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The distant snowy land where rounded creatures dwell:

Experiencing Moomin-related nostalgia and belonging in Finland

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Abstract

With the release of the *Moominvalley* (2019–) animated TV series, the Moomin characters have once again appeared on screens across the world. Whether this newest adaptation of Tove Jansson's books and comic strips will initiate a new 'Moomin boom' remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the re-appearance of the Moomins in domestic (Finnish) and international media has sparked a resurgence of nostalgia among audiences already familiar with the characters. The present study examines what meanings are attributed to the Moomin stories and sites associated with them in the context of media-induced tourism. The study draws on seven English-language press articles featuring authors' observations and reflections on their visits to places with connections to the Moomins and/or Tove Jansson in Finland. The personal importance of Jansson's works and associated locations for these members of the audience is revealed through analysis of the notions of belonging and nostalgia in their accounts. On a wider sociocultural level, the findings demonstrate that values associated with Jansson's texts are (re)negotiated in new contexts and found relevant in times of contemporary socioeconomic, political and environmental crises, and that it reflects in how places with connections to her and her works are viewed and experienced. The data further show that themes in the Moomin books are viewed in parallel to what is perceived as Finnish values, such as care for others, equality and respect for nature. Finland is also imagined as a fairytalesque land, both the home of the writer and even of the Moomins themselves.

Keywords: belonging; Finland; media-induced tourism; Moomin; Tove Jansson

Introduction

The Finnish-British animated TV series *Moominvalley* (2019–), with three seasons released to date, is the latest adaptation of the Moomin books and comic strips by Swedish-speaking Finnish artist and writer Tove Jansson (1914–2001). Produced by Finnish studio Gutsy Animations and featuring a number of well-known actors among the voice cast, the partially crowdfunded first season was released in 2019 and was followed by the second season in 2019–2020, and the third in 2022. The series proved a success among audiences when broadcast in Finland and the UK, with subsequent premieres in other countries, including Japan, Germany, South Korea and China. With distribution rights sold to more than sixty countries, the series was nominated for and won several domestic and international awards (Gutsy Animations, 2020, 2022).

Moominvalley is based on the Moomin book series which describes the adventures of the hippopotamus-like characters, the Moomins, particularly the adolescent protagonist Moomintroll, as well as their friends and acquaintances. Between 1945 and 1993, Tove Jansson wrote and illustrated eight Moomin novels, a collection of short stories and five picture books. The books notably appear among the most known 20th-century European children's literature titles and are recognised for their cross-generational appeal (Harju, 2009). With a variety of unique and believable characters, the stories, illustrated by the author, offer engaging and entertaining experience for both young and adult readers.

As *Moominvalley* (re)introduced the characters to viewers worldwide, it remains to be seen whether the popularity spike can inspire a lasting effect and make the stories known and appreciated among new and younger audiences. Being a far cry from the 1990s Moomin boom, when the characters were thrust into the spotlight following an anime adaptation, the new production nevertheless has resulted in a resurgence of nostalgia among the European, Asian and North American audiences who had been already familiar with the characters, either from the books and comics or earlier screen adaptations. The instances of reacquaintance and re-engagement with the stories and the author through visits to related sites in Finland are at the centre of this research.

The Moomins have already been known to attract tourists to Finland, not only as characters of well-known stories, but also as one of the internationally recognised Finnish brands alongside Nokia, Iittala, Fiskars and Marimekko (Ikeuchi-Peltonen, 2015; Laine Kieldsen, 2017; Matilainen & Santalahti, 2018). Commercial Moomin-centred places in Finland, popular with both local and international visitors, include Moomin-themed cafes and shops in several cities, Moominworld theme park in Naantali, on the southwest coast of Finland, and seasonal visitor attractions like Moomin ice cave. Sites with biographical connections to Tove Jansson have become better known in recent years and nowadays also attract visitors: these sites are located primarily in Helsinki, where she lived for the greater part of her life, and on the Finnish archipelago, where she used to spend summers with her family as a child and, later in life, with her partner, graphic artist Tuulikki Pietilä. Jansson's paintings, frescoes and murals are exhibited in the Helsinki Art Museum; the Moomin Museum in Tampere, Central Finland, mainly features exhibitions dedicated to Jansson's famous char-

acters, but also offers information about her life and other work. The sites described here are commonly visited by admirers of Jansson and Moomin fans when travelling to Finland (Ikeuchi-Peltonen, 2015; Matilainen & Santalahti, 2018).

The aim of the study is to examine how meaning-making processes relating to literary works and authors shape and affect visitor experiences at associated places. Combining tourism studies with media and cultural studies perspectives, I look at how the affective connection to and perceived meaningfulness of the stories manifest in the way sites with connections to them are experienced. The paper draws on seven authored press articles published in influential English-language newspapers and magazines from the time around the centenary of Tove Jansson's birth in 2014 and leading to *Moominvalley*'s first season release in 2019. The analysed publications feature authors' reflections on their visits to places with connections to the Moomins and/or Tove Jansson in Finland, such as those described earlier. By applying theories of belonging, the first research objective is to examine how the sites are perceived and experienced a) in light of visitors' personal histories of engagement with the Moomin stories (and Jansson's other works) through books and other media, and b) taking into account how Jansson's life and works are (re)negotiated in contemporary sociocultural, economic and political contexts. The second objective is to look at how, in these press publications, Finland is imagined and represented as a country and a tourist destination in relation to Jansson's biography and works.

(Re)introducing the Moomins: rounded creatures from a faraway snowy land

Sites with connections to Tove Jansson present a suitable example for studying media-induced tourism and the way it relates to media consumption and the sociocultural significance of media texts. Even though writers might not have didactic intentions, certain values, sometimes even conflicting with their views, might become associated with their works, as texts are perceived not only in a personal but also in a wider sociocultural context (e.g., Sharp, 2000; Brooks & Browne, 2012). This is especially the case with 'children's fiction'. This section provides the context for studying Moomin-related tourism by offering an overview of the content and nature of the stories, their adaptations and reception, and tells how meanings attributed to them, and the author's life, have changed over time.

Initially an artistic and literary side project, intended by Jansson as a sort of escapist activity during the years of World War II (Westin, 2014), the first book in the series, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*, was published in Swedish in 1945. *Comet in Moominland* followed in 1946. *The Hobgoblin's Hat (*originally published in 1948), the third book in the series, was the first to be translated into English in 1950 (also known in translation as *Finn Family Moomintroll*). The stories were inspired, among other things, by global events (Markkanen, 2016) and Jansson's private life, featuring fictionalised versions of her family members and friends (Westin, 2014). In the years that followed, the scope of the project grew, with the characters achieving international popularity in the 1950s due to the Moomin comic strip, published in the British *Evening News* (1954–1975) and subsequently in a

number of international newspapers. The comic strip was initially written and illustrated by Jansson, with her brother Lars taking over the production in later years.

After the comic strip brought a surge of popularity globally, the Moomins became a hit in Europe, North America and Japan, appearing in a number of country-specific screen productions, on theatre stage and on a line of licenced merchandise. Some productions were made with the involvement of the author; others were more independent and, at times, less faithful to the source text. Of all the screen productions, the most influential internationally were the 1990–1992 Japanese-Finnish-Dutch animated adaptations *Tanoshii Mūmin Ikka (Delightful Moomin Family)* which included anime series and a feature film. The anime resulted in another so-called international 'Moomin boom' and made the fictional creatures famous in several Asian countries (Westin, 2014). It is largely due to the anime series that the generation that grew up in the 1990s, now in their adulthood, came to know and love Jansson's characters. At the same time, Finland saw an increase of tourists from Japan, many of whom were interested in the Moomins, and recent studies confirm the Moomin's continued contribution to the image of Finland among Japanese visitors (Ikeuchi-Peltonen, 2015; Matilainen & Santalahti, 2018).

Games based on the Moomin stories are also worth mentioning: in addition to board games, puzzles and other types of analogue games (see Moomin Characters Ltd., 2021), the characters have appeared in a number of digital games starting in the mid-1990s. To date, Moomin video game titles are available for mobile, PC and consoles, with one of the most recently announced being *Snufkin: Melody of Moominvalley* by Hyper Games, with a planned release in 2024.

When looking at the audiences' engagement with the Moomin stories in different media, the transmedial nature of the Moomin narratives plays an important role: the story continues and develops in each medium, with every new instalment not simply repeating the story, but making a unique contribution (Jenkins, 2010). For instance, already from the early days of the Moomins, the comic strip introduced new storylines that did not exist in the books. Installations (now on display in the Moomin Museum), many of which were made by Jansson herself, also feature scenes not covered in the books, such as the Moomins in a saloon in the Wild West. Similarly, the animated adaptations include characters and stories that are not originally present in the text, and the games cover previously unheard-of adventures. The variety of transmedial content also reflects in the fact that members of the audience can get 'into' the Moomins through different channels.

From 2019, the most recent cinematic adaptation – *Moominvalley* series – has enjoyed great popularity in Finland, where the Moomins are ever-present in contemporary public and private life, habitually used in branding and featured on a variety of products. For international audiences, who are not commonly surrounded by the characters in everyday life, the Moomins' (re)appearance through the new animated adaptation brings back memories of their first encounters with the stories, either through books or earlier screen adaptations, as will be seen from media publications under study.

While the Moomin books have remained popular since the 1950s and have been praised for not shying away from 'adult' themes like danger, death, loneliness and longing (Harju, 2009; see also Holland, 2020), they have also been criticised in the past for various reasons: their lack of didactic value; depicting a bourgeois lifestyle; presenting 'traditional' gender roles and reaffirming heterocentric norms (Westin, 2014). Despite the stories being labelled 'for children', Jansson did not have a specific intention to write for younger audiences and emphasised that the Moomin books were not intended as educational (Westin, 2014). With the stories holding nostalgic value for many members of the audience, the reception of the Moomin books has also been changing over time.

In recent years, the Moomin books have been approached from new perspectives (e.g., Taipale, 2018; Wells, 2019) and Tove Jansson's life and her artistic and later literary works became the focus of media attention and academic interest. Two published biographies, by Boel Westin (2014) and Tuula Karjalainen (2014), a biographical film *Tove* (2020, directed by Zaida Bergroth) and the newly launched information resource ToveJansson.com offer insights into writer-artist's professional and personal life. Exhibitions and festivals dedicated to Jansson are regularly held in Finland and abroad (see ToveJansson.com, 2023). In contrast to earlier presentations of the author as a motherly figure or, alternatively, keeping quiet about her sexuality, recent press publications (see e.g., Dening, 2017) – including the official Moomin website (see e.g., Moomin Characters Ltd., 2019) – shed light on Jansson's political views and her same-sex relationships.

Theoretical framework: Media-induced tourism and belonging

The chosen examples of visiting locations with connections to works of fiction and their author fall under the wider category of travel induced by media productions; in this paper I primarily use the term *media-induced tourism*, to reflect the fact that the Moomin stories are transmedial, with the most known media being books, animated adaptations and comic strips. The media-induced tourism phenomenon as such encompasses an older established practice of *literary tourism* (Squire, 1994, 1996; Herbert, 2001; Watson, 2006), which involves travelling to sites with biographical connections to writers and/or due to the locations having appeared in or inspired works of fiction. More recent forms of popular leisure activity, such as travelling to sites with connections to screen productions present another form of media-induced tourism: the terms *film tourism, film-induced tourism* (e.g., Beeton, 2006; Buchmann et al., 2010), *movie tourism* (e.g., Suni & Komppula, 2012) or *movie-induced tourism* (e.g., Riley et al., 1998) have been used by researchers studying travel motivated by an interest in places that were used as filming locations. Not only films but also TV series (e.g., Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2017) and animation (e.g., Yamamura, 2015) can draw visitors to locations and can be considered as forms of *screen tourism* (e.g., Kim, 2010). Broader terms like *media tourism* (Reijnders, 2011a), *mediatized tourism* (Månsson, 2011), *pop culture tourism* (Lundberg & Lexhagen, 2014) and *contents tourism* (see e.g., Graburn & Yamamura, 2020) have been used to reflect a variety of productions that can inspire travel, including music, anime, comics and games.

