Living improvement in the municipality of Skurup: exploring gender differences

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Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to explore what the residents of Skurup wishes to improve in the municipality of Skurup and if the improvements can be generalized on gender. The paper will give answer to if the improvement can be based on which gender the respondents belongs to. If there is a connecting between living improvement and gender in the municipality of Skurup.

Design/methodology/approach - A quantitative study in the form of 200 surveys is used to let us know what the residents of Skurup wishes to improve. The method will consist of primary data, which is collected through surveys. Supplement in the empire will consist of secondary data from databases like Web of Science, Scopus, Diva, Emerald insight and Google scholar.

Implications/Findings - The study reveals what the people in Skurup wishes to improve in their municipality and if the result is affected by gender differences. The paper increases understanding of how a municipality can make their place good to live in based on different gender preferences. As women and men prefer different things, the attributes which they wishes to improve varies based on different gender aspects and can´t be generalised on the whole population, as there are other affecting factors.

Originality/value - The research paper gives accurate information about what the residents of Skurup wants to improve and if the improvement factors has anything to do with gender. It increases understanding of how a municipality can make their place good to live in, for different genders. It also provides information to the municipality of Skurup what they should improve according to the sample of residents.

Paper type - Research paper.

Keywords - Gender differences, municipality, Skurup, improve living and value propositions.

Introduction

In todays society it is important, if not necessary, too be an attractive region or city. This is caused by an increased global connectivity and mobility of both humans and capital. This has in the end created a competitive environment for municipalities. It is not about marketing or branding. It is about making the municipality a good place to life and then letting the world know it (Källström & Ekelund, 2016). Skurup is a municipality in the center of south Skåne. It is a
hilly district, characterized by cultivated fields with larger single farms originating in agriculture reforming the late 1780s. According to Solberg Søilen (2013), Skurup developed from a village into a station community and the new station community established around the railway station in the late 1800s, as a new railway line was implemented. This made Skurup into a more attractive place to live in (Jönsson, 2016).

The research is going to study if there is any gender difference in living improvement factors in Skurup. Because men and women are different and have different needs in life. The research will give better understanding for these differences (Fadda & Jirón, 1999).

This research will answer the two research questions: what do the residents think could be better in the municipality of Skurup and Is the result of what the residents wishes to improve different depended on gender? The purpose with the research paper is to give accurate information about the residents of Skurups thoughts on their municipality. The result can be used in further research and used in the development of the municipality of Skurup based on different gender opinions.

**RQ1. What do the residents think could be better in the municipality of Skurup?**

**RQ2. Is the result of what the residents wishes to improve, affected by gender differences?**

The first part in this paper is the metod, which will give an in-depth declaration of the chosen method. The following chapter is empire, consisted of primary data and secondary data. The end of the research paper will include analysis, conclusions, implications and suggestions for further studies.

**Method**

1.1 **Primary data**

The goal of this research is to discover if the result of what the residents wishes to improve in the municipality is affected by gender differences. The method will consist of primary data, which is data collected from a field under control and supervision. The intent of this method is to gather classified information in standardized form and put it in a computer. This means that the information is easy to analyse (Jacobsen, 2002). The data is collected to answer the questions in this research. Due to this, the research can also be useful for further research.

This research will be quantitative and the information is collected from people in Skurup. The data collection will consist of a survey with a framework, which has been defined before the investigation (Jacobsen, 2002).
The survey will consist of three questions and they will in the end answer the questions in the research paper. The chosen category is; Segment random sampling; the samples will consist on the basis of a representative segment. This is still random, but more focused than random samples (Jacobsen, 2002). This will give more relevant information then if everybody in Sweden would answer. The representative group will only consist of residents of Skurup. These are the people who lives in the municipality and knows how it is to live there and which factors that could improve. The unit of analysis is therefore consisted of a group. In this case the residents of Skurup (Boddy, 2016).

Population (P): Residents of Skurup  
Sample size (s): 200

As the sample size consists of 200 residents, the answers cannot be generalized for the whole population of Skurup. It is important to be careful and not draw conclusions about the conditions that the research does not show. The analysis can be done, only on the available observations, not on missing data (Beuckelaer & Wagner, 2012). The data is based on an observation of 200 residents, the chosen number for this research. According to Jacobsen(2002) a simple random sample is as a lottery. If the sample comprises a smaller proportion than 10% of the population it is largely indifferent to how large the population is. In this case the sample size is 1.3% of the population which can contribute to a bias and give a result which can’t be generalized for the whole population (Boddy, 2016). With a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5 the population should be 375.

