**Ann Svartsjö**

# FERRY TRAFFIC ON THE BOTHNIAN BAY

## Market Research of a Potential Ferry Line between Kokkola and Skellefteå

**Thesis**
**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**
**Degree Programme in Tourism**
**November 2013**

**ABSTRACT**

| Department | | Date | Author |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kokkola-Pietarsaari Unit | | November 2013 | Ann Svartsjö |
| **Degree programme** | | | |
| Degree Programme in Tourism | | | |
| **Name of thesis** | | | |
| FERRY TRAFFIC ON THE BOTHNIAN BAY<br>Market Research of a Potential Ferry Line between Kokkola and Skellefteå | | | |
| **Instructor** | | | **Pages** |
| Jennie Elfving/Centria Research and Development | | | 78 + 3 |
| **Supervisor** | | | |
| Katarina Broman | | | |


The subject of this thesis was a potential new ferry line on the Bothnian Bay, between Kokkola in Finland and Skellefteå in Sweden. The aim was to find out whether there is a ground and demand for running the ferry connection Kokkola-Skellefteå, which has not been current since the late 1990's. Furthermore, the intention was to invoke the potential development of a new ferry line which would complement the current ferry line between Vaasa and Umeå during the summer months.

The history of past ferry lines are presented, as well as the destinations Kokkola and Skellefteå. Finally the opportunities and difficulties with operating the ferry line are discussed. The research carried out was quantitative and investigated the interest of 461 potential customers, of the regions of Kokkola and Skellefteå, in using the ferry line. Also 35 assorted travel organisers on both sides of the Bay were inquired in the research. The initiative for the research was originally raised by, among others, the city of Kokkola and Destination Skellefteå. Centria Research and Development was assigned to commit this research, and functioned as the commissioner in writing this thesis.

The main findings of the research indicated that there appears to be a general interest and hope of a continuation of the ferry line. However, the concept of the new ferry line has been faced with challenges, such as the much needed financial supports that have been proven difficult to obtain. Moreover, if the ferry line would be actualised, it might be challenging to produce adequate profit considering the competition of ferry passengers with the ferry connection on Kvarken.



**Key words**

Bothnian Bay, ferry traffic, Kokkola, Kvarken, local tourism, m/s Coccolita, quantitative research, Skellefteå

## SAMMANDRAG

| **Enhet** | **Tid** | **Författare** |
|---|---|---|
| Karleby-Jakobstad | November 2013 | Ann Svartsjö |
| **Utbildningsprogram**<br>Degree Programme in Tourism | | |
| **Arbetets namn**<br>FERRY TRAFFIC ON THE BOTHNIAN BAY<br>Market Research of a Potential Ferry Line between Kokkola and Skellefteå | | |
| **Handledare**<br>Katarina Broman | | **Sidantal**<br>78 + 3 |
| **Uppdragsgivarens handledare**<br>Jennie Elfving/Centria forskning och utveckling | | |


Ämnet i detta examensarbete var en potentiell färjelinje på Bottenviken, mellan Karleby i Finland och Skellefteå i Sverige. Målet var att få reda på om det finns en grund och efterfrågan för att bedriva färjelinjen Karleby-Skellefteå, vilken inte har varit verksam sedan slutet av 1990-talet. Vidare var syftet att ge grund till en potentiell utveckling av en ny färjelinje som kunde komplettera den nuvarande färjelinjen mellan Vasa och Umeå under sommarmånaderna.

Historia om tidigare färjelinjer samt fakta om destinationerna Karleby och Skellefteå presenterades. Slutligen diskuterades möjligheterna och svårigheterna med att trafikera färjelinjen. Undersökningen som genomfördes var kvantitativ och utredde intresset av att använda färjelinjen, bland 461 potentiella kunder från Karlebyregionen samt Skellefteåregionen. Även 35 utvalda reseorganisatörer från båda sidorna av viken blev tillfrågade i undersökningen. Initiativet till undersökningen togs först av bland andra Karleby Stad och Destination Skellefteå. Centria forskning och utveckling fick i uppdrag att genomföra undersökningen, och fungerade också som uppdragsgivare i utarbetandet av detta examensarbete.

De primära resultaten av undersökningen indikerade att det förefaller sig finnas ett generellt intresse och en förhoppning om en fortsättning på färjelinjen. Däremot står konceptet med den nya färjelinjen inför en del utmaningar, såsom de välbehövda finansiella stöden, vilka har visat sig svåra att erhålla. Därtill kan det bli utmanande att producera tillfredsställande vinst med färjeförbindelsen på Kvarken med tanke på konkurrensen om färjepassagerare, i fall färjelinjen förverkligas.



**Nyckelord**
Bottenviken, färjetrafik, Karleby, kvantitativ undersökning, Kvarken, lokalturism, m/s Coccolita, Skellefteå

ABSTRACT
SAMMANDRAG
TABLE OF CONTENTS

**GRAPHS**

**TABLES**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is a potential passenger ferry line in the Bothnian Bay, between Kokkola in Finland and Skellefteå in Sweden. The purpose of this planned ferry line is to offer the residents in the local regions convenient access to the destinations on the other side of the Bay. Skellefteå and Kokkola are familiar destinations for many former travellers in these regions, since there have been shipping companies running this route in the past. Historically as well as culturally, there has been, and still is, a close interchange between Finland and Sweden in these regions. The Swedish language as well as the culture, are connecting matters for many residents in these regions.

A market research commissioned by the town of Kokkola and the town of Skellefteå was carried out in order to investigate the interest of potential customers. Both private consumers as well as assorted travel organizers from the Kokkola region and the Skellefteå region, were asked on their interest in using the ferry line. The questions also considered what kind of services it would offer if the ferry line would be actualised, and the interest in visiting the neighbouring country.

The commissioner for this thesis is Centria Research and Development, who was assigned this research by, among others, the city of Kokkola and Destination Skellefteå. The research method chosen was a quantitative research, which was carried out using mail surveys. The background for this thesis was finding out whether there is a ground for introducing the new ferry line. Furthermore, the writer of this thesis wanted to inquire into the demand and the opportunities for such a ferry service and how it would affect tourism in the local regions of Kokkola and Skellefteå.

# 2 FERRY PASSENGER TRAFFIC ON THE BOTHNIAN BAY AND KVARKEN

In this chapter the history of the past ferry traffic on the Bothnian Bay and Kvarken will be introduced, going back to steam boat traffic in the 19th century to car ferries and tax free in the 20th century. To clarify the geographical terms, the Bothnian Bay (Bottenviken/Perämeri), or the Bay of Bothnia, and Kvarken (Kvarken/Merenkurkku) are part of the Gulf of Bothnia (Bottniska Viken/Pohjanlahti). The Bothnian Bay is the northernmost part of the Gulf of Bothnia and its southern borders are Umeå on the Swedish coast and Vaasa on the Finnish coast. The Kvarken region is the narrowest part of the Gulf of Bothnia and municipalities belonging to Kvarken are Korsholm, Korsnäs, Malax, Vaasa and Vörå in Finland and Kramfors and Örnsköldsvik in Sweden. (Velmu 2013.)

## 2.1 The start of ferry traffic on Kvarken

The history of the first passenger boat trip over Kvarken goes back to 1837, when the steam boat Norrland operated a number of boat trips between Vaasa and Umeå. Norrland was followed by several other boats running more or less regular traffic over Kvarken. After the First World War a Swedish company commenced regular boat traffic during the summer months from Umeå to Vaasa with the steam boat Turisten ("the tourist"). By the outbreak of World War II this route was discontinued. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013.)

In 1947, the boat traffic between Vaasa and Umeå resumed with the small steam boat s/s Pörtö, which was purchased by the shipping company Rederi Ab Vasa-Umeå – Varustamo Vaasa-Uumaja Oy that continued operating the boat traffic but re-named the boat to Turisten. During the first year, a total of 42 boat trips between Vaasa and Umeå had been carried out (Fellman 2013.) The boat Turisten was followed by two other small steam boats, s/s Korsholm and s/s Korshom II, operating between Vaasa and Umeå. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013.)

Simultaneously, two other shipping companies also operated traffic on Kvarken. Wasa Line ran traffic with the boat Wasa and Sveabolaget with, among other boats, Ragne, who operated from Stockholm and Sundsvall to Vaasa. The traffic and the amount of passengers were increasing and in December 1958 Rederi Ab Vasa-Umeå put s/s Korsholm III into traffic as the first car ferry between Finland and Sweden, carrying a total of 35 cars. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013; Malmberg & Stampehl 2007, 25, 43; Dumell 2007, 13.)

S/s Korsholm III was the following year followed by s/s Örnen, which operated between Vaasa and Örnsköldsvik (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013). The car deck was later rebuilt in order to take in more cars and from 1961 onwards she admitted 45 cars on the route Vaasa-Holmsund, Umeå/Örnsköldsvik. The traffic with Korsholm II as well as Korsholm III between Vaasa and Umeå continued as before. (Dumell 2007, 31, 34.)

The first proper car ferry on Kvarken was put in traffic between Vaasa and Umeå in 1964. This ferry, m/s Wasa Express, was complemented by other similar ferries, such as m/s Botnia Express, m/s Polar Express and m/s Fenno Express. The first winter that a car ferry operated between Vasa and Umeå was in 1972, when m/s Scania Express started year-around traffic. Ferry traffic also opened between Vaasa and Sundsvall and between Sundsvall and Pori (Björneborg), that route, however, lasted shortly. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013.)

In the 1970’s there was a need for larger ferries, since motoring as well as tourism increased. The new m/s Wasa Express and m/s Botnia Express were put in traffic. By every decade the ferries became larger and in the 1980’s m/s Wasa Star, the largest ferry so far on Kvarken, started operating. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013.) Also m/s Fennia and m/s Sally Express served during the 1980’s, as well as m/s Wasa Queen which ran between Vaasa and Sundsvall for six years (Dumell 2007, 70).

M/s Wasa King, running the routes Vaasa-Umeå and Vaasa-Sundsvall, would become the foundation for the traffic on Kvarken in the 1990’s. However, it had to be sold in 1993 due to economic difficulties. Wasa King was re-named m/s Estonia and in September 1994 it foundered after losing its bow visor. This was the greatest peacetime boat disaster on the Baltic Sea and changed the ferry traffic overnight. (Dumell 2007, 125-126.)

Ferries following m/s Wasa King, were m/s Wasa Queen and m/s Silja Festival. Wasa Line (founded as Rederi Ab Vasa-Umeå), with their primary routes from Vaasa to Umeå, Sundsvall and Örnsköldsvik, was once again re-named in 1993 into Silja Line, the parent company. The traffic to Sundsvall was closed in 1996 and in 2000 Silja Line announced that the Kvarken lines would be closed down entirely due to unprofitability (Dumell 2007, 98). By then the traffic had operated several months through public subsidies. (Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto 2013.)

After the drop out of Silja Line on the Kvarken line, there was only Botnia Link’s freight ferry left operating on Kvarken, from Vaasa to Umeå (in the beginning Vaasa-Härnösand) with m/s Transparaden (Rintala 2001, 36). The passenger ferry traffic on Kvarken was resumed in 2001 by the new shipping company RG Line with m/s Fennia, re-named m/s Casino Express. RG Line was now alone on this route since Botnia Link discontinued their traffic in 2002. Casino Express was replaced with m/s RG1 in 2005. (Dumell 2007, 137.)

RG Line filed for bankruptcy in November 2011, but continued their ferry traffic until the end of 2012 (Bagge 2011). In 2013 a new era of the ferry traffic on Kvarken begun, when the operation of RG Line’s estate in bankruptcy was taken over by NLC Ferry (with Vaasa and Umeå as joint owners). The old ferry m/s RG1 was not enclosed with the new shipping company, instead traffic continued, and today still is running, with m/s Wasa Express, which can be read more about in chapter 2.5. (Koski 2012; Haveri 2013.)

### 2.2 Ferry passenger traffic from Kokkola/Karleby

As leisure tourism increased in the beginning of the 1960s, consequently, more routes opened up for boat traffic. In 1960 the shipping company Rederi Ab Bottenviken commenced boat traffic between Skellefteå and Yxpila Harbour in Kokkola with m/s Bothnia. (Karleby hamns historia 2013.) This ferry carried 258-400 passengers and 12-15 cars and the journey lasted close to seven hours (Herrgård 1999-2012b).

The route was mainly between Skellefteå and Yxpila in Kokkola, however, in the middle of the 1960’s, m/s Bothnia also called at the port of Pietarsaari and the port of Piteå, north of Skellefteå. In the last year of operating, it also operated to Holmsund in Umeå, south of Skellefteå. The route was, however, not profitable enough and the operation was closed down in 1966. Nevertheless, with its seven seasons of operating, m/s Bothnia became a retainer in the ferry traffic of the Bothnian Bay. (Karleby hamns historia 2013; Dumell 2007, 34.)

In 1967 M. Rauanheimo Oy re-opened traffic between Kokkola and Skellefteå with m/s Coccolita which occasionally also operated between Oulu (Uleåborg) and Luleå. In August of 1967 Coccolita made a call at the port of Stockholm on a special trip from Kokkola during the athletics championships between Sweden and Finland. In 1968 Coccolita served between Kokkola and Skellefteå as well as Kokkola and Härnösand. However, after three years of operating, the traffic terminated and Coccolita was put up for sale. (Malmberg & Stampehl 2007, 214.)

In the summer of 1968 M. Rauanheimo Oy also put s/s Oulutar in traffic, operating between Skellefteå and Oulu together with m/s Coccolita (Malmberg & Stampehl 2007, 214). This old steam boat also ran to the ports of Luleå, Härnösand and Kokkola. In 1970 Oulutar was scraped in Helsinki, at that time by the name of s/s Örnen. (Dumell 2007, 32.) The following attempt on traffic to Sweden from Kokkola was made in 1972 by the shipping company from Pietarsaari, Jakob Lines. However, this time the route lasted only for one year. (Rintala 2001, 12.)

Subsequently, it lasted 13 years until the next ferry line would operate from Kokkola. Vaasanlaivat-Vasabåtarna opened traffic from Kokkola to Umeå in 1985, though Jakob Lines took over the following year with m/s Fenno Express to Skellefteå. Approximately every other route operated from Kokkola and every other from Pietarsaari. Kokkola had better hotel capacity than Pietarsaari, and therefore the weekend routes usually went from Kokkola. In 1993 the routes from Kokkola were cut down by Jakob Line. By 1995 the ferry line from Kokkola was more or less extinguished, as a result of declining passenger numbers, which in turn was the consequence of the capsizing of m/s Estonia. (Rintala 2001, 25-26, 33.)

### 2.3 Ferry passenger traffic from Pietarsaari/Jakobstad with Jakob Lines

In 1969 the shipping company with the domicile of Pietarsaari was founded, Oy Jakob Lines Ab, entering competition with the shipping company Rederi Ab Vasa-Umeå. Jakob Lines' first boat m/s Nordek was put in daily traffic from Pietarsaari to Umeå. The same year the route to Skellefteå opened, and Nordek called at the port of Skellefteå 16 times during the first season of operating. The following years Jakob Lines operated two ferry lines to Sweden – and later on additionally two more lines opened. (Rintala 2001, 6.)

Jakob Lines chartered, in 1971, the boat s/s Bore II from Bore Line. For a short time period it operated from Pietarsaari to Skellefteå, after which it transferred to the line Pietarsaari-Umeå. The following year another boat was chartered and put in traffic on the same routes, s/s Bore III, previously running the route Helsinki-Stockholm (Dumell 2007, 80). With the increasing capacity of Jakob Lines, ferry traffic to a fourth harbour started, from Pietarsaari to Umeå and Skellefteå and now also from Kokkola to Skellefteå. (Rintala 2001, 11-12.)

The route from Kokkola, however, was soon declared to be too profitless and was closed after the first year. In 1973 Jakob Lines sold m/s Nordek and bought s/s Bore Nord (formerly s/s Birger Jarl). The following year Jakob Line chartered Bore Nord to Bore Line on a long-term contract while m/s Wasa Express was chartered to Jakob Lines for two summers, and was re-named Nord Express. (Rintala 2001, 13-14.)

The ferry line from Pietarsaari was in 1976 run by the chartered m/s Achilleus for a short time, after which s/s Bore Nord returned to Pietarsaari when the lease was concluded. The perception was that with Bore Nord, Jakob Lines would not be able to manage in the competition between the other shipping companies for very long. Therefore, in exchange for Bore Nord, Jakob Lines bought s/s Bore. (Rintala 2001, 17, 19.) Under the name of s/s Borea, it served between Pietarsaari and Skellefteå/Umeå (Dumell 2007, 80).

In 1982 Jakob Line bought m/s Polar Express from its closest rivalry, Oy Vaasanlaivat-Vasabåtarna Ab. After two years, and having sold both s/s Borea and Polar Express, ferry traffic started with the largest ferry on Kvarken at the time, m/s Fennia. Fennia served on the routes Pietarsaari-Örnsköldsvik and Pietarsaari-Skellefteå until December 1985. The following four years m/s Fenno Express operated on the line to Skellefteå, from Pietarsaari as well as from Kokkola. 1989-1991 traffic continued with m/s Polar Express and m/s Fenno Star and passenger numbers rose to new record numbers, to approximately 150,000 per year. (Rintala 2001, 22, 24-26, 30.)

In 1992 m/s Fennia was transferred back to Jakob Lines' fleet and operated, to Skellefteå and Umeå, the final seven years of Jakob Lines' existence until 1999. Also for Jakob Line, the years after the Estonia accident were difficult, passenger numbers dropped and the economic losses were major. In June 1999 Fennia called at the port of Pietarsaari for the last time. The history of Jakob Lines ceased in December 2000, and the shipping company was merged with Wasa Line. (Rintala 2001, 32, 34, 37.)

### 2.4 The significance of tax free

The ferry traffic on Kvarken and the Bothnian Bay had two significant driving forces, the mink feed and tax free sales. At the time when the fur farming in Ostrobothnia, Finland was blooming, the minks were fed with Baltic herring from Sweden that was transported by boat. Furthermore, there was a need for fast transportation across the Bay for lorries and heavy traffic going between the Nordic countries. To generalize, one could say that when the boom of the fur farming stagnated, the shipping companies’ revenue of cargo declined. At that time, at the latest, the selling of tax free goods became the fuel that pursued the ferry traffic on Kvarken and the Bothnian Bay. (Dumell 2007, 87.)

In the beginning of the 1990’s the ferry lines on Kvarken were amongst the most profitable in the traffic to Sweden. The revenue from the selling of tax free goods accounted to 50 % of the profit of the shipping companies. Therefore the shipping companies were able to keep very low prices on tickets, since the passengers consumed well on board. The consumers on Kvarken were not used to paying more than five, or ten euros at the highest, for a ticket. The selling of tax free goods on board ferries going abroad came to an end the 30th of June 1999, due to directives of the European Union (Rintala 2001, 36). As a result, ticket prices had to be increased and the shipping companies became dependent on the revenue from cargo since passenger numbers declined drastically. (Dumell 2007, 136-137.)

Also to the two major shipping companies on the Baltic Sea, Silja Line and Viking Line, tax free sales were, and still are, of great importance. However, the autonomous Åland Islands are classified as freestanding areas and their special protocol with the European Union allowed tax free sales to continue on these ferry lines (Norden 2013). Accordingly, the tax free sales could continue on the ferry lines on the Northern Baltic Proper and the Sea of Åland (for instance Turku-Stockholm) as long as the ferries made a port of call on Åland on their route between Finland and Sweden. (Dumell 2007, 136.)

Unfortunately, a similar exception was not made for the ferry traffic on Kvarken and the Bothnian Bay in order to maintain profitable ferry lines. Instead the Kvarken ferry traffic was put in a close to hopeless position. (Rintala 2001, 36.) In the beginning of the 1990's more than a million passengers travelled from Vaasa and Pietarsaari. During the coming years, the passenger numbers would decline to 800,000, because of a reduced number of end harbours and departures. In 1998 the numbers fell to half a million, and when tax free sales closed in 1999, to 300,000 passengers. The following year the ferry traffic was closed down. (Dumell 2007, 137.)

### 2.5 The Kvarken ferry traffic of today

Since January 2013, NLC Ferry has run year-round ferry traffic from Vaasa to Umeå with m/s Wasa Express, which is marketed under the familiar name Wasa Line. Also the ferry is familiar for many passengers since the very same Wasa Express ran the same route in the summer of 1997, but then chartered by Silja Line. This Wasa Express, though, is not to be mistaken with the first Wasa Express that run on Kvarken 1964-1974, nor the Wasa Express operating between 1976 and 1988. This boat was built in 1981 with the name m/s Betancuria and was previously used in charter traffic on the Canarian Islands. The prospect is for this ferry to operate for at least five years, while a more long-term solution is being found, hopefully implying economical support from the European Union. (Granqvist 2012.)

The expectations for the new ferry line were in general high. A functioning ferry line is not only beneficial for the residents and the private consumers, but also for the tourism industries in the regions. For instance, in the 1990's the majority of foreign tourists in Umeå were Finnish. Since that, when the ferry line has been run by RG Line and the ticket prices has been increased, Finnish tourists in Umeå is in third place, after Norway and Germany. The aspiration is to increase the number of Finnish tourists in Sweden, and vice versa. (Holmström 2012.)

