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**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF RUSSIAN TOURISTS, CASE VUOKATTI SKI  
RESORT**

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<p>Customer satisfaction plays a significant role in modern business. If the consumer is satisfied with the product, he/she will purchase goods from exactly this company again. Another situation is in tourism. Even though tourism is business, the product is intangible, for example services, entertainment etc. The definition and the principle of satisfaction in tourism is different from business. To satisfy the tourist, the specific location should provide high-quality services, a variety of activities, have developed infrastructure and so on.</p> <p>Vuokatti is one of the best ski resorts in Finland. The location is in the beautiful and breath-taking region Kainuu, in the Sotkamo municipality. In the year 2014, Vuokatti was visited by more than 500 000 tourists and 35 000 of them were Russians. Because of the fact that Russians are the biggest group of foreigners visiting Vuokatti, it is important to know about the general level of their satisfaction. Moreover, Vuokatti needs to know about the existing issues in the resort from the tourists' point of view.</p> <p>The methodology used in the research includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to collect all the necessary data. Face-to-face video interviews and an online survey provide the clearest picture of the Vuokatti image and indicate the problems of the place.</p> <p>By using the theoretical background, all the issues were classified by their nature. It gives to the Vuokatti resort a precise understanding of the future steps to be taken in the resort development.</p>	
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## PREFACE

I can no other answer make but,

thanks,

and thanks;

and ever thanks.

William Shakespeare (*Twelfth Night*, Act 3, Scene 3)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The idea and the basis for this thesis were formed during the internship period in a marketing firm called “Pohjolan Mylly”, Vuokatti, Finland. The company is responsible for the marketing of ski resorts like Vuokatti, Tahko, Ruka, etc., and of domestic baseball team “Sotkamon Jymy”. In the above mentioned firm, the author worked as the marketing manager of Vuokatti in Russian social media “Vkontakte”.

The purpose of the work is to evaluate the level of Russian customers’ satisfaction of visiting Vuokatti. In addition, to find out using a questionnaire what kind of business ideas can be created for the future.

According to the report about annual earnings of Vuokatti (Vuokatin matkailun tunnuslukuja, 2014), could be said that at least 75 % of foreign income came from Russian tourists, in the period from January to October (Fig. 1).

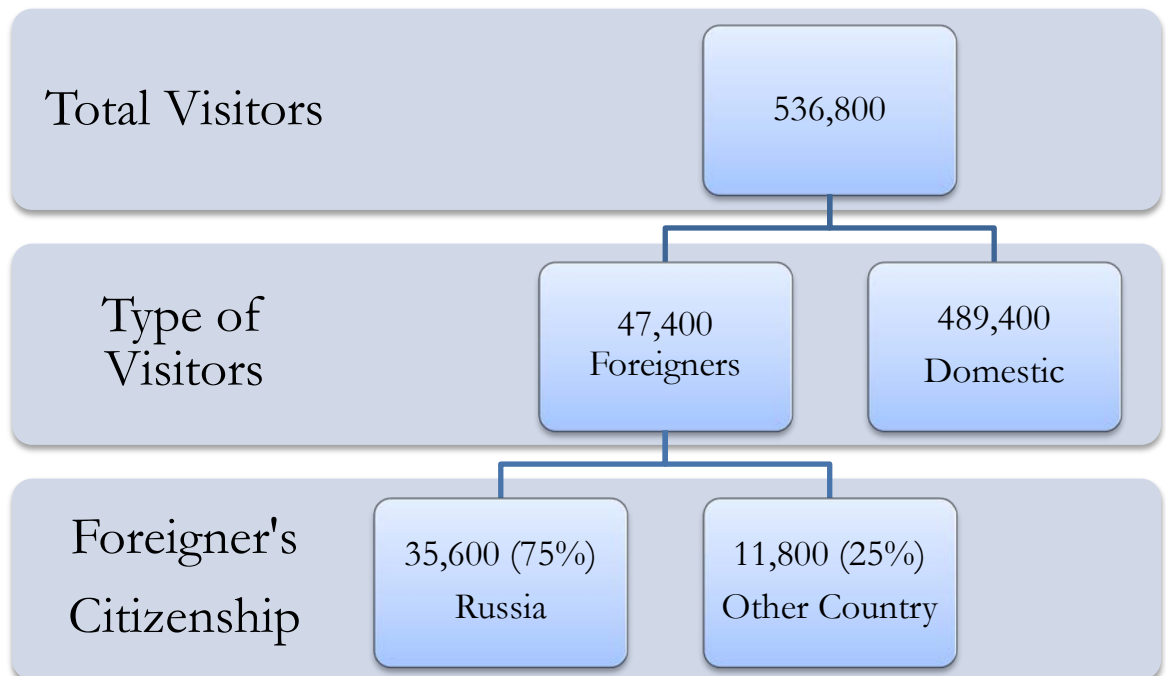


Figure 1. Amount of visitors in Vuokatti in year 2014 (Vuokatin matkailun tunnuslukuja, 2014)

However, because of the bad political situation in winter time period, from December to January, the amount of visitors decreased by 5-10%, and at the moment fewer and fewer visitors come to Vuokatti. Mostly it is caused by the high exchange rate of the ruble, from

December 2014 to January 2015 during the New Year holidays in Russia, when 1 EUR was equal, at its maximum to 100 RUB, e.g before so called “black Friday” the rate was 1 EUR = 40 RUB. Nevertheless, tourists, who bought accommodation in Vuokatti, before the economic crisis happened, came for holidays. As was mentioned above, Russians are the most profitable tourist group of foreigners in Vuokatti, and that is why, companies want to know, how customer is satisfied with their services. Most percentage of Russian visitors, who come to Vuokatti are persons who already visited Vuokatti before, so called “patrons”, but still new tourists come to visit this ski resort.

Furthermore, the thesis is about customer satisfaction, and includes the information about Russians customers and their behavior during the vacation. Complementary information from different researches by Russian scientists will supplement the theoretical background, in order to highlight the validity of the thesis research’ results.

The aim of the research is to help the entrepreneurs of Vuokatti to improve their business operations to increase customer satisfaction and to Vuokatti in general, to improve the image of the resort by developing its infrastructure. In addition, it is possible that the outcomes will provide ideas for new business or entertainment in the ski resort area.

## 2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The present chapter includes definitions of customer satisfaction both in business and in the tourism sector. It is important to note that tourism is also business, but with another concept and principle, which means that satisfaction of customer can be reached by completely different ways.

During the reading of the scientific literature, the one significant problem was spotted: customer satisfaction in business and in tourism is different, not by the definition, but by the factors affecting it. In this chapter these differences will be explained.

### 2.1 Customer Satisfaction in Business

#### 2.1.1 Definition

Without any definition it is clear for most of the people what does the word “satisfaction” means. One of the author’s friends defines this word as “all, what makes me to be happy”. For sure, this word means different things for every single person; for someone it is money, for another it is peaceful life. However, these “definitions” are not suitable for the thesis work, mostly because they are not concrete about the business or tourism sector. It is a bit confusing, that one word can or, probably, means different things. While the research was made, it became clear that even scientists define “satisfaction” differently. From these, a conclusion is that it can be defined, let’s say, properly for all spheres. Then again, need to dive into the theory.

According to etymology, satisfaction is derived from the Latin *satis* (enough) and *facere* (make) (Oliver 1997, 11). Simply, “satisfaction” means that product or service is reaching the point “enough” for the customer. However, etymology does not mean the right definition. Business dictionary defines the term as “Customer level of approval when comparing a product's perceived performance with his or her expectations”. In business, satisfaction is when the product meets or even exceeds customers’ expectations what means they are satisfied, but if product does not what they want to see, then customers are dissatisfied (Arm-





chapter will cover information about service in general, and how company can evaluate the quality of service.

### 2.1.2 Service

The service in business, as was mentioned above, plays a significant role and affects company's economy. In short, if the customer purchased the service, then when the consumer is satisfied with the service he\she becomes a repeat customer, as well as brings new. On this basis, the company should pay consequential attention to provide a good service. Isovita and Lahtinen figures out that good service consists of four elements: service quality, service culture, service package and providing service. (Lahtinen and Isovita 1994, 111)

Providing service is an activity, where customers, personnel and the service environment are the core elements. The customers may actively participate in the company's life by making feedback or suggestions; personnel should work conscientiously; the service environment should be positive. (Lahtinen and Isovita 1994, 112)

Service package is defined as an assortment of goods and services, which is provided in the specific environment. Moreover, it consists of four features: supporting facility, or physical resources that are the foundation for the service; facilitating goods, or things which is consumed by the customer; explicit services, or "benefits that are readily observable by the senses and that consist of the essential or intrinsic features of the service"; and implicit service, or alien feature of the service. (Fitzsimmonds and Fitzsimmonds 2004)

Service culture in short, means how the company's image meets expectations of the customer. In general, if the consumer has purchased bad quality product, immediate image is created, even if the service was good. The customer communicates with personnel and company's tangible resources and everything goes well, the consumer will not detect any fault or defect and vice versa. (Lahtinen and Isovita 1994, 114-116)

The last one is service quality, the author wants to explain theory deeper and that is why, the next chapter is created.

### 2.1.3 Service Quality and Model about Service Quality

The importance of service quality in business life as well as in tourism is important and plays a crucial role in company's economic success.

Service quality in business can be defined as a “complex and ephemeral concept which refers to some attribute of what is offered, provided whereas satisfaction or dissatisfaction refers to a customer's reaction to that offer”. (Kasper and Gabbott 2006, 186)

Customers made conclusions about service quality, using five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Empathy, from the customer' point of view, means that the company's personnel provide individual attention with great sensitivity and understanding of consumer' needs. Tangibles include physical facilities, staff, and furnishings. Assurance stands for the company's internal values – politeness, respect of consumers and active communication with the customers. Responsiveness deal with providing for the customer rapid service in a situation where the issue should be solved fast and create a positive impression of service quality. Reliability means that the service is performed precisely and faithfully. (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons 2006, 109)

But what is more important to know about the service is the existence of gaps. Gaps model was suggested in year 1985 by Parasuman, Zeithaml and Berry (Fig.3). The model consists of four provider gaps, and one customer gap, which is the distinction between expectations and perceptions. Customers expect from the company high quality product and services, and what company potentially should do.

The first, knowledge gap is about company's ignorance of what customers foresee from the firm. The problem may arise from lack of communication with consumers, not efficient management system or wrong marketing research. (Ziethaml *et al.* 1990, 51-71)

Second gap is called “Policy” and stands for company amiss of selection of service standards and design. It means, that firm can not arrange fulfillment of customer needs and expectations, due to poor management focus on customers and absence of customer-driven ideals. (Ziethaml *et al.* 1990, 71-89)

Third gap is emerging from failure in delivery to service standards. This gap may be caused by troubles in supply and demand, and problems with service negotiators. Moreover, poor

employee' policy in the company and inadequacy in teamwork are serious indicators of existence of fourth gap. In addition, creators noted that key factor of the gap are customers, who do not know their own roles and responsibilities. (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, 89-115)

The last one, communication gap is happening when a company does not execute the given promises. To be successful, firm use advertising of a new product for attracting customers, where the information may be exaggerated, what caused overpromising and customer becomes dissatisfied. Poor internal marketing program and absence of interactive marketing in communication plan will lead to the gap. (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, 115-135)

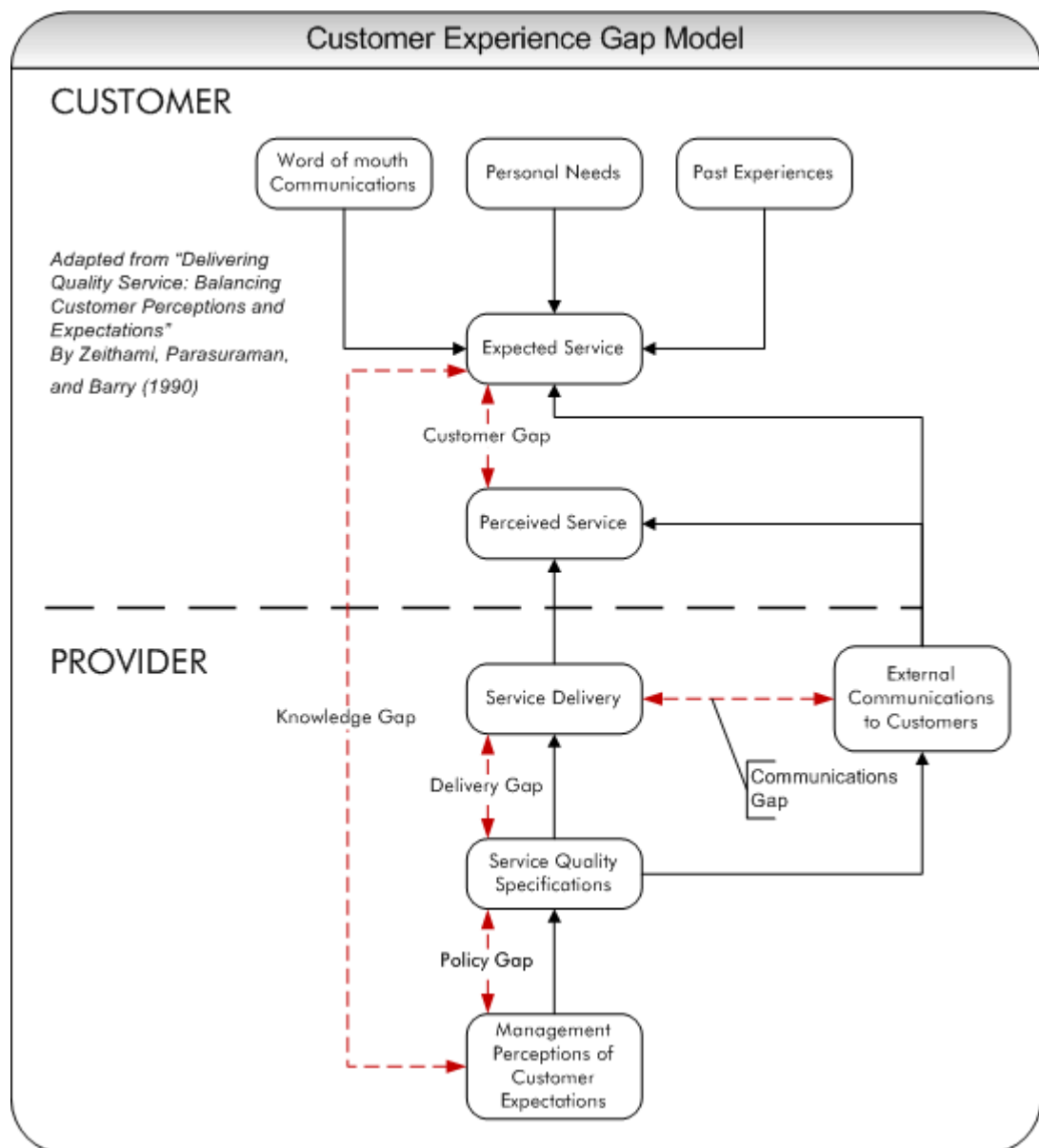


Figure 3. Customer experience gap model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990)

If a company wants to reduce the probability of appearance of gaps, necessary to know, what customers want and need; provide right service quality standards; guarantee that these standards will be implemented and perform the promises. The company always should operate direct to customers, to research consumer world and to adapt operations in customers' world.

In conclusion, the author wants to note that the term, according to business is defined; important issues of service in business were covered, and the next will be the tourism.

## 2.2 Customer Satisfaction in Tourism Industry

### 2.2.1 Definition

First of all, the explanation, what does tourism means is needed. Ryan assumes that tourism is “an economic and business activity” (Ryan 1995, 5). From economic side, tourism brings money to the region where tourist destinations are situated and the money can spend on regional development. From the business side, tourism is a great opportunity to become an entrepreneur, e.g. to open travel agency or activity based service, like the rent of snowmobiles in mountain ski resorts. In that case, the information about satisfaction from previous chapter is perfectly suitable for 2.2. However, Okello and Yerian (2009) in the article “Tourist satisfaction in relation to attractions and implications for conservation in the protected areas of the Northern Circuit, Tanzania” prove that satisfaction can be defined in three ways. First, it is a post-consumption evaluation of action made in time to find out does it meet or exceed expectations. Second, it is an emotional clarification of previous consumption experience. Third, it is “individual’s cognitive–affective state derived from a consumer experience” (Bosque and Martin 2008, 551-573).

Explanations mentioned above are similar to the customer satisfaction definition in business from chapter 2.1, but in tourism exists some differences. Tourism satisfaction plays a significant role in satisfaction with life, what means individual wellbeing or satisfaction with leisure, work, family and health (Okello, Yerian 2009, 607). In business the customer can buy the product and this product may not have an influence on a person’s life. In tourism, travel-

ling sometimes may affect human's behavior and vision of life, for example improving relationships with family and friends.

However, from tourism point of view the satisfaction is when people are planning to revisit the same location or travel around the same country. It is clear, that for the first time, the place which visitor has not seen before will have a great positive impact, what leads to satisfaction. Nevertheless, satisfied customer is seeking to make long-term relations in order to use the service or product again, recommend it to family, friends or colleagues. However, in tourism, service quality will be evaluated by a different model, than in business and the next paragraph is about this model.

### 2.2.2 Model to Evaluate Service Quality

In previous chapter was used a graph, explaining the satisfaction sequence in business. The tourism sector is more service provider of business, rather than of product. In the last three decades, the way how to evaluate quality of service has been studied (Ghotbabadi, Baharum, Feiz 2012, 2). In article "A review of service quality models", the authors figure out four suitable models of service quality: Nordic by Gronroos, The SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al., Multilevel by Dabholkar et al. and The Hierarchical by Brady & Cronin. In article conclusion authors assumed that "hierarchical service quality is the most suitable and helpful measurement for managers to collect the right information and make the right decisions".

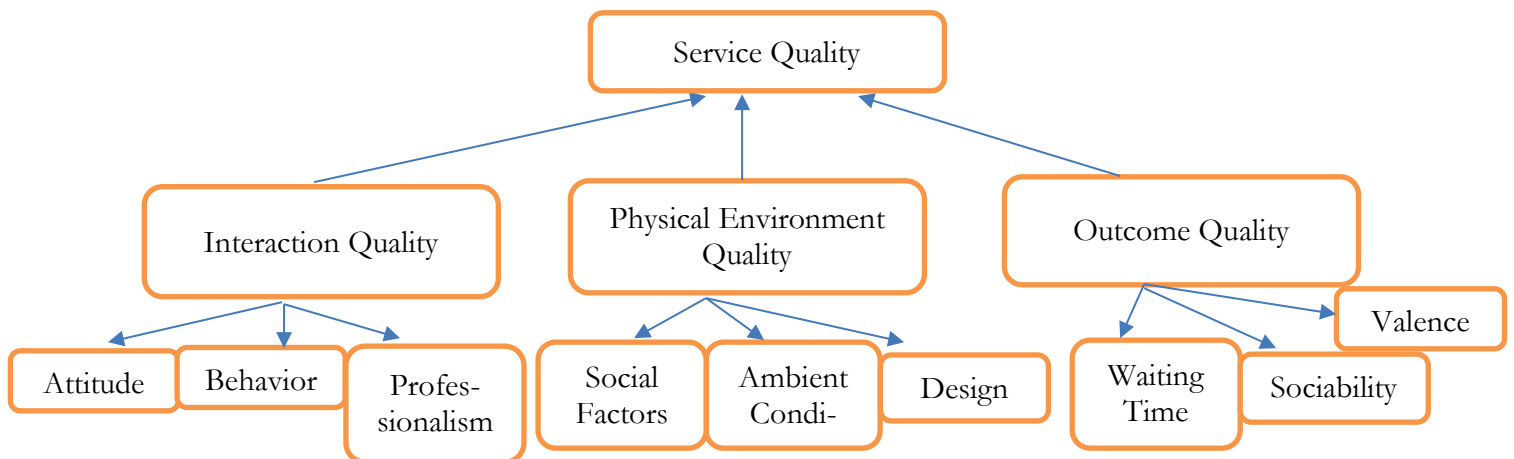


Figure 4. The Hierarchical Model (Ghotbabadi *et al.* 2012, 6)

The hierarchical model was introduced by Brady and Cronin in far 2001. This model shows the experience of the customer at different levels and a various elements of the service (Ghotbabadi *et al* 2012, 6). Moreover, this model allows businesses to detect the customer needs and things where firm's service fails in concert in order to improve it.

Service quality as recognized by customers is a multi-dimensional hierarchical design which is consisting of total service quality, the main elements and the sub-elements. The sub-elements are the first in order of factors of design; the main elements are the second in order. The hierarchical model is widely used in the marketing sphere. According to Rajat Gera (Web-article, 4-5) already exists the measurement for “agribusiness, airport services, education, electronic services, health services, mobile communication services, recreational sport industries, transport services, travel services”, what proves that the model is suitable for the tourism. Below is the explanation about the main elements.

Interaction quality means the quality of the personal communication between consumers and the service jobholder. In the hotel industry, based on that factor the customers evaluate the service overall. (Channoi *et al.* 2013, 3)

Physical environment quality can be determined as the neighboring physical environment - hospitality, location, furniture and etc. Consumers judge about the service quality through the tangible physical things. (Channoi *et al.* 2013, 3)

Outcome quality, in other words technical quality, refers to what buyers have after the usage of the service or synergy with providers. (Channoi *et al.* 2013, 3)

However, the reader may be confused: why exactly the Hierarchical model was mentioned above, and nothing about other ones?! As was said before, even the researches consider that the model is better than others and the author of the thesis supports that opinion by himself.

### 2.2.3 Factors Influencing Tourist Satisfaction

In satisfaction, as well as in service quality, are problems which affect the costumer's decision. Ryan assumes that visiting selected location the second time will not provide the same experience as was in the first time. (Ryan 1995, 42)

To understand how to satisfy the customer, it is fundamental to know about what does persuade the holiday-maker to select the holiday or the resort. (Ryan 1995, 42) Only the determination of a motivation will not provide knowledge of the way to satisfy tourists. As Ryan (1995) designates, to create an atmosphere in which the tourist will be fascinating every time being in a place he\she already was, it is needed to consider the following affairs:

1. The nature of involvement
2. The role of risk
3. The role of stress
4. Boredom and frustration
5. Needs analysis

A numerous amount of researchers assume that **involvement** is an important cause of satisfaction in tourism business. For example, Ryan (1995, 43) points out that the tourist behavior depends on strong motivation to receive an enjoyment from the holidays and the negative incidents will lead to “cognitive dissonance to achieve the goal of enjoyment”. (Ryan 1995, 43) Cognitive dissonance is defined as uncomfortable mental stress as a result from the conflict of two or more contradictory things. (Dictionary.com) Involvement, in case of satisfaction, also is dependent on different factors, such as “the opportunity to become involved due to economic or social factors”. (Ryan 1995, 44)

Psychological **risk** is one of the factors which affected the tourists. Ryan (1995, 44) mentioned that people who already prepared to take psychological risk are people who proceed to new and unknown place. In other words, modern travelers prefer to visit familiar locations by using the same transportation type what was used before and it can be explained as risk avoidance strategies. Even through the mass media, it is clear that if in specific place was happening terrifying accident, e.g. bomb explosion, plane drop, unstable political situation, the tourists can cancel their trip to that specific place what is caused by the risk factor. Moreover, concerning ski resorts, people are expected before the trip that they will be safe on the slopes and during skiing and if needed, the best medical assist will be provided.

