination, which may affect the tourists' perception of a destination as well as the development of the destination (Agapito et al., 2010: 91).

The object of this thesis is to figure out the destination image perceived by different stakeholders, including destination authority, tourists and residents in the case of Fortress of Suomenlinna. In this chapter, firstly, destination image is discussed in a broad sense which helps to have a comprehensive and deep understanding about the destination image, including the definition of destination image, the relationship about the destination image and brand from destination marketing perspective, the image formation process and the concept of travel context. The concept of seasonality is a specific travel context in the case of Suomenlinna, which affects the perception of destination either by tourists or by residents. Then, destination image perceived by different stakeholders are presented in details, combined with a theoretical model of destination image and brand proposed by García et al. (see Figure 3). In García et al.'s (2012) model, constructs of destination image and the theory of congruency of image

held by different stakeholders are the main focuses in this thesis.

## **2.1 Destination Image**

### **2.1.1 Definition of destination image**

After more than four decades' research in tourism destination image, however, in the tourism literature, there is still no consensus on the conceptualization of destination image and the majority of destination image studies do not have any conceptual framework (Echtner et al. in Pike, 2004: 96). After reviewing 15 studies between 1975 and 1990, Echtner and Ritchie (in Pike, 2004: 96) claim that most definitions of destination image are rather vague, for example, "perception of an area"; for instance, Crompton (in Jenkins, 1999: 2) defines an image as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination". Fakeye and Crompton (in Gallarza et al., 2002: 60) argue image as "the mental construct developed by a potential tourist on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions". Murph, Pritchard and Smith (in Mart í and Bosque, 2008: 264) propose destination image as "A sum of association and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception".

Unlike physical goods, destination image is a multidimensional concept. Due to the lack of precise concept delimitation of destination image, after reviewing the literature in the destination image field, Gallarza et al. (2002) put forward a theoretical framework of destination image concept, defined in four major natures: complex, multiple, relativistic and dynamic. Jenkins (1999: 1) argues that the term -destination image has been used in diverse circumstances, including the perceptions held by individuals, stereotypes perceived by groups and the projected image by tourism promoters and marketers.

In this article, considering the different stakeholders, apart from customers' perspective which is mostly studied, it includes different stakeholders. Destination developers and marketers intend to develop a desirable image associated with the destination to brand, promote and position the place. Local people who live in the destination may have their own perception of the place.

### **2.1.2 Destination image and brand**

As the increasing competition among tourism destinations throughout the world, many scholars discuss the relationship between brand and image from the destination marketing perspective (Garc ía et al., 2012: 650).

Tasci and Kozak (2006) claim that confusion between brand and image exists in the tourism destination context. Tourism experts more or less agree to view brand and

image from different angles: brand is regarded as a product of marketing activities by destination developers and marketers, while image is a product of consumer perception (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 311). However there is conflict about the causality between brand and destination image: some experts suggest that “brand comes first and shapes the image”, while some experts view image is how a brand is perceived (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 311). It is important that the mix-up between destination brand and image in the destination context generates benefits rather than costs (Tasci and Kozak in Garc á et al., 2012: 650).

The image and brand should be consistent and integrated through marketing activities, and brand plays a positive role to deliver the destination-intended image to customers (Carmen, Stuart and Ritchie, 2005: 335-337). As images are perceptions of destinations established in tourists’ minds, and through branding, destination can send positive information to tourists, hence it helps to influence the destination image into the direction what the destination aims to convey to tourists. While image building can be regarded as a dimension of branding, and the self-analysis of the destination images should be the first activity of the branding process (Saraniemi, 2011: 250). For destination development/ marketing, the first step to do in branding strategy is the market research including the analysis of current image preserved by customers, the market segmentation as well as the competitors. Both destination image and brand help tourists to form expectations about the destination, and they will judge whether their previous expectation match the actual experience, then it leads to the degree of tourist satisfaction (Carmen, Stuart and Ritchie, 2005: 337). Besides, Garc á et al. (2012: 650-651) argue that a brand name and the word-of-mouth recommendation are vital factors in destination choosing process, so brand can be a specific identity in destination which will be a part of destination image element.

Aaker defines brand image as the actual image perceived by consumers, which is distinguished from brand identity (self-image and desirable market image), and the DMOs can influence the brand perception held by customers through positioning (Pike, 2004: 74). However, in the practice, many researchers (e.g. Pike, 2004; Hankinson, 2005; Hosany et al., 2007; Qu et al., 2011) believe destination image is an interchangeable term with brand image in the destination branding and marketing context.

In this thesis, since the study object, the Fortress of Suomenlinna is a World Heritage Site since 1991, which functions as a tourism brand for the public. Besides, another considering is that this thesis includes the supply aspect of the destination, which is the destination authority, from the supply perspective, they attempt to project an image that can influence the perception and evaluation held by tourists and potential tourists to promote the destination. So from destination marketing perspective, destination image and brand convey the similar meaning, and destination image and

brand image are interchangeable concepts in this study.

### 2.1.3 Destination image formation process

Due to the importance of destination image, it is necessary to figure out how the destination image is formed in the minds of people. Many researchers have agreed that destination image is created by two factors: stimulus factors and personal factors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999: 870). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) argue the destination image is formed by both stimulus factors and tourists' characteristics in the general destination image formation framework (see Figure 1). And they specify stimulus factors as information sources, previous experience and distribution, and personal factors as tourists' psychological (values, motivations and personality) and social (age, education, marital status and so on) features.

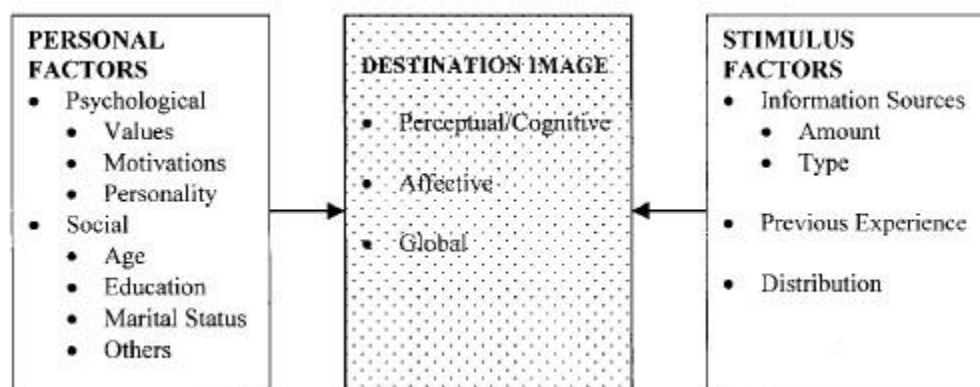


Figure 1: A General Framework of Destination Image Formation  
(Baloglu and McCleary, 1999: 870)

Today, people are living in the information era and exposed themselves in a variety of information. When choosing a destination, on the one hand, they are more informed of the destinations through newspapers, TV advertisements, guidebooks, websites and so on; on the other hand, it takes time and risk to make decision choices based on the plenty of information. Information sources also known as image formation agents (Gartner in Beerli and Mart í, 2004: 661) are stimulus factors in the environment that influence the perception and evaluation of destination images.

Gartner argues that image formation process is a continuum of different formation agents or information sources from advertising to actual visitation, and each influences the image formed in the minds of people (Beerli and Mart í, 2004: 661) (see Table 1).

From Table 1, image formation agents or information sources can be divided into three types, which are induced image, organic image and autonomous image. Organic image and induced image are mostly discussed by scholars. As Gunn (in Pike, 2004:

98) proposed there are two levels of images, one is organic image which is embedded in the individual's knowledge form everyday assimilation of information, while another is induced image, which is formed through the influence of tourism promotions directed by marketers. Besides, Gunn and Gartner (in Tasci and Gartner, 2007: 414) argue that the organic image is not resulted from commercial information sources, but generated from word-of-mouth and actual visitation, while the induced image is a result of marketing and promotion by destination developers and marketers. However, autonomous image is different from induced image which seems rather neutral. From these statements, for destination developers and marketers, they should market the destination corresponding to three kinds of images. There is a great potential to influence the induced image through appropriate marketing activities (branding and positioning strategies). In addition, the organic image generated from word-of-mouth and actual visitation is more stable and reliable, which enables the development of consumer loyalty. From this sense, tourism destinations should reinforce the positive image and attempt to provide pleasant experience to tourists who are visiting the destination, for example, by offering diverse themed activities.

Table 1: Image change agents

Image change agent	Examples
Overt induced 1	Traditional advertising
Overt induced 2	Information received from tour operators
Covert induced 1	Second party endorsement through traditional advertising
Covert induced 2	Second party endorsement through seemingly unbiased reports, such as newspaper articles
Autonomous	News and popular culture
Unsolicited organic	Unsolicited information received from friends
Solicited organic	Solicited information from friends
Organic	Actual visitation

(Pike, 2004: 99)

Agapito et al. (2010: 92) suggest destination image as a perceptual subject is formed in the interpretation of rational and emotional context, comprising of two interrelated components of cognitive and affective. Cognitive and affective evaluation of a destination is used by many researchers (e.g. Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Uysal et al., 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Mart  n and Bosque, 2008; Kim and Perdue, 2011): cognitive evaluation refers to the individual's own knowledge and belief of the destination (e.g. the quality of the scene) while affective evaluation refers to the individual's feelings of the destination (e.g. the atmosphere, fun) (Beerli and Mart  n, 2004: 658). The combination of cognitive and affective images creates the overall image, which displays the positive or negative evaluation of the place (Beerli and Mart  n, 2004: 658).

Destination image can be formed both for the public who have never been to the destination and tourists who have visited the destination due to the diverse information sources. And the destination image is dynamic which means it changes over time because of the change in personal factors or stimulus factors. For example, the visitation of a place will most likely revise the image formed by the tourists before visiting. Many researchers have found the image formed or modified as a result of visiting to a destination seems to be 'more realistic, complex and differentiated' (Pearce et al. in Echtner and Ritchie, 2003: 39).

In order to having a better understanding of the complex concept of destination image, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) investigate the destination image in three dimensions (see Figure 2).

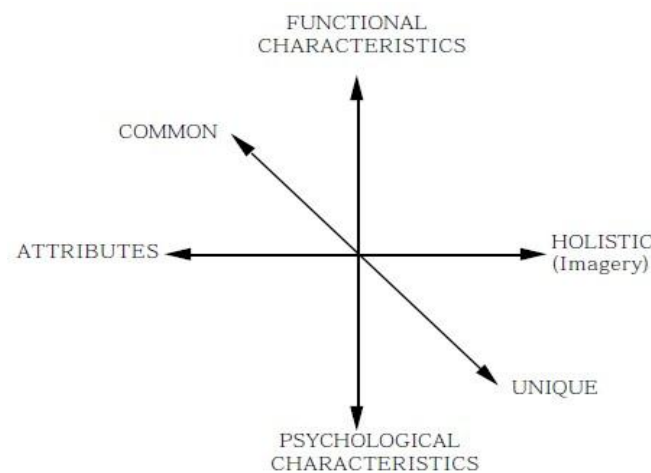


Figure 2: The components of destination image  
(Echtner and Ritchie, 2003: 43)

Attributes and holistic dimension suggests that destination images are perceived both by individual features/ attributes and holistic impressions of the destination (Echtner and Ritchie 2003: 43). Functional characteristics of destination images refer to those directly observable or measurable characteristics (e.g. natural scenery, price level, transport), while the psychological aspect of destination image relates to those more abstract, intangible features (e.g. friendliness of local people, the service level of staffs, atmosphere and mood) (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003: 42). Destination images can share some common functional and psychological features but also can be based on more unique traits, so common-unique dimension of destination image displays the commonness or uniqueness of features associated with all destinations (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003: 43-44).

Echtner and Ritchie's model provides us with more detailed investigation to destination image. For example, what do you think of this single attribute belonging to the destination? Or what is your overall impression of this destination? You can evaluate the destination from the natural scenery, cultural heritages, historical

buildings, amenity facilities and so on. You can also view the destination from the atmosphere, the service quality of staffs, the friendliness of local people and so on. Additionally, what is the common feature this destination has the same with other destinations, but what is the unique attributes that cannot find in others?

#### **2.1.4 Travel context and seasonality in tourism**

##### *Travel context*

Hu and Ritchie in 1993 proposed the first destination image research dealing with the relationship between the perceived destination attractiveness with the varying travel context (Pike, 2004: 109). And in the Pike's destination image analysis, there are 23 out of 142 papers mentioning the interest of travel context in destination image studies (Pike, 2004: 109). Pike (2004) argues that 'travel context' is an important factor that should be considered in the destination image studies. Since attribute importance varies in different situations (Barich et al. in Pike, 2004: 107), according to Pike (2004: 108), travel context refers to "the specific usage of the product, such as the time of year, type of trip or geographic travel range". In the case of Fortress of Suomenlinna, two kinds of travel context should be distinguished: visiting season (summer or the rest of year) and travel distance (near-home travel or long-distance travel).

