



Push and Pull Factors of Finnish and French Gastronomy Tourists in the Saimaa Lake Region

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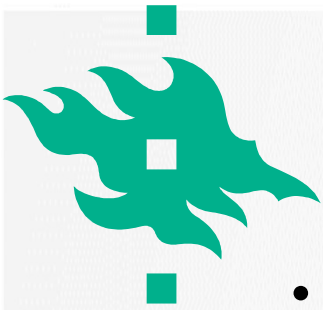


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BACKGROUND

- Food tourism is a growing sector of the tourism industry -> according one estimation: 53% of leisure tourists are food tourists
- Finnish Food tourism strategy for 2024-2028: many reasons to invest in food tourism
- Tourism revenue can be increased by developing value-added services that are specifically linked to food and food tourism
 - > Potential for rural areas
- Finland's main travel destinations: Helsinki region, Lapland, Lakeland, Coast and Archipelago
- Saimaa Lake region and gastronomy tourism
- Project: D.O.Saimaa and Saimaa Academy of Gastronomy, funded by the South Savo Regional Council / Just Transition Fund (JTF), the municipalities of the Mikkeli region



THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- Exploring the push and pull factors of food tourism in the Lake Saimaa region.
-> What are the motivations of Finnish and French food tourists and which factors attract them to food tourism in the Saimaa region?
- In addition, the importance of practical aspects related to food tourism was examined:
 - activities with food
 - purchasing food and souvenirs
- Background information
 - travel party
 - factors influencing the respondent's food consumption
 - demographic factors



PUSH AND PULL FACTORS IN MOTIVATION

- Motivational factors push individuals to travel, whereas destination attributes pull them.
- There are several motive factors in food tourism context, such as
 - Push factors describe the internal motivations: cultural experience, togetherness, healthiness, sensory appeal(e.g Galati et al. 2021; Kim & Eves 2012)
 - Pull factors attracts to a particular destination: factors related to local destination itself, and to food as well to people (e.g. Lai et al.2019; Su et al. 2020)
- Factors influencing push and pull motives: socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits (food neophobia and variety-seeking), previous experiences (e.g. Mak et al. 2012)



MATERIALS AND METHODS



- The survey was conducted using a consumer panel in Finland and France (implemented by Norstat Ltd).
- Time of data collection: October 2024
- Number of respondents:
 - Finland: n = 1024; 517 females; 502 males
 - France: n = 1008; 496 females; 510 males
- The respondents were individuals who had an interest in food tourism in the Lake Saimaa region.



RESULTS

- Food tourism push factors (motivations)
- Food tourism pull factors (factors of attraction)
- Activities at the food tourism destination
- Places where tourists want to do their grocery shopping and souvenirs
- What and what kind of souvenirs would a food traveler like to buy?



RESULTS – PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

PUSH

- PC1 Food and beverage experiences that emphasize enjoyment, exploration, and local authenticity
- PC2 Seeking experiences, self-development/self-fulfillment, and social interaction
- PC3 Sustainability: doing good for myself and the environment through eating well
- PC4 Being together (togetherness)

PULL

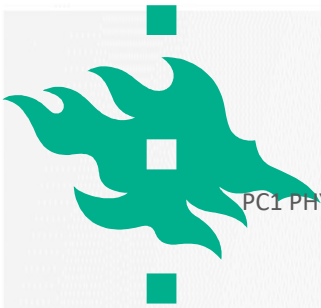
- PC1 Physical and social attractiveness of the destination
- PC2 Gastronomic quality and expertise
- PC3 Experiential, distinctive, and communal food culture
- PC4 Sustainable and accessible food tourism destination

All four push and pull factors showed significant differences ($p < .001$) between Finns and the French.