Risk and **stress** are connected to each other: even the idea about any risk during the holidays will generate stress on a psychological level. Furthermore, stress can be provoked in situations when a tourist is in a foreign country with another culture, for example by language



barrier. Of course, tourist destination cannot control stress of the each tourist, but what place can do is to minimize the presence of the stress factors.

**Boredom** for the recreation area, according to Iso-Ahola and Weissenger (1990, 2) can be defined as availability of leisure time, where too much time for the task in hand engender boredom, as well as too little time does the same.

**Frustration** means a feeling of dissatisfaction, as a result from unfulfilled needs. Ryan (1995, 48) gives an example of frustration in the tourist industry – the delaying of aircraft, especially if it is a package charter flight. In this situation, holiday-maker has a transfer by bus from the hotel to airport in a specific time in order to not to be late for a plane, but then the delay is happening and the tourist starts to face with uncertainty what induce stress and apathy. (Ryan 1995, 48)

When talking about **needs**, every educated person will recall Maslow's need hierarchy. The hierarchy arises from the basic needs of survival up to the formulation of a healthy personality. The theory also suitable for the recreation and tourism services, because the model helps to determine the travel decision-making.

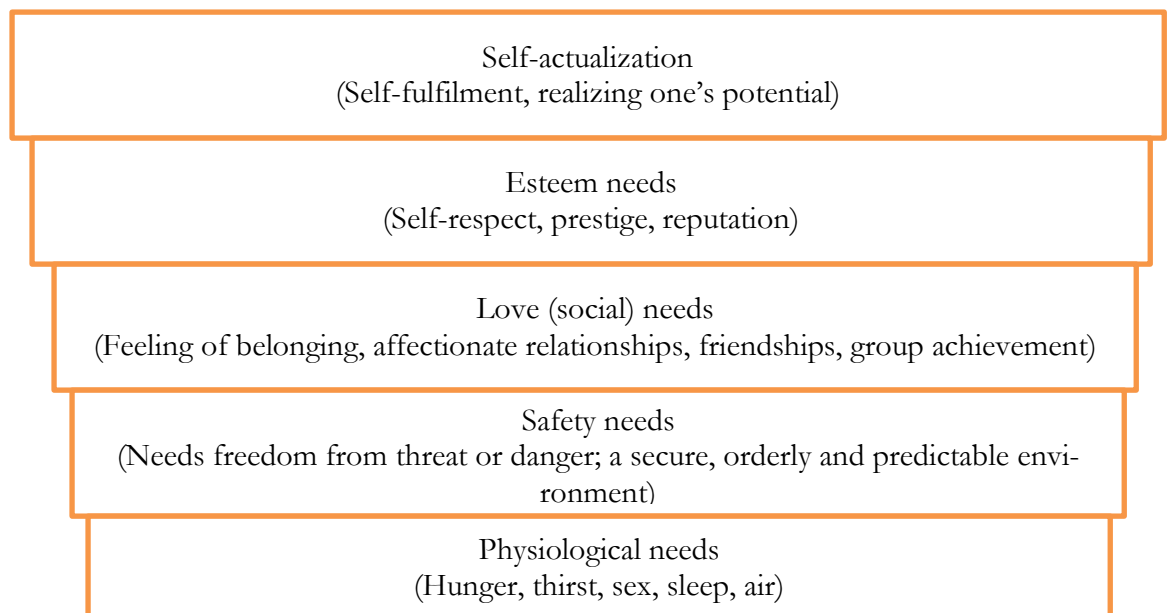


Figure 5. Maslow's need hierarchy from bottom up to top (Ryan 1995, 53)

The tourists want to have in the holiday location the high-quality restaurants and accommodation, as well as information about destination's safety, in other words to fulfill person's physiological and safety needs. To satisfy the social needs, tourism destination must offer

different events and group activities. Concerning self-esteem needs, the resort or the recreation service can provide special offers for the tourists, e.g. competition where the prize will be 2-days free accommodation in any hotel or the other option. The last one, self-actualization needs can be fulfilled, for example in the sport resorts by offering to the visitors the training with professional sportsman.

However, the analysis of different researches by the author gives **other factors** influencing satisfaction. Russian scientists Vetitnev A., Romanova G., Matushenko N. and Kvetenadze E. completed the research about destination satisfaction in Russian resorts. Through the research, scientists proved that on the satisfaction of Russian tourists in domestic tourism are affecting the following factors: “purpose of travel, source of payment of travel, choice of accommodation, holiday organization mode and tourist’s spending”. (Vetitnev *et al.* 2013, 1170) These factors also can be defined as core aspects in the tourist’s decision making.

In other research, done by Suthathip Suanmali (2014) was analyzed that tourists also considered the next list of factors before the trip:

1. Hospitality (Appealing accommodation facilities, variety and quality of food, willingness of staff to help tourists as well as warm and welcoming of local people)
2. Attractions and Accessibility (Diversity of cultural attractions and natural attractions, availability of domestic products, the presence of information and documents about the destination, advantage to travel, openness of basic medical treatment and local authorities)
3. Cost of Staying (Price of living, price of food, price of transportation, price of products)
4. Environmental Factor (Water and air conditions, personal security and safety, destination cleanliness, noisiness)
5. Infrastructure (Internet access and Wi-Fi, local transportation)

Moreover, researcher established that the Cost of Staying factor is the most important for the tourists. (Suthathip Suanmali 2014, 8)

In conclusion, the author wants to note that there is exist a huge amount of factors which affected tourists’ satisfaction, but all the issues mentioned above are the most important and should be taken into account by the marketers and the business society in specific tourist destination.

### 3 RUSSIAN CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

Russia is the largest country in the world, situated on more the one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area. Moreover, the Russians are the nation with 146 million people on 1 January 2015, according to Information Agency "Regnum". The Russians have a long history behind the nation, strong cultural values which have effect on daily-life of each Russian and, in addition to all, a wide soul which is unclear to other nations. Because of these factors, when talking about the tourism and the Russians as customers, it is important to cover details and fable about consumer buying behavior, culture and society of the nation in general.

#### 3.1 Russians as Consumers

Scientists figure out different generations of the Russians which are connected with historical events: Silent Generation or Lost Generation, who were born in a period from 1923 to 1943, may still make a buying decision; Baby Boomers or Generation of demographic explosion, were born from 1943 to 1963; X or Unknown Generation, from 1963 to 1983; Y or Millennium Generation, from 1983 to 2003; Z or Digital Generation, who was born from 2003 to present days. Pesu (2013, 5) divided the total population into these generations, according to the figure below:

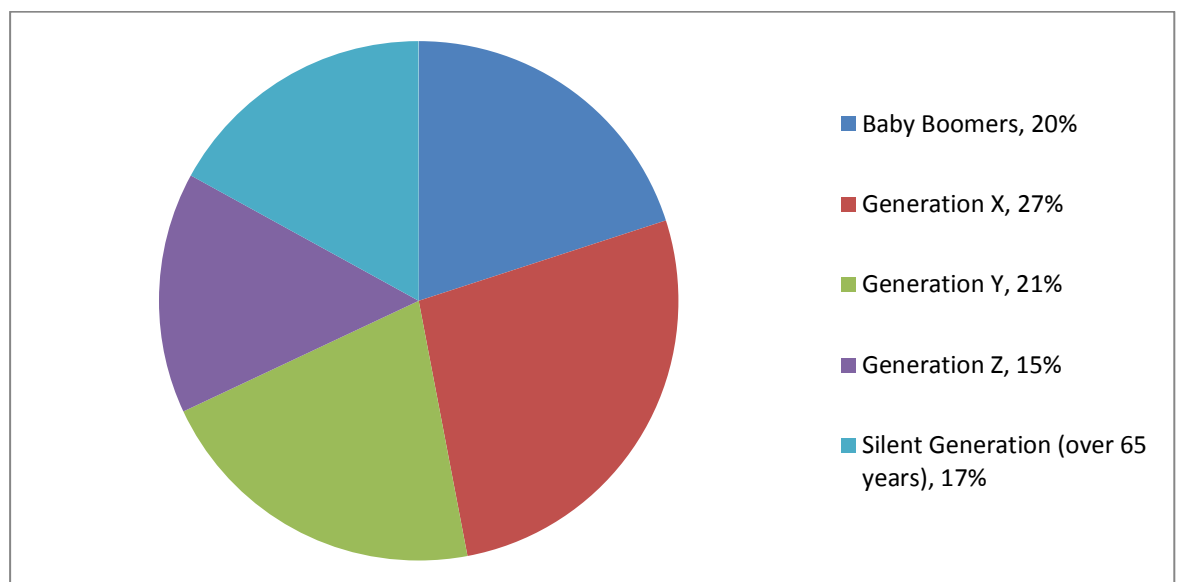


Figure 6. Share of total population in Russia into Generations (Pesu 2013, 5)

Theoretically, only three types of generation are important for the thesis: X, Y, Z. Generation X is the largest group of consumers. Miller (2013, 7) through the research, found out that this generation is materialistic, highly educated and family oriented. The generation Y is the main group of buyers, because they have the great confidence in the product, they are ambitious and, moreover, this generation has good knowledge of the modern technology. The generation Z is too young to make a buying decision for some product. Considering the services which are provided in Vuokatti, the kids “play” a significant role, as an example Angry Birds Activity Park which is mainly focused on consumers from Generation Z, or the children’ park “Hupila” near the slopes which works as a recreation room. However, Baby Boomers also should be considered, because they are requesting for the high quality products and services.

What is more important is that Pesu (2013, 7) figured out 7 types of Russian consumers: Innovators, Achieved, Stable, Spontaneous, Upwardly Oriented, Traditionalists and Saving-Oriented.

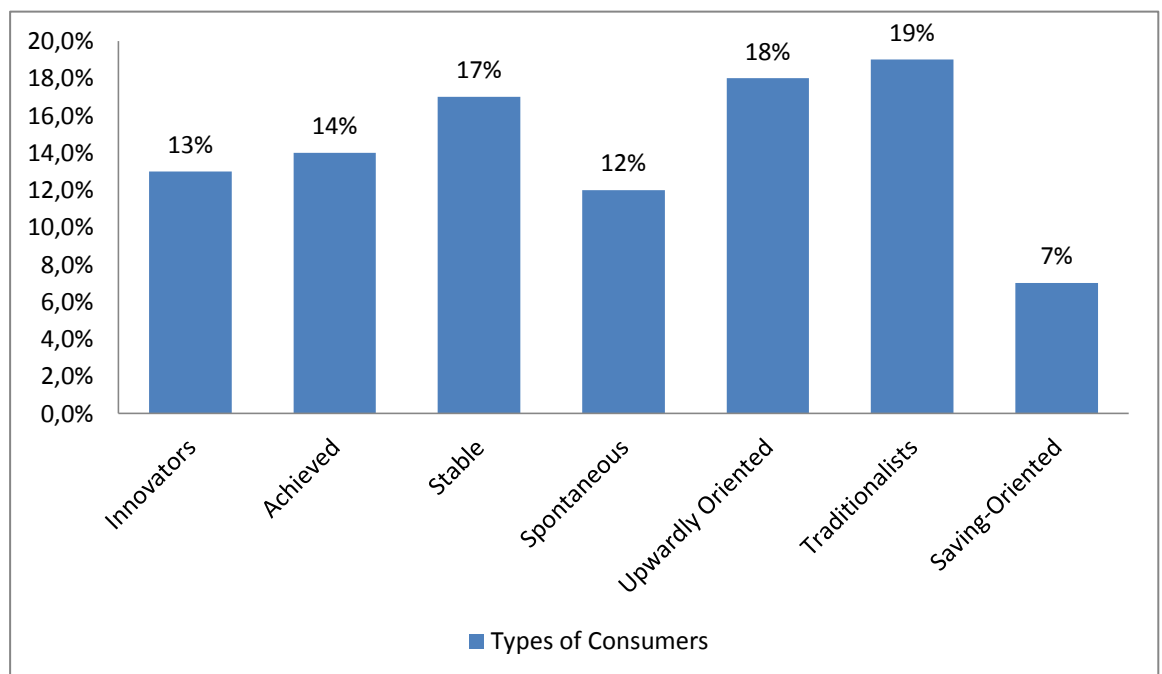


Figure 7. Types of Russian consumers (Pesu 2013, 7)

As shown in the figure 7, Traditionalists are the hugest category. People who belong to this division are traditionally oriented. They prefer to buy products with which they are already familiar, using “Soviet” shop structures. Moreover, Traditionalist have minimum suffer from the changes. Pesu (2013, 8) claimed that under this category are the pensioners and people with the low-income.

The second massive category is Upwardly Oriented. This category has low consumption potential. People do not want to spend a lot of time on shopping, preferring to this Internet purchases. The significant fact is that in the category members will choose the prestige of the product rather than the high quality of the product. (Pesu 2013, 12) People who belong to this category are around 30 years old and have an income above the average.

Stable is a category with people who have traditional consumer behavior and prefer to buy cheaper products with good quality. However, they do not get attracted by the novelties, but are addicted to purchase the famous brands. Category members shop only when it is needed. (Pesu 2013, 10)

Achieved is a category of consumers who have the high consumption potential with the strong focus on the health care. They are ready to spend time on searching for a product for the best price in different stores, keeping attention to the discounts. (Pesu 2013, 9) Important information is that people choose well-establish brands to avert the risk.

Innovators are a category also with the high consumption potential, with the focus on novelty. People have an active life position and like to travel worldwide to find adventures and to receive impressions. For them, the social status is an essential factor in life which is influence the selection of brands: the famous and trusted ones. Pesu (2013, 13) noted that 48 percent of people from this category are less than 30 years old.

Spontaneous is a type of people who make buying decision spontaneously and passionate. They take care of time and paying attention to the advertising and special offers. (Pesu 2013, 11)

The last category is Saving-Oriented, what is the opposite of Innovators. People prefer to save their money, do not make any purchases until the discount time. The category's consumer potential is much more the average.

In April 2015, the company called GFK-Rus` made a research concerning the Russian consumers in a crisis condition. The research was done by using a questionnaire and collection of statistical information from the Russian governments. The analysis shows that the GDP of Russia decreased by 5 percent: from 1 percent in 2014 to -4 percent in 2015. It was caused by the sanctions, the downturn in oil prices and it directly affect customers buying

behavior. Concerning the Russian consumers, was concluded that almost half of the respondents agreed that year 2015 is a bad time for making huge purchases and savings.

Regarding to economics, GFK has made a figure about index of consumer sentiment, which is shown below:

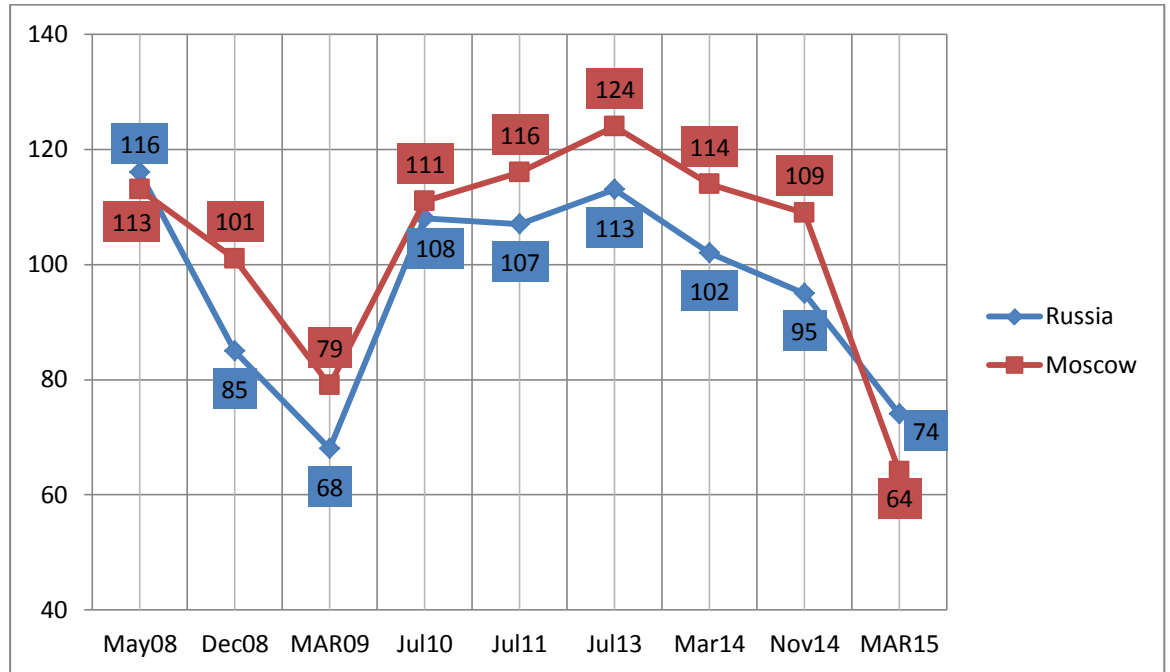


Figure 8. The index of consumer sentiment in Russia and Moscow (GFK Rus` 2015, 5)

Firstly, the definition about the index is needed in order to explain the meaning of the numbers above. The index of the consumer sentiment is a measurement of the consumer's approach towards the economy. (Investorwords.com) This index evaluates by the respondents' answers about an individual financial situation, as well as the country's total economy situation in the present and in the future. The index is equal to 100 when the amount of positive and negative marks is same.

The capital letters in the figure 8 is the period of crisis time: world economic crisis in 2009 and financial crisis in Russia in 2015. Moscow, as a region, and Russia, in general, have the negative sentiment index in the both periods. However, it is interesting that Russia has the index which is lower than the Moscow' index during the each period of time. The research mentioned above also concluded that consumers expecting that the duration of new crisis will be from 3 to 4 years and the recovery of the consumer market will be slower than after it was in 2009.

The next figure is significant, because it shows what kind of products and services may suffer from the financial crisis in Russia:

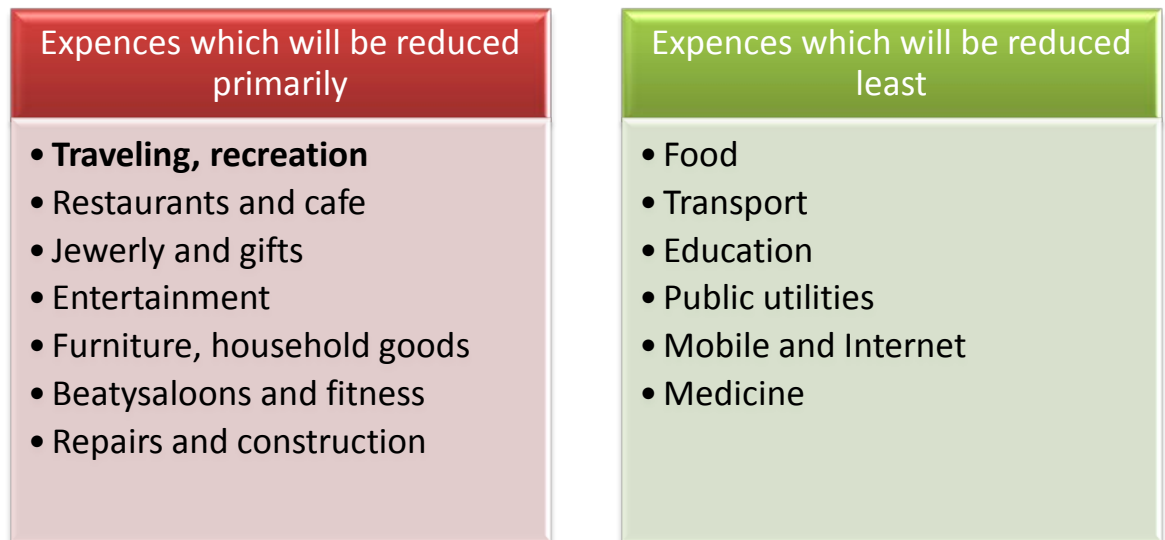


Figure 9. Change in the structure of consumer spending (GFK Rus` 2015, 6)

From these findings, it is clear that lots of businesses will be under the threat of losing their customers. What is more important is that those businesses which are situated outside the Russia will suffer more. It is caused by the factor that the Russian customers prefer to buy the Russian products, because people believe that the Russian manufacturers understand the wish of a client better than foreign, as well as foreign companies are not suitable for Russia in any case (Landor 2013, 2). As in GFK findings, Landor provided the figure which is significant for the thesis:

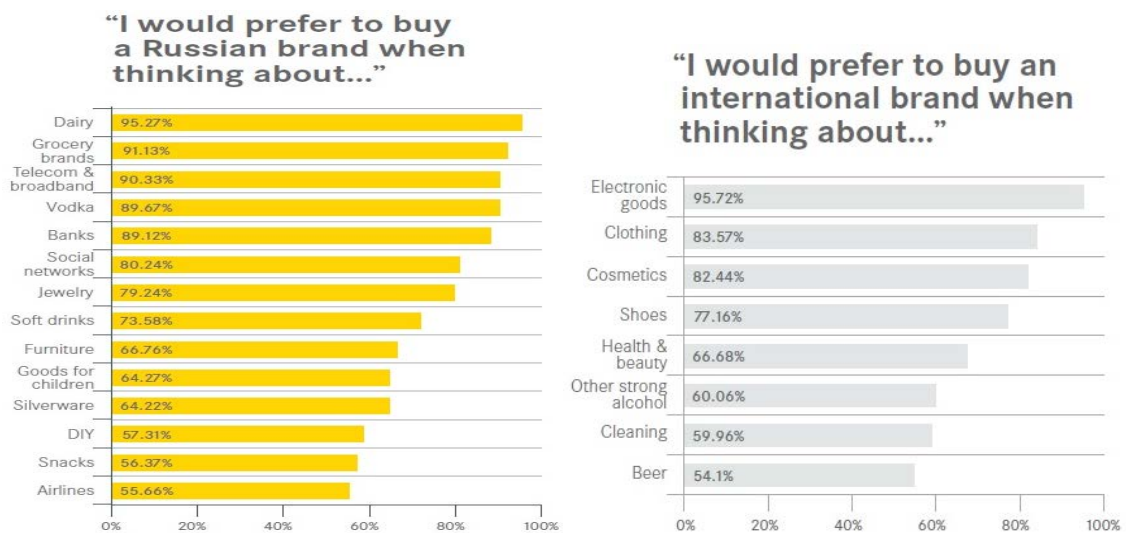


Figure 10. Landor’s research findings (Landor 2013, 2)

The visual information above from GFK Rus' and Landor is not similar, but fully connected to each other. The conclusion can be made that the Russians during the uncertain economic and political situation prefer to buy all necessary goods and services mostly from domestic market rather than from foreign, because of the cheapness compare with other products.