##### *Seasonality in Tourism*

Bulter (2001: 5) defines seasonality in tourism context as a temporal imbalance phenomenon in tourism, and its form of expressions are usually as "numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, transportation, employment or admissions to attractions". The reasons that create seasonality in tourism are primarily two elements: one is "natural" and another is "institutionalised" (Bar-On in Bulter, 2001: 6). Natural cause refers to the "regular temporal variations in natural phenomena", for example, difference in seasons, temperature, sunlight, snowfall, daylight (Bulter, 2001: 6). These natural changes on the one hand will influence people's travel pattern especially to those natural resorts, on the other hand, the natural changes shape the destination appearance and attractiveness especially for the destinations in peripheral locations and high latitudes. The tourism industry in Nordic countries is largely affected by the natural elements. For example, the fjords tourism in Norway is typically a summer activity while polar-lights scenery, snow based activities are basically winter-oriented. "Institutionalised" elements are caused by human actions and policies, such as religious, cultural, ethnic and social factors (Bulter, 2001: 6). School holidays and industrial holidays are typical human examples that cause fluctuations in tourism and in developed countries summer months are viewed as traditional holiday to offer best weather for no matter beaches, lakes or mountains (Bulter, 2001: 7).

In the case of Fortress of Suomalinn, both affected by natural and institutionalised seasonality in tourism, i.e. the variation in temperature, snow coverage, and daylight hours and so on, coupled with the traditional holiday for employees in summer in the industrial world, there is a significant variation between high season in summer and off season in winter. Due to the difference in natural scenery, admission to tourism, the intensity of transportation, visitors and tourism facilities, which may cause different tourism experience for tourists who visit the destination in different times of a year, the image of the destination varies.

## **2.2 Destination image perceived by different stakeholders**

### **2.2.1 Destination image projected by marketers and received by visitors**

From destination marketing perspective, destination image perceived by tourists and potential tourists are significant for the brand equity. From commercial organisations' perspective, brands have become an asset and generate values to the firms, especially strong brand equity enables a competitive advantage by generating greater sales or higher margins (Pike, 2004: 71). For destination developers and marketers, destination image is always related to destination branding. Destination image in tourism context is an important part of brand; destination image contributes to the formation of destination brand and its success in the tourism market (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 313). Cai (in Qu et al., 2011: 465) claims that the principal part of destination branding is to build a positive image that functions to define and differentiate the destination by selecting certain attributes. Saraniemi (2011: 250) suggests that destination image analysis is usually the first step in the branding process, and destination positioning and identifying the target markets are also related marketing activities.

From destination authority's perspective, they intend to project a destination image associated with destination branding (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 313), which is always related to marketing activities, through advertisement, logo and slogan in the brochures and other materials, events and all kinds of activities. In the tourism context, the definition of destination brand:

“A destination brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience” (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1988:17).



This definition of destination brand conveys many meanings to us. A destination brand presents in a visible way such as symbol, logo. And nowadays, logo is often used in the destination marketing activities such as brochures, advertisements by DMOs. The primary and key function of destination brand is to identify the attributes and personality of the destination and differentiate the destination from other competitors in the market. From tourists' perspective, destination brands especially the well-known brands reduce the search costs and also reduce perceived risk as well as psychological risk (Carmen, Stuart and Ritchie, 2005: 330). Brands can offer tourists a kind of travel experience that can be expected to be pleasant and the collected pleasant experience will enhance the reputation of the brand.

From consumers' perspective, influenced by the projected image sent by destination authority (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 313), as well as other factors including personal factors (e.g. motivations) and other information sources (e.g. actual visitation), tourists and potential tourists may receive an overall perception of the destination. Tasci and Kozak (2006: 313) believe that there might be commonalities between destination authority's projected image and the tourists' received image. Furthermore, tourists and potential tourists' perceived image have an important impact on the consumer behavior, including awareness, choice, use, satisfaction, recommendation, trust and loyalty (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 314).

Potential tourists or tourists having images of tourism destinations is a matter of awareness, in some sense, even the negative image is better than no image of a destination. The awareness of a destination has an important impact on the purchase decision made by potential tourists and it is claimed that it is a big problem for a place without or with little tourism image to the outside areas (Pike, 2004: 106). As for tourist destinations, the first thing is to establish and maintain an image to the public, preferably a positive image. Moreover, there is a distinction between lacking of any image and having a negative image since a negative image is a sign of awareness.

Nowadays, visiting a tourist destination or having a journey is more regarded as an experience for visitors, and this experience is more associated with intangible service than physical goods. Unlike purchasing physical products, consumers are not sure about what they are going to get from this journey or vacation before they go, so what counts in making purchase decisions is the subjective perception about the destination. It is not good news for destination marketing organisations that images do not have a strong and direct relationship with the reality/ fact (Reynolds in Pike, 2004: 97). However, Hunt and Mayo (in Pike, 2004: 97) suggest that whether an individual's perceived images are correct is not as important as what the consumer actually believes to be true. From a marketing perspective, this means whether the image of the destination conveys what the real picture about the destination is not as important as what the potential tourists or tourists hold about the perception of the destination in

their minds. Since the image of a destination influences the purchase selection process by potential tourists, according to Hunt (in Pike, 2004: 93), the importance of the destination image held by potential visitors can affect the viability of the destination. It is acknowledged that the destination image held by potential visitors no matter it is true or not plays a vital role in decision making process.

Bosque et al. (in Agapito et al., 2010: 91) find the importance of destination image in affecting the consumer behavior during the pre-visit, during the visit and after the visit, so the destination image forms and changes over time. Many scholars have investigated that destination image affects the behavior of tourists in different time: in the decision making process of choosing a destination; when comparing the expectations with the actual experience, influencing the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; during the time of revisiting and word-of-mouth recommendation (Agapito et al., 2010: 91).

### **2.2.2 Residents' active and passive role in destination image study**

Although the destination image study has gone for four decades since it was pioneered by John Hunt, Edward Mayo and Clare Gunn (Pike, 2002: 541), the majority of destination image research are from the views of tourists and the DMOs. However, so few researchers include the local residents to the destination image study. For example, Pike only finds 2 papers out of 142 destination image research papers from 1973 to 2000 that involve the angle of local residents (Pike, 2002: 542).

After reviewing a quantity of literatures of tourism destination image, Gallarza et al. (2002: 61) conclude that the local residents are involved in the destination image research in two ways. One is residents' active role in destination image study, which means local residents of destination hold images of their own place of residence which may be different from the images perceived by tourists. The other is the residents' passive role in the destination image study: residents are viewed as a part of destination image and their attitude towards tourism industry and tourists influence the tourists' image of the destination (Gallarza et al., 2002: 61).

There are few papers focusing on the residents' active role in destination image studies, which is how residents view the place of residence. Witter (1985) has made a comparison analysis of attitudes about a resort area between tourists and local retailers (as a segment of local community). He finds that retailers evaluate the destination significantly more positively than that of tourists and retailer residents of the destination and tourists hold different opinions of what tourists look for in a vacation destination (Witter 1985). Jutla (2000) investigates distinct images of Simla from tourists and local residents: for tourists, they pay more attention to natural and cultural landscape while for local residents, their familiarity with the city is important, and local residents blame the problems such as congestion, over-development, and high

cost of living to the presence of tourists.

There are many studies about the community's/ residents' attitude towards tourism in tourism literature. Several models have been implemented to explain the relationship between tourism and the community in the tourism destination as well as the attitude held by residents (Getz, 1994: 248). From a time scale axis, community's opinion on tourism and its impact have changed in different development periods of tourism. Jafari summarizes four platforms as "advocary, cautionary, adaptancy and knowledge-based", however, these four platforms are "additive and parallel, rather than sequential" (Breakey, 2005: 5-6). According to Jafari (1990: 34-36), the advocacy platform is filled with the economic prospects of tourism, and both private and public sectors are aware of the economic importance of the tourism, for example tourism is regarded as a viable economic alternative for many communities, but at the same time, it starts to realize the noneconomic aspects, such as the environment, socio-cultural issues. However, in the second platform- cautionary platform, the position of tourism is challenged, the undesirable consequences of tourism both in economic and non-economic aspects are widely revealed, including the environmental damage, commercialization of local people and culture, the unfair distribution of economic benefits and the structure of the host society. Jafari (1990: 34-36) refers the following platform as adaptancy platform, in order to cope with the benefits and the disadvantage of tourism proposed in the preceding platforms, it attempts to find some types of tourism with fewer negative impacts such as alternative tourism, responsible tourism and ecotourism, which are embraced with good attributes (e.g. community-oriented, benefits both hosts and guests, not destructive). The last knowledge-based platform considers tourism as a whole and aims to form a scientific body of knowledge on tourism.

Apart from Jafari's tourism platforms theory, another two most popular models that interpret this changing trend are Doxey's Irridex model (proposed in 1975) and Butller's destination lifecycle theory (proposed in 1980), and some longitudinal studies about attitudes of host communities towards tourism have been conducted to prove the change of community's attitudes over time (Mason and Cheyne, 2000: 392). Irridex model explains that along with the cost outweighs the benefit perceived from tourism, residents' attitude towards tourism vary from initial 'euphoria', through 'apathy' and 'annoyance' to 'antagonism'(Getz, 1994: 248).The destination lifecycle theory interprets the sequential phases of growth of a destination as well as the associated forms, scope and intensity of tourism development (Fagence, 2002: 60). Due to the different levels of tourism development, and the value changes between benefits and costs, the relationship between tourism and the community transfers from intimate to tension or maybe back to close again.

Social exchange theory is used as a predominant theoretical base by many researchers

who attempt to examine residents' support for any form of tourism development (Andriotis et al. in Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2010: 176). Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010: 176) propose that social exchange theory explores the interaction between two parties with regards to the costs and benefits accruing to each other in the exchange process and the interaction tends to continue only if both parties think they are benefiting more than what they give up during the exchange. With social exchange theory, Konstantinos and Roger (2003: 183) argue that residents who benefit more economic and social advantages have more positive perception of tourism than those who have fewer benefits from tourism. Wang and Pfister (2008: 85) claim tourism benefits are value domains in tourism, and economic and noneconomic value domains affect residents' attitude towards tourism: economic value is rather obvious and clear-the direct economic benefits from tourism activity including personal income, tax revenue, employment and so on, nevertheless, the noneconomic values which may alternatively lie in less tangible variables (e.g. community-building values, community pride) in different circumstances. Wang and Pfister (2008: 92) find out that residents who do not have a direct economic benefit from tourism can also hold positive attitude towards tourism since they feel a strong shared social benefits associated with tourism development. The social exchange theory provides us an important view apart from the economic aspects, and from noneconomic dimension it gives some explanations there are a variety of indicators influence residents' attitude towards tourism development in the specific circumstance.

### **2.2.3 A model involving multiple stakeholders of destination image and brand**

Freeman et al. delimit the term stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Yilmaz and Gunel, 2009: 98). Any stakeholder groups of any organization represent a variety of interests, because each stakeholder group has its own needs, expectations and values (Yilmaz and Gunel, 2009: 99). And the most common way to identify stakeholders is to regard a group of people's distinct relationship with organisations (Yilmaz and Gunel, 2009: 99). Webster (2000) argues that brands are not only the relationship with the end-customer, but also involves other stakeholders in the marketing strategy. In the context of destination image, destination authority, tourists and local residents are important stakeholders. Destination authority intends to project a positive image to the tourists and potential tourists in order to attract more tourists and enhance the brand equity. Tourists and potential tourists may have perceptions and evaluations of the destination due to their personal factors and all the information sources/ agents, while local residents who live and impacted by tourism in the place where they reside might have their own images (Tasci and Kozak, 2006: 314).

The conceptual model (see Figure 3) developed by Garc á et al. considers triple aspects of stakeholders, including visitors, local people and entrepreneurs (Garc á et

al., 2012: 650). From a destination marketing perspective, this model reveals that relationship between destination image and brand. Destination image and brand are related concepts and there is an unclear line between them (García et al., 2012: 650). However, in the tourism literature, there is no consensus about the relationship between image and brand (Tasci and Kozak, 2006).

