



**LAUREA**  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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# Accessible Tourism

A Study of Accessibility in Hotel Chains, Public Transportation, and Ferry  
Companies in Helsinki

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## A Study of Accessibility in Hotel Chains, Public Transportation and Ferry Companies in Helsinki

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A Study of Accessibility of Hotel Chains, Public Transportation and Ferry Companies in Helsinki

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This Bachelor's thesis was prepared for the fulfillment of the educational standard of Laurea University of Applied Sciences. This thesis is aimed to achieve a main goal which is to explore accessible service and product with its environment into hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki. In addition, this thesis describes the current accessibility situation of hotel chains, public transportation and two ferry companies in Helsinki.

The empirical study material was collected at three major sector including hotel chains in Helsinki with the connection of public transportation and ferry companies Viking Line and Silja Line. The research was conducted by contacting most of the leading hotel chains, public transportation authority HSL or HKL and ferry companies delivering to them an e-mail with details of the theme of thesis. The research was accomplished with the help of the structured interview, e-mail questionnaire and systematic observation in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies through the perspective of wheelchair person. The research questions explore the current service level in accessibility in hotel chains, in public transportation and in ferry companies in Helsinki and its improvement in service delivery. The output of thesis includes the theory section and empirical section that deals with researched area.

This thesis presents the significance of accessible tourism in a whole life approach. Accessible tourism is based on a new emerging niche market in tourism industry related to disabled travelers and seniors including a major factor of human life span and a phenomenon which can be influenced any person at any stage of his or her life. Every disabled tourist has a right to experience the tourism product and service whenever and whatever they desire without any barrier. This study benefits all the stakeholders of tourism industry as well as students of tourism. Additionally, this thesis focuses the value of accessible education or training in University education and in degree programmes of tourism. Furthermore, this thesis facilitates to build up the social inclusion, independence, equity and dignity. In order to strengthen the potentiality of tourism in Helsinki, this thesis gives an innovative idea and a solution to improve accessible tourism in Helsinki.

Key words: Accessible Tourism, Hotel Chains, Public Transportation, Ferry Companies and Service Environment.

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## 1 Introduction

According to United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is a diverse industry, which is a central economic driver for socio-economic development in a number of areas and destinations throughout the world. Tourism is a whole exertion of transportation, airlines, travels and tours agents, hotel industry, ferry companies, Information technology industry and host community of tourism destination. (UNWTO 2011). The growing population of elderly and disabled people not only in Europe but also all over the world needs a special support and service, developed the new emerging new niche as an accessible tourism in tourism industry.

Accessible tourism enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimension of access, to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments. It includes people in wheelchairs independently or with helper, walking stick or crutches, disabled tourist with trolleys and heavy luggage, visual and hearing impairments, seniors, families with prams and, pregnant women who can frequently move anywhere as their wish. (Darcy & Dickson 2009, 34). The disabled tourists want to enjoy the services and facilities without any restriction by service provider for spending their enjoyable leisure time at popular tourism destination. Therefore, the disabled tourists need specific help and support at destination. The specific support to disabled tourist is depended up on the standard service of public transportation, accommodation and travelling services. However, the fundamental of service provider should be well known about extra service, gift, bonus or economic benefits (Ideas 2012) those services which make a customer happy.

The aim of this thesis is to explain a comprehensive analysis of the current service situation in Restel group hotel chain, Hilton Hotel, Scandic Hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel, public transportation facilities in bus, tram, metro, train and in ferry companies Viking Line and Silja Line. The research questions are what is the current service level in accessibility in hotel chains, in public transportation and in ferry companies in Helsinki? and how the services could be improved in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki?

In order to strengthen of the potential of tourism in Helsinki, the thesis gives some innovative ideas and a solution to improve accessible tourism in Helsinki. This thesis is a minor effort for supporting action to the project in title of Helsinki for all. The main aim of project is to create a barrier free image in Helsinki. As people grow older, additional services may be required to support them to remain active and to continue to live independently. The purpose of the equity and dignity of the human being helps to access without any barrier to experience tourism activities.

To collect the information of the current situation in accessibility in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki, the used research methods are structured interview, e-mail questionnaire and systematic observation to collect the required data through the perspective of a tourist in a wheelchair. A test user was not used but the situations were imagined thinking that other segmented group of tourists can be accessed easily where a tourist in a wheelchair can access. The evaluation criteria used in the thesis are positive, negative and neutral criteria by Jokiniemi (2007). This thesis recommends the possible improvements to concern parties to increase the better quality service. Additionally, this thesis helps to build the social inclusion, participation and self-fulfillment, respect and valuing, support, independence and dignity to all stakeholders. (ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing 2010)

This thesis includes the major three areas of accessibility in Helsinki which is interrelated to smooth operation of tourism activities in popular destination of Helsinki. The print literature and internet are the major sources of theoretical concept. Literature review is a logical flow of idea (The writing centre 2011) which is essential for thesis writing. The most of theoretical concept in this thesis is related to a book of Buhalis & Darcy (2010). In addition, there are a lot of theories books related to research methods which were studied from library and case studies from Australia (life in Australia 2012), UK, Canada, New Zealand, and USA. The thesis used hotel brochures, annual reports and articles of public transportation and ferry companies for purpose of secondary data.

The accessibility of hotel chain and ferry company is related to entrance door, elevator, location of room or cabin, standard of bed room, accessible toilet and their facilities, accessible parking access into restaurant, and receptionist desk, education of accessibility of hotel staffs like manager and others. By the systematic observation and questionnaire, the research data are recorded to make this form of thesis. Besides that, the accessibility of transportation is related to easy access to get in and out in bus tram, train and metro, availability of space, numbers of reserved seats, its safety belt, and height of stop switch and travel card reader machine. The main structure of thesis is divided into twelve sections and subsections.

- Introduction
- Background of Research
- Accessible Tourism
- Research Methodology
- Research Analysis
- Accessibility in Hotel Chains , Public Transportation and Ferry Companies
- Summary of Emperical Findings
- Validity and Reliability of Thesis

- Conclusion and Recommendation
- References
- Figures and Tables
- Appendices

The thesis process is divided into four major components mainly on literature study, research process, analyzing the research data and preparation of final report. The thesis has started from literature study in September 2011. The authors have collected and studied the literature materials, studies of different cases from different countries, and use of electronic sources like internet. The research process was started in January and continued to March 2012. The interviews were conducted in Restel group hotels, Hilton and Radisson Blu hotel, Helsinki regional transport (HSL 2012), and Viking Line and Silja Line. The form of collecting the information was structured interview, e-mail questionnaire and systematic observation at service environments. After completion of research process, the authors started analyzing the data in March. The final presentation and the report writing were completed in May 2012.

## 2 Background of Research

Tourism industry is a service intensive industry which is depended on the quality of customers' services experience through the service provider's offer like the accommodation by hotel industry, transportation service by transport company, travel and tour service by travel agent or tour operator, flight service by Airline company and voyage and entertainment by ferry companies. The history of hospitality sector has a significant role in tourism industry. The market segment is the targeted to specific group who usually travels more destinations. A huge number of baby boomers in European market are the main attraction of service provider to upgrade the business providing quality service according to customer's expectation. (Stickdom & Zehrer 2011).

The accessibility of the Helsinki could be a potential source of income if the service for disabled tourist is sufficient. The compressive analysis accessibility in the hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies help to create an exact figure of those industries where the researchers pointed out the possible recommendation. Accessible tourism is about making it easy for all people to enjoy tourism experiences. (Accessible Tourism in Australia 2011). An older population inevitably changes society changes (Helsinki Sanomat 2011). The population of the baby boomers is a major source of income of inbound tourism in Europe who have a lots of disposal income after retirement from work. (Laplante1991 and Quinn 1998). Helsinki is the capital city of Finland which has a greater economic value of inbound and out bound tourism. Therefore, it is both opportunity and challenge for tourism industry. (Swopec 2012) This report will help to show the current situation of

hotel, public transportation and ferry companies. By the qualitative analysis, this thesis gives an innovative idea what types of services are essential for disabled tourists.

The population of disabilities is estimated to be 50 million in Europe. Those people have a lot of disposal income which is a main attraction for tourism industry. The study topic has a global significance because the recent phenomena of elderly people is a challenging world spread problem for disabled people and other demographic groups to be mobile and travel anywhere without any limitations and restrictions. (ENAT 2012)

The aging population of Finland is not only a challenging issue but also an opportunity for a whole Europe. It is an attraction and major source of income of inbound and outbound tourism. The infrastructure of the most popular destination, public transportation and accommodation are the valuable service for whilst travelling. The first European access city is Avila in Spain (Avila tourimo 2012) which is an extra ordinary step to develop the image at destination for disabled tourist. The project of 'Helsinki for all' is also a remarkable step for accessible tourism in Helsinki. (Helsinki for all 2012)

Everyone in the tourism industry knows that people who need extra service, have a right to experience the same services and opportunities as everyone else: independent travel, accessible facilities, trained staff, reliable information and inclusive marketing. Accessible tourism benefits everyone. More individuals enjoy the opportunity to travel means the tourism industry gets more visitors, longer stay, longer seasons and regular incomes. Society as a whole benefits from new job opportunities, more tax revenue for government and an accessible environment for both inhabitants and visitors. (Yarra Ranges Business & Tourism 2011)

Accessible tourism is based on new emerging niche market in tourism industry related to disabled travelers and seniors including a major component of human life span and a phenomenon which can affect any person at any stage of his or her life. Therefore, this thesis focuses to mobility requirements of following target group. The person on wheelchair, walking stick and crutches, people with visual and hearing impairments, seniors, pregnant women, and families with pram, travelers with heavy luggage, and travelers with trolley are the key players of accessible tourism. The overall analysis of this research is based on the eye of tourist on a wheelchair. (Hamk 2011)

This thesis covers the accessibility in hotel chain in Helsinki, public transportation in Helsinki, ferry companies in Viking Line and Silja Line. This thesis describes about the current situation of accessibility of tourism industry including hotel, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki region. The reason that the researchers have chosen the hotel chains in Helsinki were found Helsinki is a modern and furnished with all facilities. Helsinki has been operating a good network of

public transportation in central Helsinki and ferry connections to neighboring countries Sweden and Estonia.

### 3 Accessible Tourism

According to Darcy and Dickson (2009), accessible tourism enables people with access requirements, including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimension of access, to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments. It includes tourist in wheelchairs independently or with helper, Walking stick or crutches, tourist with trolleys and heavy luggage, Visual and hearing impairments, seniors, families with prams and, Pregnant women who are frequently move everywhere as their wish. Importantly, this definition recognizes the importance of accessible tourism requiring a process grounded on three important values, independence, equity and dignity (Darcy & Dickson 2009, 34).

The definitions of disability by WHO (1980), it is often vary according to the purpose of the data collection or according to different classifications used (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2000, WHO 1980, 1997). In addition, Impairment is any loss or abnormality of Psychological, physiological or anatomical structure of function (United Nations Enable 2009). Considering the all segments in accessible tourism, this thesis is focused on disabled tourist in wheel chair.