In Landor's research are stated 6 conclusions. There is no need to cover deeply each of the outcomes, but to list them can help the reader to understand the connection of the thesis research questions and the theoretical background: "Russian prefer to buy Russian; service is improving, but it still lags behind Western Europe and the United States; Russians love their food, and choose to spend lots of money on it; brands remain underdeveloped, so Russians stay focused on value; Russians love their kids and are ready to spend on them; Russians consume promiscuously". (Landor 2013, 2-5)

### 3.2 Russians as Tourists

Of course, when people talk about the Russian tourists, they usually recall an unacceptable behavior of Russian people abroad: their bad manners, the huge amount of drinking alcohol, impolite attitude to other people and so on. And it is not an empty talk, because according to an article "Worst Behaved Tourists" (2013) by Triposo, the Russians took the third place as "the most difficult and drink travelers". (Triposo, 2013) Moreover, Daily Mail Reporter (2009) made a survey and figured out that the Russians have an awful preference in fashion and terrible behavior, because of "I want everything right now" factor and flashing their money everywhere. Nevertheless, the real picture of the Russian tourist may be otherwise – the Russians are desired and are the most profitable tourists in many countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Greece, Spain, and Finland.

Historically, the Russians had started travelling abroad only in the end of 20 century after the fall of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet Union times, when the communist ideology was the basis of the society, all the borders were closed for the external tourism. However, despite of that, very rich persons could afford to visit other countries, but the consumption of only "homemade" products was preferable. It means that the Russians do not have a chance to adopt their behavior to another world. When the borders became open and people felt freedom, the process of globalization began. There was the rise of international air travelling, because the Russians started to crowd the beaches of Turkey, Egypt, what later becomes a



symbol of Russian society. (Tavernise 2015, A6) However, in the year 2015 Turkey already lost 500,000 Russians: there was a drop in the amount of tourists from 2 million to 1,4 million in seven months. (Mehmet 2015) Moreover, the European Union also suffered from the situation in the world with the Russian tourists – Greece lost 1 million, Spain 800,000 and Italy 683,000 people.

The decrease in the amount of the Russian tourists traveling abroad generates an extraordinary surge of the domestic tourism in Russia. Russian people started to travel within the Motherland, visiting Saint-Petersburg, Moscow, the Golden Ring of Russia, and etc. Moreover, after the situation when the Crimea was connected to Russia, many people started to substitute Turkey's beaches to Crimea's beaches.

There is slightly different situation with the Nordic countries of the European Union. Finland is the most visited country in the Nordic region, if concern the Russian tourists. This phenomenon is caused by the geographical closeness factor and by the factor of longstanding traditions, people connections and trade (Finland was as part of the Russian Empire from 1809 until 1917). (Wikipedia) In the year 2013, even it is old information, still it can be used, Finland was in the second place of Top 50 most popular foreign travel destinations with more than 4 million tourists. (Rosstatistics, 2014)

The most popular foreign travel destinations of Russian citizens					
Top 50 by departure from Russia for 9 months of 2013 (sum total)		Top 50 by departure from Russia for 9 months of 2013 (tourism)			
1	UKRAINE	8 177 019	1	TURKEY	2 767 649
2	FINLAND	4 213 681	2	EGYPT	1 429 629
3	TURKEY	3 654 272	3	GREECE	1 097 884
4	KAZAKHSTAN	2 822 488	4	SPAIN	887 191
5	ABKHAZIA	2 705 007	5	CHINA	787 226
6	ESTONIA	1 712 778	6	FINLAND	787 159
7	EGYPT	1 652 204	7	THAILAND	683 082
8	CHINA	1 509 254	8	GERMANY	638 193
9	GREECE	1 292 791	9	ITALY	605 482
10	GERMANY	1 196 171	10	CYPRUS	494 702

Figure 11. Rosstat's information about foreign travel destinations of Russians (Rosstatistics, 2014)

Nonetheless, in the year 2015 only 1,7 million trips were registered in the first 6 months, compare with 2,5 million in the same period in the year 2014. (Rosstatistics, 2015)

The importance of Russian tourism for the Finnish economy was always a popular subject for students' thesis researches. The search of information through other thesis materials is also a valuable part of the research.

The student from Saimaa University, Eila Potapova (2012, 24), figured out that the Russians travelling to Finland for the shopping, as well as for spending holidays. Nevertheless, the shopping attracts the Russians because of the closeness to the board – people from Sortavala need to drive only 2 hours and they will be in Joensuu, or the same amount of time from Kostamuksha to Kajaani, needless to say about Saint-Petersburg citizens who can within the same day visit Imatra and return back. With the regard to spending holidays, people are engaged by the clearness and safety of Finland and the high level of services in the country. However, for some reason, Finland has an image of boring country in the Russian society, because there is no enough entertainment and activities. (Potapova 2012, 28)

To conclude, Finland is the beneficial example of a destination-affected consumer behavior. Simply stated, a person is attracted by the fact that specific place meets tourist needs. It is important to note that there may be the lack of information about the complete list of facilities available what will affect the tourist's decision of visiting exactly that destination instead of another within the same country.

The next chapter will cover information about exact destination in Finland – Vuokatti. It was essential to highlight the importance of Russian tourists in Finland, in order to connect the chapters by the sense.

## 4 VUOKATTI OVERVIEW

### 4.1 General Information

Place Vuokatti is situated in a beautiful country Finland, picturesque region Kainuu and municipality Sotkamo.

Vuokatti is one of the most popular ski resorts in Finland, according to an annual report, in the last year the total amount of visitors were 536 732 people when Ruka, another famous ski resort in Finland, had 397 073 people in the same period. Vuokatti offer over 8000 sleeping places and the each year this number is growing, because new accommodation services are opening. Vuokatti is famous mostly because of its developed infrastructure: 13 slopes with different difficulty, 9 lifts, including 2 chairlifts, the biggest Angry Birds Activity Park in the world, Holiday Club Katinkulta, Vuokatti Sports Institute are just the small part what Vuokatti can offer to visitors. It is important to note that in the thesis paper will be focused on Vuokatti's firms which provide services for the tourists, not for the city needs.

However, the huge amount of visitors who came in Vuokatti is accounted for the winter period. It can be explained that the most of Vuokatti's activities working only during the winter time, such as Vuokatti Rinteet (the slopes), Vuokatti Husky Safaris, and some accommodation services like Kolazko. Nevertheless, a significant role in understanding of the research outcome will plays a clear vision of Vuokatti itself. For this reason, the author decided to compose the Vuokatti profile on each service.

### 4.2 Previous Researches

The search has identified 244 papers from students. After a quick analysis, the author has noted that better part of works is in Finnish language. However, student' researches were concentrated on the marketing of a company in Vuokatti, such as Husky (32 papers), Holiday Club Katinkulta (74 papers) and etc.

The significant point is that the author has accentuated one work which was made for "Pohjolan Mylly" in the year 2009 by Anu Jokelainen and Susanna Kinnunen, students of Kajaani

University of Applied Sciences. The thesis is named as “Influence of a Brand Image in Developing a Tourism Destination – Case Vuokatti”. In short, there was done the secondary data research, to prove that Thomas Gad’s 4D brand model can be used for marketing of Vuokatti. In the theoretical part students also provided information about Vuokatti, including info about accommodation services, different events Vuokatti offers and etc., but not in details, just in brief. In conclusion, students agreed that brand model can be used and mentioned that “The values for Vuokatti are versatility, all-year roundness, safety, nature, and genuineness”, as well as “Genuineness refers to Vuokatti being true to itself and stands for its image. Basically what you see is what you get”. (Jokelainen and Kinnunen 2009, 37)

During 6 years, from 2009 to 2015, Vuokatti was in the process of improving infrastructure. Good example is the largest Angry Birds Activity Park, which was built in 2012, and attracts many visitors nowadays. (Angry Birds Activity Park)

Last but not least, in the thesis about brand image, “Pohjolan Mylly” has note that “Vuokatti plans to become even more popular and a bigger place throughout the year, so it has different kinds of new activities in store for the future”. (Jokelainen and Kinnunen 2009, 19)

### 4.3 Vuokatti’s Profile

It is significant to mention, that all information about Vuokatti was taken from official webpage <http://www.vuokatti.fi/fi> using the text in Finnish language, because all the pages are exactly in this language and are updated every day by the administration of the resort what means that information is reliable and actual. Moreover, the author has used official websites of each accommodation service, activity service and the transportation service to receive the latest information which is valid.

#### 4.3.1 Accommodation

Vuokatti has a huge amount and diversity of accommodation service: from small hotel rooms to two-floored wooden houses. Guests are able to come to Vuokatti with friends and stay all together in one place what makes holidays cheaper, because Russian prefer to cut the expenses on equal parts between each other.

The author of the thesis decides to put below the general information about rental services.

#### 1. Holiday Club Katinkulta

Holiday Club Katinkulta is the part of huge company Holiday Club Resorts Oy. It is the leading firm in tourism accommodation services in Europe. Holiday Club offers as spa-hotels as cottages or apartments.

Holiday Club Katinkulta is one of the most popular places of recreation in Vuokatti. The hotel counts 116 comfortable rooms, including 4 luxury rooms. In addition, Katinkulta affords 364 cottages near the main building. Moreover, there is a SPA-center, with 20 different swimming pools, "Sauna World" with Finnish, Turkish, and smoke sauna with ice-hole. In the main building, there are 5 tennis courts, 4 bowling lanes, 6 courts for badminton, table tennis, squash and golf simulator. In addition, guests can visit 3 restaurants, café, night club and sport-bar. For the business, hotel may offer a rent of the conference hall. (Holiday Club Resort)

#### 2. Break Sokos Hotel Vuokatti

The hotel was built in the year 2007, and has 350 sleeping places. Food service count 2 restaurants – Amarillo, which served Mexican food, and Kippo (Finnish cuisine), and an evening bar HileBar, where guests can sing at karaoke. The hotel also offers sauna, gym and meeting rooms for 16 to 100 persons. (Sokos Hotels)

#### 3. Sport Institute Vuokatti

Sport Institute Vuokatti is a modern skiing training center, also offers an accommodation: hostel (for 2 – 7 persons in one room), cottages (for 2 – 5 persons), hotel (double and triple room), an apartments Uusi-Uutela (for 4 – 6 persons) and Vuokatti Chalets (36 apartments for 2 – 6 persons). The institute offers a restaurant Olas for 250 persons with Swedish table and café in Vuokattinhalli and in the main building of the institute. (Vuokatin Urheiluopisto)

#### 4. Hotelli Vuokatti

Hotelli Vuokatti is situated near the lake Nuasjärvi in Vuokatti. There are 18 furnished rooms, in total 44 sleeping places for 2 - 4 persons. From the year 2014, hotel offers 23 apartments of Vuokatti Suites for 2 – 6 persons. Food service consists of restaurant and bar.

As an entertainment guests can play tennis, mini-golf as well as visiting sauna or gym. (Hotelli Vuokatti)

#### 5. Hotel Tulikettu

However, this hotel is situated in Sotkamo, about 7 km from Vuokatti, but it is also can be used for accommodation of Vuokatti tourists. This family hotel offers 82 comfortable rooms for 2 – 4 persons. Guests may use gym, pool and sauna. The hotel also has a restaurant called Tulikettu for 400 persons, the bar and conference rooms. (Hotelli Tulikettu)

#### 6. IIDA Vuokatti holiday apartments

23 apartments of IIDA are fully furnished and situated only at 400 meters from the slopes and ski tracks. There are 2 apartments for 2 - 4 persons, 16 for 4 – 6 persons, 4 for 6 – 8 persons and 1 apartment for 8 – 10 persons. (IIDA Vuokatti)

#### 7. KaisonKulma holiday apartments

KaisonKulma apartments are situated in the center of Vuokatti. These apartments can offer 39 high-quality 1-floor cottages with all furniture guests are needed. Interesting fact that apartments are divided into two types with different names: KaisonSydän with Aino, Hilma, Maija, Elli, Liisa and Kerttu which are 50 square meters, and Venla and Sanni are 65 square meters; ElinanSydän with Rauha, Helena, Siiri, Kirsti, Tuija and Riitta are from 53 – 55 square meters, and Aune and Elvi are from 68 – 70 square meters; all of them are able place from 2 to 8 persons. In addition, Venla apartments offer conference hall for 20 persons. (KaisonKulma)

#### 8. Kolazko Cottages

Kolazko Ltd. is the company which has houses on the hill, near the slopes, ski trails and lifts. Kolazko has 22 Finnish style apartments:

- Nefriitti and Lasuriitti - 48 square meters, for 2 – 4 persons
- Rubiini and Meripihka - 59 square meters, for 4 – 6 persons
- Akaatti, Akvamariini, Ametisti, Smaragdi, Malakiitti and Onyksi - 67 square meters, for 4 – 6 persons
- Safiiri - 75 square meters, for 4 – 6 persons

- Granaatti, Topaasi, Jaspis - 84 square meters, for 6 – 8 persons
- Aventuriini, Helmi , Jade - 84,5 square meters, for 6 – 11 persons
- Aleksandriitti - 90 square meters, for 6 – 9 persons
- Koralli - 100 square meters, for 6 – 9 persons
- Turkoosi - 130 square meters, for 8 – 11 persons (Kolazko Oy Vuokatti)

#### 9. Loma Perkkiö

Perkkiö cottages are situated on the road between Kajaani (12 km away) and Vuokatti (18 km away). The company offers 6 cottages in Perkiölampi place: cottages for 4 – 6 persons and cottages for 6 – 8 persons; 7 apartments in Vuokatti: for 2 – 4 persons, for 4 – 6 persons, for 6 – 8 persons. (Loma Perkkiö)

#### 10. Vuokatinmaa Cottages

Vuokatinmaa cottages are situated near Vuokatti hills, on the lakeshore of Nuasjärvi. In Vuokatinmaa area, there are 22 apartments with 132 sleeping places in total: apartments 42 square meters, 55 square meters, 82 square meters, 95 square meters and Villas 99 square meters. In addition to accommodation, there is a private pier with rowing boat, trampoline, ski maintenance and storage room for guests' usage. (Vuokatinmaa Loma-asunnot)

#### 11. VillaVuokatti

Villa Vuokatti offers to customers, luxury accommodation – villas 70 – 145 square meters, with all necessary technics and furniture. However, there are 4 huge Villas, and 5 Villas, divided into apartments, what means that each house has 2 flats. (VillaVuokatti Oy)

#### 12. Vuokatin Aateli

The company has 21 cottages, as for 2 persons, as well as luxury villas for 16 persons. Interesting fact that famous Finnish-Russian actor Ville Haapasalo is the “face” of Vuokatin Aateli – on the official YouTube channel of the company was posted small stories on Russian and Finnish with Ville and his journeys in Vuokatti.

Moreover, Vuokatin Aateli offers to guests unique service: Aateli Island where people can get by boat, by seaplane, by helicopter or on the personal boat. On the island is situated sumptuous villa “Fregat”. (Vuokatin Aateli)

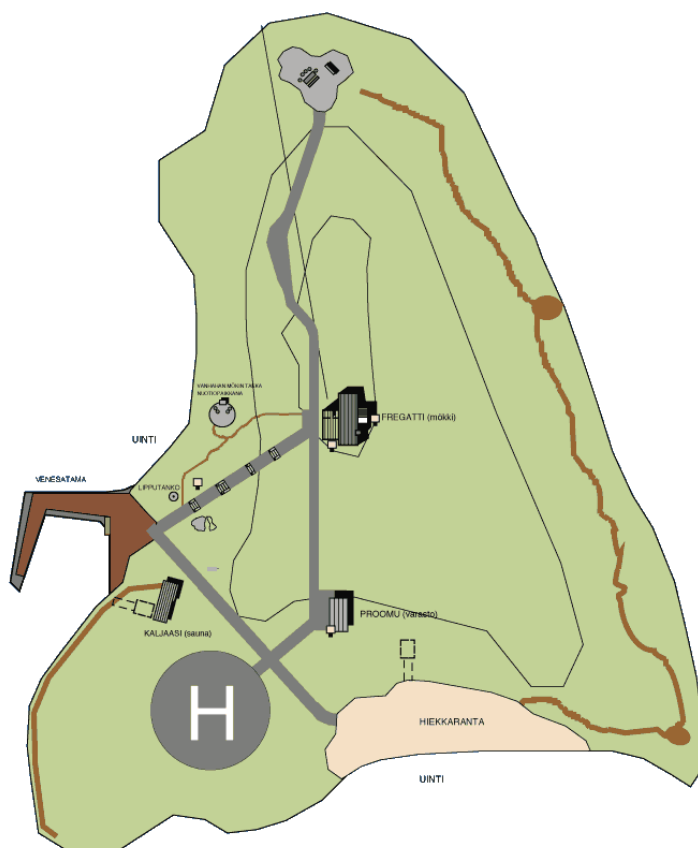


Figure 12. The map of Aateli Island (Vuokatin Aateli)

### 13. Vuokatti Weekend

Apartments are situated near the slopes and are fully equipped. Cottage “Weekend Lux”, suites “Weekend Due and Duetto” are situated so, that person can start skiing directly from the door; cottage “Weekend Family” is situated in the vicinity of the front slopes. Each of the cottages can hold 8 people. (Vuokatti Weekend)

### 14. Lomakoti Kuusela cottages

The cottages are situated near the Vuokatti slopes and near the lake Särkinen. There are 3 cottages with all necessary technical devices and furniture, 188 square meters, which can place 16 – 20 persons. In addition, Lomakoti Kuusela offers a placement in “old house Kuusela”, which was built 100 years ago, and can hold 30 persons. (Lomakoti Kuusela Oy)

### 15. Vuokatti Lomapalvelu



These 4 apartments situated in the center of Vuokatti and can place 4 – 8 persons. (Vuokatin Lomapalvelu Oy)

#### 16. Vuokatinranta

The company offers holiday apartments as for 8 as for 2 people and cottages for groups or families. Furthermore, Vuokatinranta organize different events and trainings during the year, has a gift shop in the main building and Christian bookshop. (Vuokatinranta Oy)

In conclusion, it is significant to add that this list of accommodation service in Vuokatti do not include cottages which are on an official resort webpage, but situated in 30 minutes from Vuokatti.

### 4.3.2 Activities

Vuokatti is famous between different ski resorts for its variety of activities, available all year round. This chapter will cover the information about how tourists can spend their leisure time. Activities will be subdivided into two parts – available during the winter and during the summer, moreover, some businesses provide both of them.

#### **Winter Activities**

##### 1. Skiing and Snowboarding

The most popular and the main activity in Vuokatti is skiing. The resort has 13 slopes in total and arrange them as for the beginners as for professionals. For example, the experienced skiers can choose SuperPipe or SlopeStyle which are for snowboarding, or Olympiakatti slopes that correlate to the international standards.

Near the western slopes, two Vuokatti Rental Offices are situated where skiers can take the equipment, make the maintenance of outfit and in SportShop can buy the special sport clothes from famous brands. In addition, the beginners are able to ask a support from Vuokatti Ski School's professional instructors, who speak Finnish, English and Russian.



Figure 13. Map of Vuokatti Slopes (Vuokatti)

Moreover, during the skiing, the tourists can get warm, have a snack or just relax in “A la Katti” and “Pirtti” restaurants, or in “Hesburger” at the bottom of the slopes and in café “Ripa’s Kupila” on the top of slope 6b. From the year 2014, near the entrance to the slopes and ski pass sales was opened the children’s house “Hupila” where kids can play in games, to relax and wait for their parents, until an adults will not be satisfied with the skiing process.

Vuokatti has variety of prices for ski passes, for example, a ticket for the whole day, from 9 am to 7 pm cost 39 euros, for 14 days with photo of guest it costs 261 euros and the most expensive costs 1100 euros – corporate ski-pass. The slopes are working until the end of April, but the beginning of the season depends on the weather condition, it should be cold and enough snow for the forming of slope tracks. On the hills, the natural snow is using, but if the air temperature is more than 0, it means that snow begins melt and the condition of the tracks is getting worse and for this situation snow guns are using. A snow cannon is the tool which produces snow by forcing water and pressurized air through it. (Wikipedia) Guns are used at the beginning and in the end of the season in Vuokatti, in order to supplement the natural snow and tracks what helps to extend the ski season.

The figure below represents information about duration of slopes functioning.

Kausi	Loka	Marras	Joulu	Tammii	Helmi	Maalis	Huhti
13/14					5.12.-26.4.		
12/13					1.12.-27.4.		
11/12					26.11.-28.4.		
10/11					13.11.-30.4.		
09/10					5.12.-1.5.		
08/09					22.11.-29.4.		
07/08					17.11.-27.4.		
06/07					08.11.-24.4. (sulj.12-15.12)		
05/06					26.11.-30.4.		
04/05					20.11.-29.4.		
03/04					31.10.-30.4.		
02/03					24.10.-27.4.		
01/02					9.11.-28.4.		
00/01					24.11.-27.4.		
99/00					19.11.-1.5.		
98/99					12.11.-24.4.		
97/98					1.11.-1.5.		
96/97					30.11.- 1.5.		
95/96					4.11.-1.5.		
94/95					11.11.-1.5.		
93/94					23.10.-1.5.		
92/93					17.10.-1.5.		
91/92					6.12.-1.5.		

Figure 14. The duration of ski seasons in Vuokatti from 1992 to 2014. (Vuokatti)

As seen, last two years resort was opening slopes only in December what was caused by the warm temperature during October and November. In the year 2015, the slopes should be opened in the end of November, nonetheless the weather can make any adjustments.

To crown it all, it is significant to mention that Vuokatti also offer more than 150 kilometers of tracks for running skiing and cross country skiing. Traditionally from the year 2004, 10 of October is the date of “Ensilumenlatu” or First-snow ski track. This event attracts huge amount of skiers and admit to start ski trainings even if no show out-of-doors.

## 2. Vuokatti Safaris

Vuokatti Safaris is a family business which from the end of 2014 is a joint venture of Vuokatti Safari and Vuokatti Husky Ltd. Company is the most functional safari firms in Finland: there are as winter activities as summer in the service assortment.

To the winter activities, the company attributes Husky Safaris, Snowmobile Safaris and Snowshoeing.

Snowshoe Adventure is the tour for groups of 4 or more people. It starts from safari center and lead to the Vuokatti hills. The duration is 1,5 hours and with the price 35 euros for adult and 19 for kids.

Snowmobile Safaris have variety of tours and will be submitted as a table.

