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Developing the Wolf Cave as a Tourism Attraction

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ABSTRACT

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The object of the thesis was to research the current situation of the Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction and customer satisfaction. Another aim was to detect the opportunities of developing the Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction.

Theory part of the thesis is constructed of areas of tourism and customer service that are relevant for the survey. In addition, a description of the Wolf Cave, its surrounding areas and Finland as a tourism destination were presented. The customer satisfaction survey was executed in summer 2009 by using a quantitative research method.

The results revealed defects in the current product. In addition, the results revealed new views of the product and need for development. The attraction in its current form has various defects and no larger plans should be implemented before these defects have been solved.

Index Words	Tourism, Culture Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Nature Tourism, Customer Satisfaction, Quality
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VAASAN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Degree Programme of Hotel and Restaurant Business and Tourism Management

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	Maria Hautaviita
Opinnäytetyön nimi	Susiluolan kehittäminen matkailukohteena
Vuosi	2010
Kieli	Englanti
Sivumäärä	56 + 3 liitettä
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Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on kartoittaa Susiluolan nykytilanne matkailukohteena sekä tutkia nykyisen asiakaskunnan asiakastytyväisyyttä. Tarkoitus on myös selvittää Susiluolan kehittämisen mahdollisuuksia matkailukohteena.

Teoriaosuus koostuu matkailun ja asiakaspalvelun eri osa-alueista jotka ovat relevantteja tutkimuksen kannalta, Suomesta matkailukohteena sekä Susiluolan ja sen ympäristön esittelystä. Tutkimus toteutettiin kesällä 2009 kvantitatiivista menetelmää hyödyntäen selvittämällä asiakastytyväisyyttä turistikohteissa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset paljastivat epäkohtia matkailukohteessa sen nykyisessä muodossaan sekä kohteen kehittämistarpeen. Tulokset toivat uusia näkemyksiä sekä itse kohteesta että sen kehittämisestä. Tutkimustuloksista voidaan päätellä että kohteessa nyky muodossaan on vielä kehitettävää eikä suurempia suunnitelmia kannata lähteä toteuttamaan ennen kuin nämä epäkohdat on selvitetty.

Asiasanat	Matkailu, kulttuurimatkailu, kulttuuriperintömatkailu, luontomatkailu, asiakastytyväisyys, laatu
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1. Introduction

Nature has been one of the main attractions in the Nordic regions. Wide variety of ecosystems, habitats and landscape types including all attributes of the Nordic nature form the attractive image of the Nordic wilderness. Nature-based tourism and related forms, such as adventure tourism and ecotourism, is a growing trend internationally. The potential of nature-based tourism has raised hopes in the peripheral and rural areas of the Nordic countries for regional development. (Hall, Müller & Saarinen 2009: 130-131, 150)

In addition to nature-based tourism, also cultural tourism has grown. The growth has been stimulated by rising demand; rising education level enables more people to access culture while the effects of globalization arouse more interest in distant cultures. (Richards 2007: 2)

Both of these forms of tourism are significantly connected to developing the Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction. The Wolf Cave is an archaeological site located at the border of Kristiinankaupunki and Karijoki in Ostrobothnia. When the Wolf Cave was discovered, two municipalities have been planning how it could be used for tourism purposes and does it have potential to revive tourism in the area. Despite of this no further customer satisfaction researches has been conducted. The motivation to study the potential of the Wolf Cave for touristic purposes lies behind personal interest of the writer of this thesis.

1.1 Aim of the study

The main objective is to find out what tourists think about the present product, what they are expecting when they arrive and how did the product fulfill these expectations after visiting the attraction. The objective of this study is to research the possibilities of the Wolf Cave from the aspect of tourism. More detailed questions will be asked about the exhibitions of the Wolf Cave and also about the

practical matters such as guidance and guides' skills. The aim is to research possibilities of development through the means of a customer satisfaction survey.

Presently there are two exhibitions and guidance centers: the Wolf Cave Tourist Center in Karijoki and the Wolf Cave Exhibitions in Kristiinankaupunki. Opinions of the visitors of the Wolf Cave Tourist Center and the Wolf Cave Exhibition are researched. The questionnaire will be available in English, Finnish and Swedish. The data is collected during June, July and August of 2009. These are the restrictions of this study.

1.2 The structure of the thesis

There are two main sections in the thesis, theoretical and empirical. The first chapter introduces the thesis. Second chapter handles tourism. The purpose is to study the very basics of tourism and to define what kind of tourism we are dealing with when we are talking about the Wolf Cave. This chapter gives background information from the traveling aspect on the Wolf Cave. The chapter is essential because the main aim of the thesis is to study the potential of the Wolf Cave and how the Wolf Cave could be developed as a tourist attraction.

The third chapter of the theoretical section examines issues of tourism product development that are relevant to the study. The fourth chapter introduces the Wolf Cave. Basic information on the cave and its findings are described. The Wolf Cave is discussed from tourism point of view and further development plans are introduced.

The empirical study consists of the analysis of the attraction, the results of the research and analysis of the results. This section defines what customers want and expect from this kind of tourist attraction and based on these results more development ideas can be planned.

The implementation of this research starts by drawing up a questionnaire. The questionnaire forms will be taken to both locations, the Wolf Cave Tourist Center

in Karijoki and the Wolf Cave Exhibition in Kristiinankaupunki. Because of product's seasonality data is collected only during two months, from mid June to mid August of 2009. The results are analyzed after the summer and an analysis will be prepared.

2 Tourism

Tourism is a mixture of activities, services and industries that deliver the travel experience. It includes restaurants, transportation, hotels, and entertainment and activity facilities. (Goldner & Ritchie 2005: 7) Tourism is a sector of industry that has grown rapidly during the past 30 years and is a major force in the economy of the world. Tourism is responsible for over 10 % of global gross domestic product (GDP) and it has a substantial effect on the host environments and cultures. Tourism is also a significant employer – in 2010 it is expected to generate 250 million jobs globally. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill: 2005: 4)

There have been several attempts to define specifically what tourism is. The United Nations Statistical Commission has approved a definition that was recommended by the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The definition is:

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

People can be referred to as tourists when they are away from their usual environment on a visit that is temporary and short-term, but no longer than 12 months. They are engaged in activities that would normally associate with tourism. Excursionists are tourists who are not necessarily staying away from home overnight but are on a day trip. (Youell 1998: 9-10)

2.1 Characterizing tourists

Definitions of tourism and a tourist are desirable but in practice every tourist is different from each other. Categorizing tourists eases research and the publishing of statistical information. In addition, it is useful for marketing. Tourists can be classified in two basic ways according to the nature of their trip: geographically or by the purpose of visit. The first way (geographically) refers to domestic and

international tourists. Domestic tourism means residents' traveling within their country of residence and international tourism is traveling outside the country of residence. The second (purpose of visit) may be divided in three main categories: Leisure and recreation tourism including holiday, sports, cultural tourism, visiting friends and relatives (VFR); other tourism purposes including study and healthy tourism; and business and professional tourism including meetings, conferences, missions, incentive and business tourism. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill: 2005: 17-18)

In addition to the division of three main categories, there is also more specific way to divide tourists. The division is based on tourist's motivations. Sub-categories are; visiting friends and relatives; business tourism; religious tourism; health tourism; social tourism; educational tourism; cultural tourism; scenic tourism; hedonistic tourism; activity tourism; and special interest tourism. (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999: 29) Tourists have different motivations and usually they are influenced by several different motivators. A trip to visit friends and family could also include intention to relax, get away from home and possibly do a little sightseeing. The distinction between expressed motivators and real motivators is substantial. Tourists may have motivators that they do not express for multiple reasons. Maybe they feel that others would not understand the real motivators or the real and expressed motivators are conflicting. (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999: 29)

Tourist classifications vary from demographic factors to tourists' motivations, lifestyles and personalities. Tourism analysis can be made on the basis of different variables. Socio-economic variables can be age, sex, education, occupation and occupational status, annual income and family and party composition. Trip variables can be season or trip period, trip duration, trip distance, purpose of the trip, mode of transportation, expenditures and type of accommodation. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill: 2005: 18-22)

2.2 Nature tourism

Nature tourism encompasses all forms of tourism that use natural resources. In this case natural resources can be in a wild or undeveloped form including species, habitat, landscape, scenery and salt and fresh water features. The motivation for nature tourism is to enjoy of undeveloped natural areas and wildlife. Nature tourism can also be labeled as nature resource-based tourism. This implies an element of use that corresponds to any form of tourism where activity happens outside and which relies on the natural resource base. (Fennel 2003: 21, 28-29)

2.3 Cultural tourism

Several researches handling cultural tourism have been conducted. As a result a vast scale of definitions has been formed. Human beings are naturally interested in things that are unfamiliar to them and this makes culture one of the strongest motivations of traveling. Valene L. Smith has identified six categories of tourism according to the types of travel experience provided at the destinations.

Ethnic tourism means traveling to destinations to observe the truly exotic cultural heritage. Typical activities would be, for example, visiting native homes and attending ceremonies. Cultural tourism is traveling to experience and participate in vanishing lifestyles that are depended on human memory. Activities combined to this type would be, for example, folk dance performance and costume festivals. Historical tourism includes visits to historical museums, churches, monuments and cathedrals of old glorious times such as Rome, Egypt and Greece. In environmental tourism the emphasis is on natural and environmental attractions, for example traveling for the purpose of getting back to nature. Such attractions could be Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon and national parks. Recreational tourism includes mostly traveling for relaxation purposes in destinations with good superstructure. The last type of these six is business tourism, in which the main interest is to participate in conventions, meetings, conferences and seminars.

Though the main reason is business related, this type of tourism is often combined with one or more of the other types.