Understanding disability as part of human life span has been part of research and policy for many decades. Despite accessible tourism is a new emerging issue all over the world. Most of the countries are pursued the by the law in tourism destination providing barrier free access at destination A whole of life approach of accessible tourism is that it has been estimated that 30% of a population will have access requirements at any point in time, and most people will have a disability at some stage during their life. (Laplante 1991& Quinn 1998)

#### 3.1 A Whole of Life Approach and United Nation Convention

This approach preserves the human right of all human living for equitable access entertainment in tourism experience. It is a fundamental right of human being free to move and travel all over the world. The following legislations are preserved the right of the disabled tourists. (Darcy & Dickson 2009). The recent trend in accessible tourism is developing as an area of academic study and industry practice which is a valuable revolution. Accessible destination experiences take direction from universal design principles to offer independent, dignified and equitable quintessential experiences that provide a 'sense of place' within the destination region for people with access requirements (Darcy, Camero, Pegg, & Packer 2008).

It is an international human rights instrument, intended to protect the rights of equity and dignity of persons with disabilities. This law preserves to endorse, defend, and ensure the full pleasure of human rights by tourists with disabilities. It is a milestone of history on human right. The Convention aims to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with all other citizens. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty to be ratified by the EU as a whole. It has also been signed by all 27 EU Member States. (United Nation 2006; 2008)

This new legislation is seen by the European Commission as a key element of the European Disability Strategy, which was unveiled last year. The EU executive is getting ready to launch a major study that will identify and analyze the barriers which prevent people with disabilities from making full use of public buildings, transport and all kinds of services. This act will provide the basis for developing new EU legislation on accessibility standards. (Tourism Review 2011)

### 3.2 Visitor Friendliness and Universal Design

This thesis focuses on how the pleasant environment of hotel chains, public transportation, and ferry companies in Helsinki increase the numbers of disabled tourist in every season. The core attention of thesis in hotel industry is to find out the accessibility of entrance gate, structure of information desk, accessibility of room, toilet and emergency alarm or telephone, accessible parking and accessibility of restaurant and bar. The service environment includes friendliness in welcoming the disabled tourist, providing précised information, instruct to guest by hotels staff like receptionist, manager, barman and waiter etc. The special support and service should be provided to disabled tourists with friendly manner creates an immortal experience. (Bucur 2012)

In addition, the (a) esthetic criteria includes the decoration of hotels. Including color light, space, floor, carpet and room design are also the common attraction of visitors which increases the superior image of hotel through the visitor friendliness aspect. The information on hotel webpage, accessibility maps of hotel and with touristic destination are the first informant of visitors, should be accessed easily with a minimum effort.

This philosophical concept of Universal design is propounded by Australian National Research Agenda for Accessible Tourism. Universal Design is based on seven principles to facilitate equitable access the lifespan. The intent of the universal design concept is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by more people at little or no extra cost. The universal design concept targets all people of all ages, sizes and abilities. (Center for Universal Design 2009; Preiser & Ostrooff 2001).

- Equitabe use
- Flexibility in use

- Simple & intuitive use
- Perceptible information
- Tolerance for error
- Low physical effort
- Size and space for approach and use

The illustration of these principles in the Center for Universal Design provides a shift in understanding as to the benefits of the implementation for all industries. The implications of this interdisciplinary design approach are that access would become central to a design rather than an add-on for compliance reasons. Many groups would be the beneficiaries; for example, environments designed to be inclusive of mobility would be of assistance to tourists using wheelchairs, those with mobility (University of Buffalo 2011) challenges, families with prams, travelers with heavy luggage, shoppers with trolleys and workers safely going about their duties. Signage and lighting would be informed by the needs of tourists with low vision, rather than just aesthetics as dictated by the tradition of architects and designers. (Center for Universal Design 2009). In addition, universal design depends upon the infrastructure of buildings, product and service environment where the service provider offers to disabled tourists. The concept of universal design explores the understanding of all stakeholders in an understanding way.

### 3.3 Helsinki for All

The overall theme of this thesis is to explore the current situation of hotel chains, transportation and ferry companies through the different value of every age level of disabled tourists. Besides that, the City of Helsinki also launched a project named Helsinki for All. The Accessibility Plan is the foundation for an accessible Helsinki. The plan approved by the Helsinki City Board on November 14, 2005 directs and commits the city's offices and institutions to developing ease of access and smooth functioning. The accessibility of the city of Helsinki includes the convenient movement and functioning on streets, squares, parks, yards and playgrounds, easy access to buildings and unimpeded movement within them, stairless access from one place to another and between transport modes, clear directional signs and a good acoustic environment. (The City of Helsinki 2012)

The project of 'Helsinki for All' will be a milestone for developing a new niche in accessible tourism in Helsinki by providing a support to World Design Capital Helsinki 2012. The result of the thesis is more worthy to all stakeholders of the tourism industry. Helsinki for All is a cooperation project established by the Helsinki City Board in 2002 and headed by the Public Works Department. Representatives of city offices, associations for the elderly and disabled, resident associations, government, property owners, commercial life and organizations are all participating in the project.

(HEL 2012). In addition, Accessible tourism like other niche areas of tourism has been described most commonly through an estimation of market size (Keroul 1995 & Touche Ross 1993), and more lately the estimation of economic contribution of the group (Buhalis, Michopoulou, Eichhorn, & Miller 2005 & Darcy 1998).

#### 4 Research Methodology

A study of accessibility in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki is a new topic which the researchers have chosen. Facing a challenging task by the researcher has chosen the mix research method for collecting data. The mix methods consists the qualitative and quantitative research method. The qualitative research method is mostly used in tourism industry due to its nature. The primary and secondary data collection method are conducted to explore qualitative and quantitative result through face to face structured interview and e-mail questionnaire with manager of hotel chain of Restel group of hotel, Hilton hotel, Radisson Blu, and Scandic hotel in Helsinki. Helsinki Regional Transport Authority (Helsingin Bussiliikenne HSL or HKL), Tram, Train, metro, taxi service, Viking line and Silja line are major source of research in this thesis because it is an essential factor for mobility of disabled tourist (Woodside 2007).

##### 4.1 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research methods were originally developed in the social science to enable researcher to study social and cultural phenomena. The examples of qualitative research are action research, case study research, and grounded search. Qualitative data are mostly a record of what people have said. Therefore, the research is done through face to face interview and using e-mail questionnaire and systematic observation in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies. In addition, the face to face interview and systematic observation on service environment were recorded in form of video and photograph by camera (Myers 2009, 8).

Besides that, the qualitative data can be collected from experimental or lab tests even though it is not so relevant in our research. The observation measures more than one property such as space, height, location, sound, decoration, colour, posters, carpet, way of service, and customer security of all observable bodies, distinguished as independent objects in this thesis (Brace 2008).

##### 4.2 Quantitative Research Method

At one level it is very easy to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research. (Punch 1998) refers to quantitative research as empirical research where the data are in form of numbers,

and the qualitative research where data are not in form of numbers. Quantitative research is easy way to collect the data in sense of result which is easy to summarize and analysis. (Ehow 2012).The methods of collecting data for quantitative research are shown in Figure number 1.

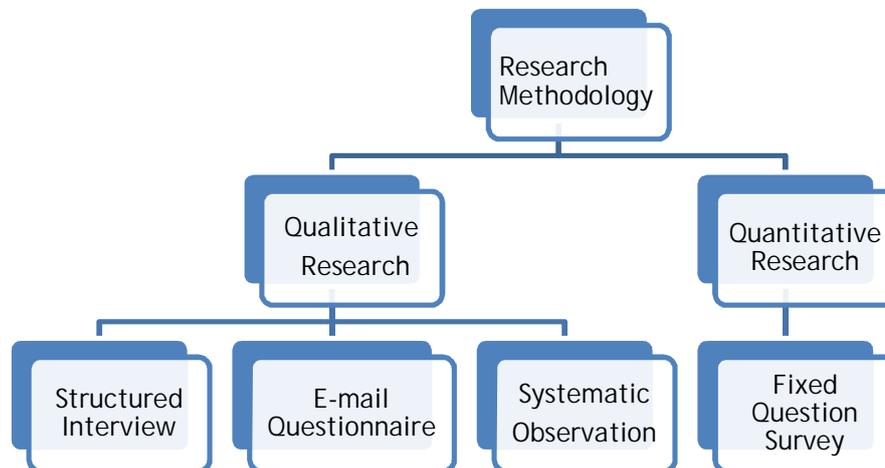


Figure1: The Research Methodology of Thesis (Brace 2008)

The figure number 1 presents the mix method of research even though the qualitative research is mostly used in tourism research (Brace 2008). The qualitative research method includes the Structured interview, e-mail questionnaire and systematic interview. The main theme of structure interview is to collect the data within the frame of designed questions. The design of the questions are based on key factors and 5E's criteria by ENAT. The e-mail questionnaire was used to collect the data due to busy schedule of respondents at work.

The systematic observation was based a designed observation at service points. Whereas using e-mail for electronic surveys directly replaces the role of conventional mail, electronic interviewing makes use of the more interactive and immediate nature of e-mail, either in the form of one-to-one interviewing or the setting up of electronic focus groups. The practical advantages of electronic interviewing are two-fold. First, as Foster (1995) and Hoepfl (1997) points out, interviewing by electronic mail is not constrained by geographical location or time-zone; the need for proximity between the interviewer and interviewee is no longer an issue. Secondly, electronic interviewing data require no additional transcription, the text from e-mail interviews can easily be tailored for any word processing package or computer-based qualitative analysis package with a minimum of alteration. (Social Research 2012).

The quantitative research includes the number of disabled tourist arrivals or travels in different seasons in a month and number of accessible rooms or cabins and disabled tourists arrivals in fixed

question interview. The distance of accessible room or cabins from elevator to reception desk was also included in quantitative research.

The purpose of data collection is to obtain information to keep on record, to make decisions about important issues, to pass information on to others (Ehow 2011). Primarily, data is collected through (Hopefl 1997) the observation in hotel rooms and its facilities, interview and questionnaire with manager of hotel in Helsinki area. The observation of all hotels and its accessible room, entrance gate, parking area, restaurant and toilet are included for data in this thesis. The authors observed the accessible room in Hilton and Scandic hotel.

The primary data is also called raw data but the accuracy level is high (Ehow 2011). Before the data collection, the authors had selected a sample of hotels choosing as Restel group of hotels which covers the major market share of hotel rooms in Helsinki area. The primary data are collected from manager of hotel chain, e-mail questionnaire with department head of public transport and receptionist of Viking Line and Silja Line and observation of service point.

Actually, the interview and questionnaire were conducted to collect the primary data for this thesis. The information based on existing staff in the hotel chain, public transport, web page of hotel chains and ferry companies, annual a report public transportation are the roots of source of data for development of this thesis. The common primary data collection methods are interview, group interview, questionnaire, e-mail questionnaire, observation, survey and lab test which are used for both qualitative and quantitative data collection for every research (Wayne C, Booth etc al.2008).

The common sources of secondary data for social science include censuses, surveys, organizational records and data collected by other than user through qualitative methodologies or qualitative research. The internet website, printed books, monthly or yearly bulletin, magazine and brochures are used for secondary data in this case. It is an easy and the cheapest way to get the information. For this thesis, the secondary data are used the webpage of hotel chains, brochures of hotel chains, Viking Line and Silja Line, statistic data from hotel chains, and annual report of public transportation(Wikipedia 2011).