A kind of uncertainty in this research is the selection uncertainty, because the research only consist of a sample of people, and not everyone in the population. Further, this also affects a loss uncertainty by all of the sample represented that did not answer the survey. Another form of uncertainty in the method is just uncertainty, and it means that the respondents in the survey may have been mistaken and sometimes given an abnormal answer than the rest of the respondents (Jacobsen, 2002). The survey is anonymous which is good. This means that the interference is minimal. The setting for the research is non-contrived, as the residents answers the questions in a natural environment. The time horizon is cross-sectional and the test is due to one week, so the result won't be changed due to that the municipality makes different changes that affects the municipality.

According to Jacobsen (2002), there are three type of methods: describing, causal and explanatory. In this case the method is exploratory. The study is undertaken when not much is known about the situation at hand. The selected population will be observed and the results of the data collection will be presented in the empire. The purpose with this research is to understand if the result will be affected by gender differences. Therefore are a quantitative primary data method chosen. The survey will collect new and accurate information. If this research would be based on secondary data, there is a chance that the information would be inaccurate and not reflect the thoughts of the people living in Skurup now. The survey will consist of a questionnaire of three questions and the questions are formed to cover the two research questions. The question will have six predetermined answers, which
will be answered in a ranking system. The answers are based on Skurups municipality’s website. The six categories will be explained in the survey to give to the residents the right tools to answer as correct as possible. The survey will be formed to give full explanation for the residents in the beginning to avoid answer that is based on own views on the questions. The design is simple and there are only three question, as there are more likely to get answers if the survey is short and doesn’t take to much time for the residents to answer (Jacobsen 2002).

**Answers alternatives:**

*Business sector:* This section is in charge of everything regarding labor issues. The business sector can help private persons with: support, counselling, jobs seeking, finding jobs for unemployeds, help with collaboration. They also helps companies to find land and facilities.

*Living environment:* This section is in charge of the residents living conditions and the environment issues. They are in charge of waste and recycling, animals and farming, fire protection, facilities, environment, natur and parks, infrastructure, sustainability and drains.

*The municipality and democracy:* This section is in charge of factors related to the municipality and politics. Things they are in charge of are: laws and regulations, improvement comments, decisions, press and information material. They are responsible in all the aspects regarding the municipality.

*Care and support:* This section is in charge of safety and security, everything regarding family issues, health care, geriatric care, dentistry and support for abuse like drugs and alcohol.

*Education and the children:* This section is in charge of childcare, education in different steps for both children and adults.

*Experience and activities:* Manages turism, compounds, culture, sports, exercise and outdoor activities and different activities.

The scaling is 1 to 6, and the residents will be asked to answer the question by picking different alternatives on the scale. This can in the end be categories into a nominal or ordinal scale.

The first question will be a yes or no question. The question will eliminate residents of other municipalities, because the population is only residents of Skurup. The second question is about gender. The residents can either chose female, male or do not want to disclose. Question three is an indication of what the residents think could be better in the municipality of Skurup. The residents will answer the question by marking one alternative they think could improve.

The survey will be in Swedish to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of words. The survey is answered online. The link of the survey will be shared on Facebook and through mail. On Facebook the link will be in six different groups which has connection to Skurup. The
municipality has decided to cooperate and is sharing the survey through their media to reach as many people as possible. According to Evans and Mathur (2005), online surveys has significant advantages over other formats, however, it is imperative that the potential weaknesses of online surveys be mitigated and that online surveys only be used when appropriate. The method with online surveys gives the opportunity to reach people during the day. Most people work during the day so this helps to get answers from not only elderly and people how are out on the town during day, if it would be a survey interview. Online surveys state that when most of a society has internet access and the basic drawback for the use of online survey research, the lack of representativeness, disappears (Evans and Mathur, 2005).

1.2 Analysis of primary data
The analysis of the data is content analysis. The method refers to data reduction and sense — making. The goal with the analysis is to identify core meanings and reveal themes. Miles and Huberman (1994) developed a four-step framework for analyzing of data. The first step is to collect data, the second step is to organize the data, the third step is to categorise the data into displays which in this case are tables. The fourth step is the conclusion, which involved deciding what the identified themes meant and how they helped to answer the research purpose and questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data will in the end become tablets and bar graph which in the end will be easy to analysis.

1.3 Secondary data
The help and form the questions for the survey, secondary data will be used. The data will be collected from databases, included Web of Science, Scopus, Diva, Emerald insight and Google scholar. This sources will provide qualitative secondary data. This data will be presented in the empire and analyzed and compared with the primary data. The secondary data will consist of information about different concepts regarding this research. The secondary data will provide a ground and an overall understanding for the area of research.