The service concept of Wasa Line offers the passengers a sufficient number of cabins and good food and beverages on board, as well as entertainment and some possibilities for shopping. In addition, connecting traffic with buses from the centre of Vaasa and Umeå is offered. By the first month of operating, Wasa Line began offering theme cruises with programme on board built around different themes, such as jazz cruises, senior cruises and party cruises (Wasa Line 2013). The prospect is to further develop the cruise traffic as well as the conference services on board. (Haveri 2013.)

Shopping trips to Umeå organised by local bus companies have not been arranged since 1999 (with an exception for a few times with RG Line), when tax free was abolished and the common interest for cruises disappeared. These trips are now making a comeback with m/s Wasa Express, and successfully so. (Forth 2013.) At the moment of writing, Wasa Line has had a positive result from these ten first months of operating. The company's managing director Jan Teir estimates the number of passengers to 140,000. If the prognosis wears, that is 20,000 more passengers than the company first calculated for in the beginning of the year. (Stagnäs 2013a.)

As mentioned before, m/s Wasa Express is used as a short-term solution for the Kvarken traffic, and the vision is a modern, reliable ferry running on gas. The new ferry would be approximately the same size as Wasa Express, but better equipped to manage the ice during winter time, since the Vaasa-Umeå route is one the most northerly ferry routes of the world. The estimated cost for the new ferry is between 50 and 100 million euros, and support from the European Union has been applied for. Additional financing would be necessary from both Finland and Sweden, and the regions on both sides of Kvarken. (Stagnäs 2013b.) In July of 2013, the project was granted 6.1 million euros in support from the European Union and the planning is still in progress (Yle 2013).

# 3 THE POTENTIAL FERRY LINE BETWEEN KOKKOLA AND SKELLEFTEÅ

This chapter will cover the backgrounds and aims of the project m/s New Coccolita and furthermore will the impacts on local tourism in the concerned regions be discussed. The initiative for investigating the possibilities for a new ferry line was initially raised by Tillväxt Skellefteå, Destination Skellefteå, Mellersta Österbottens Förbund and the city of Kokkola/Karleby. The decision was to investigate the interest and demand for such a ferry line with the help of a market research.

The idea was to offer the residents of the regions a familiar destination in the neighbouring country and re-open a ferry line that once was well in demand. The ultimate aim is to create a common vision of a new concept of a ferry connection between the two cities. One of the essential causes for looking into the possibilities and prerequisites for a new ferry line is the low numbers of Finnish tourists accommodating in Skellefteå, and vice versa, Swedish tourists accommodating in Kokkola (Skellefteå Kommun 2011,2). Kokkola and Skellefteå get approximately 3,000 Swedish respectively Finnish overnights each year, which could be compared with the 60,000 overnights by Norwegian tourists in the region of Skellefteå (Infrastrukturnyheter 2011).

Another cause is the fact that the cultural interchange would benefit from better communications between Finland and Sweden. Furthermore, the new ferry line would also contribute to an economic growth in the regions and attract tourists not only to Kokkola and Skellefteå, but also to other regions of Finland and Sweden. (Skellefteå Kommun 2011, 2.) The intention is not to compete with Wasa Line and their ferry line Vaasa-Umeå, but on the contrary complement it during the peak season of the summer months, and increase the appeal for the traffic between Vaasa and Umeå (Backman 2012).

The market research was a two-parted quantitative research, with a total budget of 60,000 euros. Financing was granted partly by the EU programme Bothnia-Atlantica, as well as the municipalities of Skellefteå and Kokkola. (Skellefteå Kommun 2011, 2.) The questionnaires were sent by mail to randomly selected residents in the region of Kokkola and the region of Skellefteå. Also assorted travel companies, such as travel organisers and bus companies, in and around Kokkola and Skellefteå were asked to fill in the questionnaires.

As for the motivations for tourism development, the most significant and consequential motivation is the economic benefits brought by tourism. The purchases made by tourists on the place of visitation make a direct economic impact on all concerned businesses. Also indirect economic impacts are involved, as visitors travelling and purchasing, assure jobs and salaries for employees working in tourism business. When there is an increase of tourism in an area, more stores, shops and banks, for example, are established to meet the needs of the visitors, and these businesses create employment. A strong ground for efforts in tourism development is therefore to create occupations in the certain area. (Tengling, Friberg, Lindmark & Tjörnhammar 2007, 101-102.)

When it comes to the infrastructure of tourism, such as roads, hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions, and in some areas ferry connections, are investments required in order for a destination to be attractive for visitors. These infrastructures are a prerequisite for tourism and furthermore, tourism and transport are also somewhat co-dependent. However, the environmental impacts of establishing new infrastructures also need to be evaluated and taken into consideration. The infrastructure interferes with the landscape where it is built and convenience has its price in the form of nature damages, pollution and wearing. (Blom, Ernfridsson, Nilsson & Tengling 2002, 69.)

In order for a destination to be attractive, tourist attractions and service offerings, such as accommodations, shops and restaurants, are required, as well as the communications in order to move around. Moreover, of high importance are also the information and booking facilities for the tourists. (Blom et al. 2002, 9.) These are the cornerstones of tourism, but to primarily be able to attract the visitors, the destination has to be marketed and promoted, and especially so when establishing new attractions or, in this case, a new ferry line.

The project to produce a new service, or product, can be carried out when the developing process is completed, which primarily involves computing whether the service would fill a need for the customers and would have good chances of being profitable. (Aronsson 2003, 220.) Simply said, in developing the ferry line between Kokkola and Skellefteå, this is the approximate current stage of the process. Ahead of the process is still, obviously, finding financing and, for instance, establishing a management capable of furnishing the ferry line, and further on. The concerned destinations of the ferry connection, Kokkola and Skellefteå, are to be presented in the following chapter.

# 4 PRESENTING KOKKOLA AND SKELLEFTEÅ

The two concerned towns that the ferry line would operate between, Kokkola in Finland and Skellefteå in Sweden, will be introduced in this chapter. The tourism sights of these two regions, which also will be presented, are of great relevance in this context since they could act as an appealing force for people from across the bay and thereby enable the ferry connection. Convenient access with the ferry line could also enable tourists to travel on to other places of interest and to attract tourists to visit also the surrounding regions of Kokkola and Skellefteå.

## 4.1 Kokkola – Karleby

Kokkola (Karleby in Swedish) is a municipality and the province centre of Central Ostrobothnia, located on the west coast of Finland (Kokkolan Kaupunki 2013a.) It is one of the oldest towns of Finland, founded in 1620 by the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf (Visit Kokkola 2012, 4.) Kokkola is a bilingual town with close to 50,000 inhabitants, of which the majority, 84.2 %, speaks Finnish, and almost 14 % speaks Swedish (Kokkolan Kaupunki 2013b).

As for the infrastructure, Kokkola is conveniently located and easy to reach by car, as well as by airplane and train. Situated in the centre of Finland at the coast of the Bothnian Bay, Kokkola is a junction where three of Finland's main roads meet. Moreover, the main railroad goes through Kokkola and the railway station is very centrally situated in the city centre of Kokkola. The train ride from Kokkola to the capital Helsinki takes approximately four hours. (Kokkolan Kaupunki 2013c). The closest airport, Kokkola-Pietarsaari, is situated in Kruunupyy/Kronoby approximately 22 kilometers from Kokkola centre. Apart from daily flights to

Helsinki, there are occasionally also leisure flights going from Kokkola-Pietarsaari Airport. (Visit Kokkola 2012, 2).

### 4.1.1 Tourist attractions in Kokkola

Kokkola is a town of history, culture and music (Keski-pohjanmaan matkailuviesti, 3). One of the most distinctive features of the town is the old town district with wooden houses, of which most originate from the 19th century. The town plan, however, dates back to the 1650s, and the oldest preserved buildings originate from the 17th century. (Neristan Oppistan: askel askeleelta – steg för steg 2007, 31; Visit Kokkola 2013a.) This part of Kokkola is called Neristan and is one of the most homogeneous and most comprehensive preserved historical areas of wooden houses in Finland (Kokkolan Kaupunki 2013a).

In the old days Neristan ('downtown') was inhabited by craftsmen and sailors, while the wealthy merchants and ship owners lived in the southern part of the town called Oppistan ('upper town') in distinguished houses with large gardens. The buildings in Neristan, on the other hand, were modest and the plots were small and were shared by several families. (Neristan: Kokkolan Vanhakaupunki – i Gamla Karleby 2007, 6.) In the 21st century, Neristan has established its status as a lively historical neighbourhood and is today a significant cultural district. Along the atmospheric streets you can find restaurants, cafés, hotels and antique shops. (Visit Kokkola 2012, 5.)

Another popular sight in Kokkola is the lighthouse island Tankar, located in the outer archipelago of Kokkola. Already in the 1500's the island served as a base for fishermen and seal hunters and later on it has become an important landmark for navigators. Today Tankar is a versatile destination and during summer time there is regular passenger boat traffic to the island. (Visit Kokkola 2013b.) The island is situated 15 kilometres from the passenger harbour in Kokkola and it takes 90 minutes to reach the island (Visit Kokkola 2013c).

Besides the lighthouse, built in 1889, the island includes an old fishing village, a small church and a bird station (Visit Kokkola 2013b). Services for visitors are available, such as a café, a museum displaying seal hauling, and a guesthouse offering accommodation on the island (Tankar: Kokkolan Majakkasaari – Fyrön i Karleby 2007, 9). There is also a 1.5 kilometre long marked nature path from where visitors can experience the rich vegetable kingdom as well as the many animal species living on the island (Visit Kokkola 2013d).

A wide range of interesting events are taking place during the summer in Kokkola, such as Kokkola Rock Festival, Kokkola Venetian Festival (Kokkolan Venetsialaiset) and Kokkola Cup (one of Finland's largest junior football tournaments) (Keski-Pohjanmaan Matkailuviesti, 4). Events like these have a great capacity to attract visitors also from farther away, and could be increased and developed further with more visitors. Kokkola is a good choice of a holiday destination also for families with children, with sights such as The Toivonen Animal Park and Peasant Museum, the swimming centre VesiVeijari and Touhutalo (an indoor adventure and play park) (Visit Kokkola 2012, 11, 19, 21).

### 4.1.2 The surrounding environs of Kokkola

With the potential ferry line, comes the opportunity to attract visitors to other regions outside of Kokkola, which have many attracting tourism sights to offer. In order to have a rewarding ferry line, the co-operation of marketing tourism should be extended to the adjoining regions on both sides of the Bay. As Skellefteå has a generous share of Norwegian tourists, Kokkola and its surrounding regions could be of interest also for Norwegian tourists. Mentioned below are some of the sights and activities that could attract visitors from across the Bay to use the potential ferry line to Kokkola and to visit these regions. Since the ferry line would be the most northerly one in Finland, the writer has here concentrated on the immediate surrounding regions of Kokkola as well as the northerly regions of Finland.

North of Kokkola is the Finnish Lapland, with its unique and versatile nature. Taking into account that the ferry line would run only during summer time, Lapland offers interesting sights and activities also in the summer, such as hiking, river cruises, fishing, golfing, river rafting and canoeing. (Lapland 2013a.) In Sodankylä, Lapland is the world's only international gold museum, where one can take part in the history of gold in Finland and in over 20 other countries. For families with children, the Ranua Zoo could be a destination of interest. (Lapland 2013b.)

For the ones interested in culture and music, the cultural capital of Northern Finland, Oulu (Uleåborg), could be an attracting destination with the many cultural and music festivals arranged in the city. Oulu, situated approximately 200 kilometres from Kokkola, also offers great opportunities for shopping, as one of the largest northerly cities of the world. (Discovering Finland 2013.) More southwards and approximately 70 kilometres from Kokkola, is Kalajoki, with Finland's longest sand beaches. In a short distance from the sand dunes are numerous tourist attractions, such as a spa and a surf centre, as well as a wide range of different accommodations. (Kalajoki 2013.)

Also the neighbouring towns of Kokkola have much to offer. In fact, the three coastal towns Kokkola, Pietarsaari and Uusikaarlepyy (Nykarleby) were mentioned in Mondo, Finland's mostly read travelling magazine, as the best domestic finding in a spread about the most intriguing tourism destinations of 2013. Common for this region are the charming and idyllic wooden house areas. Mentioned as recommended tourism sights in Uusikaarlepyy were Kuddnäs Museum and the historical cafeteria Brostugan. Among the tourism sights of Pietarsaari there are the old wooden house district Skata (similar to Neristan in Kokkola), Rosenlund and the Aspegrens Gardens and After Eight Music Café. (Kelola, Hiltunen, Poutanen, Aro 2013; Pernu 2013.)

Another attractive sight, situated approximately 80 kilometres south of Kokkola, is the adventure park Powerpark in Härmä. Powerpark is a versatile amusement park offering not only roller coasters, but also the largest go cart indoor hall in Europe, a horse centre, numerous hotels, a camping site, restaurants, Finland's first 5D movie theatre and activities such as safaris and paintball. The amusement park also includes Finland's largest wooden roller coaster Thunderbird, which also has been voted one of the best ones in world. (Powerpark 2013.) Not far from Powerpark, is the spa hotel Härmän Kylpylä, an ideal destination for tourists wanting to relax and pamper themselves during the holiday.

## 4.2 Skellefteå

Skellefteå is a municipality and a city in Västerbotten County in Northern Sweden, and situates as the southern outpost of Swedish Lapland (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 5). The city is inhabited by approximately 35,000 residents (about 71,600 counting the whole region). Mining is a large industry in Skellefteå, which often is associated with gold, thereof the nickname the Gold Town. (Korta fakta 2011, 2, 3). Distinguishing Skellefteå is the proximity to the sea and water, with five large rivers and a total of 360 kilometres of coast (Skellefteå Municipality 2010, 10.) As a matter of fact, by one of the rivers in the town is the oldest wooden bridge in the whole of Europe (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 5.)

As far as the infrastructure is concerned, Skellefteå is easily accessed and has a well-established transport system. The European road E4 runs through the centre of Skellefteå and by car it is also easy to reach Norway by taking the Silver Highway. (Skellefteå Kommun 2010.) From Skellefteå Airport, Stockholm is only 55 minutes away by plane (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 51). The airport also offers direct flights to Barcelona, Spain with Ryanair as well as charter flights to, for instance, Turkey and Greece. Transportation by train is also easy to and from Skellefteå, and by bus, with long-distance buses and scheduled service with the 60 local buses. (Skellefteå 2011, 16.)

### 4.2.1 Tourist attractions in Skellefteå

Skellefteå is to the surface the largest coastal municipality of Sweden and offers sights and activities for visitors of all ages. All conveniences of a city can be found in Skellefteå, at the same time as the experiences of nature still are within reach, for instance in some of the nature reserves offering sublime views and activities. Furthermore, for tourists looking for shopping, Skellefteå has a great offering both in the city centre and in shopping malls outside the centre. (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 21, 29.) Solbacken Handelsområde, for example, is Europe's only shopping mall completely built in wood and has been voted as one of the most popular commerce centres in Sweden (Solbacken Handelsområde 2013).

Skellefteå is a suitable destination for camping guests, with several high-class camping sites in and outside the city. Two of them are Skellefteå Camping and Byske Havsbad, the only five star camping site on the coast of Norrland. Skellefteå is an exquisite destination also for families with children. Leo's Lekland, for instance, is the largest circuit of indoor play lands in Scandinavia (Leo's Lekland 2013). There are several water parks in Skellefteå as well, both indoor and outdoor, and some of them in direct connection to the camping sites. (Destination Skellefteå 2013a.)

Another interesting family-oriented sight situated in Skellefteå is HB Adventure, with an immense Lego exhibition and one of the world's largest Lego Star Wars collections (Destination Skellefteå 2013b). Skellefteå also has one of the world's most modern go kart complexes, Skellefteå Karting Arena, with a separate track even for the smallest children (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 9). Another adventurous sight is Boda Borg, an adventure centre combining physical challenges with intellectual sharpness, creativity and team work in different challenges executed in teams of 3-5 persons. Boda Borg is a destination well-suited for families, groups of friends, or even companies and school groups. (Boda Borg 2013.)

When it comes to history and culture, Skellefteå offers numerous interesting sights. The heart of historical and cultural life in Skellefteå is Nordanå Culture Centre, which includes Bonnstan (freely translated 'the peasant town'), Skellefteå Museum and Skellefteå Art Gallery, among others. During summer time there are several events arranged in this area, such as the music festival Trästockfestivalen, which is one of the most visited festivals and the largest of its kind in Sweden. Other major events arranged every summer in Skellefteå are Stadsfesten, one of Norhern Sweden's largest summer events, and the food festival Matfesten. (Upptäck Skellefteå 2013, 13, 33.)

### 4.2.2 The surrounding environs of Skellefteå

Recently an increasing amount of Russian tourists has been noticed in Kokkola, as well as in Lapland (Pått 2013). Through the ferry line, Russian tourists would have an easy gateway to also get to Skellefteå and other places in Sweden, likewise as Norwegian tourists would be able to travel to Finland from Skellefteå. Norway as a destination could also attract tourists from across the Bay as Norway would be easily accessed with the ferry line to Sweden.

From Skellefteå, the southern outpost of Swedish Lapland, it is convenient to travel on to Northern Sweden with its steep landscape and nature, offering great opportunities for nature and adventure tourism. The area offers numerous camping sites and national parks, for example Europe’s largest nature reserve Vindelfjällen (Svenska turistföreningen 2013). During the summer, when the potential ferry line would run, there are fine opportunities for hiking, cycling, kayaking and fishing. (Västerbotten 2012.)

An interesting tourism sight in Västerbotten is Granö Beckasin, situated about 130 kilometres from Skellefteå. Granö Beckasin offers accommodation in cottages of different standard, as well as a tree hotel where you can lodge up in the tree in a cottage of full hotel standard. Activities offered on the sight are for example log raft trips, moose safaris and dog-sledding on wheels. (Granö Beckasin 2013.) This year Granö Beckasin was nominated for Stora Turismpriset (freely translated the Great Tourism Price) in Sweden and their vision is to become a unique destination in the last wilderness of Europe, with an ecological consideration (Västerbotten 2013).

A similar sight is the Tree Hotel in Harads (winner of Stora Turismpriset in 2011), located approximately 200 kilometres from Skellefteå. The Tree Hotel offers accommodation in tree rooms of innovative and contemporary design of different themes, such as the UFO and the Bird's Nest. (Tree Hotel 2013.) Unique sights like these could attract visitors from across the Bay and could be an ingenious choice for leisure tourists looking for something out of the ordinary. Another unique experience can be found in Norsjö (less than 100 kilometres from Skellefteå), where the longest ropeway is situated. There visitors can join in on one of the daily trips on the 13.6 kilometre long ropeway and admire the nature of Västerbotten from above. (Gold of Lapland 2012.)

While the regions of Northern Sweden are perhaps most characterized by their nature, cities such as Luleå, Lycksele and Piteå also offer activities for visitors wanting the city life. All of the above have great shopping opportunities, cultural activities and events, as well as family-friendly sights and activities. One example is Lycksele Zoo – Norrland's largest tourist facility, which includes the Children's Zoo and Lyckoland, an adventure park for children (Lycksele Djurpark 2013). All of the above mentioned tourism sights and destinations could function to appeal and attract Finnish tourists to these regions and to use the ferry line in order to have convenient access to these attractions.

# 5 RESEARCH METHODS

Research can be perceived as a part of the process to create better grounds of decisions and is a constantly ongoing process in businesses and organisations. The purpose of research could be, for instance, to conclude what the result of changes, new markets or new products could be and what such alterations in the business or organisation could bring. Collected data from research of the reality is being complemented with theory about the subject. The collected data serves as a basis for the creating of models and theories, which are made in order to facilitate the analysis. (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul 2011, 9-57.)

Good research projects should be interesting, trustworthy and understandable. Research is made in order to describe a course of event or a development. The purpose may also be to explain, understand or predict events and developments. Aside from interviews and questionnaires, research can also be done with the help of observations of an occurrence, as well as reading documents, with the aim of extracting quantitative or qualitative material on the matter. Depending on the aim of the report the type of research is decided. (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul 2011, 9-57.) The different research methods and conceptions related to research will in this chapter be presented. Since the method used in the research of this thesis was quantitative and survey-based, these forms of research will be portrayed more in detail.

## 5.1 Qualitative and quantitative research methods

The research methods are divided into qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research includes interviews – informal, in-depth, and group interviews, as well as participant observation and analysis of texts (Veal 2006, 99). Differentiating qualitative research techniques and quantitative research techniques is that the latter implicate numbers, quantities, while qualitative techniques do not involve numbers. With qualitative methods the focus of the research is normally on meanings and attitudes. (Veal 2006, 98-99.)

The most crucial piece of work in a research is the collection and analysis of data. In a research, the collection and analysis ought to be systematic and there should be a thorough description of the research process. When data is collected for a research, there are two main methods to choose from – a questionnaire or an interview. These methods can be used separately or in combination, for instance interviews face to face, telephone interviews, internet surveys or questionnaires that are sent to the respondents by mail or handed out personally. The advantages and disadvantages are weighed against each other, and naturally, the choice of method is affected by the resources on hand, i.e. time and capital. (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul 2011, 87–95.)

