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FIN1 Followup Report

Deciding on a topic for my FIN1 paper was not very difficult. I chose to write about Finnish sauna-bathing, concentrating particularly on sauna-whisks and whisking, simply because it was something that interested me. Initially, I thought I would not do any original research, but soon discovered that I would be almost forced to, because finding enough source material for my paper was not as easy as I had imagined.

The sources that I found focused mainly on the past centuries and old sauna traditions, but I wanted to find out more about the sauna-bathing habits of today's younger generations. That is why my paper had two main topics; the past and present sauna-bathing habits. I felt it was important that I write about the present-day traditions as well, since there does not seem to be much information available on that.

The two main research questions in my paper were how were *vihtas* used in the past and how are they being used today, particularly by young adults. I began by describing the past traditions, and then moved on to talk about the findings from my study, focusing on the modern-day sauna-bathing practices. This was done to see what kind of changes have taken place in Finnish sauna-bathing habits.

If I were to start over with this paper I would hopefully not wait for two years before finishing it, but would have the sense of scheduling a timetable and sticking to it. As to the source material, I would be likely to repeat my study, because of the lack of useful sources, but would probably not have as many questions as I had now. I believe I might leave out the section dealing with dried, frozen, and artificial *vihtas*, and concentrate more on the actual sauna-whisking habits, since that alone would give me enough material to analyze.

I think it would have been interesting to find out more specifically what the reasons are for why younger generations bathe in sauna less frequently than their parents and grandparents, and why they also use and/or know how to make a *vihta* less often. If I decided to do another survey, this would be something I would focus on. It might also be a suitable topic for someone else taking this course.