Push Factors - Finns and French





Pull Factors - Finns and French





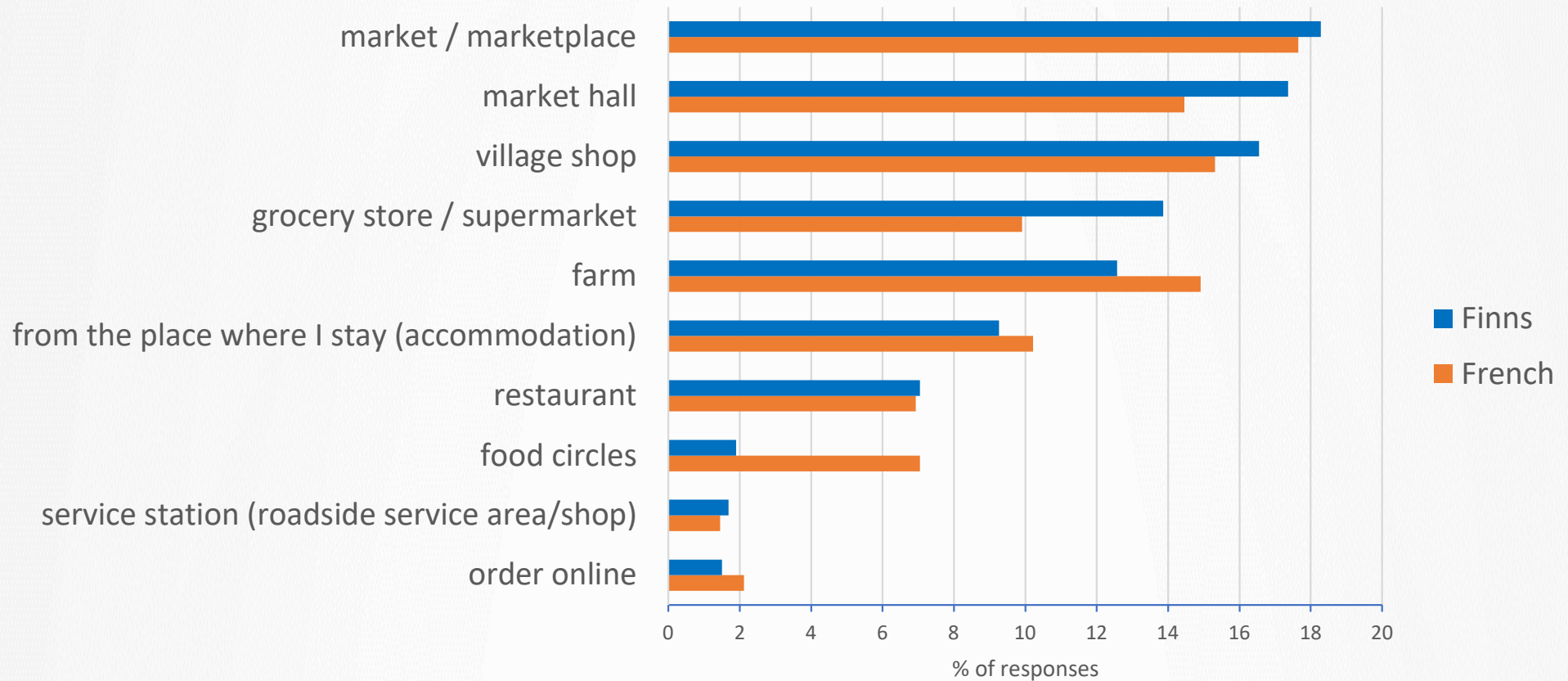
FINNS AND FRENCH: ACTIVITIES

It is important to me that in a food tourism destination I can...



