

Rural Wellbeing Tourism Destinations – Demand Side Viewpoint

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Abstract. Tourism destinations have been one of the focus areas of tourism research and management and we are still witnessing considerable research and development on the topic. More research is emerging on tourism destinations with the demand side point-of-view. This study examines rural wellbeing destinations from the viewpoint of wellbeing activities tourists are interested in. A multinational survey data with 550 respondents were collected in northern Europe with an online questionnaire. Based on principal component analysis 14 dimensions of rural wellbeing tourism products were identified. These products and their meaning for destination management and marketing is discussed.

Keywords: rural tourism, wellbeing tourism, travel activities, destination management

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Introduction

Tourism destination is a central feature of tourism research (Pearce 2014) due to its significant constructs for the examination of tourism with a geographically bounded locality, in where both economic and social interactions occur (Tinsley and Lynch 2007). The attractiveness of a destination as a marketing resource can be considered from different angles, such as those of nature and landscape, the climate, culture, history, the possibility of engaging in various hobbies and activities, and accessibility. However, the resource itself is not a product. Rather, existing resources are the necessary preconditions for the creation of a travel experience that can be turned into a saleable tourism product (Middleton and Clarke 2001; see also Bærenholdt et al. 2004; Tuohino 2015).

On one hand, the literature on tourism destination management has been in the foci of interest in recent years among both academics and practitioners (Laesser and Beritelli, 2013; Pearce and Schänzel, 2015). On the other hand, destination management requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach, which among others provides greater insights and understanding of demand side issues, e.g. information about different types of customers (Fyall and Garrod, 2012).

The importance of marketing, which probes the wishes and likings of tourists, has long played an essential role in the development of customer-oriented tourism destinations. From the marketing management viewpoint destinations are considered a traditional commodity product and therefore agglomerations of both public and private facilities and services designed to meet the needs of tourists (e.g. Pavlovich 2003; Dredge and Jenkins 2003; Cooper et al. 2005; Saraniemi and Kylänen 2011). Further, destinations are geographically disconnected actors on the demand and supply side, but on the other hand, consumption (demand) and production (supply) occur in the same place (Vanhove 2011).

Destinations can also be examined from the viewpoint of activities. Reinhold et al. (2015) identify a gap in the destination definition regarding the demand side as definitions typically focus on institutional and supply-oriented perspective. Also, when tourists choose a destination, they are interested in what they can do there while they are on their holiday

(Pesonen & Tuohino, 2015). In this study, the concept of rural wellbeing destination is examined through the demand side survey with focus on activities a rural destination potentially provide for tourists.

Literature review

Tourism destination

Destination is by nature a challenging concept because of its spatial angle of approach is often from a technical and static viewpoint (Saarinen 2004). Destinations are traditionally defined as geographical areas such as a country, an island or a town (Davidson and Maitland 1997). Destinations are also defined as a unit of action, where different private and public stakeholders, e.g. companies and public organizations, interact and provide all those facilities, infrastructures and services that are needed during the holiday distinct from visitors' usual place (Pechlaner *et al.* 2009; Jenkins *et al.* 2011; Saraniemi and Kylänen 2011; Vanhove 2011; Bregoli and Del Chiappa 2013), albeit Pearce (2014) argued that destination is a commonly used term without definition. Tuohino and Konu (2014) correspondingly defined destination as a geographical area including various tourism products and services and the prerequisites needed for realizing them. Buhalis (2000, 97) in turn highlights that "*...it is increasingly recognized that a destination can also be a perceptual concept, which can be interpreted subjectively by consumers, depending on their travel itinerary, cultural background, purpose of visit, educational level and past experience*". Bærenholdt *et al.* (2004) approached tourism as social and cultural practice by stating that places receive the meaning only through concrete production and consumption processes that connect people to the realm by contextualizing their experiences (see also Saraniemi and Kylänen 2011) while Ritchie and Crouch (2000) stated that destination experience is the fundamental product of tourism.