When the material is collected, the process of analysing and interpreting the collected data begins. From the conclusions drawn from the analysis and the interpretations, suggestions of problem solving are to be found. The most significant piece of knowledge of a researcher is the ability to analyse, interpret and reflect. (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul 2011, 59-61.) Furthermore, when it comes to qualitative research, the analysis of the research begins with the data collection. In contrast, in quantitative research all collected data is needed in order to complete the analysis of the research. (Jennings 2001, 195.)

There is no such research method that could produce the whole truth of the researched matter, and thus would be ascendant to all other methods (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 75). Whatever method chosen, however, the method always has to be critically reviewed in order to decide how reliable and valid the extracted information is. Reliability and trustworthiness measures to what extent an instrument or a method gives the same result at different occasions during otherwise similar circumstances. Naturally, a concrete question that gives a certain type of answer in one situation and a completely different answer in another situation is not reliable. (Bell 2006, 117.)

Validity, on the other hand, is a far more complicated term than reliability. One manifestation is that validity is a measurement of whether a certain question measures or describes what it is desired to measure or describe. If a question is not reliable, it also lacks validity, although the validity does not have to be high just because the reliability is high. Validity can be proven complicated to measure. However, the researcher should ask him- or herself whether the same results or the same answers would be extracted if also some other researcher would use one's own implement. (Bell 2006, 117-118.)

## 5.2 Surveys as a quantitative research method

The research methods dominating leisure and tourism research are the quantitative methods, and in particular the use of questionnaire-based surveys (Veal 2006, 100). Surveys and questionnaires are quite distinct from each other, even though the two terms occasionally are used interchangeably. One approach to distinguish surveys and questionnaires is stated below.

> In general, surveys are methods of data collection in which information is gathered through oral or written questioning. Oral questioning is known as interviewing; written questioning is accomplished through questionnaires. (Jennings 2001, 230.)

Surveys based on questionnaires are used when quantified information is demanded, of a specific population. Moreover, the individuals' own reviews of their behaviour and/or their attitudes need to be acceptable as a source of information, since questionnaire surveys are dependent on information from the respondents. Therefore the exactitude of the respondents' statements depends on their own competence to recall as well as their honesty. Essential is also the format of the questions in the questionnaire, in order to get reliable results. (Veal 2006, 100, 231.)

There are different types of questionnaire surveys, based on how they are conducted, and these are household surveys, street surveys, telephone surveys, mail surveys, site or user surveys and captive group surveys (Veal 2006, 100-101). In most cases the aim of a questionnaire is to produce information about a representative assortment of the population and based on that describe results that are representative of the whole population. This is also an inevitable problem with questionnaires, since the population assortment indeed has to represent the whole of the population. (Bell 2006, 23.)

Another disadvantage with surveys and questionnaires is that the closed response can restrict the answers from the respondents. Moreover, surveys may in some cases also be an intrusive form of collecting data. On the other hand, the collecting of data can often be processed quickly and is often less expensive than, for instance, interviews. Furthermore, surveys can be, geographically, more widely distributed for a lower cost. (Jennings 2001, 244.) Given that the survey is well planned and well structured, surveys can be a comparatively fast and inexpensive way to extract information (Bell 2006, 24).

The method used in the research of this thesis was mail surveys, also called postal surveys. The questionnaires were posted to the respondents, who filled them in and returned them. Mail surveys enable inclusion of a large assortment of the population, and thereby give a more reliable result since the respondents represent a larger group of the population. On the other hand, the problem of low response rates is an inevitable problem when it comes to mail surveys. Factors affecting the response rate of a survey are, for instance, the interest of the respondent, the length and the design and presentation of the questionnaire and rewards for responding. (Veal 2006, 241.)

Conducting a mail survey there is no face-to-face contact with the respondents. This can be a disadvantage in the aspect that the respondents are not able to seek clarification from the researcher(s) concerning the questions, and this can result in incomplete answers. Moreover, the researcher has no control or assurance that the respondent will actually complete the survey. Also, it is not possible for the researcher to make observation notes of the respondent. On the other hand, the absence of the researcher removes interviewer bias since the researcher is unable to have an influence on how the respondent answers the questions. (Jennings 2001, 232.)

### 5.3 Market research of the potential ferry line through mail surveys

A market research can help to assess and analyse the viability and the profitability of a service or product, for example through surveys. Before actually implementing the service or product and making it available to the public, a market research allows insight into what is the potential target group of the service or product. (Investopedia 2013.) The purpose of this market research was to get a perception of the interest in the potential ferry line between Kokkola and Skellefteå. The research included two different questionnaires, one addressed to private consumers and the other to travel organisers. The questionnaires aimed at consumers and travel organisers in Finland were also slightly different from the questionnaires addressed to Swedish consumers and travel organisers. The questionnaires can be found as appendices, translated into English as they originally were in Swedish and Finnish.

The research of private consumers was carried out using mail surveys. The four pages long questionnaire was sent out by post to residents in the region of Kokkola as well as the region of Skellefteå. The respondents were randomly chosen and the source of addresses was the Population Register Centre. The questionnaires were made by Centria Research and Development and the writer of this thesis was joined in the project approximately by the time of sending out the questionnaires. When the questionnaires of private consumers were returned the writer of this thesis entered all data into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and returned the SPSS file including the data to Centria. Entering the data to SPSS embraced close to 30 working hours. The data of the survey of travel organisers was collected and analysed by Centria in Webropol, an online survey and analysis software. The results of the surveys were promised for usage in this thesis.

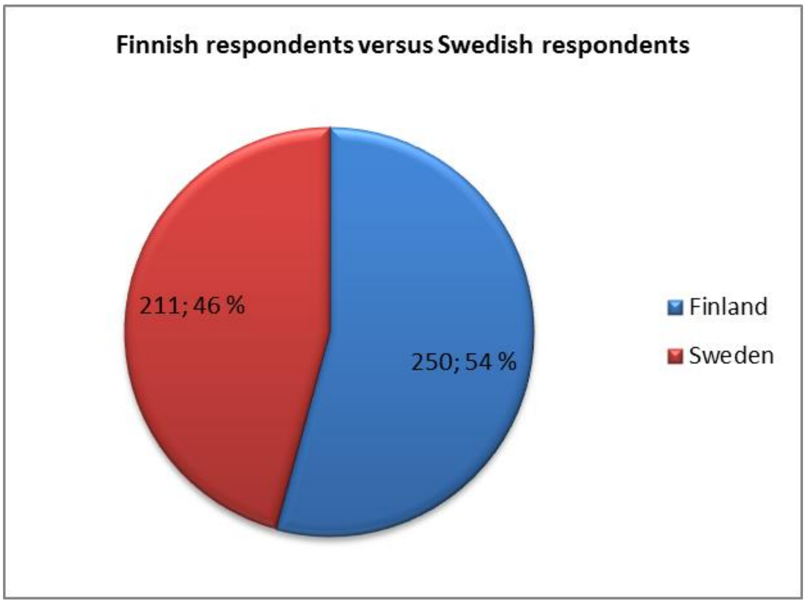
The private respondents returned the questionnaires in postage-paid envelopes. When conducting surveys, this is a common way to increase response rates as the respondents are not bound to pay for the cost associated with returning the letters. Another way of increasing response rates is a reward. In this case, all respondents got an attached coupon on which they could fill in their contact information. By filling in the information they entered a lottery with the chance to win a travel package to Skellefteå, respectively Kokkola, including flights and hotel accommodation. Rewards like these are commonly used tactics when conducting surveys and can add good value to the research when the result is a significant increase in responses. The results of the research will be presented in the following chapter.

# 6 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of the research will hereafter be presented. Since the research was two-parted, the research of private consumers will first be reviewed, and thereafter the research of the Finnish travel organisers. Due to the quantity and magnitude of both surveys, and limited time resources, the writer has entered the survey results of the travel organisers from Finland only. Finally, possibilities with implementing the ferry line, as well as the difficulties involved, will be discussed. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the ferry line will also be laid out in a SWOT analysis.

## 6.1 Part one: researching the interest of private consumers

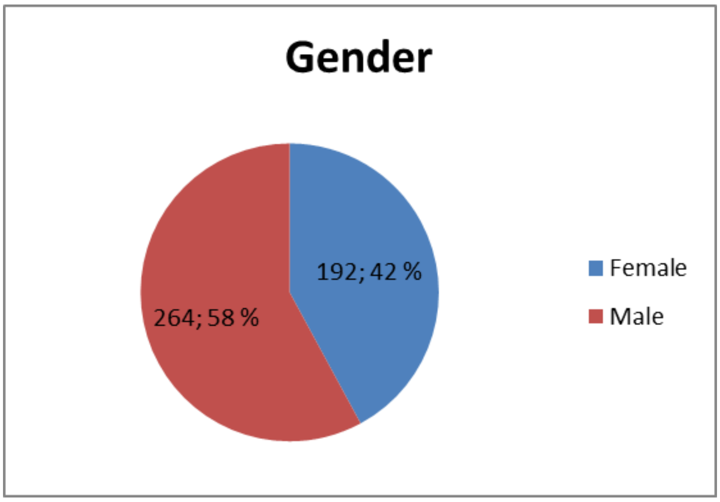
The survey of private consumers was carried out through a mail survey where the respondents were randomly chosen residents of the regions of Kokkola and Skellefteå. In the survey of private consumers from Finland, a total of 250 filled questionnaires were received. From respondents in Sweden, a total of 211 filled questionnaires were received. As shown in graph 1 below, among all respondents the majority, 54 %, was from Finland and 46 % was Swedish respondents. In total 461 questionnaires were returned and the response rate was 34 %. According to Veal, a response rate of 20-30 is a relatively common rate of response (Veal 2006, 241). The questionnaire directed to the Finnish respondents can be found in appendix 1, and appendix 2 includes the questionnaire for the Swedish respondents.




GRAPH 1. The proportion of Finnish respondents versus Swedish respondents

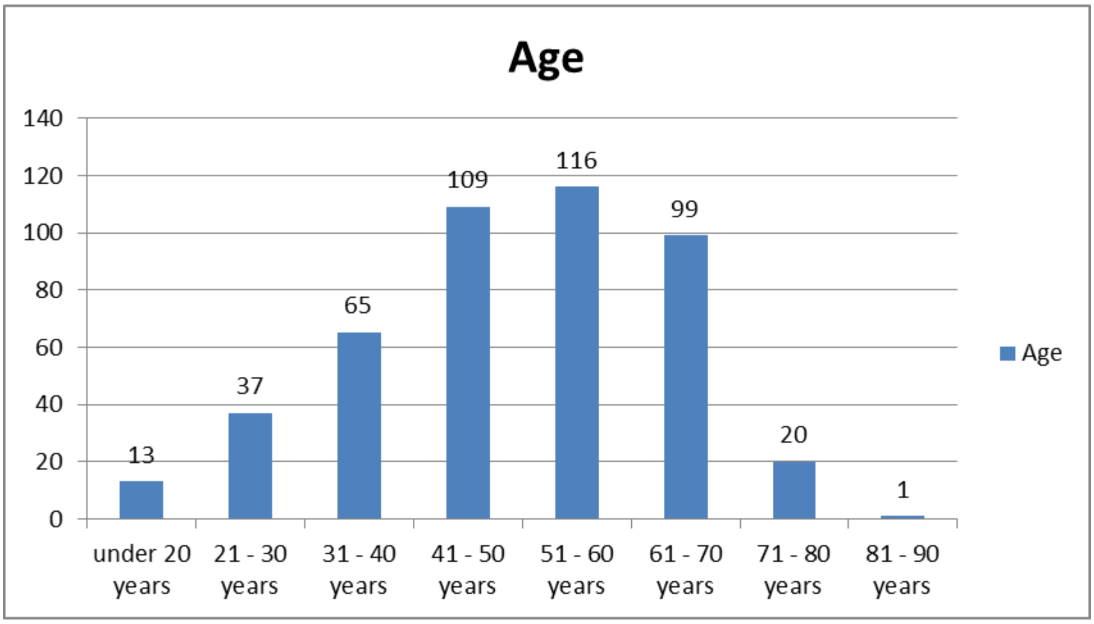
### 6.1.1 Background questions

The background questions involve the respondents' gender, age and mother tongue. The question of age was an open-ended question, with no alternatives provided, while the other two were close-ended questions. In the first question the respondent's gender was asked, and as shown in graph 2 below, the majority of all respondents, 58 % (264 respondents), was male and 42 % (192 respondents) was female.



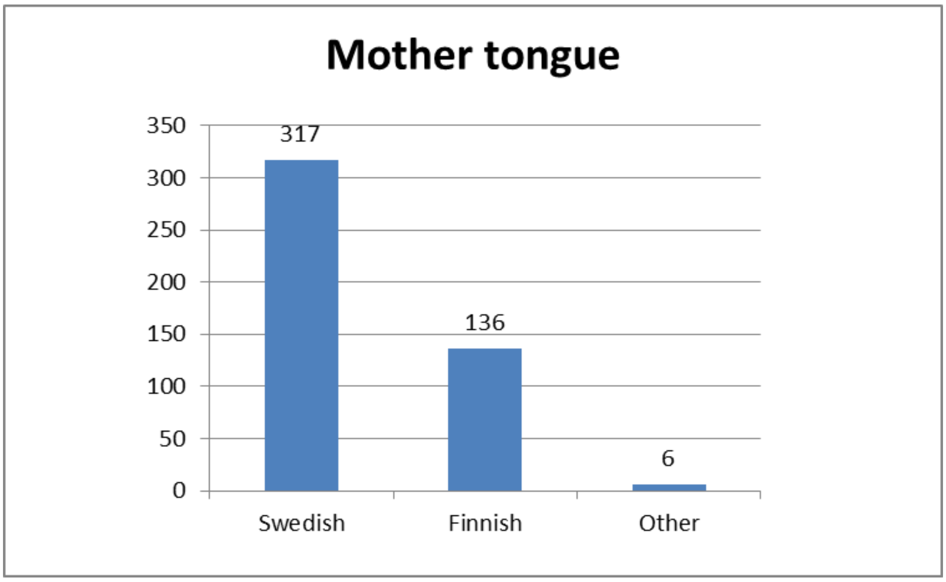

GRAPH 2. The division of the respondents' gender

The division of the respondents’ age is shown in graph 3, where the ages have been divided into different age groups. The majority of the respondents were in the upper mid-ages, around 51-60 years of age. The respondent of the youngest age was 16 years old and the oldest respondent was 89 years of age. The average age of all respondents was 50 years. The age of the respondents is most likely an impacting factor when it comes to what interests the respondent on the destinations and what is desired of the boat trip, which will be brought up further on in the chapter.



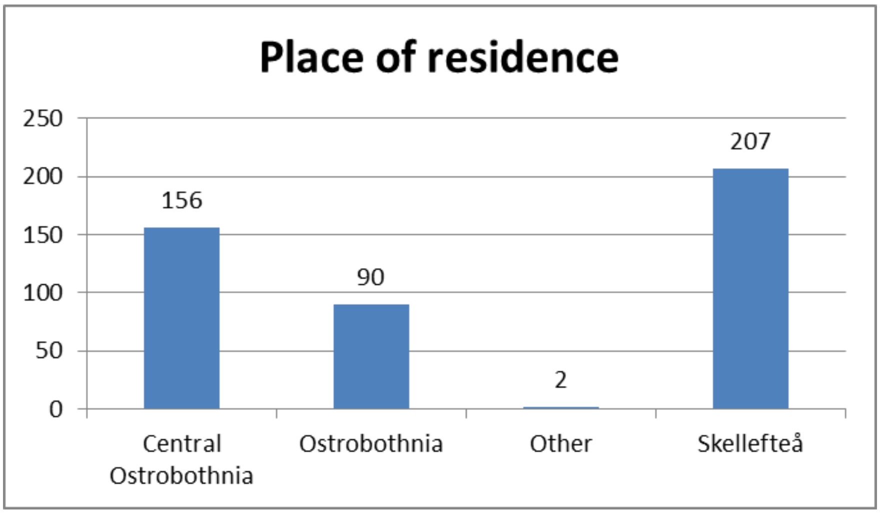

GRAPH 3. The age of the respondents according to age groups

In question three, the mother tongue of the respondent was enquired for, which is demonstrated in graph 4 below. Most respondents had Swedish as their mother tongue, a total of 317 respondents out of 459 (leaving two missing values). The percentage of Swedish-speaking respondents was 69 % and the share of Finnish-speaking was 30 %, respondents speaking other languages constituted 1 %. Among the Finnish respondents the share of Swedish-speaking was 44 %. As for the Swedish respondents, there was one Finnish-speaking respondent and one respondent speaking another language. The five other speaking other languages were Finnish respondents.




GRAPH 4. The mother tongue of the respondents

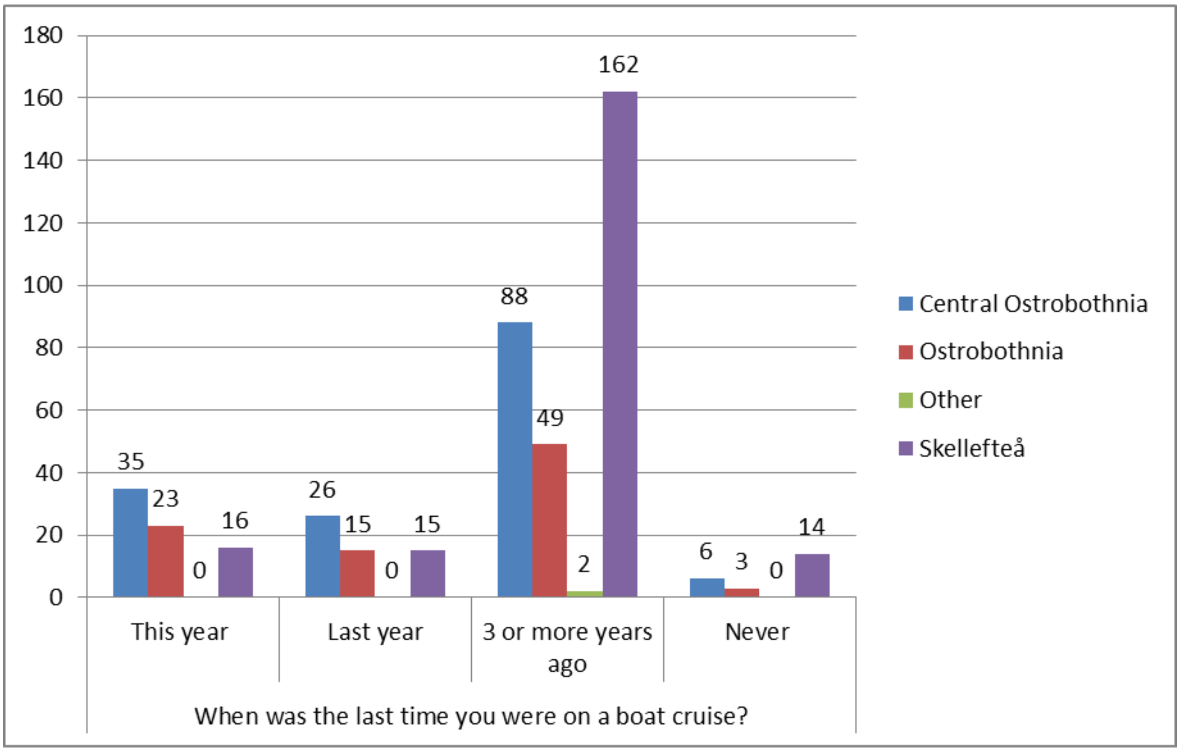
The place of residence of the respondents appears in graph 5. All 211 Swedish respondents were residents of Skellefteå, though, due to the four missing values in the question, the graph features 207 respondents from Skellefteå. As for the 250 Finnish respondents (of which two left missing values), the place of residence for 156 respondents, the majority, was Central Ostrobothnia (including Kokkola). 90 Finnish respondents were from Ostrobothnia (including eg. Pietarsaari and Vaasa) and two respondents lived elsewhere.




GRAPH 5. The respondents' place of residence

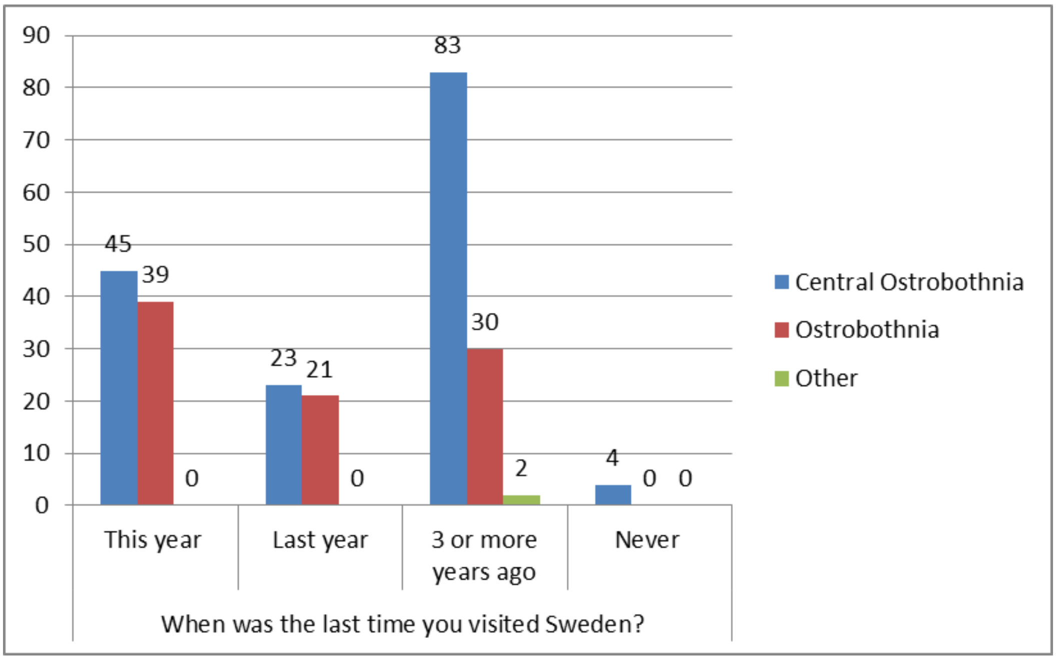
### 6.1.2 Time of previous travels

In question five, the respondent was requested to answer when the last time the respondent went on a boat cruise. Graph 6 shows the respondents' frequency of going on a boat cruise, according to the place of residence of the respondents. Respondents from Central Ostrobothnia were the most active in going on boat cruises, during the last two years. Most of the respondents, from all regions, went on a boat cruise three or more years ago, and particularly respondents from Skellefteå attended a boat cruise three or more years ago. There were also some respondents who had never gone on a boat cruise, most of them were from Skellefteå, but these were a minority.