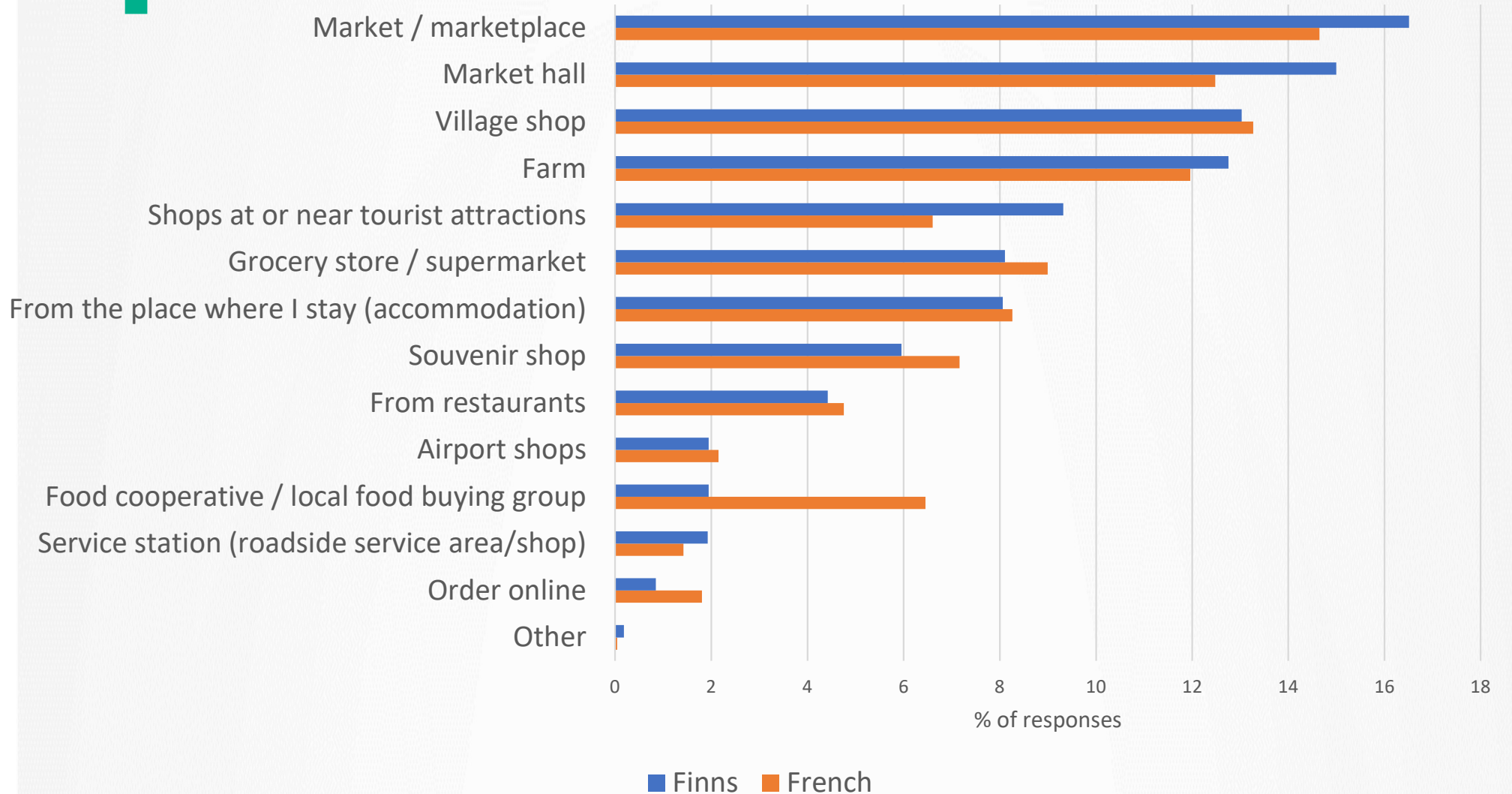


FINNS AND FRENCH: Groceries (food to use during vacation)