This classification is rather unassailable because most of the destination areas provide more than only one of these types. In addition many destinations provide same basic types so the tourists can choose the one that best meets his or her demands. (Goeldner, McIntosh & Ritchie 2005: 285-288)

2.4 Heritage tourism

Going back to the past can be familiar and safe but at the same time it can also be a journey to something completely different. When compared to the current way of living, the past could be something new and exotic, a different culture. The myths and utopias of the past provide valuable ingredients for experience tourism. (Petrisalo 2001: 136-138)

Heritage represents the inheritance to be passed down to future generations in terms of cultural traditions and physical artifacts. It represents what there is the present: what elements are wished to be preserved. Therefore, heritage is selective; society filters it through its value system. (Timothy & Boyd 2003: 2)

Heritage sites are places that are archaeologically or historically significant and are open for visitors. (<http://www.saa.org>) Heritage sites can be historic buildings and monuments, sites of important past events like battles, traditional landscape and indigenous wildlife, language, literature, music and art, traditional events and folklore practices and traditional lifestyles including food, drink and sport. (Timothy & Boyd 2003: 4-5)

There are different definitions for heritage tourism. Usually heritage tourism is linked to cultural tourism in the way that cultural tourism encompasses heritage tourism. Three types of heritage tourists can be identified: those visiting a site they deem to be part of their heritage, those visiting what they consider as a heritage site though it is unconnected with their own and those visiting a site

specifically classified as a heritage site although unaware of this destination. (Timothy & Boyd 2003: 5-6)

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), culture and heritage have become a component in 40 per cent of all international trips. Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing forms of cultural tourism. (Timothy & Boyd 2003: 1-5)

2.5 Finland as a tourism destination

Research concerning the image of Finland as a tourism destination was implemented by Finnish Tourist Board (Matkailun edistämiskeskus, MEK) in 2002. The research was done in the main marketing areas, which are Germany, Sweden, Russia, Great-Britain, Netherlands, Italy and France. The research was made by interviewing people in their own home countries and in their own native language. All interviewees were older than 15-years-old and chosen by random sampling. In every country interviews were executed in several different cities. (<http://www.mek.fi>)

The results revealed that Finland is considered to be emphasized by nature, winter and northern location. Finland is also relatively unfamiliar because 6 % of all respondents could not mention any associations. The most common associations were cold climate, sauna, lakes, forests and friends. The most common positive adjectives were good, nice, exotic, hospitable and friendly. Describing Finland as a destination was relatively difficult for respondents. The image of a nature and winter traveling oriented destination was strong especially in France and the Netherlands. The British, Germans and Italians had the most unclear image of Finland. The most positive adjectives to describe Finland were good, comfortable, nice, lovely, exciting, cozy, naturally beautiful, hospitable, friendly and authentic. (<http://www.mek.fi>)

2.5.1 Preconditions for tourism in Finland

Finland has fair preconditions and development possibilities for tourism. Scientifically and culturally Finland has fair conditions – there are no preconditions for mass tourism but there is some attractiveness. Scientifically Finland's benefit is landscape. There is relatively large number of rivers, lakes, islands and shores. Waters, forests and varying landscape makes Finland topographically attractive. Because of relatively warm summers and relatively cold winters, Finland is also suitable for active summer and winter travelling. Especially the bright nights of summer, dark days of winter (kaamos), colourful fall (ruska) and exotic Lapland are the key factors. Despite of some environmental problems Finland's nature is still relatively pure. Culturally Finland's preconditions are slight. Sami culture, orthodox traditions and some historical sites have received some broader attention, but in addition to these there are not much further attractions. Economically and politically Finland has good preconditions. Developed infrastructure, the standard of living and political objectivity form good basis for both leisure and business travelling. (Hemmi & Vuoristo 1993: 95-96)

2.5.2 Tourism in Ostrobothnia

Ostrobothnia is both culturally and naturally thriving. Located on the coastline and archipelago of Kvarken, the maritime nature gives its mark on nature of the area. There are small, idyllic towns and peaceful countryside. There are tour services, hiking trails, nature paths, good roads, bridges and ferries which offer both relaxation and activities in addition to good routes to move around. (<http://www.matkailupohjanmaa.fi>)

Culture has something for both children and adults. There are exhibitions, amusement parks, animal parks and musical events. In the summer there are many outdoor theatre performances. Ostrobothnian specialists manufacture handicrafts,

such as potteries, metal smithies, weaving shops, of high quality.
(<http://www.matkailupohjanmaa.fi>)

There's the inventive entrepreneur who comes up with the most astonishing things to attract tourists; there's the person who digs a hole for a lake because a lake didn't exist before, another one who sets up an amusement park next to his engineering workshop, a third who buys a ship and starts to run services to Sweden because no-one else will, and so on.

This ingenuity and entrepreneurship alone is a good reason to take a holiday in Ostrobothnia - you never know what crazy things someone has invented! (<http://www.visitfinland.com>)

3 Tourism product development

In order to successfully discuss developing a tourist product, the meaning of tourism destination, attraction and tourist product should be defined.

A tourism destination is a particular geographic region within which the visitor can enjoy various types of travel experiences. Tourism destinations can be defined by recognized political jurisdictions such as: a nation or country; a macro region that consists of several countries or other similar groupings; a province or state within a country; a localized region within a country; a city or town; a unique locale. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 407-408)

Tourism attractions are the main motivators for travelers. Attractions draw tourists into a destination and usually it is a combination of attractions that brings tourists to a destination. Attractions can be classified in a number of ways; cultural attractions such as architectural sites, monuments and historical sites; natural attractions such as landscape, parks, mountains; recreations such as golf, swimming, sight-seeing; events; and entertainment attractions. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 210-211)

Before planning the destination tourism policies must be defined. "Tourism policy can be defined as a set of regulations, rules, guidelines, directives and development/promotion objectives and strategies that provide a framework within which the collective and individual decisions directly affecting long-term tourism development and the daily activities within a destination are taken." (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 405)

Tourism is a growing industry. However, the decision to develop tourism must be studied carefully because tourism has both positive and negative effects. Tourism is often thought to solve an area's development problems, but it can also cause worse problems. Overdevelopment can pollute soil and water, and if there are too many visitors at the same place at the same time, it may also pollute people. Planning is essential in order to have sustainable development and still protect the nature and authenticity of the destination. Good planning decreases the possibility

of problems and mistakes and it provides user satisfaction (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 442-444)

3.1 Product planning and development

When developing a product, most companies' objective is to create a profitable and continuous business. In order to succeed in this, they must provide a product that satisfies customer's needs. Product planning is an essential part of the development. To have successful results there is the rule of "five rights" – planning to have the right product, at the right place, at the right time, at the right price, in the right quantities. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 525)

Customers are the hearth of the product. A product is built for customers, to fulfill their needs, wants and desires. It can be seen as a bundle of customers' satisfactions and benefits. Creating a successful product is not easy because customers' needs and desires are constantly changing due to changing lifestyles and developing technology. (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 525)

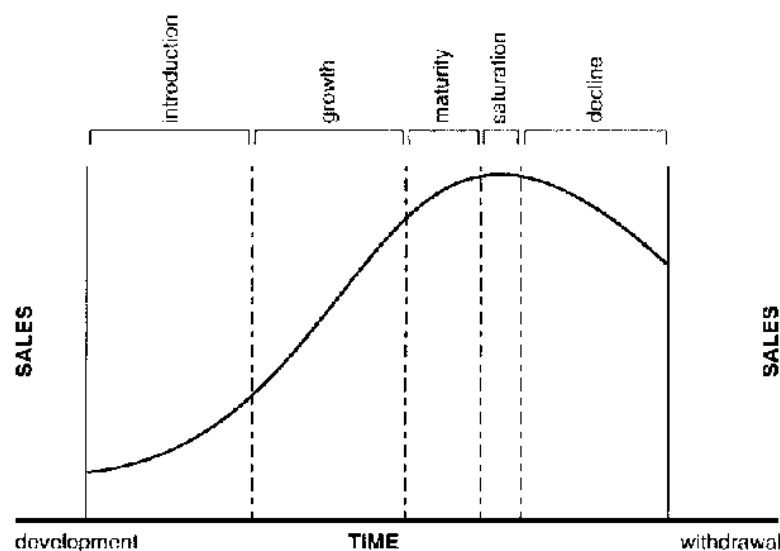


Figure 1 Product life cycle (<http://www.fao.org>)

Competitive forces usually carry products through a life cycle. Figure 1 is a typical life cycle that shows the five states of product life: introduction, growth, maturity, saturation and decline. In the introductory stage the products requires a lot of visibility and resources. The cost and per cent of failures is high. In the growth stage the product is accepted by customers. Sales and profits rise rapidly and more competition enters the market. In maturity stage the product has a strong position at market. Sales have decelerated from the earlier stage and the firm tries to maintain the position at markets. Saturation stage is when the sales reach its peak. Mass production and technology has lowered the price so that it is available to everyone. The saturation phase might last for years but the final stage is decline. The old product is replaced by new one, demand drops, there are less competitors and advertising expenditures are lower. Some products may survive at this stage even though they will not reach a high market share anymore (Goeldner & Ritchie 2005: 525-526)

3.2 Consumer behavior

The basic question relating to tourism and consumer behavior is that why do some people travel while some do not. Some reasons not to travel are; cannot afford to travel; do not need to travel; do not have time to travel; bad health situation; and do not have the courage to travel. The reasons why someone travels and the motivation behind the choice of destination vary. (Hemmi & Vuoristo: 1993: 135)

It has been suggested that a person's tendency to traveling depends partly on a person's worldview. Worldview includes; perception of time and space; perception of birth of the world; perception of supernatural and its effects; perception of being and non being; perception of the relationship of nature and humans relationship to the nature, perception of the person himself and his relation to others and perception of the community, society, history. Worldview is constructed of different images and depends on a person's self image. (Hemmi & Vuoristo: 1993: 135)

The images of destinations and regions are formed through information that has been personally attained and through information that has been provided by others. The image of the destination can be considered to be formed through the process of perception. Location is a central concept in geography and traveling. The perception of a location, its entity and the amenity of the location varies among people. It is connected to personal experiences, cultural background and the information received. Therefore, when consumer behavior is studied, it is important to get acquainted also with psychology. (Hemmi & Vuoristo: 1993: 135-136)