GRAPH 6. The frequency of going on a boat cruise based on the place of residence

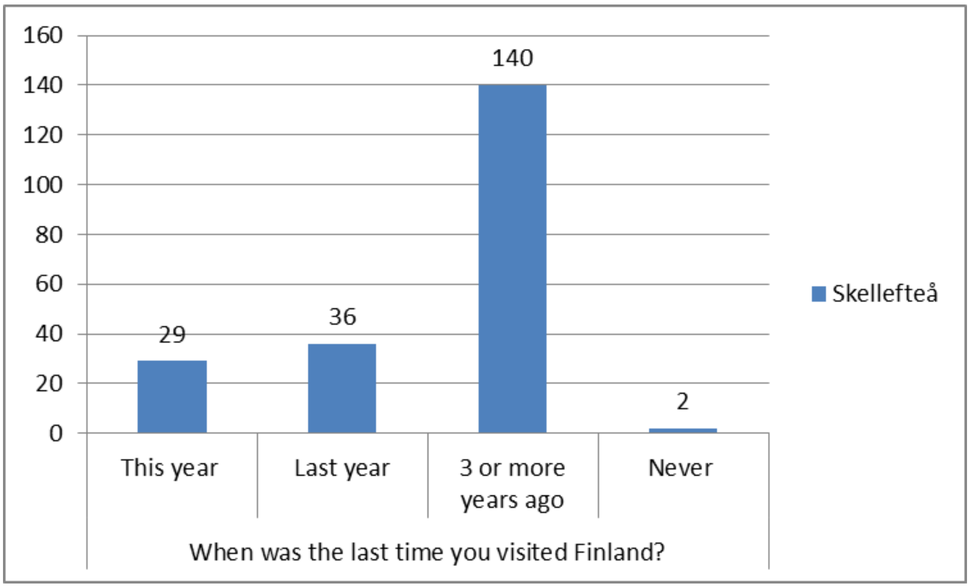
Graph 7 indicates when the respondents from the region of Kokkola last went to Sweden, with a division of the respondents' place of residence. Respondents from Central Ostrobothnia travelled to Sweden primarily three or more years ago, while the majority of respondents from Ostrobothnia last went to Sweden within the same year. Common for residents of both regions is that most have travelled either recently (the same year) or for some years ago (three or more years), as there is a decline in the respondents who last travelled last year. There is also a small share of the respondents from Central Ostrobothnia, 4 out of 155, who have never been to Sweden.




GRAPH 7. The Finnish respondents' frequency of visiting Sweden, according to the respondents' place of residence

The Swedish respondents were asked when they last visited Finland, and these results are displayed in graph 8. The majority of the inquired Swedes, 140 out of 207 (68 %), last visited Finland three or more years ago. Two respondents had never visited Finland, and not more than 29 respondents had visited Finland during the same year. Compared with the results of the Finnish respondents, one can identify that the Finnish respondents more often visit the neighbouring country than the Swedes visit Finland.

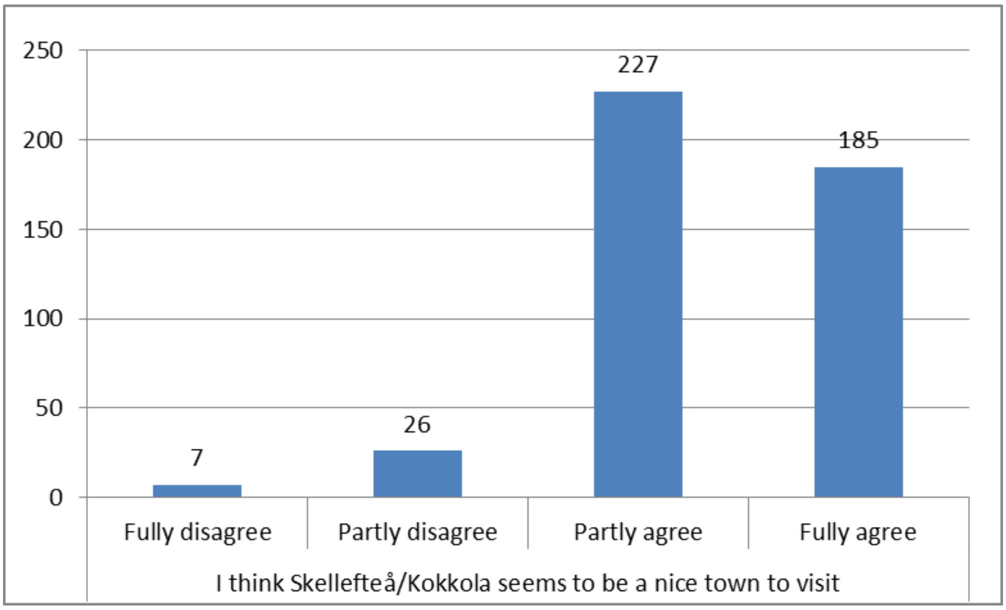
Many respondents, from both Finland and Sweden, had last travelled to the neighbouring country, and been on a boat cruise, for three or more years ago, possibly during the time when there was a ferry line from Skellefteå to Kokkola/Pietarsaari. Since the ferry line came to an end, the easy access to travel vanished for the northerners of Finland and Sweden, who now have had to fly, drive to the border in north or take the southern ferry lines, to reach the neighbouring country.




GRAPH 8. The Swedish respondents' frequency of visiting Finland

### 6.1.3 Interest in Skellefteå/Kokkola as a destination

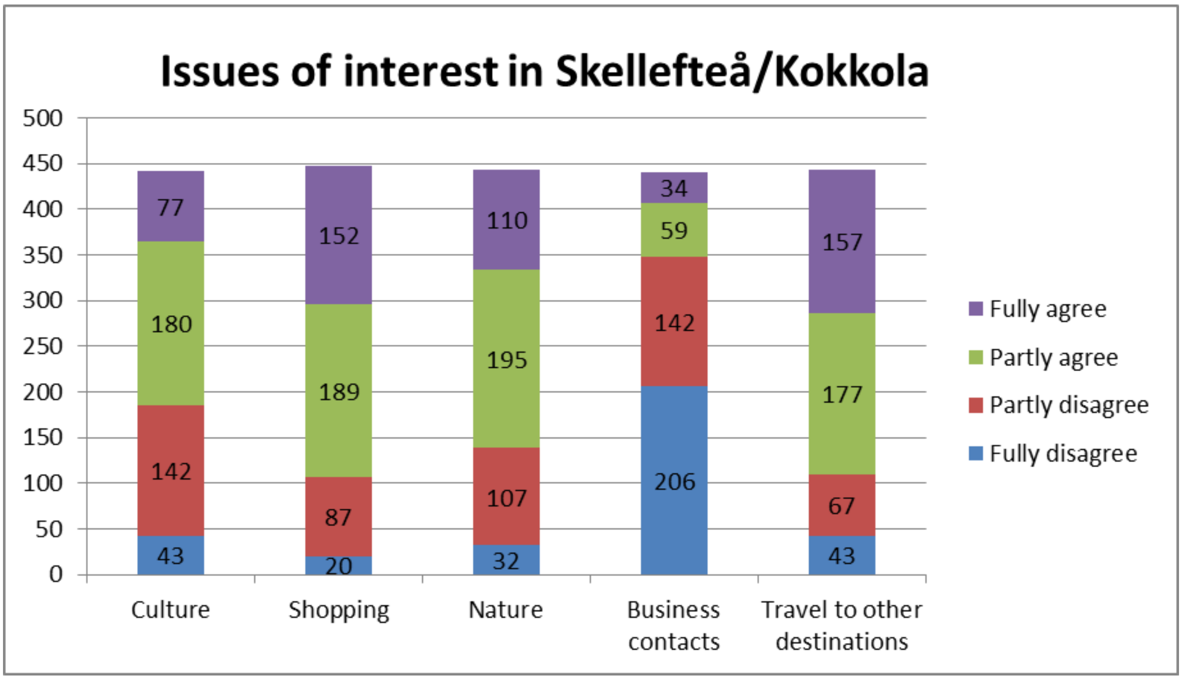
In the seventh question, the respondent was requested to circle the alternative best corresponding to his/her opinion on what the destinations Skellefteå/Kokkola have to offer. The first matter was whether the respondent thinks that Skellefteå (for the Finnish respondents) or Kokkola (for the Swedish respondents) seems to be a nice town to visit. As graph 9 presents, the majority, 227 out of 445, partly agreed that Skellefteå/Kokkola would be of interest and 185 respondents fully agreed. Seven respondents fully disagreed with the statement that Skellefteå/Kokkola would be a nice town to visit. Although the graph does not expose whether Skellefteå or Kokkola is of more interest to the respondents, there seems to be a general interest in visiting the destinations Skellefteå and Kokkola.




GRAPH 9. The respondents' standpoints on the statement 'I think Skellefteå/Kokkola seems to be a nice town'

The respondent was also asked to indicate what she/he finds interesting in Skellefteå/Kokkola, the cultural selection, shopping opportunities, experiencing the nature or business contacts. Also whether the respondent is interested in travelling to other destinations through Skellefteå or Kokkola was inquired for. By observing graph 10 and the statement most respondents agreed with, it is clear that travelling to other destinations from Skellefteå/Kokkola would be of interest for many, as 157 respondents out of 444 fully agreed with the statement. The shopping opportunities also seem to be of great interest, seeing that 152 respondents agreed fully with the statement.

Experiencing nature is also a popular issue of interest, with 110 respondents, out of 444, fully agreeing with the statement. Of least interest, was creating business contacts in the regions, perhaps because of the age structure of the respondents. Impacting the results, were also the missing values of this question, since some respondents chose an alternative for only one statement, leaving the others empty. However, in general it appears that the respondents are in fact interested in what the regions have to offer, and especially leisure activities attract the respondents, in contrast to doing business.



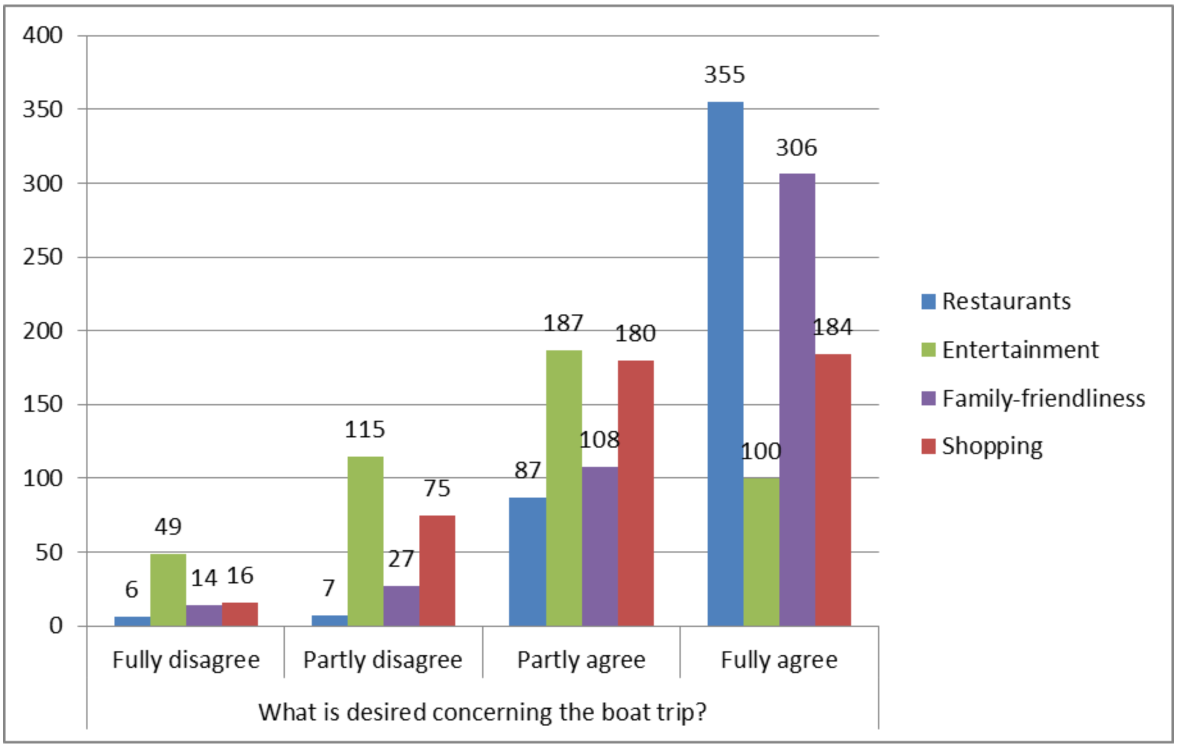

GRAPH 10. Issues of interest in visiting Skellefteå/Kokkola

The respondents also had the possibility to freely comment and express their opinion in the open-ended question concerning the destinations - Skellefteå for the Finnish respondents and Kokkola for the Swedish respondents. A common perception was that the destinations are quite unfamiliar to many respondents, and therefore they found it rather difficult to answer the questions about, for instance, the destination's shopping opportunities and cultural selection. In general, though, many would find it interesting to explore the destinations. Some respondents that were familiar with the destinations from the time when there still was a ferry connection between Skellefteå and Kokkola/Pietarsaari, commented that they would find it exciting to relive the memories from the boat trips of the past.

### 6.1.4 Opinions on the boat trip and services on board

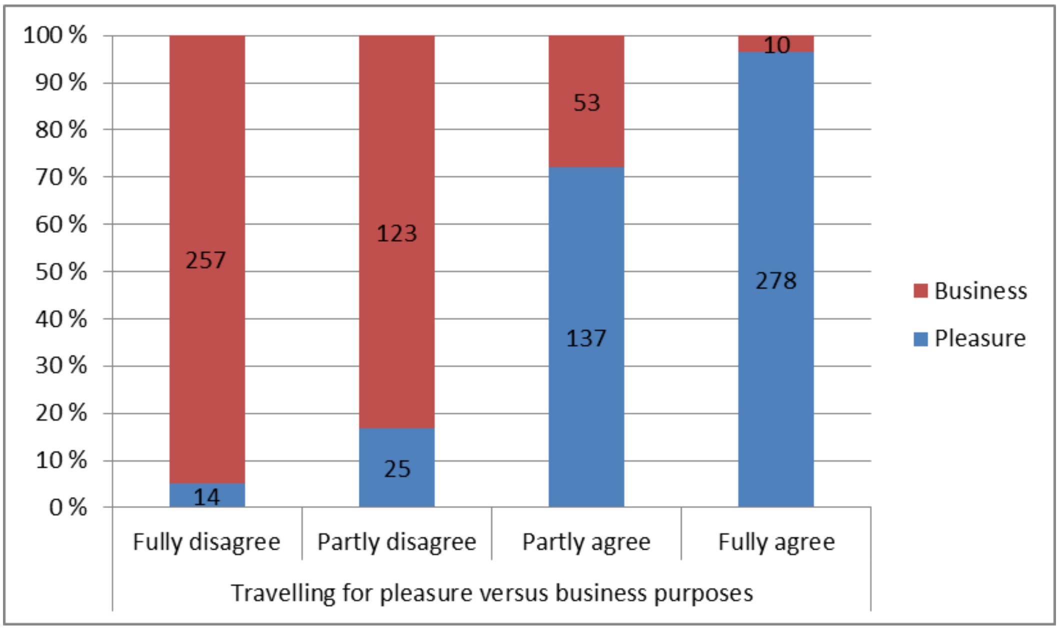
Hereafter the respondents' opinions on the boat trip itself and the services desired on board, will be presented. Related to this, are also the factors impacting on the respondents' decision to travel by boat and thus, causes for using the ferry line. In question eight in the questionnaire, the respondents were, again, asked to choose the alternative that best corresponded to the concerned statement. The first statements regarded which possibilities should be offered to the passengers on the boat, according to the respondent. Indicated in graph 11, restaurants are of very high importance, as 355 out of 455 respondents (78 %) were of the opinion that good food service on board is important.

Important is also for families with children to be able to have a family-friendly boat trip with activities for the children. As 306 out of 455 respondents fully agreed with that it is important to be able to bring the whole family, family-friendliness is almost as important as good food service according to the respondents. As for shopping, 184 respondents fully agreed, and 180 partly agreed, with shopping opportunities also being important to have on board the boat. Of least importance of the four concerns appears to be entertainment on board, seeing as most respondents, compared to the three other questions, fully disagreed (49 respondents).




GRAPH 11. The respondents' standpoint on the importance of restaurants, entertainment, family-friendliness and shopping on board

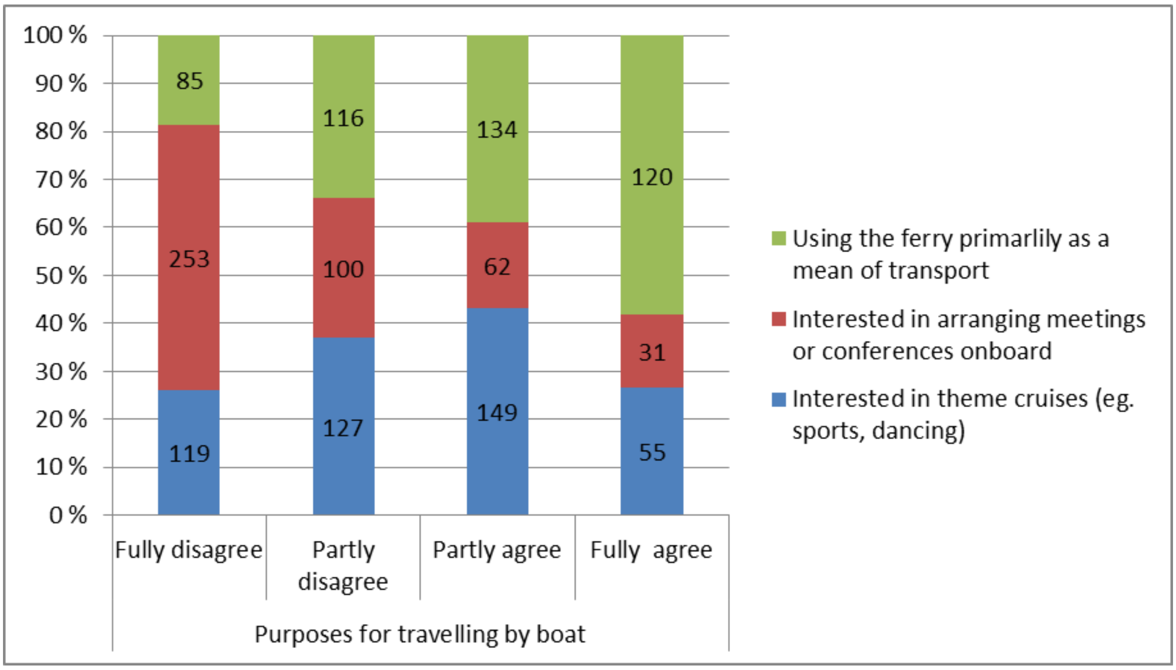
The purpose of using the ferry line is featured in graph 12. Clearly, most respondents would travel for pleasure purposes in contrast to business purposes. 278 respondents fully agreed with that the boat trip would primarily be for pleasure, while only 10 respondents fully agreed with the boat trip being primarily for business. A rather substantial share of the respondents partly agreed or partly disagreed with the trip being for pleasure, respectively for business, which may suggest that the respondents potentially would interfuse pleasure with business on the trip. In general, though, it appears that the respondents would use the ferry for purposes of pleasure. This could also be observed in graph 10, where establishing business contacts in the region were much less interesting than leisure activities, according to the respondents.




GRAPH 12. The respondents' standpoint in the purpose of using the ferry line

The respondent was also asked more specifically about the purposes for using the ferry and which activities would be of interest for the respondent. Graph 13 shows the respondents' viewpoint on whether the ferry would primarily be used as a mean of transport, and the respondents' interest in theme cruises and arranging meetings or conferences on board. 120 respondents fully agreed with that the boat would mainly be a mean of transport, which suggests that activities on the destination appeal to the respondents, rather than activities on board the boat. The interest in attending theme cruises (for example sports or dance cruises), was fairly neutral, as most respondents partly agreed or partly disagreed with theme cruises being of interest.