According to Reinhold *et al.*, (2015) issues in five domains of destination management preoccupy the discourse of scholars and practitioners, including the definition of the destination, the purpose and legitimacy of DMOs, governance and leadership in destination networks, destination branding and sustainability. Reinhold *et al.*, (2015) suggest that the scholars and practitioners think about the ways in which decision makers in destinations can make destinations and DMOs fit for the new needs that changing customers have. Indeed, Murphy *et al.*, (2000) consider that the destination is a construct driven by tourist. According

to Beritelli et al., (2014), Reinhold et al., (2015) also argue that networks and the networking capabilities of destinations are becoming critical for the success of the destination.

The built-up and natural physical environment of a destination, its local culture and community spirit can be considered as the core resources in tourism. From the resource point of view, the attractions have vital importance, as without attractions there is no tourism (Ritchie and Crouch 2000, 2003/2005, 2011; Sheldon and Park 2009; Vanhove 2011). From the tourism point of view, built-up and natural environment forms a physical framework for the detection and experience setting manifested as a visual experience and a sensory-based landscape experience. As a functional resource, built-up and natural environment provides opportunities for versatile recreational and leisure activities. It also provides a comprehensive frame for a variety of independent or guided activities and tourism products or services built by local tourism entrepreneurs. As a symbolic resource built-up and natural environment has many meanings experienced subjectively, e.g. as a rural landscape (Tuohino 2015).

Recently in the literature demand-based view of a destination has received increased attention (Reinhold et al., 2015; Beritelli et al., 2014). Beritelli et al., (2014) argue that a destination is actually a network of suppliers activated by demand. Fine (1999) sees a destination as a demand-caused supply network where different actors respond to the developments in the market place to produce tourism goods. DMO's should not focus just on geographical areas but tourism destinations are overlapping spaces that consist of dynamic flows (Beritelli et al., 2014).

Tourists frequently seek locations and activities that are transcendent (Smith and Kelly 2006); places that influence the quality of experience (Sheldon and Park 2009). De Botton (2002) described how travelers are attracted to landscapes that benefit their soul by making them feel small, yet part of an infinite and universal cycle (see Smith and Kelly 2006). Therefore, destinations with unique natural features have been attracting tourists seeking increased health in various forms during centuries and tourism destinations have developed naturally around special features (e.g. Konu et al., 2010; Sheldon and Park, 2009; Smith and Puczko, 2009). Rodrigues et al., (2010) on the other hand state that successful tourism destinations must offer new tourism products and address special interest niches, too. They continue that wellbeing is a relevant motive and should be regarded in tourism strategies. Rural areas can be seen as examples of this type of destinations, as rural places can be seen as refuge from urban life and a place to engage (Rodrigues et al., 2010).

Rural wellbeing

Rural wellbeing tourism is related to wellness and health tourism, for example as defined by Sheldon and Bushell (2009), but it has a broader stance, and it might be seen as a further development of historical trends (Connell, 2006; Erfurt-Cooper and Cooper, 2009; Müller and Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Smith and Puczko, 2009, 2014).

The development of the traditional spa and wellness resorts towards a more holistic paradigm is widespread. According to García-Altés (2005) diverse demographic, economic and lifestyle related factors have enhanced this. Many people are stressed by living in work-obsessed, time-pressed, materialistic and overindividualistic societies (Laing and Weiler, 2008; Sheldon and Bushell, 2009; Smith and Puczko, 2009, 2014). Where experienced travellers seek new experiences (Konu and Laukkanen, 2010), this adds to the increased emphasis on more holistically oriented wellness products (Koh et al., 2010; Lehto et al., 2006; Mak et al., 2009).