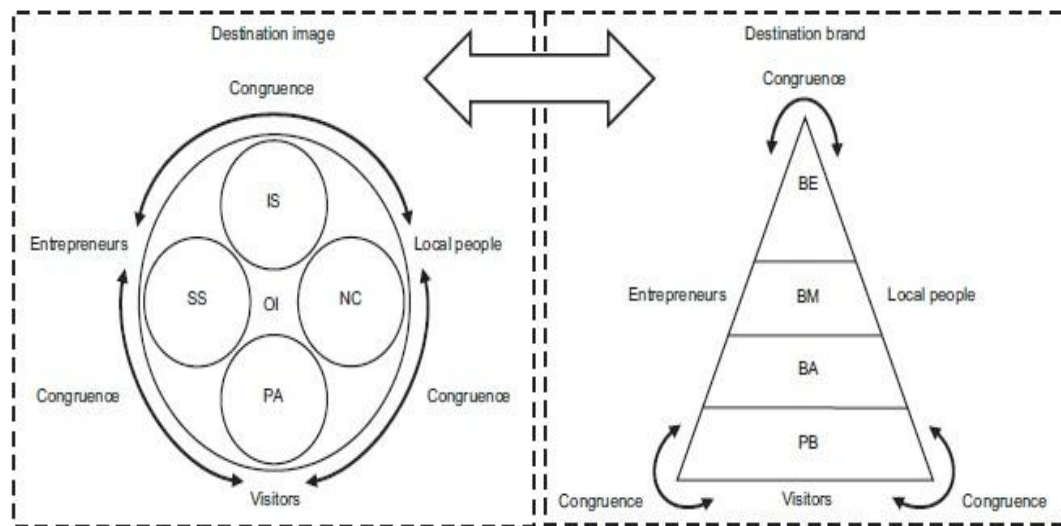


Figure 3: Conceptual model. Relationship between destination image and destination brand. Notes: IS: infrastructure and socioeconomic environment; NC: natural and cultural researches; PA: pleasant atmosphere; SS: social setting environment; OI: overall image; PB: presented brand; BA: brand awareness; BM: brand meaning; BE: brand equity.

(García et al., 2012:650)

In the left part of the model (see Figure 3), it interprets the congruence of destination image among different stakeholders (visitors, local people and entrepreneurs). Tourism entrepreneurs and local people, visitors and local people, entrepreneurs and visitors are all interrelated. In Figure 3, destination image is interpreted in four dimensions, comprising of infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS), natural and cultural researches (NC), pleasant atmosphere (PA) and social setting environment (SS). According to Echtner and Ritchie (2003), all these four aspects are attributes-oriented, ranging from functional characteristics to psychological characteristics. And the overall image (OI) corresponds to more holistic/ imagery pictures about the destination.

Table 2: Proposed constructs of IS, NC, PA, SS and OI

Concept/dimension	Indicator	Literature review
Infrastructure and socioeconomic	Good opportunities for recreation activities Good shopping facilities	Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Beerli and Martín

<b>environment (IS)</b>	High quality of accommodation High quality of infrastructure Low prices of tourism services Good value for money	(2004), Echtner and Ritchie (1991), San Mart ín and Rodr uez (2008)
<b>Natural and cultural resources (NC)</b>	Beautiful landscapes Fascinating architecture Interesting cultural attractions Unusual ways of life and customs	
<b>Pleasant atmosphere (PA)</b>	Relaxing atmosphere/peaceful place It is slightly crowded Place to rest	
<b>Social setting environment (SS)</b>	High level of personal safety High level of cleanliness Unpolluted environment	
<b>Overall image (OI)</b>	The image that I have of this destination is as good or even better than other similar destinations Overall destination image is very positive	

(Garc ía et al., 2012: 652)

In Table 2, Garc ía et al. (2012) based on the literature references and proposed constructs of IS, NC, PA, SS and OI. In this study, these constructs are adopted in the questionnaire design in measuring the perceptions of destination held by both tourists and local residents.

In the right part of the model (see Figure 3), it explains the congruence to achieve brand success through brand equity (BE) among all the stakeholders (Garc ía et al., 2012: 651). Presented brand (PB) refers to the name, logo and their visual presentation, and PB is the brand message that destination authorities and organizations desire to conceptualize and promote through advertising (Garc ía et al., 2012: 648). PB can be associated with unique attributes and attributes generated in the brand, for example, Aaker includes brand's emotional benefits such as "interesting", while Wells claims PB's core elements lie in the attributes related to the attractiveness such as "attractive", "appealing" (Garc ía et al., 2012: 648). Brand awareness (BA) refers to "the ability to recognize and recall a brand" (Aaker et al. in Garc ía et al., 2012: 649). And there are many levels in terms of brand awareness, ranging from brand ignorance, brand recognition, brand recall to top-of-mind and dominant brand (Garc ía et al., 2012: 649). Brand meaning (BM) refers to the dominant perception of the brand in the minds of stakeholders (Berry in Garc ía et al., 2012: 649). And it is the impression comes to your mind first thinking of the brand, causing certain attitudes or feelings (Berry et al. in Garc ía et al., 2012: 649). In my opinion, brand meaning is

similar to the brand image, which is the perception and evaluation associated with the brand. Brand equity (BE) is the company/ organisations' assets and liabilities associated with brand (Aaker in Garc á et al., 2012: 650). Keller (in Garc á et al., 2012: 650) proposes that a brand with positive BE generates distinctive advantages (i.e. powerful communication, effectiveness, high consumer reference and purchase intentions). And in this destination image and brand model, BE is more referring to the loyalty, word-of-mouth (Garc á et al., 2012: 650) and loyalty means the commitment to buy again or recommend it to others (Oliver in Garc á et al., 2012: 650).

## **2.3 Summary of theoretical part**

Destination image has been studied in the tourism literature for a long time and still catches an increasing attention in tourism field (Pike, 2004: 93). It is important to study destination image from the destination marketing perspective, which is closely related to the destination branding. The main concepts are presented in the literature review, including destination image, the relationship between destination image and brand, destination formation process and the travel context especially seasonality in tourism. As Gallarza et al. (2002) claimed that destination image is a complex and multi-faceted concept, this study attempts to capture one aspect of the destination studies. This study emphasizes on the destination image perceived by different stakeholders including destination authority, tourists and residents. For destination authority, destination image is more associated with destination brand, and they attempt to build and promote a positive image to tourists aiming to increasing tourists and establishing customer locality. From tourists' perspective, destination image can be formed before visiting the destination because of diverse information sources/ agents. However, the actual visitation plays an important role in building or modifying image on their minds, besides, the tourist experience in the destination influences tourist satisfaction. While residents have the active and passive role in destination image, which means on the one hand, locals of destination hold images of their place of residence, on the other hand, residents' attitude towards tourism in the destination affects the destination image (Gallarza et al., 2002: 61).

Garc á et al.'s (2012) theoretical model (see Figure 3) presented here involves three stakeholders in destination image and brand. In this model, the destination image is comprised of five constructs, including overall image (OI), infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS), natural and cultural researches (NC), pleasant atmosphere (PA) and social setting environment (SS). In addition, the theoretical model indicates the success of destination marketing lies in the congruency of destination image perceived by three different stakeholders.

In the empirical study, the author attempts to investigate the destination image perceived by three stakeholders, destination authority, tourists and residents in the

case of Fortress of Suomenlinna respectively. And followed by a discussion on whether the image of Suomenlinna held by these three stakeholders is consistent with each other.



## **3. Methodology**

In this chapter, it explains what kind of method is chosen in order to conduct the empirical study aiming to answer the research question. The main research question of this thesis is: what is the destination image perceived by different stakeholders? And the main research question can be divided into three sub-questions as what is the destination image perceived by destination authority, by tourists and by local residents, respectively. A variety of methods including qualitative and quantitative methods are implemented to answer the research questions. 3.1 discuss the research strategy about structured and unstructured methods in destination image studies, and 3.2 deals with how the data is collected in this empirical study, while 3.3 is the summary of the method part.

### **3.1 Research design**

The research question comprises three stakeholders, which makes empirical study complex. It is a question to think what kind of method is going to use to collect data on three stakeholders. Taking into consideration of the characteristics of each stakeholder and manipulity of the study, three different methods are applied. Qualitative semi-structured interview is used to investigate the image of Suomenlinna projected and promoted by destination authority; qualitative online content analysis is applied to explore the image of Suomenlinna perceived by tourists who have visited the site; quantitative survey (questionnaire) is used to figure out the image of Suomenlinna from the perspective of residents compared to tourists. 3.1.1 define the qualitative and quantitative methods in social science in general, while 3.1.2 specify the qualitative and quantitative methods applied in the measurement of destination image study.

#### **3.1.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods**

Qualitative and quantitative are frequently used methods in social sciences. Thomas (2003: 2) defines qualitative and quantitative in a simple way as follows:

“The qualitative methods involve a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements or amounts. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, focus attention on measurements and amounts (more and less, larger and smaller, often and seldom, similar and different) of the characteristics displayed by the people and events that the researcher studies.”

#### **3.1.2 The measurement of destination image**

Gallarza et al. (2001) argues the measurement of destination image is one of the most popular topics in the umbrella of destination image studies. Structured and

unstructured methodologies are mostly used in the empirical assessment of destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Jenkins, 1999; Gallarza et al., 2001). According to Echtner and Ritchie (1993: 5), structured method especially the scale items based on a set of specific attributes to rate and compare images will be effective for measuring the common and attribute-based components of image, but may be not useful in catching the unique and holistic components, and the unstructured method such as open-ended questions is effective in this sense. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggest that a combination of structure and unstructured methodologies must be used in order to capturing a full picture of the destination.

In this article, the author adopts the thought of Echtner and Ritchie to combine the qualitative (unstructured) and quantitative (structured) methodologies in the empirical study.

## **3.2 Data collection**

### **3.2.1 Semi-structured interview**

Bryman (2008: 436) claims in terms of qualitative interview, there are two main types, which are unstructured interview and semi-structured interview. According to Bryman (2008: 196), semi-structured interview refers to the interviewer prepares a series of questions that are in general forms of an interview schedule but it is able to change the sequences of the questions. The reason of implementing semi-structure interview is considering that semi-structured interview not only covers the research topic or the listed questions (an interview guide), but also the interviewee is provided a great deal of room in how to reply (Bryman, 2008: 438). It pays more attention to the interviewee's point of view and tends to be flexible and enables participants to provide insights into how they view the questions which is important to this research (Bryman, 2008: 437-438). In the interview with the tourism manager, a series of questions is prepared as an interview guide, however, the interview is not strictly conducted by the sequence of the interview guide. Some questions are varied and some are not covered according to the response of the participant. Through the interview with the tourism manager, the author intends to know how destination authority views the image of Suomenlinna held by tourists as well as residents, more importantly, how destination authority attempts to project and promote the image of Suomenlinna from destination marketing perspective.

In order to answer the research question of what is the destination image projected by the destination authority, interview is an effective way to get rapid results from responsible person. Firstly, through browsing the official website of Suomenlinna, the author learnt that the Fortress of Suomenlinna is directly run by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, who is operating and managing all the things related to Suomenlinna,

subordinating to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Suomenlinna 2012). Secondly, the author went to the visitor center of Suomenlinna and asked who is someone could answer the questions of destination image. The author got the contact information of the tourism manager who is in charge of destination image things. Then the author sent an email to make an appointment with the tourism manager about an interview. Besides, the guideline of the interview was sent to the tourism manager (see Appendix 1) about one week before the interview aiming to improve the efficiency of the interview. The interview took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April in the visitor center of Suomenlinna from 11 am to 11:45 am and the whole conversation was recorded in order to help the author to restore all the information.

### **3.2.2 Online content analysis**

According to Altheide (in Bryman, 2008: 529), qualitative content analysis is an approach, which is different from traditional quantitative content analysis, that researcher is constantly revising the themes or categories that are extracted from examination of documents. The reason for choosing qualitative content analysis is regarding it enables a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials (Bryman, 2008: 529) and qualitative text analysis is inductive, non-statistical and usually exploratory in nature (Popping and Ryan in Gretzel et al., 2008: 342). Due to the research purpose, the author applies qualitative analysis to investigate the image of Suomenlinna perceived by tourists who have visited Suomenlinna. Besides, the text is online based since to date Internet has become a popular cyber site where researchers can gather data from all over the world at home.