Empire
According to Källström and Ekelund (2016), it is important for any municipality to use strategical thinking when it comes to place development. If a municipality wants to change its image and improve, they need to focus on "product development". Building a place where stakeholders finds it good and making a brand is important. This will in the end generate a good reputation. A primary goal for any municipality should be to develop a place into one that is good for tourists to visit, for businesses to operate and for residents to live. The residents must be the primary focus of the development (Anholt, 2010). To maintaining a stable, diverse and appropriately resident is vital for a place’s sustainability. Municipalities depend on their residents for economic, social, cultural and environmental qualities. In turn, a resident’s satisfaction with their municipality is shaped by the perceived quality of theses factors (Insch & Florek, 2008).

The Quality of Life (QoL) is a concept regarding residents personal needs, expectations and requirements (Lepage, 2009). According to Calman (1984),
quality of life is negatively affected when there is a gap between an individual's expectation of a situation and how the individual then experience it in reality. If the gap between expectations and reality is little, quality of life increases. SBU (2012) describe quality of life as concept that encompasses man's own assessments of their physical, mental and social well-being. Life quality is a subjective experience that changes with time and is affected when there is a disturbance in the individual's life situation. The municipality can by offering value proposition help individual’s to create quality of life by offering good condition for co-creation.

The concept of "quality of life" represents more than the private "living standards" according to Fadda and Jirón (1999). It refers to all the elements which are important for human beings, which are all their needs and requirements. This differs from men and women. The concept measures people's well-being, satisfaction and happiness. To satisfy this needs the women and men needs accessible social and public infrastructure. Human beings also perceive life different and that depends on different factors, like: gender, age, culture, ethnicity and religion. In this case the gender differences will be studied.

The perceptions may vary according to gender relations, roles, needs and access to resources. They will also be affected by their neighbourhood and different residents have different acceptable levels. There is according to Araújo de Azevedo, Ferreira Custódio and Antunes Perna (2013) a gender effect on several attributes. Women likes urban planning, overall security and traffic jams. Men state higher levels if satisfaction with parking place, public transportation, ease of finding qualified jobs and ease of finding a house at a reasonable price.

According to Lepage (2009) there is hard to draw parallels of what different genders prefer as income, age and different aspects can affect a person. Everybody has basic needs and depending on how well they are met, residents can think of other things that are not as important. If you have a house and a healthy family, you can start to think about other things like; activities, experiences and education for example. Health, well-being and happiness comes first in line (Lepage, 2009)

Men care more about how they are perceived by others. Women are more caring for others. Women are more likely to care about their family then men, who focus more on themselves (Wallander & Östesgård, 2009). According to Wallander and Östesgård (2009), individuals who has bigger confidence are more likely to have a higher quality of life. They spend more time on other things in life then only focusing on themselves. Women focus more on health and men already thinks that this is good as it is. Men are more likely to test new things according to Wallander and Östesgård (2009). Women are more focused on education than men. Men are more likely to become leaders and care more about career. Women are more focused on family life and development of municipalities. Even though this has changed as the society has change there are still these stereotypes left. That women care more about family and men care more about career and education (Wallander & Östesgård, 2009).
Women are more likely to feel less safety and men do not focus on that as much as men. This would indicate that men focus more on other things in a municipality than men do. They focus more on living attributes that are for their advantaged. Women focus more on the municipality as a whole and care more about children, others and their families well-being, than about themselves. Men care about being leaders and care about the municipality to be equal for all. This could indicate that they are likely to care about democracy in a wider range than women (Wallander & Östesgård, 2009).

The municipality as a place provider cannot create value for a resident. Instead, value propositions, of which the resident can create value for herself/himself, should be offered (Grönroos, 2008). Hässleholm municipality and Kristianstad municipality emphasise that they should offer and highlight education, childcare and elderly care, of high quality. This facts come from an annual municipal report, where key value propositions are highlighted. The report also shows that residents are interested in culture. Culture in the form of libraries, events, performances and culture in schools, is also emphasized. Nicely tended parks and gardens is also an important part of a municipality (Källström & Ekelund, 2016). According to Källström and Ekelund (2016), the value propositions are offerings that representatives of the municipality believe that the place offers residents and that they see as propositions from which residents ought to be able to create value.

Three vital factors for a municipality

Geographical location and the natural environment-The closeness to large metropolitans gives value to residents. The municipality’s geographical appearance is important and the variation is important of townships, countryside and city. Access to seaside, beaches and a unique natural environment gives more value to the residents.

