

The municipality of Skurup: the influence of gender on the residents' knowledge and preferences

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Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of this paper is to find out what the residents of Skurup know about their own municipality. This study will investigate which areas that the residents are most involved in and have the biggest insight in. The aim of this study is to find out how gender differences affect the residents' knowledge and preferences.

Research limitations- This paper will only focus on the residents of the municipality of Skurup and a sample size of 200 residents.

Design/methodology/ approach – The research method in this paper is a quantitative study in the form of an online survey. The survey consist of four questions and the sample size consists of 200 residents in the municipality of Skurup. The method includes both primary quantitative data and secondary qualitative data. The secondary data is retrieved from books, articles and the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Diva, Emerald Insight and ABI Inform.

Implications/Findings – The research in this paper shows that the residents in Skurup have the biggest insight and knowledge in following areas: *Business sector, Housing market, Childcare and Education*. The findings in this paper also indicate that gender affects the knowledge and the preferences of the residents. This research indicates that the men in Skurup have the biggest insight in *Culture, Experience and activities* and *The community and democracy*. The women in Skurup have the biggest insight in the categories *Childcare, Elderly care and service* and *Education*. It is also important to consider other factors which affect individuals' preferences and needs.

Originality/ Value – This paper provides information about what the residents in Skurup know about their municipality. This research also reveals the needs and preferences of the men and women in Skurup. This paper increases the understanding regarding the residents' preferences based on gender and can be useful when making decisions within the community and when allocating resources between different sectors.

Keywords – Skurup, gender differences, community, preferences and knowledge.

Paper type – research paper

Introduction

Skurup is a municipality located in the centre of Skåne, Sweden. The municipality of Skurup transformed from a village into a station community in the late 1800s (Solberg Søylen, 2013). There were approximately 15000 residents living in the community in 2016 (Andersson, 2016). The term community can be defines as a place where one lives, works, networks, and most prominently identifies. The individual sees the place as an essential part of him or herself

(Eder & Arneberger, 2012). The place where the individuals live represents a part of themselves. The knowledge and preferences of the residents within the community vary depending on their stage in life and their specific situation (Wheelwright, 2003). Different groups have different needs and priorities and it is important for the community to consider this diversity when making decisions which will affect the residents.

The purpose of this paper is to find out what the residents of Skurup know about their own municipality. The aim of this study is to find out what the residents know and which preferences they have regarding different areas within their community. There are gender differences which affect the perception and several attributes of the individuals (Araújo de Azevedo, Custódio & Perna, 2013). Women and men tend to value different things when it comes to their community (Wallander & Östersgård, 2009). The work of the community is facilitated if those who are in charge have an insight in the preferences and needs of the residents. It also makes it easier to plan different activities within the community and to allocate the resources between different sectors. With this knowledge about the residents the community will be able to meet the needs of the residents in a better way and this will result in a higher level of satisfaction. Research shows that residents who are strongly involved in the community and who are given the chance to be active in the processes will demonstrate a positive behaviour and they will often act as ambassadors for their place (Insch & Stuart, 2015; Insch & Florek, 2008). In other words if the community invests in their residents and takes them in consideration when making decisions, the community will also benefit from the residents in the long run. In order to find out what the residents of Skurup know about their community and how gender differences affect their knowledge following research question has been designed:

Research question: *What do the residents of Skurup know about their community based on their gender?*