3.3 Travelers' motivations and needs

Motivation is one of the key factors behind behavior models, which is affected by learning, culture and observation. Motivation is firmly connected to a person's personality and psyche and affects how a person will react to his environment and behavior. Key concepts in motivation are need and wants. (Hemmi & Vuoristo 1993: 137)

The classic definition of motivation derives from the word "motivate". Motivating someone is causing a person to act in a certain way or stimulate interest including a person to act. Probably the best known motivation theory is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow identified two motivational types: deficiency or tension reducing motives and inductive or arousal seeking motives. The most important need is to be satisfied first. When this is satisfied, it is no longer a motivator and the second important need will come into play. (Robinson, Long, Evans, Sharpley, Swarbrook 2000; 4)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of five layers (Figure 1). The most important level is at the bottom. Physiological needs (hunger, thirst, rest, activity) are to be satisfied before safety needs (security, freedom from fear and anxiety) become a motivator. Following this pattern the final three levels are social needs (belonging and love – affection, giving and receiving love), esteem needs (self

esteem and esteem from others) and self-actualization (personal self-fulfillment). (Robinson, Long, Evans, Sharpley, Swarbrook 2000; 4)



Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (<http://www.abraham-maslow.com/>)

Crompton has divided tourist motives into nine categories. The first motivator, escape from the natural environment, contains a will to change environment. Therefore, the holiday should socially and physically be different than the home environment. The second motivator, self observation and valuation, contains a will to find something new from a person himself and from the environment. The third motivator is relaxation. The fourth motivator is the aspect of respect. A person wants to improve his status by traveling. The fifth motivator is regression. This means that a trip gives an opportunity to do something that would otherwise be impossible. A traveler's actions might be childish and irrational. The sixth motivator is visiting friends and relatives and improving family relations. The seventh motivator contains a will to make social interaction easier. Trips are usually more people oriented rather than destination oriented. The eighth

motivator is to experience a new thing. Curiosity and adventure are usually connected to this motivator. The ninth and the last motivator is education. Traveling is supposed to be able to develop people. (Hemmi & Vuoristo 1993: 137-138)

3.4 Product quality

Everybody knows what quality is but defining it is more complicated. There are three ways to define quality: philosophical approach, technical approach and user-based approach. (Schneider & White 2004: 9)

The perspective of philosophical approach holds that quality equals innate excellence and it cannot be defined any further. Every customer recognizes quality when they see it, but they usually cannot explain it further. The technical approach considers quality from an objective and absolute perspective. Quality is measured by how well the product conforms to technical standards. In this case quality is can be measured objectively and the results can be shown in numerical form. This approach applies well to measure the quality of standardized products. The third perspective is user-based approach in which the quality is defined by customer. Quality is subjective and changes on the perceptions of customers. (Schneider & White 2004: 10) Good quality fulfills customers' expectations and needs and improves customer satisfaction. (Lecklin 2002: 26)

3.5 Customer satisfaction

Customer relationship is formed when a customer has a connection with the service provider either through staff, product or even an advertisement. Usually a customer is perceived to be the buyer of the product. A customer can also be a person who uses the service provider's products although he never has a connection to the provider. This is possible when this customer is a customer of

the one that is in contact with the service provider. It is important for a company that targets to succeed to take also potential customers in to consideration. Potential customers are customers that are either nobody's customers or competitor's customers. (Lecklin 2002: 89-90, 94)

The operations of a company can continue only if the customer is willing to pay a sufficient price for the product. Therefore, satisfied customers are the stronghold of a company. Changes of needs, expectations and values have critical effect on defining customer satisfaction. (Lecklin 2002: 117, 119)

When developing a product, it is important to research customer satisfaction thoroughly. The basic feedback from customers is an important source of information but also specific customer satisfaction surveys are important to organize. Feedback from customers and customer satisfaction surveys show both satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Unsatisfied customers are a risk for a company: they usually do not return and, in addition, they tell about their negative experiences to others. Therefore, it is important to detect the reasons for dissatisfaction and take action in order to fix the causes. (Lecklin 2002: 119, 127)

Customer satisfaction is formed as a result of customers' expectations and needs. When a customer perceives that the received service has given positive value for the customer's investment, the customer is considered a satisfied customer. (Komppula 2002: 63)

4 Introduction to the Wolf Cave

The Wolf Cave is an archeological site located in Southern Ostrobothnia at the border of Karijoki and Kristiinankaupunki. The cave was formed as a result of erosion, and it is estimated to be more than 2.6 million years old. For long time it remained untouched, even though the cave was widely known in the area long before its importance discovered. The highest point of the cave is 2.2 meters high. It is difficult to determine the size of the cave because it is still partially filled by sediment layers, but it is estimated to be over 400 square meters. This makes it the biggest cave in Finland. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>)

In 1997 the National Board of Antiquities in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Finland initiated a test excavation. The results of the excavation were encouraging enough to start a research project of the Wolf Cave. Artifacts retrieved from the cave so far include some 200 identified tools and about 600 stone flakes and chips probably left from the work of fashioning stone tools. In addition to these a 5-square-meter pavement forming a distinct floor surface and a burnt rock surface indicating that fire was held in the cave were also found from the cave. The traces of human activity that have been found have dated back 130,000-115,000 years. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>)

The evidences point to the direction of Homo Neanderthalensis, the ancestors of Homo Sapiens. The oldest remains of a recognized form of Neanderthal are 115 000 - 130 000 years old. The last Neanderthals lived in France about 35 000 years ago. Neanderthal remains have been found only in Europe, Near East and Middle East. So far the Wolf Cave is the oldest known human dwelling site in northern Europe. It is also the only place where evidence of human inhabitancy has been found in a place that was later covered by continental glacier. Because of this the cave is an exceptionally valuable research site. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>)

Serious debate has been going on concerning the authenticity of the Wolf Cave. Geologists, archaeologists and other experts have argued for years whether the cave is sensational archaeological discovery or severe mistake. Some Finnish

experts have stated that there is no proof of Homo Neanderthalensis. On contrary some trusted experts from other countries have shown their support for the discoveries. (<http://www.tiede.fi>)

4.1 The Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction

The Wolf Cave is unique being the oldest archaeological site in Finland. It is also the oldest known human dwelling site in northern Europe. Due to its uniqueness the cave attracts visitors from across the world. The cave has aroused interest among archaeologists, geologists, professionals and other people who are interested in history. There are lots of believers and supporters but also critics. Newspapers and magazines abroad have written about the cave and professionals from all over the world have spoken out about the cave. Some researchers are convinced that the cave and the artefacts found from the cave are authentic and man-made whereas some researchers have criticized the site harshly. (<http://www.tiede.fi>)

The cave has received a lot of attention both nationally and internationally. However, as long as the argument about the significance of the cave goes it is hard to develop tourism plans any further.

4.1.1 Present situation as an attraction

Currently the Wolf Cave is an important part of tourism in Kristiinankaupunki and especially Karijoki. Though these both municipalities benefit from the attraction, there is no significant co-operation between them.

There are two Wolf Cave exhibitions. The Wolf Cave Exhibition is located in Kristiinankaupunki on top of one of the highest mountains of Southern Ostrobothnia, Pyhävuori. The exhibition is located downstairs of a restaurant Lähiluola. The Wolf Cave Tourist Centre is located in Karijoki on top of

Paarmanninvuori. Both exhibitions and the Wolf Cave are annually visited by thousands of tourists from Finland and abroad.

4.1.2 Development plans

The chapter is based on the Development Plan of Region of the Wolf Cave (Peter Edén 2001) and the Business Plan of The Ice Age Centre (Suupohjan Elinkeinotoimen Kuntayhtymä, Ilppo Karesola, 2003).

From the day when the cave was discovered people have been thinking about how to turn it into a tourism attraction. The exhibitions were built, web sites were launched, work group was assembled and ideas for further development were thrown. Both Kristiinankaupunki and Karijoki hoped that the Wolf Cave would become a major tourist attraction that would revive tourism. Municipality of Karijoki started to contemplate how to achieve this.

In 2001 Regional Council of Ostrobothnia published a plan for the development of the Wolf Cave area. Motivation behind the plan was to increase the number of visitors, which could give new opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment. The vision is that in 8-12 years there is an international theme park and/or visitor centre as the Wolf Cave is known widely also abroad and the Wolf Cave is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are four values: we are important for Finnish society and are part of the society and conversation; we produce and deliver information of the roots of the Finnish people and mankind and also experiences and good will for visitors with ethical grounds; we serve people sincerely, gladly honestly, reliably and professionally; and we do our part in helping Finnish research of prehistory and geology to develop. We also help countryside and its people to survive.

The plan is to build a visitor centre and/or theme park based on the theme of the Wolf Cave and its inhabitants. Exhibitions and experiences have scientific base and education is to be arranged for school trips. Accommodation and conference

facilities must be situated in the visitor centre area or near it and the centre must have resources to provide services for all kinds of groups.

In spring 2002 a project of The World of the Wolf Cave started. The aim of the project was to devise a preliminary plan for a new experience centre. Later the plan got a new name: Ice Age Centre. Ice Age Centre would be located in Karijoki. The project group consisted of representatives of municipality of Karijoki, National Board of Antiquities, Environmental Administration of Western Finland, Entrepreneurs of Karijoki, Suupohja Development Association, Geological Survey of Finland and other important parties. The project group operates under the federation of municipalities of Suupohja (Suupohjan elinkeinotoimen kuntayhtymä). Currently the project is put on hold due to high costs.

4.2 Description of environment

The Wolf Cave is located on the border of two provinces of Ostrobothnia and Southern Ostrobothnia. The environment described in this chapter includes surrounding municipalities and regions. In addition, it includes the locations that are relevant for the research.