The assumptions of the questions were based on different approach of accessible tourism such as human right, social, economical, ethical, (A) esthetical, ecological, educational, and universal design. The 5's criteria are more essential factors for those people who are working in tourism field (ENAT 2012).

## 5 Research Analysis

After collecting all the data from primary and secondary resources, the author sorted out the data and analyzing them for thesis report. Without analysis the data, the conclusion might be wrong. The test of the questionnaire is used before act in real field (Cassell & Symon 2005). When the researcher is evaluating the collected data, the following four requirements should be satisfied. Therefore, the questionnaire is tested by a student from University of Helsinki and a student from Arcada University of Applied Sciences.

Availability means that it has to be seen that the kind of data the researcher want is available or not. If it is not available then the researcher has to go for primary data. The available data found in personal web page of research area were not sufficient so the structured interview and e-mail questionnaire was conducted.

Relevance means it should be meeting the requirements of the problem. For the researcher have two criteria. Units of measurement should be the same and the Concepts used must be same, and accuracy of data should not be outdated. The relevance of this thesis topic is related to accessibility of hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies where the researcher used same standard of accessibility (Management study guide 2011).

Accuracy means to find out how the data is accurate. The specification and methodology used should be considered in order to find out accuracy level. While testing the accuracy, the margin of error should be examined and the dependability of the source must be seen. The data were presented whatever the respondents replied at the time of interview.

Sufficiency means the test of questionnaire which gives the direction of sufficiency of the data before conducting the interview. Insufficient data should be modified before conducting the interview according to theme of thesis. A student from University of Helsinki and a student from Arcada University of Applied Sciences help to test the sufficiency of questionnaire (Management study guide 2011).

The research was based on qualitative analysis with structured interview and systematic observations which were conducted out in winter season. The secondary data were used to further establish a strong understanding on subject matter. The empirical result of the observations and interviews were analyzed with facilitate the accessibility of tourism theories in establishing a new image of barrier free Helsinki (Learning Domain 2011).

## 5.1 Analysis of Structured Interview

The structured interviews were conducted with different hotel staffs in hotel cabinet, a waiting room of beside the information desk, on February 27, 2012. The front office managers of Radisson Blu and Hilton hotel, and duty manager of Scandic hotel, were the main respondent on face to face structured interview. The e-mail questionnaire with Cumulus hotel and Scandic hotel and communication manager from Silja Line were used method of research even though the researched has observed the hotel service environment twice.

The first question was related to know how much do you about Accessible tourism. The basic idea of this question was to know about the accessible tourism and how it is familiar with tourism professionals. By taking a consideration of one hotel manager has prioritized that it is a main value of hotel even rest of the respondents were thinking that only the wheelchair tourist is belongs to disabled tourist. Therefore, the topic was not so much familiar with respondents in research area.

The second question was belongs to the flow of disabled tourist basically in summer and winter season. The statistics of disabled tourist arrivals in hotel is exactly double in summer season in compare to winter season. Two hotels have regular disabled tourists but rest of hotel has no disabled tourist. In other hand, the public transportation modes, metro and tram 3T, 3B, 4 and 4T were found the most accessible than other transportation modes. The lower floor train is selected the one of the best transport carrier at the time of systematic observation. The disabled tourists traveled more times using public transportation and ferry companies in summer season than winter season.

The third question was belongs to the number of accessible room or seat or cabin which is available at hotel or transportation or ferry companies. The reply of the respondent was less than 12 rooms or cabins where the maximum numbers of accessible cabins are found in Silja Line. A hotel has no accessible room even though the numbers of accessible rooms or seats or cabins are quite low and insufficient to cover the future growth of demand.

The fourth question was related to the distance of elevator from information desk and room or cabins from elevator. The measurement of the distance was found less than 10m which is fully accessible and relevant to disabled tourist. The rooms in hotel chains and cabins in ferry companies were found nearer from elevator.

The fifth question was related to the special facilities and extra services provided by hotel, public transportation and ferry companies. All the respondents were mentioned that most of the facilities are available on their service station except the accessible parking area. One hotel has no access in elevator to go to underground parking area so that the disabled tourists need to use staff's elevator.

By this reason, they used to hire accessible taxi and used wheelchair for mobility of disabled tourist. Regarding the accessibility, the accessible design is highly important to disabled tourist. The metro in Helsinki was found most accessible than other transport modes even metro was design without accessible toilet.

The sixth question was belongs to the personal experience regarding to challenges faced by staffs during their working period. Conforming to the statement by the respondents, the respondents did not face any specific challenge during the working time in all area of research. The tourist with heavy luggage and trolley with children faced difficulty on travelling in public transport modes whose modes was designed inaccessible without lower floor. However, it can be manageable sometimes by the help of others which increases only the dependability.

The seventh question was belongs to evaluation of disabled tourist's satisfaction on customer service and service environment. Most of the respondents said that the convenient way to send the feedback was used in filling the written feedback form and drop into the suggestion box. The feedback through the web page and immediate feedback to the working staffs is used by disabled tourist when they feel dissatisfied. Moreover, people involvement in social media and its attraction changed the recent scenario sending the feedback. The connection in social media like Face book, twitter used by hotel chains, public transportation authority and ferry companies give the opportunity to disabled tourist to share their felling and experience to each other spontaneously.

The eighth question was belongs to the importance of accessible map of service providers about popular destination including essential accessible facilities. All the respondents were found more exciting saying that it is a brilliant idea in accessible tourism. The accessible map in Sydney was found the best example when the researcher studied case study from different countries.

The ninth question was belongs to economic importance of accessible tourism in future. All respondents were totally agreed at this point saying that accessible tourism has a huge potential for future business except one reply of the respondent in hotel chain who expressed his ignorance in this issue.

Through the tenth question, the researcher wanted to know how the length of stay in hotel and repeating travelling in ferry companies and public transportation modes can be increased. The quality of service and product, user friendly behavior with disabled tourist, without any barrier to experience the tourism product and service definitely increases the length of stay and repeat travelling.

The eleventh question was belongs to educational value of accessible tourism which was found dissatisfactory. The segment and concept of accessible tourism is totally a new phenomenon so that

people are not completely familiar with it. Most of respondents only thought that a tourist with wheelchair only consists in accessible tourism.

The last question was belongs to the further improvement in hotel chains, public transport modes and ferry companies in accessible area. The almost half of the respondents had no idea about it even the idea of a few respondents was simple and without any creativity. In other hand, most of respondents were fully satisfy with existing facilities in their service points.

## 5.2 Analysis of Systematic Observation

The task was divided between researcher and co-searcher before conducting the face to face structured interview. The pleasant environment in all hotel chains was most appreciable moment during the observation. The existing working staffs on information desk were four personnel in all hotels except only one hotel manager was working in Cumulus hotel. The women working in hotel chains and ferry companies at information desk were equal in ration with men.

The interior decorations of all hotels and ferry companies were found attractive with eye-catchy colour, colourful light and modern furniture. The light and sound system was pretty good in all hotels and ferry companies. The entrance in Radisson Blu with a wheelchair was confidential when the searcher saw a person with a wheelchair went out from the hotel. The manager has provided an opportunity to researcher to observe the accessible room in Hilton Hotel on March 27, 2012 and Scandic Hotel last year.

The design of accessible room was perfect but the entrance doors of most rooms were quite heavy in both hotels. The disabled tourist need more force to open the door independently which was found inaccessible. The other facilities in room like TV, telephone, internet, accessible toilets, comfortableness of bed, and design of cupboard was user friendly is both hotel and ferry companies but the emergency alarm in toilet in Scandic Hotel was extra ordinary service. The distance of accessible room or cabin and elevator was located nearer and attractive with its interior decoration. The more than two duty managers as well as receptionists were working at same time in every hotel chains and ferry companies. The accessible toilets were found in good condition in ferry companies and lower floor train. The carpet on ferry companies was quite old and dirty even the carpet of hotel was found neat and clean.

The universal icons of disability was found inside the public transport modes is positive but outside was found neutral. The electronic information system in metro, tram and lower floor train was found positive but the bus and non-lower floor train has no such service. The Wi-Fi service in tram, metro, hotel chains and ferry companies was common trend for disabled travelers and guest.

Furthermore, the analysis of case studies is one of the least developed aspects of case study methodology. The case study employs a series of statistical tests to help in the presentation of the data which is not mostly used in this research analysis. The analysis of situation, creating the displays, tabulating the frequency of respondents, and ordering the information were used methods in research analysis (Tellis 1997).

## 6 Accessibility in Hotel Chains, Public Transportation and Ferry Companies

The accessible tourism is new emerging issue all over the world. The concept is still indistinguishable in general public as well as professionals who are involved in tourism industry. The technology is being changed so fast so that the tourism management needs to keep a close consideration even in building infrastructure, the way of service offer in different segments of market structure for its development in which the accessible begins. Basically, the accessibility consists in existing facilities in service point in which the disabled tourist can enjoy without any barrier.

### 6.1 Accessibility in Hotel Chains

Accommodation provides the base from which tourists can engage in process of staying at a destination. It is a major element of the wider hospitality sector that is used by all kinds of tourist. Hospitality is very essence of tourism, involving the consumption of food, drink and accommodation in an environment away from the normal home base. However, the study included the accommodation sector which is highly significant in accessible tourism. The character of physical facilities should be built in the establishment period otherwise it could be costly to manage whenever it needs (Page 2007).

The research is based on three different sectors even though they are interrelated to mobility of disabled tourist in the most popular destination like Lutheran Cathedral Church, Market square and Finnish National museum. Those disabled tourist definitely visit the most popular destination using transportation mode staying in hotel from where they can access those destination easily. Therefore, the selection of the hotels is situated in hot spot of Helsinki area in which the researchers paid high attention. The respondents of hotel chains were high professional due to more than one year experience in tourism related field. Those respondents were front office supervisor, duty manager and manager from hotel chains. The four respondents were from hotel chains and rests were from public transportation and ferry companies. The accessibility of the hotels depends upon different criteria even though the main key factors were designed by following points. The research was conducted in Radisson Blu situated at Kamppi, Hilton Hotel situated at Hakaniemi,

Scandic Hotel situated at Simonkatu in Kamppi and Restel group of hotel i.e. Cumulus Hotel at Kaisaniemi in Helsinki

#### 6.1.1 Restel Group Hotel

Restel group is a major hotel chain which operates 47 hotels in Finland including domestic and international standard hotels. Cumulus is a member hotel of Restel group. There are 26 hotels in Finland. The Cumulus hotels in Helsinki are in central location by excellent transport connections. The hotels are great locations for business as well as for leisure travel. Shopping, theatres, concerts, exhibitions and sights of interest are just moments away from the hotel. Hotel Cumulus Kaisaniemi is situated in the city centre, just above the Kaisaniemi metro station. All of the rooms have free ADSL-broadband connection, elevator, ironing room, paid parking house nearby and sauna but the hotel was built without disabled room. However, the Cumulus Hotel at Hakaniemi has only one disabled room (Cumulus 2012).