Method

This paper is based on both qualitative secondary research and primary quantitative research. When it comes to the secondary research all data have been retrieved from scientific papers, books and other sources. All the scientific papers used in this study are retrieved from the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Diva, Emerald Insight and ABI Inform. The aim of this paper is to discover what the resident of Skurup know about their own community and which areas that they have the biggest insight in. In order to be able to collect the primary data a survey was developed and the questions in the survey are based on the qualitative secondary data in order to get answers of high relevance and quality. The questions in this survey are in Swedish in order to avoid misunderstandings. The link for the survey was shared on five groups on Facebook and through email. By using an online survey respondents of all ages can be reached and they can answer the survey at any time during the day. The online survey facilitates the classification of the primary data since the form of it is standardized and the answers are automatically divided into categories. The survey is based on four questions and the sample which is used in this study is a segment random sample (Jacobsen, 2002). This sample consists on the basis of a representative segment in this case the segmentation is limited to the residents in the municipality of Skurup. The questions in the survey regards what people know about Skurup and therefore the respondents need to live in Skurup since they possess this specific knowledge. This research is an exploratory research since there is not a lot of information about this specific group or subject. The units of analysis in his paper is a group which consists of the residents of Skurup.

Population (P): The residents of Skurup (15000)

Sample size (s): 200

To reduce the risk of biases the sample with a confidence level of 95 % and a confidence interval of 5 in the population should be 375 residents. Due to this the sample in this paper which is based on a sample size of 200 residents have a greater level of uncertainty. The survey in this paper resulted in 217 useful answers and these additional 17 answers will serve as a margin of error. The answers and results of this paper can therefore not be generalized on the whole population of Skurup. The conclusions in this study are based on the observation regarding the 200 residents which have answered the survey. A level of uncertainty does exist in this method since it only includes the 200 individuals which have answered the questionnaire. It does not include those within the sample who did not participate their opinions are not represented in this paper. Other factors which can create a bias and uncertainty in the study is the scenario where the individuals might have misunderstood the questions in the survey and answered them in another way than what was intended (Jacobsen, 2002). Despite this the study reveals some patterns when it comes to knowledge and the factors which affect preferences and knowledge. The findings of this study can be used when conducting further research in this specific field. The interference of this survey is minimal since the survey is conducted online in a private environment and all the answers are anonymous. The minimal interference contributes to a higher relevance and quality when it comes to the answers which are given by the respondent.

The survey consists of four questions and the answers will be used in this paper in order to answer the research question of this study. The first question is a yes or no question where the respondents are asked if they are a resident of Skurup or not. This is an important question since it eliminates all of the respondents which are not representative for the population of Skurup. This is a way to get a relevant and representative sample. The second question is about the age of the residents this is also important to know since age is a factor which may influence the preferences of the respondents. The third questions is about the gender of the respondents the alternatives which are given are; man, woman or other/do not want to disclose. The fourth question consists of eight different areas within the community of Skurup and the respondents are asked to choose four alternatives which they have the biggest insight in and knowledge about. Each of the eight categories come with a short explanation in order to avoid misunderstandings and to get answers of high relevance and quality. The categories and explanations are as follows below:

Business sector: this area regards all labour issues. For instance it can help the residents with job seeking, activities for unemployed, counselling and support regarding labour issues. This sector can also help companies to find facilities and locations where they can establish their business.

Housing market: this sector regards resident issues. This sector can help the residents to find somewhere to live, either to buy or rent a house or an apartment.

Culture: this sector regards all cultural activities e.g. the access to public libraries, museums, theatre, cinema etc.

Childcare: this sector is in charge of all issues regarding the children for instance daycare, healthcare etc.

Elderly care and service: this sector is in charge of all issues regarding health and wellbeing. This includes nursing homes for the elderly, healthcare, dentistry etc.

Education: this sector regards all the education within the community. Education for children of all ages and also adults is included here.

The community and democracy: this section is in charge of the daily operations of the community and all the decision making.

Experience and activities: this regards all the leisure activities, truism, the nightlife in the community, sport activities etc.