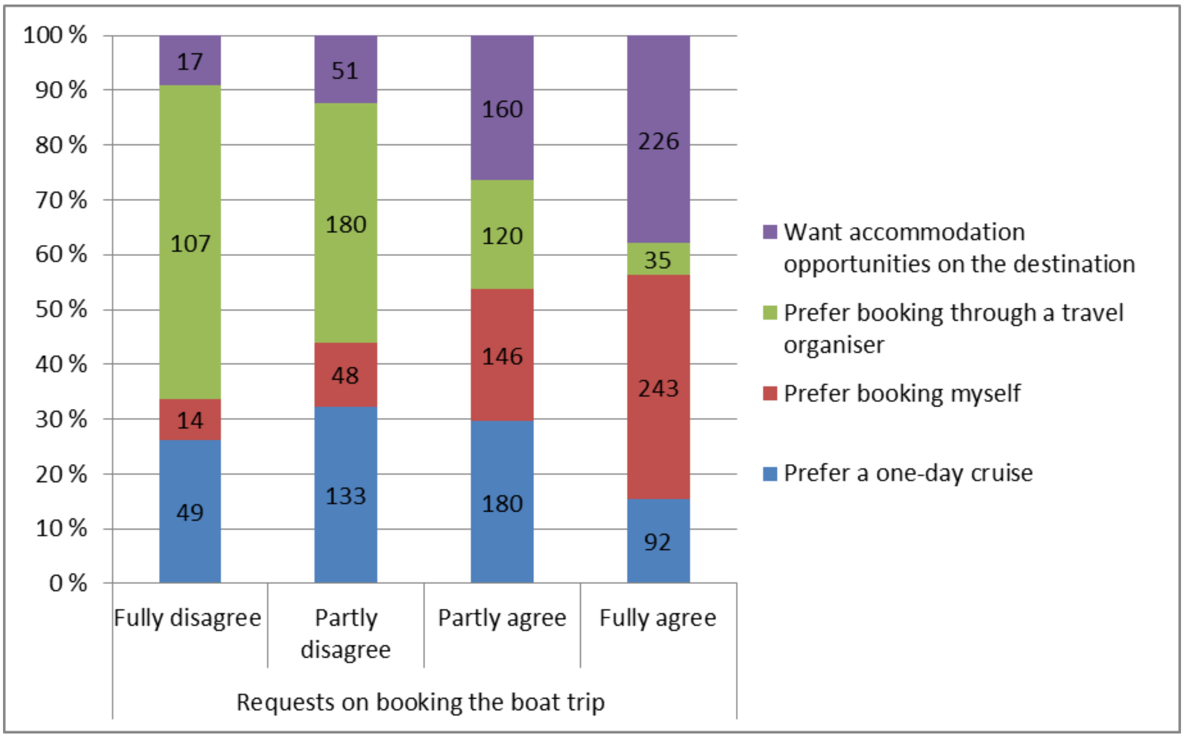
As already noticed, doing business on the destinations is not of interest to most respondents. Nor arranging meetings or conferences on board was of high interest to the respondents, seeing that 253 respondents out of 446 fully disagreed with that such business arrangements would be of interest. Only 31 respondents, who fully agreed, would want to arrange meetings or conferences on board. Although the interest in business trips with the ferry does not seem to be very high, it would be, in the researcher's view, favourable to have capacity for arranging meetings on the boat in order to serve all types of customers.




GRAPH 13. The respondents' interest concerning business arrangements on board, theme cruises and the primarily ground for using the ferry line

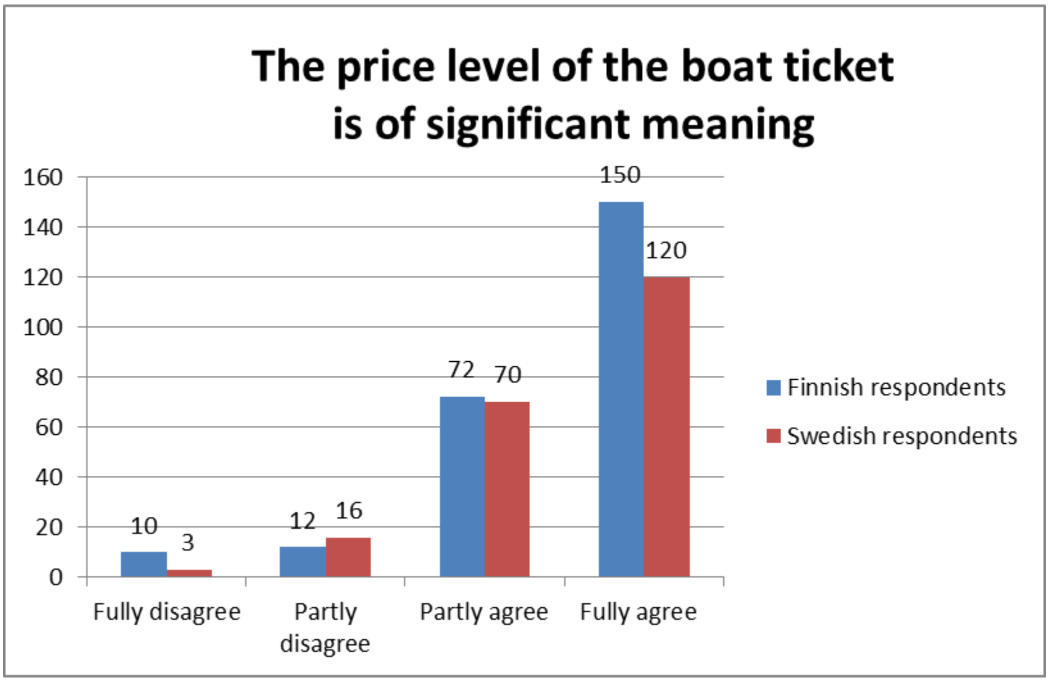
The respondents' preferences regarding the booking of the boat trip, asked in question nine, is indicated in graph 14 below. Most respondents (243 fully agreeing respondents and 14 fully disagreeing) prefer booking the boat trip themselves rather than having it booked by a travel organizer. Presumably the preference of booking is associated with the age of the respondent, since the younger generation of travellers is nowadays used to doing the booking and arrangements of trips by themselves.

Most respondents also want opportunities to accommodate on the destination (Skellefteå/Kokkola), as 226 respondents fully agreed, and 17 fully disagreed, with wanting to stay overnight ashore. Although many respondents would like to stay overnight on the destination, one-day cruises would also be of interest to a substantial share of the respondents. Most respondents either fully agreed or partly agreed, in contrast to fully or partly disagreed, with preferring to go on a one-day cruise. The departure time and time of return of the ferry would presumably be significant matters in whether the one-day cruises would be appealing to the passengers or if they instead perhaps would like to stay on the destination for longer.




GRAPH 14. The respondents' preferences concerning the booking of the boat trip and the composition of it

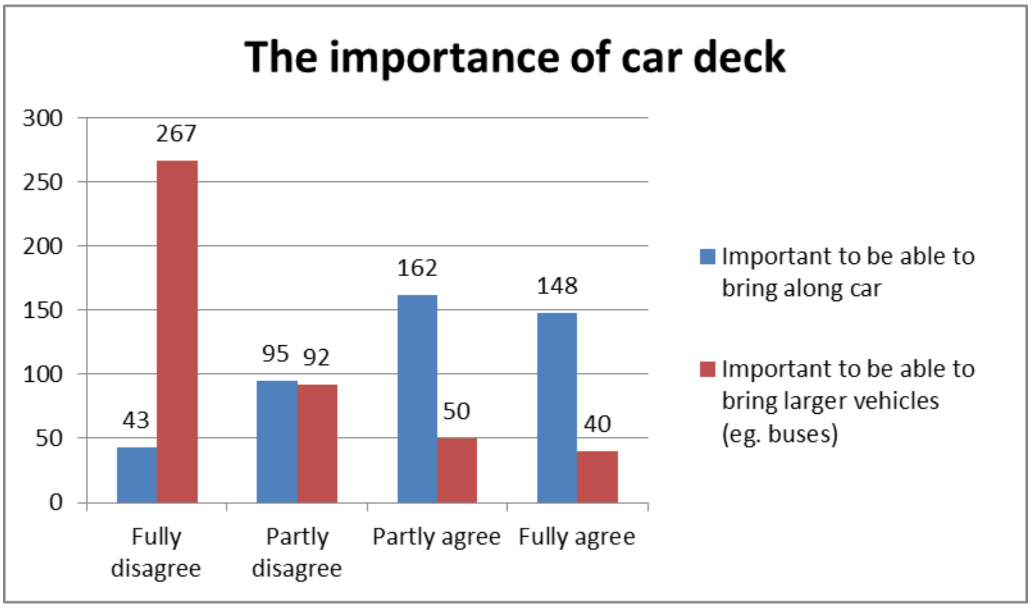
The price of the boat ticket seems to be conclusive for whether the respondents would use the ferry line or not. This is proved in graph 15, with a division of the opinions of the Finnish respondents as well as the Swedish respondents. 150 out of 244 Finnish respondents (61.5 %) and 120 out of 209 respondents from Sweden (57.5 %), fully agreed with the ticket's price level being of great significance. A substantial share, 72 Finnish respondents and 70 Swedish respondents, partly agreed with the importance of the price level. Only ten Finnish respondents, respectively three Swedish respondents fully disagreed with the statement. Thus, in order for the ferry line to attract passengers, the price should be set at a level that the passengers are willing to pay for it. The respondents' opinions on the price they are willing to pay are featured further on in chapter 6.1.7.




GRAPH 15. The respondents' standpoint in the significance of the boat ticket's price level

Significant to the possibilities the ferry line would offer, is whether the boat would be including a car deck, and thereby enable the passengers to bring along their car, or other vehicles, on the trip. Graph 16 implies that most respondents (162 respondents) partly agreed that being able to bring the car is important. 148 respondents fully agreed and 43 fully disagreed with the card deck being important. Perhaps the respondents not wanting to bring the car to the destination might be more interested in one-day cruises or the activities on board the boat.

The respondent was also asked about her/his viewpoint on whether a car deck with the capacity of also larger vehicles (for example buses), is important. In this question the majority (267 respondents fully disagreeing) did not think the possibility to bring larger vehicles is important. Out of 449 respondents, 40 respondents fully agreed, and 50 respondents partly agreed with a large car deck being important. Supposedly these respondents who do not think that the ability to bring larger vehicles is important, the researcher believes would be more interested in using more of a cruise ship-type of ferry with activities on board, rather than a ferry similar to a cargo ship.



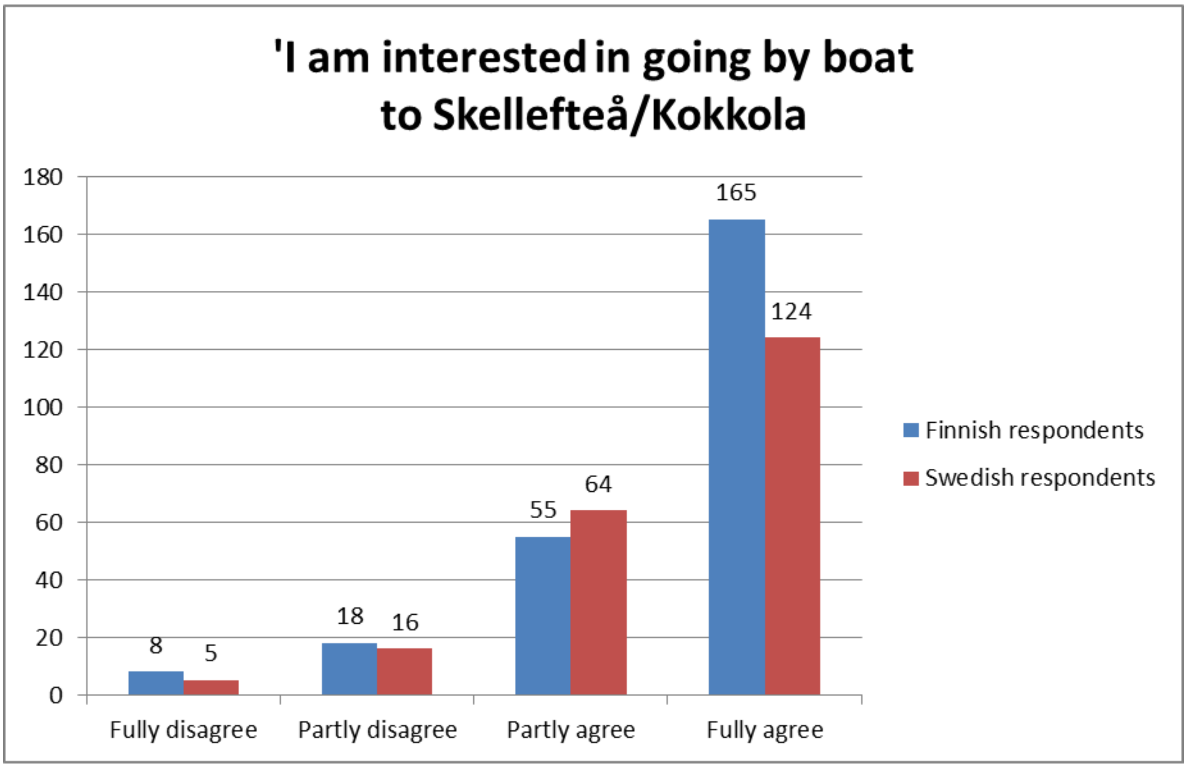

GRAPH 16. The respondents' standpoint in the importance of a car deck on the boat

### 6.1.5 Likelihood of using the ferry line

The questions of most significance to the research are the questions concerning the respondent's interest in using the potential ferry line and the likelihood of that happening. In question ten, the first matter inquire into whether the respondents have an interest in utilising the ferry line. Graph 17 below attests that 165 out of

246 Finnish respondents, and 124 out of 209 Swedish respondents, fully agreed with the statement 'I am interested in going by boat to Skellefteå/Kokkola'.

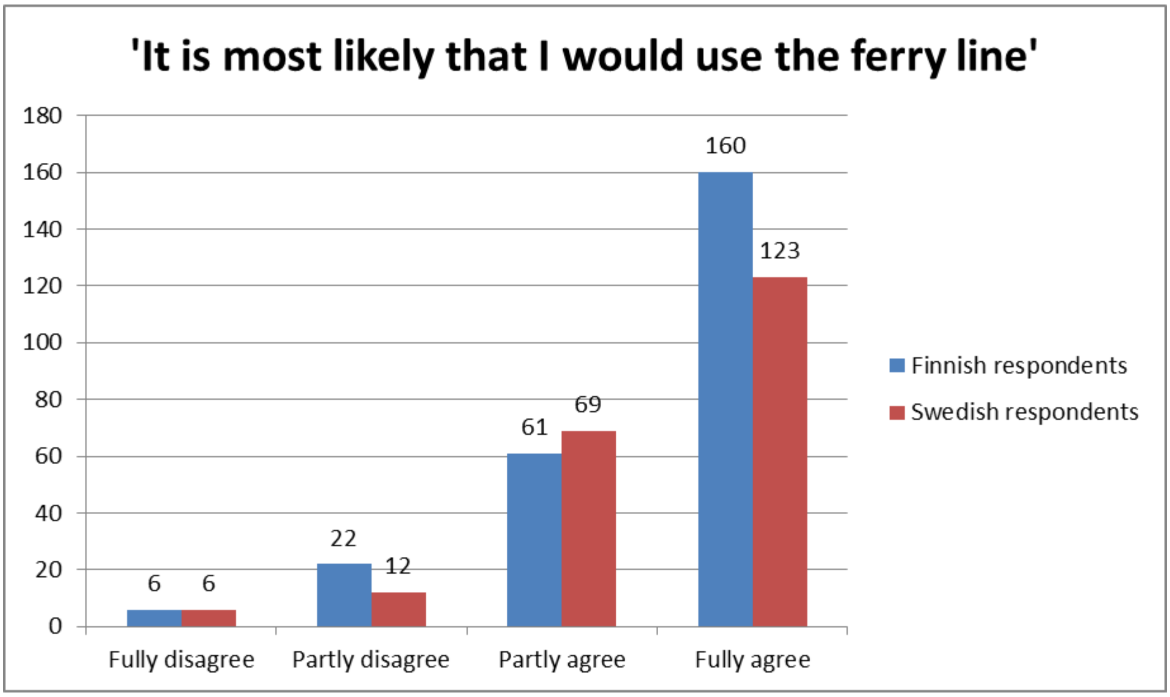
In percentage that makes 67 % of the Finnish respondents and 59 % of the Swedish, who would have an interest in using the ferry line. The share of respondents who partly agreed with the statement was, from Finland, 55 respondents (22 %), and from Sweden, 64 respondents (31 %). Eight Finnish respondents and five Swedish respondents had no interest in using the ferry line. In general though, there seems to be a substantial share of respondents with an interest in travelling by boat to Skellefteå/Kokkola.




GRAPH 17. The Finnish respectively Swedish respondents' interest in using the ferry line

Another core statement of the research that the respondents were asked to express their views on, was 'It is most likely that I would use the ferry line if it would start operating'. As shown in graph 18, 160 Finnish respondents out of 249, and 123 out of 210 Swedish respondents, fully agreed with the statement, which is approximately 64 % of the Finnish respondents and 58 % of the Swedish. 61 Finnish respondents and 69 Swedish respondents, who partly agreed, estimated the probability of using the ferry line to be fairly high.

Only six respondents from both Finland and Sweden, who fully disagreed with the statement, would most likely not utilise the ferry line if it was actualised. The results clearly clarify that the majority of the respondents would most likely use the ferry if it would start operating. However, the probability of the respondents actually using it when, and if, the ferry line would open, is presumably affected by whether it would live up to the respondents' expectations and imagination of what the boat trip and the ferry should be like.

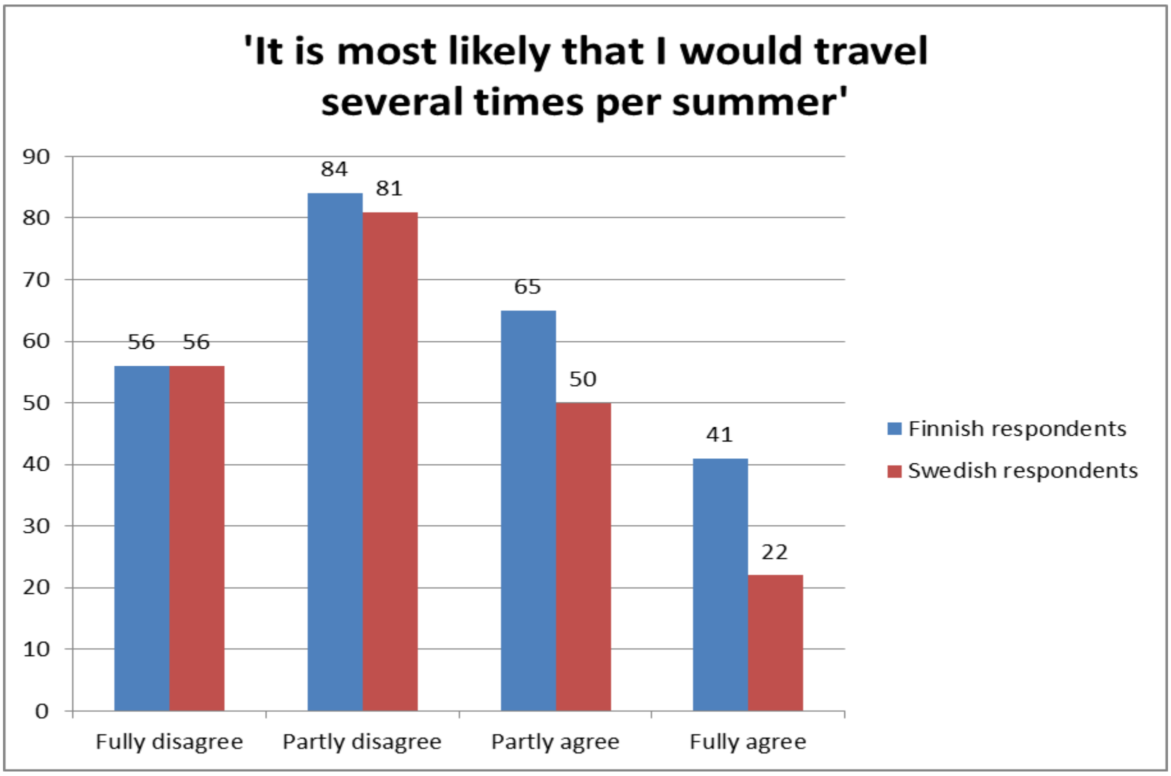



GRAPH 18. The Finnish respectively Swedish respondents' likelihood of using the ferry line

The likelihood of the respondent using the ferry line several times per summer was also asked, and the result is shown in graph 19 below. Most respondents, 84

Finnish respondents and 81 Swedish respondents, partly disagreed with the likelihood of using the ferry line several times per summer. 56 respondents from both Finland and Sweden fully disagreed and would most likely not use the ferry line more than once per summer, or possibly not at all. Least respondents assessed that they most likely would use the ferry line more than once per summer, as 41 Finnish respondents and 22 Swedish respondents fully agreed with the statement.