Altheide describes the steps in qualitative content analysis that researchers are supposed to do:

- generate a research question;
- become familiar with the context within which the documents were/ are generated;
- become familiar with a small number of documents (6-10);
- generate some categories that will guide the collection of data and draft a schedule for collecting the data in terms of the generated categories;
- test the schedule by using it for collecting data from a number of documents;
- revise the schedule and select further cases to sharpen it up (Bryman, 2008: 531)

Some tourists are used to writing down their travelling to memorize trips in their dairies or articles. Since the development of technology, people are doing so many things on the internet such as writing blogs, comments and reviews in the e-communities especially as the rapid development of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and a variety of social communities. Some scholars have been doing the research on the content analysis on the text, visual and video materials/ data in

tourism field. The narratives about travel experience shared in the social community may influence the readers' future image of the destination (Volo, 2010: 299). The author thought maybe it was a good idea to find suitable materials where tourists wrote down their real feelings and evaluations about the destination after their visitation. Then the author used Google to search item "Fortress of Suomenlinna", in website Tripadvisor, as one of the top hits, there are 231 reviews and comments (viewed on 17<sup>th</sup> April) on the Fortress of Suomenlinna written in a single website. People who write down the reviews in the Tripadvisor are Finnish and foreign tourists who have visited Suomenlinna and put in writing of their personal experience about the journey to the site, which is also helpful for potential tourists to use these reviews as references to make decisions.

A total of 231 reviews (24 pages) were posted in the form of texts. The reviews are in the chronological order, with the most recent ones in the top page (the first page). They range from May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 to April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. There is a problem due to the diverse written languages, the author narrowed down the reviews in English to analyse considering the Google translate may be not accurate to translate other languages into English. Then there is another concern: who are those tourists writing reviews in English, are they all from English-speaking countries? If so, it maybe causes problems of sample homogeneity, which may influence the generalization of the result, because tourists from the same country may perceive things in a certain way or so-called stereotypes. Bearing this concern in the mind, the author investigated where the tourists who written the English reviews come from. The author found out about 14 out of 24 pages and 141 of 231 reviews were written in English with tourists from throughout the world. Finally, the author chose to analyze the reviews written in English, which were 141 reviews (texts) all together.

After collecting data, the author needs to code the data in the purpose of research. Bryman believes that as a strategy of searching themes in data, qualitative content analysis should pay attention to the coding approach (Bryman, 2008: 531). Besides, qualitative method involves categorization and coding (Gretzel et al., 2008: 342). When reviewing the texts, each text (review/ comment) was decomposed into "meaning units", which is considered as "words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other through content and context" (Graneheim and Lundman in Banyai, 2009: 56-57). In this research, each text was coded into a word document, which includes the information about nationality of the author who wrote the review/ comment, and the meaning units. Later, based on the research question-how do the tourists perceive the image of Suomenlinna, the meaning units are categorized into different themes according to author's subjective interpretation of the texts (Banyai, 2009: 57).

### 3.2.3 Survey-questionnaire

There is a consideration on designing survey questions: open-ended, close-ended, partially open-ended or rating-scale questions (Sherri, 2012: 93). Sherri claims each type of questions with its own advantages and disadvantages: open-ended questions allow participants to give a variety of responses but difficult to analysis statistically; closed-ended questions are easy to analyse statistically but strictly limit the response of participants. Many researchers prefer to use a Likert-type scale because it is easy to analyse statistically (Sherri, 2012: 94). In this study, questionnaires are designed combined with all these three types of questions. There are similarities and differences between two questionnaires for residents and tourists. The identical part is the items associated to the Suomenlinna referring to constructs of IS, NC, PA, SS and OI (see Table 2). And five-point Likert scale is used to rate the attributes and overall image of Suomenlinna from 1 (total disagreement) to 5 (total agreement). The same part in background information includes variables of age, gender, education level, but the different part of background information is that: residents are asked about how long they have being living in Suomenlinna, and whether their job is related to tourism industry, while tourists are requested to state whether they are Finnish or foreigners and how many times they have visited Suomenlinna. The background information questions are designed with open-ended questions such as age, how long time have been living in Suomenlinna and closed-ended questions (choice questions and multiple-choice questions) such as gender, educational level. Apart from background information, another difference in two questionnaires is that for residents there are two more questions compared to tourists. One is that residents are asked to express their general attitudes toward tourists, as their passive role in the destination image. The other question is an open-ended question referring to Echtner and Ritchie (1993: 5): What image or characteristics come to your mind when you relate Suomenlinna to a tourist destination? Since the questionnaire for residents is mostly the structured statement about the attributes items of Suomenlinna, this open-ended question gives freedom for residents to speak out their opinions of the Suomenlinna. The advantage of open-ended question here is that respondents have the freedom to express their own thoughts rather than restricted to the choices offered by the author (Pallant, 2007: 8).

In terms of sampling techniques, convenience sampling is used as the sampling technique in conducting the survey. According to Sherri (2012: 102), convenience sampling refers to involve getting participants wherever you can find them, typically wherever is convenient. This convenience sampling is less expensive and easier to generate compared to other sampling techniques such as random selection (Sherri, 2012: 100). For the resident sample, several places are chosen as the frequent places among locals according to suggestions by some locals. The survey places are the supermarket, the library and the R-kiosk. For tourist sample, survey is conducted in the main attraction points in Suomenlinna. Considering the small amount of questionnaires, in order to improve the respond rate of the survey, the author

implemented the questionnaire one by one, rather than distributing several questionnaires at the same time.

After the designing of two questionnaires, the survey is conducted in two phases. Due to the limited time and human resources, 30 tourists and 30 residents were surveyed in mid-April, 2012. Phase I is a pilot-test to ensure the instructions, questions and scales are clear rather than vague to answer. Ten questionnaires for each sample group (residents and tourists) are surveyed. Through the short conversation with one by one respondent, the author found two questions difficult to answer for either residents or tourists. It was found that the item “high quality of accommodation” is difficult for tourists to answer because they are mostly half-day trip or one-day trip which makes them have no idea about the accommodation facilities in Suomenlinna. Another question is the item “it is slightly crowded”, local residents reflect that it really depends on the seasons. So these two question items were removed from the questionnaire considering the appropriateness of the survey. In phase II, twenty more questionnaires from each sample were done using convenient sampling techniques. Each questionnaire was distributed to the respondents individually and implemented one by one and face to face.

### **3.3 Summary of method part**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methods and approaches used in the empirical study implemented in order to answer the research question. The study is combined with qualitative (unstructured) and quantitative (structured) methods due to the unique characteristics of each stakeholder and the applicable of the study in the limited time and human resource.

The data was collected in diverse ways in the structure of three stakeholders. The author finds the use of diverse methods and approaches helps to capture a more comprehensive picture of the destination image perceived by different stakeholders. Qualitative semi-structured interview shows how destination authority view the image they attempt to project and promote as well as how they understand the image of Suomenlinna held by other stakeholders. Online content analysis gives view of perceptions and evaluations of destination image from perspective of tourists who have visited Suomenlinna, while survey (questionnaire) displays the local residents’ opinion on the image of Suomenlinna compared to tourists.

## **4. Analysis**

Silverman (2007: 9) claims that data-analysis is more important than the source of data, and researchers should spend more time in analyzing data and writing conclusions than gathering data and doing literature reviews. Silverman argues the importance of “manufacture” data as “reality” will not speak for itself, but have to be understood by means of certain concerns and perspectives and by logistics of research (2007: 38). In this chapter, the author keeps the research question in mind and analyzes different data in the structure of three main involving stakeholders, i.e. destination authority, tourists and residents. 4.1 give a brief introduction to the study object- Fortress of Suomenlinna. 4.2 illustrate the destination image of Suomenlinna from the destination authority’ perspective, which is explored directly through the interview with the tourism manager. It analyses through the structure of the interview guideline (see Appendix 1), including seasonality in Suomenlinna’s tourism, what the destination authority have understood about Suomenlinna’s image held by near-home tourists, international tourists and local residents, and most importantly, the image that destination authority attempts to project and promote. 4.3 is the qualitative content analysis based on the online material of 141 tourists’ reviews/ comments on the Suomenlinna, to explore destination image perceived by tourists who have visited Suomenlinna, in the structure of the context of Suomenlinna, and the constructs of destination image proposed in the theoretical model (see Figure 3 and Table 2), i.e. Seasonality, Domestic tourists and international tourists, Overall image (OI), Infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS), Natural and cultural resources (NC), Pleasant atmosphere (PA) and Social setting environment (SS), while 4.4 discuss about the local residents’ opinion towards the place where they reside through structured and unstructured methods. Destination image perceived by residents in Suomenlinna is analysed on both active role and passive role as literature proposed (Gallarza et al., 2002). In the structured method, it analyses through a comparison of mean value rated by tourists and residents about the individual attributes as well as overall image on a 5-point scale, which indicates residents’ active role of the destination image, besides, the question of residents’ general attitude towards tourism in Suomenlinna indicates the passive role of the destination image. Finally, it analyses an open-ended question about residents’ thought on Suomenlinna as a tourist destination.

### **4.1 An introduction to the study object**

In this thesis, the study object is Fortress of Suomenlinna (abbreviate as Suomenlinna in this paper) in Finland. Suomenlinna means Castle of Finland in English, the Swedish name as Sveaborg, which was built in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the Swedish ear as a maritime fortress, located on a group of islands at the entrance of Helsinki’s harbor (Suomenlinna 2012; UNESCO 2012). Suomenlinna was

listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991 as an interesting example of European military architecture of old times (Suomenlinna 2012; UNESCO 2012). Suomenlinna has an important role in Finnish history, and it has been a property of three sovereign states: it used to be a part of Swedish era and a part of Russian era in the history before Finland won its independence (Suomenlinna 2012).

Today, Suomenlinna is managed by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, who is subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Suomenlinna 2012). Made up of 8 islands (Kustaanmiekka, Susisaari, Iso Mustasaari, Pikku Mustasaari, Länsi-Mustasaari, Särkkä, Pormestarinluoto and Lonna) with a land area of 80 hectares (Suomenlinna 2012), Suomenlinna is now a mix of living area, working space as well as a tourist destination, and about 200 old buildings, the majority of them are still in daily uses as housing, working place, tourism facilities and so on (Suomenlinna 2012). As a living and working area, there are about 850 residents and the area offers 400 jobs around the year and 500 jobs in the summer time; as a tourist destination, Suomenlinna has become one of Finland's most popular sights for both domestic and international market, attracting about 700,000 visitors every year (Suomenlinna 2012).

As a tourist destination, a visit center in the Suomenlinna belonging to the Governing Body of Suomenlinna opens all the year round to offering tourists information. Suomenlinna offers tourists with a variety of opportunities ranging from exploring the fortress built in the Swedish and Russian era to enjoying parks and seas (Suomenlinna 2012). Besides, it provides diverse activities and sights including museums, exhibitions, events, handicrafts, and open-air theatre and so on depending on different times of the year (Suomenlinna 2012). Suomenlinna also has restaurants, cafes and a brewery with a beer garden for tourists (Suomenlinna 2012). In addition, Suomenlinna owns a range of conference and banquet facilities throughout the year (Suomenlinna 2012), which also attracts business sector to organizing meetings and parties here.





Figure 4: A map of Suomenlinna (Aarography 2012)

## 4.2 Destination authority's perspective through the semi-structured interview

### 4.2.1 Seasonality in Suomenlinna

There is a strong seasonality in Suomenlinna tourism industry just like many other destinations in Nordic countries. For tourism in Suomenlinna, the calendar year can be divided into summer and winter season. According to the tourism manager, summer is the high season from May till September while winter is the off-season from October to April next year. There is a big gap between summer and winter season, with regard to tourist number, for instance, in 2011, tourists who visit Suomenlinna in summer season took up 76% out of tourists in the whole year. It is always a challenging considering the seasonality in Suomenlinna, and it is not a problem to attract more tourists but too many tourists coming in summer, while it is quiet in winter. The seasonality also shapes the behavior of many entrepreneurs or

actors in Suomenlinna, which influences tourists and residents' perceptions on the destination.

#### **4.2.2 The image of Suomenlinna perceived by tourists and residents**

According to the tourism manager, there is a continuous growth of tourist number visiting Suomenlinna every year and last year 2011 it broke the new record with 778, 000 tourists. In terms of domestic and international market, domestic market takes up a big proportion; about 60%-65% out of all tourists are from the domestic domain. More precisely, the majority of domestic tourists are from the Great Helsinki area, i.e. Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa (see Figure 5). For this market segment, it is more likely to be called near-home tourists. While for foreign tourists, they are from all over the world.

The Governing Body of Suomenlinna conducts survey every second year to investigate the image of Suomenlinna perceived by different stakeholders. There is some difference between tourists from near-home areas and abroad, as well as the local people who live in Suomenlinna.

##### *The image of Suomenlinna in the eyes of near-home tourists*

The majority of tourists visiting Suomenlinna are near-home tourists from Great Helsinki area (Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa). There are two important characteristics associated with this tourist segment.