Literature review

Skurup is a municipality which is located in the centre of Skåne, Sweden. The municipality of Skurup transformed from a village into a station community in the late 1800s (Solberg Søilen, 2013). In 2016 there were approximately 15000 residents living in the municipality of Skurup (Andersson, 2016). Within the social sciences the term *community* has several definitions, however Fitz, Lyon, & Driskell (2016) define it as of as a place where one lives, works, networks, and most prominently identifies. The concept of place identity refers to an individual's emotional or symbolic ties which the individual has towards a specific place. The individual sees the place as an essential part of him or herself (Eder & Arneberger, 2012). Place becomes a part of how the self represents itself and Burley, Jenkins, Laska, & Davis, (2007) define it as follows below:

“Place becomes a part of how the self represents itself. In other words, the self arises out of the field of experience that develops an identity or core self that incorporates place, a geographic location that includes the people, objects, practices, and meanings of that place (Casey, 1993; Harvey, 1996).”

Most people like where they live however all the residents within a community are not equally satisfied (Fitz et al., 2016). The literature which involves community satisfaction involves concepts such as residential satisfaction, urban quality of life, neighbourhood attachment, community well-being and perceived quality of local services. The focus may vary in different studies however they all share a concern with residents' overall satisfaction with their community or with different areas within their municipality (Fitz et al., 2016). To apply brand strategy to place is a relatively new development in the literature of place marketing according to Inch and Stuart (2015). It is common that the authorities have a high level of control over the brand of the place and they do not allow the residents to have a great influence. Due to this the resident's powerful role as brand supporters and ambassadors of their place is ignored. This result in dissatisfaction and the brand of the place is affected negatively by a negative word-of-mouth. Furthermore residents who are strongly involved in the community and who are given the chance to be active in the processes will demonstrate a positive behaviour and they will often act as ambassadors for their place (Inch & Stuart, 2015; Inch &, Florek, 2008). When measuring community satisfaction the variations in the measurements can be more explained by the individual characteristics of the residents than by the context of the community. The satisfaction within the community can be based on different areas within the community, for instance the social life within the community and social networks, strong economic opportunities, access to various facilities etc. (Fitz et al., 2016). The satisfaction can vary depending on the area the residents may be satisfied with some things and dissatisfied with

other things within their community. For instance the factors behind the overall satisfaction of the community may not be the same as the factors behind the satisfaction of the social life or infrastructure within the community.

Different variables affect the satisfaction within the community for instance females are often more satisfied with their communities than males according to research. Studies have also shown that residents with higher education tend to be more satisfied with their community. Research has also shown that it tends to be a strong relationship between experience and the residents knowledge regarding the surrounding where they live (Ellis & Cornisch, 1997). Furthermore there are some factors which influence the residents' knowledge regarding environmental issues. Prior research has identified a positive correlation between environmental knowledge and youth, male gender levels of education, income and participation in environmental organizations (Martin, Sorice & Kreuter, 2013).

All individuals pass through predictable stages of life and they experience similar events which are related to these stages of life (Wheelwright, 2003). The life cycle concept is an established concept within the social sciences and it suggests that there is a relationship between life stage and the behavioural and demographical characteristics of individuals (Bauer & Auer-Srnka, 2012). According to Wheelwright (2003) human life can be divided into different stages three of these stages are of interest for this paper and are presented below:

1. The independent stage: the individual is capable of living an independent life and can manage all aspects of life on their own.
2. The vulnerable stage: the individual needs some help with activities which are connected to everyday life, for instance transportation, housework, managing money, preparing meals etc. These individuals live at home with assistance or in a nursing home.
3. The dependent stage: the individuals are physically dependent on others for care e.g. bathing, dressing etc. The individuals may live in assisted facilities, at home or in a nursing facility depending on their condition.