Based on the previous research on literary tourism, the reasons for the visits are often to 'connect' to or pay homage to the author; to find out more about the author's life and to look at and experience the surroundings that inspired them (Herbert, 2001; Watson, 2006; Hendrix, 2009). On the other hand, if the visit is rather motivated by the interest in the narrative and fictional characters, tourists would seek the sites that are significant to the narrative, often looking to experience the same feelings (as the characters) at the exact same locations (Watson, 2006; Hendrix, 2009). The latter also applies to travel motivated by screen productions: visitors often search for the exact filming locations which acted as a setting for film and TV series – or, in the case of adaptations, as stand-in for locations from the books – to occupy the same space and, if possible, to experience the same sentiment (Buchmann et al., 2010; van Es & Reijnders, 2016; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2017). Many tourists are often seen re-enacting on-screen scenes when on-site by taking pictures while adopting the same poses and expressions as the characters (Kim, 2010).

Purposefully created locations, such as theme parks, can also act as spaces for meaningful engagement with narratives and characters despite the supposed lack of authenticity (Laing & Frost, 2012; Bom, 2015; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018). The question of authenticity, often discussed in tourism studies, has been investigated in detail in the context of media-induced tourism (see e.g., Buchmann et al., 2010; Amey, 2018), as it provides interesting possibilities considering that tourists are often in search of fictional or fictionalised locations to begin with. Lovell (2019) found that tourists apply a 'magical gaze' when visiting heritage locations, connecting historical sites to magical stories they know: while the site may be unrelated to the story, the processes of imagination and authentication result in what she calls 'fairytale authenticity'.

Earlier studies (Buchmann et al., 2010; Kim, 2010; Reijnders, 2011a, 2016) underlined the centrality of the affective connection to the story to the understanding of the experiences of tourists who travel to sites with connections to fiction. Fiction, whether in the form of literary works, cinematic productions or other media, has the potential to make members of the audience, through engagement with the narratives, feel 'familiar' with locations they have never visited (Iwashita, 2006). Such spatial attachments and emotional involvement with places formed through fiction have been conceptualised by several tourism researchers in terms of *belonging* (Kim, 2010; Reijnders, 2016; van Es & Reijnders, 2016; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018).

While belonging remains a vaguely defined concept, the use of which varies depending on the context (Antonsich, 2010a, 2010b; Lähdesmäki et al., 2016), different aspects of it – including spatial, sociocultural and political (e.g., Yuval-Davis, 2006) – can present a useful conceptual tool for scholars researching media-induced tourism. Looking at spatial belonging – affective attachment to space – beyond the context of familiarity, 'home', and rootedness (Morley, 2001), opens up opportunities to analyse how attachments can be formed in relation to spaces encountered via media and specifically via fiction and how these attachments motivate media-induced tourism and manifest during the visits.

Although in the earlier studies on literary tourism, belonging as a concept was not specifically referred to, the sociocultural and political dimensions of literary sites have often been highlighted (e.g., Herbert, 2001; Robinson & Andersen, 2002; Watson, 2006), with an emphasis on collectively constructed meanings attributed to known literary works, authors and places with connections to them (Squire 1993, 1994, 1996). Furthermore, the social aspect of belonging in the context of media-induced travel has been examined in more recent studies in relation to personal networks, including family and friends (Lee, 2012) as well as interest groups and fan communities (e.g., Buchmann et al., 2010; Reijnders, 2011b; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018).

Members of the audience are often drawn to places with connections to stories that are meaningful to them. Reijnders (2016), in his study of personal histories of engagement with fiction and travel motivated by them, establishes that each individual has a so-called 'treasure trove' of favourite stories – encountered through a variety of media, including literature, film and TV – which are likely to affect individual travel choices. He observes that many of these personally significant narratives are those that respondents "read or saw in their youth and which they strongly associate with their youth and the time period associated with it" (Reijnders, 2016, p. 678).

Other studies on travel related to children's and young adult fiction similarly demonstrate that narratives encountered during the formative years which created a lasting impression can remain important later in a person's life, affecting the choice of travel destinations (Gothie, 2016; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018) and being integrated into the personal worldview and value systems (Squire, 1993, 1994, 1996; Reijnders, 2016; Jiang & Xu, 2016; also e.g., Hasebrink & Paus-Hasebrink, 2016). Several researchers have also pointed out how, when visiting locations with connections to known authors, the visits serve to reaffirm one's individual and also collective cultural values (Squire, 1994, 1996; Herbert, 2001; Jiang & Xu, 2016; Yu & Xu, 2016, 2018), which echoes Yuval-Davis's (2006) observation on the importance of shared values for communal belonging and on collective attachment to material space. Nostalgic sentiments – such as longing for a romanticised and idealised past, both collective and personal (Holbrook, 1993) – often appear in relation to narratives that have been familiar since the earlier years. Similar notions have been observed by researchers who focused on adult visitors travelling to sites related to children's and young adult fiction (e.g., Squire, 1994, 1996; Lee, 2012; Gothie, 2016).

Magical Finland: Media-induced tourism and the evolving destination image

Similarly to how specific sites can be envisioned by non-residents based on media representations, countries can also be imagined through the lens of fiction. Earlier studies looked into how connections to works of fiction, such as books, films and TV series, inspired viewers to travel to England (Squire, 1994; Iwashita, 2006), Romania (Light, 2009), New Zealand (Buchmann et al., 2010; Peaslee, 2011) and South Korea (Lee, 2020). In these studies, members of the audience held pre-existing assumptions and expectations on what the countries and regions are supposed to look and feel like, based on the fiction they en-

gaged with. This sub-section looks into how Moomin-related tourism connects to other forms of media-induced tourism in Finland and how the Moomin stories tie to the image of Finland as a destination.

Previous studies on media-induced tourism in Finland suggest there is a variety of locations visited due to connections to media productions, including sites associated with famous literary figures such as Aleksis Kivi, J. L. Runeberg, Elias Lönnrot, Minna Canth and Mika Waltari (Hannula, 2014; Immonen, 2018) and film production sites (Suni & Komppula, 2012). Finland's image is closely tied to Christmas tourism (see Herva et al., 2020 for a detailed review). From the 1980s, Finland, particularly Lapland, has been promoted as the homeland of Santa Claus, highlighting the magical and mystical qualities of the region. However, studies covering tourism related to Santa Claus are omitted here due to the predominantly commercial nature of the phenomenon and the general absence of the focus on the narrative.

In her thesis on Japanese tourists' pilgrimages to Finland, Shizuka Ikeuchi-Peltonen (2015), based on tourist blogs and interviews, found that literature, film, music and games are among media productions that draw tourists from Japan to Finland. With regards to film tourism, the most popular were filming locations of the 2006 Japanese film *Kamome Shokudō (Kamome Diner,* Finnish title *Ruokala Lokki)* and locations featured in films by Aki Kaurismäki. Tove Jansson and the Moomins were confirmed to be important in attracting visitors to associated sites (Ikeuchi-Peltonen, 2015), which echoes Matilainen and Santalahti's (2018) findings on Japanese visitors' perception of Finland. The Moomins and Santa Claus emerged as fictional characters closely connected to Finland in Danish media coverage of Finland and Finland's tourism promotion in Denmark (Laine Kieldsen, 2017).

Based on this brief overview, Finland as a destination seems to be strongly associated with the Moomins by international visitors, as a reflection of the popularity of Jansson's works and their adaptations and as a result of Moomin branding and use of characters in tourism promotional materials aimed at foreign tourism markets (e.g., Ikeuchi-Peltonen, 2015; Laine Kieldsen, 2017; Matilainen & Santalahti, 2018). While different versions of the Moomin origin story exist (one involving a drawing of a hideous creature on a wall of an outhouse), Jansson once notably revised the narrative of how the Moomins came to be when planning to enter the US market. She cited a snow-covered tree stump as the inspiration behind the Moomins' characters shape and colour (Westin, 2014). Such a conscious marketing move supported the view that the cold and serene Nordic landscape of the author's home country inspired the characters' creation, at the same time exoticizing Finland and the Nordic countries for foreign audiences.

While a variety of landscapes can be found in the Moomin books, Nordic nature and particular locations in Finland provided inspiration for Jansson's works (Westin, 2014; Markkanen, 2016). This adds a fictional, fairytale-like, dimension to the actual geography of Finland and resonates with Finland being known for its nature and appealing to tourists' search for 'pure' and 'untouched' destinations with a 'magical' aspect (see Herva et al., 2020). Guo et al. (2021), in a study on Finland's destination image, confirm that nature

continues to be one of the main attributes that attract tourists but also observe that 'fairy-tale' and 'magical' appear in destination attributes in their analysis of online travel reviews on Chinese platforms. The interplay of actual and fictional geographies is one of the key aspects of media-induced and particularly fiction-inspired tourism.

The destination image of a given country or region is constantly evolving, reflecting socioeconomic, environmental and geopolitical situation (Guo, 2022). A study of South Korean news articles on Nordic countries (Park et al., 2022) found that Finland is connected not only to 'nature' and 'purity', but keywords commonly appearing are 'freedom', 'welfare' and 'happiness', as they are seen as essential attributes of 'Scandinavian' and Finnish lifestyle. The changes in values and their reflection in the search for specific destination attributes echo the renegotiation of meanings associated with literary works and sites with connections to them. For this reason, it is worth analysing how sites with connections to media productions are perceived in the context of the trends in destination image and changing societal values. Making a further connection between the image of Finland and the Moomin books, the values depicted in the stories, such as inclusivity, care and pleasure found in mundane things, are reflected in what is considered to be 'Finnish' values – welfare, wellbeing, freedom and happiness – which are often present in media coverage of Finland abroad (e.g., De Paola & Pirttilä-Backman, 2023; Pearson, 2023) and highlighted in much of the tourism promotional material (see e.g., Visit Finland, 2023). Finland and other Nordic countries are known for gender equality, welfare and work-life balance and the 'Finnish' way of life is perceived as being less stressful, in harmony with nature (Matilainen & Santalahti, 2018), which corresponds to growing public interest in these issues affecting the choice of a destination.

Materials and Methods

In recent studies on popular media-induced travel, researchers focused on tourists' personal experiences and analysed the meanings attributed to the media texts in order to understand the motivation processes behind the visit as well as the sociocultural significance of the place (see e.g., van Es & Reijnders, 2016; Yu & Xu, 2018). Qualitative approach has been often used in research on media-induced tourism. Studies drew on the material generated during research (e.g., during participant observation, interviews and focus groups) and, increasingly, on online user-generated material such as reviews and blogs (e.g., Månsson, 2011; Watson, 2013), as well as textual, visual and audio-visual material like tourist photographs (e.g., Kim, 2010) and videos (e.g., Månsson, 2011).