The main push motivations in the wellbeing and wellness tourism sector seem to be relaxation, escape, pampering, physical activity, avoiding burn out and mental wellbeing. Relaxation is in many cases connected to “rest” and “physical relaxation”. Escape is in many studies seen as one of the most important motivations. Pampering seems to be a motivation that is characteristic of wellness and spa tourism (Laesser, 2011; Mak et al., 2009). Pampering is also connected to the enjoyment of comfort (Laesser, 2011). Physical activity includes sports and multiple activities, and similarly physical health and appearance. Mental wellbeing is likewise a motivation that can be seen to be specific to wellness tourism. It includes motivations such as “to seek mental peacefulness” (Mak et al., 2009) and “to help me gain a sense of balance” (Lehto et al., 2006).

Concerning the interpretative way, it is relevant to seek inspiration in ideas set by Woods (2011) and Halfacree (2006, 2007). Rural can be approached from different, but intermeshing, facets: those of spatial practices (rural localities), representations of space (formal representations of the rural) and lived spaces (everyday rural lives). In short, these ideas refer to the production, reproduction and employment of rurality and rural space (Woods, 2011).

In a tourism context, and particularly in relation to wellbeing tourism, the attributes of rural are, however, more interesting as they are of significance not only for the provision of the products but also for marketing and branding.

Rural is also often approached as an opposite to urban. When referring to tourism, it can be a highly valuable way of definition. Both rural and urban attributes can be structured via opposing adjectives linked to them: e.g. clean–polluted, tranquil–turbulent, natural–artificial, authentic–staged, silent–noisy, spacious–crowded, safe–dangerous etc. (Bell et al., 2009).

The Finrelax® study (Tuohino et al., 2015) analyses Finnish wellbeing tourism in rural areas and identifies the following attributes, most of which are non-compatible with the urban image: lakes, watersheds, coasts, the archipelago, the sea, forests, hills, fields, meadows, tundra, wilderness, natural phenomena (northern lights, seasons), landscapes, cleanliness, clean air, water, resources (berries, mushrooms), topography and unbuilt countryside. These give the most “authentic” nature, food (game, wild food, countryside food, traditional food), peace and quiet, safety, freedom, uncrowdedness, non-violence, the diversity of activities (ice swimming, rowing, cruises, courses, familiarization with forms of agriculture), traditions and cultural experiences.

Moreover, as Sharpley and Sharpley (1997: 14) state: “*it [rural] is the comparison between the tourist’s home (and usually urban) environment and the characteristics of the destination that mark it as rural.*” Approaching the term in this way gives an idea about the potential of the rural to contribute to wellbeing; especially so, when taking into account the central motivation factor of wellbeing tourists, namely escape. In addition, as Jepson and Sharpley (2015: 2) note, the “*fundamental attraction of the countryside as a tourist destination*” is greatly woven into a sense of rurality. It is not only the physical attributes and intrinsic elements of the countryside but the *idea* of what the rural space represents to them. In addition, the size of the settlement may be an important marker for rurality, economy and the presence of traditional social structures or a certain backwardness and physical isolation from economic, social and cultural networks (Bramwell and Lane, 1994; Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997; Butler et al., 1998; Juska, 2007). There is a high level of ambiguity in such interpretations and the fine-tuning of these definitions is always made on an individual level by the tourist and by the stakeholders at the destination.

The viewpoints discussed above indicate the most interesting potential resources for rural wellbeing tourism. Rural wellbeing tourism could indeed be implemented based on the

resources and needs of the local community, therefore benefitting mostly the local. For the emerging number of tourists, the rural areas also provide access to nature, local food and the local ingredients. The rural is a playground not yet fully explored from tourism development perspective.

In marketing research trend studies have often been applied (Aburdene, 2007; Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1990; Varey, 2013; von Groddeck and Schwarz, 2013) to identify new customer segments and understand customer behaviour to a significant extent. This has also been witnessed in tourism research (Leigh et al., 2013). Wellbeing travel activities (and particularly wellness and spa tourism) have also received considerable attention in academic and trade trend studies (Smith and Puczko, 2013, 2014).