#### 6.1.2 Hilton Hotel

Hilton chain has three hotels in Finland. Helsinki Strand is close to the Finnish War Museum, Helsinki Cathedral and Senate Square. The hotel is situated at Hakaniemi from where the disabled tourist can access easily the National Theatre and the Ateneum Art Museum. Hilton Helsinki Strand has a fitness center, indoor pool and sauna. The public areas of hotel have wireless Internet connection.

The hotel offers the 4-star tourist accommodation services includes business conference hall, meeting room with audio-visual equipped facilities. This hotel is a business-friendly hotel with a restaurant and a bar or lounge. The staff can arrange concierge services, business services and tour assistance according to desire of disabled tourist. In addition, the hotel facilitates the services are a fitness Centre, multi-linguistic staff, gift shops or newsstands.

The hotel has provided the electronic information device such as television with premium satellite channels and pay movies, working desks, safes and telephone. The disabled tourist can use fast wireless Internet connection with paying extra charge. In addition, the hotel offers the extra facilities such as pillow menus, a shower or tub combinations with handheld showers, scales and hair dryers. Additional amenities include complimentary newspapers in guestrooms. Furthermore, the hotel offers on request including a turndown service in-room massage and hypo-allergenic. The hotel provides extra bonus to disabled tourist when a disabled tourist reserve rooms for 10

reservations for the night, can get one free night in Hotels.com. The hotel does not charge cancellation fees when the disabled tourist cancelled the room booking (Hilton 2012).

### 6.1.3 Radisson Blu Royal Hotel

The Radisson Hotel chain is an important accommodation provider in Helsinki hotel business. Radisson Blu Royal hotel is located right place in the heart of Helsinki, the new Kamppi shopping center next door. A short walk from the hotel can be found in Helsinki's best cultural, entertainment and shopping. A world-class hotel located in the hot spot of Helsinki, within a few minute walk from the bus, underground and railway stations. This hotel is the best known conference hotel with great facilities. The restaurant of hotel serves the best Steaks in town and Scandinavian cuisine. The hotel has full of 4-star facilities with modern establishment. The hotel has three disabled rooms with all equipped facilities (Radisson 2012).

### 6.1.4 Scandic Hotel

Scandic hotel is situated the heart of Helsinki. The five Scandic hotels are operating their business in Helsinki area. The hotel has five disabled rooms which are found the highest accessible room during research period. Scandic hotel combines modern Scandinavian architecture and environmentally-friendly thinking. In addition to its airy, spacious facilities and views over the city centre, the hotel enjoys an ideal location and excellent transport connections. The disabled tourist can feel like own home in comfortable room in rich, warm tones and wood laminate flooring. The hotel has working desk, wireless internet access or relax beside the opening windows, TV with satellite channels, sauna and fitness centre. In hotel lobby bar disabled tourist can enjoy with drinks and snacks. There's live piano music on every Wednesday evenings and a courtyard terrace in summertime. Furthermore, the vibrating alarm clock and hearing loop in the reception was extra accessible services for disabled tourist in Scandic Hotel (Gala hotel 2012 & Scandic 2012).

The main key factors of accessibility in hotels are listed below. These factors are based on accommodation profile at hotel. The key factors were asked to respondents at the time of structured interview and systematic observation at service point.

- Easy to excess to get in and get out
- Facility of elevator
- Height of the information or reception desk
- Easy access in restaurant & bar , and entrainment place

- Accessible parking area
- Design of accessible room
- The safety instruments in service point
- The distance of accessible room and elevator
- The height of beds and its comfortableness
- The facilities of electronic information devices such as info TV, Wi-Fi, telephone
- The accessible toilet
- The level of education on accessible tourism of respondents

## 6.2 Accessibility in Public Transportation

The mode of transport by which disabled tourist seek to travel may be main motivation for holiday or the containing context of holiday. Public transportation is a shared passenger's transportation service which is available for use by the general public (WN 2012). Public transportation is basically arranged by government sectors in many countries but the contribution of private sector is also high.

The public transport modes includes Bus, Train, Metro, Taxi, Tram, subways, Cable cars, Van pool service, ferries and water taxi, etc. which gives service to the ordinary people or for the public even though the study is captured Bus , Tram , train , Metro and ferry companies. Now a day in developed countries, airplane also comes under the public transport because it gives service to the public daily flying from one place to another frequently.

Normally, public transportation operates according to their timetables and it is the most frequent service running. The accessible taxi gives door to door service too, according to the people demand. Internal bus routes of Helsinki can be found almost anywhere in Helsinki. For some parts of the city these buses provide the backbone of the public transportation system. Helsinki Regional Transport HRT is now the buyers and planner of public transportation services (Wikipedia 2012).

### 6.2.1 Bus

Bus services use buses on conventional roads to carrying numerous passengers on shorter journeys. Buses operate with low capacity compared with trams or trains, and can operate on conventional roads, with relatively inexpensive bus stops to serve passengers (Dpz project 2012 & Digplanet 2012). Therefore, buses are commonly used in smaller cities and towns, in rural areas as well for shuttle services supplementing in large cities. Bus rapid transit is an ambiguous term used for buses operating on dedicated right-of-way, much like a light rail. Trolleybuses are electric buses that

employ overhead wires to get power for traction. Online Electric Vehicles are buses that run on a conventional battery, but are recharged frequently at certain points via underground wires (WN2012).

### 6.2.2 Metro

Metro is the most convenient transport mode in Helsinki area. The fact that most of the stations are located on the surface makes the metro system more user friendly for passengers with mobility problems. There are no stairs on most sub-surface stations, and one can access the stations from the street level via escalators or lifts. Especially for people with seeing difficulties, all platforms have a yellow line marking the safe area on platform. Additionally, there are fire extinguishers in trains and stations. The Metro services the reliable service to passengers so that is most popular transport mode in Helsinki (Wikipedia 2012).

### 6.2.3 Tram

Trams are rail borne vehicles that run in city streets or dedicated tracks. They have higher capacity than buses, but must follow dedicated infrastructure with rails and wires either above or below the track, limiting their flexibility. The low floor tram is the best transport mode and suitable for disabled tourist due to easy access in get in and out with more space for families with pram including other facilities. The tram with low floor is operating in most popular destination in Helsinki area which is positive step in Accessible tourism (WN 2012 & Enote 2012).

### 6.2.4 Train

Commuter train is part of an urban area's public transport; it provides faster services to outer suburbs and neighboring towns and villages. Trains stop at all stations, that are located to serve a smaller suburban or town center. The stations often are being combined with shuttle bus or park and ride systems at each station. Frequency may be up to several times per hour, and commuter rail systems may either be part of the national railway, or operated by local transit agencies. The trains themselves have no steps, and the platforms are always at the same level as the train floor.

Passenger safety instructions are inside train carriages above the doors and stations at ticket hall and platforms. These instructions guide to using emergency phones and also include emergency phone number to traffic center. There is emergency-stop handles at platforms, which are used to stop the train either arriving or departing in cases such as person trapped between doors, or person

fallen onto track. There are emergency brake handles inside the carriage next to the door and at both ends of carriage.

The lower floor train is the best transport mode and designed for disabled tourist due to easy access in get in and out, more space for families with pram including accessible toilet and other facilities. Intercity rail is long-haul passenger services that connect multiple urban areas. They have few stops, and aim at high average speeds, typically only making one of a few stops per city. These services may also be international (Wikipedia 2012).

The observation of the researcher is based on following key factors in public transportation.

- Easy to excess to get in and get out
- Height of the card reader machine and switch bottom
- Universal icons
- The proper space inside the transport modes
- Design of accessible bus or metro or tram or train
- The reserved place for disabled tourists in transportation modes
- The safety instruments in service point
- The electronic information system such as Wi-Fi, Info TV telephone,
- Emergency alarm
- The accessible toilet
- The level of education on accessible tourism of respondents

### 6.3 Accessibility in Ferry Companies

Ferry are more functional modes of tourist transport than cruise ships and used to cross stretches of water. The movement of disable tourist, often in large volume, requires specific support, service and understanding of logistics-particularly of how the transportation system and its different elements are managed (Page 2007). The ferry company has a highly significant in travelling many passengers at a time. The service of ferry Companies opens the easy access of disabled tourists who lives in neighboring countries Therefore, the study of this thesis includes the Viking Line and Silja Line.

#### 6.3.1 Viking Line

Viking Line has seven vessels, which operates between the Finnish mainland, Åland and Sweden as well as between Finland and the Baltic states. Operations include passenger services, recreation

and cargo carrier services even though this thesis includes the passenger's service (Ferry logistic 2012). Viking Line has Åland ship-owners group which operates in Baltic Sea. It operates in seven vessels which are listed on the Helsinki Stock Exchange. (Credit Risk Monitor 2012) There are altogether 3091 employees in Viking Line. Viking line has signed the contract on January 29, 2007 with the Spanish shipyard astilleros for newly built ferry on its route between Kapellskär (Sweden) and Mariehamn (Åland Islands, Finland). From the beginning of summer of 2009 Viking Line has developed its vessels with new buildings from services on this short route across the sea of Åland (CFS 2012).

Viking Line has provided its reliable transport year around. There are sufficient spaces between vehicles on the car deck, roomy stairways and lifts as well as short distance between the entry hall, restaurants, shopping areas and car deck to make the vessel more easily accessible to people with disabilities (Viking Line 2012).

### 6.3.2 Silja Line

Silja Line is an economically success ferry company operates from Helsinki and Turku in different destination with carrying the largest passengers and cargo shipping. It is part of the AS Tallink Group, which is one of largest carrier in the Baltic Sea region which is operated by Tallink Silja Oy, Finland Tallink -brand from Helsinki to Tallinn and Silja Line under the brand from Helsinki and Turku to Stockholm via Åland. Tallink Silja Oy operates in four locations in Finland, in Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Mikkeli and Sally Ab, a subsidiary of Mariehamn (Tallinksilja 2012). The major key factor which is related to ferry companies is listed below.

- Easy to excess to get in and get out
- Facility of elevator
- Height of the information or reception desk
- Easy access in restaurant and bar , sauna, swimming pool, and entrainment place
- Accessible parking area
- Design of Accessible cabin
- The safety instruments in service point
- The distance of accessible cabin and elevator
- The height of beds and its comfortableness
- The electronic information system such as info TV, Wi-Fi, telephone,
- The accessible toilet
- Emergency alarm in room or accessible toilet
- The level of education on accessible tourism of respondent

## 7 Summary of Empirical Findings

The aim of the thesis is to enlighten the current situation of the hotel industry, public transportation and ferry companies. The structured questionnaire was asked to managerial level of staffs in different hotels and ferry companies and e-questionnaire to HSK and HSL for public transportation. The total numbers of the respondents are presented in Table no 2. The Figure no 7 presents the percentage of the total respondents. The hotel chains represent the highest number with four respondents, public transportation represents three respondents and ferry company represents two respondents.

| Area of thesis        | No of Respondent | Total Number of Respondents | Percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Hotel chain           |                  | 4                           | 45%        | 45%                   |
| Front office          | 2                |                             |            |                       |
| Manager               | 1                |                             |            |                       |
| Hotel manager         | 1                |                             |            |                       |
| Duty manager          |                  |                             |            |                       |
| Public Transportation |                  | 3                           | 33%        | 88%                   |
| HKL/HSL               | 1                |                             |            |                       |
| Driver                | 2                |                             |            |                       |
| Ferry Companies       |                  | 2                           | 22%        | 100%                  |
| Communication manager | 1                |                             |            |                       |
| Receptionist          | 1                |                             |            |                       |
| Total                 | 9                | 9                           | 100%       | 100%                  |

Table 1: The Number of Respondents

The above table presents the total number of respondents in research area. The maximum respondents were from different hotel chains.