Education, hobbies, sports, travel and work and other personal activities can be seen as "activities" which are present throughout an individual's life (Wheelwright, 2003). The importance of these activities vary depending on the individual's life stage. For instance success in education or career is a motivation and drive for many individuals, retirement can also be seen as a milestone at a specific stage in life. Finances is also a driving factor and the importance of it vary through life, for instance children are supported financially by their parents and therefore the aspect of finances is not the most important driving force in the life stage of the children. The life cycle concept affect the individual's preferences when it comes to for instance leisure activities, vacations and health care (Bauer & Auer-Srnka, 2012). Furthermore the importance of social relationships and housing and transportation varies depending on the individual's life stage. Important events occur throughout an individual's life and some of them are life changing and other are simply milestones which are related to an individual's life stage. Although many of these events can be seen as common knowledge, they do vary in some extent based on country and on cultural factors. Young people graduate from high school in their late teens and it is common that individuals graduate from college in their early 20s. Marriage and starting a family is common in the 20s and also the start of a career. It is common that women in their middle age stop having children due to biological factors and grown up children begin to leave home in order to start their own families. Retirement usually occurs in the 60s and a relocation to a new home, travel and leisure activities are common in this life stage (Wheelwright, 2003).

Furthermore other factors do affect the knowledge and preferences of the residents and one of those is gender. There are gender differences which affect the perception and several attributes of the individuals (Araújo de Azevedo, Custódio & Perna, 2013). For instance research has shown that men state a higher level of satisfaction when it comes to ease to find qualified jobs and ease of finding somewhere to live for a reasonable price (Araújo de Azevedo, Custódio & Perna, 2013).

It is also more common that men care more about others opinions regarding themselves than women do. Women on the other hand care more for others and they are more likely to focus on their family than on themselves (Wallander & Östersgård, 2009). Furthermore women focus more on health and men think that their health is already good as it is. Women also focus more on education than men. It is also common that men are more likely to try new things and to care more about their career than women. Women are more likely to focus on the family life and the development of their municipality. (Wallander & Östersgård, 2009). It is important to take in consideration that these attributes cannot entirely be generalized on gender since these attributes do vary based on the individual. This has changed as the society has changed but some of these stereotypes still do exist. For instance that men care more about career and women care more about family (Wallander & Östersgård, 2009). The women are more likely to care for the municipality as a whole and for the children than men. Men are more interested in being leaders and to participate in the decision making within the community.

Empirical data

Question 1. Do you live in Skurup?

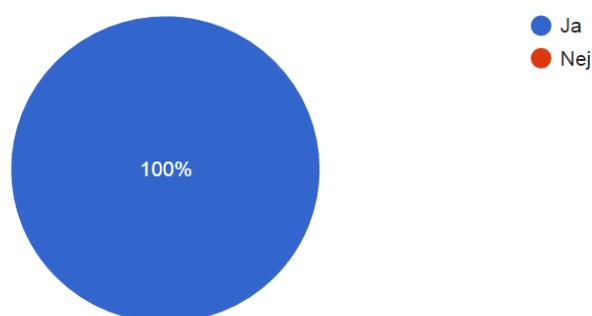


Figure 1.0 - *Do you live in Skurup?*

The first question was used in order to select those who were residents of Skurup. Only those who answered "yes" on this question were included in this paper. The total sample size is 217 individuals. Those who answered that they were not residents of Skurup are not included in this study since they are not representative for the population.

Question 3. How old are you?

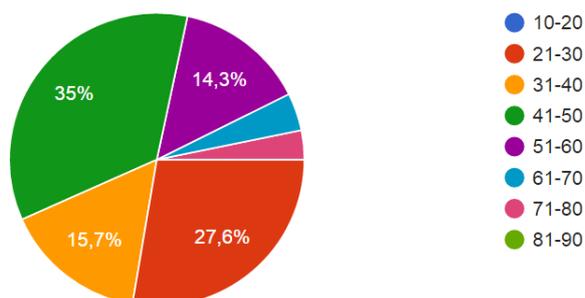


Figure 2.0 - *How old are you?*

The second question was about age since this is an important factor which influences the individual's preferences. In the group 10-20 years and 81-90 years there were no respondents, and they are not included in this paper. 27, 6 % of the sample represents individuals between 21 and 30 years old, and this equals 60 individuals. 15, 7 % of the respondents are between 31 and 40 years old (34 individuals). 35 % represent those individuals who are between 41 and 50 years (76 individuals). 14, 3 % of the respondents are between 51 and 60 years old (31 individuals). 4, 1 % represents those who are between 61-70 years old (9 individuals). 3, 2 % equals the individuals who are between 71-80 years old (7 individuals).

