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# Exploring the Coolcation Phenomenon: Tourist Preferences, Motivations, and Perceptions of Ruka Resort as a Summer Destination

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**Abstract**

This study examines how the coolcation phenomenon, in which rising summer temperatures encourage tourists to consider cooler destinations, relates to tourist preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort in Kuusamo, Finland. The research analysed 158 survey responses from international visitors to Ruka's English-language website using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and qualitative thematic analysis. The study investigated what motivates tourists to consider cooler destinations for summer travel and how they perceive Ruka's current summer offering in relation to their preferences. The results showed that respondents generally preferred warm rather than cold summer temperatures, yet a large majority were still willing to consider a cooler destination such as Ruka. This willingness was driven more by activities, scenery, and wildlife than by a desire to escape heat. Further analysis showed that what makes a destination appealing, what encourages tourists to visit, and what may prevent a visit are different considerations. Respondents perceived Ruka's summer offering as a reasonable match for their preferences overall, although this perception was weaker among those with limited awareness of the current offering. The findings suggest that Ruka's summer seasonality is shaped less by a lack of appeal and more by limited awareness and practical barriers such as cost and accessibility. This research contributes to understanding climate-sensitive tourism behaviour and seasonality in northern summer destinations.

KEYWORDS: coolcation, climate change, travel motivation, seasonality, destination perception, summer tourism, Ruka Resort

# Table of Contents

*Abstract* ..... *2*

*1. Introduction* ..... *6*

**1.1 Background** ..... **6**

**1.2 Ruka Resort and the Ruka-Kuusamo Tourism Area** ..... **7**

**1.3 Previous Research** ..... **9**

1.3.1 Climate change and changing summer travel patterns ..... 9

1.3.2 The Emergence of Coolcations as a Tourism Phenomenon ..... 10

1.3.3 Perspectives on summer tourism and development potential at Ruka Resort and in the Kuusamo area ..... 11

**1.4 Research gap and aim of the study** ..... **13**

**1.5 Structure of the study** ..... **14**

*2. Theoretical framework* ..... *16*

**2.1 Push and Pull Motivation Theory** ..... **16**

**2.2 Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts Applied to the Study** ..... **18**

*3. Methodology and data* ..... *20*

**3.1 Research Paradigm** ..... **20**

**3.2 Research Design** ..... **20**

**3.3 Data Collection** ..... **22**

**3.4 Data Analysis** ..... **22**

**3.5 Ethical Considerations** ..... **24**

*4. Results* ..... *26*

**4.1 Respondent Profile** ..... **26**

**4.2 Tourist Motivations & Preferences** ..... **29**

4.2.1 Preferred Activities During a Summer Visit ..... 29

4.2.2 Importance of Destination Factors ..... 30

4.2.3 Preferred Climate for Summer Travel ..... 31

4.2.4 Likelihood of Joining Guided or Organized Activities ..... 34

**4.3 Awareness and Appeal of the Coolcation Concept** ..... **34**

4.3.1 Awareness of the Coolcation Concept ..... 35

4.3.2 Willingness to Travel to a Cooler Destination ..... 35

4.3.3 Motivations for Choosing a Cool Summer Destination ..... 38

4.3.4 Appeal of Ruka as a Cool Summer Destination ..... 39

**4.4 Awareness of and Alignment with Ruka's Current Summer Offering** ..... **40**

4.4.1 Awareness of Ruka's Current Summer Offerings ..... 40

4.4.2 Perceived Alignment with Travel Expectations ..... 40

**4.5 Factors Influencing the Decision to Visit Ruka in Summer** ..... **42**

**4.6 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Perspectives on Ruka's Summer Appeal and Development** ..... **43**