The historical perception of region of Suupohja includes Isojoki, Karijoki, Kaskinen, Kauhajoki, Kristiinankaupunki, Närpiö and Teuva. Bordering municipalities are Jurva, Korsnäs and Kurikka. (Pictures of Suupohja in the 90th century, the Structural Development of Municipalities: 2). After amalgamations and changes in regions these borders have changed. The region of Suupohja and the coastal region of Suupohja are used in the thesis because they are commonly known and used terms. In addition, they make description of environment clearer.

4.2.1 Pyhävuori

Between Karijoki and Kristiinankaupunki there is Pyhävuori (Bötomberget). The area of Pyhävuori is known for its nature and outdoor possibilities. Vegetation is abundant and contains rarities such as Clematis Sibirica and Ghost Orchid, which are both protected plants. (<http://www.lappfjard.fi>) The terrain makes the area suitable for hikers, skiers, sport enthusiasts, historians, botanists and other nature and outdoor lovers. The slalom slope of the ski resort of Pyhävuori is one of the oldest slopes in the province and there are various cross-country skiing routes. During summer time the ski resort is the starting point of a hiking route. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>) In addition a lake is located next to the ski resort.

Caravan travelers have their own caravan park at Pyhävuori. Facilities of the local ski association, including a sauna, are available for caravan travelers. A camping house for accommodation and lectures provides possibilities for camps and camp schools. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>)

A scenic restaurant, Lähiluola, is located on top of the mountain right next to the slalom slopes and upstairs of the Wolf Cave Exhibition. In addition Wesander Marketing provides different program services. (<http://www.susiluola.fi>)

4.2.2 Region of Suupohja

The region of Suupohja is located in Southern Ostrobothnia. It consists of five municipalities: Karijoki, Kauhajoki, Isojoki, Jurva (Jurva has merged with Kurikka which is not considered to be part of Suupohja) and Teuva. Suupohja has become an important area for the furniture industry and for industrial automation. (<http://portaali.suupohja.fi>) The region is also known for its agriculture and especially for potato production; Suupohja produces a significant share of the food potato eaten in Finland. (<http://www.aspire-project.eu>)

The nature and environment in the area include more fields than on average in Finland. Swamps are also common and gravel and groundwater resources are remarkable. (<http://www.aspire.fi>) The scenery consists of flat open terrain and farmlands, hilly areas, forests, peatlands and small river valleys. There are two protected national parks, Lauhavuori National Park in Isojoki and Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas in Kauhajoki, which provide walking routes for everyone. There also four ski resorts for cross-country skiing and two for slalom. (<http://portaali.suupohja.fi>)

4.2.3 The Coastal Region of Suupohja

The coastal region of Suupohja is located in Ostrobothnia next to the region of Suupohja. The coastal region of Suupohja consists of three municipalities: Kristiinankaupunki, Kaskinen and Närpiö. The area is bilingual; 25,3 per cent of people speak Finnish and 71,6 per cent speak Swedish. The share of other languages is 3,1 per cent. The region provides approximately 70 per cent of tomato production and 30 per cent of cucumber production in Finland. The harbors of Kristiinankaupunki and Kaskinen are one of the special features of the region. (<http://www.obotnia.fi>)

Kristiinankaupunki, an old seaside town, is one of the best preserved wooden towns in Scandinavia. The wooden house idyll, narrow lanes and streets, wells, churches and museums, traditional countryside, versatile nature and the outbuildings of wooden dwellings are typical scenery in Kristiinankaupunki. The city is also known for its markets that are arranged around the year. (<http://edu.krs.fi>) Combination of seaside, archipelago and the wooden house idyll attracts visitors from all parts of Finland.

4.3 Similar attractions

There are successful stories in Europe on how to build institutions that present prehistory and arrange education and experiences to school students and other groups. Some prehistorical theme parks have also been established in Finland during the past decades. (Edén 2001; 12)

4.3.1 Similar attractions in Europe

The Land of Legends Lejre in Denmark is tourist attraction for the whole family. It presents 10 000 years of Danish history. Houses and settings are from the Iron Age, Stone Age, Viking Age and 19th century. (<http://www.sagnlandet.dk>) The Museum of Foteviken in Sweden presents the Viking Age. The museum is a reconstructed Viking village in which the maritime archaeology and history is the base of the museum activities. (<http://www.foteviken.se>)

The first marks of Neanderthals were found from Belgium and Germany. In Middle Europe there is the Neanderthal Museum that is one of the most successful archaeological museums in Germany. It is built at the place where the most famous Neanderthal fossil was found. (<http://www.neanderthal.de>)

4.3.2 Similar attractions in Finland

According to several researches, Ice Age is the phenomenon that interests foreign tourists the most in Scandinavia. History tourism and geotourism are the fastest growing areas of tourism and it is important for Finland to keep up with the development. (Karesola 2003; 7)

There are numerous prehistoric sites in Finland, but only few museums and theme parks have been established upon them. Kierikki Stone Age Centre in Yli-Ii, Northern Finland, is a centre that includes also accommodation and conference

facilities. The centre organizes guided tours and happenings around the year. The centre has won Europa Nostra –award in 2002. The award is the most significant and internationally known cultural award in Europe. (<http://www.kierikki.fi>)

The Stone Age Village in Saarijärvi is open during the summer months. The village consists of nearly 40 different objects including cafés, restaurants and guidance points. The village presents how people lived in Finland in the prehistoric past and how they survived in the natural environment. (<http://www.avoinmuseo.fi/kivikaudenkyla>)

Pohjolan Muinaiselämys Oy (Nordic Ancient Adventures) is a company in Eura that arranges guided tours for adults and children. The guided tours include visitations to the relics of Eura and the Viking Village of Härkänurmi. The company works in co-operation with prehistoric guidance center of The Laughing Dragon that is open around year. The aim of The Laughing Dragon is to disseminate information of life in the Iron Age with the help of guides and exhibitions. (<http://www.eura.fi/nauravabr/index.htm>)

5 Study

The research to study tourists' opinions about the attraction was implemented during the summer months from 15th June to 15th August in 2009. The questionnaires were taken to the Wolf Cave Tourist Center and the Wolf Cave Exhibition. The questionnaires were written in Finnish, Swedish and English.

5.1 Research method

Often research involves the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical information. The information can be either qualitative or quantitative. Sometimes the information can be both, for instance the information is qualitative in nature but is presented in a quantitative form. (Veal 2006; 40)

The quantitative research method includes statistical information and analysis and it relies on numerical evidence. To be sure of the reliability of the research, a relatively large number of answers and study material is needed. It is important to study a large number of people and use a computer to analyze the data. The information is derived from questionnaire surveys, secondary sources or from observation involving counts. (Veal 2006; 40)

The qualitative research method on contrary does not involve numerical data. The quantitative method requires large sample of people whereas the qualitative method needs a great deal of information of small sample of people. The information cannot usually be presented in numerical form. The method is used when full understanding of the people is required. The information is derived from observation, informal and in-depth interviews and participant observation. (Veal 2006; 40)

The quantitative research method was chosen due to the nature of implementation of the research. There were two locations where data was collected and the visitor number is relatively low and varied. The time when the data was collected was

several months long. The researcher had a full-time job 100 kilometers away from these locations and, therefore, could not be on site on the opening hours of the locations. In addition, it was better to collect information from relatively a large number of people in order to get statistical data of the clientele because of the variety of the character of the visitors.

5.2 Problems of the study

Since the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre and the Wolf Cave Exhibition are open only during summer months there were limited options in implementing the customer survey. The object was to receive at least 70 answers. The number of received answers was 56, of which 46 were received from the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre. This means that only 10 responses were from the Wolf Cave Exhibition. Therefore, it is hard to obtain realistic information of the Wolf Cave Exhibition.

Description of the environment was more difficult than expected because of the changes in sub regions. The merger of two municipalities and abolition of sub regions have restructured the borders of the sub regions.

5.3 Construction of the questionnaire

Questionnaire surveys encompass a small proportion, a sample, of the population in which the researcher is interested in. This kind of a survey relies on information given by respondents, which relies on the respondents' powers of recall, on their honesty and on the format of the questions in the questionnaire. Many factors can affect the respondents' actions. It has been suggested that respondents might be affected by the desire to be helpful and positive towards the interviewer. This might lead to the exaggeration in answers. Researchers should always keep in mind the nature and source of the data and not believe in it too much. (Veal 2006 231-232)

A questionnaire survey is a good method to gather specific information from people who can be considered as representatives of a wider population. The method provides means to gather and record simple data of attitudes, meanings and perceptions among the population and it can present the information in an easily understood form. The data can be re-analyzed by other researchers and it can be used in other surveys if needed. (Veal 2006: 233)

The aim of the questionnaire in this study is to research customer satisfaction and the needs and potential for touristic development. The background questions are chosen to clarify the main target group and customer segments. In addition their motivation towards the attraction is to be studied. The questions about exhibitions are asked in order to detect the level of customer satisfaction in the services and products. Statements on the services are given and respondents should evaluate them on a numeric scale.

5.4 Reliability and validity

Reliability of the research means how reliable the results of the research are. If the research is reliable, a repetition of experiment should give identical results despite of where and when it is conducted. Varying social and physical environment complicates the matter. (Veal 2006: 41)

Validity means how well the data received from the research reflects the phenomenon being studied. In the area of leisure and tourism, empirical research is depended on people's own reports, which are based on their behavior and attitudes. Therefore, the validity of leisure and tourism data can rarely be as certain as in natural sciences. (Veal 2006: 41)

The form in which questions are presented has a straight impact on the results of the research. 56 responses were received, of which all could be used to some extent. The respondents filled the questionnaire forms independently and according to their own interpretation of questions, which is affected by their

emotions, attitudes and behavior. Therefore, some misunderstanding occurred although the share of unusable answers remained small.

As mentioned in chapter 1.1, the number of responses was smaller than expected. The results of 46 responses received from the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre can be seen as valid when compared to the popularity and recognizability of the attraction. The responses correspond well with the real clientele and the topics mentioned on the responses have been under discussion for years.