Question 4. Which areas do you have a good insight in when it comes to your community?
Please select four alternatives below.

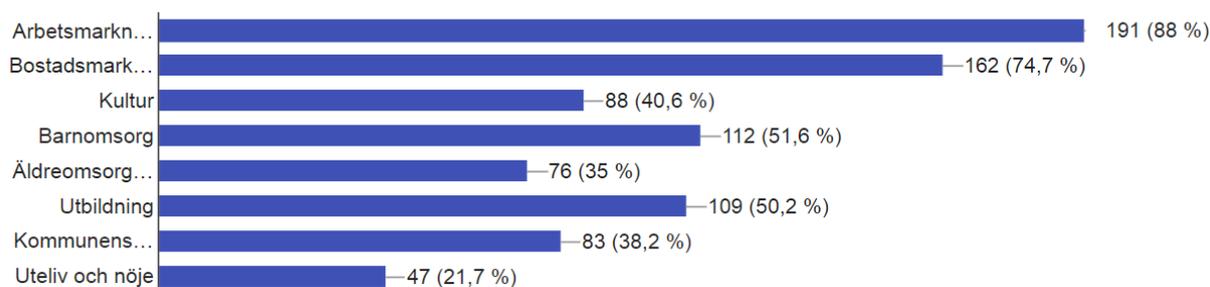


Figure 3.0 - *Which areas do you have a good insight in when it comes to your community?*

The figure above shows how the residents have answered when it comes to which areas within the community that they have the best insight in. Four categories were frequently chosen by the residents in Skurup. 88 % (191 individuals) answered that they had a good insight in the *Business sector*. 74, 7 % answered that they has a good insight in the *Housing market* and this equals 162 individuals of the total sample size of 217 individuals. The category *Childcare* equals 51, 6 % of the total sample size (112 individuals). *Education* equals 50, 2 % of the answers (109 individuals).

	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	Tot
Business sector	60	31	70	30	0	0	191
Housing market	54	16	65	17	8	2	162
Culture	25	15	18	15	8	7	88
Childcare	15	25	52	20	0	0	112
Elderly care and service	5	14	28	17	5	7	76
Education	43	15	44	7	0	0	109
The community and democracy	17	16	21	15	8	6	83
Experience and activities	21	4	6	3	7	6	47
Tot:	240	136	304	124	36	28	868

Table 1.0 – a distribution of the answers based on age group and category.

21- 30 = 60 31 -40 = 34 41 -50 = 76

51- 60 = 31 61 – 70 = 9 71- 80 = 7

Total = 217

Question 2: Which gender do you identify yourself with?

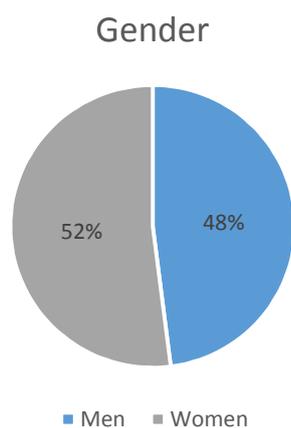


Figure 3.0 – a distribution of the answers based on gender.

The respondents were asked to disclose which gender that they identified themselves with. 52 % of the respondents chose “woman” and 48 % chose “man”.