Previous studies have shown that rural tourists are likely to consider rural areas as places to escape the overcrowded and stressful urban life (Urry 2002) and the rural settings appear to be ideal places which reflect peacefulness, relaxation, authenticity, tranquillity and e.g. pure air (Dong et al., 2013). Further, Rodrigues et al., (2010) suggested that health and wellness tourism should be integrated into rural tourism destination marketing.

The landscape, space and place refer correspondingly to *‘an environment felt to be important in human life, which is loved, admired and rejected, an environment which is interpreted and “read”’* (Porteus 1990, cited by Häkli 1999:82). In the tourism context, this implies the examination of a place as a social space and from the perspective of the offering of tourist destinations (the production of space) and tourist demand (the consumption of space) (Gottdiener 2000; Saarinen 2004; Williams 2009, see also Vanhove 2011). Therefore, this study aims to increase the understanding of a rural tourism destination as a provider of wellbeing service and activities and the understanding about the perceptions of tourists and their landscape preferences and their needs in experiencing rural nature. Thus, this study has three research questions:

What kind of rural wellbeing services are provided in northern Europe?

What kind of rural wellbeing tourism products can be created from these services?

How rural tourism destinations can utilize the wellbeing products identified?

Data and methods

To gather a comprehensive list of rural wellbeing activities, members of five rural tourism destinations or destination management organizations, located in Norway, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Denmark, were gathered for a group interview. Also members of two tourism department focusing on rural tourism from Finland and Denmark were present as well as representative of VisitFinland. Thus, altogether ten rural wellbeing tourism experts were present in the group interview. In the presented case, the goal of the group interview was to gather a comprehensive list of rural wellbeing services provided in northern Europe currently or in the near future. Based on the group interview we identified altogether 63 possible rural tourism services.

To understand what kind of wellbeing tourism products can be created from these 63 identified services we designed a survey that studied how interesting these rural tourism services are for rural tourists in northern Europe. The goal of the survey was to identify which services the rural tourists regard as similar to each other. This could be used to group rural tourism services into complete rural tourism products in which each service would be interesting to rural tourists.

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate how important are the possibilities to enjoy various wellbeing services during their rural holiday. Answer options ranged from 0 to 4 (0: not important at all, 1: slightly important, 2: moderately important, 3: important, 4: very important) with a possibility to choose No opinion option. No opinion choices were coded as missing values.

The survey was distribute on five rural tourism websites and in social media in Finland, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania and Denmark. Banner advertising was used with a lottery of a gift certificate of 500€ for one respondent. The gift certificate could be used to purchase rural tourism products in five aforementioned countries.

We obtained altogether 550 usable responses. The profile of the respondents is presented at the Table 1. Most of the respondents came from Latvia with Lithuania and Finland in the second and third place. Most of the respondents were female which was to be expected as the main target group for rural wellbeing services are women (Pesonen and Tuohino, 2015).

Table 1. Comparing differences in socio-demographics between clusters

Age	% (N=550)
18-25	6.7 %
26-35 years	28.2 %

36-45 years	33.1 %
46-55 years	23.6 %
56-65 years	7.6 %
More than 65 years	0.7 %
Mean age	40.34
Gender	
Male	21.5 %
Female	78.5 %
Nationality	
Finnish	10.2 %
Norwegian	0.7 %
Latvia	63.6 %
Lithuanian	18.8 %
Danish	1.3 %
Russian	2.6 %
Estonian	0.2 %
German	0.5 %
Other	2.2 %

To identify the underlying dimensions among rural wellbeing services principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on 63 rural wellbeing services. Communalities were higher than 0.5, KMO test value 0.937 with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significance less than 0.001. 14 principal components explained 69.408 per cent of total variance.