Basic and essential services-This area includes education, health care and elderly care, highways, public transportations and in general high-quality basic service which is very important for the residents.

Recreation and leisure-The importance of a wide range of culture should not be underestimated. Different things that give value for the residents are: activities, sports, recreation groups, museums, concert halls, heritage sites, park and access to nature. It is important to not only focus on the separate value propositions, but also to see the larger picture. To create more value for the residents. The municipality can co-create value together with a resident if interactions are established. This is a way for getting to know the residents so better value propositions can be offered. Value is created by a resident when the propositions are used, which implies that the combination of propositions and how they work together is crucial for a resident (Källström & Ekelund, 2016).
2.1 Primary data collection

1. Are you a resident of Skurups municipality?

The figure shows that 242 of the respondents in the survey are residents of Skurup. The table shows that 244 has answered the survey. This will eventually be a margin of error in the analysis.

2. Gender distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not want to disclose</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This figure gives information of the residents gender. The importance lays within variation of gender to get a good spread. This helps to analyse if the resultat of the improvements only requires to a certain gender or if it can be a parallel drawn between the genders.
Figure 3 and 4. What do you think could be better in the municipality of Skurup?

The figure above shows what the residents of Skurup think could be better. The figure separates the different answers alternatives into sections. The figures above shows what women, men and no-genders think could be better in the municipality of Skurup.

**Analysis**

The analysis will discuss the research questions based on primary and secondary data. The research questions are:

**RQ1.** What do the residents think could be better in the municipality of Skurup?

**RQ2.** Is the result of what the residents wishes to improve, affected by gender differences?
The research resulted in 244 answers and 242 were useful, as 2 of the respondent did not live in Skurup. The sample size of this research is therefore 242, 42 more then the original sample. One biases in this research is the fact. The sample size might not be representative of all genders in Skurup. As there are 15000 residents in Skurup and only 242 answered the margin of error is not too eliminate. This means that it can be errors in the presented research data. Another biases with this type of online survey is the fact that only people with computers and internet can answer the survey. But according to Evans and Mathur (2005), online surveys has significant advantages over other formats, as also everyone has access to internet and computer nowadays.

The second question shows the gender distributions and gives information about what the gender has answers in the rest of the research. Two people do not want to disclose their gender, which will become a bias in the analysis. This are people who are either a female or a male. As the answers can be tracked, the results of there will be separated from the rest of the results. As they cannot be a part of this analysis, because this study is supposed to reveal gender differences in living attributes. Figure 3 and 4 gives answers to what the residents wishes to improve depending on their gender. In this research the residents can only choose one alternative. This is to give more concrete answers, to what are the most important factor or attribute they wishes to improve.

**RQ1. What do the residents think could be better in the municipality of Skurup?**

This question will answer what the residents wishes to improve in the municipality of Skurup and this is dependent on gender.

Women are according to Wallander & Östesgård, 2009, more likely to care about their family than themselves. In the research the attributes care and support and education and children are the attributes which are chosen the most. This shows a clear indicating that women are more likely to care about others than themselves, even in Skurup.

According to Araujo de Azevedo, Ferreira Custódio and Antunes Perna (2013), women are more likely to care about their living situation from a safety perspective. In this research living environment are on the third place. In Skurup this section is in charge of safety and the overall environment for the residents. Parallels can be draw between Wallander and Östesgård (2009) and Araujo de Azevedo, Ferreira Custódio and Antunes Perna (2013), that women care more for others. All the section mentioned below are section that refers to an overall improvement for the municipality as a whole.

The sections women wishes to improve least are; business sector and the municipality and democracy. According to Wallander and Östesgård (2009), women care more about their family than work and democracy. They will spend more time focusing on their family instead of improving their own work environment. As Wallander and Östesgård (2009), stated
women focus more on the municipality as a whole and care more about children, others and their famous well-being, than about themselves. Which seems to be the case in Skurup as well.

According to Araujo de Azevedo, Ferreira Custódio and Antunes Perna (2013), men state higher levels in satisfaction with parking places, public transportation, ease of finding qualified jobs and ease of finding a house at a reasonable price. In this research business sector and living environment has the highest scores. As mentioned below men cares more about career, this is also stated by Wallander and Östesgård (2009). In Skurup 35% of all the men voted for improvement within business sector. 24% wishes to improve the living environment, and together with business sector, 59% of all the men wishes to improve these two.

According to Lepage (2009), men are more likely to start to think about improving other attributes in their life if they have a house, a healthy family and a good income. They are more likely than women to start thinking about other attributes in life if the basic needs are satisfied. The sections Care and support and experiences and activities are the sections which are selected the least. These two together constitutes 12%. The care and support section can have a low number as men who are satisfied with their basic needs cares less about that.