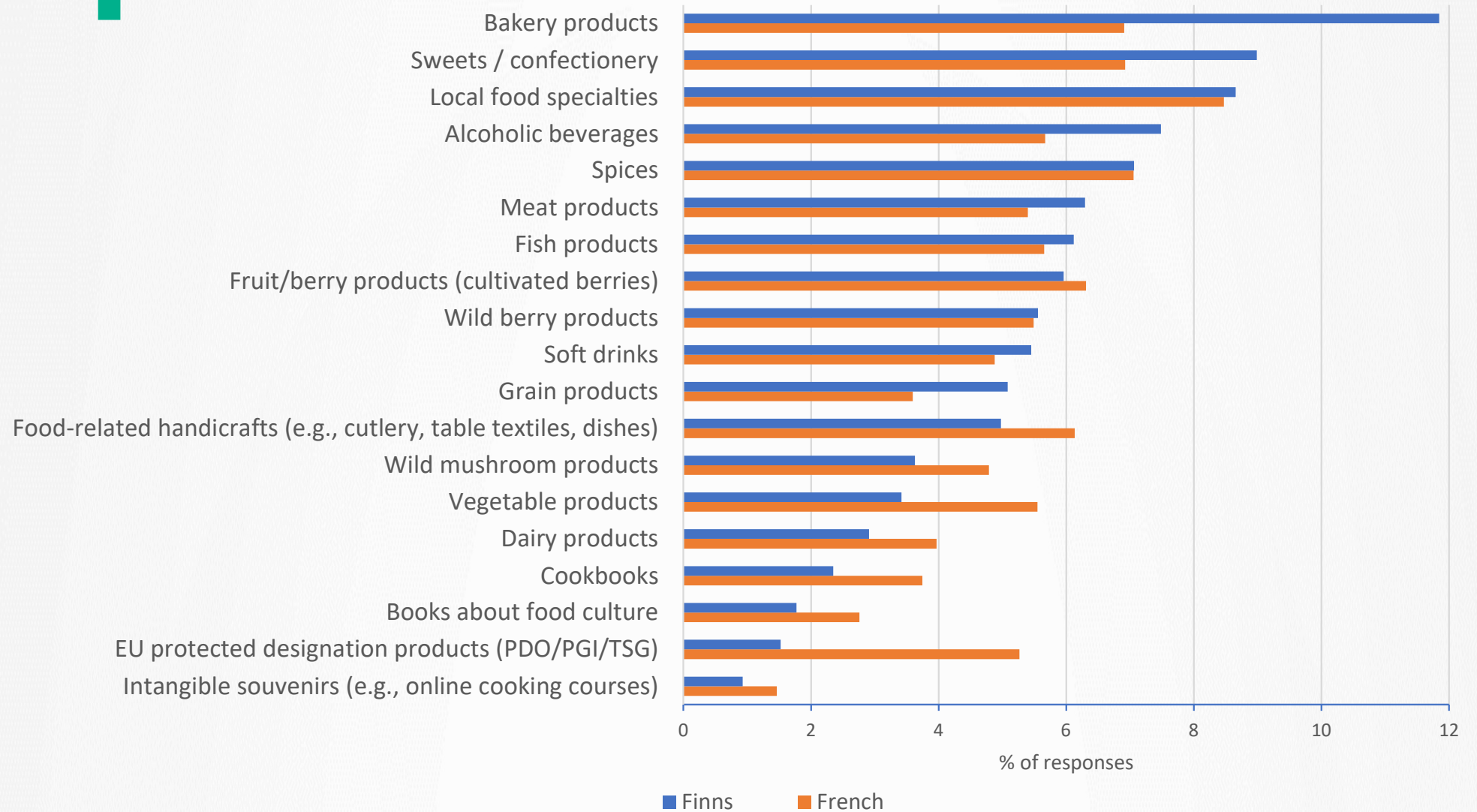


FINNS AND FRENCH: WHERE TO BUY SOUVENIRS?