Only 10 responses were received from the Wolf Cave Exhibition. In addition, a few of these forms was filled insufficiently. Therefore, the results from the Wolf Cave Exhibition cannot be viewed as reliable and valid enough to make any further conclusions concerning the Wolf Cave Exhibition. The reason for the small number of responses is insufficient co-operation with exhibition organizers.

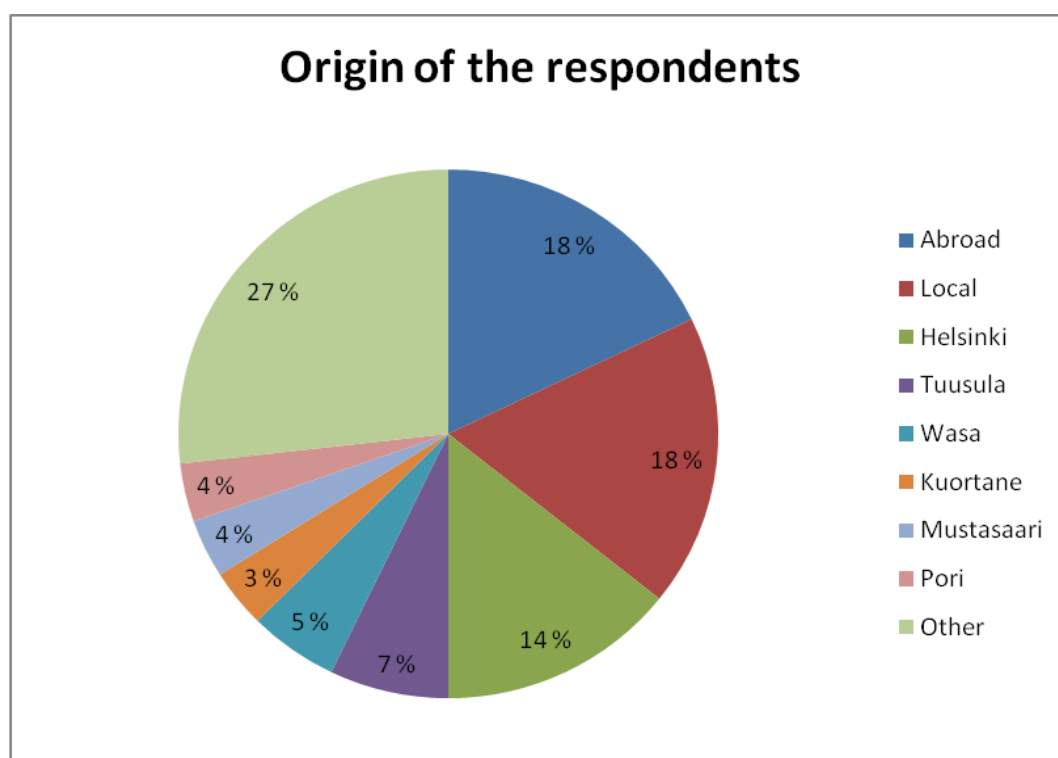
6 Results of the research

56 responses were received, of which 46 from the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre and 10 from the Wolf Cave Exhibition. Responses were received from both national and international tourists. Some of the respondents did not answer to every question but every form could be used in the analysis of the results.

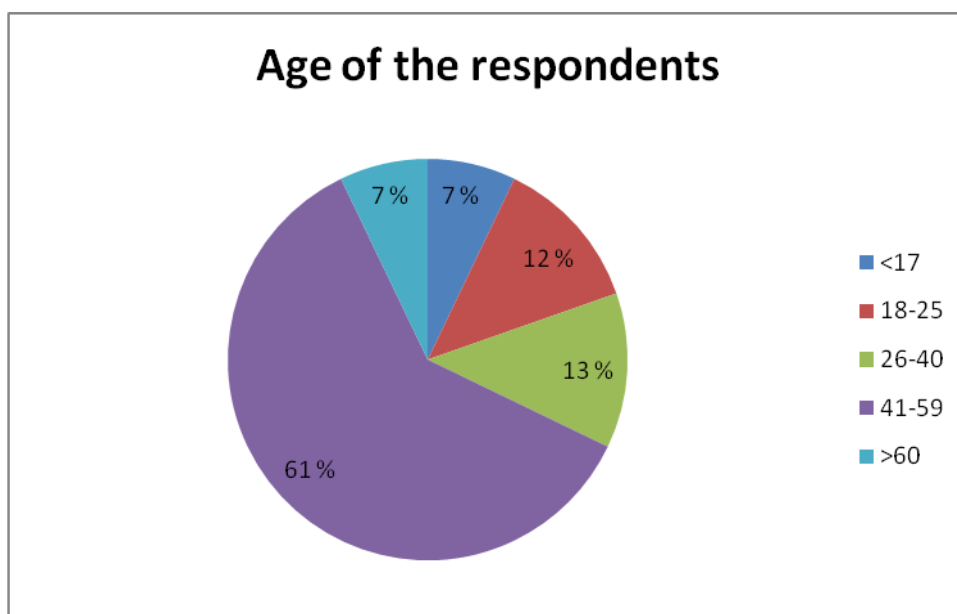
6.1 Background information on the respondents

In the first question respondents were asked to write their age. Their place of residence was asked in the second question.

Of all 56 respondents 10 were foreigners living in Sweden, Netherlands or the US. The biggest group of origin was locals (persons living in the Region of Suupohja or the Coastal Region of Suupohja) with 10 respondents. Other bigger groups were Helsinki (8), Tuusula (4) and Wasa (3).



The age of the respondents varied from 10 to 80 years. The average age of respondents was 43 years. The biggest group was 41-59 year olds with 61 %.

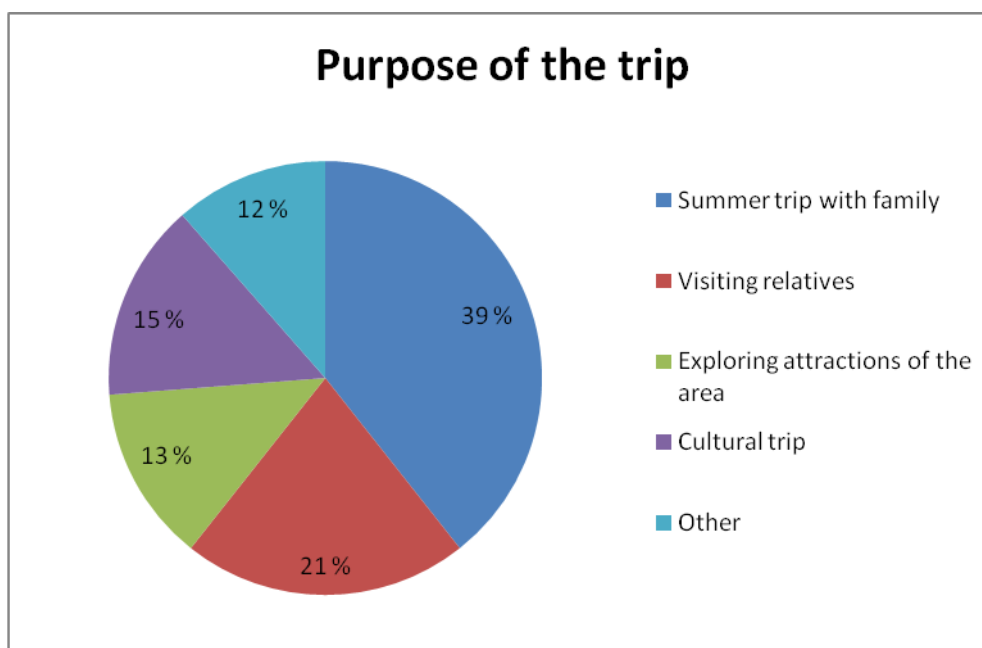


6.2 Purpose of the trip

In question three the respondents were asked to choose from five options the one that best describes their purpose of the trip. 39 % of the respondents were spending summer holiday with their family. 21 % of the respondents were visiting relatives, 13 % were exploring attractions of the area and 15 % were on a cultural trip. If none of these options matched with the respondent's motivation, they could choose "Other" and write their purpose of the trip. 12% chose this option and stated their purpose of the trip to be:

- spending holiday at a summer cottage nearby
- having an annual nature trip
- work

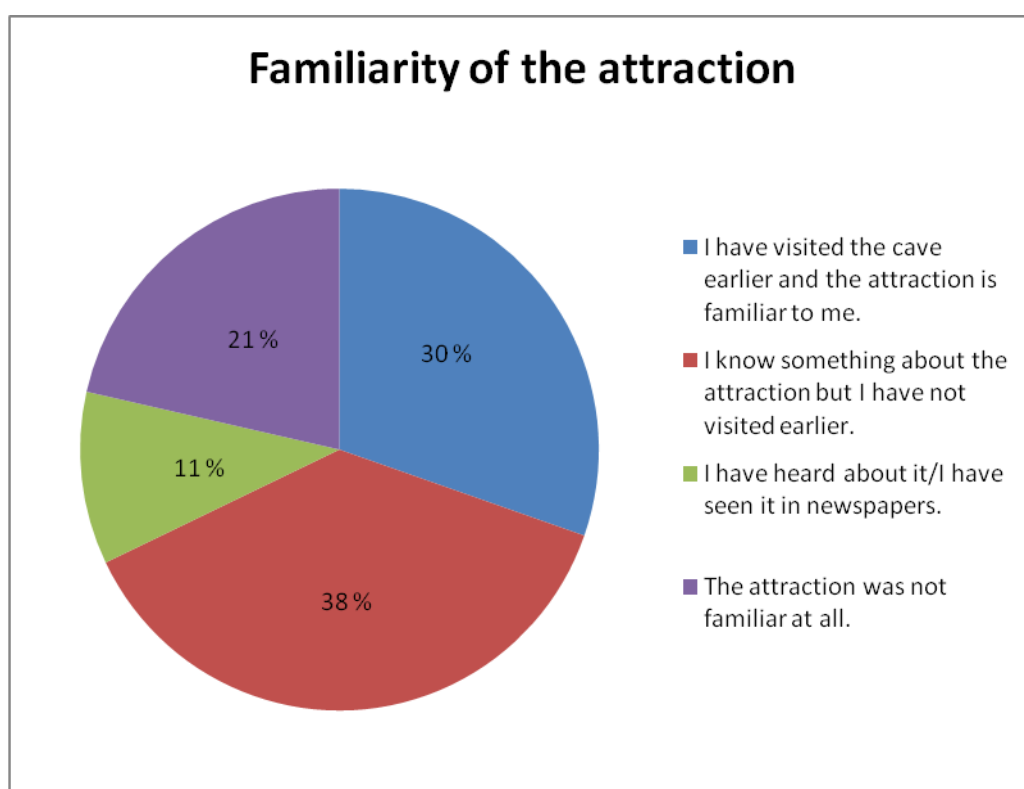
- Evankeliumijuhla (gospel celebration) in Kristiinankaupunki