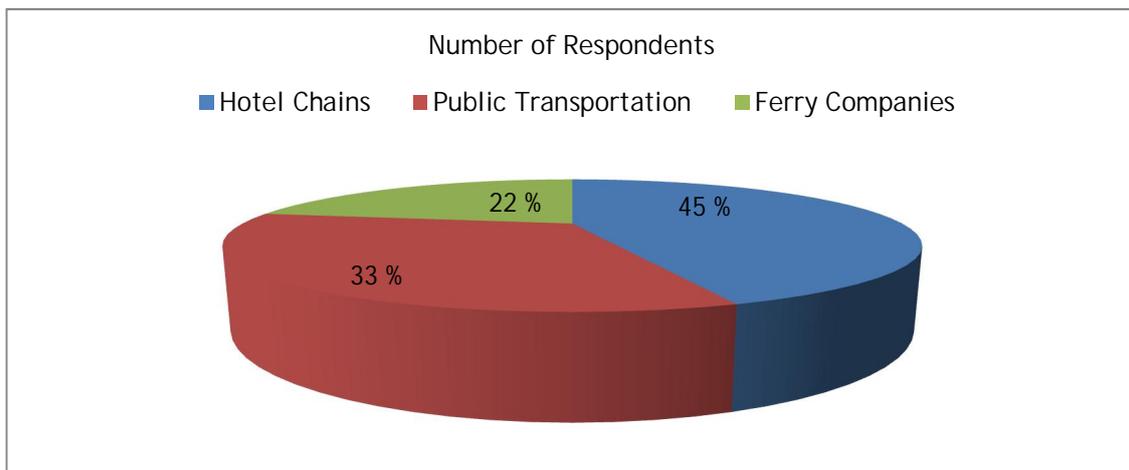


Figure 2: The Total Respondents in Research

The figure 7 shows the pie chart of total numbers of respondents in percentage. The hotel chains represent 45 percentage which is the highest percentage, the public transportation presents 33 percentage and ferry companies resents 22 percentage.

#### 7.1 Hotel Chains

A hotel is a bunch of promises with room, food and beverages services and other services. A hotel room is a fundamental element of tourist experience. The supply side of hotel business includes the availability of rooms in hotel business. The tourist follow in mainly in two seasons in different hotels were presented below. The maximum disabled tourist arrival in Scandic Hotel is the highest one among the other hotels.

| Name of Hotel Chains         | Summer Season | Winter Season |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Cumulus Hotel (Restel Group) | 8             | 4             |
| Hilton Hotel                 | 10            | 4             |
| Scandic Hotel                | 20            | 15            |
| Radisson Blu Hotel           | 15            | 10            |

Table 2: The Disabled Tourist Arrivals in Summer and Winter Season.

The tourist arrivals in summer are always higher than winter season all over the world. The graph shows the disabled tourist arrived in summer season and winter season in a month in 2011. The tourist arrivals in different season were mentioned below.

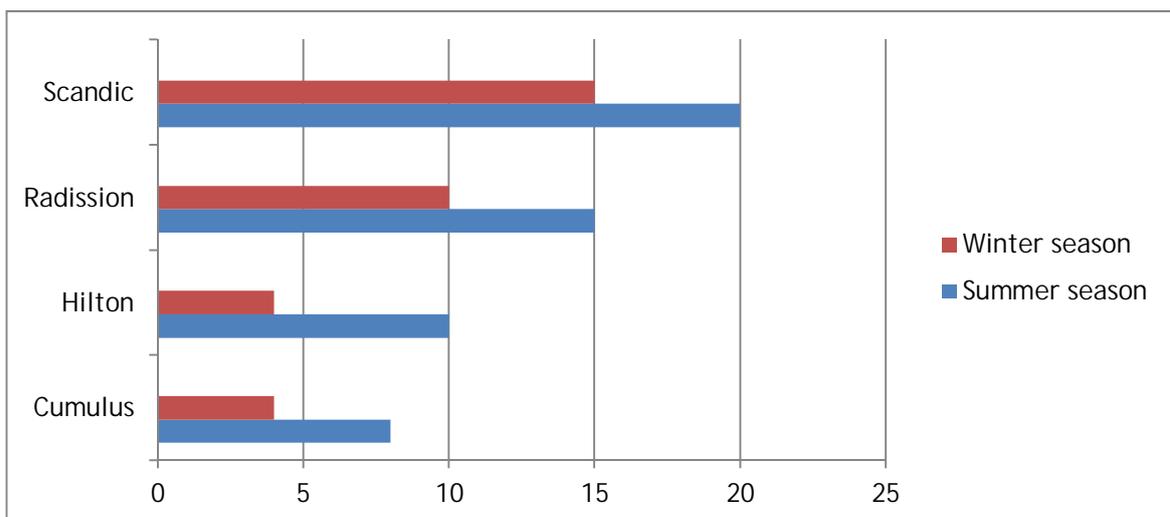


Figure3: The Disabled Tourist Arrivals in Summer and Winter Season in 2011.

The proportion of accessible rooms and total rooms available in hotel chains is very low. However, the accessibility of hotel was found appreciable.

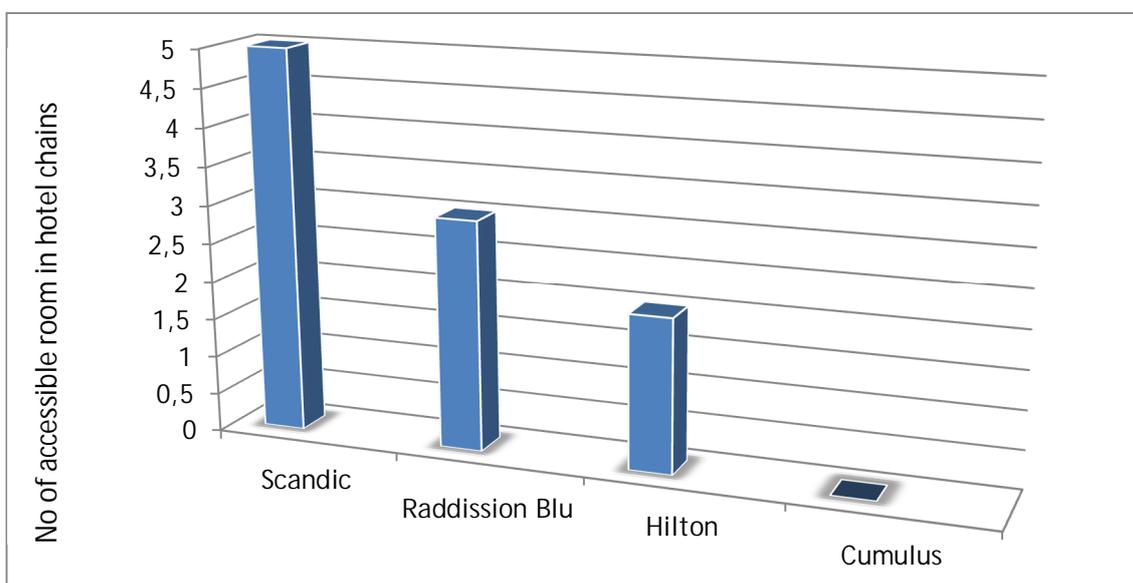


Figure 4: The Accessible Room in Hotel Chains

The accessible rooms in Scandic Hotel, Radisson Blu, Hilton Hotel have five, three and two respectively. The Cumulus Hotel has not any accessible room. The total number of hotel rooms is presented in Table number 3.

| Name of Hotel Chains        | Total Number of Room in Hotel Chains |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Cumulus Hotel(Restel Group) | 104 rooms                            |
| Hilton Hotel                | 190 rooms                            |
| Radisson Blu Royal Hotel    | 262 rooms                            |
| Scandic Hotel               | 360 rooms                            |

Table 3: The Total Numbers of Rooms in Hotel Chains

The following line graph presents the highest capacity of room available is in Scandic Hotel and Cumulus Hotel has the lowest number of rooms available.

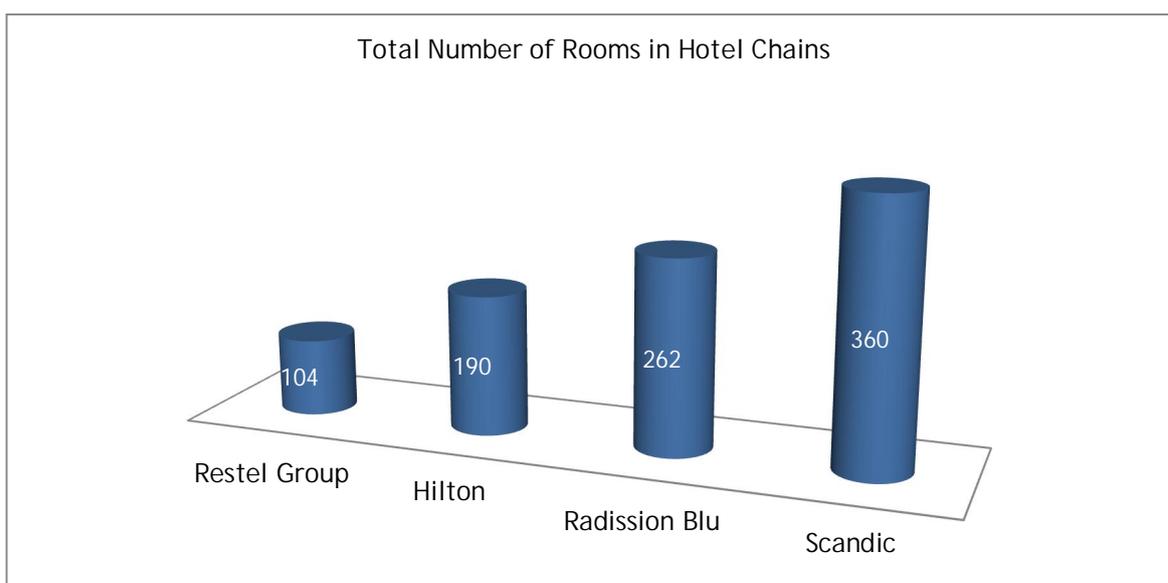


Figure 5: Total Number of Rooms in Hotel Chains

The hotel chains provide the accommodation facilities to the disabled tourists in Helsinki which found satisfactory or positive on the basis of accessibility. The first service point known as receptionist desk from where every tourist gets welcoming services is found inaccessible or negative due to its higher height. The result of other facilities and services are presented in Table number 1 in Positive, Neutral and Negative criteria with in traffic colours. The Positive result is presented in green color, Neutral is in yellow color and Negative is in red color.

| Research Criteria                               | Name of Hotels |            |           |           |          |
|---|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Evaluation Criteria                             | Cumulus        | Hilton     | Radisson  | Scandic   | Result   |
| Easy to excess to entrance                      | Negative       | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| Facility of elevator                            | Positive       | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| Height of information desk                      | Negative       | Negative   | Neutral   | Negative  | Negative |
| Easy Access to restaurant and bar               | Positive       | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| Accessible parking & sign                       | Neutral        | Neutral    | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| Design of accessible room                       | Not existed    | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| The distance of elevator and room               | Negative       | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| The height of bed and comfortableness           | Not existed    | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| The electronic information devices              | Positive       | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| Accessible toilet                               | Not existed    | Positive   | Positive  | Positive  | Positive |
| The educational of staffs on accessible tourism | Negative       | Negative   | Neutral   | Neutral   | Negative |
| Result= Positive criteria / total key factors   | 3/11 (27%)     | 8/11 (72%) | 9/11(81%) | 9/11(81%) | Positive |

Table 4: The Analysis on Accessibility in Hotel Chains

The result is based on empirical findings and systematic observation. The Restel group of hotel (Cumulus) was found less accessible than other hotels. The total number of key criteria was 11 and five criteria are found positive in Cumulus hotel. Two criteria were found in negative in Hilton Hotel and rests were positive out of 11 criteria. The hotel Radisson Blu and Scandic were found the most accessible hotel among the all researched hotel chains.