	21-30 M	21-30 W	31-40 M	31-40 W	41-50 M	41-50 W	51-60 M	51-60 W	61-70 M	61-70 W	71-80 M	71-80 W	Tot
Business sector	32	28	18	13	38	32	12	18	0	0	0	0	191
Housing market	32	22	9	7	28	37	5	12	3	5	0	2	162
Culture	12	13	12	3	16	2	10	5	3	5	2	5	88
Childcare	6	9	10	15	22	30	4	16	0	0	0	0	112
Elderly care and service	2	3	1	13	8	20	1	16	0	5	2	5	76
Education	18	25	4	11	14	30	1	6	0	0	0	0	109
The community and democracy	14	3	14	2	20	1	13	2	3	5	2	4	83
Experience and activities	12	9	4	0	6	0	2	1	3	4	2	4	47
Tot:	128	112	72	64	152	152	48	76	12	24	8	20	868

Table 2.0 – a distribution of the answers based on gender within each age group and category.

M = men

M = 105, 105/217 = 0, 48 %

W = women

W = 115, 115/217 = 0, 52 %

M 21-30 = 32

M 31-40 = 18

W 21-30 = 28

W 31-40 = 16

Total 21-30 = 60

Total 31-40 = 34

M 41-50 = 38

M 51-60 = 12

W 41-50 = 38

W 51-60 = 19

Total 41-50 = 76

Total 51-60 = 31

M 61-70 = 3

M 71-80 = 2

W 61-70 = 6

W 71-80 = 5

Total 61-70 = 9

71-80 = 7

Total = 217

Analysis

This research resulted in 217 answers and the 17 additional answers to the sample size of 200 residents will serve as a margin of error. This research is based on 200 individuals of the municipality of Skurup which identify themselves as “*man*” or “*woman*” due to this the research is not representative for all the genders which the individuals might identify themselves with. There may also be a bias in the research method since the research was conducted online and thereby excludes those individuals which do not have access to the Internet and a computer. Despite this the research method is an effective way to collect data and categorize it and it is cost and time efficient. An online survey can also reach individuals of different ages and the respondents can answer the survey at any time during the day.

Research question: *What do the residents of Skurup know about their community based on their gender?*

According to this research the residents of Skurup had the biggest insight in the following areas: *Business sector, Housing market, Childcare and Education*. These four categories were most frequently chosen by the respondents. The most chosen category was *Business sector* with 88 % of all the answers, *Housing market* got 74, 7 %, *Childcare* equalled 51, 6 % and *Education* equalled 50, 2 % of all the answers (Figure 3.0). Eder & Arneberger (2012) claim that the place where the individuals live represents a part of themselves and the individual sees the place as an essential part of him or herself. These four categories are the areas where the residents of Skurup have the biggest insight in, and it can be argued that these areas are a reflection of their lives and what is most important to them. Furthermore the answers within every category vary depending on age group.

The knowledge and preferences of the residents within the community vary depending on their stage in life and their specific situation (Wheelwright, 2003; Bauer & Auer-Srnka, 2012). In some stages of life some things are more important than others. When it comes to the age group 21-30 all the 60 respondents (Table 1.0) chose the category *Business sector* this equals 25 % of all the answers within the age group 21-30. The category *Housing market* equals 54 answers, *Education* equals 43 answers and *Culture* equals 25 answers. According to this residents in the age group 21-30 have the biggest insight in these four areas within their community. *Experience and activities* got 21 answers which equals 8, 75 % of all the answers within this group. In this life stage career, education and leisure activities are important parts of life (Wheelwright, 2003).

According to the findings of this research there are gender differences within this age group which affects the knowledge and preferences of the residents. All of the respondents chose the category *Business sector*. The category *Housing market* got 25 % of all the answers (men) and 19, 64 % of all answers (women). Both men and women chose the category *Culture and Elderly care and service* almost in the same extent (Table 2.0). Women did chose the categories *Childcare and Education* more frequently than men. Men chose the category *Experience and activities* in a higher extent than women. The biggest differences lie within the category *The community and democracy* where 10, 94 % equalled all the male answers in comparison with 2, 68 % of the female answers. These findings indicate that men within this age group value the community and decision making the highest. Women are more involved in education and the children according to this research. This is also supported by Wallander & Östersgård (2009) who claim that men are more focused on themselves and women are more likely to care for

others. Men are also more interested to be involved in the decision making and democracy according to Wallander & Östersgård (2009). Overall the categories *Business sector*, *Housing market* and *Culture* got approximately the same amount of answers despite gender and this indicate connection to the age group 21-30 where the most important parts of life tend to be for instance career and leisure activities (Wheelwright, 2003).