4.6.1 Perceived appeal of a cool summer destination ..... 44

4.6.2 Activities and services that could encourage a summer visit ..... 46

4.6.3 Suggestions for developing Ruka as a summer destination ..... 47

*5. Discussion* ..... *49*
**5.1 Overview of the Discussion** ..... **49**
**5.2 Climate Preferences and the Nature of the Coolcation Appeal** ..... **49**
**5.3 Push and Pull Factors Behind Interest in Cooler Destinations** ..... **51**
**5.4 From Appeal to Action: A Motivational Funnel** ..... **53**
**5.5 Perceptions of Ruka's Current Summer Offering** ..... **55**
**5.6 Implications for Addressing Ruka's Summer Seasonality** ..... **56**
**5.7 Contributions to Tourism Research** ..... **58**
**5.8 Limitations and Future Research** ..... **60**
*6. Conclusion* ..... *63*
*References* ..... *65*
*Appendix* ..... *72*
**Appendix 1. Survey** ..... **72**

**List of Figures**

p.

1. Preferred activities during a summer visit to Ruka……. 29
2. Importance of destination factors when choosing a summer destination…… 30
3. Preferred summer temperature ranges for travel..... 31
4. Likelihood of participating in guided or organized activities during a summer visit to Ruka……...…….. 34
5. Awareness of the coolcation concept among respondents…….. 35
6. Willingness to travel to a cooler destination during the summer…… 35
7. Motivations for choosing a cooler summer destination…….. 38
8. Perceived appeal of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination……... 39
9. Awareness of Ruka's current summer offerings among respondents..……... 40
10. Perceived alignment between Ruka's current summer offerings and respondents' travel expectations…….. 41
11. Factors influencing the decision to visit Ruka during the summer ……. 43

**List of Tables**

p.

1. Background information of the respondents…….. ……. 26
2. Preferred summer climate by age group……..…… 31
3. Preferred summer climate by region of residence…….. 33
4. Willingness to consider a summer vacation to a cooler destination (e.g. Ruka) by age group.……...…. 36
5. Preferred summer climate and willingness to consider a cooler destination…….. 37
6. Perceived alignment with travel expectations by awareness of Ruka's current summer offerings…….……...…… 42

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Climate change has affected the tourism industry in numerous ways, yet global demand has continued to grow despite this. International tourist arrivals, measured as overnight visitors, increased by 5 percent between January and September 2025 compared with the same period in 2024, and were 3 percent higher than in the pre-pandemic year 2019 (UN Tourism, 2025). This continued growth in demand does not mean that travel patterns have remained unchanged, however. Climate change is beginning to influence where tourists choose to travel, contributing to the emergence of new tourism trends such as "coolcations", where tourists seek cooler destinations to escape rising temperatures in their home countries or traditional holiday locations (Chamberlain, 2024).

The impacts of climate change on tourism are not experienced equally across regions. Europe is warming at a faster rate than many other parts of the world (van Oldenborgh et al., 2009). Over the past two decades alone, heat stress-related mortality has increased by 30 percent, with heat-related deaths rising in 94 percent of monitored regions across Europe (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2024). Very strong heat stress, defined by a Universal Thermal Climate Index ranging between 38 and 46°C, has become increasingly common, with Central and Southern Europe in particular experiencing several weeks of such conditions as global temperatures continue to rise (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2024). Beyond rising temperatures, growing resistance to mass tourism in popular destinations has added a further layer of pressure on traditional summer travel patterns. In 2024, this tension became visible through public protests against overtourism in destinations such as Barcelona and Mallorca (Reuters, 2024a, 2024b), alongside measures such as Venice's day-tripper access fee (Comune di Venezia, 2024). These developments reflect mounting friction between resident populations and visitor volumes in established summer destinations. Combined, worsening heat and growing overcrowding may help explain why interest in cooler and potentially less crowded destinations, often termed "coolcations," has begun to emerge.

While extensive research exists on the broader impacts of climate change, the specific phenomenon of ‘coolcations’ remains relatively underexplored in academic tourism literature. Related issues, such as climate-induced migration and the concept of “climate

refugees", have been addressed by scholars such as Hartmann (2010) and Lister (2014). However, these studies focus primarily on displacement and forced mobility rather than on voluntary leisure travel and destination choice.