In the current study, the use of authored press articles – written by professional journalists and writers and published online in popular newspapers and magazines – gives an opportunity not only to look at how the reporters describe their experiences but also to examine how these experiences are presented to the intended wider press readership. There is a lot of user-generated material focusing on Jansson and her works that is worth studying. However, for ethical reasons and due to the difficulty of obtaining permission for

the use of personal data, personal blogs and discussions on social media are excluded from the analysis.

Searches for English-language press articles were conducted in ProQuest database, using combinations of search words 'Tove Jansson', 'Moomin' and 'Finland', with additional keywords 'tourism' or 'travel'. Only articles published in or after 2014 that have full text available online and have free access were included. After removing duplicate entries from the search results, the search resulted in 54 entries. The metadata for each entry was reviewed to exclude sponsored travel reviews and a general overview of travel destinations and sites. Press articles for analysis were selected based on the following criteria: a) the article covered visits to sites in Finland with connections to either Jansson or her works; b) the author(s), in their respective pieces, reflect on the personal and/or societal importance of Jansson's works. Several articles that covered authors' visits to Finland to attend *Moominvalley* premiere were excluded, as the connection to Finland was absent and the importance of the texts was not addressed. Therefore, these articles did not help to address the aim of the research. Seven authored press articles were chosen for the study (see Table 1).

Table 1. List of press publications used as research material.

Author	Publication/date	Title of the article	Places/event visited
Simon, Kate	*The Independent*, 2014, August 9	Finland: It's Moomin marvellous	Klovharu, Pellinge archipelago; Ateneum museum, Helsinki
Peterson, Britt	*The Washington Post*, 2014, August 14	In Finland, giving in to Moomin madness (reprinted with minor changes in other newspapers)	Various locations in Helsinki; Klovharu, Pellinge archipelago; Moominworld theme park, Naantali
Oberman, Tracy-Ann	*The Independent*, 2015, May 18	Finland and the Moomins: On troll patrol in a fairytale landscape	Various locations in Helsinki; Moomin Museum, Tampere
Pratchett, Rhianna	*The Guardian*, 2018, March 12	My family and other Moomins: Rhianna Pratchett on her father's love for Tove Jansson	*Moominworld* theme park, Naantali

Luckel, Madeleine	*Vogue,* 2018, May 24	Moomins are Finland's favourite cartoon creatures – here's where to see them in Helsinki	Various locations in Helsinki
Caster, Yvette	*Metro,* 2019, January 8	There's a Moomin museum in Finland and you should visit before the new series *Moominvalley* starts	Moomin Museum, Tampere
Allardice, Lisa	T*he Guardia*n, 2019, April 6	"It is a religion": how the world went mad for Moomins	*Moominvalley* premiere, Helsinki

The articles were published online in newspapers and magazines[1] *The Guardian* (2 articles), *The Independent* (2 articles), *Metro*, *The Washington Post* and *Vogue* between 2014 and 2019..

The authors' personal and, in some cases, professional interest in Jansson's works can be observed in all chosen publications. All authors have been previously familiar with the Moomin characters, and the nostalgic sentiment and references to their childhood appear in several accounts, as will be presented in the analysis section. The two earliest published articles, by Kate Simon (2014) and Britt Peterson (2014), were tied to the centenary of Jansson's birth: both of them visited sites with biographical ties to Jansson in Helsinki and in Pellinge archipelago, with Peterson also visiting Moominworld theme park. Tracy-Ann Oberman's (2015) article mentions *Moomins on the Riviera* (2015), the animated adaptation in which Oberman voiced Moominmamma, and covers a family visit to various attractions with ties to Jansson as well as the Moomins. Madeleine Luckel's (2018) article covers her Moomin-themed visit to Helsinki. The other pieces – by Rhianna Pratchett (2018), Yvette Caster (2019) and Lisa Allardice (2019) – all refer to the then-upcoming *Moominvalley* series: Pratchett's visit to Moominworld and Caster's trip to the Moomin Museum were Moomin-centred, while Allardice attended the premiere of the series in Helsinki.

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1   The selected press articles were available openly online and accessible without subscription. While the exact online circulation figures for these newspapers and magazines at the time of publication are not readily available and the number of all-time readers for the articles is difficult to estimate, as of 2021, the average daily audience for online newspapers in the UK was estimated to be 3,5 million for The Guardian, 1,6 million for Metro and 1,4 million for The Independent (See https://www.statista.com/statistics/529970/uk-online-newspaper-market-by-daily-average-unique-browsers/). For The Washington Post, one of the highest-circulation print newspaper in the USA, average daily circulation in 2021 was estimated to be 180,159 (See https://pressgazette.co.uk/news/biggest-us-newspapers-by-circulation/). In addition to the print edition, online subscriptions for The Washington Post are available, and up to 20 articles per week can be read online without a subscription. Vogue, a monthly fashion and lifestyle magazine, is among the top 50 magazines in the USA, available in print and digital format, with paid and verified circulation for 2021 being 1,249,072 (See https://pressgazette.co.uk/publishers/magazines/biggest-us-magazines-by-circulation/

While, due to the defined criteria, the selected sample is comparatively small, the data selection method nevertheless corresponds to the focus of the study, and the textual data found in the seven articles provide rich material for analysis. Furthermore, using a small sample is not uncommon in qualitative research that aims for an in-depth study of nuanced experiences and perspectives such as, in this case, interpretation of the context and meaning-making processes relating to visits to sites with ties to media productions. The articles were closely examined using qualitative content analysis, a method suitable for "the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The study used a mix of *conventional* and *directed* approaches to content analysis, as outlined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). Some codes were derived from theories of belonging and findings of previous studies on media-induced travel (*directed content analysis*), while other codes were derived directly from the data (*conventional content analysis*).

After reading through the data several times, initial observations were made on the coding categories, as the themes found in the data were correlated to chosen theories of belonging and findings of earlier studies of media-induced travel. During subsequent detailed readings, the coding scheme was developed (see Table 2), codes were assigned based on the themes that appeared in the data, with codes subsequently grouped into categories and sub-categories reflecting respectively the major and minor themes.

Table 2. Coding categories based on the themes in the data.

Categories	Sub-categories		
Personal histories of engagement with Jansson's works	medium (e.g., books, screen adaptations, comics)	shared memories (e.g., with family members)	noting the adult themes in the Moomin books
Perceived importance of Jansson's works (particularly, the Moomin books) and biography	personal: nostalgia (e.g., childhood, family, familiar places)	collective: wider sociocultural importance of values in the books and presentations of Jansson's life	message/values relevant to recent events (e.g., political, environmental crises)
Experience during the visit: return, search, connection	'returning' to childhood, acceptability of being child-like	connecting to the characters, looking for places that inspired stories	connection to and/or paying homage to the author, getting to know her homeland
Finland as a country/destination, through connection to Jansson/Moomins	Moomins' fame in Finland (to be found everywhere), commercial nature	'magical', 'fairytalesque'; nature and cities, viewed through stories	country represents Jansson's values found in Moomin books: equality, care, nature

Results

The present section is divided into sub-sections that correspond to major themes in the data. To understand the meaningfulness of the visits inspired by Tove Jansson's works and biography, it is important to first look at them in the context of prior engagement with Jansson's works. The importance of the pre-visit stage, including personal histories of engagement with stories and meanings associated with them, has been emphasised in a number of earlier studies on media-induced travel (e.g., Kim 2010; Reijnders, 2016). Thus, I will first concentrate on the authors' familiarity with the stories, then proceed to look at the meanings and values associated with the narratives, both in personal and wider social contexts. Next, the descriptions of visitor experience will be analysed and a perceived connection between Jansson, the Moomins and Finland will be examined.

Histories of engagement with the Moomin stories and personal importance of the narratives

"I don't remember the precise moment I was introduced to the Moomins. They were always just there; a cosy, comforting and slightly weird presence in my childhood that has stayed with me", writes Rhianna Pratchett, an English game and comic book writer, in her 2018 piece in *The Guardian*. Reflecting on her own prior acquaintance with the stories and the reasons they became important to her, she compares her earlier life experience, in terms of the environment and family structure and dynamics, to that of the Moomins, with a parallel between herself and the protagonist Moomintroll:

> *Undoubtedly, part of the appeal of the books was that my early life was quite Moominish. I lived in a little pink cottage on the edge of a valley in deepest, darkest rural Somerset.*

> *My parents were quite Moominish themselves. I identified with young Moomintroll, being an only child and having a writer for a father and a mother who loved her garden (Pratchett, 2018).*

In relation to Pratchett's observation on similarities between the fictional surroundings of Moominvalley and her own geographical experience during her childhood, Reijnders (2016) has observed that stories are often found attractive if the places depicted in them remind readers and viewers of places familiar from childhood and adolescence. Thus, the affective attachments to places can be 'transferred' to works of fiction and spatial belonging can manifest in relation to locations described in books and depicted in cinematic productions (Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018). Squire (1994, 1996) similarly observed how nostalgia for rural environments and the 'simple pleasures' of the earlier years can be associated with works of fiction.

Rhianna Pratchett further remarks on the role of the Moomin books in her family:

Moomin-related vocabulary entered the Pratchett lexicon and we would often remind each other to "throw the woolly trousers to the crocodile"[2] when travelling abroad. This will make sense if you've read the fantastic Comet in Moominland (Pratchett, 2018).

Pratchett's article (2018) marked the third anniversary of the death of her father, popular fantasy writer Terry Pratchett. She writes about him building her a model of Moominvalley during her childhood and teaching her "to make waterwheels out of leaves and sticks, the way Moominpappa does in *The Exploits of Moominpappa*". She describes lasting emotional ties to the Moomin books which remained important to her and her family, especially during the difficult times surrounding the illness and death of her father.

When my father was lost in the murky depths of his Alzheimer's disease and couldn't sleep at night, I would read the Moomin books to him. As ever, it was comfort in a time of darkness. To us the Moomins meant love (Pratchett, 2018).

Rhianna Pratchett (2018) was introduced to the Moomin stories through the books, and the same was the case for the three other authors (Peterson, 2014; Luckel, 2018; Caster, 2019), as indicated in their respective publications. Journalist and editor Britt Peterson (2014), in her piece in *The Washington Post*, tells of her trip, which included various locations:

I set off on a quest of my own, traveling through Finland in search of the Moomin-land I've loved since I read the books in English translation as a child (Peterson, 2014).

Madeleine Luckel (2018) tells in her *Vogue* article that she was introduced to the Moomin books at an arts camp when she was a child and, despite admitting she no longer remembers the plot of the books, she has held a fascination with the "odd, yet undeniably cute" characters. Of her visit she says:

This journey would check an item off my life-long, well-tended, travel bucket list [...] But my affection for these fantastical creatures went a bit deeper [...] for years I harbored a nostalgic love and appreciation for the Moomins and their world (Luckel, 2018).

In her article in *Metro*, podcaster and journalist Yvette Caster (2019), referring to herself as a Moomin 'fan' waiting excitedly for the *Moominvalley* series, similarly remembers her own earlier engagement with and attachment to the Moomin stories:

Moomins have had a place in my heart since childhood – I even named my hamster Little My – and it was fascinating revisiting the characters and books as an adult (Caster, 2019).