According to Hair et al., (2010), the primary purpose of factor analysis is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis. Factor analysis provides tools for analyzing the structure of the interrelationships among a large number of variables, in this case tourists' interest in rural wellbeing services and activities. As we do not have any information on how rural wellbeing services are interrelated an exploratory approach with principal component analysis was applied. The principal components identified in this study have different loadings from different variables. A factor loading is the correlation between the variable and the factor (Hair et al., 2010), meaning that a .30 loading translates to approximately 10 percent explanation and 0.50 loading to 25 percent explanation. Thus, the larger the loading, the more important the loading is in interpreting the factor matrix. To confirm the results correlation analysis among principal components was conducted and no significant correlations were found. This means that the principal components identified are not connected to each other but form independent constructs, just as they should.

As presented in Table 1, there are many different nationalities among the respondents. There might be response style effects (Dolnicar & Grün, 2007) that affect the results of different nationalities. Comparing median scores of different activities between nationalities shows us that there are national differences among respondents in interest in wellbeing activities. To check the validity of the principal components identified in this study nation-specific correlation analysis among variables were conducted. Presenting these results in detail is out of the scope of this paper but correlation analysis show statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlations among variables in each principal component among respondents from each main nationality (Latvian, Lithuanian, Finnish) in the study. Especially items with high loadings are correlated among all nationalities, increasing the validity of the results

ProWell – promoting and enhancing sustainable rural wellbeing tourism in Northern Europe

The ProWell project – towards a new understanding of rural wellbeing tourism aims at enhancing, developing and promoting sustainable thematic rural wellbeing tourism products in Europe. This objective is pursued through a transnational cooperation between different tourism stakeholders: small and micro tourism enterprises (SMTEs), destination marketing organizations, tourism development organizations, and research institutes. In a wider perspective, the project aims at profiling and adding competitiveness to Northern Europe as a Rural Wellbeing Tourism Destination.

More specifically the project activities were:

1. Definition of the concept of sustainable Rural Wellbeing for marketing and further development purposes (e.g. related to the Finrelax® concept in Finland, WellCome in Denmark and other national or regional products and product lines). Rural wellbeing was defined as follows: *Rural wellbeing tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings and that interconnects actively with local nature and community resources. Based on the rural tangible and intangible, openly accessible and commercial ingredients, wellbeing tourism is a holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and/or health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences.*
2. Identification of products and product lines of Rural Wellbeing, including the identification of the service components that focus on or arise from the specialties of the natural and cultural heritage of northern Europe.
3. Developing the guidelines for sustainable thematic Rural Wellbeing tourism product development.
4. Forming the transnational Rural Wellbeing Tourism Network of organizations for the promotion of Rural Wellbeing tourism products and sustainable practices, and to increase the competitiveness and development of such tourism products. This includes also sharing best practices in marketing and sustainability activities.

5. Providing settings that encourage SMTEs and other stakeholders including local authorities to participate in promotional activities and enhance their own product developments and other activities related to the theme.
6. Promoting Rural Wellbeing at a European level by using a range of methods, including interactive marketing methods that innovatively activate service providers and customers.

The participating countries were Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway, with an emphasis on actors in regions that are dominated by natural and rural resources.



The ProWell project addressed transnational thematic tourism products contributing to more sustainable tourism and is co-funded by the EU, awarded under the 2013 call for proposals “Supporting the enhancement and promotion of transnational thematic tourism products”. ProWell also receives significant support in kind, and crucial information and knowledge from its project partners in all five countries.

Read more here: <http://www2.uef.fi/fi/mot/prowell>

Results

The results of the principal component analysis are presented in tables 2-16. We identified altogether 14 dimensions of rural wellbeing services. KMO value for principal component analysis was 0.937 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has significance value less than 0.001. All values for communalities were greater than 0.5.

Most important services were Outdoor sports and Walking in Nature when the median score of the highest loading item is examined. Most of the Cronbach alpha values are higher than

0.7 recommendation (Nunnally, 1967), but some principal components are clearly less reliable than required. Last component, *Sleeping*, had only one item with significant loading. The alpha values of all principal components were maximized by removing items that reduced the value. We allowed an item to load on more than one principal component as it is only logical that a single wellbeing service can be connected to several themes or products.