Firstly, tourists from the Great Helsinki area regard Suomenlinna as their “backyard”, “a beautiful setting”, and “a nice day out in the summer time”. From this point of view, this image is more associated with the natural attributes of Suomenlinna. As the tourism manager claimed that tourists from the Great Helsinki area usually visit Suomenlinna in “a sunny summer day”, “They come here just to have a walk and want to relax”.

Secondly, tourists from the Great Helsinki area are really proud of Suomenlinna. As for information sources discussed in the theory part, for Finnish they study the history of Suomenlinna as an important part of Finnish history in the fifth grade, and schools will also organize trips to visit Suomenlinna at least for students in Great Helsinki area, so in this sense, this kind of experience (textbook and school trip) is more likely to be regarded as the organic image, which may transfer to knowledge and is deeply rooted in their minds. So this contributes to their proudness image of Suomenlinna. Besides, tourists who live in Great Helsinki area are willing to guide their relatives and friends especially guests from abroad to visit Suomenlinna in their hometown, which functions as word-of-mouth recommendations.

However, the tourism manager points out that it is still a small segment of tourists

from the Great Helsinki area who visit Suomenlinna compared to the whole population in Great Helsinki area. There are still steps to go to expand the near-home market.



Figure 5: A map of Great Helsinki area and Suomenlinna (Travel Yahoo 2012)

#### *The image of Suomenlinna from foreign tourists' perspective*

The survey done by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna shows foreign tourists regard Suomenlinna more as “a historical site”. Nowadays, leisure tourists who travel abroad will refer to some sources to make decision choices especially for who travel long-distance. Suomenlinna, as a World Heritage Site, is known by most tourists who visit Suomenlinna, manager confirms about 60% of international tourists travelling to Suomenlinna know it as a World Heritage Site before they came here. Manager says “They read it somewhere it is a must-see and why it is a must-see”. “Somewhere” refers to the diverse information sources such as website, guidebook (e.g. Lonely planet, Tripadvisor) and so on, which to date plays a significant role in the destination marketing although the destination authority does not participate or passively participate in this field of campaign.

#### *The image of Suomenlinna from local people's view*

Suomenlinna is a district belonging to the city of Helsinki and now there are about 850 residents living in Suomenlinna. People who live in Suomenlinna have a variety of professions, some have work on the islands but some commute to mainland of Helsinki to work every weekday, besides, there are some artists living there.

From the survey the destination authority has done, local people equal Suomenlinna to “home”. The tourism manager claims “they strongly feel the community, more like a small village, and they feel the sea, the nature, and also the quietness of winter time, as the core attribute image”. So for local residents, the close relationship or the strong

bond in the community where they know and trust each other is unique compared to living in the metropolis- Helsinki. Another core value of living in Suomenlinna is the beautiful nature on the island and the peaceful and quietness in winter.

### **4.2.3 The image that destination authority attempts to project**

The tourism manager says that “as the site or brand manager, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna wants to promote the destination as a whole, while other entrepreneurs or actors may do their own business”. There are more or less 30 different actors in the field of tourism in this small area, which makes it challenging to market the destination image as a whole to tourists. The tourism manager claims that “Visitors who come here they do not know or care, actually they do not need to know every museum has different owners”. It proves Agapito’s opinion that the complexity of the destination is associated with the fact that destination is a mixture of specific tourism products and services such as transportation, shopping, catering (Agapito, 2010: 92). Bramwell and Alletop (in Wang and Xiang, 2007: 75) argue that the fragmented nature of tourism destination, which refers to stakeholders with diverse business goals but responsible for different components of the total offer. In this case, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna acts as the “site and brand manager”, but there are about 30 other actors with their own different goals, more precisely business goals in the Suomenlinna destination. However, tourists are more tend to regard the destination as a whole, which makes them to build holistic and overall image towards the destination.

#### *Presenting the authentic history to tourists in an interesting way*

According to the tourism manager, as the main actor and official representative of Suomenlinna, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna attempts to “present the origin of the Fortress and how it plays a key role in the whole nations’ history in three layers: the Swedish time of Finland , the Russian time of Finland and Finland Independent time”. Compared to other stakeholders or actors within the destination such as the museum owners, restaurant operators, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna takes more serious and significant responsibility of presenting the authentic Finnish history to the tourists.

It is the historical attribute that the destination authority intends to project to tourists. After getting feedbacks from tourists, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna attempts to offer tourists authentic experience about the history of Suomenlinna in an interesting way. One main concern is to use story-telling to present the history in a vivid and interesting way. The tourism manager puts it “history is usually boring but if you can sort of put the history in the story...tourists come here could experience the history”. However, as a living community where is the home to 850 residents, sometimes it is difficult to balance the interests of tourists and local residents. For example, tourists may request to see the “real scene” of people wearing old costumes

walking on the streets to help them visualize the history. However, as a living community, local residents do not want to be interrupted of their daily life. As tourism manager said that with the rapid development of technology, it is more likely to recreate the life of old times in Suomenlinna and present to our tourists in the near future.

*How to “keep the door open” to tourists?*

It is a challenging and a tough question that how to balance the seasonality in Suomenlinna tourism industry. The main object of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna is to attract tourists in winter time rather than attracting tourists in summer, because “during the sunny days in summer, “we are kind of sold out, all the services such as restaurants, café toilets are crowded with tourists”. However, in winter, the whole Suomenlinna is rather quiet, although which is a core value for local residents who enjoy the peacefulness of the winter, but for the destination authority, they intend to “keep the door open” to tourists. As one of the most popular destination in Helsinki or even in Finland, it becomes a must-see whenever tourists visit Helsinki or Finland. And these tourists who choose to visit Suomenlinna in winter time are usually foreign tourists, however, the current situation is although the destination is open all the year round, there is not much to offer to the tourists in winter. As there are more or less 30 different stakeholders/ actors in Suomenlinna offering different kinds of tourism facilities, and in winter, they choose to close the door. It influences the tourist satisfaction since there is no restaurant, café or shop open to tourists, and almost all the museums are closed, hence it may affect the destination image perceived by tourists who visit the destination as well as the potential tourists. The tourism manager claims the problem of the diverse actors in the Suomenlinna “we cannot do alone, if one of this bunch sending a wrong message, it is not good for the united one. As site manager, we are frustrated, you cannot do everything you would like to do or the process they go forward but the pave is quite slow”. Apart from the stakeholders on the islands, there are other actors which are direct or indirect connected to the tourism in Suomenlinna, which also influence the destination image perceived by tourists. For example, the ferry between the mainland of Helsinki and the islands of Suomenlinna is a part of Helsinki city public transportation- HSL. And the tourist information center in Helsinki where tourists are probably going to inquire the information about Fortress of Suomenlinna, if failed to give the right information, which also affects the tourist perception and satisfaction of the destination since tourists tend to view all the experience as a whole. So there needs to be a close cooperation between different stakeholders and actors no matter they are direct or indirect related to the destination.

The seasonality challenge is a typical problem for the high-latitude tourist destinations. The Governing Body of Suomenlinna believes it is much easier to extend the summer season than to focus on the winter season. As for site manager, the Governing Body of

Suomenlinna intends to attract more tourists in winter time, when there are enough tourists, “the entrepreneurs/ actors in Suomenlinna could keep their door more open, and it could benefit them and us as site manager”. One important concern for tourism in winter is the service, as the tourism manager puts it “there should be at least one place where you can get hot drink, some food and one of the museums or exhibitions about the Suomenlinna where you can get the experience and sense where this place was”.

As the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, they are focusing one thing to offer something to the tourists in winter. “The visitor center is under renewing in this season, the whole museum tears apart and is going to build again. One thing every year we get many customer feedbacks is that they want this place to have more shopping facilities such as a cafe. There will be a small museum shop starting of June behind the information desk, and next winter, we are going to build a very small café, then we can be sure that there is one place where foreigners can get warm inside and go to the museum and learn the story”. And the good news is efforts are made to gather all the 30 stakeholders within the destination and starts to corporate to promote the destination as a whole. For example, some museum owners would think to open there door longer for September, October, and a new café with a small art shop starts to open every weekends and also Fridays and Mondays.

As the World Heritage Site, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna attempts to present it to everyone throughout the world as a historical treasure, where tourists get to know the Finnish history, so the door is always open to all the tourists. For near-home tourists, Suomenlinna is viewed as a “backyard”, however, this segment is still small compared to the whole population in the Great Helsinki area. The destination authority aims to educate the residents in the Great Helsinki area about the history of Suomenlinna, more importantly how to behave in the historical site of Suomenlinna. It is always a hot topic about whether to charge the entrance fee of Suomenlinna to its tourists. However, due to the opposition of near-home tourists who regard Suomenlinna as their “own backyards”, they do not want to pay. So at the moment, there is no entrance fee for both tourists from domestic and international market. However, there is a problem that many near-home tourists do not behave properly when visiting Suomenlinna. For example, during the Wappu holiday (April 30th or May 1<sup>st</sup>), hundreds of youngsters come to Suomenlinna with their own beers, without leaving any money to the destination but remaining all the rubbish on the islands. Besides, since many historical articles such as guns, cannons are presented in the open area, some tourists do not have the awareness to protect the historical treasures. So keep the door open but educate tourists how to behave in this historical site is another promoting object for the Governing Body of Suomenlinna.

### 4.3 Perceptions of tourists through qualitative content analysis

After careful reviewing of 141 short written texts, the author interprets texts based on the research question and personal subjectivity, and seven themes are categorized through the specific context of tourism in Suomenlinna and constructs of destination image in the theoretical model proposed by Garc á et al. (2012) (see Figure 3 and Table 2).

#### *Seasonality*

On the whole, tourists who visit Suomenlinna during summer time (June, July and August) are more likely to give positive perceptions of the destination compared to those who visit Suomenlinna in the rest of the year, but it does not mean that tourists who visit in the winter usually give negative image and vice versa. “Weather”, “summer” and “winter” are frequently mentioned in the texts. For example, many tourists who visit Suomenlinna in winter describe as “windy”, “cold”, “everything was closed in winter”. Due to high latitude of Helsinki, the winter is usually very long (from November to the next year of March) and the winter temperature is rather low (average -5°C). During the winter time, the majority of tourism facilities are closed such as tunnels, many museums, cafes, restaurants, handicrafts shops and so on. Additionally, there is much less activities going on in the Suomenlinna during winter. On the contrary, many tourists who visit there in summer, identifies a variety of things to explore, such as “picnic”, “swimming”, “sunbathing”, “theatre shows”, “explore some of the interesting underground corridors”, “a jazz festival”, “try the local brewery” and so on.

Just as one tourist summarized:

“This was my second trip to Suomenlinna, my first being last April, when there was still snow on the ground and hardly any tourists. This time though, the island really came alive in the nice weather, it's a very pretty place to visit and definitely worth seeing.”

However, due to a big difference of tourists' number in Suomenlinna between winter and summer, visitors in winter usually evaluated Suomenlinna as “tranquil”, “quite” and “peaceful” while some tourists who went there in summer commented like “crowded”.

#### *Domestic tourists and international tourists*

In the 141 reviews/ comments, tourists who wrote down and shared their experience in the Tripadvisor community, there are about 35% of Finnish tourists, and the majority of Finnish tourists are near-home tourists, mainly from surrounding

cities-Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa. About 61% of commenters are foreigners from USA, UK, Russia, other European countries, India, South Korea, Japan, China, Canada, Australia, Baltic countries, Nordic countries and so on.

In general, no matter domestic tourists or international tourists, they have high perception and evaluation of the Fortress of Suomenlinna. All together 231 tourists who gave comments in the Tripadvisor websites (viewed on 17<sup>th</sup> April ), including comments in English and other languages, 115 out of 231 comments evaluate this destination as “excellent”, and 87 out of 231 comments give “very good” ratings. So all together, about 87% of tourists rate Fortress of Suomenlinna as “very good” and above.

For international tourists, usually they are long-distance traveller, except for Russian, Swedish and Estonian tourists. The majority of international tourists spend a half-day trip in Suomenlinna, usually 3-4 hours’ walking tour on the islands. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Fortress of Suomenlinna has become a strong brand. Fortress of Suomenlinna is the most popular tourist destination in Helsinki. Many international tourists regard Fortress of Suomenlinna as “a must-see”, “highlights” in Helsinki, where they can learn Finnish history and explore the old times. For some tourists, they come to Helsinki because of Suomenlinna, as one Indian tourist said “Suomenlinna was the reason I chose to take a stop-over at Helsinki, and I wasn't disappointed a bit”.