The systematic observation explores the service environment of the hotel chains. The excess to get in get out in all hotels is positive except Cumulus Hotel at Kaisaniaemi. The information desk all hotels were too high except hotel Radisson is neutral. Based on systematic observations on the hotel's appearance, all were found new. In addition, the wallpapers were plain and room carpets were white and gray in hotel Hilton. The lightings were decorated attractively in all the hotels. The main lobby was decorated by huge hanging lamps in hotel Hilton. The material of interior decoration of disabled room and as a whole of hotel is the best in all hotel chains. The materials used for the interior decoration were found fashionable only in Scandic, Radisson Blu and Cumulus than other hotel The new way of spa service in hotels feel make relax while staying in hotels. The entrance door of disabled room was found quite heavy in most of the hotels.

Conclusively, It would be worthy if Cumulus Hotel improves most of the area of accessibility to widen the area of tourism market. The Hilton Hotel was found more than 72% accessibility and the Radisson Blu and Scandic Hotel were found more than 81% accessibility. The 100% accessibility in any hotel is like an impossible anywhere due the expectation of disabled tourist is varied. However, the service provider should still need to improve the physical and addition service and product to serve disabled tourist regularly.

## 7.2 Public Transportation

The public transportation is a common transport mode of domestic and international tourists. The recent trend in tourism is the more convenient service provided by fast train service also became user friendly for international tourists. The Metro in Helsinki is found the most accessible transport modes among others modes. The result of systematic observation in public transportation modes is presented in following graph.

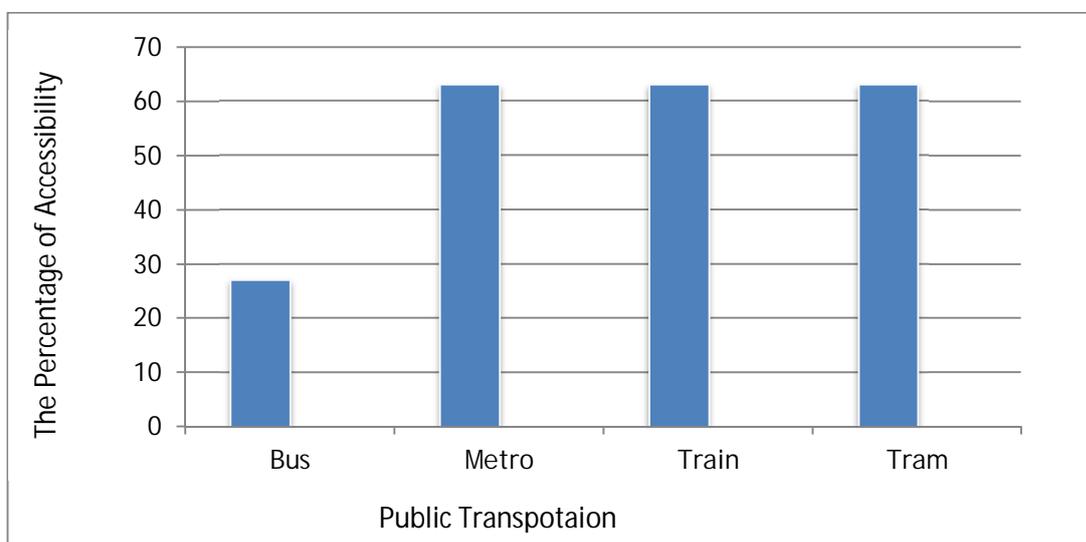


Figure 6: Accessibility in Public Transport Modes

The accessibility of the public transport is to access get in and out from public transport. The lower floor tram and trains were found fully accessible for entrance of disabled tourist.

| Research Criteria                                 | Name of Public Transportation |             |           |             | Result   |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
|   | Bus                           | Metro       | Train     | Tram        |          |
| Easy to excess to entrance                        | Negative                      | Positive    | Neutral   | Positive    | Neutral  |
| Reserve seats and space                           | positive                      | Positive    | Positive  | Positive    | Positive |
| Design of Accessibility                           | Negetive                      | Positive    | Positive  | Positive    | Positive |
| Seat belts and emergency alarm                    | Negative                      | Neutral     | Neutral   | Negative    | Negative |
| The height of switch bottom & card reader machine | Positive                      | Not existed | Positive  | Positive    | Positive |
| Space inside the transport modes                  | Neutral                       | Positive    | Positive  | Positive    | Positive |
| The electronic information device                 | Negative                      | Positive    | Negative  | Positive    | Neutral  |
| Accessible toilet                                 | Not existed                   | Not existed | Positive  | Not existed | Neutral  |
| The level of education                            | Negative                      | Negative    | Negative  | Negative    | Negative |
| Universal Icons                                   | Positive                      | Positive    | Positive  | Positive    | Positive |
| Result=positive criteria / total key factors      | 3/11(27%)                     | 7/11(63%)   | 7/11(63%) | 7/11(63%)   | Neutral  |

Table no 5: The Analysis on Accessibility in Public Transport Modes

The Bus was found less accessible than other transport modes. The total numbers of key criteria were eleven and only three criteria were found positive in Bus. The excess way to get in and get out is neutral. It's very difficult for the disabled tourist who uses wheelchair and family with pram to get in and out because of high level of bus entrance and surface of ground level. The reserve seat has a positive in every bus but which was found less than five in numbers. The universal icons sign

of reserve seat is so clear and it is located in upper on wall besides seat. The window of bus is big enough with clear to view the outside scenario. The height of stop button is quite okay. The person using wheelchair cannot easily touch the stop button and need lots of energy and efforts to press. The level of education on Accessible tourism is negative. Bus Company has not given so many facilities to disabled tourist. The safety instruments and belts were not found in bus seats.

The excess to get in and get out in Metro is positive due to its accessible design. The space of metro is a huge enough and the seats are located properly. The reserved place for disabled tourist is positive. The universal icons of disabled tourist and elder people are clearly shown on the wall of reserved area. There was not any safety instrument in reserved seat which was found negative. There was a facility of electronic information devices such as info TV, stop information board and internet connection.

The excess to get in get out of old model train is negative because of stairs in entrance door. It is not accessible for disabled tourist to get in and out even difficult to family with pram and tourist with heavy luggage. The height of card reader machine was attached in normal height so it is accessible for all people which are positive sign. The reserved seats for disabled tourist were preserved properly with universal icons. In Train, six criteria were found in Negative and rests were positive out of eleven criteria.

The tram 3T, 3B, 4 and 4T were observed the structured accessibility even though other trams were found less accessible. These trams connects disabled tourist to the Katajanokka and Olympia Terminal to travel in Viking line and Silja Line respectively. The Lower floor train is more accessible or positive than other normal trains. The metro was found positive than other modes.

Conclusively, the bus was found 27% accessible, Metro, Tram and train were found 63% accessible in Helsinki. However, The Metro and tram 3T, 3B, 4T were found the most accessible transport modes at the time of observation. The overall result of public transport is Neutral means it needs a lot of improvement in their services.

### 7.3 Ferry Companies

There are certain things that should be considered to make disabled passenger who are using wheelchair, the cabin should be placed near from the lift and public areas. Corridor must be wider enough to use wheelchair. Staterooms should have wider doorways, low level controls, hand rails, specially designed bathroom and security alarm should be attached in toilet and low peep holes in cabin (Ideal Cruising 2012).

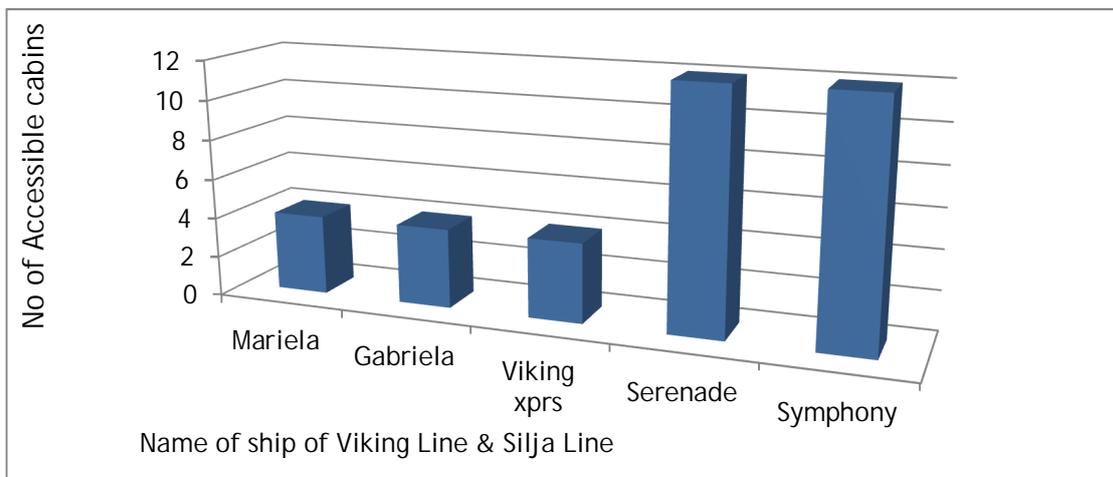


Figure 7: The Accessible Cabins in Ferry Companies

The figure number 10 shows the no of accessible cabins in different ferry companies. The accessible cabins in Viking Line and Silja Line vessels were four and twelve respectively.

| Research Criteria  | Name of    | Ferry       | Companies |
|--|------------|-------------|-----------|
| Positive, Neutral and Negative                             | Silja Line | Viking Line | Result    |
| Easy to excess to entrance                                 | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| Facility of elevator                                       | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| Height of information Desk                                 | Negative   | Negative    | Negative  |
| Easy Access to restaurant & fun club                       | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| Accessible parking & sign                                  | Negative   | Negative    | Negative  |
| Design of accessible room                                  | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| The distance of elevator and room                          | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| The height of bed and comfortableness                      | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| The electronic information devices                         | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| Accessible toilet  | Positive   | Positive    | Positive  |
| The level of education                                     | Negative   | Negative    | Negative  |
| Result Positive criteria /total key factors(Accessibility) | 8/11(72%)  | 8/11(72%)   | Positive  |

Table 6: The Analysis of Accessibility in Ferry Companies

The structured observation shows different criteria on positive, neutral and negative results. The excess to get in and get out is positive. The excess in entrance was smooth and has a big space which makes easy and comfortable for disabled tourist. The elevator had also big space and smooth to get inside and outside so the result came in positive. While doing the systematic observation on the information or reception desk, it was found too high. In order to make accessible height of the information desk, most of the ferry companies should be renovated in lower level to make user friendly to disabled tourist. There is an easy access in restaurant and bar, club and entertainment which were found well managed and accessible. The parking area has quite narrow space as well as the height of the floor is managed improperly so the observation shows as a negative result. There was no sign for accessible parking in both ferry companies. Every cabin is designed properly with attached bathroom which makes easier for disabled tourist. The safety instruments were placed in proper location which was found very positive and effective.