Table 2. Principal component analysis results

Principal component	Variance explained	Eigenvalue	Median score of the highest loading item	Cronbach alpha
1. Treatments and spa	32.275	20.333	2	0.964
2. Slow living	6.582	4.146	1	0.937
3. Exercises	4.723	2.975	0	0.933
4. Alternative medicine	4.544	2.863	1	0.944
5. Local life	3.125	1.969	1	0.816
6. Wilderness	2.620	1.651	2	0.678
7. Outdoor adventure	2.428	1.529	1	0.880
8. Meditation	2.181	1.374	1	0.864
9. Eco-village	2.026	1.276	2	0.869
10. Outdoor sports	1.945	1.225	3	0.608
11. Learning about nature	1.831	1.153	2	0.742
12. Walking in nature	1.786	1.125	3	0.560
13. Museums	1.696	1.068	2	0.628
14. Sleeping	1.648	1.038	1	N/A

Table 3. First principal component: Treatments and spa

Items	Loadings
Visiting spa (relaxation, special saunas, yoga, treatments etc)	.836
Massage	.823
Taking traditional treatments (e g foot care, facial treatments, cupping therapy)	.723
Taking alternative treatments (e g sauna therapy, reiki, peat therapy)	.717
Hot stone massage	.664
Visiting recreational spa (swimming, hot tubs, slides etc)	.647
Muscle therapies	.627
Sauna treatments	.608
Thalassotherapy	.596
Finnish sauna	.595
Physical research or fitness test	.595
Balance exercises	.573
Participate in fitness- and well being seminars	.567

Fitness exercise	.552
Exercise with personal trainer	.548
Local fruit-based treatments	.546
Acupuncture	.464
Reflexology	.431
Chiropractic care	.420
Stress coaching	.416
Folk medicine	.376
Forest therapy	.367
Taking part in personal development course (for example mindfulness)	.304

The principal component with the largest variance explained and greatest number of items was *Treatments and spa*. The items that loaded most strongly on this principal component were visiting spa with relaxation focus, special saunas, yoga and treatments, massages and traditional and alternative treatments. Other services loading on *Treatments and spa* mostly belong to aforementioned categories, but also fitness exercises, tests and seminars are similar to treatments and spas.

Table 4. Second principal component: Slow living

Items	Loadings
Slow living studies	.725
Participating in growing your own food	.716
Charity work / events	.699
Volunteer work for local community	.678
Silence tour	.666
Protection of local resources	.659
Digital detox	.648
Collect your own herbs	.612
Visiting an eco-village	.446
Staying in an eco-villages	.443
Photography tours	.401
Forest therapy	.400
Spiritual training	.385
Technology enhanced tourism experiences	.383
Doing handicrafts	.355
Meditating	.353
Local fruit-based treatments	.306

Table 4 contains items connected with *Slow living*. People interested in slow living studies also prefer growing their own food in the destination, doing charity work, events and volunteering for the local community and having a digital detox. However, as they are

opposite of each other, it is interesting to notice that technology enhanced tourism experiences also load to this principal with digital detox. This could either be a reliability issue in the data or mean that tourists do not want the whole holiday to be digital detox, just a part of it. The data from the study does not provide more details on the matter.

Table 5. Third principal component: Exercises

Items	Loadings
Indoor group exercises	.811
Outdoor group exercises	.699
Nordic walking	.650
Going to a gym	.638
Jogging	.474
Doing yoga	.455
Fitness exercise	.450
Physical research or fitness test	.383
Taking part in personal development course (for example mindfulness)	.374
Participate in fitness- and well being seminars	.356
Balance exercises	.340
Muscle therapies	.337
Meditating	.335

In *Exercises* the main services are group exercises, Nordic Walking and going to a gym. Also fitness exercises, tests and seminars belong to this principal component. It is interesting to note that also doing yoga and meditating are regarded as exercises. Logically also muscle therapies and balance exercises load into this principal component.