Table 1. Snowmobile trips by Vuokatti Safaris (Vuokatti Safaris)

Name	Duration	Description	Capaciousness	Price
Safari to the Vuokatti Hills	2 hours	Trip on snowmobiles up to Vuokatti Hills.	Minimum 4 person	105 € - 1 person 75 € - 2 person on 1 snowmobile 40 € - child
Scenic Route Safari	3 hours			135 € - 1 person 80 € - 2 persons on 1 snowmobile 40 € - child
Visit Huskies by snowmobile	3 hours	Trip to Husky Farm via breathtaking route.		135 € - 1 person 110 € - 2 persons on 1 snowmobile 55 € - child
Naulavaara Safari	5 hours	Lake Kiantajärvi – Naulavaara-Maanselän Etappi – Vuokatti: 100 km		245 € - adult

Husky Safaris also offers different tours:

Table 2. Husky trips by Vuokatti Safaris (Vuokatti Safaris)

Name	Duration	Description	Capaciousness	Price
Nippu and Nalo Trail	1,5 hours	Trail is 0,5 km long and guests will drive it several times	-	49 € - adult 29 € - child
Alfon's Runaway Trail	2 hours	Trail is 6 km long, through the forests	2 person in sled	79 € - adult 49 € - child
Husky Adventure	4 hours	Trip through winter forests and frozen lakes		125 € - adult 75 € - child
Northern Lights Ad-	4 hours	Trip through winter forests		155 € - adult 95 € - child

venture		and frozen lakes with spectacular northern lights		
Winter Wonderland Trail	5 hours	Trip is 35 km long, through winter forests	1 person in sled	189 € - adult
In the Wilderness with Huskies	2 days	Trip is 20 – 40 km per day, with comfort accommodation and food service		570 € - adult
One Week Husky Safaris	7 – 8 days	Trip takes place near the Finnish-Russian border	-	2095 € - adult

### 3. Skating

In Vuokatti, during winter season is opened the IceWay skating track. This two-way trail is 1,5 – 3 km long and near Katinkulta and Vuokatinmaa. All necessary equipment tourists can get from the GoVuokatti company and Holiday Club Katinkulta.

## Summer Activities

### 1. Golf

Holiday Club Katinkulta provides games in golf from April until October. To all guests of Vuokatti is available 9-hole course which does not require a membership card. For the experienced golf players, 18-hole course is accessible, but only for members of Holiday Club.

### 2. Carting

Guests can ride in a car down to the hill when there is no snow on the slopes. These cars do not have an engine and everything what is helping them to ride is gravity. On the western slope is situated the lift which delivers racers on the starting point to the top of the hill. The price for carting is 30 euros per 10 laps and 15 euros for 4 laps.

### 3. Cycling

For extreme sport lovers Vuokatti suggests to visitors mountain cycling. Bike tracks are able as for professionals as for beginners. From the year 2014 in Vuokatti were opened 10 new cycling trails from 9 to 89 kilometers length.

### 4. Roller Skating

Asphalted roads and roller-skiing tracks perfectly useful for roller skating. The track begins near Vuokatti Sport Institute and has a distance in 4 km. Moreover, the route has connected to others tracks in region what gives an ability to create own trip. In addition to simple tracks, there is the rising path 2,5 kilometers long and with 7 percent vertical degree.

#### 5. Frisbee golf and Minigolf

Visitors of Vuokatti are able to try themselves in Frisbee golf. Near Vuokatti Sport Institute gamers can find Vuokatti DiscGolfPark course, which is free to play. In addition, Katinkulta offers courses with nine targets for some amount of euros. Families can play in mini-golf on Hotel Vuokatti's course with 18 holes.

#### 6. Forest orienting

The Vuokatti Sport Institute provides huge area (45 square kilometers) with the checkpoints network for orienting. The map with checkpoints is selling in the reception of Sport Institute.

#### 7. Hiking

The best time to come hiking in Vuokatti is autumn, because in that time the nature is the most colorful. Exactly in Vuokatti, tourist can go hiking, even without any experience of it. For the professionals, there are two national parks in Kainuu region – Hiidenportti and Tiilikajärvi with vertical rocks and beautiful nature.

#### 8. Fishing

Kainuu region has many lakes. Near Vuokatti are Nuasjärvi and Särkinen lakes where tourists can go fishing. However, according to Finnish law everybody can fishing, but there are some places which require a license. The licenses and equipment for Vuokatti area can be redeemed from GoVuokatti, Vuokatti Travel or Vuokatti Safari offices.

#### 9. Ball Games

During summer near Katinkulta and Sport Institute people can find courts and fields for the basketball, squash, volleyball, badminton, tennis and floorball. All necessary equipment is available at the same place where fields are situated.

## 10. Horse Riding

The Kainuun Vaellustalli company offers rides on Icelandic horses. During the ride people can enjoy beautiful landscapes. There is no limitation in previous experience, because all participants receive basic training and guidance before the start. However, the webpage of company available only in Finnish, what effect on Russian customers negatively.

## 11. Vuokatti Action

Vuokatti Action suggests to customers variety of activities, such as archery, indoor climbing, forest golf, kiiking, football in body zorbs, riding on rope and special offer – Action-championship which include different activities for competition of two teams.

## 12. Vuokatti Safaris

The description about this firm was covered in previous subchapter. All activities during the summer time are listed in following table:

Table 3. Summer activities of Vuokatti Safaris

Name	Duration	Description	Capaciousness	Price
RIB Boat Safaris				
RIB Boat Sprint	1 hour	Ride on 550 horsepower boat on lakes of Vuokatti	1 – 12 persons	490 €
Katinkulta Route	2 hours	Ride to Kajaani, with the stop in market place		690 €
Kajaani Route				890 €
RIB Boat Evening	evening	Ride through Katinkulta Route and stop for the dinner in some restaurant	1 – 24 persons	By the request
Huskies in Summer+				

Tour in Husky Arena	1 hour	Meeting with Huskies	-	15 € - adult 10 € - child
Nippo and Nallo Trail	1 hour	Ride on “Husky Mercedes” with 10 dogs	-	34 € - adult 20 € - child
Husky Scooter		Two dogs run in front of guest’s scooter	-	34 € - circuit trail 50 € - forest trail
Husky Trekking	3 – 4 hours	Hiking with dogs in Vuokatti area	4 person minimum	70 € - adult 42 € - child
Fishing				
Trolling	3 hours	Fishing with the guide	5 person	395 €
Trolling with a catch guarantee	4 – 6 hours		1 – 5 person	495 € - 4 hours 695 € - 6 hours
Trekking				
Hiking in the Hills	1,5 hours	Hiking tour with local guide	4 persons minimum	25 € - person
Nordic Walking	2 hours	Participants can learn the technique of Nordic Walking	5 – 100 persons	35 € - person

### Round The Year Activities

At last, meaningful to mention about indoor activities available for tourists in Vuokatti.

#### 1. Angry Birds Activity Park

Angry Birds Activity Park in Vuokatti is the largest Angry Birds Park in Finland. The park is a place where the whole family can have fun. Kids can enjoy in adventure tracks, rope climbing or car racing, while their parents have time to play golf, football, hockey or virtual games.

Moreover, in park building is situated Vuokatti Freestyle Hall where visitors can ride on skateboard, scooter, BMX and snowboard. The park offers “Forge” gym with modern train-



ers. After an adventure day, families can have a lunch in Robinson restaurant, which is situated in the same building. The cost for the ticket is 19 euros for entrance and 8 euros for Freestyle Hall.

## 2. Fitness Centers

Nobody can imagine Vuokatti without different sport activities. Indoor gyms are available for every visitor, for free or the price is included in accommodation bill, of Vuokatti in many places: Holiday Club Katinkulta, Hotelli Vuokatti, Sokos Hotel Vuokatti, Vuokatti Sport Institute and Angry Birds Activity Park.

## 3. Skiing and Snowboarding

Even during the summer time, when it is warm outside, tourists and citizens can skiing and snowboarding indoor. In Vuokatti, there is Snowboarding tunnel 80 meters long where is the stable temperature -5 Celsius degrees with variety of prices and tickets. Moreover, Vuokatti Ski Tunnel is the first indoor ski tunnel in the world. The tube is 1,2 kilometers long with the price for the ticket in 15 euros.

## 4. Bowling

Bowling game is the perfect variant for making competition between friends and family. In Vuokatti it is possible to compete in BowlCircus Vuokatti or in Katinkulta. BowlCircus has 16 lines, as well as billiard and darts games in same building; in Katinkulta only 6 lines.

## 5. Swimming

Holiday Club Katinkulta and Vuokatti Hall swimming pool offers to customers, a variety of pools with massage zones, long pools for sport swimming, kids' zones, an outdoor pool and etc.

### 4.3.3 Vuokatti' Social Media

Modern people do not imagine their lives without Internet. According to recent researches, about 83 percent of travelers are using the Internet in order to plan their trips and holidays. Russia is the first country in Europe by Internet usage (Internet World Stats). Furthermore,

70 percent of travelers read reviews and check information about tourist destinations, while planning their trip.

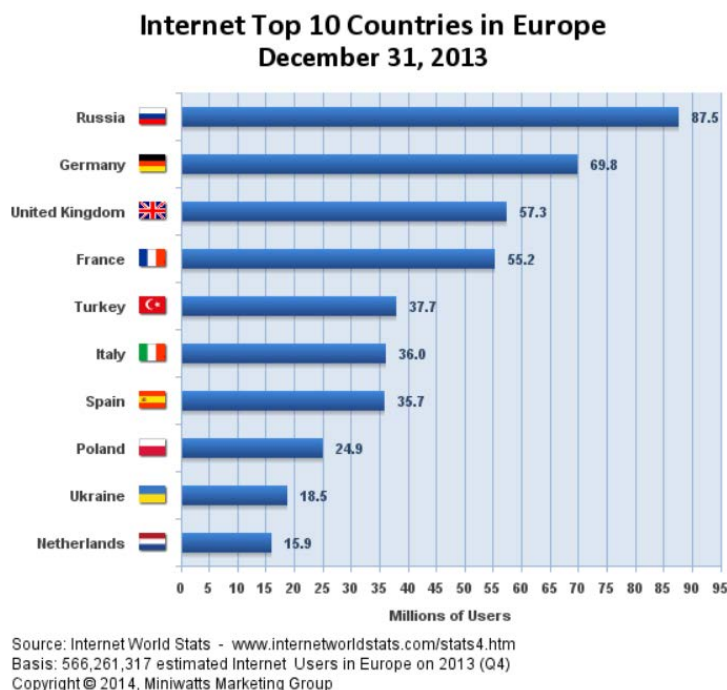


Figure 15. Internet Top 10 Countries in Europe. (Internet World Stats)

Vuokatti use the Internet as the main tool of advertising and informing people about activities, accommodation and lotteries for tourists.

#### 1. Vuokatti's Group in Russian Vkontakte

From the year 2012 Vuokatti has connection with Russian tourists in Vkontakt. On 22 October 2015 there are 9,422 members. On the daily basis, the administration of the group is posting information about activities available in the resort and what is new in Vuokatti. In addition to that, participants can leave their comments and suggestions about Vuokatti, ask questions and just reply to the post in special topics. Moreover, the group makes lotteries for the attraction of people which include free tickets for accommodation in Vuokatti. Exactly this group will be used for the thesis research process.

#### 2. Vuokatti in Instagram

Instagram is a popular social media where people post photos about their life. Vuokatti has 1728 followers and 177 posts. Posts include photos with beautiful nature, people, buildings and etc., with the description on Finnish and several posts in English. While Vuokatti make

the posts, hastags (symbol # and word) are using, in order to attract followers, because by hastags Instagrammers are searching for a pictures.

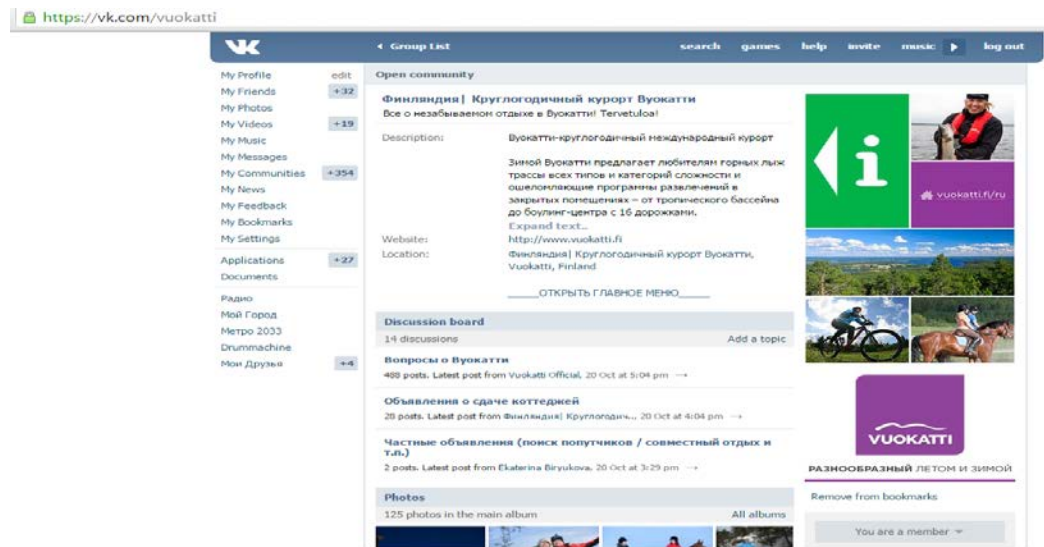


Figure 16. Vuokatti' group in Vkontakte (Vkontakte 2015)

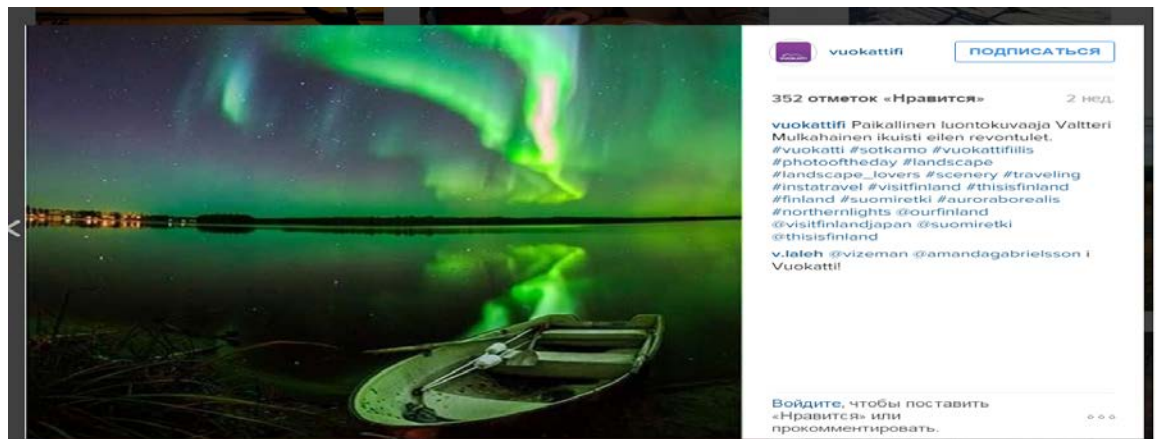


Figure 17. Example of Instagram post from Vuokatti. (Instagram 2015)

### 3. Vuokatti in Facebook

Facebook is international social media. While Vkontakt popular only in Russia, Facebook is used all over the world, even in Russia, but not so often. In Facebook, Vuokatti has 13,470 “likes” what means, that exactly this number of people are able to see updates on page in their own timeline. Posts on page are in Finnish with a small description and links to official website of Vuokatti. As in Vkontakt, people can reply to post.

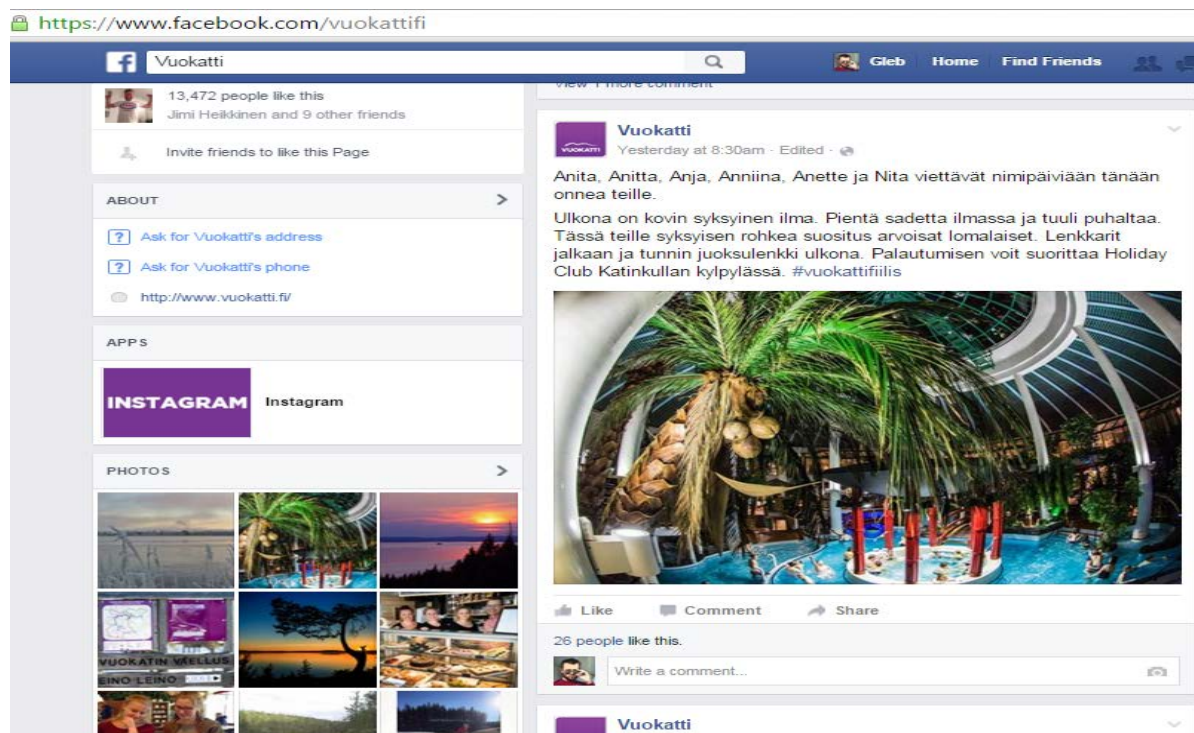


Figure 18. Facebook Vuokatti' page. (Facebook 2015)

#### 4. Vuokatti in YouTube

Free video advertising is a good chance to attract customer. By mentioning “free” means that videos can be placed in social media which nowadays is used as an alternative to TV - YouTube. Vuokatti has channel in here from the year 2008 with 350 subscribers and more than 390 000 views. On the page users see the link to other social media profile and videos, mostly on Finnish language, only once there were posted videos on Russian with English subtitles made by the author of this thesis. Videos includes interviews with customers, messages from “Pohjolan Mylly” (a company which makes all marketing for Vuokatti), storytelling about being as a tourist in Vuokatti and just advertising of businesses in the resort.

#### 5. Vuokatti in Twitter

Twitter “is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets" (Wikipedia). Vuokatti use Twitter as a page for copying general posts on Facebook and YouTube and also make many retweets (take someone’s post into own page). Posts can be read by everybody, but to reply on them or to retweet can only registered persons.

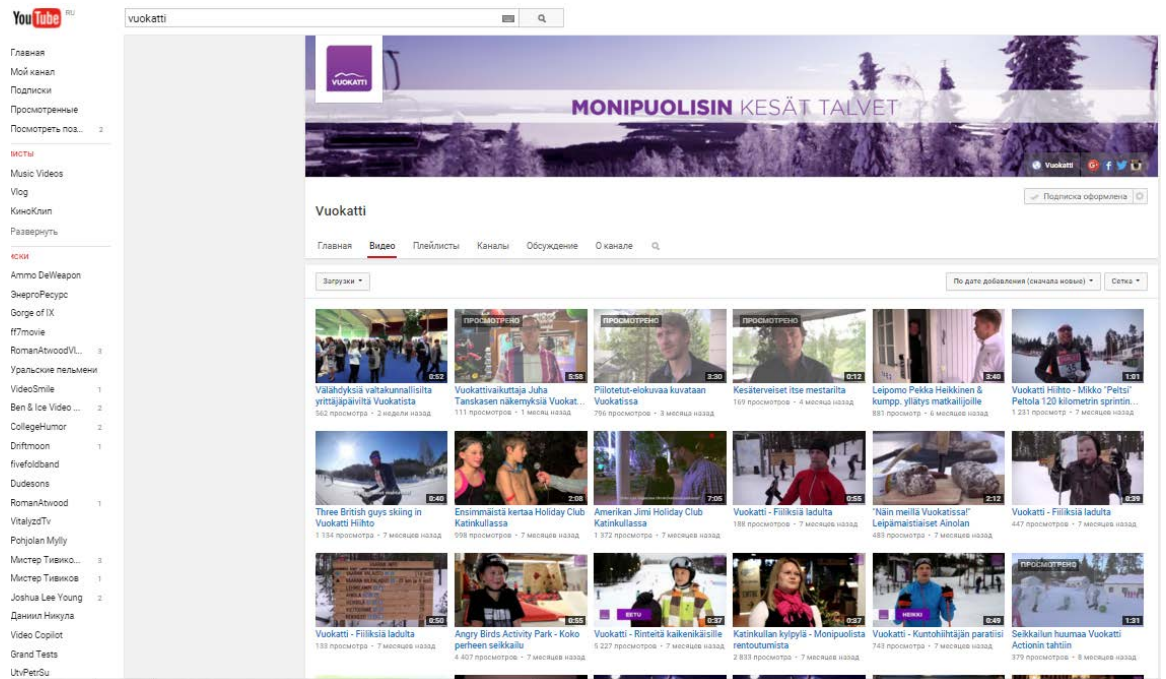


Figure 19. YouTube channel of Vuokatti. (YouTube 2015)

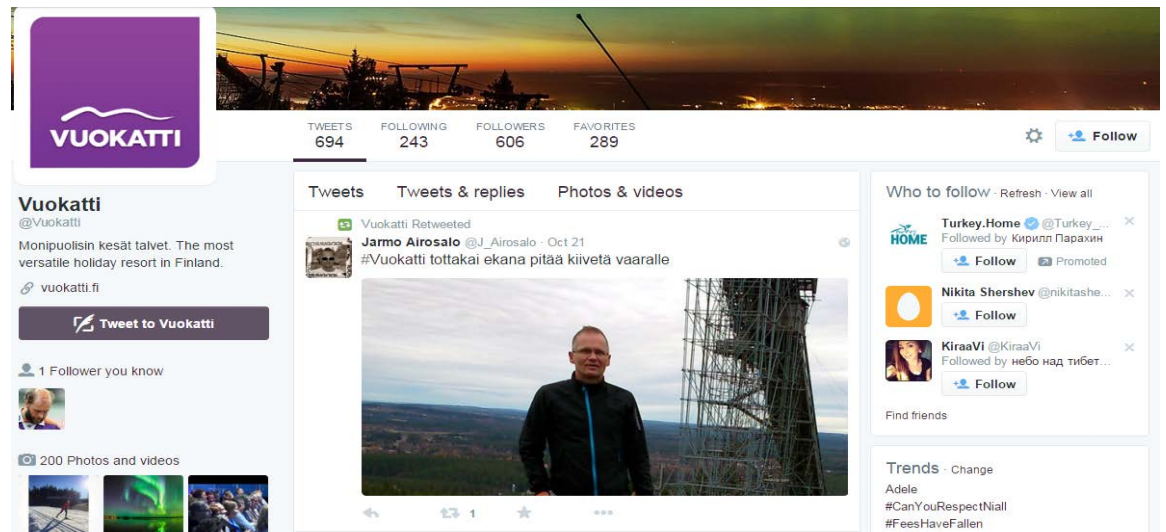


Figure 20. Twitter page of Vuokatti. (Twitter 2015)

## 6. Vuokatti' Official Webpage

To add to all covering above, Vuokatti has official webpage, where visitors can find any information they need: accommodation, activities, transportation, events and so on. The website is available in English, Russian and Finnish. However, the Internet resource has a serious problem: news about events and incoming lotteries are only in Finnish language and the

rent of accommodation online only on the Finnish page, while English and Russian pages are the same and just were translated. Pictures below shows mentioned issue:

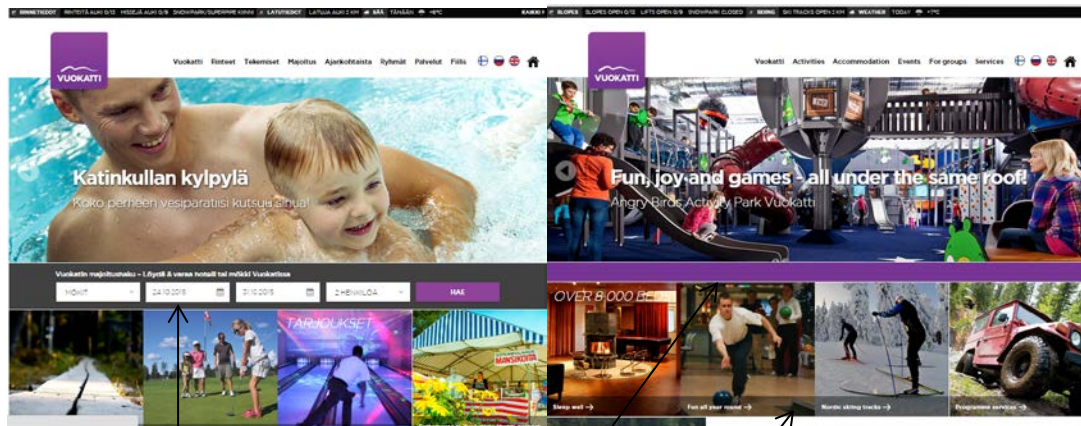


Figure 21. Vuokatti website pages on Fin and Eng languages (Vuokatti)

1. Online Rent. (No on second page)
2. Tarjoukset (Sales). (No on second page)

It is clear that Finns can rent accommodation immediately from the homepage, while Russians and others should search it on the page in inset “Accommodation – Rental Services”.