The objective of the fourth question was to find out what was the motivation of travelers' towards the Wolf Cave. There were three options; we specifically came to visit the Wolf Cave; we were coming to this area and planned our route so that we can visit the cave too; we were passing by when we noticed the guidance and decided to visit the cave. 27 per cent, and the biggest group of the respondents, were coming to the area and planned their route so that they could visit the Wolf Cave on their way. 14 respondents came specifically for the cave and 10 respondents were only passing and noticed the guidance on their way. Five of the answers could not be used.

6.3 Familiarity of the attraction and how it meets expectations

The aim of the fifth question was to find out how familiar the attraction was for the respondents in advance. 21 stated to know something about the Wolf Cave but have never visited it before. For 17 respondents the attraction was familiar and they had visited it earlier. 12 stated that the attraction was not familiar at all and 6 respondents had heard about it or read about it from a newspaper.



In the sixth question respondents were asked to evaluate how well the attraction met their expectations. The scale was one to five (1 – poorly, 5 – very well). 47 respondents answered the question and their average grade was 3,96.

6.4 Opinions about the Wolf Cave Exhibition

The respondents were given seven statements and they were asked to give numerical (scale from one to five) evaluation on how well these statements meet their opinions. Only 12 responses were given from the Wolf Cave Exhibition of which the most were insufficiently answered.

Statement 1: The exhibition was comprehensive and there was plenty of information. 12 responses were received with the average grade of 3,45.

Statement 2: The exhibition was pleasant and easy to follow. 12 responses were received with the average grade of 4,33.

Statement 3: Guides mastered the subject and their tasks. Only 4 responses were received with the average grade of 4.

Statement 4: There was good amount of complementary material (e.g. souvenirs). 9 responses were received with the average grade of 3,33.

Statement 5: There were sufficiently brochures about other attractions and possibilities. 9 responses were received with the average grade of 3,44.

Statement 6: Route to the cave was easy to follow and guidance was clear. 11 responses were received with the average grade of 4.

Statement 7: Value for the money was good (price-quality ratio). 10 responses were received with the average grade of 3,9.

Some of the respondents stated that there was no guiding at all. Also, the amount of brochures was thought to be insufficient. More information about the nature of the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre was needed. The average grade of all the responses was 3,78.

6.5 Opinions about the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre

The respondents were given seven statements and they were asked to give numerical (scale from one to five) evaluation on how well these statements meet their opinions. 47 responses were given from the Wolf Cave Exhibition of which some were insufficiently answered.

Statement 1: The exhibition was comprehensive and there was plenty of information. 47 responses were received with the average grade of 3,98.

Statement 2: The exhibition was pleasant and easy to follow. 46 responses were received with the average grade of 4.

Statement 3: Guides mastered the subject and their tasks. 33 responses were received with the average grade of 4,15.

Statement 4: There was good amount of complementary material (e.g. souvenirs). 45 responses were received with the average grade of 3,49.

Statement 5: There were sufficiently brochures about other attractions and possibilities. 41 responses were received with the average grade of 3,46.

Statement 6: Route to the cave was easy to follow and guidance was clear. 43 responses were received with the average grade of 4.

Statement 7: Value for the money was good (price-quality ratio). 39 responses were received with the average grade of 4,44.

Most of the visitors who do not speak Finnish criticized that everything was available only in Finnish. The information should be updated and more examples of artifacts were required. The exhibition video was commented: the last part where the former mayor of Karijoki is speaking is very old and needs to be updated. More information about wolves, stones and the other exhibition was wished. Local visitors wished that the Information Centre would be open longer.

A broken freezer was mentioned often because no ice cream was served even though it was summer. Also, more different souvenirs were longed for. Guides received both positive and negative comments. Most of the comments stated that the guides mastered their tasks and their language skills were praised. The average grade of all the responses was 3,93.

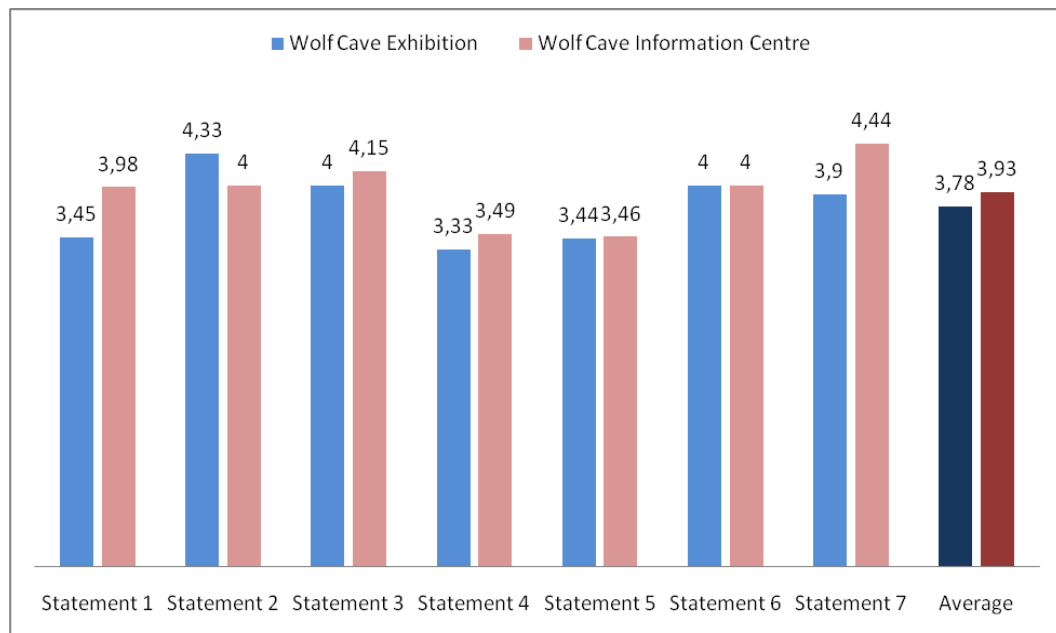
6.6 General comments

A lot of free, general comments were received from the visitors. The comments that handle specifically one of the exhibitions were mentioned in chapters 6.4 and 6.5.

Lack of advertising was often mentioned. Many stated that they have not seen any advertisement anywhere. There should be more information on the internet too. Visitors would have wanted to read arguments and debate about the subject and a religious view of the rising of the ground was required (the Flood). Visitors would also be eager to get inside the cave. People who had visited both exhibitions thought that the exhibitions completed each other and gave different perspectives.

Some of the visitors had also their own ideas about developing the attraction. Two visitors stated that camping site for short-term stays in Paarmanninvuori would bring more people. The opportunities of experience tourism were mentioned and also the Wolf Cave Market was suggested.

6.7 Comparison of the results



The results of the Wolf Cave Exhibition and the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre are very similar. When comparing the results, the fact that an inadequate number of responses was received from the Wolf Cave Exhibition. This has a great effect on the results. The average grade of the responses shows that customers are only slightly more satisfied with the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre.

The biggest difference is customers' satisfaction with price-quality ratio (statement 7). The Wolf Cave Tourist Centre was considered to be better priced and gave better value for money. The exhibition in the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre was also considered to be more comprehensive (statement 1). Still, the Wolf Cave Exhibition was considered to be more pleasant and easy to follow (statement 2). This was the only statement where the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre was evaluated to be weaker.

6.8 SWOT-analysis

A SWOT-analysis has been constructed on the basis of the customer survey results, the Development Plan of the Wolf Cave Region and the Business Plan of the Ice Age Centre.

Strengths

- uniqueness, authenticity
- international subject
- outdoor activities in the area
- support of experts
- collaboration
- nature, environment
- participation of the locals
- guide services
- excavations in summer
- archaeologically and educationally significant

Weaknesses

- poor accessibility, location
- seasonality
- narrow subject
- restricted access to cave
- danger of collapse
- lack of professional employees
- weak guidance
- lack of advertisement

Opportunities

- interest of the locals
- collaboration
- developing service structure
- uniqueness, authenticity
- nature tourism
- interest towards culture
- developing present services
- marketing
- improving basic components
- similar tourist attractions

Threats

- uncertainty of the history
- criticism, divides opinions
- lack of funds
- competition
- behavior of collaborators
- Natura 2000 restrictions

6.8.1 Strengths

As mentioned before, the Wolf Cave is the oldest human dwelling site in northern Europe. This means that the cave is one in a kind in Finland. The site has already aroused interest internationally and it is annually visited by international tourists. The subject itself, human history, is universal.

With diverse terrain and vegetation, the environmentally rich surroundings are great for nature enthusiasts. Annually people come to visit Pyhävuori, for example, just to see the rare *Clematis sibirica* (Siperiankärhö). *Clematis sibirica* is a vine that grows only in three places in Finland. The first known growing place is situated a couple of kilometers from the Wolf Cave. Environment and nature of Pyhävuori provide good activities for outdoor and nature enthusiasts. A small scale leisure centre that focuses on outdoor activities has already been built on top of Pyhävuori.