As these glimpses of personal histories demonstrate, early encounters with the stories are fondly remembered. It has been previously indicated that stories encountered during

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2   This relates to an event in **Comet in Moominland**. While travelling to the Observatory in the Lonely Mountains, protagonist Moomintroll and his friend Sniff encounter crocodiles and, to divert their attention and escape being devoured, the two throw to the crocodiles the woolen trousers that Moomintroll's mother had packed them for their journey. This scene and its illustration, present in the original publication, has been removed from 1968 edition (and subsequent translations) as it was considered disturbing for younger readers.

the formative years often hold lasting significance for members of the audience (Squire, 1994; Reijnders, 2016) and can be associated with important interpersonal relationships (Hasebrink & Paus-Hasebrink, 2016) – particularly with family members, as in Rhianna Pratchett's (2018) case – and became connected to childhood memories and bound to personal histories.

In relation to how the characters and stories in children's books are (mis)remembered, it is worth noting how the 'darker side' of children's fiction is often ignored, underplayed or forgotten in the course of time. Squire (1994, 1996) observed this trend among visitors to Hill Top Farm in connection to Beatrix Potter's books, and this seems to be the case also with Tove Jansson's Moomin books (Harju, 2009). For instance, for actress and journalist Tracy-Ann Oberman (2015), the Moomins are "carefree, white, hippo-shaped characters who live in Moomin- valley", naturally recalled as round and jolly, as she refers to them in her article in *The Independent*. The cuteness is the Moomins' most often remembered feature, as the earlier accounts show, although Peterson (2014) and Caster (2019) acknowledge the 'scarier' earlier form of the Moomins when they first came to be. Lisa Allardice (2019), in her article in *The Guardian* also notes: "With longer noses and an angry glare, the original Moomins were altogether meaner creatures" in comparison to their present form, "famous for their gentleness, generosity and good humour".

With the cute aspect emphasized by much of the Moomin merchandise, the commonly shared view of the characters and idealised versions of the fictional events tend to disregard the 'adult' themes (which, in truth, continuously feature in the Moomin books – those of fear, danger and loneliness) in favour of the idyllic landscape and carefree existence. In contrast, in Lisa Allardice's (2019) account, the 'adult' themes are repeatedly acknowledged: "It is striking how much fear shadows the novels: for all the sunshine and picnics, menace lurks behind every bush", she writes, and refers to discussions with *Moominvalley*'s scriptwriters, who drew attention to the fact that the novels "go to some very dark places". Notably, the same is echoed in an article by Tom Holland (*The Guardian*, 2020), who not only emphasises the darker themes in Jansson's books, specifically *Moominland Midwinter*, such as death, isolation and loneliness, but also underlines the books' relevance to the situation many found themselves in during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perceived societal importance of Jansson's works

To continue on the relevance and societal importance of the Moomins, Rhianna Pratchett's account features further notions on why Jansson's works were valued in her family:

> *Continuing my Moomin education, my parents taught me the importance of the natural world; of community, compassion and understanding (Pratchett, 2018).*

Both Pratchett (2018) and Allardice (2019) refer to Terry Pratchett calling Tove Jansson "one of the greatest children's writers there has ever been" and contemplate the contemporary relevance of her works. From her own family history of engagement with Jansson's works, Pratchett (2018) connects it to a wider societal context, underlining their relevance in light of recent events – in all likelihood, Brexit and the rise of populism:

I delighted in the world Jansson created, one built upon themes such as friendship, love, tolerance and empathy. (Values my own country could do with embracing a little more at the moment – in fact, the Moomins should be required reading for anyone seeking to enter western politics) (Pratchett, 2018).

It has previously been indicated that individuals tend to connect their favourite narratives to ongoing events and reassess the meanings of the stories in new contexts. While nostalgia for the 'good old days' has often been connected to the exclusion of 'outsiders' – those with different sociocultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds (Morley, 2001), Pratchett's (2018) warm remembrance of the rural setting and the days when children like herself were "relatively free to run around in nature, getting bruised, stung and muddy with little parental supervision" by no means implies or involves turning away or excluding the 'Other'.

Allardice (2019) highlights the re-kindled international interest in Jansson's later works and biography, but specifically points out her influence on a number of writers through the Moomin books. She also emphasises that the first two books in the series "resonate all too strongly with current conflicts, the plight of refugees and, with uncanny presentiment, today's ecological crisis" and further observes on what makes the books special:

It is this strangely comforting combination of catastrophe and everyday cosiness that makes the Moomins so enchanting and enduring. The Moomin books are survival stories [...] (Allardice, 2019).

Of the (then) upcoming *Moominvalley* series, she says that the adaptation:

couldn't be more timely: never has there been a better moment to introduce the Moomins, with all their optimism, openness and hospitality, their deep connection with nature and anti-consumerist ethos (without ever being pompous – with the exception, perhaps, of Moominpappa), to a new audience, and hopefully readership (Allardice, 2019).

Briefly reminiscing about what the books mean for those already familiar with them, she ponders the reaction of the younger audiences to the new adaptation: "But whether Jansson speaks to generation Peppa Pig [...] is another matter" (Allardice, 2019).

In relation to Jansson's biography, Simon (2014), Oberman (2015), Caster (2019) and Allardice (2019) all draw attention to Jansson's openness about her sexuality and liberal political views, which earned their admiration. Oberman (2015) writes that Jansson was "brought up by free-thinking parents, and was later openly bisexual and by all accounts a pretty fantastic woman". Allardice (2019) refers to the fact that Jansson's female lovers inspired characters in the Moomin books, and also recognizes that the Moomin family, even though they appeared to conform to heteronormative standards, were not meant to be a representation of an ideal family. On Moomintroll's relationship with his parents, she notes, "So much literature is about escape from the family, but here it is always the point of return, a place of safety" (Allardice, 2019).

During the visit: Connecting to the stories, getting closer to the author

For Peterson (2014), Luckel (2018), Pratchett (2018) and Caster (2019) visiting Moomin-related sites offered a way to connect to beloved characters from their childhood, with a notable nostalgic aspect in their accounts. These notions echo observations by several researchers on the importance of affective attachment to narratives for tourists travelling to places with media connections (Buchmann et al., 2010; Kim, 2010; Reijnders, 2011a), particularly in relation to stories that are known from childhood (Squire, 1994, 1996; Lee, 2012; Gothie, 2016; Reijnders, 2016).

Peterson (2014) and Pratchett (2018), who visited Moominworld theme park, note it is a place where it is natural and acceptable to behave in a child-like way. In light of the shared family engagement with the Moomin stories and their lasting significance, Pratchett and her mother's joint visit to Moominworld was a profound experience for them both:

> I recently got the opportunity to take my mother to Moominworld in Naantali, Finland, the beautiful, island-based theme park designed hand-in-hand with Jansson. My mother said that exploring a life-sized Moominhouse, and singing and dancing with Little My, made her feel like a child again. My heart soared (Pratchett, 2018).

The above example also coincides with the results of several studies on theme park visits: even purposely created environments, 'genuine fakes' (Bom, 2015) like theme parks, can enable meaningful experiences by allowing visitors to experience the sense of being 'at home' and to immerse themselves in familiar fictional narratives (Lee, 2012; Waysdorf & Reijnders, 2018). Feeling like a child or allowing oneself to 'play' at the sites with connections to children's fiction was similarly observed by Gothie (2016) in her study on *Anne of Green Gables* tourism on Prince Edward Island.

Another indication of the search for a 'connection' with a fictional character appears in Oberman's (2015) account. The reason for a family trip to Finland was, for her, to find out more about and connect to Moominmamma, the character Oberman voiced in *Moomins on the Riviera* animated adaptation:

> in a bid to get to know her [Moominmamma] and Jansson's homeland, I took my eight-year old daughter and my husband off to explore Helsinki (Oberman, 2015).

Caster (2019) visited the Moomin Museum in Tampere as a "refresher course" on the Moomins, to renew her acquaintance with the characters before the new adaptation and to learn about Jansson, "groundbreaking in her personal life as well as in her creative capacities". Simon (2014), Peterson (2014) and Oberman (2015), driven by their interest in the stories and the author, also discovered previously unknown facts about Jansson and her works during their respective visits.

Journalist, editor and travel writer Kate Simon (2014), during her author-centred trip to the Finnish archipelago, visited the island Klovharu where Jansson and her partner used to spend summers. She refers to biographical facts and Jansson's later works, as well as to the information provided by her guide, a local sea captain who knew Jansson and her family. Referring to the visit as a 'pilgrimage' – a term often used to describe trips taken by literary

travellers who wish to get 'closer' to their favourite authors (Herbert, 2001; Watson, 2006), she writes about her visit to the island:

> *The tiny, remote retreat was a place where Tove could commune with nature, the life force of her work. I'm making my pilgrimage in the centenary year of her birth (Simon, The Independent, 2014).*

She provides detailed descriptions, drawing readers' attention to the tiniest details. The fact that the cabin remains almost unchanged invites projecting the author's (and her partner's) past presence onto the lived space.

> *The small wooden house, which has been preserved just as it was left when the two women turned the key for the final time. [...]*

> *The dining table [...] was where Tove likely wrote her last melancholic Moomin stories, Moominpappa at Sea and Moominvalley in November (Simon, 2014).*

Peterson (2014), who also visited Klovharu to explore Jansson's retreat, describes the cabin as "a compact one-room cube" where "every hook has a distinct purpose; every inch of shelf is used".

As these examples demonstrate, the visits feature an element of seeking a 'connection', either to the author or fictional characters, which resonates with earlier research. It highlights the importance of reconnecting with the narratives and understanding the inspiration behind the works, learning more about Jansson and 'paying homage' to her by visiting her homeland.

Finland imagined through the lens of the Moomin stories and in connection to Jansson

Continuing on Finland as Jansson's and the Moomins' homeland, Allardice (2019) notes the "central place of Tove Jansson's Moomins in Finnish culture", while Oberman (2015) refers to the characters as "national icons". The overwhelming presence of the characters in Finland and the commercial nature of the Moomin brand was mentioned by Peterson (2014) and Allardice (2019), while Luckel (2018) and Caster (2019) were impressed by the number of other tourists at Moomin-related sites. Luckel (2018) particularly describes her surprise at not being alone in her quest to look for the Moomins and remarks on how easy it is to find anything Moomin-related:

> *Moomins are an even bigger deal than I had previously thought.*

> *[...] coffee shops are dripping in Moomin-themed memorabilia, as well as menus designed to evoke the fictional cuisine of the Moomin world (Luckel, 2018).*

Peterson (2014) similarly describes how, during her stay in Helsinki, "Moomins pop up everywhere like blobby white mushrooms". At the same time, she describes Moominworld as a "thoroughly Nordic version of a children's amusement park", with no rides but "long, winding walks through the woods" (Peterson, 2014).

In several articles, authors note that respect for nature and pleasure found in the mundane is a theme that appears in the Moomin books which resonates with the Finnish way

of life. Oberman (2015) refers to the "beautiful simplicity of life under the stars in The Valley", and Pratchett (2018) recalls her parents teaching her small joys nature can offer through Moomin books. Simon (2014) also highlights the importance of nature, connecting the characters, "enchanted forest-dwelling creatures", with the author's "remote retreat [Klovharu] [...] a place where Tove could commune with nature, the life force of her work".