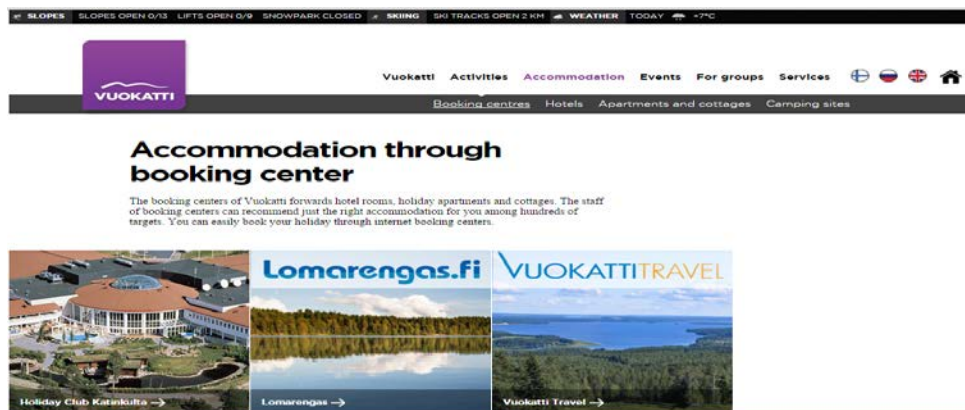


Figure 22. The page of rental services. (Vuokatti)

However, mentioned issues were already discussed with “Pohjolan Mylly”, but there are no changes. The next is a Russian language webpage which is the same as the English page.

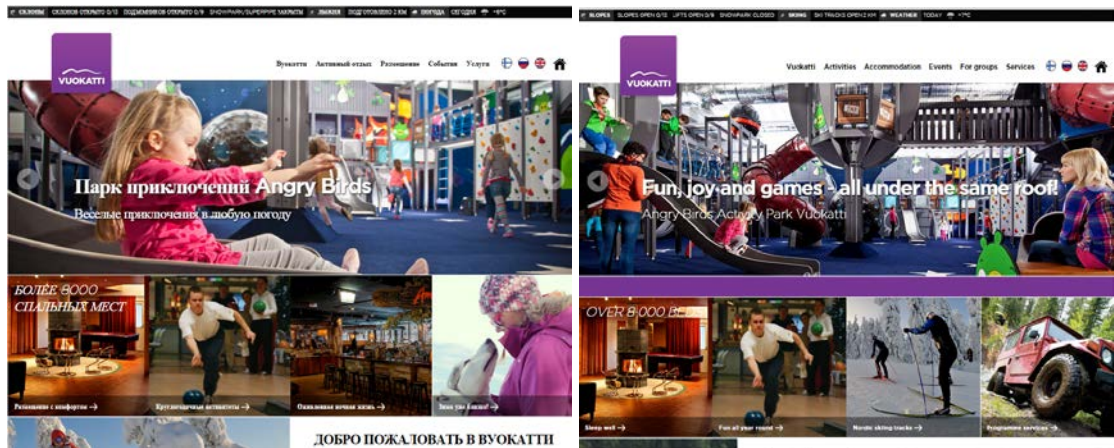


Figure 23. Eng and Rus language pages of Vuokatti website. (Vuokatti)

All in all, recommendations for improving each social media page will be in chapter [7 Conclusions and Recommendations](#).

#### 4.3.4 Transportation

The last what needs to be covered in Vuokatti’ Profile is how tourists may reach the resort. Many Russians travel to Vuokatti by car: during the winter period there are cars with Russian plates from Moscow and its region, Saint-Petersburg and Leningradskii region, Karelia and other parts of Russia. Alternative variant which Russians are using when traveling to Finland is the rent of a microbus (approximately for 15 – 20 persons). Exactly in resort, visitors can rent a car for their holidays. Nonetheless, different transportation options are available for tourists.

##### 1. Plane

Quickest way to arrive in Vuokatti is by plane from Helsinki. Flight is approximately 1 hour 20 minutes long and the plane landed in Kajaani Airport, what is at 40 minutes away from Vuokatti. For example, on the Russian air carrier “Aeroflot” online booking page people can choose the flight to Helsinki from Moscow, from Saint-Petersburg, from Niznyi Novgorod, from Tumen’ and from other cities, but with a transfer in Domodedovo (Moscow) to Finnair flight. (Aeroflot) From the airport to Vuokatti tourists can take a bus.

## 2. Train

The train station is situated in Kajaani. Timetables of arriving trains are corresponding to local bus timetables. (Vuokatti 2015) Russians can reach Kajaani by using “Allegro” from Saint-Petersburg or by “Lev Tolstoi” from Moscow and take a transfer to VR train from Kuovola to Kajaani. (VR-Ytymä Oy)

## 3. Bus

As in previous subchapters, the main bus station is situated in Kajaani. Bus trip by “Pohjolan Matka” from Kajaani to Vuokatti is 36 minutes long and cost about 8 euros. (Pohjolan Matka Oy) Moreover, during winter season Vuokatti offers free bus in Vuokatti, it is colored in purple with “Vuokatti” letters and the bus is riding around resort to Sotkamo. (Vuokatti 2015)



## 5 METHODOLOGY

The research for the thesis was divided into several steps: analysis of theoretical background, in order to figure out demand for the research, appropriate data collection, careful data investigation and judgment. The thesis author wants to complete the work with the best result and fulfil the needs of the commissioning party. In the data collection process both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

It is important to keep in mind that these two methods are different from each other. In the book “Researching Tourist Satisfaction” Ryan (1995) had published interesting and simple table: Qualitative versus Quantitative research which is duplicated below.

Table 4. Qualitative versus Quantitative research (Ryan 1995, 29)

<b>Comparison Dimension</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
<b>Types of Questions</b>	Probing	Limited probing
<b>Sample size</b>	Small	Large
<b>Information per respondent</b>	Much	Varies
<b>Administration</b>	Requires interviewer with special skills	Fewer special skills required
<b>Type of analysis</b>	Subjective, interpretive	Statistical, summarisation
<b>Hardware</b>	Tape recorders, video, pictures, discussion guides, projection devices	Questionnaires, computers, printouts
<b>Ability to replicate</b>	Low	High
<b>Training of the researcher</b>	Psychology, sociology, social psychology, consumer behaviour, marketing, marketing research	Statistics, decision models, decision support systems, computer programming, marketing, marketing research
<b>Type of Research</b>	Exploratory	Descriptive or casual

The author has used two types of “hardware” – video recordings and the questionnaire what helps to receive as many answers as possible and figure out what problems Vuokatti has.

### 5.1 Research Design

As was mentioned above, the author has chosen different types of methods for achieving the best result. As Ryan (1995, 35) supposed, to complete the research well, the design of it

needs to be done in an appropriate way. Correct research should have validity and reliability, otherwise research should be implemented again. Moreover, even if the design is right, errors during the process of data collection will lead to issues in data analysis.

Qualitative research or video interviews was taken by the author to receive deeper information concerning research questions. Communication with people face-to-face can give more appropriate data. What is more important, is that the researcher itself can see respondents feelings about the experience of their travelling, holidays and time spending in a specific location by paying attention to the body language. The author agrees with the next statement: “Qualitative research can be a source of ideas, insights and new perspectives upon a problem”. (Ryan 1995, 28-29) The qualitative research provides answers exactly from the respondent’s head and do not give the opportunity to person to make a choice of offered answers.

Quantitative questionnaire was made with the purpose to receive a big amount of responds. A.J Veal (2011, 56) emphasized, that surveys and questionnaires are a typical tool for the collection and analysis in tourism researches. Moreover, quantitative research outcomes are easily evaluated, due to numerical data and closed-ended questions.

Talking about the author’s questionnaire design is important to approach to a theoretical literature. Chris Ryan in his book “Researching Tourist Satisfaction: issues, concepts, problems” has big chapter about Qualitative research. Of course, there is no need to cover everything Ryan wrote, but general material will be mentioned with connection to author’s questionnaire. First and the most significant is questionnaire design. Ryan (1995, 136) figure out a few parameters, which should be used:

1. Be interesting to the respondent, and be able to keep it
2. The questionnaire must not be long
3. Questions must relate to providing of the data
4. Simple language must be used
5. Questions must be ordered in an appropriate way
6. Questions must be realistic

These entire specifications author has observed in his questionnaire (attached as Appendix 1 and 2). The survey includes closed-ended questions as well as open-ended, the numerical data, for example question about tourists’ satisfaction of Vuokatti.

## 5.2 Data Collection

The main point of the research is to collect information about Russian tourists' experience from visiting Vuokatti, their satisfaction level and what kind of problems Vuokatti have. It is clear, that the target group is Russians who already have been in Vuokatti once or many times. The essential clarification needs to be added: the tourist's expression about place he or she visited first time "will have a great positive impact what leads to satisfaction", in other words, it is answered on the research problem.

The process of data collection was divided into two steps: an electronic form and face-to-face video interviews.

The survey has been done in online service "Google Documents", due to easiness of working process and availability of various options for creating questions, such as numerical scales, open answers and etc. The questionnaire which was created in this service can be launched on the Internet and the answers can be collected from the registered person as well as from unknown. In addition, the creator can see the statistical data about the responds immediately online. The survey was created in Docs and it was published in two groups in Vkontakte – in the official group of Vuokatti and in group "rent accommodation in Vuokatti", as well as was sent by messages to persons who was in Vuokatti before. In addition to Vkontakte, the author has posted several messages on the forum of the TripAdvisor website on the topic about Finland. The survey was launched during October of the year 2015. At the end of the collection process, the data were analyzed and transferred into tables.

Face-to-face interviews were done with the help of a video camera. However, the process of meetings has started during the practical training period of the author. The task was received from Jimi Heikkinen, who was the boss of the author. The main purpose was to receive from Russian customers' feedback about their holidays in Vuokatti. Before the first interview, the author has made a list of questions (Appendix 3) and the entire list was approved by the commissioning party. The next stage was to meet with Russian tourists. It was done by meeting people outside, for example on the slopes, and through the connection with accommodation services and making an appointment with people who would like to answer on questions. Moreover, during the shooting of video advertising for "Vuokatti", the author met unplanned respondent who also gave feedback about Vuokatti on video camera. All

gathered information was translated into English and transferred into a text document (Appendix 4).

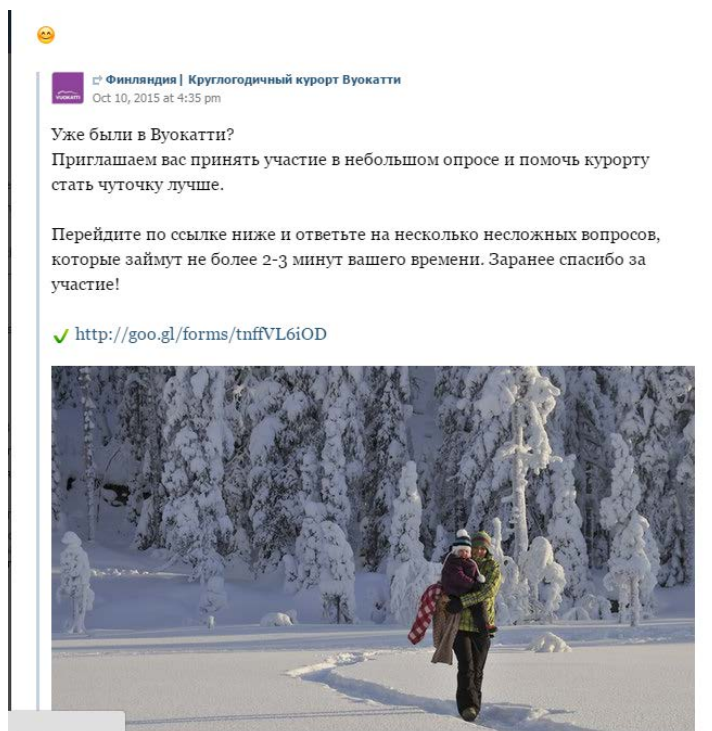


Figure 24. The post about the questionnaire in Vkontakte. (Vkontakte)

### 5.3 Population and Sample

As was mentioned above, the research includes two different samples. The sample population for the video interview has been determined as tourists who agreed to participate in the recording. According to the files, the author has 6 respondents from different parts of Russia.

The other sample population was the Russians who took part in online survey. There were 46 respondents who participated randomly and via their own desire. However, as the author has noted in the thesis, at least 3 persons may be excluded from the sample, because they were in Vuokatti only one time and their satisfaction level is the highest.

#### 5.4 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was also divided into two steps. The survey outcomes were studied with the help of SPSS program. The figures represent the findings in a visual form for better understanding of conclusions and recommendations.

The interview outcomes were transferred into the literature form, translated and placed in Word document. The papers were carefully analyzed and feedbacks about the problems of Vuokatti were underlined, in order to connect it with the thesis. Nonetheless, the list of answers is attached at the end of the paper as APPENDIX 4.

#### 5.5 Reliability and Validity

All the information that was collected is reliable and valid. First of all, there is no sense for the respondents of video interviews to distort it. All persons were asked about the place they are visiting many times and, moreover, they were warned that these answers will be delivered to the Vuokatti administration what indicates its significance and relevance.

However, there is a different situation with the questionnaire. The data received from the Internet sources may not be fully trustworthy, because the method of the data collection is dissimilar to face-to-face interviews. Moreover, it is impossible to generalize survey's results to all Russian tourists in Vuokatti. It is caused by the factor that the questionnaire was published online and was not filled by those who do not have a social media profile. It means that the validity is only relevant to the survey's sample.

In addition, the way the research was done may not be absolutely right. There are different pros and cons about which method is right. For example, are answers from an online survey from the real life experience of the person or people just choose the answer which they like and so on. Moreover, as the author's classmates concluded in their final work – "opinions could be various in different time" what caused by environmental changing. (Labors and Khakimullin, 2015)

## 6 RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The chapter covers information about research findings. The outcomes will be divided into two parts. The first is an analysis of the survey results, using SPSS for frequency tables and the figures for visualization. The second is an analysis of video interviews, using logical conclusion from the answers. The outcomes from SPSS can be found in APPENDIX 5, and full transcription of interviews in APPENDIX 4.

### 6.1 Video Interviews Results

Most of the respondents from video interviews were families what means that at least two persons were participating in one interview.

#### 1. Customers from Petrozavodsk.

All in all, interviewees, male and female, are satisfied with Vuokatti services, mainly because they are REVISITING the place during 17 years. The accommodation is the best in Finland. Vuokatti has good infrastructure and many activities. However, the following wishes were mentioned:

- The Santa Clause place. It will attract families with kids. Even if in Kuhmo is Santa Clause, people will prefer to visit the nearest one.
- Vuokatti needs a dancing place. There is the dancing hall in Naapurinvaara, but it is not situated in Vuokatti and many tourists will not go there. Especially in hotels should be a dance hall, as was in Katinkulta before.
- Vuokatti needs an exotic or rare activity. It may be long cross-country ski route, for example from Kajaani to Kuhmo (100 km) with warm stops, like a small house with hot tea and food, an accommodation place for the night, probably like the ice house.
- Vuokatti should continue to take care of nature, even if new accommodation services are built.

2. Customer from Petrozavodsk.

A second respondent – female, is satisfied with Vuokatti in full. She also is REVISITING the resort during 2 years. No any comments about the problems or suggestions.

3. Customers from Saint-Petersburg.

All in all, tourists from Saint-Petersburg, male and female, were absolutely satisfied with Vuokatti. They are REVISITING the place during the 7 years. However, they also gave feedback:

- Vuokatti should continue to take care about cross-country skiing routes, what means to maintain tracks in the same condition. The quality of this activity should not get worse.

4. Customers from Staraya Russa.

As the author had concluded in meeting report, respondents are satisfied with Vuokatti. Tourists had been in resort first time and are planning to REVISIT it in December this year. However, the respondent mentioned a problem:

- There is the issue of language in Vuokatti. Not all Russians able to speak English or Finnish.

5. Customer from Saint-Petersburg.

The tourist has mentioned about the positive and negative experience from visiting Vuokatti. Tourist is REVISITING Vuokatti each year repeatedly, from the year 2008. The positive things are:

- Free child' slope
- Very good Russian instructors
- More Russian-speaking personnel
- Excellent “Hupila” house

These are negative things about Vuokatti:

- Inconsistency in time administration. Some of the slopes' equipment stops working before the closing time of the slopes what cause "money down the drain" issue.

#### 6. Customer from Saint-Petersburg

The tourist is REVISITING Vuokatti since 2000. The respondent is travelling with the huge group of people (more than 30) and visitors are fully satisfied with Vuokatti. No problems, but the positive aspect that Vuokatti is developing each year.

### 6.2 Survey Results

As was mentioned, the questionnaire was posted online and the respondents come from social media – Vkontakte and Tripadvisor. The number of participants was 46. The original questionnaire can be found in APPENDIX 1 and SPSS tables in APPENDIX 5.

#### 1. Gender and Age

The author assumes that there is no need to represent all data in figures, what means few outcomes will be in text.

The survey results show that the female group (67% or 31) is in 2 times bigger than the male group (33% or 15). The next figure represents dependence between gender and age:

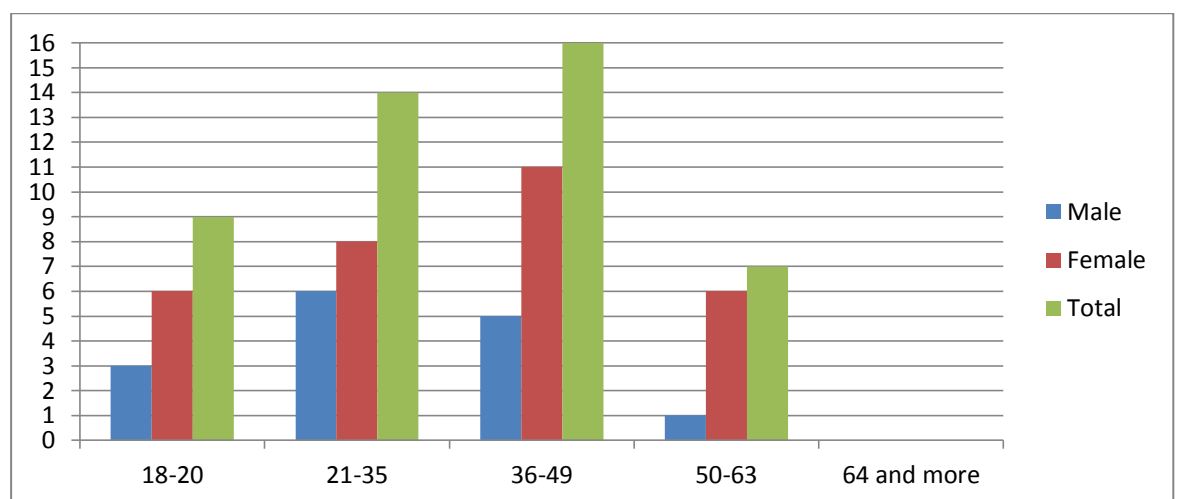


Figure 25. The respondents' gender by age



As figure 25 shows, the most of the respondents are between age 36-49. These people are from generation X, according to Pesu (2014) and the data prove the statement that exactly X,Y,Z generations are the main for the thesis research.

## 2. Occupation and Income

Figure 26 represents the occupation of respondents where employment workers are the majority of cluster with 54%. The second huge group is students with 35%. The unemployed cluster includes pensioner and not working, and is equal to 11%.

However, for Vuokatti the foreground customers are working people, because only they can afford to spend money on accommodation, activities and the other services. Nevertheless, the rest groups cannot be taken away, because the survey was for those, who already visit the resort.