The Wolf Cave is archaeologically and educationally significant. A scientific base gives stability for the attraction; the facts behind the attraction are not going to change when they have been proved to be right. Having a solid base makes it safer to build a destination upon. Local entrepreneurs have participated well in developing the tourism attraction and the local guide service has included the cave to their routes. Active participation of local the entrepreneurs and guides guarantee the positive development of the destination also because the destination becomes part of their personal heritage. With co-operation the operations are possible, and developing the service structure in the surrounding area would improve the opportunities of the attraction. The Wolf Cave has had support from respected experts abroad.

For an archaeological site like this it is normal that access to the cave is denied or very restricted for audience. The Wolf Cave is not an exception but during every excavation the crowd has a chance to get inside the cave with archaeologists. Archaeologist will also answer to visitors questions if they have any. This helps visitors to get the best possible experience.

6.8.2 Weaknesses

Though the location of the site gives great opportunities, it is also a weakness. The area is “middle of nowhere”: bigger cities are a 100 kilometers away from the destination. Transportation connections are weak. The cave itself is located in the middle of the forest. Terrain is varying and rough, which make it hard for physically challenged people to visit the cave. For disabled people it is impossible. Unfortunately organizers have found guidance to be problematic; due to lack of surveillance, attempts to mark the route have been sabotaged. This leads to unsatisfied customers who cannot find their way to the cave. Both exhibitions suffer from lack of professional employees. Karijoki usually employs students who are looking for a summer job. In Pyhävuori’s exhibitions waiters and even chefs from the restaurant work in exhibition facilities when needed.

As many other tourism attractions, also the Wolf Cave is seasonal. Exhibitions are open during three months in the summer and the cave is almost unreachable during winter. Access inside the cave is denied for 11 months in a year and the cave is open for visitors only when archaeologists are working. The subject is narrow and the site attracts mostly people who are interested in history, archaeology and geology. Currently the entertaining value is minimal. The cave is also in danger of collapse. No excavations were conducted in 2001 because of this. In 2002 the cave was reinforced with steel bolts and mortar joints. After this excavations and visits have continued normally. (<http://www.susiluola.fi/eng/research.php>)

As mentioned in the research results, customers have not seen any advertisement. Lack of advertisement leads to smaller number of customers, which causes unprofitable operations.

6.8.3 Opportunities

The interest of the locals plays an important role in the success of the attraction. As research results showed, a big share of the visitors is local. They are an important customer group. Also, the interest of local entrepreneurs and other forces is important in order to develop the attraction to next level. Collaboration with these forces is essential.

Service structure and superstructure of the area is fair. Accommodation, restaurant and entertainment possibilities should be developed to make the whole area attractive. One attraction in an area that has nothing else of interest will not motivate people to visit. Developing the superstructure and service structure would revive area's economy in many other ways also.

The Wolf Cave is unique and authentic. Cultural and heritage factors of the attraction motivate people to visit it. These are the factors that should be focused on. In addition, combined with the environment, the area has great potential for nature tourism.

The present services and components of the product are to be improved. The basic components must be improved to the level that they satisfy customers as well as possible. Currently there are defects in the very basic components of the attraction and developing the present services would improve the situation. In addition, well designed exhibitions and services attract more visitors.

Even the best product needs marketing. Without marketing there are poor chances for visitors to find the attraction. Well planned marketing is a requirement for success and with efficient marketing the visibility and recognizability of the attraction would grow. In addition, co-operation with competitors could bring more new ideas and visions on how to improve the attraction and what else could be done. One of the ways to improve quality is to consult competitors.

6.8.4 Threats

The history of the Wolf Cave is still uncertain. Archaeologists and other professionals all over the world are divided into two groups; those who think that Homo Neanderthalensis have dwelled in the cave before the last Ice Age; and those who think that the artifacts found from the cave are naturally formed and there is no human evidence. In addition, criticism is directed to operations of National Board of Antiquities. Its operations concerning the Wolf Cave have been criticized by several different persons also inside the bureau itself. National Board of Antiquities has been important stakeholder in the investigations of the Wolf Cave. (Tieteessä tapahtuu 8/2004: 50-53)

Developing the attraction is difficult because of a lack of funds, especially when plans of the Ice Age Centre are considered. As mentioned in the Business Plan of Ice Age Centre, external funders are needed. Also entrepreneurs' attention and investments are substantial. In addition, the actions of collaborators must be taken in consideration.

Natura 2000 has restrictions concerning the area of Pyhävuori. These restrictions should be taken in serious consideration when preparing plans for development. The area is under nature conservation and there are limited opportunities to using the natural resources.

Competition for the Wolf Cave exists in different parts of Finland. There are prehistoric theme parks whose operations are better organized, with a broader subject and stable position in economy. Some of these destinations are open around the year. The closest theme park is located in Eura which is only approximately 160 kilometers from Karijoki. When comparing the operations of the Wolf Cave to its competitors, the Wolf Cave is far behind.

7 Conclusions

Since discovering the Wolf Cave, different parties have had several ideas on how to take advantage of it in tourism. Hopes were high when more and more evidence was found in excavations. When the likelihood of the oldest site in Northern Europe was discovered and researchers started to talk about Homo Neanderthalensis, the Wolf Cave was soon found from the centre of storm. Some tourist packages have been developed upon the Wolf Cave and there are two separate the Wolf Cave exhibitions, but a lot is to be done.

The aim of the thesis was to study customer satisfaction of the Wolf Cave Tourist Centre and the Wolf Cave Exhibition. In addition, the object was to find out if the current products should be developed and how the Wolf Cave could be used for tourism purposes. The research results show that customers are relatively satisfied with the current product. However, there are a lot of things which should be developed. The results showed some defects in the very basic elements of products, such as marketing, guidance and complementary material (for example souvenirs and brochures). Almost every Swedish and English speaking customer complained that everything was offered only in Finnish and, therefore, they could not get as much information as they wanted on the site.

Every customer defines quality differently. The product can be seen as of good quality when it not only meets customers' expectations but also exceeds them. When a customer receives something extra in purchasing the product and sees this positively, he will most likely see the product as good quality. Beneath quality are customer's motivations. Customer satisfaction is constructed from customer motivations and the quality of the product.

If the basic elements of the product are insufficient and hardly meet customers' expectations, it cannot be seen as a product of good quality. For a small attraction like the Wolf Cave it is important to give customers extra value in order for them to remember the attraction. Otherwise the attraction stays at a neutral level in their minds and will quickly be forgotten.

Developing the attraction into a destination that requires lot of finance and resources is very risky before the basic elements are on such a level that the product can be seen as being of good quality. Also, product life cycle has to be taken in consideration. The project requires a lot of money, especially in the beginning in order to achieve maturity and saturation. Otherwise the product will skip these stages and go straight to decline.

When basic elements are developed some new products can be developed on higher level. The current idea of the Ice Age Centre is a large scale operation that is significantly larger than the current situation of the attraction. In addition, there are currently adequate accommodation facilities and fairly good restaurants in the area. Therefore, it is not only the tourism attraction that should be developed but also the superstructure of the surrounding area. Costs would exceed budget greatly and development plan includes enormous risks. This requires interest and investments from numerous stakeholders and entrepreneurs and strong co-operation of the surrounding municipalities.

Networking is essential because external funding is needed for the project to succeed. Participation of the public body is the core of financing. Collaboration in marketing is more efficient because marketing itself will not be enough. Supplementary service supply of Karijoki is insufficient and more is required. In addition, science and education are the basis of operations and level of knowledge and abilities are improved by comparing experiences with others and adapting new procedures to Ice Age Centre on the basis of this comparison. (The Business Plan of the Ice Age Centre; 8)

At the moment operations should be developed only on a smaller scale. Even if the plans of the Ice Age Centre would not become true, the research and plans made give excellent basis for every kind of further development. The surrounding area has good potential for nature tourism. Advantage has been taken of the natural resources in the area but operations are scattered. The cave not only has value as a historical site but it also has great value as a natural site. The location of the Wolf Cave would support nature tourism well. This would not require as much

finances and staff then the Ice Age Centre but Natura 2000 restrictions have to be taken in consideration since the area of Pyhävuori is under nature conservation.

As a tourism attraction the Wolf Cave is relatively young and small-scaled. Operations are inefficient and, in addition, they are focused on two different locations. Having everything located in a single place would serve tourists better, after all people have to walk at least a few kilometers in order to get to the cave itself. Competition is a serious risk but with co-operation it can become a substantial element for success. There are competitors that have developed their operations further and their position on the market is stable. These provide good models on how the operations could be developed.

Summer 2010 will be the last year when the Wolf Cave Exhibition in Pyhävuori is open for public. The exhibition will be open until October only when reserved. The city of Kristiinankaupunki has rented the exhibition facilities from IF Länken and the rental agreement expires at the end of the year 2010. Finances to maintain the exhibition are also ceasing because no external financial support for operations has been received. (Suupohjan Sanomat 2010; 9)

The future of the attraction is still open. With the current economical situation it is hard to start any development projects that require finance and great resources. In addition, the debate about the Neanderthal people has to become stable before anything can be built upon it. The subject should be scientifically investigated thoroughly and the result of this investigation will define the future of the Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction. In any case the nature of the attraction remains scientific, history and nature based.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The customer satisfaction questionnaire in Finnish

Appendix 2: The customer satisfaction questionnaire in Swedish

Appendix 3: The customer satisfaction questionnaire in English

APPENDIX 1

Hei! Olen Maria Hautaviita ja opiskelen Vaasan Ammattikorkeakoulussa. Tämä kysely on osa opinnäytetyötäni, jonka tarkoituksena on auttaa Susiluolan kehittämisessä matkailukohteena. Vastauksenne ovat tärkeitä tämän saavuttamiseksi. Jokaisessa kohdassa rästetään yksi vaihtoehto, ellei toisin ole mainittu. Joihinkin kohtiin tulee vastata antamalla numeroarvosana. Asteikko: 1 – erittäin huonosti, 2 – huonosti, 3 – kohtalaisesti, 4 – hyvin, 5 – erittäin hyvin.