Connection to Finland already appears in the titles of five articles – those by Simon (2014), Peterson (2014), Oberman (2015), Luckel (2018) and Caster (2019). The country, known for its cold climate and often advertised for its natural beauty and connection with Santa Claus, can be perceived, to some extent, as exotic by overseas tourists and even by visitors from other parts of Europe. In a manner reminiscent of how Beatrix Potter set her anthropomorphic animal stories in places familiar to her (Squire, 1994, 1996), Jansson got the geographical inspiration for her fictional locations from 'real' places in Finland, which can be traced (Markkanen, 2016), and this is just what Simon (2014) does during her trip; the subtitle of her article mentions a "fairytale archipelago".

Viewed in connection to the Moomin stories, Finland becomes constructed as an exotic, cold and somewhat fairytalesque place. The reported 'magical' atmosphere is especially apparent in Oberman's account:

> [...] the Hogwarts-esque house in which Tove Jansson grew up, at 4 Luotsikatu.

> Suomenlinna Fortress [...] the place has a Game of Thrones vibe.

> [...] Moominvalley-style setting of the train journey [from Helsinki to Tampere] – vistas full of pine trees, lakes and rivers (Oberman, 2015).

Oberman (2015) makes connections to the other literary and cinematic productions in the fantasy genre, including *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, when describing Finnish cityscapes and "Moomin-esque landscapes". For her, the Art Nouveau and Art Deco architecture in Helsinki contributes to the fairytalesque feeling, with the city perceived as both modern and magical. Finland for her is 'trendy', as she describes the Design District with its "cobbled streets that are chock-full of creative cafés, art shops, and fashion" (Oberman, 2015).

While Moominvalley can be considered one of the fantastical worlds that "cannot exist and they cannot be travelled to" (Laing & Frost, 2012, p. 156), Finland, for visitors, becomes a representation of this fictional place. The combination of the focus on nature and the 'magical' in the findings connects to recent studies on Finland's image (Guo et al., 2021; Park et al., 2022). The themes found in the Moomin books, such as equality and respect for nature, become connected to what Finland represents for these visitors.

Conclusion

This study focused on the experiences of visitors who travelled to places with ties to Tove Jansson and her works and explored how the notions of nostalgia and belonging appear in seven authored press articles centred around the authors' visits to sites in Finland. The

findings show that Tove Jansson's works, the Moomin stories in particular, had deeply personal meaning for the authors of the articles, in the context of their lived experiences. It confirms the findings of the earlier studies on media-induced travel which emphasised the importance of prior engagement with and dedication to the narratives when analysing the experiences of visitors to sites with connections to fiction (Buchmann et al., 2010; Kim, 2010; Reijnders, 2011a, 2016). The analysis shows that the Moomin stories – intertwined with personal histories and associated with social attachments – remain important in adulthood and can affect individual travel choices. Conceptualised in terms of social and cultural belonging, re-engagement (through visits) with the Moomin stories, which were long familiar to these members of the audience, brings up associations with childhood and is sometimes connected with important interpersonal relationships.

The previous research highlighted that media-induced tourism as an activity is not only connected to media consumption and the context in which it is produced and consumed, but also connects to views and values that the media production and the site connected to it represents for the audience members (Squire, 1994, 1996; Kim, 2010; Jiang & Xu, 2016; Yu & Xu, 2016, 2018). The present study shows that the message from the books is found relevant in new contexts and the (re)interpretation of Jansson's biography affects how associated sites are viewed. The authors of the articles reflect on the themes that appear in the stories and values associated with Jansson's works – emphasizing inclusivity, hospitality and empathy. They reaffirm the relevance of the Moomin texts in light of recent events, such as the rise of populism, the refugee crisis and climate change.

The data show that Finland is imagined as an alluring land and experienced by the authors of the articles as somewhat exotic and fairytalesque, serving as the model for the Moomin tales. The notion of 'magical Finland' resonates with Lovell's (2019) research on the 'magical gaze', in which she draws attention to how places are perceived as fairytalesque, based on existing or perceived connections to fairytales and fantasy. Similar to how New Zealand came to be perceived as the 'real' Middle-earth as a result of being used as a setting for the 2001–2003 *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Buchmann et al., 2010), Finland, as a country where Jansson lived and where the characters were conceived, becomes fictionalised.

At the same time, Finland is found to be 'trendy' and 'modern'. While nature continues to be Finland's attraction, also due to the increasing awareness of climate change and the search for natural locations as tourism destinations, current public interest in welfare, equality and work-life balance results in growing demand for vacation in the Nordic countries and interest in Nordic lifestyle. Contemporary interpretation of the themes of inclusivity, care, friendship and respect for nature found in Jansson's books are also connected to the image of Finland as a country where welfare, equality and nature are considered important. Whether the country can hold on to that image as the new conservative coalition government takes over as a result of parliamentary elections in 2023 will be evident in the years to come.

The present research offered insights into how changing interpretations of media productions are projected onto places with connections to texts and authors and how it affects

visitor experiences. The findings on meaning-making processes relating to media productions and evolving destination image can be applicable in the context of media-induced tourism. Further studies can make transcultural comparisons when looking at how the changing meanings of media productions influence media-induced tourism. Tourism inspired by children's literature in Finland could be compared to similar attractions in other Nordic countries, such as those with connections to Astrid Lindgren in Sweden and Hans Christian Andersen in Denmark. As Moomin locations appear in other countries, such as Moomin Valley Park and Metsä Village in Hanno City, Japan, insights into how not only the characters but Finland and the Nordic countries are represented would be relevant and invite further investigation.

Acknowledgements

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Työn merkityksellisyys osana kestävää matkailutyötä

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Abstract

This paper discusses the significance of meaningful work, particularly in the tourism industry. There is a lack of consensus on defining meaningful work and its pursuit. This paper aims to connect meaningful work with sustainable, decent tourism work. As an industry vulnerable to changes, tourism has been influenced by recent global changes in consumer behaviour, digitalisation, and general economic restructuring. The pandemic hit the industry severely and exacerbated issues like a shortage of skilled human capital and challenges in tourism work. This study notes that, amid these changes, social responsibility in tourism work has taken a backseat, and meaningful work in this industry remains relatively understudied. The overarching purpose of the research is to provide an overview of existing discussions on meaningful work in tourism research and give examples of current development projects. By synthesising existing literature, the study aims to offer insights into areas of prior scholarship, identify aspects of meaningful work that may have been overlooked, and contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon in the context of tourism work.

Keywords: meaningful work, tourism work, sustainable work, social responsibility

Johdanto

Työn merkityksellisyys nousee puheenaiheeksi niin työpaikoilla, sosiaalisessa mediassa kuin uutisoinnissa melkeinpä päivittäin. Keskusteluissa on nostettu esiin, onko merkityksellisen työ jokaiselle kuuluva oikeus vai vain harvojen hyväosaisten luksusta. On myös kyseenalaistettu, käytetäänkö työn merkityksellisyyttä verukkeena tai oikeutuksena työstä maksettavalle matalalle palkalle (Kangasluoma 2021; Kujala 2022).

Työ vie ison osan ihmisen elämän parhaasta ajasta. Suhtautuminen työhön on kovin yksilöllistä kuin myös sukupolvi- ja kulttuurisidonnaista. Työn merkityksellisyys on subjektiivinen kokemus siitä, kuinka merkittävää ja arvokasta oma työ on. Se vaikuttaa olennaisesti työhön suhtautumiseen ja oman ammatti-identiteetin rakentumiseen. (Martela

ja Pessi, 2018). Suomalaisten työntekijöiden pohdinta omista merkityksistään, arvoistaan ja niiden toteutumisesta työssä on lisääntynyt. Yhä useampi on valmis vaihtamaan työpaikkaa, mikäli kokee työn olevan ristiriidassa oman arvomaailman kanssa. (Great Place to Work ja Duunitori 2021).

Tutkimuksen saralla työn merkityksellisyys on tärkeäksi tunnustettu teema ja sitä on tutkittu monilla eri tieteenaloilla, esimerkiksi organisaatiopsykologian, teologian, johtamisen ja liiketoiminnan etiikan näkökulmista (mm. Bailey ym. 2018; Martela ja Pessi 2018; Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra ja Beersma 2017; Juntunen 2019; Lips-Wiersma ja Wright 2012; Steger, Dik ja Duffy 2012; Rosso, Dekas ja Wrzesniewski 2010). Merkityksellisyyden kokemus muodostuu vuorovaikutuksessa työyhteisössä (Wrzesniewski 2003) työntekijän omien, olemassa olevien arvojen pohjalle (Lips-Wiersma ja Morris 2009; Martela ja Riekki 2018). Työoloilla, työpaikan organisaatiokulttuurilla, työyhteisön arvoilla ja johtamiskäytänteillä on mahdollisuus vaikuttaa työn merkityksellisyyteen (Supanti ja Butcher 2019; Bailey ym., 2018; Michaelson, Pratt ja Grant 2014; Christensen ja Walumbwa 2013).

Merkityksellisyys osana kestävää työtä

Matkailutyön sosiaaliseen vastuullisuuteen liittyvien teemojen tarkastelu on jäänyt taka-alalle (Duncan, Hillman ja Elbe 2020) ja työn merkityksellisyyttä on tarkasteltu vielä melko vähän. Tässä puheenvuorossa työn merkityksellisyyden kokemus pyritään nostamaan osaksi kestävää ja hyvää matkailutyötä.

Matkailutyötä on tarkasteltu monitieteisesti muun muassa julkisen ohjaamisen (Harju-Myllyaho, Hakkarainen ja Vähäkuopus 2020) työmarkkinoiden, matkailutyön paikallisten vaikutusten, työn tekemisen ja kokemisen näkökulmista (Veijola, Hakkarainen ja Nousiainen 2013, p. 174). Matkailualalla on merkittävä rooli erityisesti niin naisten ja nuorten työllisyyden edistäjänä (International Labour Organization 2017) kuin myös harvaanasutuilla alueilla (Tuulentie ja Hakkarainen 2014; Robinson, Martins, Solnet ja Baum 2019). Työtä tehdään hyvin erilaisilla toimialoilla, eri kokoisissa organisaatioissa ja työtehtävät edellyttävät monipuolista osaamista (Robinson ym. 2019). Perinteisesti arvostettujen teknisten taitojen lisäksi ja sijaan, matkailualan työtehtävät edellyttävät pehmeämpien taitojen osaamista, kuten esimerkiksi asiakaskohtaamiseen liittyviä tunnetaitoja (Duncan, Scott ja Baum 2013).

Alan työmahdollisuudet ovat usein sesonkiluonteisia, joten alaa haastaa sesonkityölle tyypillinen huono maine, matala palkka, epäsäännölliset työajat, epävarmuus työn jatkuvuudesta ja mielikuvat matalan koulutustason työtehtävistä. Alan ei koeta tarjoavan mielekkäitä urapolkuja, vaan se nähdään läpikulkualana, joten vaihtuvuus on suurta. (Baum ym. 2016; Duncan ym. 2013). Pandemia pahensi osaajapulaa ja syvensi työn epäkohtia, joista osa on jo normalisoitunut alalle tyypillisiksi (Hadjisolomou, Booyens, Nickson, Cunningham ja Baum 2022; Booyens, Hadjisolomou, Nickson, Cunningham ja Baum 2023). Alan työoloja koskevat selvitykset (Hadjisolomou ym. 2022; Curran 2021), työntekijä- ja työnantajaosapuolten järjestäytymiseen (Barry ja You 2018; Thornthwaite ja Sheldon 2014)

ja minimipalkkaan (Markey ja O'Brien 2021) liittyvät keskustelut kertovat tarpeesta tehdä epäkohtia näkyväksi.