This thesis therefore explores the emerging concept of "coolcations" and its potential as a strategy for stimulating summer tourism growth, focusing on Ruka Resort in Kuusamo, Finland. This case was selected in part due to a research collaboration with Ruka Resort, which hosted the survey on its own English-language website, providing access to genuinely prospective international visitors rather than a general population sample. Despite the effects of global warming, the northern location of Ruka helps maintain comparatively moderate summer temperatures. The empirical phenomenon examined in this study is the growing trend of "coolcation" tourism, where travellers actively seek cooler destinations as refuges from heat (Chamberlain, 2024). This phenomenon intersects with current seasonal tourism patterns at Ruka Resort, where winter tourism is already well established, but summer visitation remains significantly lower. Since tourism demand in Northern Finland is highly seasonal, with a strong concentration on the winter season and an ongoing need to develop year-round tourism, including summer tourism (Rantala et al., 2019; Tyrväinen et al., 2017), this thesis explores whether there is potential to further develop summer tourism at Ruka Resort, particularly during the July to September period. The purpose of this study is to also examine whether Ruka Resort's summer offering aligns with emerging interest in cooler destinations and how this relates to its seasonality challenge. By exploring tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of cooler summer travel, the study seeks to assess the extent to which Ruka's positioning corresponds with evolving travel behaviour. A more balanced distribution of demand throughout the year could contribute to the long-term sustainability of destinations like Ruka and support broader regional tourism development in areas such as Kuusamo.

## 1.2 Ruka Resort and the Ruka-Kuusamo Tourism Area

Ruka Resort is a major tourism destination located in Kuusamo in north-eastern Finland. The resort is centred around Rukatunturi and Ruka Village, where accommodation, restaurants, shops, tourism services, and recreational facilities are located close to the slopes and surrounding natural environment. Ruka Village operates throughout the year, providing

accommodation and services alongside the area's slopes and recreational routes (City of Kuusamo, n.d.; Ruka-Kuusamo, n.d.-a).

Ruka is particularly well established as a winter tourism destination. The ski resort has 41 slopes and 22 lifts and records more than 200 skiing days during a typical season. During the 2024–2025 ski season, Ruka recorded approximately 498,800 skiing days. In addition to downhill skiing and snowboarding, winter activities in the wider Ruka-Kuusamo area include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and husky and reindeer experiences (Ruka-Kuusamo, n.d.-a).

During summer, Ruka and the surrounding Kuusamo area offer a broad range of nature-based and outdoor activities. These include hiking, mountain biking, cycling, white-water rafting, canoeing and stand-up paddleboarding, fishing, and wildlife experiences. The resort infrastructure itself is also used during the summer through attractions and activities such as Ruka Bike Park, scenic lift access, the summer sled track, and Ruka Coaster. The wider tourism area provides additional experiences such as guided hiking, bear watching, reindeer farm visits, sauna experiences, and local food activities, while nearby natural attractions such as Oulanka National Park form an important part of the area's summer tourism offering (Ruka-Kuusamo, n.d.-b).

Tourism represents a substantial activity in the wider Kuusamo area. According to Ruka-Kuusamo, approximately one million tourists visit Kuusamo annually, and the destination has more than 13,000 commercial accommodation beds. In 2025, Kuusamo recorded 536,300 registered overnight stays, of which 360,900 were domestic and 175,500 international. An additional 390,300 overnight stays were estimated in unregistered accommodation, resulting in approximately 926,600 overnight stays in total. The overnight statistics are based on data from Statistics Finland and Visitory (Ruka-Kuusamo, n.d.-c).

Although Ruka already operates as a year-round destination and offers an established range of summer activities, its strong association with winter tourism provides an important context for this study. The question is therefore not only whether Ruka possesses attributes that may appeal to summer tourists, but also how potential visitors perceive these attributes and whether emerging interest in cooler summer destinations could support greater summer

tourism demand. This makes Ruka a relevant setting for examining the coolcation phenomenon and its relationship with tourist preferences, motivations, and perceptions.