1. Ikä: _____

2. Asuinpaikka: _____

3. Ensisijainen matkan tarkoitus:

- Kesälomamatka perheen kanssa
- Sukulaisten luona käyminen
- Lähialueen nähtävyyksiin tutustuminen
- Kulttuurimatka
- Muu, mikä? _____

4. Valitkaa se kohta joka parhaiten sopii Teidän matkaanne:

- Lähdimme varta vasten Susiluolaan tutustumaan.
- Olimme tulossa näille seuduille ja suunnittelimme reitin tutustuaksemme kohteeseen.
- Matkalla huomasimme Susiluolan opastukset ja päätimme tutustua kohteeseen.

5. Tunsitteko luolaa entuudestaan?

- Olen käynyt tutustumassa aiemminkin ja tunnen kohteen entuudestaan.
- Tiedän kohteesta, mutta en ole tutustunut aiemmin.
- Olen joskus kuullut / lukenut lehdestä
- Olen lukenut internetistä, mistä? _____
- Kohde ei ole entuudestaan tuttu.

6. Asteikolla 1-5, kuinka hyvin kohde vastasi odotuksianne? (1 erittäin huonosti - 5 erittäin hyvin) _____

Seuraavat kysymykset koskevat Susiluolanäyttelyitä. Vastatkaa sen mukaan missä olette käyneet.

7. Olemme käyneet:

- Karijoen Paarmanninvuoren Susiluolan Opastuskeskuksella
- Kristiinankaupungin Pyhävuoren Susiluolanäyttelyssä
- Molemmissa
- Aiomme tutustua molempiin (rastittakaa myös missä olette jo käyneet)

8. Arvioikaa kysymyksen jokainen kohta numeroarvosanoin sen mukaan missä olette käyneet (1 erittäin huonosti - 5 erittäin hyvin). Jos olette käyneet molemmissa, arvioikaa molemmat.

Karijoen Susiluolan Opastuskeskus (numeroasteikko 1-5):

- ___ Näyttely oli kattava ja sisälsi runsaasti oleellista tietoa.
- ___ Näyttelyä oli helppo ja miellyttävä seurata.
- ___ Oppaat tunsivat aiheen hyvin.
- ___ Oheismateriaalia oli riittävästi (esim. matkamuistoja).
- ___ Esitteitä muista kohteista oli hyvin tarjolla.
- ___ Reitti luolalle oli helppo ja opastus oli selkeää.
- ___ Hinta – laatusuhde oli kohdallaan.

Kristiinankaupungin Susiluolanäyttely (numeroasteikko 1-5):

- ___ Näyttely oli kattava ja sisälsi runsaasti oleellista tietoa.
- ___ Näyttelyä oli helppo ja miellyttävä seurata.
- ___ Oppaat tunsivat aiheen hyvin.
- ___ Oheismateriaalia oli riittävästi (esim. matkamuistoja).
- ___ Esitteitä muista kohteista oli hyvin tarjolla.
- ___ Reitti luolalle oli helppo ja opastus oli selkeää.
- ___ Hinta – laatusuhde oli kohdallaan.

9. Näyttelyiden sisältö (valitse vain yksi kohta):

- Näyttelyt täydensivät hyvin toisiaan ja toivat uusia näkökulmia.
- Näyttelyt olivat toisiinsa nähden samanlaiset ja kertoivat pitkälti samoja asioita.

Kiitos ajastanne! Seuraavat rivit ovat vapaaseen kommentointiin (esim. miten kehittäisitte kohdetta).

APPENDIX 2

Hej! Jag heter Maria Hautaviita och jag studerar i Vasa Yrkeshögskolan. Den här gallupen är en del av mitt lärdomsprov som behandlar Varggrottan som ett rese-mål och hur kan det utvecklas. Era svar är viktiga för att uppnå syftet. Välja endast ett alternativ i varje frågan om ingenting annat är rådas. I några frågor borde ni ge en numerisk värdering: 1 – mycket dåligt, 2 – dåligt, 3 – någorlunda, 4 – bra, 5 – mycket bra

1. Ålder: _____

2. Hemplats: _____

3. Resans huvudsakliga syfte:

- Semesterresa med familjen
- Besöka släktingar
- Bekanta sig med sevärdheter i närområdet
- Kultur
- Annat, vad? _____

4. Välj det alternative som bäst beskriver er resa:

- Avsikten för resan var att bekanta oss med Varggrottan.
- Vi var på väg till dessa trakten och planerade ruten för att bekanta oss med rese-mål.
- Vi körde förbi, märkte Varggrottans råd och bestämde att besöka.

5. Kände ni till varggrottan från förr?

- Jag har besökt grottan tidigare och känner den från förr.
- Jag känner till grottan, men har inte besökt den tidigare.
- Jag har hört/läst om Varggrottan.
- Jag har läst om Varggrottan från internet, var? _____
- Jag känner inte till Varggrottan från förr.

6. Hur bra uppfyllde Varggrottan era förväntningar? Ande på en skala mellan 1 och 5: _____

De följande frågorna gäller Varggrotteutställningarna.

7. Jag har besökt...

- Varggrottans Informationscenter i Paarmanninvuori, Bötom
- Varggrotteutställningen i Pyhävuori, Kristinestad
- Både och
- Jag kommer att besöka båda (kryssa för det alternative du redan besökt).

8. Svara på följande frågor på en skala mellan 1 och 5 (1=mycket dåligt, 5=mycket bra)

Varggrottans Informationscenter i Paarmanninvuori, Bötom:

- Utställningen var omfattande och innehöll rikligt med relevant information.
- Det var enkelt och trevligt att följa med utställningen.
- Guiderna kände till ämnesområdet och kunde sin sak bra.
- Det fanns bra antal av kompletterande materiellt.
- Broschyrer om andra sevärdheter fans till buds.
- Rutten till grottan var enkel och ruttanvisningarna var tydliga.
- Pris/Kvalitets förhållande var bra.

Varggrotteutställningen i Pyhävuori, Kristinestad:

- Utställningen var omfattande och innehöll rikligt med relevant information.
- Det var enkelt och trevligt att följa med utställningen.
- Guiderna kände till ämnesområdet och kunde sin sak bra.
- Det fanns bra antal av kompletterande materiellt.
- Broschyrer om andra sevärdheter fans till buds.
- Rutten till grottan var enkel och ruttanvisningarna var tydliga.
- Pris/Kvalitets förhållande var bra.

9. Utställningarnas innehåll:

- Utställningarna kompletterade varandra och gav nya perspektiv.
- Utställningarna var rätt så likadana och innehöll liknande information.

Tack för er tid! De följande rader är för fri kommentering (t.ex. hur skulle ni utveckla rese målen).

APPENDIX 3

Hello! My name is Maria Hautaviita and I am presently studying at Vaasa University of Applied Sciences. This questionnaire is part of my thesis which handles the Wolf Cave as a tourism attraction. The object is to bring up more ideas how to develop the attraction. Your answers are important in order to succeed in this object. Select only one option in each question unless something else is told. In some questions a numeric evaluation is to be given: 1 – very bad, 2 – bad, 3 – fairly, 4 – well, 5 – very well

1. Age: _____

2. Place of residence: _____

3. Primary purpose of the trip:

- Summer vacation with family
- Visiting relatives
- Exploring attractions of the area
- Cultural trip
- Other, what? _____

4. Choose the option that best describes Your situation and trip:

- We specifically came to visit the Wolf Cave.
- We were coming to this area and planned our route so that we can visit the cave too.
- We were passing by when we noticed the guidance and decided to visit the cave.

5. How familiar you were with the cave beforehand?

- I have visited the cave earlier and the attraction is familiar to me.
- I know something about the attraction but I have not visited earlier.
- I have heard about it / I have seen it in newspapers
- I have read about it from internet, where? _____
- The attraction was not familiar at all.

6. At the scale of 1-5, how well did the attraction meet your expectations? (1: very bad – 5: very well) _____

Following questions handle the Wolf Cave exhibitions. Answer the questions according to where You have already visited.

7. We have already visited...

- The Wolf Cave Tourist Centre at Paarmanninvuori, Karijoki
- The Wolf Cave Exhibition at Pyhävuori, Kristiinankaupunki
- Both
- We are planning to visit them both (mark the one you already have visited)

8. At the scale of 1-5, how well do these phrases meet your opinions? (1: very bad – 5: very well)

The Wolf Cave Tourist Centre at Paarmanninvuori, Karijoki (scale 1-5):

- ___ The exhibition was comprehensive and there was plenty of information.
- ___ The exhibition was pleasant and easy to follow.
- ___ Guides mastered the subject and their tasks.
- ___ There was good amount of complementary material (e.g. souvenirs).
- ___ There were sufficiently brochures about other attractions and possibilities.
- ___ Route to the cave was easy to follow and guidance was clear.
- ___ Value for the money was good (price-quality ratio).

The Wolf Cave Exhibition at Pyhävuori, Kristiinankaupunki (scale 1-5):

- ___ The exhibition was comprehensive and there was plenty of information.
- ___ The exhibition was pleasant and easy to follow.
- ___ Guides mastered the subject and their tasks.
- ___ There was good amount of complementary material (e.g. souvenirs).
- ___ There were sufficiently brochures about other attractions and possibilities.
- ___ Route to the cave was easy to follow and guidance was clear.
- ___ Value for the money was good (price-quality ratio).

9. Information gained from the exhibitions:

- Exhibitions completed each other and gave different perspectives.
- Compared to each other, exhibitions were similar and repeated the same information.

Thank You for Your effort! Following rows are for free commentary (e.g. Your ideas for development).