Matkailuala on jo pitkään tehnyt töitä alan työpaikkojen vetovoimaisuuden vahvistamiseksi. Vetovoiman rinnalle nousseen pitovoima-termin käyttö on tuoreempaa, mutta se kertoo, että huomio on hiljalleen siirtymässä osaajien houkuttelusta niiden vaalimiseen. Pitovoimalla tarkoitetaan niitä toimenpiteitä, joilla työntekijöitä pyritään pitämään työnantajan palveluksessa. Hyvien ja kokeneiden työntekijöiden pysyminen organisaatiossa vaikuttaa usein positiivisesti organisaation tuottavuuteen ja asiakastyytyväisyyteen. (Karimi ja Parsafar, 2017.) Työn merkityksellisyyden kokemus on pitovoiman näkökulmasta positiivinen ja tavoiteltava, sillä se vahvistaa pitovoimaan myönteisesti vaikuttavia ominaisuuksia ja käyttäytymistä, kuten työmotivaatiota, sitoutumista ja työhyvinvointia (Hackman ja Oldham 1976; Rosso ym. 2010; Michaelson ym. 2014; Geldenhuys, Laba ja Venter, 2014; Jung ja Yoon, 2016). Usein pitovoimaa pyritään vahvistamaan ulkoisin kannustimin, mutta yhä enemmän tulisi kiinnittää huomiota merkitykselliseksi koettuun työhön, joka itsessään motivoisi osaajia jäämään (Scroggins, 2008).

Mihin tulisi kiinnittää huomiota työn merkityksellisyyden toteutumiseksi? Vaikka eri tutkimusperinteet tarjoavat erilaisia ja toisistaan poikkeaviakin malleja ratkaisuiksi, on niistä mahdollista löytää yhteistä tarttumapintaa työn merkityksellisyyden tarkasteluun. Seuraavan neljän osa-alueen toteutuminen työssä vahvistaa merkityksellisyyden tunnetta (Lips-Wiersma ja Morris 2009; Lips-Wiersma ja Wright 2012, Martela ja Riekki 2018). Ensimmäinen osa-alue on yksilön omaehtoisuuden tarve ja ihmisenä kehittyminen. Työn merkitykselliseksi kokemista vahvistaa tunne siitä, että on vapaa päättämään omasta työstään. Tällöin motivaatio työn tekemiseen kumpuaa sisältä ulkoisten motivaatiotekijöiden sijaan. Toisena osa-alueena on kyvykkyyden tarve ja oman potentiaalinen hyödyntäminen. Merkityksellisyyden tunnetta vahvistaa tunne oman työn hallinnasta ja siitä, että onnistuu työssä, pystyy suorittamaan annetut tehtävät menestyksekkäästi loppuun asti. Kolmantena osa-alueena on tarve yhteisöllisyydelle ja yhteyteen. Merkityksellisyyttä vahvistaa tunne yhteisöön kuulumisesta ja välittävistä ihmissuhteista sekä toiminen yhdessä muiden kanssa ja työn organisointi yhteisönä. Neljäntenä merkityksellisyyttä vahvistavana osa-alueena on hyväntekemisen tarve ja toisten palveleminen. Työn merkitykselliseksi kokemista vahvistaa se, että työllä on mahdollisuus tehdä pyyteettömästi jotain hyvää toisen (työkaverin, asiakkaan, ihmiskunnan) hyväksi. (Lips-Wiersma ja Morris 2009; Lips-Wiersma ja Wright 2012, Martela ja Riekki 2018).

Katsaus työn merkityksellisyyteen matkailualalla

Tämän katsauksena pohjana käytetään maaliskuussa 2023 tehtyä kirjallisuushakua (Ebsco, Sage ja Scopus). Haku kohdistettiin englanninkielisiin vertaisarvioituihin julkaisuihin. Hakusana *Meaningful Work* kohdistettiin julkaisun otsikkoon, abstraktiin ja asiasanoihin, kun taas koko tekstiin kohdennetuilla hakusanoilla *Tourism, Hospitality, Hotel* ja *Restaurant* pyrittiin sijoittamaan merkityksellisyys matkailutyöhön. Hakutulokset käytiin läpi tarkistamalla hakusanojen asiayhteys, esimerkiksi mainittiinko hotelli työnteon paikkana

vai majoittumistarkoituksessa. Tarkastelun perusteella tähän katsaukseen otettiin mukaan 15 työn merkityksellisyyttä matkailualan kontekstissa tarkastelevaa artikkelia (Taulukko 1).

Katsauksen perusteella matkailutyöhön liittyvä keskustelu heijastelee organisaatiotutkimuksen näkemystä, vahvistaen muun muassa merkitykselliseksi koetun työn myönteistä vaikutusta työtehtävään sitoutumiseen (esim. Jung ja Yoon, 2016) ja työntekijöiden vaihtuvuuden vähenemiseen (Le, Hancer, Chaulagain ja Pham 2023). Yhtä lailla matkailualalla työyhteisön organisaatiokulttuurilla, sosiaalisilla prosesseilla ja merkitysrakenteilla on mahdollisuus joko vahvistaa tai vähentää yksilön merkityksellisyyden tunnetta (Cockburn-Wootten 2012; Butler ja Hammer 2019; Shigihara 2019).

Matkailualan keskusteluissa työn merkityksellisyys nähdään tärkeänä muutoksen välineenä, jonka avulla on mahdollista lisätä tietoisuutta työn ammatillisuudesta ja vaikuttaa mielikuviin alalla tehtävästä työstä (Cockburn-Wootten 2012). Työn merkityksellisyys, hyvän tekeminen ja yhteiskunnallisesti saatu arvostus motivoivat työskentelemään pandemia-aikaisissa riskialttiissa karanteenihotelleissa ja vaikutti myönteisesti työntekijöiden ammatti-identiteettiin ja alan työn imagoon (Goh ja Baum 2021). Merkityksellisyys nostetaan esiin mahdollisena keinona houkutella, sitouttaa ja johtaa etenkin nuorta sukupolvea (Tan, Lew ja Sim 2019) ja se nousee vastavalmistuneiden joukossa yhdeksi työn laadun osatekijäksi (Weaver 2008).

Keskustelussa nostetaan esiin myös johtamistyylien yhteys merkityksellisyyden kokemukseen. Johtamistavalla on mahdollista vaikuttaa organisaatiokulttuuriin, työyhteisön asenteisiin ja käytänteisiin (Cockburn-Wootten, 2012) ja työyhteisön henkisyyteen (Ahmad, Omar ja Jamal 2018; Aboobaker 2022). Esimerkiksi palveleva johtamistyyli huomioi työntekijän yksilölliset vahvuudet, vahvistaen merkityksellisyyttä ja vaikuttaen myönteisesti myös asiakaspalvelutyön laatuun (Rabiul, Patwary, Mohamed ja Rashid 2022). Eettinen johtamistapa mahdollistaa oikeudenmukaiset, tasavertaiset työolosuhteet ja hälventää työntekijöiden kokemaa epävarmuutta (Anser, Moazzam, Muhammad, Muhammad ja Zahid 2021). Työnantajan yhteiskuntavastuullisuus edistää työntekijän auttavaa käytöstä työpaikalla ja vahvistaa tunnetta työn merkityksellisyydestä (Supanti ja Bucther 2019; Raub ja Blunschi, 2014). Toisaalta, työn merkityksellisyyden kokemuksella on todettu olevan vaikutusta organisaation kestävän kehitykseen johtamiseen ja ympäristömyönteiseen käyttäytymiseen (Gurmani ym. 2021).

Merkityksellisyys muodostuu niin arkipäiväisissä tehtävissä kuin poikkeusolojen kokemuksissa. Vaikkakin karanteenihotelleissa tehtiin töitä ihmiskunnan turvallisuuden eteen, työn merkityksellisyys ei ole maailman parantamisesta (Goh ja Baum 2021). Myös "huonot" tai rutiininomaiset työt tarjoavat merkityksellisyyden kokemuksia (Butler ja Hammer 2019; Shigihara 2019). Matkailualan monipuoliset työtehtävät tuottavat tekijälleen merkityksellisyyden kokemuksia, mutta mahdollisuuksia siihen tulisi edelleen kehittää ja vahvistaa (Goh ja Baum 2021; Supanti ja Bucther 2019).

Taulukko 1. Katsaus työn merkityksellisyyteen matkailualan tutkimuksessa

Tekijä	Artikkeli	Näkökulma
Aboobaker, N. (2022).	Workplace Spirituality and Employee Wellbeing in the Hospitality Sector: Examining the Influence of Fear of COVID-19.	Työn merkityksellisyys osana työpaikan henkisyyden kokemusta. Työpaikan henkisyyden vaikutus työntekijöiden hyvinvointiin pandemian aikana.
Ahmad, A., Omar, Z., ja Jamal, N. A. (2018).	Workplace spirituality among Malaysian employees in hospitality and educational organisations.	Työn merkityksellisyys osana työpaikan henkisyyden kokemusta. Kokemuksen vertailu eri alan työpaikkojen välillä.
Anser, M., Moazzam, A., Muhammad, U., Muhammad, R., ja Zahid, Y. (2021).	Ethical Leadership and Knowledge Hiding: An Intervening and Interactional Analysis.	Eettisen johtamistavan ja työn merkityksellisyyden vaikutus työntekijän tiedon jakamiseen / salaamiseen palvelualoilla.
Butler, P., ja Hammer, A. (2019).	'A Minute's a Life-Time in Fast-Food!': Managerial Job Quality in the Quick Service Restaurant Sector.	Työn merkityksellisyys osana esihenkilötyön työelämän laatua. Subjektiivisten odotusten, sosiaalisten prosessien ja objektiivisten laatukriteereiden vertailu.
Cockburn-Wootten, C. (2012).	Critically unpacking professionalism in hospitality: Knowledge, meaningful work and dignity.	Työn merkityksellisyys keinona vahvistaa ammatillisuutta ja vaikuttaa mielikuviin alalla tehtävästä työstä.
Goh, E., ja Baum, T. (2021).	Job perceptions of generation z hotel employees towards working in COVID-19 quarantine hotels: The role of meaningful work.	Merkityksellisen työn rooli Z-sukupolven työntekijöiden työskentelyssä riskialttiissa karanteenihotelleissa.

Gurmani, J., Khan, N., Khalique, M., Yasir, M., Obaid, A. ja Sabri, N. (2021).	Do Environmental Transformational Leadership Predicts Organizational Citizenship Behavior towards Environment in Hospitality Industry: Using Structural Equation Modelling Approach.	Työn merkityksellisyyden kokemuksen yhteys organisaation kestävän kehitykseen johtamiseen ja ympäristömyönteiseen käyttäytymiseen.
Jung, H., ja Yoon, H. (2016).	What does work meaning to hospitality employees? The effects of meaningful work on employees' organizational commitment: The mediating role of job engagement.	Työn merkityksellisyyden muodostuminen. Merkityksellinen työn vaikutus työntekijöiden motivaatioon ja sitoutumiseen.
Le, L., Hancer, M., Chaulagain, S., ja Pham, P. (2023).	Reducing hotel employee turnover intention by promoting pride in job and meaning of work: A cross-cultural perspective.	Työn merkityksellisyyden yhteys henkilöstön vaihtuvuuteen. Vietnamin ja Yhdysvaltojen kulttuurienvälinen vertailu.
Rabiul, M. K., Patwary, A. K., Mohamed, A. E., ja Rashid, H. (2022).	Leadership Styles, Psychological Factors, and Employee Commitment to Service Quality in the Hotel Industry	Johtamistyylien yhteys asiakaspalvelutyön laatuun työn psykologisen merkityksellisyyden ja turvallisuuden tunteen kautta.
Raub, S., ja Blunschi, S. (2014).	The Power of Meaningful Work: How Awareness of CSR Initiatives Fosters Task Significance and Positive Work Outcomes in Service Employees.	Yrityksen yhteiskuntavastuutekojen suhde organisaatiokansalaisuuteen ja palvelualan työntekijöiden kokemaan työn merkityksellisyyteen.
Shigihara, A. (2019).	"I Mean, Define Meaningful!": Accounts of Meaningfulness among Restaurant Employees.	Merkityksellisen elämän ja työn tarkastelua, työn merkityksellisyyden muodostuminen työn sisäistä ja ulkoisista tekijöistä.