Comparing the respondents from Finland with the ones from Sweden, it seems that respondents from Finland would be more likely to more frequently utilize the ferry line. The Finnish respondents that fully agreed with the statement were almost double the amount of respondents from Sweden. Causes for travelling several times per summer might be for business-related purposes, visiting friends and family in the regions, or some might have family-summer cottages on the other side of the Bay.

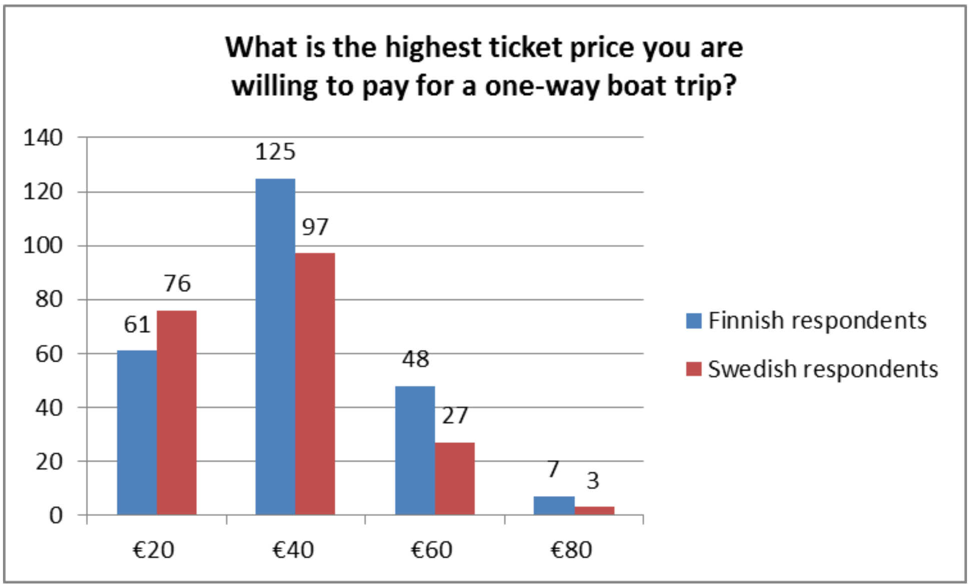



GRAPH 19. The Finnish respectively Swedish respondents' likelihood of using the ferry line several times per summer

### 6.1.6 Price of the boat trip

In question 11 the respondent is inquired after the highest price that she/he would be willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat to Skellefteå/Kokkola. Here the respondents from Finland had rather same opinions concerning the price, as the Swedish respondents. The majority of all respondents were willing to pay a price of maximum 40 euros for a one-way trip, as displayed in graph 20. The Finnish respondents willing to pay 40 euros was in percentage 52 %, and the share of Swedish respondents willing to pay 40 euros was 48 %. Quite many, 61 out of 241 (25%) Finnish respondents and 76 out of 203 (37 %) Swedish respondents were not willing to pay more than 20 euros. Respondents willing to pay 80 euros for the boat trip were only seven Finnish respondents (3 %), respectively three Swedish respondents (2 %).

Finnish respondents were in general willing to pay more than the Swedish respondents. Overall the level of costs in Finland is higher than in Sweden, which partly may explain why the Swedish respondents were not willing to pay as much. Also, since the price alternatives were in the currency euro, the Swedish respondents might not have a comprehension on how high the price alternatives were. With that there might have been difficulties answering the question according to what would correspond to the respondent's opinion. On the other hand it is also possible that the Swedish respondents might not be as interested in using the ferry line and thereby not willing to pay high amounts for using it. However, it is clear that the price level is a decisive matter for the respondents (as shown in graph 15) and the price for a one-way boat ticket should not be more than 40 euros in order for the ferry line to attract passengers.




GRAPH 20. The highest price which the respondents were willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat to Skellefteå/Kokkola

### 6.1.7 Open-ended comments

The respondents were free to comment and express their wishes concerning practical arrangements and the content of the boat trip. One opinion that often came up was that activities for children are important. There should be a play room on the boat for the children, and also easy access to get around with strollers. Many respondents desired comfortable seating with ocean view, and a pleasant and calm atmosphere, while some wanted partying and live music. Important for many is also the food service, requests that were brought up was that home cooked meals, preferably locally produced, should be served as well as lighter meals and snacks. Some respondents wanted to be able to go on a camping holiday, or motor cycle holiday, and wanted a large enough car deck. Good personnel and service on the boat also seems to be of importance to the respondents.

Based on the comments, it also seems to be an interest in package trips to go with the boat trip. Some respondents suggested package trips with activities such as golf, shopping, fishing or sightseeing on the destination, including the boat trip and accommodation. Package trips directed to families with children, including family-friendly activities on the destination, was also one request. One common request was that there should be bus connections from the centre of Skellefteå and Kokkola to the harbours, according to the departure times of the ferry. Another wish was to have bus transportation going farther, for instance Oulu-Kokkola, and also from Pietarsaari to Kokkola. Sufficient car parking at the harbours was also of importance to some respondents.

When it comes to the price of the boat ticket, discounts for families, students, and senior citizens, as well as for school groups and sports clubs, were desired. For most respondents, the price concludes whether the respondents would use the ferry line or not. On the other hand, one comment was that the price is not significant as long as the boat is large and comfortable and the service is good. Some respondents noted that when booking the boat trip, and also on board the boat, the passenger should be able to receive tourist information, maps and information on events on the destination.

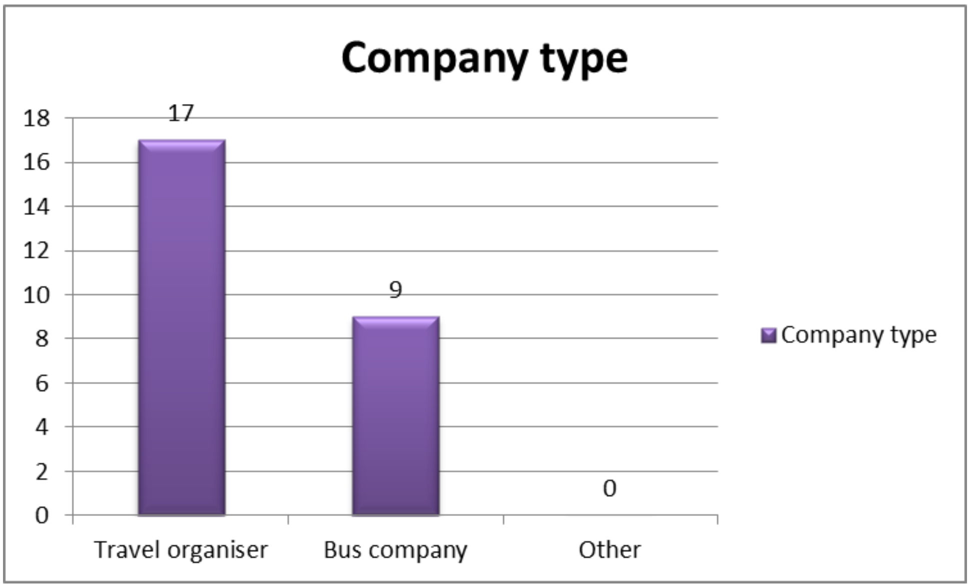
In general, the attitude towards the potential ferry line was positive based on the comments. However, another stated opinion was that the ferry line would not be able to compete with the ferry line from Vaasa to Umeå. Some respondents commented that a functioning ferry line over the Bothnian Bay is certainly of importance. A few commented that they are dependent on the ferry lines because of work, or because they have family on the other side of the Bay. Overall it appears that many respondents have missed the ferry connection from Kokkkola to Skellefteå since it stopped operating, and some think back to the boat trips of the past with a sense of nostalgia.

### 6.2 Part two: researching the interest of travel organisers

In the research of inquiring the travel organisers, mail surveys were sent out to assorted travel organisers within a radius of 300 kilometres from Kokkola, respectively Skellefteå. Out of the 35 companies answering the questionnaire, 18 companies were from Finland and 17 from Sweden. Among them were travel agencies as well as bus companies. The questions were rather similar to the ones aimed at private consumers, but were targeted to the companies and their interest in arranging, for instance, tour packages using the ferry line. Because of the magnitude of the two-parted surveys, the writer of this thesis has concentrated on the results of the 18 travel organisers from Finland only. Hereafter the results of the survey will briefly be presented. The questionnaire addressed to the Finnish travel organisers can be found in appendix 3.

#### 6.2.1 Background questions about the company and its operation

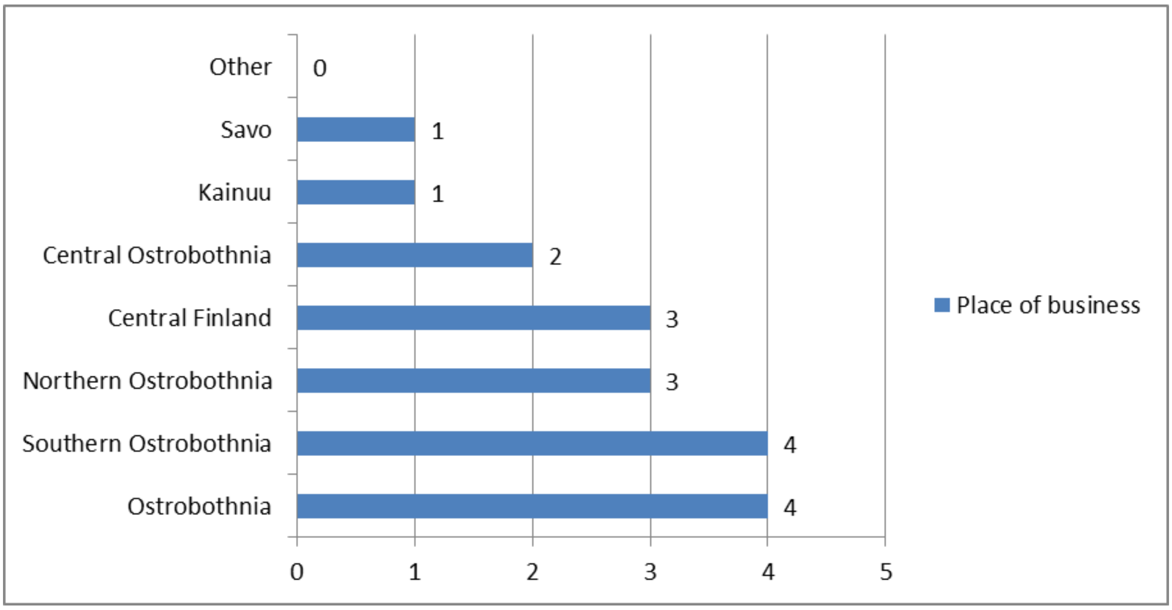
In the first question the companies were asked about their type of company. Since several companies belonged in both categories, the total amount of Finnish travel companies is 26, as shown in graph 21, though the total number of responding companies from Finland is 18. However, the majority of the companies was travel organisers, 17 out of 26, while nine companies were bus companies.




GRAPH 21. The proportion of company types

The question concerning the target group(s) of the travel companies was an open-ended question, which 16 out of 18 companies completed, leaving two missing values. Most companies had several target groups, while three companies had one rather broad target group; senior groups from Southern Finland, leisure travellers and travellers from the region of Ostrobothnia. A handful companies targeted their services, among other things, to companies and business travellers, or associations. Many companies had pensioner groups as one target group, and two companies also had school groups. Common for most companies, however, was that they targeted their services to group travellers.

The place of business of the companies, featured in graph 22, shows that the majority of the companies are situated either in Ostrobothnia (four companies) or Southern Ostrobothnia (four companies). Three companies were located in Northern Ostrobothnia, and three companies in Central Finland. Two companies had their business in Central Ostrobothnia, while one company was from Kainuu and one from Savo.



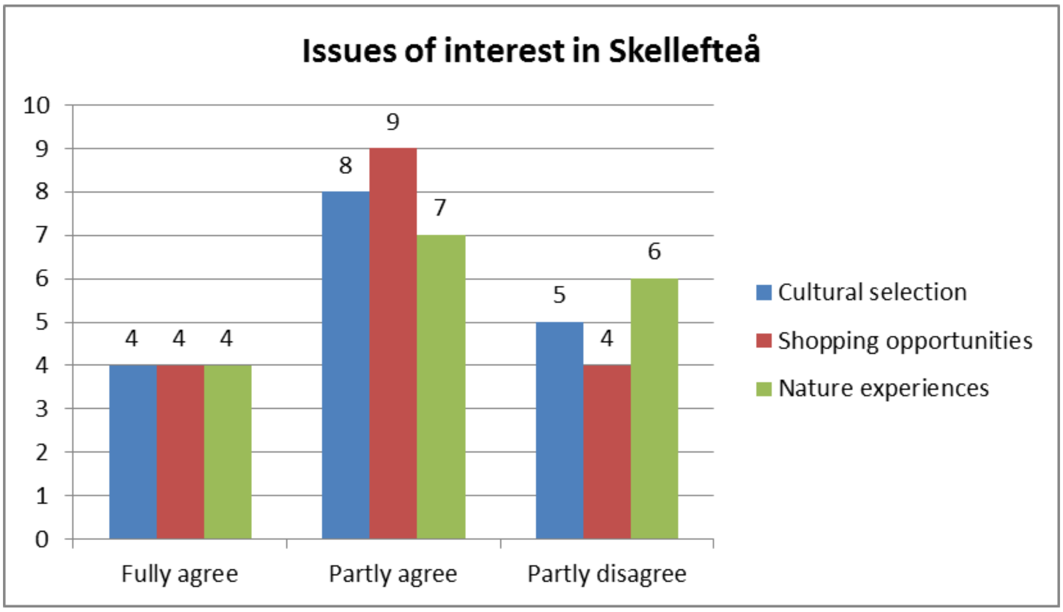

GRAPH 22. The place of business of the travel companies

The companies were also asked whether they organise tour packages and trips to Sweden. Most companies, 15 out of 18 (83 %), regularly organise travel packages. Two companies answered they occasionally organise tour packages and one company does not arrange tour packages. Organising trips to Sweden, is done by eight of the companies regularly (44 %) and nine companies (50 %) occasionally offer trips to Sweden. One of the companies does not arrange trips to Sweden.

### 6.2.2 Interest in Skellefteå/Kokkola as a destination

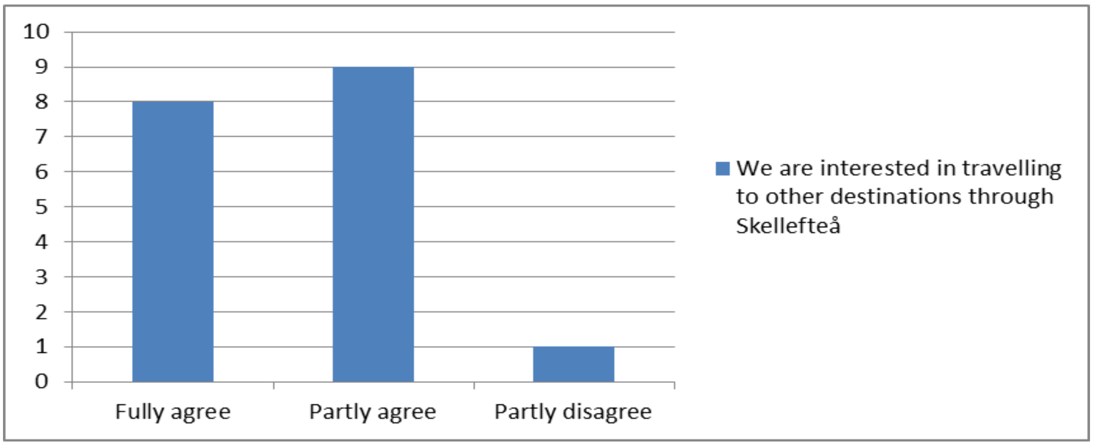
As the private consumers were asked about their interest in the destinations Skellefteå and Kokkola, likewise were the travel companies, only the question for the companies was more meant as what their customers are interested in. The statement 'I think Skellefteå seems to be a nice town to visit', the majority of the companies (56 %) partly agreed with. 33 % of the travel companies fully agreed and 11 % partly disagreed with Skellefteå being a nice town to visit, or further a nice town to arrange trips to.

Graph 23 below, shows which issues of interest that would be interesting to the company, or the customers of the company. Of most interest, the shopping opportunities appear to be, as most respondents agreed (fully and partly) with that shopping in Skellefteå is of interest. The respondents had rather similar answers to this question, and there were no significant differentials in the interest in the culture, shopping and nature in Skellefteå. In this matter the target groups presumably settles what the company would find interesting, and what the company would believe could attract their customers and be suitable for their organisation. There were perhaps some difficulties for the companies to answer the question as the form of a company, as the questions were more directed to one individual, which may have affected the result and the reliability of it.




GRAPH 23. The companies' issues of interest in Skellefteå

The possibility to travel to other destinations through Skellefteå appears to be of interest to most companies, as featured in graph 24. Eight of the companies fully agreed, and nine companies partly agreed with travelling through Skellefteå being of interest. One company partly disagreed and none of the companies fully disagreed. Particularly the responding bus companies might presumably be interested in organising trips to, for instance Northern Sweden, using the ferry line to Skellefteå.

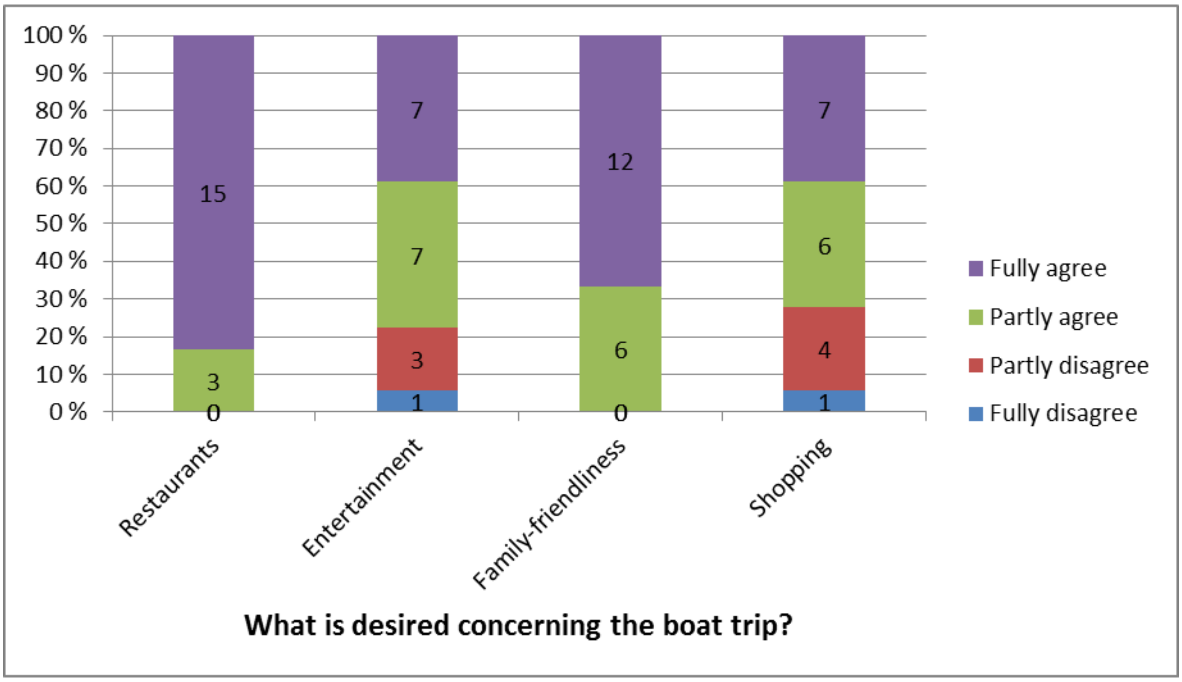



GRAPH 24. The companies' interest in travelling through Skellefteå to other destinations

Based on the open-ended comments concerning Skellefteå as a destination, many companies were rather unfamiliar with the destination and therefore found it difficult to give direct answers to what would be of interest. Another comment was that Skellefteå might be of interest also to their current customers, and regarded the short boat trip as an advantage. Two companies commented that the location of Skellefteå is suitable because of easy access to other destinations of interest in Sweden, as well as in Norway.