Figure 27 shows the level of income of the respondents. To “no income” group belongs people without income and most of them are students. However, 5 persons from students have an income and are included in the columns with purple colour. The income level of 21000-40000 roubles or 300-572 euros (exchange rate is 1 eur=70 rub) is most frequent.

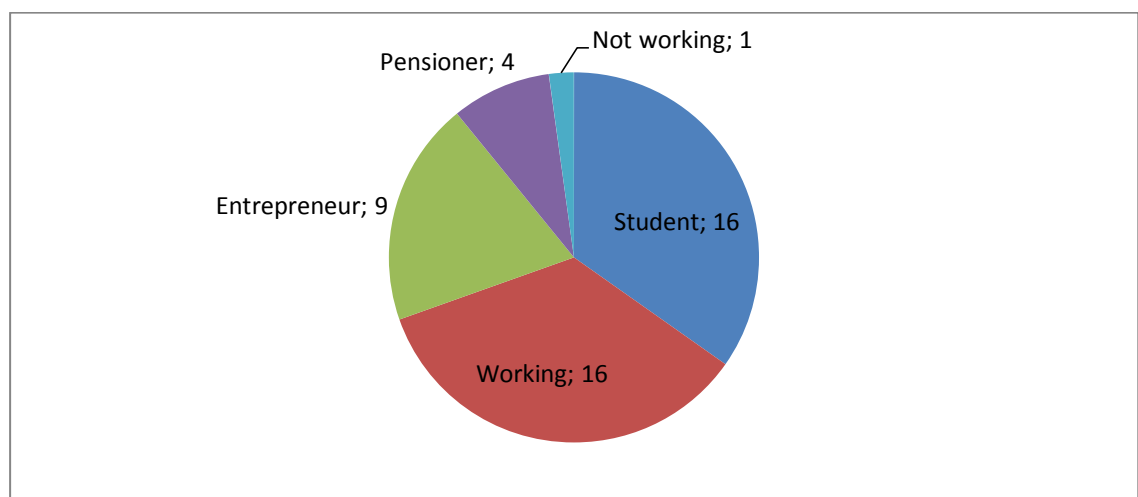


Figure 26. The respondents' occupation

## 3. Family Size

More than half of the respondents (25 or 54%) do not have children. It can be explained that the group “students” (16 persons) do not have children yet and 9 persons also do not

have kids. One child have 9 respondents (20%), from two to three children have 11 persons (24%), and more than three children has only one respondent (2%).

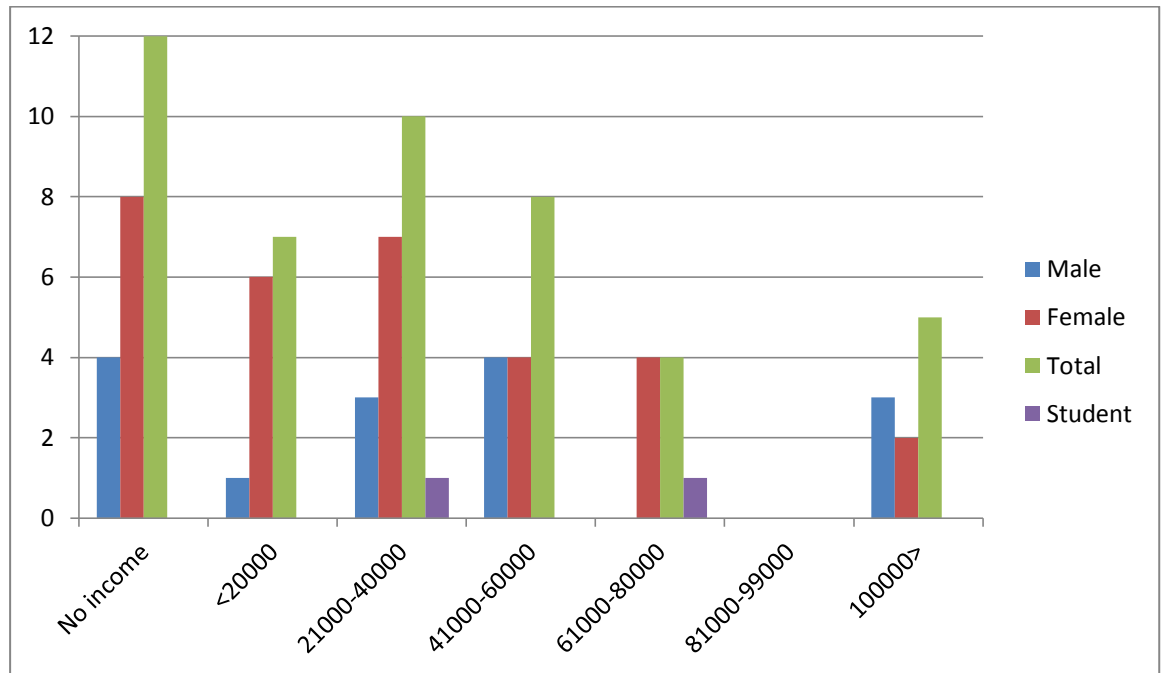


Figure 27. The respondents' level of income

#### 4. Place of Living

Most of the respondents are from Saint-Petersburg and Leningrad region - 12 (27%). In second place are the residents of Petrozavodsk – 11 (25%). The next are the citizens from Kostomuksha – 8 (18%). 6 respondents (14%) are from Moscow and Moscow region. However, Vuokatti also is visited by people from Nizniy Novgorod (1 person), Kiev (1 person), Murmansk (1 person), Tulski region (1 person), Helsinki (2 persons). There was no answer from 3 persons.

#### 5. Findings about Vuokatti

After the questions about respondent's personality, the survey asks the questions about Vuokatti and the findings are below.

Figure 28 represents the information about the visits. Most of the persons visit Vuokatti one time in year (35 %). However, because of the bad economic situation in Russia, the answer "Visited before" should be included in the questionnaire, in order to find the percentage of those who decided not to back for the holidays in Vuokatti. Under the variant "Other" the

respondents were able to write their own answer. The answers are: “When I visit Kajaani”; “Constantly”; “Once in a month” and “Visited before, once in a year”. However, the last answer will be assigned to variant “Visited before”. All in all, from 46 respondents, 8 or 17 % decided not to visit Vuokatti again, due to some reasons.

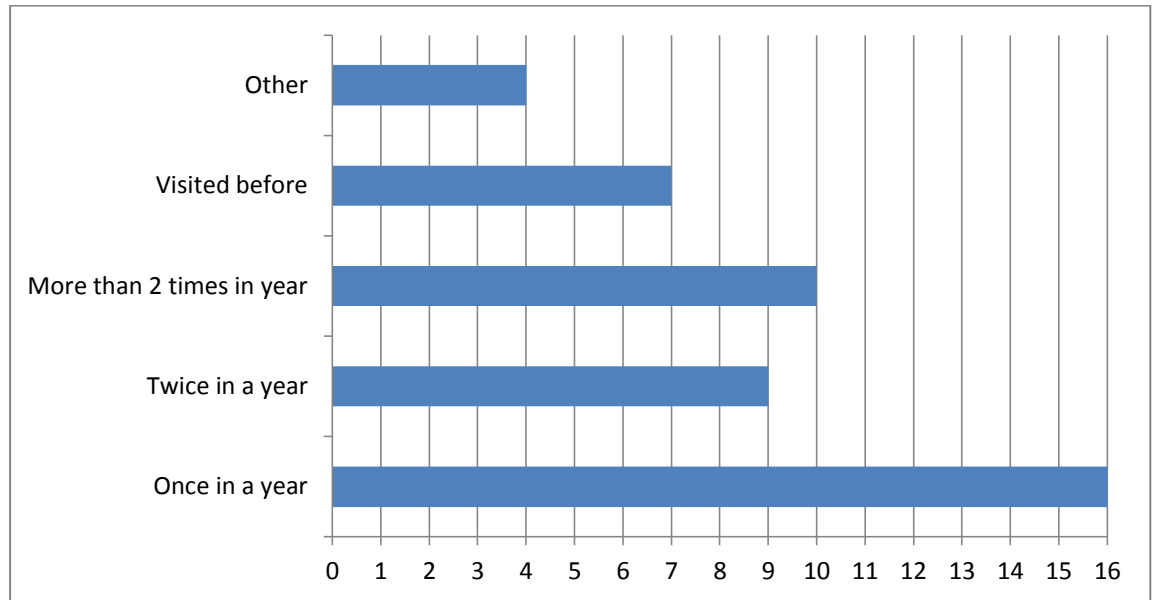


Figure 28. The amount of visits in Vuokatti

The figure 29 shows what amount of time people were in Vuokatti. As seen from the figure almost 92 % of the respondents had REVISITED Vuokatti from 1 to more than 11 times. However, in this figure also are included people who decided not to visit the resort again. It is important to show the amount of people who potentially will not be back in Vuokatti. Therefore, those who will not be back in the resort again are important for the thesis and their opinion will be considered.

It is significant to know about the period of the year when tourists prefer to visit Vuokatti. It is clear that preferable time is New Year and Christmas. The children have long school holidays and working people have national holidays what means that Russians are able to spend at least two weeks in Vuokatti, from the end of December to the second week of January. The respondents were able to choose from one to seven variants simultaneously. However, it is more important to prove that Vuokatti is all-year round resort in truth. The most popular time for the tourist is winter, mainly because of mountain and cross-country ski.

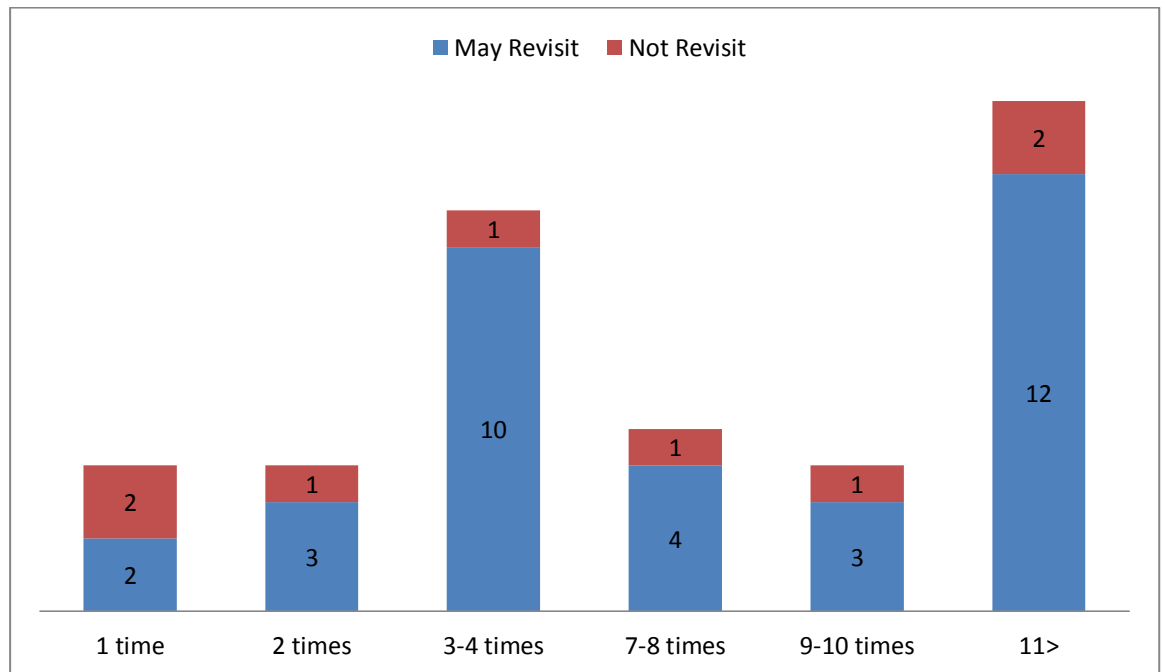


Figure 29. The amount of time people had visited Vuokatti

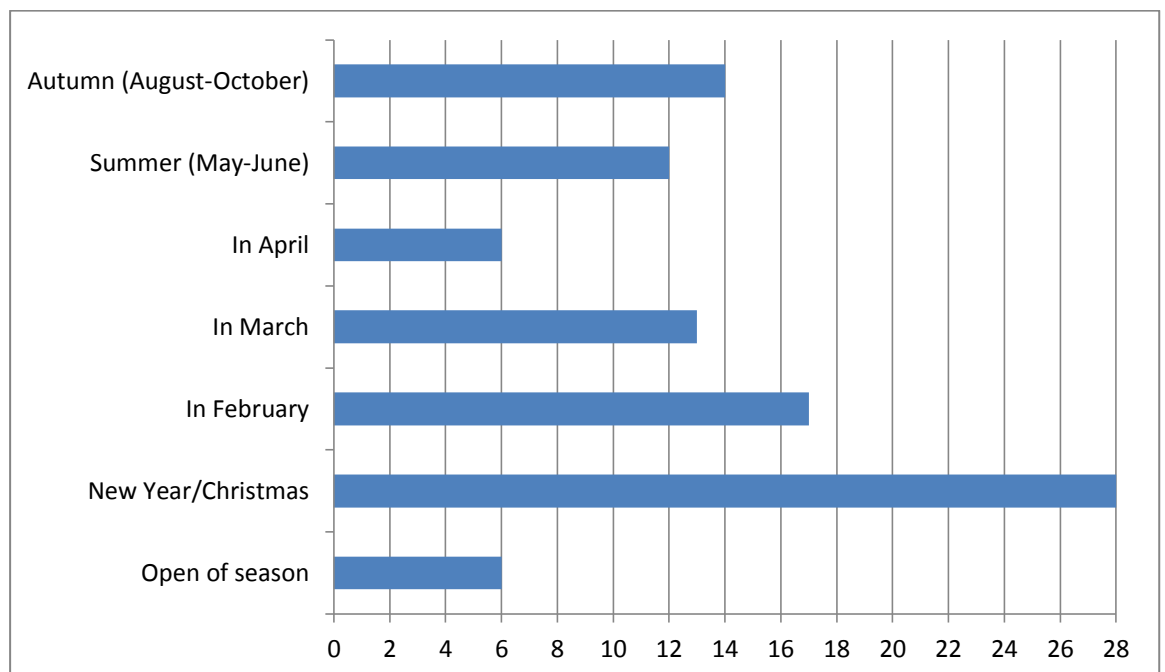


Figure 30. The period of a year when tourists are visiting Vuokatti

There is no need to make a figure about transportation, because 37 respondents (82%) are traveling to Vuokatti by car, only 4 persons by bus, 2 by plane, 1 by train and 1 answered that is traveling with friends.

The important question is about factors which affect tourist's decision making process when he/she is deciding to visit Vuokatti:

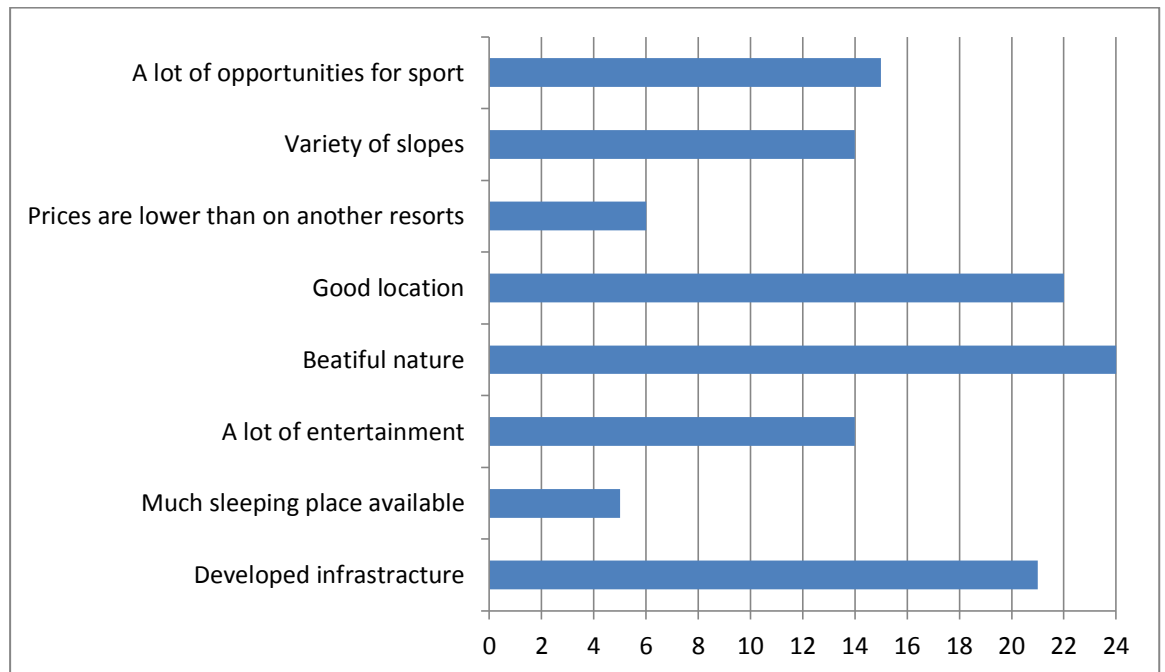


Figure 31. The factors that attract tourists to Vuokatti

As was mentioned previously, the respondents were able to choose a variety of answers and even add from their own. However, most of the participants (43 persons) just pointed out suggested factors. Moreover, there were two persons who add unmentioned and one who do not write anything:

- The Tunnel and the First Snow (Ensinlumilatu)
- Studying of my children

Furthermore, if bethink the service quality model for tourism, mentioned in [chapter 2.2.2](#), without a doubt can be concluded that Vuokatti has good physical environment quality, what also was voiced in a video interview.

Vuokatti provides many different sport activities and a variety of entertainment for the visitors. That is why the variants about slopes, sport and entertainment are in second place of the choices.

Last but not least, two variants about prices and accommodation have the minimum choices. In the year 2015, the price factor plays the core role in Russian tourist' decision making

process, due to high currency exchange rate. The tourist cannot purchase too much and too expensive products and services. An accommodation factor may be caused by overloading of existing ones during holidays what means that people are not able to find a place. All in all, the small amount of responds on these two variants does not mean that customers are dissatisfied. Mostly, it means that Vuokatti has some issues which need to be solved, in order to attract more tourists.

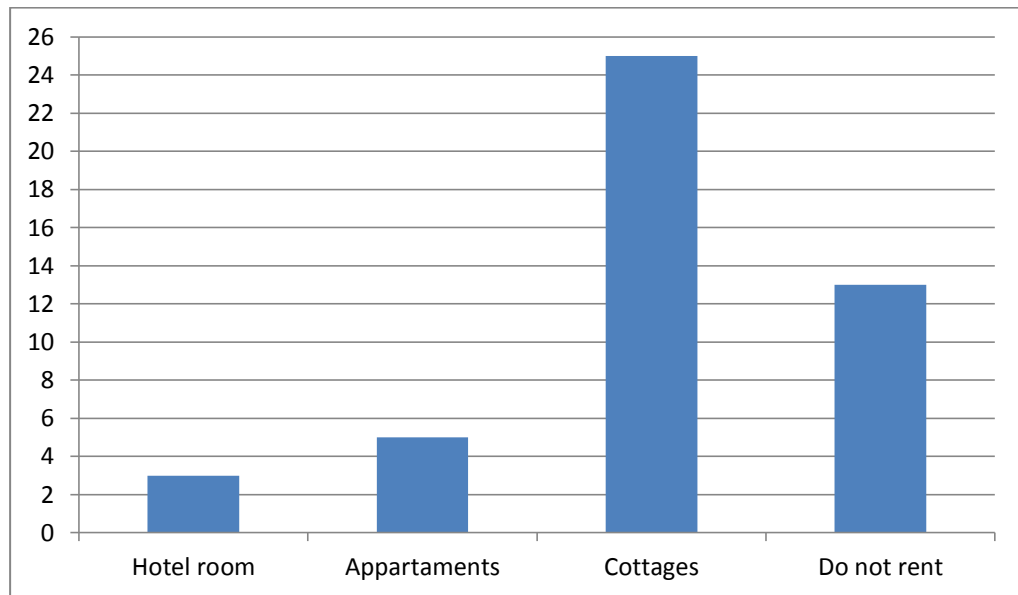


Figure 32. The type of an accommodation which Russians choose in Vuokatti

Almost 54 % of the respondents rent a cottage while visiting Vuokatti. The Russians prefer to travel in Vuokatti in large groups, because it is cheaper, considering accommodation services. “Do not rent” variant means that people when visiting Vuokatti do not have accommodation in Vuokatti, because persons are in transit or have rented accommodation in another location.

Almost 83% (38) of the respondents are satisfied with the quality of service in Vuokatti. 15% (7) of participants consider that the quality can be better as well as 1 respondent do not satisfied with quality at all. Those, who are not satisfied, were able to write the reasons why and the answers are next:

- Sometimes cottages are not in a good condition (Hospitality factor of satisfaction and the issues in ambient condition of Physical Environment Quality).
- In Vuokatti is placed the Russian kid’s camp, during the summer time and tourists cannot enjoy the nature and the silence, due to children scream

The last one issue is interesting, because potentially Vuokatti cannot affect the screaming children. Probably, it means that kids should be located apart from the general tourists, in order not to cause FRUSTRATION.

Considering the fact that many Russians came to Vuokatti with children, the questions about kid's entertainment and Angry Birds Activity Park were asked. The answers are the next:

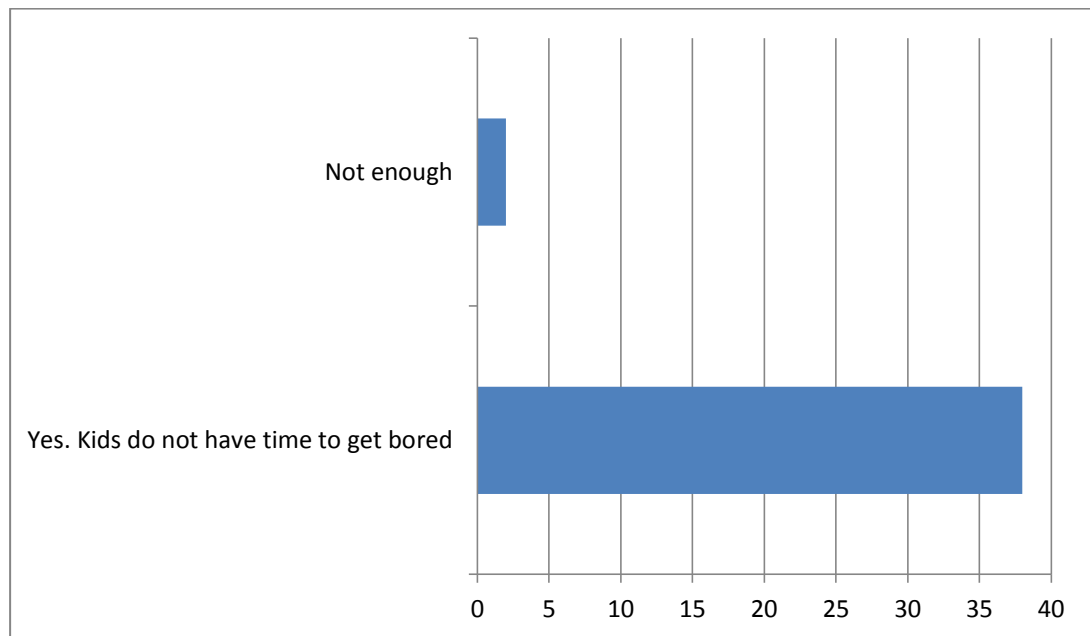


Figure 33. The availability of the entertainment for kids in Vuokatti

In the figure 33, there are only 40 responds because 4 persons do not write anything, 1 has answered “Do not know”, 1 has written: not enough workshops for children and classes for children.