For domestic tourists, mostly are near-home tourists from Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, they usually have been to Suomenlinna for many times. As a historical and cultural destination, Suomenlinna has special meanings for Finns as an important part of Finnish history, e.g. “This former maritime fortress island has a lot of meaning especially for us Finns or anybody who are interesested (interested) in history.” Furthermore, today, Suomenlinna’s profile in near-home tourists’ minds is more like a city park or public area where they can relax and have fun. Many tourists quote as “Suomenlinna is very popular place for a summer time picnic among locals”, “Suomelinna is our favourite spot for picnics during summertime”, “perfect for picnic”, “picnic spot”. Another high frequency word among near-home tourists is “swim/swimming”, Suomenlinna is a destination in front of their home where they can enjoy the sunshine and lay on the beach in the best time of a year. A tourist from Helsinki makes a good summary of how near-home tourists view Suomenlinna and what they do in Suomenlinna: “It is absolutely recommended on a beautiful day. Walk around, have a picnic, buy an ice cream or luxury food, see the well-preserved fortress and learn about the history. Go swimming in the sea, relax on the beach. Buy handmade crafts and candies. This place is really a paradise in the summer and a very popular spot for the locals.”



### *Overall image (OI)*

Tourists who make comments about Suomenlinna from many dimensions, and we can use Echtner and Ritchie's (2003) model (see Figure 2) to analyze the image perceived by tourists who have visited the destination: functional vs. psychological, attributes vs. holistic (imagery) and common vs. unique. Correspondingly, the model proposed by Garc á et al. (2012) about constructs of destination image (see Table 2) influenced by Echtner and Ritchie (2003) investigate destination image from a different perspective. For example, in Garc á et al.'s (2012) model, the overall image (OI) is correspond with holistic (imagery) aspect in Echtner and Ritchie's (2003) model, all these Infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS), Natural and cultural resources (NC), Pleasant atmosphere (PA), and Social setting environment (SS) are related to attributes dimension, and IS, NC, SS are related to functional dimension while PA to psychological dimension. In the qualitative content analysis, the main line will be the model of Garc á et al. (2012), but combined with Echtner and Ritchie's (2003) model.

In general, tourists perceive positive image on the destination of Suomenlinna. Definitely, Fortress of Suomenlinna is a must-see in Helsinki, and Suomenlinna is an "interesting" destination with "a lot to explore", offering a variety of things to tourists, history, culture, and nature and so on, as one tourist said "history, nature and the Baltic sea, all in one package". From text analysis, Suomenlinna seems to be a destination suitable for tourists in diverse age ranges, in diverse types of tourists except for tourists with walk disabled because the only way to explore the Suomenlinna is walking but with some cliffs and a part of uneven roads.

Located in a few of islands, Suomenlinna has become a special place and differed from the downtown of Helsinki. From this point, it is a unique strength as a tourist destination. As tourists identify Suomenlinna as "like another world next to downtown Helsinki", "a must-see for a quick escape from the city", "It's also a wonderful place to get away from the city", "a perfect place if you plan a lazy day in a special place" etc. Compared to the urban tourism in downtown Helsinki, Suomenlinna is special/ unique with its "beautiful surroundings/ nature", "relaxing/ peaceful atmosphere", "old architecture/ buildings" and so on.

### *Infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS)*

As a whole, Suomenlinna is a destination "good value for money". Many tourists mentioned the ferry trip as "reasonable/ inexpensive price" and surprised that there is "no entrance fee for the Fortress of Suomenlinna", and the only fee you have to pay is to visit the museums and the guided tour, which are also defined as "worth". The museums are interesting especially the submarine and the guided tours are informative. As one tourist said "a good fun from budget point (point) of view, all you need is ferry ticket, no entry fees". Moreover, most of tourists have a good and deep impression on the return ferry trip from market square of Helsinki to Suomenlinna.

They have got a fantastic/ excellent view of both downtown Helsinki and islands, e.g. “you have an excellent view of Helsinki and its harbor from the boat”, and “the ferry trip to the fortress is also an experience”.

As for tourism facilities such as accommodation, cafes and restaurants, shopping places, it varies between high-season (summer) and off-season (the rest of a year). Since almost all the tourists mentioned their trip to Suomenlinna is a half-day or a whole without staying overnight on the islands, they do not refer to the accommodations. But for some spots such as the submarine, tunnels, the majority of cafes and restaurants, souvenir shops are closed in the winter, which creates inconvenient for some tourists who visit there in winter, e.g. “nothing to do during winters”, “most of the attractions were closed due to it being winter”.

Some tourists mentioned the “brewery” on the island where they can enjoy the “local beer”, and they can sit in the brewery garden and taste the local beer during the summer time. In author’s opinion, this can be regarded as a unique feature or a highlight to the destination, sort of surprise or “wow” factor.

#### *Natural and cultural resources (NC)*

Natural and cultural attributes/ features are mostly discussed themes in the texts, and according to Echtner and Ritchie (2003), these belongs to functional characteristics. As an old -time fortress, it is abundant in history and culture. Fortress of Suomenlinna was built in the Swedish era to protect against Russia, and many spots are well maintained as today tourist can still see the ramparts/ walls, guns, cannons, storage rooms, tunnels and so on. A diverse of museums displays the historical and cultural features to tourists. Suomenlinna is a destination where tourists can have a quick glance of the Finnish history and culture. Tourists evaluate it as “magic of the Nordic past”, “great place to see history”, “very historical”, “great historic site” etc. The most of old buildings with a long history are well preserved and used as working space and housing for inhabitants. The nature in Suomenlinna is also highly evaluated by tourists as “beautiful nature” with hills, parks, beaches and a great view of Baltic Sea.

#### *Pleasant atmosphere (PA)*

Compared to other features, pleasant atmosphere focuses on the psychological dimension, more related to the mood and feeling when tourists visit the destination. Suomenlinna is located in the islands and the only way to get there is by water, which makes it a “remote”, “isolated” area although it only takes about 15 minutes to get there from the market square of Helsinki. So it is free from the usual fast-paced lifestyle in big cities, which contributes it to a tranquil/ quite/ peaceful atmosphere. Near-home tourists from Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa come to the Suomenlinna to relax themselves from daily routine life, especially in a sunny day in summer. However, some tourists mentioned it might be a crowded place in summer with plenty

of international and Finnish tourists.

#### *Social setting environment (SS)*

Personal safety, cleanliness and environment are not directly stressed in the texts. From author's viewpoint, as a destination in Nordic country, it has common feature with other destinations in Nordic area owing a reputation of good public security, fresh air, blue sky, unpolluted environment.

## **4.4 Local residents' opinions (compared with tourists)**

#### *Demographic profile of respondents*

Thirty questionnaires for tourists and residents sample, respectively are distributed and all together fifty nine questionnaires are valid, hence the response rate is 98.3%.

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

	Residents	Tourists	Reference
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	44.8%		
Female	55.2%		
<b>Age</b>			
12-17 years	10.3%	13.3%	
18-34 years	34.5%	56.7%	
35-64 years	55.2%	23.3%	
65 years or older	0	6.7%	
<b>Education Level</b>			
Elementary school	3.4%	0	
Middle school	3.4%	13.3%	
High school	41.4%	30%	
Vocational school	10.3%	0	
Bachelor degree	20.7%	36.7%	
Master degree	17.2%	20%	
Others	0	0	
<b>Nationality</b>			
Finnish		10%	
Foreigner		90%	
<b>How many times have you visited Suomenlinna?</b>			Agapio et al. (2010)
One time		80%	
More than one time		20%	
<b>How many years have you lived in Suomenlinna?</b>			Agapio et al. (2010)
Less than 2 years	10.3%		

2-10 years	27.6%	
More than 10 years	55.2%	
<b>Is your job related to tourism?</b>		Brida et al. (2011)
Yes	27.6%	
No	72.4%	

Two variables (I have of this destination is as good or even better than other similar destinations, and overall destination image is very positive) measure the overall image of the destination-Suomenlinna. In Table 4, the mean value of overall image perceived by both tourists and residents are rather positive, for tourists with 3.90 and 3.97 on a 5-point scale and for residents with 3.86 and 3.97. However, there is no significant difference between these two groups considering these two overall image variables (sig. value is .851 and .995, respectively). When respondents are asked about the agreement on the other items which are individual attributes of Suomenlinna, and these individual attributes/ features also capture Echtner and Ritchie's (2003) functional-psychological characteristic dimension of destination image. Apart from overall image items, in 14 items/ individual attributes describing Suomenlinna, for tourist sample, 11 out of 14 attributes received a mean value of 3.50 or higher, especially for beautiful landscapes (4.30), fascinating architecture (4.23), relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place (4.70), high level of personal safety (4.53) and unpolluted environment (4.27); for resident sample, 10 out of 14 attributes received a mean value of 3.50 or higher and with some attributes of highly distinguished, including beautiful landscapes (4.79), fascinating architecture (4.79), interesting cultural attractions (4.14), relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place (4.10), and high level of personal safety (4.17). Considering the constructs of image, both groups evaluate positively on natural and cultural resources (NC), pleasant atmosphere (PA), social setting environment (SS) as well as overall image (OI) of destination-Suomenlinna, however, in terms of infrastructure and socioeconomic environment (IS), both groups give relatively low mean values, especially it is not a good place for shopping, however, on a whole, Suomenlinna is a destination good value for money.

Based on previous analysis, the image of Suomenlinna as a destination held by tourists varies in high-season and off-season, besides, the majority of tourists involving in the survey only visit Suomenlinna in their first time (see Table 3), so the tourists' perception of Suomenlinna showed in the survey seems only represent tourists who visit Suomenlinna during mid-April, 2012. Compared to tourists, residents have more positive image of Suomenlinna in the natural and cultural resources (NC), in which four variables describing NC shows distinctively higher mean value compared to tourists, especially for the attributes of beautiful landscapes (4.79) and fascinating architecture (4.79). However, compared to tourists, residents seem to agree much less on good opportunity for recreation activities, high quality of

infrastructure, low prices of tourism services, relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place, high level of personal safety and unpolluted environment.

Table 4: Tourist and residents' mean value on each variable

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Tourists</b>	<b>Residents</b>
<b>good opportunity for recreation activities</b>	3.60	3.31
<b>good shopping facilities</b>	2.07	2.00
<b>high quality of infrastructure</b>	3.57	3.10
<b>low prices of tourism services</b>	3.03	2.83
<b>good value for money</b>	3.57	3.59
<b>beautiful landscapes</b>	4.30	4.79
<b>fascinating architecture</b>	4.23	4.79
<b>interesting cultural attractions</b>	3.80	4.14
<b>unusual ways of life and customs</b>	3.27	3.86
<b>relaxing atmosphere/peaceful place</b>	4.70	4.10
<b>place to rest</b>	3.97	3.76
<b>high level of personal safety</b>	4.53	4.17
<b>high level of cleanliness</b>	3.87	3.69
<b>unpolluted environment</b>	4.27	3.72
<b>the image that I have of this destination is as good or even better than other similar destinations</b>	3.90	3.86
<b>overall destination image is very positive</b>	3.97	3.97