## 1.3 Previous Research

### 1.3.1 Climate change and changing summer travel patterns

Steiger et al. (2016) surveyed different mountain summer tourists in Southern Germany and found that weather and climate play a significant role in travel decision-making and overall tourist satisfaction. They also found that temperatures below 15°C and above 30°C were generally perceived as unacceptable, with variations based on the type of tourist: older tourists are more sensitive to heat, sports tourists tolerate cooler temperatures, first-time visitors are more sensitive to rain, and families prefer warmer temperatures. The study was conducted in 2016, however, and may not fully reflect current tolerances and preferences, given that the ten hottest years on record over the past 174 years have occurred between 2014 and 2023 (NOAA, 2024). According to Steiger et al. (2016), mountain destinations could be promoted as heat refuges with a focus on attracting sports tourists, a strategy that may be even more relevant today. However, the Alps have been warming at three times the global average during the 20th century (Beniston, 2012).

Additionally, studies by Lise and Tol (2001) and Grillakis et al. (2016) suggest that climate change is expected to significantly alter tourism demand by shifting travellers' preferences toward cooler destinations. Lise and Tol (2001) found that tourists generally favour destinations with average peak summer temperatures around 21°C, suggesting that as global warming intensifies, popular warm-weather destinations may see reduced demand as tourists seek more comfortable climates. Similarly, Grillakis et al. (2016) focused on Europe and found that a 2°C rise in global temperatures could increase tourism appeal in central and northern Europe while weakening the attractiveness of the Mediterranean region due to excessive heat during peak summer months. Together, these studies underline the potential for a northward shift in tourism demand. However, the Arctic region has also been warming at four times the global average since the 1980s (Rantanen et al., 2021), faster even than the Alps, highlighting that even destinations positioned as climate refuges are not immune to the impacts of climate change.

Schwirplies and Ziegler (2017) found that a significant number of winter tourists are willing to adapt their travel plans in response to climate change by choosing cooler destinations or shifting their travel periods. Their research highlights that demographic factors, such as gender, age, and climate awareness, influence this adaptability, with older and more climate-conscious travellers being particularly open to altering their travel habits. While this study focused on winter tourists, these findings may also be relevant for summer tourists, as rising temperatures could similarly encourage them to seek cooler destinations or off-peak travel periods to avoid extreme heat. Notably, Schwirplies and Ziegler (2017) distinguish between these two forms of adaptation — changing destination and changing travel timing — as separate tourist responses to climate change.

While Europe is warming faster than most regions and many of the consequences appear severe, Koutroulis et al. (2018) found that Southern European destinations are less vulnerable to climate change due to their strong capacity for adaptation. However, they note that this capacity diminishes under higher warming scenarios. Climate projections also carry inherent uncertainty, as numerous variables influence long-term outcomes. Rutty and Scott (2010) highlight this uncertainty, suggesting that while the Mediterranean may become "too hot" for tourist comfort during peak summer months under certain climate change scenarios, the exact threshold remains unclear and may shift over time as northern European travellers acclimatise.

### 1.3.2 The Emergence of Coolcations as a Tourism Phenomenon

An analysis of Google Trends data shows that interest in the term "coolcation" was virtually non-existent prior to 2024; a significant spike occurred during 2024, with the majority of searches originating from Sweden and Norway (Google Trends, 2024). This interest was likely sparked by multiple news articles on the topic, with Vogue Magazine releasing an article called "Are 'Coolcations' the Future of Travel?" (Eskins, 2024) and DW News writing "As heatwaves scorch southern Europe, some tourists are heading to colder destinations. Could vacation spots with cooler temperatures be the trend of the future?" (Martiny, 2024).

The concept of coolcations has also begun to receive attention in academic tourism research, with several recent studies examining a climate-driven shift in global tourism behaviour, especially evident in Northern Europe and other cooler regions. According to Fernández-Villarán et al. (2025), destination management organizations across the Nordic countries are beginning to integrate "coolcation" strategies into their marketing and sustainability narratives as a response to rising temperatures. These strategies aim to extend tourism seasons, reduce pressure on overheated destinations, and attract climate-conscious travellers, though their implementation remains inconsistent across regions. Additionally, Gössling and Scott (2024) show that climate change is broadly redistributing global tourism flows toward higher latitudes and altitudes as travellers seek relief from heat stress. Despite these emerging insights, empirical research on coolcations remains limited, particularly with regard to tourists' motivations, preferences, and perceptions of cooler destinations.