To note about the workshops, the author needs to add, that in January 2015, two Russian girls have made one week work-shop for the Russian kids with activities outside and inside the “Hupila”. The kids and parents were very satisfied.

However, the administration of Vuokatti was not interested in, even do not know about it, and this entertainment was organized by Kolazko Oy. It can be assumed that Vuokatti has Interaction quality issues as well as “Policy” gap in company. There is poor communication between the administration of Vuokatti (the managers) and the service providers (the workers). The workers know what customer want, but managers cannot implement it.



Figure 34. The workshop for the Russian kids in Vuokatti (Vuokatti)

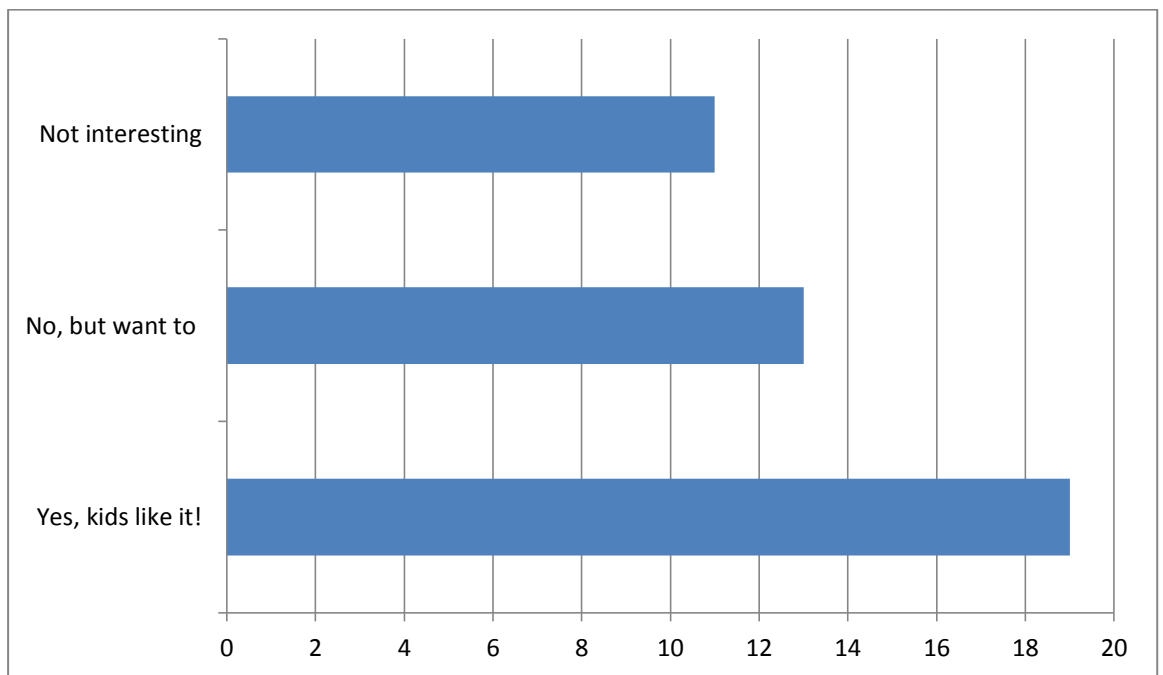


Figure 35. Have the tourists ever visited Angry Birds Park in Vuokatti

Almost 44% of the respondents (19) have visited Angry Birds Park and like it. In addition, 13 persons want to visit it and 11 do not interest in. However, two persons have not answered anything, and one adds that “We do not have small children in family”. All in all, figure 35 indicates that respondents are familiar with the park.

Without a doubt can be said that every visitor of Vuokatti has heard about Holiday Club Katinkulta Spa. The next figure represents the information about the respondents’ attitude to the Kakinkulta:



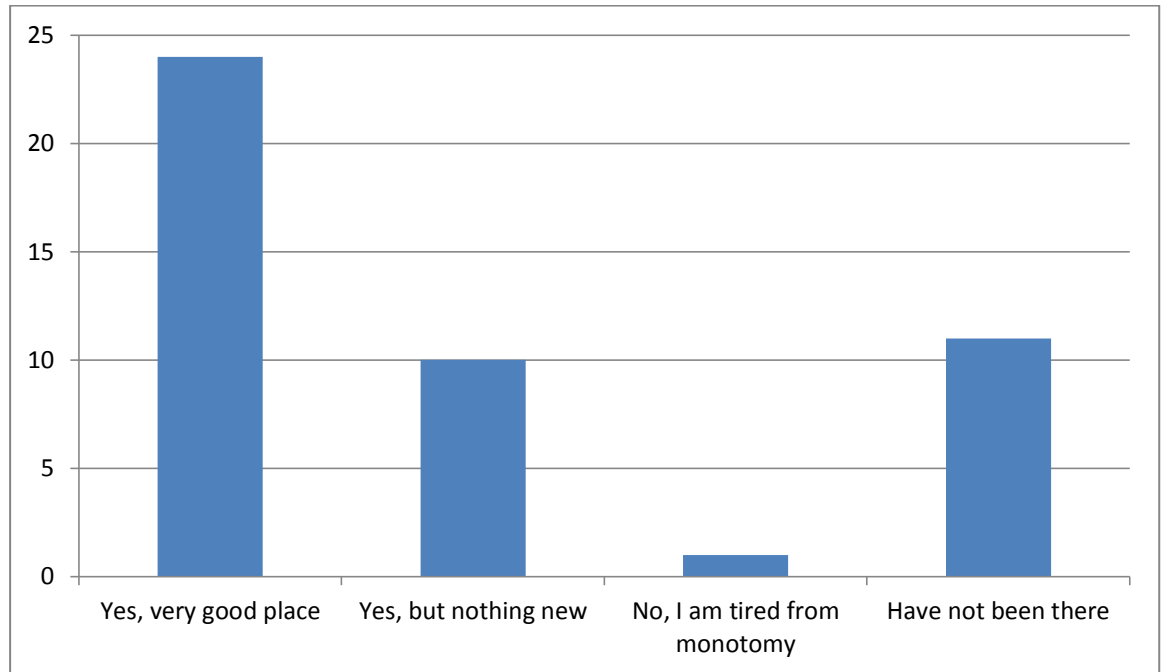


Figure 36. Tourists' attitude to the Spa Katinkulta in Vuokatti

In total, 76 % of the respondents have been in Katinkulta Spa before. Most of the visitors have REVISITED it at least two times – answers 2 and 3 means that people can compare their first visit to the next ones. Probably, the one person will not attend the spa again, because it becomes not attractive, due to unchanging services. It means that the person has BOREDOM AND FRUSTRATION. 10 persons are potential ex-visitors, because of the same issue as the previous person.

In the theoretical part was concluded that the core factor in the tourist decision making process plays “Price” or “Cost of Staying. The figure on the next page represents the findings about the price level in Vuokatti.

As the findings shows, most of the respondents (54%) agreed that the price level is high, but is accepted by the family budget. Only one person has chosen “cheap enough”. What is more important is that nobody agreed with the statement that Vuokatti is the cheapest place. According to the theory, if the price level is high, the tourist will not go in this place. In the situation with Vuokatti, people are REVISITING the resort what indicates that the prices are not too high.



Figure 37. The price level in Vuokatti

In the theory is the chapter about the social media pages of Vuokatti. It was significant to know, from where the respondents receive information about Vuokatti.

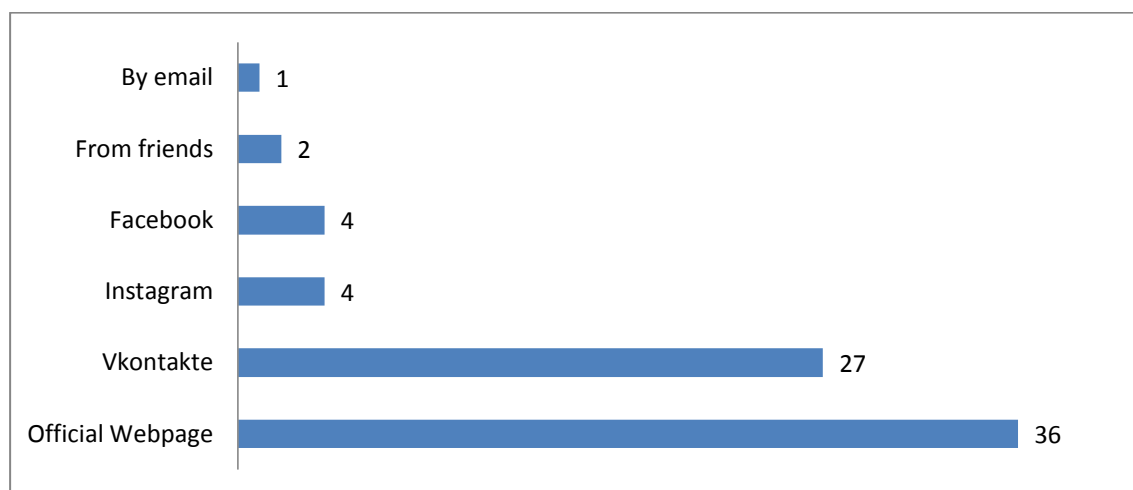


Figure 38. The social media channels of receiving information about Vuokatti.

There were 44 respondents, because the two persons have not answered anything. The answers “by email and from friends” are added by the respondents. The author needs to explain about email channel. Vuokatti use “MailChimp” (an email distribution service) in order to deliver to tourist agencies the information about upcoming events, but not to the private persons. The variant “from friends” proves the theory “satisfied customer is seeking to make long-term relations in order to use the service or product again, recommends it to family, friends or colleagues”.

However, from figure 39 also may be made a conclusion: Vuokatti SHOULD improve communicational channel for Russians. It means that the Russian language posts should be

in Instagram and Facebook. Interesting fact is that 78% of the respondents judged that in Vuokatti enough info on Russian language. The next figure represents the information about which services in Russian should be added:

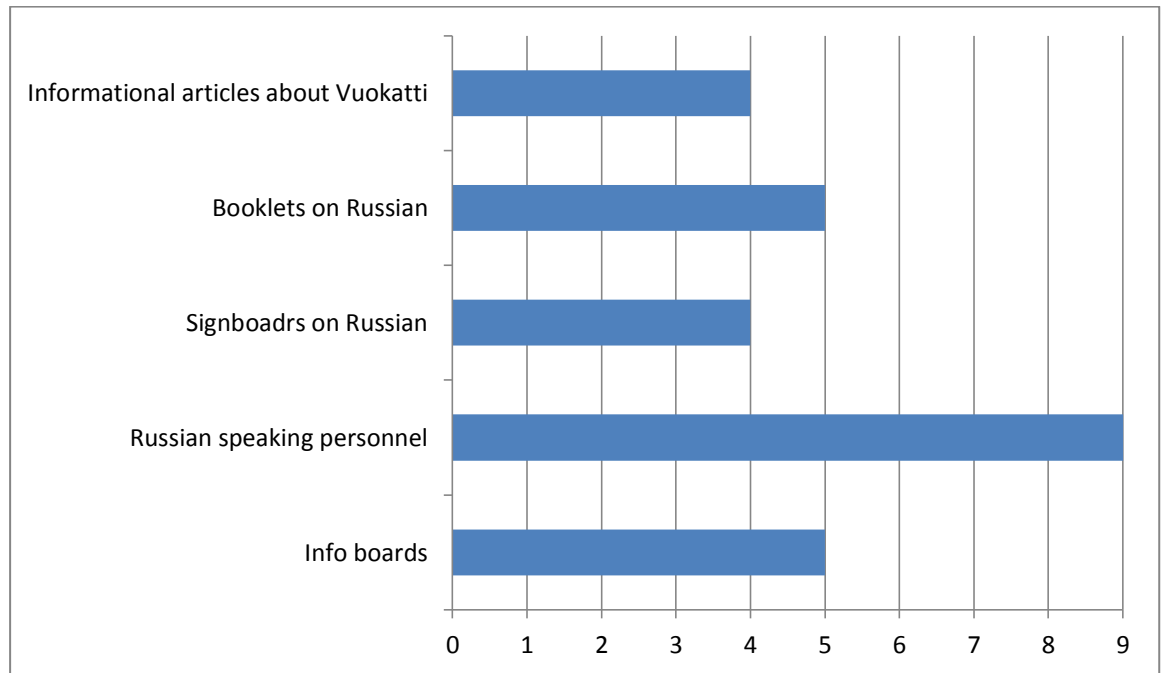


Figure 39. Tourists' desire about the Russian language services in Vuokatti

Only 11 respondents had answered to this question. There were 10 persons who agreed that Vuokatti do not have enough Russian content. What is more significant is that 2 persons, who even agreed, had chosen few answers from figure 39. In addition, one person provides the feedback: "Most of passing offers are only in Finnish". Another problem is the Russian speaking personnel. The author covered information that not all Russian tourists can speak English or Finnish and the language barrier is a significant issue for them.

The penultimate question in the survey was open and respondents were able to write the opinion about problems in Vuokatti. The next list of answers represents the tourists' opinions. However, the viewpoints which are not related to the service of Vuokatti, such as amount of snow, and which do not have suggestion were excluded. Nevertheless, most of the answers are significant for Vuokatti' administration and are divided into the categories:

**Nature of Involvement factor:**

- Special offers for the students
- Night institution, cafes

- To reduce the price of the ticket to Angry Birds Park (19 euros). Also, it would be great to have a special social day when the prices will be lower for some categories of the people
- Work-shops for kids
- Events and competitions for the beginners
- Santa Claus' village. Most of the Russians are visiting Vuokatti during the New Year and they expect to see the traditional mascot
- More pedestrian' routes in winter time . Some Russians like to walk, instead skiing, moreover, walking through beautiful scenery will have a great impact on a person

**Cost of Staying factor:**

- More cost-efficient accommodation
- It could be great if the price for cross-country skiing will be included in the accommodation price
- To reduce the price of the ticket to Angry Birds Park. The same issue as in the previous factor

**Accessibility factor:**

- Bus to Kostomuksha

**Boredom and Frustration factors:**

- Do not place too much hockey players together – it caused frustration, because of their behavior

**The Role of Risk factor:**

- Safety guards on slopes. People will enjoy skiing more, when they will feel themselves in safe.

**Lack of Information factor:**

- Big karaoke – bar. In Break Sokos Hotel and Holiday Club Katinkulta are situated the bars, but probably tourists do not know about these places.
- Ice rink. However, in Vuokatti is the Ice Rink what means that people do not know about it.

**Physical Environment Quality factor:**

- To build a New Spa. The survey results show that the customers are tired of the old Spa
- New ice palace. The old one is small and there cannot be many visitors at one time

- More long slopes
- New slopes
- Small cozy cafes

**Interaction Quality factor:**

- More trainers on the slopes
- Russian speaking personnel

Finally, the author wants to represent the figure with a total satisfaction level of tourists. The following numbers mean: 0 - Very poor, will not be back; 1- Poor; 2 – Not so poor, maybe will be back; 3- Satisfied; 4 – Cool; 5 – Very cool, will be back. The findings are the next:

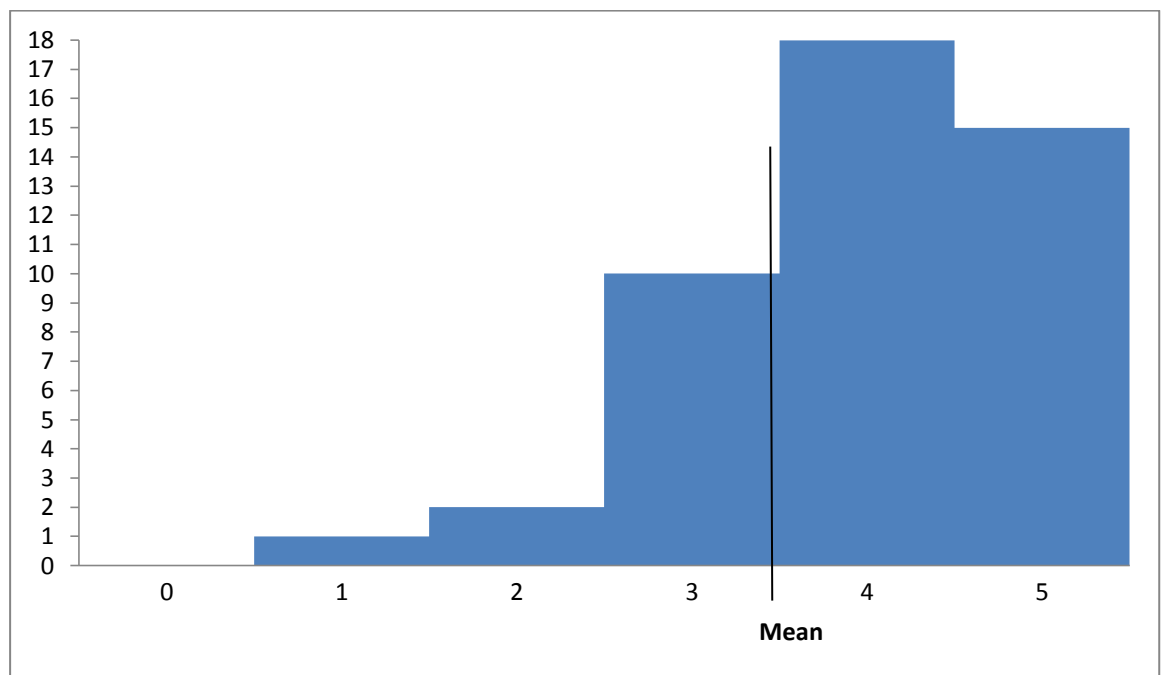


Figure 40. The general level of Russian customers' satisfaction in Vuokatti

In this figure, the mode equals to 4 (the bigger column), the median also equal to 4 and the mean is 3,95. These numbers prove that in general, the respondents from the research are satisfied of Vuokatti. Moreover, most of the people will REVISIT the resort in the future. The significant point is that nobody has chosen "0" – what means that Vuokatti is satisfying every single person.

## 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Conclusions

The thesis was completed as the research for the Vuokatti administration of the Russian tourists' customer satisfaction. The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the level of Russian customers' satisfaction after they have visited Vuokatti. In addition, to figure out what can be improved in the resort. The findings will be presented to Pohjolan Mylly, a company which advertises and make marketing for Vuokatti. Moreover, through the research the problems of Vuokatti were identified.

A face-to-face interview have provided to the author the great opportunity to hear in "live" and record feedbacks from the tourists in Vuokatti. The author had evaluated the body language and the person's behaviour during the meeting. It gave to the author a confidence that these persons are telling the truth. Moreover, the consent of a person to record the interview means that tourists want to help to the resort in developing. The visitors are sharing information about their expectations from Vuokatti for the future.

The questionnaire provides more knowledge about customers' wishes and desires, negative or positive experience, as well as indicating existing issues from the Russian tourist point of view. It was discovered that principal visitors of Vuokatti are families with kids and people with the age from 21 to 49. Most of the respondents have stable income, but people think that prices in Vuokatti are high, but approachable for the family budget. Moreover, Russians prefer to visit Vuokatti during the winter season, but they also revisit the resort around the year. However, due to poor economic situation in Russia, some of the customers decided not to go in Vuokatti anymore. Vuokatti attracts tourists because of the nature and location, developed infrastructure and a variety of entertainment and opportunities for the leisure time. It means, that Vuokatti is offered everything tourist need. Vuokatti has enough entertainment for kids, such as Angry Birds Activity Park, the free slopes for children, "Hupila" house.

However, in addition to the positive points, Vuokatti has issues in providing the service. The following list is a summary of the problems from the interviews and the survey.

**Nature of Involvement factor:**

- Special offers for the students
- Night institution, cafes
- To reduce the price of the ticket to Angry Birds Park (19 euros). Also, it would be great to have a special social day when the prices will be lower for some categories of the people
- Workshops for kids
- Events and competitions for the beginners
- Santa Claus' village. Most of the Russians are visiting Vuokatti during the New Year and they expect to see the traditional mascot
- More pedestrian' routes in winter time . Some Russians like to walk, instead skiing, moreover, walking through beautiful scenery will have a great impact on a person
- Rare or exotic activity

**Cost of Staying factor:**

- More cost-efficient accommodation
- It could be great if the price for cross-country skiing will be included in the accommodation price
- To reduce the price of the ticket to Angry Birds Park. The same issue as in the previous factor
- The price level is high

**Accessibility factor:**

- Bus to Kostomuksha
- Inconsistency in the work of the lifts and the slopes

**Boredom and Frustration factors:**

- Do not place too much hockey players together – it caused frustration, because of their behavior
- Do not place kids camp near the tourists
- Unchanging Spa Katinkulta

**The Role of Risk factor:**

- Safety guards on slopes. People will enjoy skiing more, when they will feel themselves in safe.

**Lack of Information factor:**

- Big karaoke – bar. In Break Sokos Hotel and Holiday Club Katinkulta are situated the bars, but probably tourists do not know about these places.
- Ice rink. However, in Vuokatti is the Ice Rink what means that people do not know about it.

**Physical Environment Quality factor:**

- To build a New Spa. The survey results show that the customers are tired of the old Spa
- New ice palace. The old one is small and there cannot be many visitors at one time
- More long slopes
- New slopes
- Small cozy cafes
- Dancing hall
- Sometimes cottages are not in a good condition

**Interaction Quality factor:**

- More Russian language content inside and outside the buildings
- Russian speaking personnel

**Outcome Quality factor:**

- The social media profiles do not have enough information on Russian language

This entire list will help to the administration of Vuokatti to improve the image of the resort by concentrating on the nature of the problems. Moreover, the suggestions will be provided in the next chapter by the author.

All in all, the respondents are SATISFIED with Vuokatti. According to the theory of the customer satisfaction in tourism, the factor that people are REVISITING Vuokatti many times is the crucial indicator that the customers are SATISFIED.

## 7.2 Recommendations

Through the interviews and the survey was detected that even if the customers are satisfied, not all of their expectations are met. During the analysis, the problems were combined into the groups by the nature of the factor.