Table 6. Fourth principal component: Alternative medicine

Items	Loadings
Reflexology	.723
Chiropractic care	.723
Acupuncture	.692
Folk medicine	.537
Spiritual training	.410
Hot stone massage	.409
Thalassotherapy	.407
Stress coaching	.403
Muscle therapies	.381
Balance exercises	.376

Alternative medicine is focused on alternative medicine such as reflexology, chiropractic care, acupuncture and folk medicine.

Table 7. Fifth principal component: Local life

Items	Loadings
Doing handicrafts	.694
Buying local handicrafts and other local products	.678
Study local traditions (like weaving, embroidery)	.562
Cooking classes	.553
Traditional local food	.543
Collect your own herbs	.372

Fifth principal component was labelled as *Local life*. Rural tourists interested in doing handicrafts are also interested in buying local products and studying local traditions, cooking classes and local food.

Table 8. Sixth principal component: Wilderness

Items	Loadings
Go boating	.744
Fishing	.679
Berry or mushroom picking	.625
Swimming	.581

Wilderness contains items that relate to foraging and being in nature, especially close to water. Going boating and fishing, picking berries and mushrooms and swimming load strongly into this principal component.

Table 9. Seventh principal component: Outdoor adventure

Items	Loadings
Kayaking	.859
Canoeing	.846

Outdoor adventure items kayaking and canoeing load into their own principal component instead of being connected to *Wilderness* items as some might presume. This means that kayaking and canoeing are separate activities different from all other services.

Table 10. Eight principal component: Meditation

Items	Loadings
Meditating	.628
Taking part in personal development course (for example mindfulness)	.596
Doing yoga	.556

Spiritual training	.412
Stress coaching	.331
Folk medicine	.315

Meditation contains services such as meditating, a personal development course, yoga and spiritual training, all focused on increasing and maintaining mental wellbeing.

Table 11. Ninth principal component: Eco-village

Items	Loadings
Staying in an eco-villages	.617
Visiting an eco-village	.569
Sauna treatments	.451
Finnish sauna	.422
Local fruit-based treatments	.395
Forest therapy	.367

Besides being part of *Slow living*, eco-village items load strongly on their own principal component, *Eco-village*. The results define the concept of eco-village and the services tourists are interested in enjoying in the village. These include sauna, forest therapy and local fruit-based treatments.

Table 12. Tenth principal component: Outdoor activities

Items	Loadings
Hiking	.716
Cycling	.563
Riding therapy	.394
Jogging	.338

Outdoor activities are connected to moving around in the nature. Hiking and cycling load strongly into this principal component. Riding therapy and jogging have minor loadings.

Table 13. 11th principal component: Learning about nature

Items	Loadings
Study local flora / fauna	.699
Study local traditions (like weaving, embroidery)	.449
Protection of local resources	.424
Silence tour	.325
Walk in nature trails	.306

Studying local flora and fauna loads the strongest into *Learning about nature* component. This belongs together with items such as studying local traditions, protection of local resources and silence tours and walking in nature trails.

Table 14. 12th principal component: Walking in Nature

Items	Loadings
Walk in nature trails	.532
Traditional local food	.527
Trekking	.489

Walk in nature trails also loads strongly to the twelfth principal component together with traditional local food. Also trekking loads quite strongly into this component. Thus this principal component was labelled as *Walking in Nature*.

Table 15. 13th principal component: Museums

Items	Loadings
Visiting museums	.664
Technology enhanced tourism experiences	.517
Photography tours	.452
Visiting recreational spa (swimming, hot tubs, slides etc)	.353

The second to last component contains items such as visiting museums, technology enhanced tourism experiences and photography tours. It seems that technology, museums and photography are connected to each other, but also recreational spa has a minor loading in this component. This could provide a novel approach to designing a museum and spa products.