### 1.3.3 Perspectives on summer tourism and development potential at Ruka Resort and in the Kuusamo area

The Kuusamo area has long been recognised as a nature-based tourism destination, with Oulanka National Park proposed as early as 1897 (National Parks, n.d.). Today, Kuusamo remains one of Finland's most popular hiking regions, largely due to the Karhunkierros Trail, which is partly located within Oulanka National Park (Yle, 2013). As the country's most visited long distance hiking route, Karhunkierros attracts tens of thousands of hikers annually (Yle, 2013), indicating the strong role of nature-based activities in Kuusamo's summer tourism profile.

Climatic conditions in the Kuusamo region also shape the context for summer tourism activities. Data from the Kuusamo Välikangas weather station indicate that average temperatures during the summer months typically range between approximately 13°C and 17°C in July and between 12°C and 15°C in August in recent years (Kilotavu, n.d.). Although maximum daily temperatures can occasionally exceed 25°C, such extremes are generally short-lived compared with many Central and Southern European destinations. Precipitation levels are moderate, with rainfall occurring throughout the summer season. These conditions create relatively mild summer environments where outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and nature observation can be enjoyed without exposure to excessive heat.

Existing research highlights several benefits associated with nature-based tourism, which is highly relevant for destinations that rely on natural environments as a central tourism resource. Pearson and Craig (2014) show that exposure to natural environments can enhance mental health, as interactions with nature help restore limited attentional resources more effectively than urban settings, drawing on Attention Restoration Theory to explain why green and natural settings appear to reduce mental fatigue more consistently than built environments. These restorative qualities are particularly relevant for destinations offering outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and nature observation during the summer season. In addition to individual wellbeing benefits, Buckley and Brough (2017) demonstrate that nature-based tourism can generate wider societal value through reduced healthcare costs, improved workplace productivity, and lower levels of antisocial behaviour, framing these effects as part of a broader economic case for parks and protected natural areas as a public health resource rather than solely a recreational one. Together, these findings underline that nature-based tourism experiences carry benefits extending beyond individual visitor satisfaction into broader public health and economic domains.

At the same time, research has also identified potential environmental challenges linked to tourism development in the Kuusamo area. Kangas et al. (2009) found that ski slope management practices at Ruka Resort, including machine grading and fertilisation, significantly altered soil nutrients and vegetation structures, creating risks such as nutrient leaching. These findings remain relevant for summer tourism development, as activities such as mountain biking utilise the same slope areas during the snow free season. However, the study by Kangas et al. (2009) is over a decade old, and there is limited recent research examining how current management practices affect the local environment. Since then, Ruka Resort has implemented several sustainability initiatives, including achieving carbon neutrality for scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2018 (Ruka Sustainability, n.d.), highlighting the need for updated research in this area.

Ski resorts more broadly face pressure to diversify beyond their traditional winter season, both to reduce dependence on increasingly uncertain winter conditions and to develop year-round tourism operations (Zach et al., 2021). Steiger et al. (2016), discussed above in relation to mountain summer tourists in Southern Germany, illustrate this broader pattern of resorts

positioning themselves as attractive summer destinations rather than relying solely on winter sports demand.

Overall, tourism research in the Ruka Kuusamo area has largely focused on winter activities, with comparatively limited attention given to summer tourism. While the potential for nature-based summer activities such as hiking and mountain biking is acknowledged, strategies for developing and promoting summer tourism remain underexplored. Moreover, existing studies tend to focus on winter visitors, leaving limited empirical knowledge about the preferences, motivations, and expectations of summer tourists in the region.