The distance of cabin and elevator were found so close so it was accessible for disabled and elderly tourists. The heights of beds were found in suitable height with extremely comfortable. The emergency alarm was found in every room which was specially designed for disabled tourist. The level of education on accessible tourism was found not so much familiar even the staff and employees were more conscious on this topic to make a memorable experience to disabled tourist.

Conclusively, the ferry companies were found more 72% accessible so the a few improvements are still necessary at this moment. The final result of ferry companies is positive even the ferry companies should be more responsive all the time.

The alternative option questions were designed in form of traffic light colour which crates the awareness to the respondents. The result of the choosing best option in five different scales was found only hardly in two options which show a positive attitude in accessibility in tourism. However, the familiarity of the accessible tourism is very low. There were nine alternative option questionnaires in first part. These questions are intended to explore the physical requirements, (A)esthetic, ethical, ecological, economic and educational perspectives of respondents. This questionnaire is presented in Appendices 1.

The following Table number 6 presents the opinion of the respondents in above structured questionnaire. All most respondents were expressed their opinion in strongly agree and agree scales.

| Scales                     | Frequency Hotel Chains | Frequency of Public Transportation | Frequency of Ferry Companies |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Strongly agree             | 4                      | 3                                  | 2                            |
| Agree                      | 4                      | 3                                  | 2                            |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 0                      |                                    |                              |
| Disagree                   | 0                      |                                    |                              |
| Strongly disagree          | 0                      |                                    |                              |
| Total                      | 4                      | 3                                  | 2                            |

Table 7: Scales in Accessibility on Different Key Factors

The outcome of the scales belongs to more in strongly agree than agree. The scale of strongly agree shows the confidence in subject matter than scale in agree.

Conclusively, the accessibility in hotel chains and ferry Companies is in satisfactory except public transportation. The stakeholders of tourism industry needs to keep center attention to disabled tourist how the customer service and service environment could be more customer friendly by adding extra support and renovation of service point.

## 8 Validity and Reliability

One aspect to consider when evaluating a research is its validity. The term validity refers to whether the research method is used in the measure what a researcher has intended it to measure (Guhari & Grounhaug 2005, 80).

The measurement may also contain errors and affect the measurement. The respondents may vary in the way they respond, some normally use the extreme ends of the response scale while others prefer the centered options. However, their opinions of the questioned issues may be the same. The responses can also be influenced by personal or situational factors such as person's mood, time pressure or mechanical factors (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 80).

It refers to what extend a causal relationship exists between variables. A correlation as such does not indicate a causal relationship and does not indicate whether it is influenced by other factors. For instance, a positive correlation between the consumption of coffee and cancer has been found, other factors such as smoking while drinking coffee need to be taken into consideration when

studying whether there really is correlation between coffee and cancer (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 85).

It relates to what extent the findings can be generalized (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 86). If the researcher uses the results from the sample data to generalize to wider concepts or groups beyond the sample wrongly, the external validity is at risk. For the research to be externally valid, same results would be gotten if the study was to be conducted in another setting, time and to a different sample.

In this research personal and situational factors might have influenced the results as the questionnaire was given at the end of a meeting after a long day so the respondent might have been feeling tired and reluctant to fill in the questionnaire. The situation in the room as the questionnaire was handed out and filled in was slightly restless as well. Additionally, the respondents were sitting close to their co-workers and this might have influenced.

In statistics, reliability is the consistency of a set of measurements or of a measuring instrument, often used to describe a test. The two types of reliability are used in research work. It is the variation in measurements when taken by different hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies with the same method or instruments. It is the variation in measurements taken by a single hotel or instrument on the same item and under the same conditions which includes intra-rater reliability.

## 9 Conclusion and Recommendation

The accessibility in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies play a vital role for developing the popularity of a touristic place. The accessibility has a global significance including inbound and outbound tourism for disabled tourists. The infrastructure of hotel chains, public transport and ferry companies and way of customer service at service point change the length of stay and period of travel. The understanding on accessible tourism by the all staffs of tourism industry was found pretty low so that additional training and academic study should be commenced more by the government bodies and private organization.

The level of accessibility hotel chains and ferry companies was found highly appreciable even though the more flow of out bound tourists could be an opportunity for tourism business in near future. The renovation and development of infrastructure is more expensive so that only modern hotels can grasp the opportunity and manage the supply of disabled tourists. The level of confidence can be increased by the free mobility and secure place whenever a disabled tourist can stay a longer time visiting different destinations. The organizing of different events including suitable competition or fun program targeting to the disabled tourists can be hot news for electronic media which help to highlight the image of destination. The expectation of disabled tourists did not end at

any level so that the new ideas and innovation need to develop for easy access and user-friendly environment. It would be worthy if the researched area of tourism management should consider following priority in their service point.

#### Priority 1 Accommodation

The disabled tourist wants to access appropriate and affordable housing structure, design and accommodation in hotel chains and ferry Company. Accommodation needs and circumstances may change as people grow older. The service providers need to find new innovating accommodation choices for older or disabled tourist and strives to ensure that planning requirements, concession programs by asking them in advance at the time of booking hotel rooms or cabins in ferry companies.

#### Priority 2 Support Services

The disabled tourists use appropriate and accessible support services to assist them to maintain active and relatively independent lives. As people grow older, additional services may be required to assist them to remain active and to continue to live independently. Taking Caring in hotel chains, public transportation and ferry company promotes inter-generational harmony and reduces the risk of social isolation which increases the more length of stay in hotel and repeat of travelling in transportation mode.

#### Priority 3 Health, Wellbeing and Security

The destination management, hotel and transportation modes needs to careful in health and wellbeing to disabled tourist lifespan to allow them positively and to actively participate in entertainment program organized by hotel chains or Ferry Company for their longer stay or repeat travelling time. Improving the health and wellbeing of disabled tourist starts with education and promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. It also relies on providing opportunities for people to remain active throughout their lives and on developing strategies to reduce social isolation and improve access to social networks.

The safety instruments in transportation, toilet of hotels and ferry Companies build up confidence of disabled tourists in which the length of stay and repeat travelling is depended. Finally, the length of stay and repeat travelling increases the financial strength of the tourism industry as well as disabled tourist which income is circulated to all people involved in tourism industry.

As safety is broader than simply 'feeling safe', aspects relating to physical, emotional and financial safety have been incorporated in the actions developed to meet this priority. The disabled tourist needs emergency alarm and telephone facility in accessible location inside and outside the service point. The safety belt and sufficient space for pram or wheelchair tourist and heavy log aged tourist is essential for free movement

#### Priority 4 Transport and Mobility

The disabled tourist wants to move easily at popular destination with public transportation, and walk ways. Access to safe, flexible and accessible transport options is a key factor in older people's ability to remain independent and to actively participate in tourism experience. One of the most common causes of social isolation is limited access to transport. Disable tourists who have always relied on their own car for transport experience a loss of independence when they are no longer able to drive or when the cost of running a car is too high. (ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing, 2010-2014)

#### Priority 5 Accessible Parking

The disabled tourist parking should be provided in the quantity of accessible parking spaces it should be regulated by the municipal by-laws. The following table represents the accessible parking space which is preserved by municipal law in Canada

| Total Parking Spaces | Minimum No. of Accessible Spaces | Total Parking Spaces | Minimum No. of Accessible Spaces |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| up to 25             | 1                                | 151-200              | 6                                |
| 26-50                | 2                                | 201-300              | 7                                |
| 51-75                | 3                                | 301-400              | 8                                |
| 76-100               | 4                                | 401-500              | 9                                |
| 101-150              | 5                                | more than 500        | 20% of total                     |

Table 8: The Accessible Parking Space

Accessible parking spaces shall be within a reasonable and safe proximity of the federal facility but may be distributed among distinct parking areas (Treasury Board of Secretary Secretariat 2012).

#### Priority 6 Respect, Valuing and Safety

Disabled tourist feel respected and valued and experience as a safe place to live and visit. Many seniors feel that they are not respected for their knowledge and skills and for their past and current contributions to the community. Valuing older people as an important community group will lead to them being respected and acknowledged as 'elders'.

#### Priority 7 Accessible Map

The disabled tourist need for better coordinated information and communication including accessible map emerging as the most important issue for older people. Seniors or tourist in wheelchair considered it difficult to find information about support service and products, suggesting that a single point of access is required whenever they want to move.

Information for seniors needs to be available in a range of formats as the older age spectrum covers a number of generations, many of whom are not well-versed in the use of current technology. The tourism bodies needs to provide accessible, relevant and accurate information whenever they think it is essential (ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing 2010-2014).

#### Priority 8 Training and Development

The structure training and development is mostly essential for the staff members in research area. The insufficient knowledge in accessible tourism doesn't help to grow the flow of disabled tourist. The customer service is a catchy sensation which makes an immortal image in their minds. A well trained staff can perform perfectly at any kind of difficult situation.

All the above mentioned priorities are very essential for accessibility in all area of research. The missing of a single priority shows inaccessibility on their service. Therefore, the service provider should try to fulfill all priorities on their service offer. According to Buhalis (2003), Tourism is highly networked industry dependent on co-operation and collaboration with competition. The extreme heterogeneity that characterizes tourism is mainly due to the fact that many other industry and economical sector such as accommodation in hotel business, public transportation including ferry companies and sport plays a critical role in the production process. The success is depended into the opportunity that can grabs on time. A business called a successful when their service or products are saleable easily in the market. Therefore, all the stakeholders should have equal contribution providing a new innovative ideas, service and product targeting to specific group. (VECCI 2012) Hence, the accessible tourism has a highly significant for every human being in future because every person should cross the different kind of disability at any stage of his or her lifespan.

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## 12 Appendices

## Appendix1: Questionnaire

## Part one

Please mark the best option for each statement on the basis of your professional experience.