**The Nature of Involvement factor** can be solved by the several steps. First of all, during the New Year holidays, Vuokatti can arrange a meeting with Russian Santa Claus in “Hupila” house. Everything is needed is a small advertising campaign of the event and prepared screenplay and actors. Secondly, in the same “Hupila” house Vuokatti may arrange the workshops for the kids with Russian speaking animators. Vuokatti should carefully think about the pricing policy and to create the different price offers for the students, pensioners, working people and families with kids. An adopted pricing policy will attract new and existing customers, because they will be able to calculate the **cost of staying** and to compare it to the other resorts in Finland. Moreover, Vuokatti should provide different events and competitions for the tourists from various social groups.

To solve the **Physical Environment Quality factor**, Vuokatti may build a house where will be situated the dancing hall, a karaoke bar. In the winter time there also can be arranged a Santa Claus house. Such kind of investment from Vuokatti will attract more customers. In addition, a new big ice skating arena can be built. For example in Helsinki, the ice arena is used for the musical performances what Vuokatti also can fulfill.

**Boredom and Frustration factor** can be resolved by placing the huge group of kids or sportsmen apart from the other tourists. However, this problem depends on the education in the family, but not on the location or activities. Holiday Club Katinkulta should think about the development of the Spa, in order to attract those customers who already do not visit it, due to the monotony. Of course, it is an expensive and the long-term project, but may be profitable.

**Interaction Quality and Outcome factors** are the core problems which should be solved. It is including not only the personnel issue, but also the accessibility of information about the resort. Vuokatti should provide info desks into three languages – Russian, English and Finnish, as well as use these languages in each social media profile. Moreover, the visual content in Russian language also should be during the year seasons, such as brochures, signs, pointer, etc. Vuokatti should print brochures which tourist may use as a guideline in any situation with the information about the companies, services and municipal places. In addition, Vuokatti should have the Russian speaking personnel in every single company which is listed in these brochures. During the seasons, Vuokatti can attract Russian students from Kajaani to work and help the tourists, if it is needed.

Last but not least, Vuokatti should take care about existing activities, such as the slopes, cross-country skiing routes, because the customers are satisfied of the mentioned activities and do not expect that it may become worse. The improvement of the existing slopes also will have a positive impact on the tourists. Moreover, the working hours of the lifts should be the same as of the slopes.

All in all, the aim of the thesis was reached. It was researched that the survey's and the interviews' respondents are SATISFIED. The problems were identified and the suggestions are submitted.

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## APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH

This survey is intended for those who have already visited the ski resort Vuokatti. It will not take from you much time and effort. All you need is to choose the proposed answers or write them by yourself. The survey is anonymous and will be used as a study for a graduate student at the University of Applied Sciences in Kajaani. In the future, the results of this survey can help to improve the ski resort Vuokatti, based on data obtained from the resort guests. Thanks for answers!

**1. Your gender**

- Male
- Female

**2. Your age**

- 18-20
- 21-35
- 36-49
- 50-63
- 64 and older

**3. Your occupation**

- Student
- Working
- Entrepreneur
- Pensioner
- Workless

**4. The level of income**

- No income
- Less than 20000 rubles
- 21000-40000
- 41000-60000
- 61000-80000
- 81000-99000
- 100000 and more

**5. Family**

- No children
- 1 children
- 2-3 children

- More than 3 children

**6. Place of living**

- Moscow and Moscow region
- Saint-Petersburg and Leningrad region
- Petrozavodsk
- Kostamuksha
- Other (able to write)

**7. Have you visited Vuokatti?**

- Yes
- No

**8. How often You visit Vuokatti?**

- Once a year
- Twice a year
- More than 2 times
- Visited before
- Other (able to write)

**9. How much times do You were in Vuokatti?**

- 1
- 2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9-10
- 11 and more
- Other (able to write)

**10. In which period of year You are visiting Vuokatti?**

- Able to choose a few answers
- Opening season
- New Year/ Christmas
- In February
- In march
- In April
- Summer (may-june)
- Autumn (august-october)

**11. How do you get to Vuokatti?**

- By personal car
- By bus/rent a bus
- By train
- By plane
- Other (able to write)

**12. Why do you choose Vuokatti?**

- Able to choose a few answers
- Developed infrastructure
- There is always availability of sleeping places
- I like that Vuokatti has a lot of entertainment
- Beautiful nature
- Good location
- Prices in Vuokatti are lower than on another skiing resorts
- I like the variety of slopes
- A lot of opportunities for sport
- Other (able to write)

**13. Which type of accommodation do You choose, when visiting Vuokatti?**

- Hotel room
- Rent an appartaments
- Rent a cottage
- Do not rent, because just travel through
- Other (able to write)

**14. Are You satisfied with Vuokatti's services?**

- Yes, fully satisfied
- Yes, but can be better
- Not satisfied in full
- Not satisfied at all

**15. If You are not satisfied fully or not satisfied at all, why?**

Open question

**16. Is it enough entertainment for children in Vuokatti**

- Yes. There is no time for children to be bored
- No, not enough, should be more (what?)

**17. Have You visited Angry Birds Park?**

- Yes, kids were happy!

- No, but would like to visit
- No, I am against such places (please write why?)
- Do not interest

**18. Do you like Katinkulta Spa?**

- Yes, very good place
- Yes, but there is nothing new
- No, tired of monotony
- No, I have not been there

**19. Are prices in Vuokatti reasonable?**

- It is very expensive!
- Relatively expensive, but I can afford to buy smt
- Relatively low prices
- Low prices, I can afford to buy many
- Cheap enough
- Very cheap!

**20. Where do you get info about Vuokatti?**

- Official website
- Vkontakt
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Other (able to write)

**21. Is it enough in Vuokatti information on Russian language?**

- Yes
- No

**22. If You had answered “No”, what exactly there is not enough on Russian language?**

- Info tables
- Russian speaking personal
- Russian language signboard
- Magazines about Vuokatti
- Informational articles about Vuokatti
- Other (able to write)

**23. Do Vuokatti needs something new?**

Open question

**24. What is your general satisfaction level from visiting Vuokatti?**

- 0 – Very poor, will not be back
- 1 – Poor
- 2 – Not so poor, maybe will be back
- 3- Satisfied
- 4 – Cool
- 5 – Very cool, will be back!

## APPENDIX 2. ORIGINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Данный опрос предназначен для тех, кто уже посещал горнолыжный курорт Вуокатти (Vuokatti). Он не займет у Вас много времени и сил. Все, что Вам нужно, это выбрать предложенные варианты ответов или написать их самим. Данный опрос является анонимным и будет использован в качестве исследования для дипломной работы студента из Университета Прикладных Наук г. Каяни. В будущем, результаты данного опроса могут помочь в улучшении горнолыжного курорта Вуокатти (Vuokatti), на основе полученных данных от гостей курорта. Спасибо за ответы!

**\* Обязательно**

**Ваш пол \***

- Мужской
- Женский

**Ваш Возраст \***

- 18 - 20
- 21 - 35
- 36 - 49
- 50 - 63
- 64 и старше

**Род занятий**

- Студент
- Работаю
- Частный предприниматель
- Пенсионер
- Безработный

**Уровень дохода**

- Нет дохода
- Менее 20 000 рублей
- 21 000 - 40 000
- 41 000 - 60 000
- 61 000 - 80 000
- 81 000 - 99 000
- 100 000 и более

**Размер семьи**

- Нет детей
- Один ребенок
- 2-3 детей
- Больше трех детей

**Место проживания**

- Москва и Московская область
- Санкт - Петербург и Ленинградская область
- Петрозаводск
- Костомукша
- Другое:

**Посещали ли Вы Вуокатти? \***

- Да
- Нет

**Как часто Вы посещаете Вуокатти? \***

- Раз в год
- Два раза в год
- Более 2-х раз в год
- Посещал раньше
- Другое:

**Сколько раз Вы были в Вуокатти? \***

- 1 раз
- 2 раза
- 3 - 4 раза
- 5 - 6 раз
- 7 - 8 раз
- 9 - 10 раз
- 11 и более
- Другое:

**В какое время Вы посещаете Вуокатти?**

Можно выбрать несколько вариантов ответов, если Вы посещаете Вуокатти более одного раза в год

- Открытие сезона
- Новогодние праздники/Рождество
- В феврале
- В марте
- В апреле
- Летом (май - июль)
- Осень (август - октябрь)

**Каким способом Вы добираетесь до Вуокатти?**

- На собственном авто
- На автобусе\снимаю автобус



- На поезде
- На самолете
- Другое:

### Почему Вы выбрали именно Вуокатти?

Можно выбрать несколько вариантов ответов

- Развитая инфраструктура
- Всегда есть наличие свободных спальных мест
- Мне нравится, что в Вуокатти есть много развлечений
- Красивая природа
- Удобное местоположение
- Цены в Вуокатти ниже, чем на других горнолыжных курортах
- Мне нравятся склоны и их разновидность
- Много возможностей для спорта
- Другое:

### Какой вид размещения Вы выбираете, при посещении Вуокатти? \*

Укажите название отеля или другого места, где вы проживаете на время отдыха

- Номер в отеле
- Снимаю апартаменты
- Снимаю коттедж
- Бываю проездом, ничего не снимаю
- Другое:

### Удовлетворены ли Вы качеством обслуживания в Вуокатти? \*

- Да, полностью устраивает
- Да, но хотелось бы лучше
- Не полностью удовлетворен
- Не удовлетворен вообще

Если вы не удовлетворены или удовлетворены не полностью, в чем причина?

### Достаточно ли в Вуокатти развлечений для детей?

- Да. Детям некогда скучать!
- Не достаточно, хотелось бы больше (укажите что, в следующей графе)
- Другое:

### Посещали ли Вы Angry Birds Park?

- Да, детишкам понравилось!

- Нет, но хочу посетить
- Нет, категорически против такого парка (укажите почему в следующей графе)
- Не интересует
- Другое:

#### Понравился ли Вам бассейн Katinkulta?

- Да, очень хорошее место
- Да, но нет ничего нового
- Нет, надоело однообразие
- Не был в этом бассейне

#### Насколько в Вуокатти приемлимые цены?

- Все очень дорого!
- Относительно дорого, но я могу кое-что себе позволить
- Сравнительно невысокие цены
- Невысокие цены, я многое могу себе позволить
- Достаточно дешево
- Очень дешево!

#### Где Вы получаете информацию о Вуокатти?

Можно выбрать несколько вариантов ответов

- На официальном сайте
- В группе ВКонтакте
- В Instagram
- В Facebook
- Другое:

#### Хватает ли в Вуокатти информации на русском языке?

- Да
- Нет

#### Если Вы ответили "Нет", то какой именно информации на русском языке Вам не хватает?

Можно выбрать несколько вариантов ответов

- Информационных табло
- Русско-говорящего персонала
- Вывесок на русском языке
- Буклетов по Вуокатти
- Информационных статей по Вуокатти
- Другое:

#### Нужно ли в Вуокатти что-нибудь новое? \*

Укажите, как вы считаете, чего не хватает на горнолыжном курорте?

**Укажите Ваш общий уровень удовлетворения от посещения Вуокатти \***

0 1 2 3 4 5

---

Совсем не устроило,  
больше не приеду



Полностью все устрои-  
ло, вернусь еще раз!

APPENDIX 3. QUESTIONS FOR THE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

1. Why do you choose Vuokatti to spend your holiday?
2. Are you satisfied with its services?
3. How long do you visit Vuokatti?
4. What is not good in Vuokatti?
5. What should be improved in Vuokatti?
6. Do you want to see something new in Vuokatti? If yes, what?

APPENDIX 4. THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS  
WITH THE RUSSIAN TOURISTS

1. Meeting with customers, report 1. Monday. Petrozavodsk.

Today was a meeting with the customers from Petrozavodsk, Russia. They are living in Holiday Club Katinkulta.

1. “Vuokatti is the place where is everything we need: skies, mountain skies, dogs, snow, clearness, spa”.
2. “We very like this place. Mostly because of the accommodation. We are thinking that in Vuokatti is the best accommodation in Finland. We were everywhere in Finland, but our point of view is that Katinkulta is the best. Tennis, aqua park and another activities are in the same building. We very like sport and this is the best place for it”.
3. “The first time we came here was the year 1998. Since that time we are visiting Vuokatti, sometimes even a few times in a year”.
4. “We like sports, but also we like dancing. Earlier, there was a dance club with the DJ and people were dancing in the evening. Now, there is only a karaoke. We wish that on Fridays and Saturdays there can be a dancing in Katinkulta”.
5. “I cannot find anything what can be improved. Everything is very cool”.
6. “Vuokatti now have all. However, we really want that the nature will be the same. If something will be built in here, please keep in mind that one of the asset of Vuokatti is the perfect nature. It should be in the same condition”.

This is the translation from the video interview. However, I was just talking with the customers. For my own interest, I asked about could it be interesting for them, if in Vuokatti will be a Ded Moroz place (Russian Santa Claus) and they answered – Yes. And it will be very popular. However, it should be the REAL Russian Santa Claus – with his granddaughter. If they will come to the customers it will be much more cool and Russians will pay for that for sure.

The next opinion, is as example of cross-country skiing somewhere in the north (near Murmansk and Rovaniemi). So, the main point was that, there are different activities along the ski path: place, where people can take a rest and eat blini with the hot tea, the snow hotel and the warn house. So, if in Vuokatti will be something similar and EXOTIC, people will

come here. Something EXOTIC is what Vuokatti needs. Because EXOTIC attracts. No matter how much it cost, it is unusual and exist nowhere else.

So, all in all, the customers prefer Vuokatti to the other places because of possibility to spend holidays in many ways.

## 2. Meeting with customer report 2. Wednesday. Petrozavodsk

Today was a meeting with customer from Petrozavodsk, Russia. She is leaving not in Vuokatti, but in Jormua. I met her on slopes and we decided to talk outside, it was not cold.

1. Vuokatti is a wonderful year-round resort! Fresh air, cozy atmosphere, friendly staff, swimming pools and saunas for every taste, reasonable prices. Plus, convenient location. That is why, for the third I spend their holidays here.
2. Completely satisfied. Service on a high level
3. In Vuokatti, I was just 3 times in winter: 2013, 2014 and in current 2015. We came with my boyfriend for a day in the water park Holiday Club Katinkulta. Just visited the amusement park Angry Birds. It was so cool!
4. In my opinion everything is fine
5. No, I think Vuokatti has everything needed for the great holidays!

This is the translation from the video interview. Customer happy and satisfied.

## 3. Meeting with customers, report 3. Friday. Saint-Petersburg

Today was a meeting with customers from Saint-Petersburg. It was interesting, that they started to answer immediately I turn on the camera, I even do not ask questions.

- We are spending the holiday in Vuokatti not for the first time; we have been here from year 2008. This year, we have placed in VuokattiMaa! Very satisfied! The cozy atmosphere, friendly and helpful staff in cottages, everything has made a spectacular vacation! I would like to express special thanks to all of those, who is involved in the preparation of cross-country ski. Thank you very much! Trails were in excellent condition. Every day of 30 km. jogging brought unheard of fun! Without doubt, next year will come to Vuokatti again and will try to bring friends.

This is the translation from the video interview. Customers were very happy, and during the recording I can see the smile on their faces. I have asked them, do Vuokatti needs something new, the answer was no, because Vuokatti has enough activities.

4. Meeting with customers, report 4. Monday. Staraya Russa (Novgorod region)

Today was a meeting with customers from Staraya Russa – a city in Novgorod region. It was group of 10 persons, but I had talked to one female. They were in Vuokatti for the first time during august of 2015. In this moment I just ask question – what can you say about Vuokatti?

- We are living in Vuokatti Sport Institute. This is our first time in Vuokatti. We are come here with our friends. Five days with my children and friends were awesome! We were fishing, went to mushrooms in forest. In addition, we had enjoyed beautiful nature, cleanness of air and water, friendly inhabitants. I loved it. The only small inconvenience is the language barrier - it is necessary to know English, or you may be in little troubles. Very grateful to the residents of Vuokatti and Finland as a whole! We are planning to back in Vuokatti on New Year. And again, thanks to the country for its fresh air, clear water, for well-conditioned roads and kind-hearted people. Great holidays in great country.

This is the translation from the video interview. Customers are happy and satisfied for the first time. However, I have not asked 5 questions, because visitors do not have experienced before of this place.

5. Meeting with customer report 5. Monday. Saint-Petersburg

Today I had meeting with customers from Saint-Peterburg. It seems to be, that most of customers are from Saint-Petersburg. These customers are staying in Kolazko cottages, so we met there and I started to ask questions.

1. Vuokatti is a perfect place for our holidays! We were here in this January, and now back in March. We are very happy staying in Vuokatti
2. Yes, we are satisfied, but, however, during skiing we had face with few issues:

Why chairlifts are closed at 18.30 while the cash desk sells ski passes on skiing from 17.00 to 19.00? Those, who have these ski passes, had not used their paid 30 minutes of skiing. Second, fence around the children's room and the figures for the detour to the slope of child (free) are removed all in 18.00, despite the fact that formally the resort is open until 19.00.

3. We are visiting Vuokatti from year 2008, and more than one time in year. Right now, we are here in second time in 2015, and are planning to back on New Year.
4. I have already mentioned the issues we faced this year. But I need to mention, that despite on problems, we have enjoyed our holidays. It is cool, that Vuokatti continue to pay attention to customers and I would like to note that: there is a now free child' slope; very good instructors; more Russian-speaking personnel; excellent "Hupila" house.
5. Vuokatti do not needs something new, but important to maintain existing services on perfect level

This is the translation from the video interview. It was the very positive and interesting meeting. It was a family, but I have talked to the one person – female. They had wish me good luck and also added that this is very good job – to asked customers about their opinion, what means that Vuokatti taking care about tourists.

6. Meeting customer report 6. Thursday. Saint-Petersburg.

I have met this customer today during recording process of video advertising of "Hupila". I do not ask questions, but tourist just told everything.

- We started to visit Vuokatti from the year 2000. My children were grown up there, as well as my grandchildren. We like Vuokatti deliriously. We came in Vuokatti with our friends and sometimes our team can have more than 30 persons! We like this place very much, because Vuokatti is the place for the winter holidays. We were in Alps and in different countries, even in Turkey, but Vuokatti attracts us every single year. We are happy that Vuokatti is developing every year: for kids, Vuokatti has a lot of different entertainment; moreover, these entertainments are helping children to evolve. Very cool is that now in Vuokatti is "Hupila" where we can change clothes or keep kid warm. It is cool to see old faces in cafeterias, perfect conditions



in cottages. Moreover, it is cool that there is a kid' animators, which can take children from parents and keep them safe. Thank you very much!

This is the translation from the video interview. I suppose that everything was covered by the tourist. I do not have anything to add.

## APPENDIX 5. SPSS TABLES

**Gender \* Age Crosstabulation**

Count

		Age				Total
		18-20	21-35	36-49	50-63	
Gender	Male	3	6	5	1	15
	Female	6	8	11	6	31
Total		9	14	16	7	46

**Frequency Tables****How much times the respondents visit Vuokatti**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once in a year	16	34,8	34,8	34,8
	Twice in a year	9	19,6	19,6	54,3
	More than 2 times in a year	10	21,7	21,7	76,1
	Visited before	8	17,4	17,4	93,5
	Other	3	6,5	6,5	100,0
Total		46	100,0	100,0	

**Amount of times the respondents were in Vuokatti**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	8,7	8,9	8,9
	2	3	6,5	6,7	15,6
	3-4	11	23,9	24,4	40,0
	5-6	5	10,9	11,1	51,1
	7-8	4	8,7	8,9	60,0
	9-10	4	8,7	8,9	68,9
	11>	14	30,4	31,1	100,0
Total		45	97,8	100,0	
Missing	System	1	2,2		
Total		46	100,0		

**How the respondents are travelling to Vuokatti**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid By own car	37	80,4	80,4	80,4
By bus	4	8,7	8,7	89,1
By train	1	2,2	2,2	91,3
By plane	2	4,3	4,3	95,7
Other	2	4,3	4,3	100,0
Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The type of accommodation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Hotel room	3	6,5	6,5	6,5
An apartments	5	10,9	10,9	17,4
Cottages	25	54,3	54,3	71,7
Do not rent	13	28,3	28,3	100,0
Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The satisfaction from the services**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes, in full	38	82,6	82,6	82,6
Yes, but may be better	7	15,2	15,2	97,8
Not in full	1	2,2	2,2	100,0
Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**Have the respondents visited Angry Birds Activity Park**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	4,3	4,3	4,3
Yes, kids like it	21	45,7	45,7	50,0
No, but want to	13	28,3	28,3	78,3
No, do not interest	10	21,7	21,7	100,0
Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The satisfaction level from Spa Katinkulta**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, very good place	24	52,2	52,2	52,2
	Yes, but nothing new	10	21,7	21,7	73,9
	No, do not like monotony	1	2,2	2,2	76,1
	Have not been there	11	23,9	23,9	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The price level in Vuokatti**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Everything is expensive	5	10,9	10,9	10,9
	Expensive, but can purchase smt	25	54,3	54,3	65,2
	not very high	15	32,6	32,6	97,8
	cheap enough	1	2,2	2,2	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The general level of satisfaction**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	2,2	2,2	2,2
	2	2	4,3	4,3	6,5
	3	10	21,7	21,7	28,3
	4	18	39,1	39,1	67,4
	5	15	32,6	32,6	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The respondents' occupation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Entrepreneur	9	19,6	19,6	19,6
	No working	1	2,2	2,2	21,7
	Pensioner	4	8,7	8,7	30,4
	Student	16	34,8	34,8	65,2
	Working	16	34,8	34,8	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The respondents' income**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21000-40000	10	21,7	21,7	21,7
	0	12	26,1	26,1	47,8
	41000-60000	8	17,4	17,4	65,2
	61000-80000	4	8,7	8,7	73,9
	100000>	5	10,9	10,9	84,8
	<20000	7	15,2	15,2	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The respondents' size of family**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No children	25	54,3	54,3	54,3
	One children	9	19,6	19,6	73,9
	2-3 children	11	23,9	23,9	97,8
	More than 3 children	1	2,2	2,2	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

**The respondents' city**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moscow and Region	6	13,0	13,0	13,0
	Saint-Petersburg and Region	12	26,1	26,1	39,1
	Petrozavodsk	11	23,9	23,9	63,0
	Kostomuksha	8	17,4	17,4	80,4
	Other	9	19,6	19,6	100,0
	Total	46	100,0	100,0	

## Chi-Square and Contingency Coefficient

### The respondents income \* The price level in Vuokatti

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,907 <sup>a</sup>	15	,826
Likelihood Ratio	11,122	15	,744
N of Valid Cases	46		

a. 22 cells (91,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,09.

#### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	,421	,826
N of Valid Cases		46	

### The general level of satisfaction \* Total amount of visits to Vuokatti

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30,564 <sup>a</sup>	24	,167
Likelihood Ratio	26,500	24	,328
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,003	1	,317
N of Valid Cases	45		

a. 34 cells (97,1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,07.

#### Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	,636	,167
N of Valid Cases		45	