## 1.4 Research gap and aim of the study

As of 2026, there are relatively few academic studies explicitly examining the concept of coolcations, with only a limited number of peer reviewed articles and a master's thesis exploring the topic in a Finnish context (Jäntti, 2026). That thesis focuses on how marketing communication constructs Finland's summer tourism identity around the coolcation concept, addressing the supply side of the phenomenon rather than tourist demand. While travelling to cooler destinations to escape extreme heat has been discussed indirectly within broader tourism and climate change research, the concept and definition of coolcations remain underdeveloped. In particular, there is limited empirical research on consumer awareness, interest, and motivations related to coolcations, highlighting a clear research gap.

Within this context, the broader research phenomenon addressed in this thesis focuses on the emerging trend of "coolcations," in which tourists seek cooler destinations to escape extreme heat. The specific aim of this research is to investigate consumer preferences and motivations associated with the coolcation trend, with a particular focus on their implications for summer tourism at Ruka Resort. The empirical focus of the thesis lies in examining tourist behaviours, preferences, and experiences related to coolcations in the context of Ruka Resort.

Ruka Resort is primarily known for its winter sports offerings and experiences a notable seasonality gap during the summer months, particularly between July and September, when domestic travel demand decreases as Finnish schools resume. This seasonal pattern results in reduced visitor numbers during a period that could otherwise hold potential for tourism

activity. At the same time, European summer tourism is increasingly characterised by overcrowding, rising prices, and heat related discomfort in traditional destinations (Nicholls & Amelung, 2008), which has prompted growing interest in alternative travel options. Within this context, cooler regions such as Finland provide a relevant setting for examining consumer interest in coolcations and summer tourism preferences.

The main research question of this thesis is:

*In what ways does the coolcation trend relate to tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort as a summer destination?*

Sub questions include:

*(1) What motivates tourists to consider cooler destinations for summer travel?*

*(2) How do tourists perceive Ruka's current summer offerings in relation to their preferences and expectations?*

To address these research questions, the study uses a quantitatively driven embedded mixed-methods approach based on an online survey conducted through Ruka's English-language website. The final dataset consists of 158 completed responses from international respondents. Quantitative survey data are used to identify general patterns in tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions, while open-ended responses provide qualitative insights that help elaborate on and contextualise these findings. The quantitative data are analysed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations, while the qualitative responses are examined through thematic analysis. The research design and methods are described in detail in Chapter 3.

## 1.5 Structure of the study

This thesis is divided into six chapters and examines the emerging phenomenon of coolcations in relation to summer tourism development at Ruka Resort in Kuusamo, Finland.

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic by outlining the broader context of climate change and its implications for tourism, with particular attention to changing summer travel patterns. It reviews relevant previous research on climate change and tourism, the emergence of coolcations as a tourism phenomenon, and summer tourism and seasonality in the Ruka–Kuusamo area. The chapter identifies the research gap, presents the aim of the study and the research questions, and provides an overview of the study's structure.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework guiding the research. It introduces Push and Pull Motivation Theory as the primary framework for examining tourists' travel motivations and destination choice. The chapter concludes by explaining how these theoretical concepts are applied in the context of the study.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach and data. It outlines the research paradigm and mixed-methods research design, details the survey development and data collection process, and explains the quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Ethical considerations are also addressed.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical results of the study. It begins with a profile of the survey respondents and proceeds to report findings related to tourist motivations, preferences, and climate-related travel behaviour. The chapter further examines awareness and perceptions of the coolcation concept and the appeal of Ruka as a summer destination, before turning to respondents' awareness of Ruka's current summer offering, their perceived alignment with it, and the factors most likely to influence a decision to visit. The chapter concludes with a thematic analysis of open-ended responses concerning the appeal and development of Ruka as a summer destination.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and existing literature. The discussion focuses on coolcations as a climate-related push factor, Ruka's pull factors as a summer destination, awareness gaps and destination perceptions, and the broader implications for addressing summer seasonality in northern resort destinations.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings, drawing conclusions in relation to the research aim, and outlining the theoretical contributions and practical implications for Ruka Resort.