Scale: 5=Total agreement, 1=Total disagreement

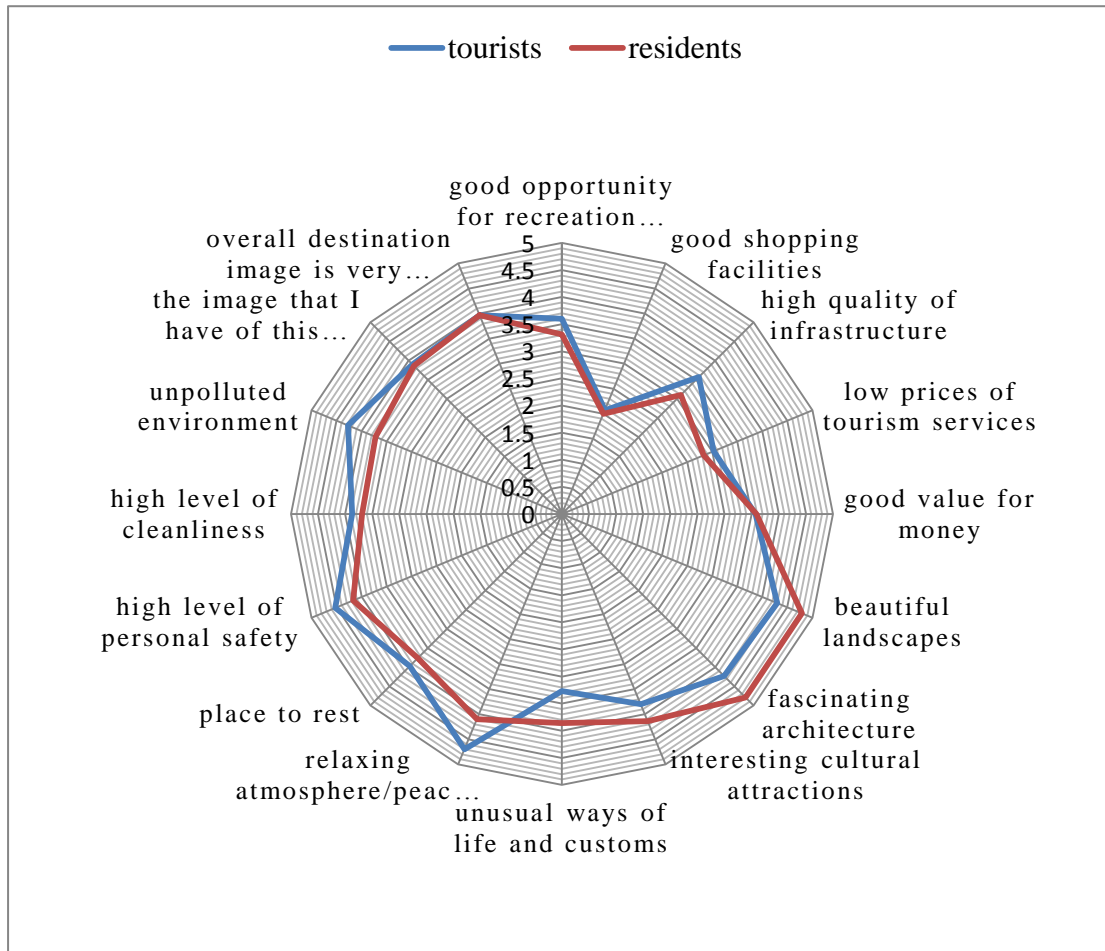


Figure 6: Mean value of image constructs: residents versus tourists

#### *Residents' general attitude towards tourism in Suomenlinna*

In the residents' questionnaire, there is a specific question (statement) describing local peoples' general attitude towards tourism industry in Suomenlinna, which indicates whether residents support the tourism in the destination or not. The question (statement) is: "In general, I have more positive than negative opinion of tourism industry in the Suomenlinna", respondents are asked to evaluate their agreement or disagreement on this statement on a 5-point scale (5=Total agreement, 1=Total disagreement). The survey finds out that the mean value of residents' general attitude is 3.59 out of 5, which shows a positive attitude.

#### *Unstructured question*

An open/ unstructured question is: what image or characteristics come to your mind when you relate Suomenlinna to a tourist destination. In 30 residents' questionnaires, 10 respondents wrote down their own thoughts. The opinions can be divided into three categories:

Opinion 1: good sides about Suomenlinna

Here is the extract of respondents:

“Beautiful”, “beautiful architecture & landscape”, “fresh air, the sea, fortress walls”, “good, interesting place, the most cool in Helsinki”, “clean environment, militarism, relaxation”.

From the extract, the author find residents relate Suomenlinna to the (beautiful) nature, (interesting) history and (relaxation) atmosphere. These correspond to the results from the structured questions, showing a highly positive image of beautiful landscapes, fascinating architecture and interesting cultural attractions (see Table 4).

#### Opinion 2: bad sides about Suomenlinna

Here is the extract from respondents:

“In summer, so many tourists, it is difficult for locals to take ferry and shops are full of people”, “I think there is a lot of stuff to improve”, “too many drinking people in Suomenlinna”, “too crowded in summer”.

These quotations indicate the seasonality in Suomenlinna tourism that has been discussed previously. In summer, there are too many tourists coming to the islands which sometimes severely interrupt dairy life of locals, such as taking ferry, litter disposal. So it in some extent can explain the structured questions that local residents give a relatively low mean value in relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place, high level of cleanliness and unpolluted environment, especially compared to tourists (see Table 4).

#### Opinion 3: others

One respondent said it should be a castle in the sea. Since the first impression related to the name- Suomenlinna, which means Finnish castle, it may cause many puzzle among people.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Similarities and differences on the destination image perceived by different stakeholders**

The previous analysis chapter answers the research question in some extent from three different perspectives; however, here it is going to discuss as a whole whether destination image perceived by these three stakeholders is in consistent to the theoretical model proposed by Garc ía et al. (2012) (see Figure 3) of congruence of destination image among different stakeholders. Although there is some similarities among three stakeholders on the image of Suomenlinna, due to the different interests and values, the differences of the image results in the inconsistent image of the destination, which sometimes causes conflicts among stakeholders.

As a whole, Suomenlinna enjoys a positive image on both tourists and residents. The content analysis indicates that 87% tourists from domestic and international market hold positive overall image of Suomenlinna. The survey from both tourists and residents also shows this pattern, where tourists evaluate on two overall image items gives a mean value of 3.90 and 3.97 on a 5-point scale (see Table 4). And for residents in Suomenlinna, the mean score of these two overall image items are 3.86 and 3.97.

Apart from overall image, there are many issues which are agreed among three stakeholders, including seasonality issue, historical attributes, and natural attributes.

Seasonality issue in Suomenlinna is an aware issue among all stakeholders. For destination authority, they always regard it as a challenging and a tough problem to balance the high season and off season. In summer, too many tourists makes all the tourism service run out of order, while in winter, no museum or shop owned by private actors is open for tourists. This circumstance is proved in the qualitative content analysis. Tourists who visit Suomenlinna during summer are more likely to give positive perception and evaluation on Suomenlinna, when there is beautiful nature, a diverse activities to explore. But in winter, tourists are more likely to reflect that it is boring and seems everything is closed. However, it seems a different situation for local residents in Suomenlinna. Residents do not like the crowdedness in summer which breaks the quietness in their community and interrupt their daily life, but they enjoy the quietness of Suomenlinna.

Destination authority of Suomenlinna, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna has a better understanding of the image perceived by other stakeholders, which in some extent matches the findings from qualitative content analysis and the survey.



Destination authority learns that there is difference between image of Suomenlinna held by near-home tourists (tourists from the Great Helsinki area) and by international tourists. For tourists from Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa, there are two main characteristics of the destination image:

One is that tourists regard Suomenlinna as a recreational place, where they are more likely to visit in a sunny summer day. This image of Suomenlinna is in accordance with the content analysis of the perception of near-home tourists in which the profile of Suomenlinna is more like a city park or a public area where they can relax and have fun, such as “A popular place among locals”, where near-home tourists visiting Suomenlinna regard themselves as locals. And near-home tourists are fond of having picnic, swimming during a sunny summer day in Suomenlinna.

Another characteristic of near-home tourists is that they are proud of the history of Suomenlinna, and they are proud to recommend Suomenlinna to their guests. From the qualitative content analysis, it finds similar results that Suomenlinna has a special meaning for Fins as a historical and cultural place.

For international tourists, destination authority finds that historical attributes is most important to them, since the majority of foreign tourists come to visit Suomenlinna in the fame of a World Heritage Site, while content analysis displays that Suomenlinna is a destination full of Finnish history, where they can explore the old times of Finland. So the Fortress of Suomenlinna becomes a must-see in Helsinki or even in Finland for long-distance travellers.

As literature claims the complexity of the tourist destination (Agapito, 2010: 92) and the fragmented nature of tourism destination (Wang and Xiang, 2007: 75), different stakeholders have different interests / value priorities, which also influences how they perceive the image of the destination and there may be some conflicts on the image held by different stakeholders.

Destination authority in the case of Suomenlinna is the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, which differentiates it from other 30 entrepreneurs and actors. As the official representative of Suomenlinna, subordinate to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, destination authority attempts to promote the destination as a whole to tourists, however, 30 entrepreneurs and actors just care about their own business, only when there are enough tourists, they are willing to “open the door” (e.g. museums, cafes), otherwise not. It makes the situation difficult to handle because they are not sending the same message to tourists that the destination welcome tourists all the year round. For destination authority, they intend to “open the door” for tourists all the year round, and make great efforts to practice such as building a new café in the tourism center where tourists can get hot drink during the winter time when all the

other cafes owned by private actors are closed. Apart from about 30 actors on the islands, there are also some direct or indirect stakeholders involving in the tourism sector of Suomenlinna, such as the ferry company, the tourism information office in the city of Helsinki, which makes things more complex to handle.

As a subordinate to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture as well as a World Heritage Site manager, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna attempts to project its image on the historical attribute. Both domestic and international tourists can learn three parts of Finnish history in Suomenlinna. Besides, Suomenlinna is an attractive place full of stories both in the history and today. The destination authority attempts to present the history in an authentic and interesting way such as through story-telling. The authentic buildings and ramparts with historical figures and stories bring old times back to tourists. In addition, since the improper behavior of some tourists from near-home market, as also claimed by residents in the survey, such as drunk tourists, tourists who do not preserve the site and tourists who leave much rubbish in the site, destination authority intends to educate and regulate these inappropriate behaviors among a small amount of tourists especially near-home tourists.

From residents' perspective, beautiful landscapes and fascinating architecture are mostly valued attributes in Suomenlinna showed in the survey. And in the destination authority's survey, one of the most important core attribute for residents who equal Suomenlinna as "home" is the sea, the nature, and the quietness in winter time. However, in terms of quietness in winter time, the opposite side is the crowdedness in summer time. Compared to tourists who just visited in Suomenlinna, for residents, Suomenlinna is their home. In the survey, residents give relatively low mean value on the items of relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place, place to rest, high level of cleanliness, and unpolluted environment in comparison to tourists. However, from the survey, beautiful landscapes, fascinating architecture, relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place, high level of personal safety are unique attributes agreed by both tourists and residents among all the listed items proposed in the Garc á et al.'s (2012) model (see Table 2).

## **5.2 Implications for the destination and DMOs**

The second aim of this research is to discuss whether the destination image perceived by different stakeholders matches the marketing theory of the congruence of destination image. The above discussion on the similarities and differences of the destination image perceived by different stakeholders provides us a picture of image associated with Suomenlinna, which reflects more on the image difference dimension. However, in tourism reference, Garc á et al.'s (2012) model (see Figure 3) suggests that the success of destinations lies in the congruence of destination image and brand among different stakeholders. In this section, the author attempts to provide some angels towards building and presenting a more consistent and accurate destination

image for the destinations and DMOs of Suomenlinna as well as other destinations to achieve marketing success.

The core value of the destination-Suomenlinna is very clear. It is the historical role that the Fortress of Suomenlinna plays in the entire Finnish history and the origin of the site that kept and maintained until today. However, that does not mean it is easy to build a positive and consistent destination image/ brand image for Suomenlinna. Morgan et al. (2003: 287) claim that a destination differs from other products since it is not a single product but a composite product comprising of a bundle of different components, such as accommodation, attractions, entertainment, culture, heritage and natural environment, and destination marketers have little control over these sectors which are owned by public or private stakeholders. In the case of Suomenlinna, destination authority or other DMOs should acknowledge that the destination image/ brand image is multi-faceted: as a World Heritage Site, it requires to best preserve and maintain the site; as a district of Helsinki, it is a living community for about 850 residents with their own needs; as a tourist destination, it requires to present a authentic and memorial experience to tourists; as a recreational place for inhabitants in Great Helsinki Area, tourists have different interests and demands; as a tourism sector, it is a fragmented market with different public and private actors providing different kinds of tourism facilities.

Morgan et al. (2003: 289) argue that the importance of crafting a destination vision (the direction of future development) should base on stakeholders' values and consensus rather than a private expert-driven process based merely on market force. And stakeholders must agree that the common vision provides a meaningful and operational "dream for the future of their destination", which should be a win-win situation and reflect the values of all stakeholders (Morgan et al., 2003: 289). In the case of Suomenlinna, there is a need to build a communication bridge among different stakeholders in order to create understanding on different interests and needs, and make consensus on conveying a common image/ brand to outsiders. It takes time and patience to draw common future among different stakeholders, however, it is the prerequisite to convert awareness and attitude. And it is a pressing need to underpin the support in the public and private sectors for destination branding (Morgan et al., 2003: 297). In operational level, the destination authority or DMOs should gather different stakeholders together in discussions, workshops or forums forms to provide opportunities for different stakeholders to express opinions and make decisions.

Although this study does not focus on the stakeholders of small entrepreneurs in the destination, through interviewing with tourism manager in the Suomenlinna, these entrepreneurs are important sectors in order to create consistent destination image/ brand image. A great amount of companies and stakeholders, mostly small and private actors such as museum owners have diverse goals and interests, and tourism literature

suggests that both the destination and individual actors can benefit from establishing better cooperation and coordination of activities (Haugland et al., 2010: 275). And Haugland et al. (2010: 276) propose four main inter-organisational forms of cooperation: conventional or individualistic (no joint coordination); administered DMO or leadership by one or a few actors; contractual (contractual agreements) and corporate (common ownership). In the case of Suomenlinna, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna acts as a site manager, and it should take a leadership role in cooperating and coordinating other stakeholders to join a strong bond and network. Besides, with other companies or organisations, maybe there is a need to make contractual agreements on some issues such as transportation.