## Best options

1. The human right of disabled tourist is to experience tourism product /service from tourism destination.

2. Accessible sign in parking area/toilet/ Elevator in public transport is the most essential for disabled tourists.

3. The universal icon for disabled tourist should be placed in proper height. (Not more than or less than 1.m)

4. The ramp of bus, tram, train and taxi should be in proper condition.

5. The slope of ramp on the floor /way should be in form of 9 degree for the specific physically requirements.

6. The height of stop switch/card reader machine should be lower or user friendly for disabled tourist in service point.

7. The safety belt for disabled tourist in transportation should be placed into proper place.

8. The interior decoration of the hotel / Public transportation/ferry is the main attractions of tourist.

9. The service chain plays a vital role in accessible tourism

|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. The human right of disabled tourist is to experience tourism product /service from tourism destination.               |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 2. Accessible sign in parking area/toilet/ Elevator in public transport is the most essential for disabled tourists.     |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 3. The universal icon for disabled tourist should be placed in proper height. (Not more than or less than 1.m)           |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 4. The ramp of bus, tram, train and taxi should be in proper condition.  |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 5. The slope of ramp on the floor /way should be in form of 9 degree for the specific physically requirements.           |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 6. The height of stop switch/card reader machine should be lower or user friendly for disabled tourist in service point. |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 7. The safety belt for disabled tourist in transportation should be placed into proper place.                            |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 8. The interior decoration of the hotel / Public transportation/ferry is the main attractions of tourist.                |                |       |                            |          |                   |
| 9. The service chain plays a vital role in accessible tourism  |                |       |                            |          |                   |

Part Two

Date:.....

Name of Hotel/Transportation/Ferry Company.....

Your Current Position.....

No of Year work in this position.....

1. How much do you know about accessible tourism?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2. How many disabled Tourists stay/travel in your service place in different seasons?

A. Summer season..... (Approx)                      B. Winter Season.....  
 (Approx)

3. How many accessible rooms/cabins/buses / trams/train are operating nowadays? Mark the Answer

A. 5    B.8                      C.10                      D.13                      E. Any other number.....

4. What is distance between the accessible room/cabin from the reception and the elevator?

10m                      B.20m                      C.30m                      D.40m                      E. More than 40m

5. What kinds of facilities are available in room in hotel/cabin in ferry or bus? Mark the option.

- A. Easy to pull to open the door in hotel  
 B. Telephone and TV facility in hotel  
 C. Lower bed /comfortable bed for disabled tourist in hotel  
 D. Accessible seat/place for wheelchair/white stick/ seniors in bus /tram/train  
 E. Switch bottom in proper place for disabled tourist in bus  
 F. Internet service in hotel/ tram /train/ ferry  
 G. Emergency alarm or instrument inside the toilet for safety to guest/traveler.  
 H. Easy to access in restaurant and bar for tourist in wheelchair in hotel/ ferry  
 I. Any other (specific).....

6. What are the challenges that you have faced while working with disabled tourist?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. How do you evaluate the disabled tourist's expectation on the service environment and customer service?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

8. Why the information map in the internet including information of popular destination should be marked as an accessible point of view?

.....  
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.....

9. How the potential source of the income for tourism industry is related to disabled tourist?

.....  
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10. What factors of the service environment should be offered to disabled tourist by service provider to increases the length of stay/travel?

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.....

11. Why the education on accessible tourism is essential for all the staffs related to tourism industry?

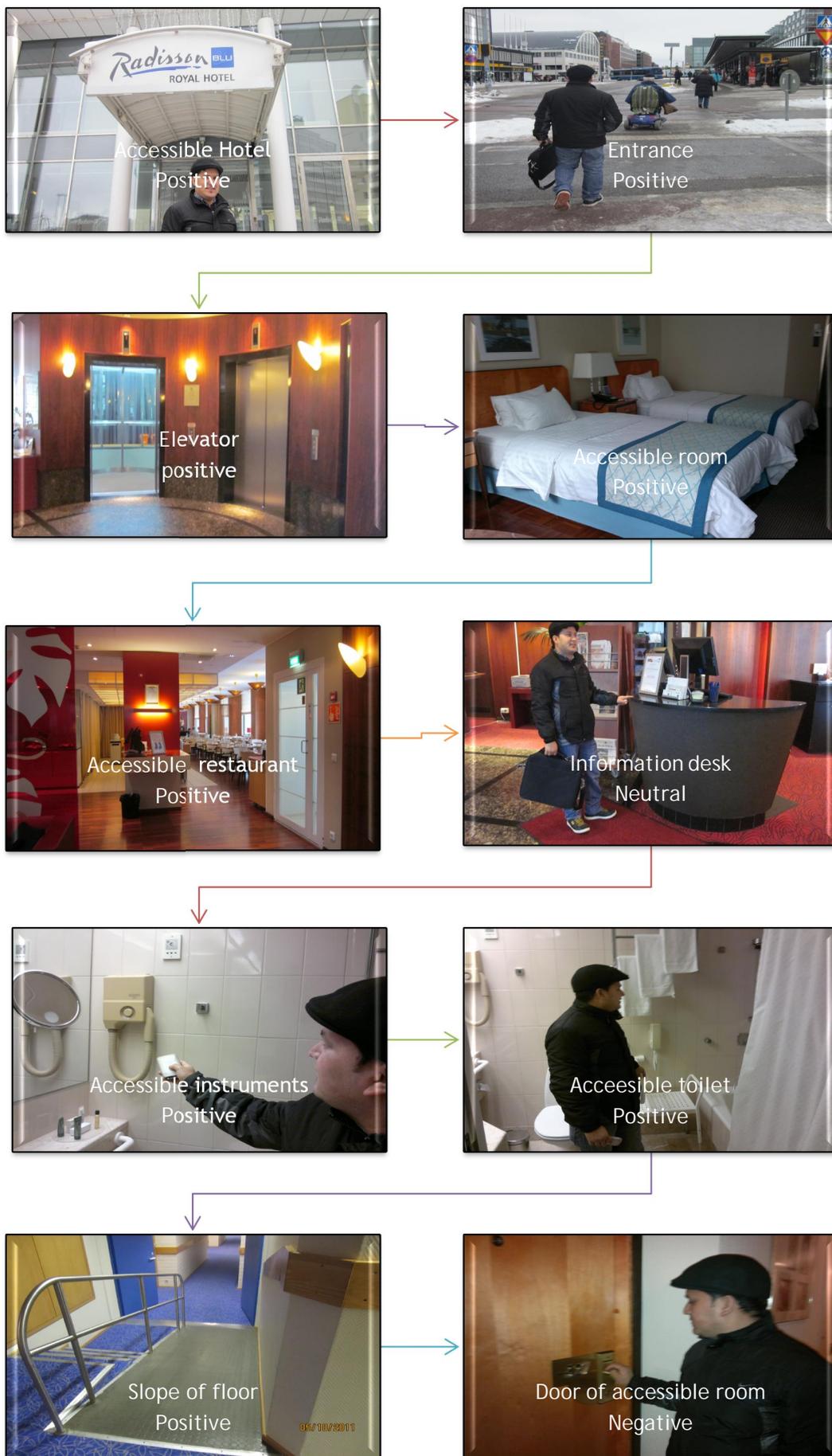
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12. What kind of infrastructure/services should be added to make more access for disabled tourist?

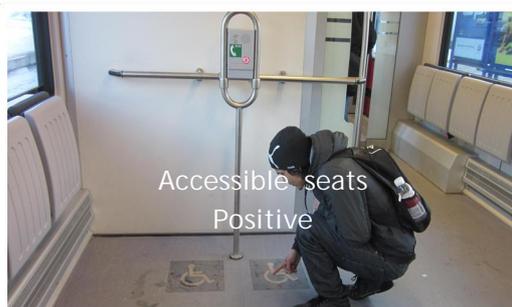
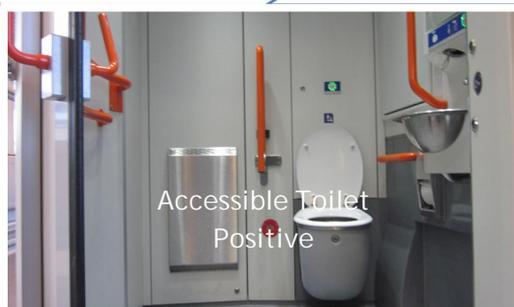
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Thank for providing a valuable time for us!

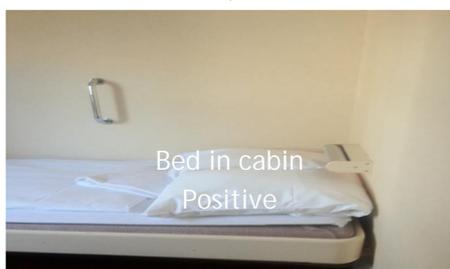
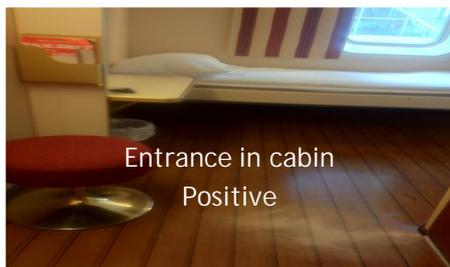
Appendix 2: Photos at the time of interview and observation in hotel chains (Khatri 2012)



Appendix 3: Photos at the time of interview and observation in public transportation (Khatri & Mahat 2011)



Appendix 4: Photos at the time of interview and observation in ferry companies  
(Shrestha 2012)





Index 5: The press release  
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#### PRESS RELEASE

Hotel Chains and Ferry Companies are the most accessible for disabled tourist in Helsinki!

The head line is one of the findings of this thesis study titled Accessible Tourism -A Study in Accessibility in Hotel Chains, Public Transportation and Ferry Companies in Helsinki conducted by the students of Degree Programme in Tourism, Kumar Khatri, Rajkumar Shrestha and Ujjwal Mahat from Laurea, Kerava Unit in June, 2012. The study analyzes the current situation of accessibility and service environment in major hotel chains, public transportation and ferry companies in Helsinki. The focus of the study was to develop the emerging new niches of accessible tourism all over the world. The thesis is a specimen of innovative and research oriented approach to studies in Laurea's Tourism Degree Programme that demonstrates the knowledge of students with the use of Laurea's academic innovation, "Learning by Development" method.

Emphasis was given in analyzing current situation of the accessibility and improving new niches for the development accessibility. The study contributed to the importance of accessibility in human life approach including equity, dignity and independence and came up with recommendation for emerging new niche of accessibility within tourism industry. The Empirical results showed that the Radisson Blu, Scandic and Hilton Hotel chain are the most accessible hotel chains in Helsinki. Besides that Viking Line and Silja Line are accessible ferry companies those are operating the passenger service from Helsinki. According to the research, there are possibilities to develop different sectors in accessibility in those area which helps disabled tourist to access without any restriction.

This study will provide a new insight for further research and development in accessible tourism concerning accommodation service sector, public transportation service, and service of ferry companies and its service environment in Finland. This study suggests the educational value within the curriculum of different degree program in educational institutions to develop highly competent manpower for future demand. The thesis opens a path for new researches providing a number of opportunities for new theses to be developed concentrating on the importance and implementation of accessibility for competitive and strategic development in accessibility in tourism industry.

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