# 2. Theoretical framework

## 2.1 Push and Pull Motivation Theory

Push and Pull Motivation Theory has been used in tourism research to explain why individuals decide to travel and how they select specific destinations. The theory originates from migration studies, most notably Lee (1966), who theorized human movement as the result of two interacting forces: push factors that drive individuals away from their current location and pull factors that attract them to a particular destination. In tourism research, this framework has been adapted to examine travel motivations by distinguishing between underlying motivations to travel and destination specific attributes that influence destination choice. Building on Lee's (1966) migration framework, Crompton (1979) translated the push–pull logic into tourism by distinguishing between internal motivations to travel and destination-specific pull attributes, despite not explicitly adopting the push–pull terminology.

Push factors refer to internal or external motivations that create a desire to travel and are often linked to personal needs, environmental conditions, or dissatisfaction with the current situation (Crompton, 1979). In tourism contexts, such factors may include the desire to escape everyday routines, avoid overcrowding, seek relaxation, or respond to unfavourable climatic conditions. In recent years, climate related push factors have become increasingly relevant, as extreme heat, prolonged heatwaves, and overcrowding in traditional summer destinations may encourage tourists to consider alternative travel options (Khatib, 2023).

In contrast, pull factors refer to the characteristics of a place that attract visitors once the decision to travel has already been made (Crompton, 1979). These include both tangible and intangible attributes such as climate, natural environments, available activities, accessibility, and overall atmosphere. From a tourism perspective, such attributes influence how potential destinations are evaluated and compared, ultimately shaping travel choices (Crompton, 1979). In the context of northern summer tourism, elements such as cooler temperatures, nature based activities, scenic landscapes, and a perception of tranquillity may increase the attractiveness of destinations positioned as alternatives to conventional warm weather holiday locations.

The Push and Pull Motivation Theory is particularly useful for examining emerging travel phenomena because it enables the simultaneous consideration of broader contextual pressures and the appeal of specific places. In this study, the concept of coolcations is explored through this dual perspective. Climate related discomfort, overcrowding, and rising costs in traditional summer destinations may act as push factors, while the cooler climate, natural environment, and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Ruka Kuusamo area may serve as pull factors.

The theory also aligns well with mixed methods research designs as quantitative data allows for the identification of the importance of different push and pull factors across a larger sample, while qualitative responses enable a more in depth exploration of how tourists describe their motivations and expectations in their own words. This combination supports an understanding of travel decision making processes, particularly in the context of an emerging and loosely defined concept such as coolcations.

Push and Pull Motivation Theory is not the only framework available for examining travel motivation. Iso-Ahola's seeking–escaping theory offers a particularly relevant alternative for the study of coolcations. Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed that tourism motivation involves both escaping undesirable conditions and seeking psychological rewards, and Snepenger et al. (2006) later applied this framework empirically within tourism research. Pearce and Lee's (2005) Travel Career Pattern model could also have been used to examine whether coolcation motivations vary according to tourists' accumulated travel experience. However, Push and Pull Motivation Theory was selected because it provides a clear structure for distinguishing tourists' internal reasons for travelling from the destination attributes that influence their choices. This distinction is compatible with the study's mixed-methods design, as it allows the relative importance of specific motivational factors to be examined quantitatively while also capturing participants' own descriptions of their motivations qualitatively. Nevertheless, the framework has limitations. Push and pull factors are not always clearly separable in practice because the same factor may influence both the decision to leave one place and the decision to choose another. Climate, for example, may push tourists away from destinations perceived as excessively hot while simultaneously pulling them towards destinations offering cooler and more comfortable conditions. This overlap is particularly relevant to coolcations, where escaping heat and seeking a cooler climate represent closely connected dimensions of the same travel decision.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts Applied to the Study

Push and Pull Motivation Theory provides the primary theoretical framework for examining the coolcation phenomenon in the context of summer tourism at Ruka Resort. The framework helps explain why tourists consider travelling to cooler destinations and how climate-related pressures and destination attributes influence travel motivations and destination choice.