According to Wallander and Östesgård (2009), men are more likely to become leaders which can indicate a higher focus on career. The men have not voted for the section municipality and democracy in a high extent which can’t be explained by Wallander and Östesgård (2009). As democracy is an east way to help and lead and improve the municipality. They aslo care much about how they are being perceived by other, which makes men to focus more on attributes which are self-centred. Women are more likely to focus on attributes which contributes to an overall improvement for others. The differences in this research are the attributes which the women wishes to improve and the attributes the men wishes to improve. Men are more likely to choose to improve attributes that improves for themselves, if there basic needs are met. Based on this research one can assume that the male residents of Skurup have the basic needs met; good living conditions, good health care and good opportunities for jobs. The women of Skurup are more likely to focus on the attribute which contributes to an overall improvement for the municipality. Which Wallander and Östesgård (2009), research also proves.

**RQ2. Is the result of what the residents wishes to improve, affected by gender differences?**

All the answered are based primary and secondary data and the research reflects both the sources. In this research there are different conclusions that can be drawn based on what the different genders prefer. But an overall conclusion can’t be stated due to the lack of unknown factors. These are factors that affect the result in one way or another. According to Lepage (2009), there is hard to draw parallels of what different genders prefer.
There are many factors that affect which attributes of living that is important for an individual. That is why the research can’t be generalized on the whole population. As the confidence interval, aslo known as margin of error, is 5 and the confidence level is 95% the research could have resulted in an analysis which could have be generalised on the whole population. But in this research the sample size is only 242 and the estimated sample size should have been 375. This is a clear bias and means that the research cannot be generalised on the whole population in Skurup. The research resulted in 244 answers and 240 were useful, as 2 of the respondent did not live in Skurup and 2 people did not want to revolve their gender. The sample size of this research is therefore 240, 40 more then the original sample.

The factor that can affect the result or why the residents choose an attribute are: income, age, religion, education, family status and different factor as psychological and physical. Everybody has basic needs and depending on how well they are met, residents can think of other things that are not as important. If you have a house and a healthy family, you can start to think about other things like; activities, experiences and education for example. Health, well-being and happiness comes first in line (Lepage, 2009).

The research shows men are more likely to want to improve business sector and living environment which can be based on different gender characteristics. But it can’t be generalised on the whole population, as the sample size is to small and as there are other affecting factors. The attributes women wishes to improve are care and support and education and children. These attributes can be based on the statements that Lepage (2009) and Wallander and Östesgård (2009) makes about how women are in general. The primary and the secondary data matches in the preferences. The secondary data states what women likes and what men likes, which reflects in the result of the primary data. If factors like age, age, religion and others factors is not included in the result. The research can state that the results are affected by gender differences. Different genders, in this case women and men has different ways to approach life and have different attributes that are important to them (Wallander and Östesgård, 2009). What Wallander and Östesgård (2009) and Lepage (2009) said about different genders is used to analyse the result of the primary data and these two matches.

**Conclusion**

The research paper provides information to the municipality of Skurup what they should improve according to a sample of residents. They can improve the living for their residents and make different improvements for both women and men, as they would like to improve different attributes.

The paper increases understanding of how a municipality can make their place good to live in based on different gender preferences. As women and men prefer different things, the attributes which they wishes to improve varies based on different gender aspects.
The research accounts only for the municipality’s contribution to value creation by its residents. It gives accurate information about what residents value high in a municipality. The research shows men are more likely to want to improve business sector and living environment and the attributes women wishes to improve are care and support and education and children. The chosen attributes can be based on different gender characteristics. But it can’t be generalised on the whole population, as the sample size is to small and as there are other affecting factors.

Implications
The study reveals what the people in Skurup wishes to improve in their municipality and if the result is affected by gender differences. It offers insight into what value proposition residents value the highest. The paper increases understanding of how a municipality can make their place good to live in based on different gender preferences. As women and men prefer different things, the attributes which they wishes to improve varies based on different gender aspects.

Suggestions for further studies
The research paper increases understanding of how gender differences can affect what a residents value in a municipality. The paper also gives accurate information of how a municipality can make their place good to live in for both women and men.

Below are listed a number of suggested studies within this field:

1. To give the research a wideness, the research could treat different affecting factors to why people would like to live in a place. Age, culture, ethnicity or religion. This could give valuable information about what different groups wish to improve.

2. Municipalities can make a qualitative research of what different grupps wishes to improve. This could improve the understanding more and give more accurate answer to why some living factors are more important than others.
References