In the age group 31-40 the category *Business sector* was chosen by 31 out of 34 respondents. The second most frequently chosen category was *Childcare* with 25 answers. The categories *Housing market*, *Culture*, *Elderly care and service*, *Education* and *The community and democracy* got approximately the same amount of answers (Table 1.0). *Experience and activities* got 4 answers, which equals 2, 94 % of all answers. There are some gender differences within this age group, the men tend to care more about the categories *Business sector* (M: 25 %, W: 20, 31%), *Culture* (M: 16, 66 %, W: 4, 69 %), *The community and democracy* (M: 19, 44 %, W: 3, 13 %) and *Experience and activities* (M: 5, 55 %, W: 0 %) than the women within this age group. The answers for the category *Housing market* is quite equal between the men and women who answered the question. Women chose the categories *Childcare* (W: 23, 44 %, M: 13, 88 %), *Elderly care and service* (W: 20, 31 %, M: 1, 38 %) and *Education* (W: 17, 19 %, M: 5, 55 %) in a higher extent than the men within this age group (Table 2.0). The findings of this research indicate that the men tend to care more about the community and decision making and the women tend to care for the children and education. This also indicate that gender does influence the preferences and knowledge of the residents (Araújo de Azevedo, Custódio & Perna, 2013).

The category *Business sector* was also the most frequently chosen category within the age group 41 -50. 70 of 76 respondents within this age group chose this alternative (Table 1.0). The category *Housing market* got 65 answers which equals 21, 38 % of all the answers. The category *Childcare* got 52 answers (17, 11 %), followed by *Education* with 44 answers (14, 47 %). *Experience and activities* got 6 answers (1, 76 %). The biggest gender differences within this age group were found in the categories *Culture* (M: 10, 52 %, W: 1, 32 %), *Childcare* (M: 14, 47 %, W: 19, 74 %), *Elderly care and service* (M: 5, 26 %, W: 13, 16 %), *Education* (M: 9, 21 %, W: 19, 74 %) and *The community and democracy* (M: 13, 16 %, W: 0,66 %), see Table 2.0.

In the age group 51-60 the 30 out of 31 respondents chose the category *Business sector*, which equals 24, 19 % of all the answers within this age group (Table 1.0). The second most frequently category was *Childcare* with 20 answers (16, 12 %), followed by the categories: *Housing market* and *Elderly care and service* which got 17 answers each (13, 71 %). The categories *Culture* and *The community and democracy* got 15 answers each (12, 1 %). *Experience and activities* got 3 answers (2, 42 %). The biggest gender differences within this age group lies within the categories *Culture* (M: 20, 83 %, W: 6, 58 %), *Childcare* (M: 8, 33%, W: 21, 05 %), *Elderly care and service* (M: 2, 08 %, W: 21, 05 %) and *The community and democracy* (M: 27, 08 %, W: 2, 63 %).

In the age group 61-70, 8 out of 9 respondents chose the categories *Housing market*, *Culture*, and *The community and democracy* (22, 22 % of all answers per category). *Experience and activities* got 7 answers (19, 44 %). The category *Elderly care and service* got 5 answers (13, 88 %). The categories *Business sector*, *Childcare* and *Education* were not chosen at all (Table 1.0). The findings of this research indicate that residents in this age group have the biggest insight in the housing market and what is happening in their community. This is supported by Wheelwright (2003) which suggests that retirement often occurs in the 60s and individuals are often looking for a new home. In this life stage the children are grown up and this age group do not have to consider issues regarding childcare. The individuals have more time to spend on themselves and on travel, culture and other leisure activities. This is also reflected on the

distribution of the answers based on gender. The gender differences were not as prominent within this age group as it has been in the previous age groups (Table 2.0). The biggest difference was found in the category *Elderly care and service* which equalled 20, 83 % of the female answers and 0 % of the male answers. This indicates that the women are more involved in the issues regarding their health and wellbeing. Wallander & Östersgård (2009) suggest that women are more focused on their health, men on the other hand believe that their health is good as it is and are not equally involved in these issues.