As for the local residents, there is a wide consensus on tourism literature that residents who obtain personal benefits from tourism are more likely to show favorable attitude towards tourism (Sánchez, 2010). In the case of Suomenlinna, involving more residents in the tourism-related jobs, and increasing the participation of locals in destination planning and management activities can probably contribute to the commitments of residents. In addition, the social exchange theory suggests that apart from economic benefits, residents can also hold positive attitude towards tourism since they feel a strong shared social benefits associated with tourism development (Wang and Pfister, 2008: 92). As for Suomenlinna, increasing social reputation and pride of the place among locals can also be a solution to win residents' support of the tourism development. Besides, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2010: 185) indicate that residents' satisfaction with the destination tourism is also associated with the conditions of the neighborhood of the community, the community facilities and services. In the case of Suomenlinna, there is a need to improve the neighboring environment and facilities and reduce the traffic congestion in order to decrease the negative attitude towards tourism among locals.

From tourists' perspective, the important and challenging role of destination marketer is to make the destination brand live, so tourists can experience the promoted brand value and sense the authenticity of a unique destination (Morgan et al., 2003: 287). In the case of Suomenlinna, communicating/ marketing the core value (historical value) to the public effectively is an important step to create and maintain a consistent and accurate destination image. Tourists who visit the destination should guarantee an authentic visit experience of the unique cultural heritage since the actual visiting experience will modify the previous image and later become a stable original image. And it will also affect the customer loyalty, in the context of tourism it is the revisitation and the word-of-mouth recommendations (García et al., 2012: 650).

## 6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the destination image perceived by three stakeholders, comprising of destination authority, tourists and local residents and to identify the similarities (agreement) and difference (disagreement) from these three stakeholders. The first conclusion is that due to its special identity (site manager), destination authority of Suomenlinna attempts to promote the destination as a whole/ a united site to the public and tries to “keep the door open” to tourists all the year round. As a World Heritage Site as well a destination that plays a significant role in Finnish history, the destination authority of Suomenlinna intends to project the historical attribute as the core value to the public. From the Governing Body of Suomenlinna’s perspective, it should be a place not only welcoming tourists from Finland but also from international market, where tourists can learn the Finnish history of three- layers in one place. Moreover, the destination authority makes great efforts to present the authenticity of Finnish history to tourists in an interesting way and give more memorable experiences to tourists such as through story-telling. Another object of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna is to educate and regulate the inappropriate behavior of a small amount of near-home tourists.

Secondly, from tourists’ perspective, there are two market segments (near-home tourists and international tourists) who may view Suomenlinna in different ways. In general, from content analysis, the majority (87%) of domestic and international tourists hold positive image on Suomenlinna. In considering the strong seasonality in Suomenlinna tourism, tourists visiting Suomenlinna during summer time are more likely to have positive image than tourists in winter. However, the main characteristics perceived by near-home tourists and foreign tourists vary: near-home tourists (tourists from Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa) regard Suomenlinna as their “backyard” and a recreational place, where they can relax and have fun especially in sunny summer days, having picnics and swimming in the spot. Besides, near-home tourists are proud of Suomenlinna for its role in their history, and they are glad to show or recommend this site to their guests. For foreign tourists, Suomenlinna is a must-see when they visit Helsinki or Finland no matter it is summer or winter since it is a World Heritage Sites and is recommended in guidebooks or somewhere else. Natural and cultural attributes are mostly valued among international tourists.

Thirdly, from residents’ viewpoint, they equal Suomenlinna to “home”. It is the strong relationship bonds in the community and the beautiful nature as well as the quietness in winter that local residents of Suomenlinna value most. In the survey, compared to tourists, residents have more positive image on the attributes of beautiful landscapes and fascinating architecture. However, residents are less to agree on the attributes of good opportunity for recreation activities, high quality of infrastructure, low prices of tourism services, relaxing atmosphere/ peaceful place, high level of personal safety

and unpolluted environment, and one reason is too many tourists visiting Suomenlinna in summer. Apart from residents' active role on destination image, their general attitude towards tourism industry in Suomenlinna is also positive.

The final conclusion to be noted is the discussion on the similarities and differences on the destination image from three stakeholders' perspective. Overall, Suomenlinna has a positive image among near-home tourists, foreign tourists as well as residents, besides, there are some issues or attributes that are agreed among different stakeholders. Seasonality in Suomenlinna tourism is an aware issue by three stakeholders. For destination authority, the imbalance of seasonality in tourism is a challenging and a tough problem from marketing perspective, since the majority of tourists are visiting in summer which created crowdedness and a sort of "everything is sold-out status", however, in winter, tourists are not guaranteed with necessary tourism facility and service. For tourists especially for international tourists, there is a big difference in tourist experience in summer and winter. In summer, every museum, restaurant, shops and so on is open to them, and there are a variety of activities and things to explore such as submarine, open theatre show. However, in winter, it seems everything is closed. For residents, they are more enjoyed with the quietness in winter when there are so few tourists, and sometimes, the crowdedness of summer disturbs their daily life. The beautiful nature and meaningful history are important attributes agreed by different stakeholders. The historical role that Suomenlinna played in three parts of Finnish history is valued highly.

However, as tourism literature claimed the complexity of the tourist destination (Agapito, 2010: 92) and the fragmented nature of tourism destination (Wang and Xiang, 2007: 75), different stakeholders have different interests / value priorities, which are more likely to form different perceptions of the destination and create conflicts among different stakeholders. As the tourism manager put it "as the site or brand manager, the Governing Body of Suomenlinna wants to promote the destination as a whole, while other entrepreneurs or actors may do their own business", even in a small destination, there would be many different direct or indirect stakeholders involving in the tourism industry, and each stakeholder has their own goal and interest, which leads to different behaviors. For about 30 entrepreneurs and actors in Suomenlinna, they are not willing to "open the door" during winter times because of economic concern. However, for tourists, they do not care whether each shop or museum has different owners, and they tend to view the experience in the destination as a whole. And the information send from different actors may cause confusion for tourists. The tourism manager says "we cannot do alone, if one of this bunch sending a wrong message, it is not good for the united one. As site manager, we are frustrated, you cannot do everything you would like to do or the process they go forward but the pave is quite slow". From local residents' perspective, Suomenlinna is the place where they live, as a living community. Local people enjoy the strong bonded community

and the beautiful surroundings in Suomenlinna. However, during summer, when so many tourists come to this place, it may break the quietness and peaceful atmosphere, and sometimes tourists may occupy the infrastructure, and even destroy the environment.

As the competition between destinations continues to intensify, in order to achieve competitive advantage and sustainable success, it requires effectively manage all the components in the tourism system (Bornhorst et al., 2010: 572). The results and analysis of this study also reflect some implications and recommendations for destinations and DMOs in destination branding and marketing. It is necessary to build a communication bridge among different stakeholders to create the awareness of the importance of presenting a consistent image to outsiders. Building a common vision and taking consideration of diverse interests among different stakeholders helps working together towards a dreamed destination future. There is a need to actively involve local community's participation in tourism industry and increase locals' support of the destination. Besides, the enhancement of the cooperation and network within the destination helps to compromise different interests and results in a win-win situation. And the destination should focus on the improvement of visit experience through diverse approaches.

#### ***Suggestions for future study***

This study mainly involves three stakeholder groups considering the destination image study, however, the author found another stakeholder group- private and small entrepreneurs plays an important role in destination marketing activities, so the author suggest the future study could involve this particular stakeholders in the destination image study. Besides, in this study, the author chose tourists group as people who have visited the destination, but literature claims destination image can be formed before and after visitation, and actual visitation can modify the previous image, so the author suggest the future study can focus on tracking tourists' image change before and after visitation.

#### ***Limitations of this study***

However, there are some limitations associated with this study. First, the main aim of this study is to explore the destination image perceived by different stakeholders, but it only limited to cover destination authority, tourists and residents, and it does not include other public and private stakeholders / actors such as the local retailers, a great amount of small entrepreneurs and big public companies and organisations. Second, due to the limited time and human resource, the quantity of questionnaire both for tourists and residents is rather limited. Finally, as discussed previously, seasonality is a big context of tourism in Suomenlinna. The implement of the survey is during mid-April, which may only reflect the destination image perceived by tourists who visiting Suomenlinna at that specific time, which in the future research

calls for a survey to be conducted that can balance the seasonality issue.



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# Appendix

## Appendix 1 Interview Guide with Tourism Manager

My research question: what is the destination image perceived by different stakeholders (destination authorities, tourists and local residents)?

I noticed that the destination image may be different in these two situations:

1. Tourists who visit in summer and who visit in the rest of the year;
2. Tourists who are near-home visitors and who are long-distance visitors.

### **The tourist number**

1. What is the tourist number from domestic market and from abroad respectively?
2. What is the tourist number visiting Suomenlinna in summer and the rest of the year respectively?

### **Destination image**

1. What is the destination image of Suomenlinna perceived by leisure tourists? Is there any difference between the image perceived by near-home tourists and long-distance tourists?
2. What is the role of local residents in the Suomenlinna tourism?
3. What is the destination image of Suomenlinna perceived by local residents (people who live in the islands)?
4. What kind of image does the governing body of Suomenlinna attempt to build in the minds of tourists or potential tourists in order to attract more tourists?

### **Seasonality of tourism in Suomenlinna**

1. How is the seasonality of tourism affecting Suomenlinna tourism?
2. What are your measures to cope with the seasonality?

### **Destination positioning and market segmentation**

1. What is the market segment of Suomenlinna?
2. How do you position Suomenlinna in the domestic and international tourism market? / What kind of attributes/features of Suomenlinna that can be identified and differentiated from its competitors?

## Appendix 2 Questionnaire: Destination Image Perceived by Tourists in Suomenlinna

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am a student doing my thesis about the destination image of Suomenlinna. I want to know what your perception of this destination is. Remember personal data are protected and only used for research purposes.

Thank you so much for your cooperation and time spent in this questionnaire.

### Background Information

Age _____ Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	Nationality: <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish <input type="checkbox"/> foreigner
What is your educational level? <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Education <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree or above <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____	
Is this your first time visiting Suomenlinna? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (How many times have visited Suomenlinna so far? _____)	

**To what extent do you agree that the following items are associated to Suomenlinna as a tourist destination? (1=total disagreement and 5=total agreement).**

### Infrastructure and socioeconomic environment

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Good opportunities for recreation activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Good shopping facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. High quality of infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Low prices of tourism services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Natural and cultural resources

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Beautiful landscapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Fascinating architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Interesting cultural attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Unusual ways of life and customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Pleasant atmosphere**

1=Total disagreement

5=Total Agreement

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Relaxing atmosphere/peaceful place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Place to rest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Social setting environment**

1=Total disagreement

5=Total Agreement

	1	2	3	4	5
1. High level of personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. High level of cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Unpolluted environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **Overall image**

1=Total disagreement

5=Total Agreement

	1	2	3	4	5
1. The image that I have of this destination is as good or even better than other similar destinations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Overall destination image is very positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you so much for your time and have a nice day.  
Have a nice day!

## Appendix 3 Questionnaire: Destination Image perceived by Residents in Suomenlinna

Dear Madam/ Sir,

I am a student doing my thesis about tourism image of Suomenlinna, and I want to know your perception about your resident place and the destination. And remember that personal data are protected and just used for research work.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

**To what extent do you agree that the following items are associated to Suomenlinna as a tourist destination? (1=total disagreement and 5=total agreement).**

### Infrastructure and socioeconomic environment

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Good opportunities for recreation activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Good shopping facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. High quality of infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Low prices of tourism services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Good value for money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Natural and cultural resources

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Beautiful landscapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Fascinating architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Interesting cultural attractions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Unusual ways of life and customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Pleasant atmosphere

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Relaxing atmosphere/peaceful place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Place to rest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Social setting environment

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. High level of personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. High level of cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Unpolluted environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Overall image



	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1.The image that I have of this destination is as good or even better than other similar destinations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Overall destination image is very positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### General attitudes toward tourism

	1=Total disagreement			5=Total Agreement	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. In general, I have more positive than negative opinion of tourism industry in the Suomenlinna.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Open-ended question

What image or characteristics come to your mind when you relate Suomenlinna to a tourist destination?

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### Background Information

Age _____	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
How long have you been living in Suomenlinna? _____	
Is your job related to the tourism industry? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
What is your educational level? <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Education <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master degree or above <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____	

Thank you so much for your support and the time spent for this survey.