Supanti, D. ja Bucther, K. (2019)	Is corporate social responsibility (CSR) participation the pathway to foster meaningful work and helping behavior for millennials?	Yrityksen yhteiskuntavastuun vaikutus milleniaalien työn merkityksellisyyteen ja auttavaan organisaatiokäyttäytymiseen.
Tan, K, ja Lew, T-Y. ja Sim, A. (2019).	An innovative solution to leverage meaningful work to attract, retain and manage Generation Y employees in Singapore's hotel industry.	Työn merkityksellisyys keinona houkutella, sitouttaa ja johtaa Y-sukupolven työntekijöitä.
Weaver, A. (2009).	Perceptions of job quality in the tourism industry : The views of recent graduates of a university's tourism management programme.	Työn merkityksellisyys työn laadun osatekijänä. Vastavalmistuneiden näkemyksiä työn laadusta matkailualalla.

Ajankohtaisia kehittämishankkeita pitovoiman vahvistamiseksi

Pitovoiman ja työn merkityksellisyyden vahvistamiseksi on toteutettu erilaisia kehittämis-kokonaisuuksia, joista tässä esimerkkinä muutamia sekä valtakunnallisia että alueellisia hankkeita. Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriön (2023) Talent Boost - toimenpidekokonaisuudella pyritään veto- ja pitovoiman vahvistamiseen kansainvälisten osaajien keskuudessa. Tavoit-teena on tukea yritysten valmiuksia tunnistaa, rekrytoida ja johtaa monimuotoisia tiimejä ja parantaa suomalaisen yhteiskunnan ja työelämän valmiuksia vastaanottaa kansainvälisiä osaajia (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2023).

Pyhä-Luosto toimi pilottialueena veto- ja pitovoiman kehittämistyölle, jonka tavoit-teena oli laatia alue- ja työyhteisökohtaiset kehittämissuunnitelmat osaavan työvoiman saatavuudelle (Lapin ELY-keskus 2023). Työn pitovoiman vahvistamiseksi matkailualalla on Lapin ELY-keskuksen hallinnoimassa Osaavaa työvoimaa työyhteisö- ja kumppanuus-verkostoilla – hankkeessa kehitettiin yritysten rekrytointiosaamista ja työnantajakuvaa. Lisäksi hankkeessa sparrattiin pohtimaan yrityskohtaisia veto- ja pitovoimatekijöitä sekä käytännön tekoja osaajien kiinnittämiseksi alueelle. Alueellisen yhteiskehittämisen tulok-sina kehitettiin alueen yhteinen henkilöstöpassi, laadittiin Pikaopas rekrytointiin ja muo-toiltiin kahden uuden henkilöstömajoittamiseen hankitun rakennuksen asumiskonsepti (Lapin ELY-keskus 2023).

Tampereen yliopiston Duunarit-hankkeessa (Saari, Koivunen, Pyöriä, Leinonen, Ta-panila ja Melin, 2021) selvitettiin suorittavan työn, esimerkiksi siivousalan, tekijöiden kokemuksia. Tulokset mukailevat aiemmin esiteltyjä, työn merkityksellisyyden kannalta tärkeitä osa-alueita: Esihenkilön työntekijälle osoittama luottamus ja positiivinen palau-te vahvistavat omaehtoisuuden kokemusta. Työssä kohdattujen ongelmien ratkaiseminen luo onnistumisen kokemuksia. Itsensä kokeminen tärkeäksi osaksi yhteisöä on olennaista.

Hyvän tekeminen ilmeni kollegoiden auttamisen lisäksi myös oman työn näkemisenä yhteiskunnan näkökulmasta. (Saari ym. 2021.)

Vielä meneillään olevassa Lapin ammattikorkeakoulun toteuttamassa Työn pitovoiman vahvistamisen kokeilut työyhteisöissä matkailu- ja palvelualalla -hankkeessa tavoitteena on tunnistaa työn merkityksellisyyden muodostumiseen, motivoitumiseen ja sitoutumiseen vaikuttavia tekijöitä. Hankkeessa on kerätty lappilaisten työyhteisöjen tarpeita pitovoiman ja työn merkityksellisyyden vahvistamiseen, ja toteutettu työhyvinvointia tukevia tilaisuuksia yhdessä lappilaisten matkailu- ja palvelualan työyhteisöjen kanssa. (Kemi ja Vähäkuopus 2023).

Lisäksi seurantaan kannattaa ottaa Jyväskylän yliopistossa meneillään oleva MEANWELL: Merkityksellisestä työstä hyvinvointia organisaatioihin -tutkimus- ja kehittämistyö. Hankkeessa luodaan tutkimustietoon perustuva toimintamalli organisaatioille sekä HR- ja työterveysammattilaisille työn merkityksellisyyden, työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnin sekä organisaatioiden toimivuuden edistämiseen (Jyväskylän yliopisto 2023).

Työn merkityksellisyys arjen tekoina

Täysin yhdentekevältä tuntuva työ voi muodostua pitemmän päälle hyvinkin kuormittavaksi (Virtanen 2023), mutta merkityksellisyyden fanaattinen tavoittelu tai työn merkitykselliseksi uskottelu voi kääntyä itseään vastaan, ahdistavaksikin. Jokaisella tulisi olla oikeus kokea työnsä mielekkääksi ja saada tunnustusta työstään.

Työn merkityksellisyydessä on kyse hyvin arkisista, työn tekemiseen, työolosuhteisiin ja työyhteisöön liittyvistä asioista. Yksilötasolla työn tärkeäksi, mielekkääksi ja merkitykselliseksi kokemista edesauttaa se, että saamme päättää työssämme tiettyjä asioita ja koemme silloin tällöin onnistuneemme ja päässeemme tavoitteeseemme. Esimerkiksi, siivoojana työskentelevälle se tarkoittaa mahdollisuutta määrittää oman työnsä järjestys, työn kohteet ja työskentelytavat, ja esimerkiksi onnistuessa saamaan erityisen likaisen kohteen puhtaaksi (Saari ym. 2023).

Työnantajalla on velvollisuus taata kestävät työolot kuin myös johtaa ja näyttää suuntaa työntekijälle. Esihenkilö voi omalla toiminnallaan tukea työntekijän omaehtoisuuden, kyvykkyyden, yhteenkuuluvuuden ja hyvän tekemisen tarpeiden täyttymistä. Pikakonstien sijaan kestävämpää on mahdollistaa työntekijälle merkityksellisten asioiden parissa työskentelyn ja työnantajaorganisaation tavoitteiden yhdistyminen. Tällöin merkityksellisyyden kokemus on aito, ja työntekijän sisältä kumpuava motivaatio vähentää työnantajaan ja esihenkilötyöhön perinteisesti kohdistettuja odotuksia merkityksellisen työn tarjoamisesta. (Michaelson ym. 2014; Lips-Wiersma ja Morris 2009.)

Huolimatta siitä, että merkityksellistä työtä koskevan keskustelun määrä on lisääntynyt, ilmiön tarkempi tarkastelu matkailutyön yhteydessä puuttuu. Voisiko työn merkityksellisyydestä muodostua osaajapulasta kärsivän matkailualan veto- ja pitovoimatekijä ilman, että se vaikuttaisi yritykseltä harhauttaa katse pois alan epäkohdista? Missä määrin työn merkityksellisyyden kokemuksen tulisi olla tavoiteltavaa ja mikä on riittävän merkityksellistä? Miten huomioida työn merkityksellisyyden toteutuminen työtehtävien ke-

hittämisessä ja johtamisessa? Missä määrin toisen kokemaa työn merkityksellisyyttä on mahdollista johtaa?

Lopuksi

Artikkelin laatimisessa on hyödynnetty Lapin ammattikorkeakoulun toteuttamassa Työn pitovoiman vahvistamisen kokeilut työyhteisöissä matkailu- ja palvelualalla -hankkeessa (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan ELY-keskus ESR) laaditun nykytila-analyysin aineistoa.

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Towards an ethical tourism recovery in Northern peripheries

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Abstract

Unsustainable tourism growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and disruption of tourism caused by its outbreak, together with the global environmental crisis and different global and local injustices, have raised debates on what tourism should be like in the future. A more ethical tourism sector post-recovery has become a topical issue for strategy making in post-pandemic tourism. In this research note, we tie together local stakeholder views on ethical tourism recovery in northern peripheries, a review of current tourism strategies in the area and relevant literature to add to the debate regarding ethical tourism recovery in the region. Our findings show that the local stakeholders participating in our research saw need for more inclusive and participatory community-centred tourism planning and development than most of the reviewed tourism strategies, which were mainly following neoliberal utilitarian ethics. Ethics should be explicitly referenced and discussed in tourism planning and policy making and form an integral part of tourism strategies, and further research is needed to support this transition.

Keywords: tourism, COVID-19, recovery, ethics, northern periphery, local community, tourism strategy

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic had a wide range of impacts on tourism. In Europe's northern peripheries, some places received more tourists, due to the growth of domestic tourism, while others suffered a decrease in visitor numbers (Jóhannesson et al., 2022; Macaulay et al., 2022). The pandemic strengthened and, in some places, dramatically highlighted some trends that had already been gaining ground in tourism consumer behaviour. Attitudes were more favourable towards local tourism as travelling was restricted and interest in

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pro-environmental travel was growing (Ianioglo & Rissanen, 2020). Correlative with a general desire for more open and perceptually-safe spaces, nature-based tourism was popular, with greater visitor numbers creating challenges for nature conservation and local communities (Jóhannesson et al., 2022; Macaulay et al., 2022). Thus, some of the only options for tourism were those limited possibilities offered by the strictures of lockdown.

Unsustainable tourism growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and disruption of tourism caused by its outbreak, together with the global environmental crisis and different global and local injustices, have raised debates on what tourism should be like in the future (e.g. Gösling et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Rastegar et al., 2021; 2023). As Rastegar et al. (2021) have noted, tourism recovery strategies cannot be formulated without consideration of ethics. Yet ethics are rarely discussed in tourism strategies, and a more ethical tourism sector post-recovery is thus a topical issue in post-pandemic tourism strategy making.

In this paper, we tie together local stakeholder views on ethical tourism recovery in northern peripheries collected in the ETRAC (Ethical Tourism Recovery in Arctic Communities) project, a review of current tourism strategies in the area and relevant literature to add to the debate on post-pandemic tourism strategies in the region. Investigating regional tourism strategies is important as they provide a framework within which decisions affecting tourism development and practices are taken (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). By pointing out what kinds of tourism development ethics these strategies incorporate in comparison to local stakeholder views, we seek to contribute to the debate on shaping better tourism futures in the North and beyond.