Table 16. 14th principal component: Sleeping

Items	Loadings
Sleep more than at home	.828

Last component, *Sleeping*, has only one item. Sleeping more than at home seems to be special for rural tourists

5. Conclusions

Based on a group interview, this study identified altogether 63 different rural wellbeing activities. These various activities provide an overview of how rural areas can be used to increase the wellbeing of tourists and travellers. Rural areas have numerous different opportunities to maintain and increase wellbeing as well as profile themselves among different travellers.

The results provide quite an interesting overview of rural wellbeing activities and products that can be created based on those. There are 14 different categories of rural wellbeing services that can be considered as rural wellbeing product families. There is some overlap between the components, meaning that some activities can be a part of different products. 14 principal components of this study do not correlate with each other, meaning that they represent 14 different dimensions of rural wellbeing activities. The results show what kind of activities rural wellbeing destinations should provide together. People interested in one activity in a product category are likely to be interested in other activities in the same category. Thus, it is reasonable for tourism providers to build rural wellbeing activity packages based on the results of this study. The most interesting rural wellbeing tourism goods were Walking in nature and Outdoor sports, which emphasize active rural wellbeing tourism. After those come the more traditional pampering focused wellbeing services such as Treatments and spa.

Study provides interesting insights for the rural destinations to utilize the results in designing their services and marketing. Especially activities that load strongly into the same component should be marketed together and customer experiences build around them. Activities with lower loadings could be regarded as supporting activities that some tourists interested in higher loading items could potentially be interested in. Activities with loadings above 0.6 and especially above 0.7 in the same component are likely to attract the same kind of customers and should be provided together as frequently as possible. The principal components identified can be directly used to create product packages, for example containing a boat trip to an island to pick berries or mushrooms, going for a swim and fishing on the way back (6th principal component, Wilderness).

Theoretically, this study increases our understanding in utilizing activities in rural destination management and design. Not all activities should be marketed together but destinations

should focus on activities and services that have synergy from the customer point of view. The results of this study demonstrate for example how people who enjoy kayaking also like canoeing, but do not necessarily like boating, fishing or swimming.

This study contributes to the demand-based management of a destination and presents a demand-based viewpoint of rural wellbeing tourism destinations. The results support the notions presented by Beritelli et al., (2014) that destinations are not geographically based constructs but are based on tourism flows. Tourists go after the services and activities that they like and they might not necessarily be geographically in the same location. Destination managers and businesses operating in rural wellbeing should understand, based on these results, what the tourists want and identify the possibilities for creating tourism goods that the rural wellbeing tourists prefer. DMO is able to create added value for visitors and suppliers in need of specific services (Beritelli et al., 2014). This indeed requires destinations to be networks of actors that enable creation of services that the rural tourists value (Reinhold et al., 2015).

While interpreting the results more closely, we also have to take into account the fact that Latvian and Lithuanian respondents represent over 82 % of the total and their understanding about wellness or wellbeing may differ from those in Nordic countries due to their long history of thermal water use and rehabilitation spas. As Smith (2015) states, in the Baltic States spas are an important part of both wellness and medical tourism. Also healing and rehabilitation aspect of spas are important. In this study there are differences among nationalities regarding how much they prefer certain activities. However, the data analysis methods used in this study do not care about differences in answering patterns but are aimed to find similarities between the respondents.

The results of this study also provide important insights into understanding what rural wellbeing constitutes for different tourists. There are a variety of ways in which wellbeing can be created, both active as well as passive. This study has discovered the main dimensions of rural wellbeing and also what kind of activities support these rural wellbeing experiences.

The sample obtained in this study is similar to earlier studies (Pesonen and Tuohino, 2015). People interested in rural wellbeing tourism products seem to be middle-aged females. Online surveys on the topic with a lottery as a reward seem to work well for this group of rural tourists. The study has also primary limitations. Even though sample size is adequate according to Hair et al., (2010), more data would have increased the reliability of the results.

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