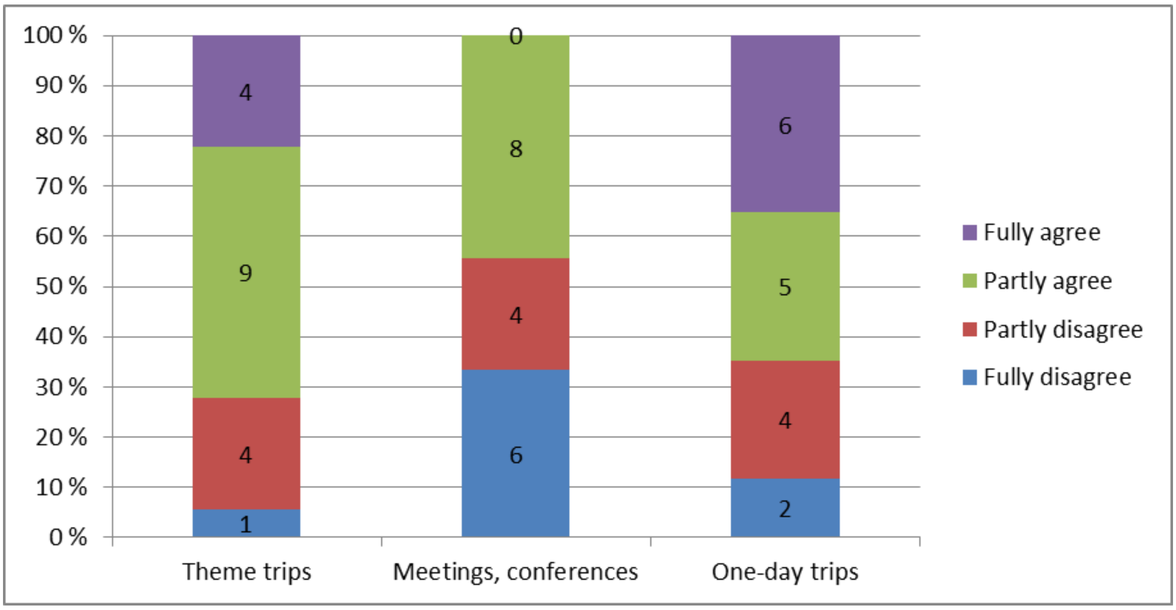
### 6.2.3 Opinions on the boat trip and the services on board

When it comes to what the boat trip should look like, and what is important to have on the boat, the companies' opinions mostly correspond to the opinions of the private consumers. Of highest importance are restaurants, with 15 companies fully agreeing (as shown in graph 25), and three companies partly agreeing, with good food service being important to have on the boat. To be able to bring the whole family on a family-friendly trip is important also to the companies, of which 12 fully agreed and six partly agreed. Entertainment and shopping on board is almost of equal importance, according to the companies, though entertainment is slightly ahead of shopping in importance.



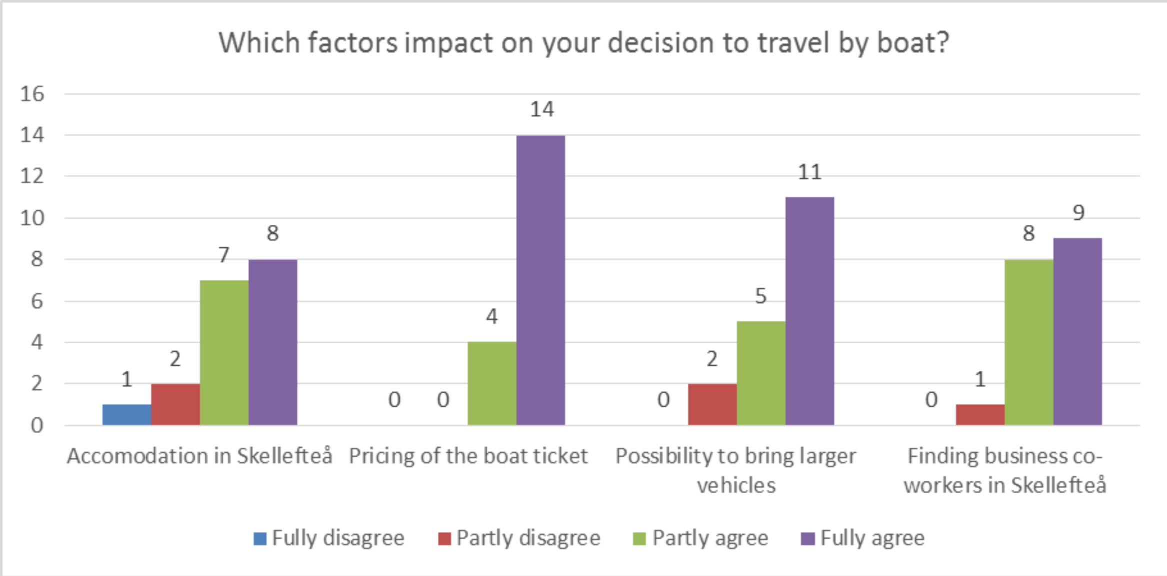

GRAPH 25. The companies' standpoint on what is important to have on the boat

The companies were also asked about their interest in theme trips (for instance sports or dancing cruises), arranging meetings or conferences on board and one-day cruises. The results of this question can be viewed in graph 26. As for theme trips, the majority partly agreed with theme trips being interesting for the company. The companies appear to have a rather equal interest in theme trips and in one-day cruises. Not so interesting, though, is arranging meetings or conferences on board, seeing that six companies fully disagreed, and none fully agreed, with that business arrangements on board would be of interest.




GRAPH 26. The companies' interest in different boat trips and meeting arrangements on board

In graph 27, the companies' opinions on practical factors concerning the boat trip and opportunities with the ferry route are featured. The price of the boat ticket was earlier noted as highly determinant for the private consumers, and likewise for the companies. Many companies also find the possibility to bring larger vehicles on the boat important, a rather obvious request for at least the bus companies. Moreover, being able to find good business co-workers in Skellefteå, as well as accommodation opportunities in Skellefteå for their customers, is of importance to most companies. The importance of co-operation with the local companies is a rather self-evident matter, especially if the companies intend to offer, for instance, tour packages in the region of Skellefteå.

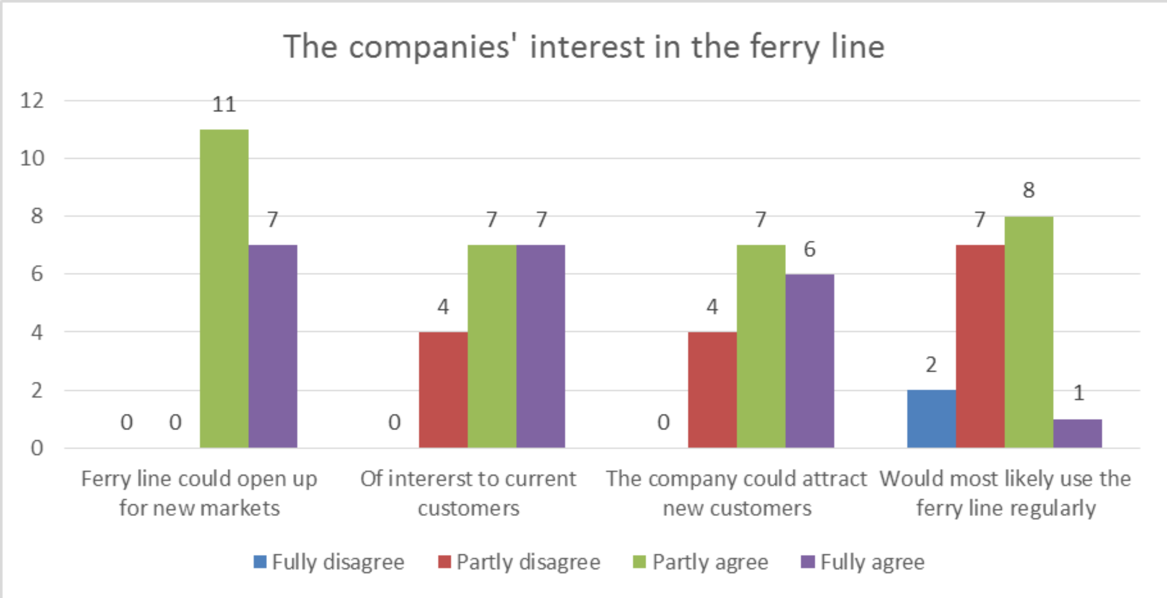



GRAPH 27. The companies' standpoint on practical factors impacting on the decision to use the ferry line

### 6.2.4 Interest in the ferry line

A very central question in the survey is obviously regarding how interested the travel companies are in using the potential ferry line. As indicated in graph 28, the companies were clearly of the opinion that the ferry line could open up for new markets for the companies, as all companies either fully or partly agreed with the statement. Many companies also believed that the ferry line would be of interest to their current customers, seeing that the majority agreed, either fully or partly. Most companies also agreed with the possibility to be able to attract new customers by using the ferry line.

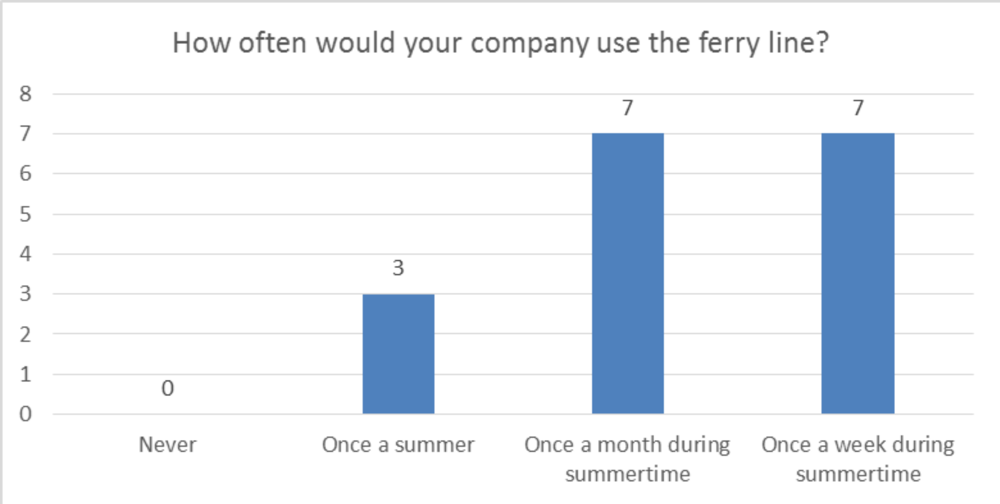
As for the companies' probability to use the ferry line on a regular basis, only one company fully agreed, while the majority either partly agreed or disagreed. Two companies fully disagreed and were not likely to use the ferry line regularly. In general, though, it seems that the companies have an interest in using the ferry line and the companies also appear to acknowledge the possibilities and opportunities that the ferry line could bring to their company.




GRAPH 28. The companies' standpoint on the possibilities with using the ferry line and their interest in it

In graph 29 below, the companies' estimation of how often they would use the ferry line, is featured. The majority of the companies (totally 14 companies, 82 %) believe that they would use the ferry line as often as either once a week or once a month during the summer months. Three companies (18 %) estimated that they would make use of the ferry line once per summer, and none of the companies estimated that they never would use the ferry line.

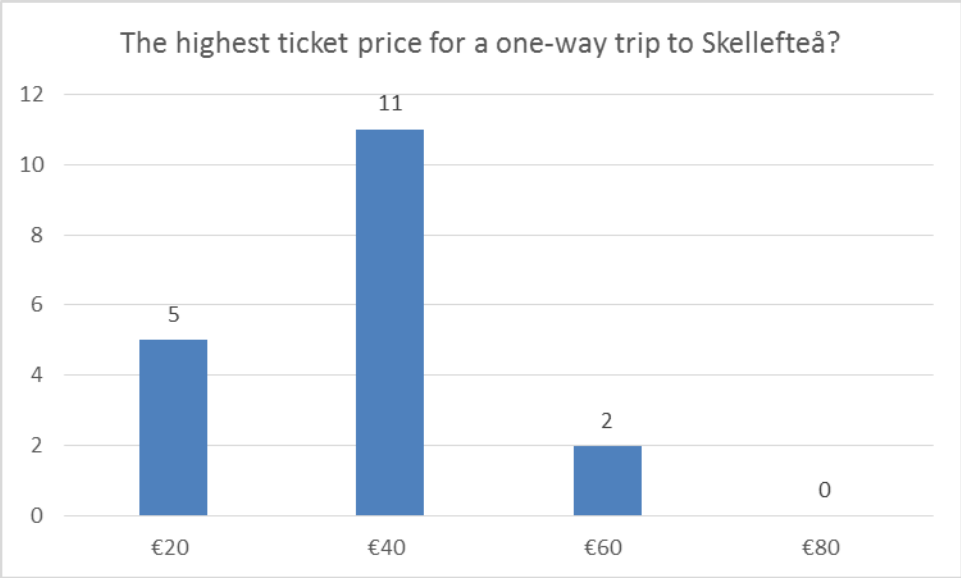
Considering these results, the companies indeed appear to be interested in the ferry line, and moreover, with the intention to use it on a regular basis. However, likewise with the private consumers, these results are highly depending on whether the ferry line would live up to the expectations the companies have on the boat and the arrangements around it. The prosperity of establishing the necessary local co-operations, is presumably also an impacting factor for the companies, on how often they would use the ferry line and whether they would use it all.




GRAPH 29. The companies' estimation of their frequency of using the ferry line

### 6.2.5 Price of the boat trip

The companies' opinion on the price level of a boat ticket is very close to the opinion of the private consumers. As featured in graph 30, most companies (11 companies out of 18) were of the opinion that 40 euros is the highest ticket price they would be willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat (excluding the bus connection). Five companies were not willing to pay more than 20 euros, and two companies could pay 60 euros for the boat trip.




GRAPH 30. The highest ticket price the companies would be willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat to Skellefteå

### 6.2.6 Open-ended comments

The companies also had the possibility to comment freely and express their requests regarding the boat trip and practical arrangements around it. Six of the companies left comments, and generally the companies would welcome a ferry line between Kokkola and Skellefteå. One comment was that if the connection would be opened, a noticeable marketing campaign should be committed in Ostrobothnia in order to attract passengers. Another company promoted tour packages including hotel accommodation, and agreed prices with the hotels for the companies. In-expensive day cruises for families with children were also requested by one company.

One stated comment was that the appearance of the boat is important, and there should be nice and clean spaces on the boat. Similarly to the private consumers' wishes, bus, or even train, connection from the centre to the harbour in Kokkola and Skellefteå, is wanted also by the companies. According to one comment, the timetables should be regular. One company remarked on the fact that the lack of tax free sales would highly affect the customers' will to purchase as well as the price of the boat trip, and that the customers will not be willing to pay high amounts for using the ferry line.

### 6.3 Possibilities and difficulties in implementing the ferry line

The biggest question mark is the profitability of the potential ferry line. The economic aspect is of great relevance, in order for the operation to be manageable. A basic condition is that the ferry traffic would run on a commercial ground and produce revenue. The greatest expense would be to find a suitable ferry to a reasonable price. According to Taito Rintala, member of the board of Kokkola Tourism and one of the investigators, the cost for a new ferry would be 80 million euros and a well-functioning, used ferry would go for approximately 10 million euros. Rintala states, that in order to purchase a ferry, municipal support is necessary. (Slotte 2013.)

Based on the findings of the market research, the inquiry states that in order for the traffic to be lucrative, it will require a passenger number of 100,000 passengers per year and a ticket price of 40 euros per person for a one way trip. According to the majority of the respondents of the research, 40 euros was also the highest amount that the respondents were willing to pay for a one-way trip. Considered to be a disadvantage by the investigators, is the somewhat small catchment area (the area from which the ferry line would attract customers), with a population of 500,000 residents totally in both regions – Kokkola and Skellefteå. Moreover, the history with RG Line, and its unprofitability leading into bankruptcy, might also deterrent customers from using the new ferry line. (Backman 2012.)

Another difficulty is to find an adequate shipping company to undertake the ferry line. If that is not possible, Rintala reckons that the financing would have to be settled with the support of municipalities, regions, private financiers, the government and the European Union. These much needed financial supports have appeared to be somewhat difficult to get granted. Likewise have the shipping companies, whom so far have been inquired of, been distant to the idea. On the other hand, both departure harbours are willing to make the necessary investments in order to operate the passenger ferry traffic, which also would enable the harbours to admit other passenger traffic. (Backman 2012.)

Another inevitable difficulty is the fact that there would be no tax free sales on the boat, which once was the main reason for why the ferry lines were so well in demand. With no tax free, the ticket prices have to be on a much higher level compared to the early 1990's, when the passengers produced the shipping companies' profit by purchasing on board. In the researcher's opinion a positive side of it, though, is that no tax free sales means less consumption of alcohol on board and presumably a calmer, more family-friendly atmosphere on the boat. And family-friendliness was one thing of high importance to, at least, the respondents in the research.

The researcher also believes that the regions Skellefteå and Kokkola, and also the surrounding environs, truly have a great deal to offer the tourists, but evidently the familiarity of the destinations is rather low on both sides of the Bay. In making this potential ferry line attractive and profitable, the researcher believes that marketing plays a huge role in order for the residents to acknowledge the possibilities and beauties on the opposite side of the Bay. In the researcher's view the tourist attractions and hotels, for example, in Ostrobothnia at least, have very little visibility on the internet, as well as in social media, and they are rather modest in marketing themselves. In the experience of the researcher, few hotels even have booking possibilities on the internet. In this area the researcher does believe there are some room for improvement, in order to increase the visibility and knowledge of the destinations and what they have to offer.

An obvious challenge is to be able to compete with the ferry line from Vaasa to Umeå. Seeing that the distance is so short from Kokkola and Vaasa, and from Umeå to Skellefteå, the passengers might as well choose ferry line according to the services available, the price level or appearance, rather than the arrival destination. Especially if Wasa Line manages to find financing for their planned new boat, the researcher suspects the Kokkola-Skellefteå ferry line will not be able to beat the competition. Not at least if the shipping companies do not unite in some sort of collaboration to certain the operation and future of both ferry connections.

### 6.4 SWOT analysis

Below, in table 1, the writer of this thesis has summoned up the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats of the potential ferry line between Kokkola and Skellefteå, in the writer's point of view.

TABLE 1. SWOT-analysis of the potential ferry line

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
|---|---|
| • general public interest<br>• family-friendliness (no tax free)<br>• short distances between destinations | • hard competition<br>• pricing is difficult<br>• no tax free<br>• destinations quite unfamiliar |

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continues)

| | |
|---|---|
| • tourists attractions are concentrated on the destinations<br>• interesting attractions in the surroundings<br>• good possibilities for nature tourism | • information on site not in both languages<br>• tourism companies lacking visibility and booking possibilities on the internet<br>• not much experience of developing tour packages<br>• lack of co-operation among local companies |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| • increase of tourists → more revenue<br>• increase in cruise tourism<br>• development of national and regional co-operation (eg. in marketing) | • regulations of the European Union<br>• weather and other external circumstances<br>• accidents or catastrophes (cf. Estonia) |

Listed as a strength for the potential ferry line (in table 1) is the general interest that the public seems to have in the ferry connection. Because of the past ferry lines between Kokkola and Skellefteå that were well in demand, the researcher feels that many would wish to see a continuation of the ferry traffic on the Bothnian Bay. As already mentioned, the lack of tax free could be perceived as both a strength and a weakness, seeing that the customers’ main cause for travelling would not be for the purchasing of, for instance, alcohol, as often was the case during the tax free times.

The short distance between the two destinations is also a benefit, since the boat trip would not last very long and the connection would offer the residents rather quick access to the neighbouring country. Moreover, on the destinations Kokkola and Skellefteå, the tourism attractions are concentrated within rather short distances, which give possibilities for a wide range of experience even if the customer is on a short day-trip.

Also the environs and regions surrounding the two destinations have a great deal to offer, and with the ferry line there would be good possibilities to travel through Skellefteå or Kokkola to other destinations or countries. Distinctive for the surrounding environs, especially the Northern parts of Finland and Sweden, is the unique nature, which gives great opportunities for nature tourism. However, the research showed that the destinations are quite unfamiliar, which makes good marketing definitely necessary for the customers to first and foremost discover the destinations and what they have to offer. Another weakness is that tourist information and road signs for instance, are seldom in both Finnish and Swedish, which might intimidate customers from visiting the destinations.

As already mentioned, the hard competition in the ferry traffic is a significant difficulty for operating the ferry line. To be able to compete with other ferry lines, the price would have to be on a low but realistic level. Another impacting factor for the pricing of the ferry trip is, again, the lack of tax free. In the researcher's experience, the local tourism companies are not very visible in their marketing and do not have much experience of developing tour packages, and most likely nor co-operation on a national level. Worth mentioning is that the experience of the researcher is regarding the local companies on the Finnish side, and therefore the researcher cannot truthfully speak for the companies in the region of Skellefteå.

Among the opportunities for the potential ferry line is that an increase in tourists creates more revenue, as well as occupations. Furthermore, cruise tourism overall has increased in recent years, which may suggest that there is a general interest in attending boat cruises and travelling by boat. The ferry line could also develop the national and regional co-operation, for instance in marketing, and possibly also create valuable business connections among local companies.

As EU regulations clearly may change the ferry traffic drastically, as we have seen with the tax free prohibition, it can be considered as an external threat to the ferry line, though these matters seldom can be prohibited nor influenced. If we look to the past, the Estonia catastrophe also drastically affected the ferry traffic, and therefore similar accidents or catastrophes are a threat for any ferry traffic. Other external circumstances, such as weather, may also be threatening to the ferry industry, but cannot either be influenced. There could be many more issues to rely on in discussing the opportunities and difficulties with the potential ferry line. In the researcher’s point of view, though, these are some of the most considerable issues in the development of the new ferry line.

# 7 CONCLUSIONS

In the beginning of my thesis process, in the end of 2011, I was joined in the project of researching the interest for the potential ferry line between Kokkola and Skellefteå and begun entering the data from the questionnaires into SPSS. My interest in the subject grew and I decided to write my thesis on the subject. Now in November 2013, my thesis is completed and I will say that the writing process has, for different reasons, been more prolonged than I first estimated for. By the time when the process started, the subject was highly current but I hope that my thesis someday might function as a springboard for continuing the process of developing the ferry line.