The most chosen categories within the age group 70-80 were *Culture* and *Elderly care and service* with 7 answers (25 % of all answers per category). *The community and democracy* and *Experiences and activities* got 6 answers each (21, 43 % of all the answers per category). The category *housing market* got 2 answers (7, 14 %). The categories *Business sector*, *Childcare*, and *Education* were not chosen at all among the respondents (Table 1.0). The findings of this research indicate that there are no big gender differences in this age group. The answers within this age group are almost equally distributed between men and women (Table 2.0).

Conclusion

The residents in Skurup have the biggest insight in the categories: *Business sector*, *Housing market*, *Childcare and Education* according to the findings of this research. The findings of this research also indicate that there is a connection between the knowledge and preferences of individuals and their gender. A majority of the men had the biggest insight in *Culture*, *The community and democracy* and *Experience and activities*. The women chose most frequently the categories *Childcare*, *Elderly care and service* and *Education*. The gender differences were not as prominent within the other categories for instance *Housing market and Business sector*. The answers were more evenly distributed within these categories based on gender. This paper indicates that the women in Skurup focuses more on others than on themselves. The men in Skurup are more likely to focus on the community and the democracy and the decision making within their community.

The findings of this paper also indicate that the biggest gender differences were found in the age groups: 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60. Women represented 52 % of the total sample size and men represented 48 %, which is a good spread when it comes to the distribution of gender in the sample. The variations were smaller in the age groups 21-30, 61-70 and 71-80. This research is based on a sample consisting of 217 residents of Skurup and one should be careful to generalize the results of this research onto the entire population of Skurup. It is also important to take in consideration that other factors than gender may affect the results for instance education, social class and income. Despite this the results indicate that there is a certain trends in the preferences of men and women within different age groups. Furthermore the majority of those who answered the survey belonged to the age groups 21-30 (27, 6 %) and 41 – 50 (35 %), see Figure 2.0. This makes these two groups most representative for the entire sample size. This may be a bias since their opinions are in majority. The size of the community can also affect the answers and affect the stereotypical gender roles.

This paper contributes to the knowledge about how gender differences affect the knowledge and preferences of the resident. The findings of this research also reflects the needs of men and women. This research can be helpful when planning the different activities in the community and when allocating the resources between different sectors within the community.

Implications

According to this research the residents of Skurup have the biggest insight in *Business sector, Housing market, Childcare and Education* when it comes to their community. This research increases the understanding of how knowledge and preferences are affected by gender. The findings of this research indicate that the men in Skurup have the biggest insight in *Culture, Experience and activities and The community and democracy*. The women in Skurup have the biggest insight in the categories *Childcare, Elderly care and service and Education*. This research also shows that there is a variety of the influence of gender within different age groups. It is also important to consider other factors which influence individuals' preferences and needs. The findings of this paper can be useful when making decisions within the community and when allocating resources between different sectors. This paper can help the responsible for the community to increase their understanding regarding the preferences of the residents and provide them with the service which they need.

Further studies

This research is limited to the residents of Skurup and how gender differences affect the residents' knowledge and preferences. This paper increases the understanding regarding which needs and preferences the men and women in Skurup have. Below are some suggestions for further research:

1. Further research can be based on other variables for instance level of education and social class in order to see if these variables affect the residents' knowledge and preferences.
2. A comparative study between several municipalities can be made in order to see if there are similarities and differences between the residents.
3. A qualitative research in the form of interviews can be conducted in order to get more detailed information regarding the respondents and their preferences and needs.

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