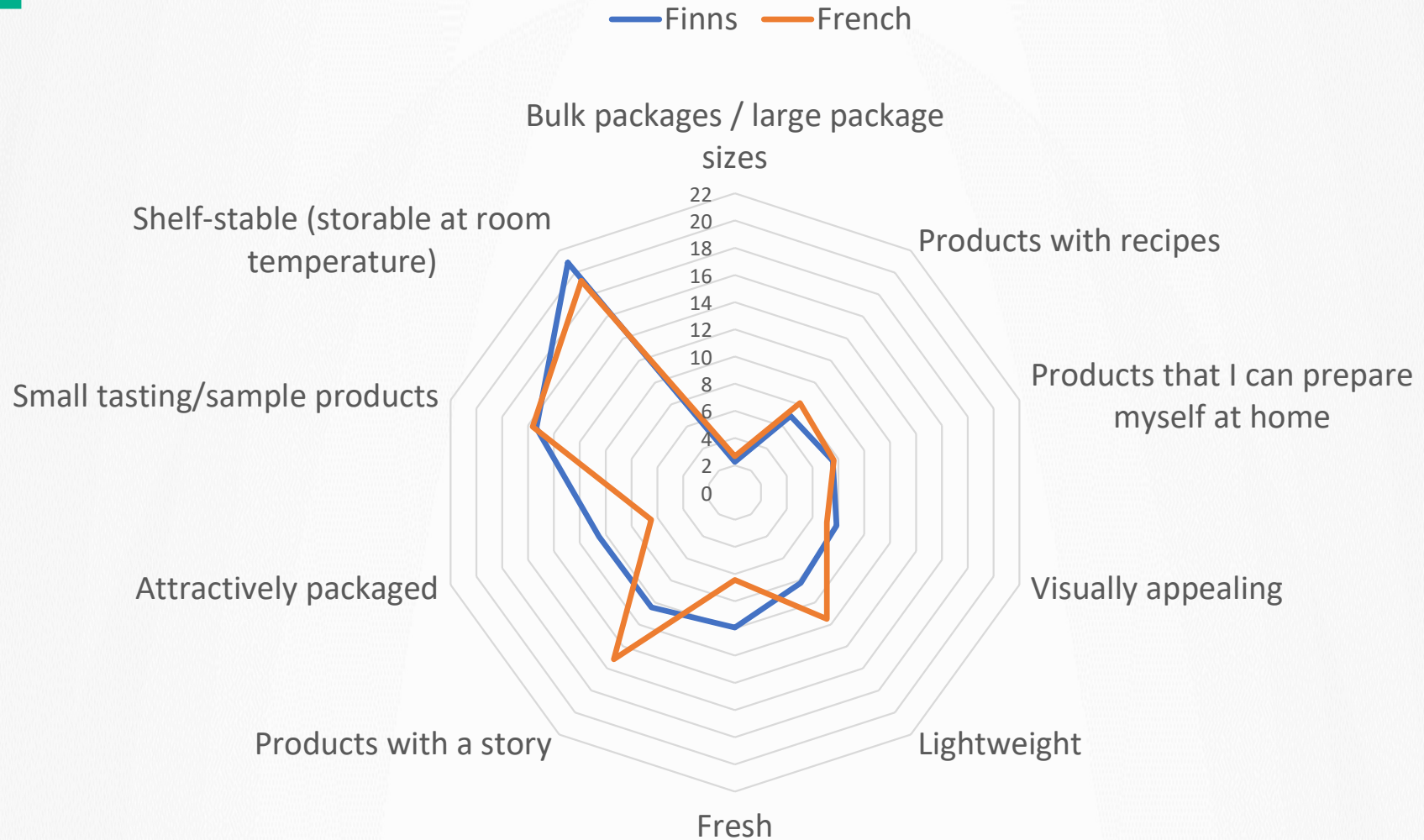


FINNS AND FRENCH: Which local food or beverage products, or related items, would you like to buy as souvenirs?





FINNS AND FRENCH: What kind of local food/drink products would you like to buy as souvenirs?





CONCLUSIONS

- The results provide insight into the motivations and factors that attract Finnish and French food tourists, which can be utilized in the development of food tourism in the Saimaa region at both the company and regional levels.
- Product development measures should be taken, for example, in relation to food souvenir products targeted at food tourists. Have souvenir products been sufficiently considered from the perspective of international food tourists?
- The results indicate that certain places are important to food tourists, such as markets, market halls, village shops, and farms. This suggests that the food tourism product is a holistic entity consisting of both its products and its environment. Rural areas naturally have significant opportunities in this regard.
- Although responsibility is at the forefront of Finland's food tourism strategy, these results show that not all sustainability issues are the most important factors for tourists (e.g. vegetarian food).



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