Ethical Frameworks for Tourism Recovery Strategies

There is a growing body of literature on ethics in tourism. In the scope of this research note, we can only briefly introduce some ethical principles that are compatible with our research materials.

Inclusion and participation are much discussed ethical principles in the context of tourism policy making, planning and development, and yet are not necessarily taking place in practice. Local people should be able to participate in or, better, have control over planning and decision-making that affect their lives (e.g., Buzinde & Caterina-Knorr, 2022; Höckert et al., 2021). Or, as Höckert et al. (2021) propose, they should be able to participate in their own development as hosts, and, importantly, also have the possibility to stay outside tourism development if they want to. Drawing on a Levinasian care ethic, Höckert et al. (2021) suggest that tourism development should be based on openness to different participants and reciprocal care of each other's well-being.

An increasing number of tourism researchers sees justice as a key ethical principle to guide tourism policy and development toward individual, communal, societal and planetary well-being (see Guia, 2021; Jamal & Higham, 2021; Rastegar et al., 2023). In line with this, the framework of Rastegar et al. (2021) places justice at the centre of tourism planning and development with four dimensions: 1) Recognition or 'how vulnerable groups and eco-

systems, their needs and rights are identified at local level', 2) procedural justice or inclusion of different rights, values and ideas in decision-making, 3) distributive justice or an equal distribution of the costs and benefits of tourism strategies, and 4) restorative justice or 'actions required for an equitable and just future' (Rastegar et al., 2021, p. 2).

There is still little empirical research on how the framework of Rastegar et al. (2021) can be applied to tourism strategies in practice (Rastegar & Ruhanen, 2022). In the following we will offer some insights based on our empirical materials. The concept of justice is, however, much wider than this framework and understanding how to apply the concept in tourism is continuously evolving (see Jamal & Higham, 2021; Rastegar et al., 2023) and this paper seeks to contribute to that debate.

Materials and Methods

During ETRAC, in winter 2021–2022 a semi-structured survey was distributed among tourism stakeholders in the project area (North Karelia, Finnish Lapland, Northern Sweden and Norway, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, and New Brunswick, Canada) concerning the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and stakeholder views on ethical tourism recovery strategies. In total 38 responses were received, from Finland, the UK, Canada, Belgium, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland and Russia. The most common respondents were businesses or academics, followed by interest groups, business support organisations, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and other types of enterprise. In addition, small group discussions on the same topics as in the survey were facilitated at a kick-off webinar in October 2021 for 20 participants representing similar stakeholders from the project area (see Macaulay et al., 2022).

Furthermore, a stakeholder workshop, with 15 participants from the project area, was organised in February 2022 in order to create a bottom-up strategy for ethical tourism recovery in northern peripheries. The main themes of the survey results and kick-off deliberations were used as discussion starters in the workshop. Attendees represented a broad range of perspectives and sectors, including academia, DMOs, tourism companies and regional development organisations. Finally, based on a synthesis of a data-driven thematic analysis of the kick-off meeting, survey and workshop materials, four interconnected strategic pillars for an ethical tourism recovery in northern peripheries were formed (see Macaulay et al., 2022).

For this research note, we reviewed the commensurate, and available, regional tourism strategies from the project area: Finnish Lapland, North Karelia, Scotland, Greenland and New Brunswick (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Regional Council of Lapland, 2021; Scottish Tourism Alliance et al., n.d.; Visit Greenland, n.d.; Visit Karelia, n.d.). Our review focused on ascertaining whether the identified four strategic pillars were represented in the regional strategies. Finally, the findings were compared with the academic discussion on tourism ethics presented above.

Results

We have structured our results around the four strategic pillars of ethical tourism recovery in northern peripheries which were formed on the basis of the stakeholder views (see Macaulay et al., 2022). The pillars are congruent with current local movements to centre and empower local communities (Higgins-Desbiolles & Bigby, 2022), offering practical ways to develop ethical tourism on the local level and hinting at the systemic changes needed for a sustainable tourism future (see Roxas et al., 2022; Varzaru et al., 2021).

Pillar One: Inclusive Network Development

The local tourism stakeholders participating in our kick-off webinar, survey and workshop saw a need for strong collaboration between businesses and communities engaged in ethical tourism recovery which could include knowledge sharing, joint packages and product development for mutual benefit (Macaulay et al., 2022). This pillar implies an ethic of care (see Höckert et al., 2021), fostering inclusion, participation, recognition, and procedural and distributive justice (see Buzinde & Caterina-Knorr, 2022; Rastegar et al., 2021).

The reviewed regional tourism strategies emphasise collaboration and network development, but only the strategies of New Brunswick and Scotland recognise local communities as partners in these activities. As Guia (2021) notes, there is, however, the risk that instead of an ethic of care, neoliberal utilitarian ethics are followed where local people are used as resources to satisfy tourists whose well-being is prioritised over that of the local communities. Hence, ethical consideration is needed at both the strategic and implementation level.

Pillar Two: Housing and Employment

According to the local stakeholders' responses in the kick-off webinar, survey and workshop, there is a need to address structural challenges with policy interventions, as the poor reputation of the tourism industry as an employer and a shortage of affordable housing, partly caused by tourist demand for accommodation, are contributing to out-migration and constraining the ability of tourism businesses to recruit and retain employees. For example, short-term housing rentals to tourists could be restricted and guidelines given to improve employer practices in the sector (Macaulay et al., 2022; see also Harju-Myllyaho et al., 2022).

A lack of employees in the sector is present in all the tourism strategies examined. The employee issue has particular prominence in the Scottish strategy, where Brexit is exacerbating the situation, as over 11 % of tourism employees have been EU nationals. The poor image of seasonal, low paid tourism jobs, or the need to increase the workforce and migration to the area, are also widely acknowledged in the strategies. The employment and housing issues of this pillar are questions of distributive justice, but as different vulnerable groups (e.g. low paid seasonal tourism workers, immigrants, local people without affordable housing) are included, recognition and restorative justice are needed as well (see Jamal & Higham, 2021; Rastegar et al., 2021), and this is not sufficiently acknowledged in the reviewed strategies.

Pillar Three: Changing Inappropriate Tourist Behaviour

The local stakeholders emphasised in our kick-off webinar, survey and workshop that problems caused by inappropriate tourist behaviour, such as littering and irresponsible wild camping, and exacerbated by the pandemic, could be tackled by providing easily accessible online and on-site information, as well as sufficient facilities and encouraging their responsible use. Taking into consideration visitors' growing interest in ethical tourism, products should be developed and marketed proactively through local collaborations between businesses and communities. To share the financial benefits of tourism to multiple locations, and ease the burden on the most visited sites, alternative routes and places should be promoted for visitors (Macaulay et al., 2022) thus fostering inclusion, participation and distributional justice (see Höckert et al., 2021; Rastegar et al., 2021).

None of the reviewed tourism strategies mentions inappropriate tourist behaviour, but the strategy of Lapland acknowledges that during peak-season some destinations suffer from over-tourism, while the Scottish strategy recognises tourism pressures in Scotland and the potential negative impacts of overcrowding (see also Ross, 2020). Many northern communities have created guidelines for tourists to advise them on appropriate behaviour (see Kugapi et al., 2020; Macaulay et al., 2022), but this kind of visitor guidance is not part of the reviewed strategies. None of them speaks specifically of developing products for ethical, sustainable or responsible tourists. Together with the ignorance of inappropriate tourist behaviour, this suggests that no responsibility is expected from tourists on a strategic level.

All the strategies aim for sustainable tourism growth and, with the exception of the Visit North Karelia strategy, distributive justice, by spreading tourism across their areas. For example, in Lapland and Greenland, the aim is to have tourism everywhere to enable employment and business activities in all local communities. The communities have, however, not been asked whether they want to have this kind of development. In North Karelia, distributing tourism more evenly across the region is not a strategic aim as there are already tourists visiting every municipality (A. Härkönen, Visit Karelia, personal communication, November 13, 2023).

Pillar Four: Local Strategic Approaches

Our kick-off webinar, survey and workshop for the local tourism stakeholders resulted in consideration of strong leadership from the local DMOs to be important, as well as recognition of local communities as relevant and active partners in inclusive local tourism planning which feeds into broader strategic decision-making. Communities should have opportunities to engage in proactive planning rather than reactively responding to problems (Macaulay et al., 2022). This pillar implies an ethic of care (see Höckert et al., 2021) that fosters inclusion, participation, recognition and procedural justice (see Buzinde & Caterina-Knorr, 2022; Rastegar et al., 2021).

Of the reviewed tourism strategies, the Scottish document is the most community-centred (see Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019), acknowledging that engaging with local communities is a vitally important step in destination development, ensuring that local needs

are understood and accounted for in decision-making. In the other tourism strategies examined, community needs, interests and well-being play only a minor role or no role at all in tourism planning and decision-making, following neoliberal utilitarian ethics where tourist and business needs are prioritised (see Guia, 2021). The same ethics dominate the reviewed tourism strategies in many other respects as well.

Conclusions

There is a growing school of thought that suggests that focus should be shifted away from visitor growth (see Cave & Dredge, 2020; Dwyer, 2023; Pollock, 2019), and the global tourism system reoriented towards sustainability (Gössling et al., 2020). We argue that transition from market-driven to community-centred (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2019), just and participatory tourism planning and development should be one such change. Combining the values and perspectives of local communities with stakeholders in the tourism sector is a central tenet of sustainable tourism (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005) but, as our analysis shows, it is still far from happening everywhere (see also Collins-Kreiner & Ram, 2020).

All the tourism strategies reviewed aim at growth which is principally justified by economic reasons. At the same time, there are not enough local employees for tourism jobs, as well as housing issues undermining the viability of the sector in fragile peripheral areas. Clearly there is also a real focus on economic survival among many small businesses as they continue to navigate recovery from COVID-19, exacerbated by inflationary issues caused by the war in Ukraine, that has to be recognised alongside the development of more ethical practices. Yet there are structural issues that need to be considered and addressed. Should the workforce be attracted from elsewhere or should tourism numbers relate to the number of local employees? Should tourists pay more to enable the payment of higher wages? These are ethical questions related to justice that demand further research.

The purpose of this research note was to contribute to the debate on how a more ethical tourism sector can be instigated post-COVID. Through interrogation of regional tourism strategies and kick-off webinar, survey and workshop with stakeholders a number of key themes started to emerge which formed the basis of the four strategic pillars presented. The limitations of this approach are acknowledged; this research was undertaken in the knowledge that it would hopefully start to precipitate discussion and contribute to the debate rather than presenting comprehensive empirical findings.

More research is needed on post-COVID tourism recovery, not least in terms of ascertaining if and how the pandemic has altered views on the changing tourism industry at a strategic level, as well as how ethics can, and should, play a more central role in both tourism policy-making and research. While the views of many of the stakeholders engaged with were commensurate with the moral aims of the research it is notable that most of the tourism strategies interrogated reveal a sizeable lacuna between traditional economic imperatives and more contemporary ethical considerations.

Ethics should form an integral part of tourism strategy making. Crucial in this is developing a better understanding of the balance to be found between the needs of tourists and

those of local communities and the planet. Only through this understanding will be recognised the just and ethical tourism future that forms the idealised reality of many scholars, visitors and local community members alike.

Acknowledgements

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