What I found rather challenging at first was to find suitable and reliable sources of information, especially regarding the history of ferry passenger traffic on Kvarken and the Bothnian Bay. Furthermore I found that extracting an adequate enough overall-cover of the subject was somewhat demanding. Deciding on what information is of significance to the matter was also quite tricky, since I felt there are so many different aspects to rely on in this subject. However, the resources of time and the magnitude of the report eventually limit the amount of information that could be included.

To give a direct answer to the research question, of whether there is a general interest in the potential ferry line, I believe is somewhat multi-faced. Since the amount of respondents was so high and it basically covers a public interest and opinion, it is not possible to give one right answer to the question. The future of the potential ferry line is depending on so many factors, whether it would be profitable to open up or not. In general, though, and based on the respondents' answers, it appears that many are interested in using the ferry line, in the assumption that it would become actualised. From my point of view it is a great initiative and at least I would warmly welcome the ferry line. In my opinion the ferry line would contribute with many opportunities and possibilities, but co-operation on a national level is much essential in the future of the ferry passenger traffic on Kvarken and the Bothnian Bay.

**REFERENCES**

Aronsson, L. & Tengling, M. 2003. Turism – Världens största näring. Third edition. Malmö: Liber.

Backman, M. 2012. En ny Coccolita är målet. Österbottens Tidning. 2 June 2012.

Bagge, M. 2011. Strandsatta efter RG Lines konkursbeslut. Österbottens Tidning. 30 November 2011, 4.

Bell, J. 2006. Introduktion till forskningsmetodik. Fourth edition. Studentlitteratur.

Blom, T., Ernfridsson, F., Nilsson, M. & Tengling, M. 2002. Turism – Natur, kultur och miljö. Malmö: Liber.

Boda Borg. 2013. Boda Borg i Skellefteå. Available: http://www.bodaborg.se/skelleftea___7.aspx. Accessed 26 October 2013.

Destination Skellefteå. 2013a. Husvagnscamping. Available: http://www.destinationskelleftea.se/sv/Destination/Bo/Husvagnscamping. Accessed 26 October 2013.

Destination Skellefteå. 2013b. Skellefteå i betraktarens öga. Available: http://destinationskelleftea.se/sv/Destination/Se/Ovrigt/LEGO_utstallning_(Star_Wars_mm)/348892. Accessed 28 October 2013.

Discovering Finland. 2013. Oulu. Available: http://www.discoveringfinland.com/travel/regions-cities/western-finland/oulu/. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Dumell, M. 2007. Sjövägen till Sverige. Finland: Schildts Förlag.

Eriksson, L. T. & Wiedersheim-Paul, F. 2011. Att utreda, forska och rapportera. Ninth edition. Malmö: Liber Ekonomi.

Fellman, I. 2013. Yle Arkivet. Med Vasabåtarna över Kvarken. Available: http://svenska.yle.fi/arkivet/artikkelit/med_vasabatarna_over_kvarken_93713.html#media=93714. Accessed 3 February 2013.

Forth, L. 2013. 450 inbokade på jungfruturen. Österbottens Tiding. 3 January 2013, 3.

Gold of Lapland. 2012. Världens längsta linbana. Available: http://www2.goldoflapland.com/sv/se-gora/a37886/varldens-langsta-linbana/detaljer. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Granqvist, J. 2012. Wasa Express återvänder hem till Kvarkentrafiken. Österbottens Tidning. 18 October 2012, 6.

Granö Beckasin. 2013. Aktiviteter, mat och boende i Västerbotten. Available: http://www.granobeckasin.com/. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Haveri, J. 2013. Vasabåtarna gör comeback. Mega. Week 2 2013, 4.

Herrgård, K. 1999-2012a. Vasabåtarna. Historien del 2. Available: http://www.vasabatarna.se. Accessed 3 February 2013.

Herrgård, K. 1999-2012b. Vasabåtarna. Skellefteå-Finland. Available: http://www.vasabatarna.se/kuriosa/annan_historik/passagerartrafik_skelleftea.htm. Accessed 3 February 2013.

Holmström, C. 2012. Svenskar ser fram emot nya turister. Österbottens Tidning. 1 November 2012, 5.

Infrastrukturnyheter. 2011. Förstudie om färjetrafik mellan Skellefteå och Karleby. Available: http://www.infrastrukturnyheter.se/2011/05/f-rstudie-om-f-rjetrafik-mellan-skellefte-och-karleby. Accessed 3 October 2013.

Investopedia. 2013. Market research. Available: http://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/market-research.asp. Accessed 30 October 2013.

Jennings, G. 2001. Tourism research. Milton: John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd.

Kalajoki. 2013. After-sea. Available: http://www.visitkalajoki.fi/en/themes-and-activities/after-sea. Accessed 25 October 2013.

Karleby hamns historia. 2013. Utvecklingen till storhamn. Available: http://www.portofkokkola.fi/historia/svenska/kehitys_sv.html. Accessed 3 February 2013.

Kelola, K., Hiltunen, P., Poutanen, M. & Aro, K. 2013. Mondon valinnat 2013, Puutaloidyllit paras kotimaan löytö. Mondo 1/2013, 31.

Keski-Pohjanmaan Matkailuviesti – Kokkola, Pietarsaari, Kalajoki ja Kaustinen ympäristöineen. Center-Botnia ry.

Kokkolan Kaupunki. 2013a. Kommun-info. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/kuntainfo/sv_SE/etusivu/. Accessed 16 January 2013.

Kokkolan Kaupunki. 2013b. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/en_GB/. Accessed 17 January 2013.

Kokkolan Kaupunki. 2013c. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/kuntainfo/sijainti_kartalla/sv_SE/sijainti_kartalla/. Accessed 2 February 2013.

Korta fakta. 2011. Skellefteå Kommun: Skellefteå. Available: http://www.skelleftea.se /Gemensamt/Trycksaker/Bifogat/Korta_fakta_Skelleftea.pdf. Accessed 20 February 2013.

Koski, O. 2012. Yle Uutiset. RG Linen konkurssipesän liiketoiminta NLC Ferrylle. Available: http://yle.fi/uutiset/rg_linen_konkurssipesan_liiketoiminta_nlc_ferrylle/6351353. Accessed 10 October 2013.

Kvarkenrådet/Merenkurkun Neuvosto. 2013. Available: http://www.kvarken.org/kvarkenradet/historia/kvarkentrafikens-historia/. Accessed 3 February 2013.

Lapland. 2013a. Lapin kesä. Available: http://www.lappi.fi/aktiviteetit/kesa. Accessed 23 October 2013.

Lapland. 2013b. Lapin nähtävyydet ja käyntikohteet. Available: http://www.lappi.fi/nahtavyydet-ja-kayntikohteet. Accessed 23 October 2013.

Leo's Lekland. 2013. Available: http://www.leoslekland.se/. Accessed 26 October 2013.

Lycksele Djurpark. 2013. Lycksele är Sveriges nordligaste och specialiserad på nordiska djur. Available: http://www.lyckseledjurpark.se/index.asp?id=10. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Malmberg, T. & Stampehl, M. 2007. Femtio år med Silja. Esbo: Frenckellska Tryckeri Ab.

Neristan: Kokkolan Vanhakaupunki – i Gamla Karleby. 2007. Kokkolan Kaupunki/Karleby Stad.

Neristan Oppistan: askel askeleelta – steg för steg. 2007. Kokkolan Matkailu Oy.

Norden. 2013. Facts about Åland. Available: http://www.norden.org/en/the-nordic-region/the-nordic-countries-the-faroe-islands-greenland-and-aaland/facts-about-aaland. Accessed 9 October 2013.

Pernu, I. 2013. Mondo. Pohjanmaan kautta. Available: http://mondo.fi/suomi/pohjanmaan-kautta. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Powerpark. 2013. Info – Powerpark yrityksenä. Available: http://www.powerpark.fi/powerpark_yrityksena. Accessed 25 October 2013.

Pått, F. 2013. Förbereder för fler ryska turister. Österbottens Tidning. 30 January 2013, 3.

Rintala, T. 2001. Oy Jaakon Linja/Jakob Lines Ab. Jakob Linesin historiikki 1969-1999. Pietarsaari.

Skellefteå. 2011. Brief facts 2011-2012. Available: http://www.skelleftea.se/Gemensamt/Trycksaker/Bifogat/Brief_facts_Skelleftea.pdf. Accessed 21 October 2013.

Skellefteå Kommun. 2010. About Skellefteå. Available: http://www.skelleftea.se/default.aspx?id=43781. Accessed 21 October 2013.

Skellefteå Kommun. 2011. Protokoll. Kommunstyrelsen. Available: http://www.skelleftea.se/Gemensamt/Namnder/Protokoll/Bifogat/bc18379e-6260-4e0b-ab5a-abfe0775b279.pdf. Accessed 21 February 2013.

Skellefteå Municipality. 2010. Available: http://www.skelleftea.se/Gemensamt/Powerpoint/PPT_Skelleftea_kommun_eng.ppt. Accessed 21 October 2013.

Slotte, Y. 2013 Ingen färja från Karleby än. Österbottens Tidning. 2 June 2013, 3.

Solbacken Handelsområde. 2013. Välkommen till Solbacken! Available: http://www.solbacken-skelleftea.se/system/visa.asp?HID=1648&FID=1316&HSID=30175. Accessed 26 October 2013.

Stagnäs, M. 2013a. Paus i trafiken över Kvarken. Österbottens Tidning. 12 October 2013, 2.

Stagnäs, M. 2013b. Ny färja aktuell i Kvarken. Österbottens Tidning. 30 January 2013, 4.

Svenska Turistföreningen. 2013. Kungsleden i Vindelfjällen.

Tankar: Kokkolan Majakkasaari – Fyrön i Karleby. 2007. Kokkolan Matkailu Oy/Karleby Turism Ab.

Tengling, M., Friberg, A-B., Lindmark, M. & Tjörnhammar, E. 2007. Turism Bas. Third edition. Malmö: Liber.

Tree Hotel. 2013. About us. Available: http://www.treehotel.se/?pg=about. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2002. Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. Helsingfors: Tammi.

Upptäck Skellefteå. 2013. Available: http://www.destinationskelleftea.se/assets/FileManagerFolder/Documents/downloads/Turistbroschyr_2012_SE_low.pdf. Accessed 21 October 2013.

Veal, A.J. 2006. Research methods for leisure and tourism. Third edition. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Velmu. 2013. The Bay of Bothnia. Available: http://www.environment.fi/default.asp?node=25164&lan=en. Accessed 21 February 2013.

Visit Kokkola. 2012. Kokkolan Matkailu Oy/Karleby Turism Ab.

Visit Kokkola. 2013a. Sightseeing. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/matkailu_2/kayntikohteet/en_GB/nahtavyydet/. Accessed 17 January 2013.

Visit Kokkola. 2013b. De tusen legendernas Tankar. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/tankar/tankar/sv_SE/tankar/. Accessed 29 January 2013.

Visit Kokkola. 2013c. Förbindelser till ön. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/tankar/tankar/sv_SE/yhteydet_saarelle/. Accessed 29 January 2013.

Visit Kokkola. 2013d. Klippöns charm. Available: https://www.kokkola.fi/tankar/tankar/sv_SE/luonto/. Accessed 29 January 2013.

Västerbotten. 2012. Vilda, varierade Västerbotten. Available: http://www.vasterbotten.net/sv/amnen/upplevelser/naturskont/vilda-varierade-vasterbotten/. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Västerbotten. 2013. Granö Beckasin nominerat till Stora Turismpriset. Available: http://www.vasterbotten.net/sv/amnen/manniskor/entreprenorer/grano-beckasin-nominerat-till-stora-turismpriset/. Accessed 22 October 2013.

Wasa Line. 2013. Teman. Available: http://www.wasaline.com/sv/passagerare/teman/. Accessed 11 October 2013.

Yle. 2013. Österbotten. Sex miljoner för planering av Kvarkentrafiken. Available: http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2013/07/08/sex-miljoner-planering-av-kvarkentrafiken. Accessed 17 October 2013.

CENTRIA
FORSKNING OCH UTVECKLING

**MARKET RESEARCH ABOUT A POTENTIAL FERRY LINE BETWEEN KOKKOLA AND SKELLEFTEÅ**

The City of Kokkola and the City of Skellefteå have decided to together investigate into the opportunities for a ferry connection between these two cities. The idea is to offer the residents of the regions a destination across the Bothnian Bay during the summer months. The unit of research and development of Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, CENTRIA, has been commissioned by the City of Kokkola to carry out a market research to investigate the interest of potential customers.

You have randomly been selected to answer this inquiry. The answers are treated confidentially. No opinions of individual persons are being revealed in the results. Your opinions are of great value to us and therefore we hope that you would take the time to answer these questions.


Among all respondents, we draw a winner of a travel package to Skellefteå for two persons including flights and hotel accommodation.

You can take part in the lottery by filling in the coupon attached. We ask you to return the filled form in the enclosed envelope by 30.11.2011 at the latest.

Source of address:
Population Register Centre
Pietarsaari Unit at the Register Office in Vaasa
PB 26, 68601 Pietarsaari

**MARKET RESEARCH**

1. Gender

   a. Female
   b. Male

2. Age _______________

3. Mother tongue

   a. Swedish
   b. Finnish
   c. Other

4. Place of residence

   a. Central Ostrobothnia
   b. Ostrobothnia
   c. Other

5. When was the last time you were on a boat cruise?

   a. This year
   b. Last year
   c. For 3 or more years ago
   d. Never

6. When was the last time you visited Sweden?

   a. This year
   b. Last year
   c. For 3 or more years ago
   d. Never

7. Are you interested in what the region of Skellefteå has to offer? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I think Skellefteå seems to be a nice town | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. I am interested in the cultural selection of Skellefteå | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. I am interested in the shopping opportunities in Skellefteå | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. I am interested in experiencing the nature of Skellefteå | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. I am interested in business contacts in the region | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. I am interested in travelling through Skellefteå to other destinations (for example Northern Sweden or Norway) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Other comments regarding Skellefteå as a destination?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

8. How would you want the boat trip itself to look like? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Good food service onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Entertainment onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. To be able to bring the whole family is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Shopping opportunities onboard are important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. The boat trip would primarily be for pleasure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. The boat trip would primarily be for business | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| g. I am interested in theme trips (for example sport cruise or dance cruise) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. I am interested in arranging a meeting or a conference onboard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. I would use the ferry primarily as a mean of transport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

9. Which practical factors impact on your decision to travel by boat? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I prefer going on a day cruise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. I prefer booking the trip myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. I prefer booking my trip through a travel organiser | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. I want to be able to stay overnight in Skellefteå | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. The price of the boat trip determines whether I would use the ferry service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Being able to bring my car is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Being able to bring larger vehicles is important (for example buses) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

10. Answer the questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

    1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I am interested in going by boat to Skellefteå | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. It is most likely that I would use the ferry line if it would start operating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. It is most likely that I would travel several times per summer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

11. What is the highest ticket price you would be willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat to Skellefteå?

    a. 20 €
    b. 40 €
    c. 60 €
    d. 80 €

Other wishes regarding the content of the boat trip and practical arrangements?

APPENDIX 2/1

CENTRIA
FORSKNING OCH UTVECKLING


## MARKET RESEARCH OF A POTENTIAL FERRY LINE BETWEEN KOKKOLA AND SKELLEFTEÅ

The City of Kokkola and the City of Skellefteå have decided to together investigate into the opportunities for a ferry connection between these two cities. The idea is to offer the residents of the regions a destination across the Bothnian Bay during the summer months. The unit of research and development of Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, CENTRIA, has been commissioned by the City of Kokkola to carry out a market research to investigate the interest of potential customers.

You have randomly been selected to answer this inquiry. The answers are treated confidentially. No opinions of individual persons are being revealed in the results. Your opinions are of great value to us and therefore we hope that you would take the time to answer these questions.

Among all respondents, we draw a winner of a travel package to Kokkola for two persons including flights and hotel accommodation.

You can take part in the lottery by filling in the coupon attached. We ask you to return the filled form in the enclosed envelope by 30.11.2011 at the latest.



**MARKET RESEARCH**

1. Gender

   a. Female
   b. Male

2. Age ___________________________

3. Mother tongue

   a. Swedish
   b. Finnish
   c. Other

4. Place of residence

   a. Skellefteå
   b.
   c.

5. When was the last time you were on a boat cruise?

   a. This year
   b. Last year
   c. For three or more years ago
   d. Never

6. When was the last time you visited Finland?

   a. This year
   b. Last year
   c. For three or more years ago
   d. Never

7. Are you interested in what the region of Kokkola has to offer? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I think Kokkola seems to be a nice town | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. I am interested in the cultural selection of Kokkola | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. I am interested in the shopping opportunities in Kokkola | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. I am interested in experiencing the nature of Kokkola | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. I am interested in business contacts in the region | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. I am interested in travelling through Kokkola to other destinations (for example Northern Finland) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Other comments regarding Kokkola as a destination?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

8. How would you want the boat trip itself to look like? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Good food service onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Entertainment onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. To be able to bring the whole family is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Shopping opportunities onboard are important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. The boat trip would primarily be for pleasure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. The boat trip would primarily be for business | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. I am interested in theme trips (for example sport cruise or dance cruise) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. I am interested in arranging a meeting or a conference onboard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. I would use the ferry primarily as a mean of transport | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

9. Which practical factors impact on your decision to travel by boat? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I prefer going on a day cruise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. I prefer booking the trip myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. I prefer booking my trip through a travel organiser | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. I want to be able to stay overnight in Kokkola | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. The price of the boat trip determines whether I would use the ferry service | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Being able to bring my car is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Being able to bring larger vehicles is important (for example buses) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

10. Answer the questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

    1 = I fully disagree, 2 = I partly disagree, 3 = I partly agree, 4 = I fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. I am interested in going by boat to Kokkola | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. It is most likely that I would use the ferry line if it would open | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. It is most likely that I would travel several times per summer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

11. What is the highest ticket price you would be willing to pay for a one-way trip by boat to Kokkola?

    a. 20 €
    b. 40€
    c. 60 €
    d. 80 €

Other wishes regarding the content of the boat trip and practical arrangements?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

CENTRIA
FORSKNING OCH UTVECKLING

**MARKET RESEARCH ABOUT A POTENTIAL FERRY LINE BETWEEN KOKKOLA AND SKELLEFTEÅ**

The City of Kokkola and the City of Skellefteå have decided to together investigate into the opportunities for a ferry connection between these two cities. The idea is to offer the residents of the regions a destination across the Bothnian Bay during the summer months. The unit of research and development of Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, CENTRIA, has been commissioned by the City of Kokkola to carry out a market research to investigate the interest of potential customers. Your opinions are of great value to us and therefore we hope that you would take the time to answer these questions.

1. The type of your company

   a. Travel agency
   b. Bus company
   c. Other

2. The prime target group(s) of your company

______________________________________________

3. Place of business

   a. Ostrobothnia
   b. Northern Ostrobothnia
   c. Southern Ostrobothnia
   d. Central Finland
   e. Kainuu
   f. Savo
   g. Other

4. Does your company organise tour packages?

   a. Yes, regularly
   b. Yes, occasionally
   c. No

5. Does your company organise trips to Sweden?

   a. Yes, regularly
   b. Yes, occasionally
   c. No

6. Is your company interested in what the region of Skellefteå has to offer? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = fully disagree, 2 = partly disagree, 3 = partly agree, 4 = fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Skellefteå seems like a nice town | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. The cultural selection of Skellefteå seems interesting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. The shopping opportunities in Skellefteå seem interesting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Skellefteå offers great nature experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. We are interested in travelling through Skellefteå to other destinations (for example Northern Sweden or Norway) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Other comments regarding Skellefteå as a destination?

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

7. How should the boat trip itself look like? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = fully disagree, 2 = partly disagree, 3 = partly agree, 4 = fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Good food service onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Entertainment onboard is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. To be able to bring the whole family is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Shopping opportunities onboard are important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. We are interested in theme trips (for example sport cruise or dance cruise) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. We are interested in arranging a meeting or a conference onboard | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. We are interested in day cruises | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

8. Which practical factors impact on your decision to travel by boat? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = fully disagree, 2 = partly disagree, 3 = partly agree, 4 = fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. To be able to stay overnight in Skellefteå is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. The price of the boat trip is determinant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. It is important to be able to bring large vehicles, such as buses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Finding good business co-workers in Skellefteå is important | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

9. How interested is your company in the potential ferry line to Skellefteå? Answer all questions by circling the alternative that best corresponds with your opinion, on a scale from 1-4.

   1 = fully disagree, 2 = partly disagree, 3 = partly agree, 4 = fully agree

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The ferry line would open up for new markets for our company | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. The ferry line would be interesting for our current customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. By using the ferry line our company would be able to attract new customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. We would most likely use the ferry line regularly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

10. How often do you think your company would use the ferry line?

    a. Never
    b. Once per summer
    c. Once a month during the summer
    d. Once a week during the summer

11. What is the highest price that you would be willing to pay for a one-way ticket to Skellefteå by boat (without bus connection)?

    a. 20 €
    b. 40 e
    c. 60 €
    d. 80 €

Other wishes regarding the content of the boat trip and practical arrangements?