This framework guides both the design and interpretation of the study by supporting the examination of climate-related push factors, such as heat avoidance and overcrowding, and destination-specific pull factors, including nature-based activities, climate conditions, and the overall atmosphere of the destination. Heat avoidance was captured directly through survey items concerning motivations for choosing a cooler destination, while perceptions related to overcrowding also emerged through the open-ended responses. Pull factors were examined through items addressing the importance of destination attributes, activity preferences, and the perceived appeal of Ruka's summer offering.

A further consideration in this study is the role of awareness in enabling destination attributes to function as pull factors. In tourism destination choice, awareness refers to whether a potential traveller knows of a destination and its relevant attributes or offerings sufficiently for it to enter the consideration process. Destination choice research has conceptualised this through the idea of an awareness set, referring to the destinations known to a traveller before the choice is narrowed to a smaller set of alternatives (Decrop, 2010). An attractive destination attribute is therefore unlikely to influence destination choice if potential visitors are unaware that it exists. This is particularly relevant for Ruka, which is strongly associated with winter tourism and may have more limited recognition as a summer destination. The survey therefore also examined respondents' awareness of Ruka's current summer offering and their perceptions of how well it aligned with their travel expectations. This allows the analysis to consider not only which destination attributes may function as pull factors, but also whether potential visitors are sufficiently aware of them for these attributes to influence destination perceptions and choice.

Within this framework, two further concepts used throughout the study are tourist preferences and destination perceptions. Tourist preferences refer to the attributes and conditions that travellers value when considering a destination, such as climate, natural scenery, activities, or other characteristics of the tourism offering. The relative importance attached to such

destination attributes can influence how attractive a destination is perceived to be (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). In this study, preferences are examined through respondents' preferred activities, the importance they assign to different destination factors, and their preferred climate for summer travel.

Destination perceptions, in turn, concern how travellers interpret and evaluate a particular destination and its attributes. Destination image research conceptualises such perceptions as including evaluations of individual destination attributes as well as broader impressions of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). These perceptions can also be influenced by the information available to travellers and by their existing characteristics and experiences (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In this study, perceptions are examined primarily through respondents' evaluation of Ruka's appeal as a summer destination and their assessment of how well its current summer offering aligns with their travel expectations. Preferences therefore describe what respondents are looking for in a summer destination, whereas perceptions describe how they evaluate Ruka in relation to those preferences.

Through these perspectives, the study explores how broader climate-related travel motivations interact with tourists' preferences, their perceptions of Ruka, and the specific characteristics of Ruka as a potential summer destination. Together, these perspectives enable a structured analysis of tourist preferences, motivations, perceptions, and awareness related to summer travel and coolcations, aligned with the aims and research questions of the study.

# 3. Methodology and data

## 3.1 Research Paradigm

This study adopts a mixed methods research approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection to examine tourists' perceptions of coolcations and summer travel behaviour in the context of Ruka Resort. The study is guided by a pragmatic research paradigm, which emphasises selecting research approaches that best address the research problem and allows researchers to combine different methodological traditions when appropriate (Maarouf, 2019; Foster, 2023). More specifically, the study follows a quantitatively driven embedded mixed-methods design, in which quantitative survey data provide the primary basis for identifying general patterns, while qualitative data collected through open-ended questions within the same survey are embedded as a supplementary component (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The qualitative responses are used to elaborate on, contextualise, and help interpret the patterns identified in the quantitative results.

A mixed-methods design was selected because it enables the study to capture both broad patterns in tourists' travel preferences and motivations and more detailed insights into how respondents interpret and evaluate potential summer destinations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The quantitative data allow general trends, differences, and relationships within the sample to be examined, whereas the qualitative responses provide a deeper understanding of motivations, expectations, and concerns that may not be fully represented through closed-ended survey items alone. The two forms of data are integrated during the interpretation of the findings, with qualitative responses used to clarify and expand upon relevant quantitative patterns. Together, these approaches support a more comprehensive examination of the emerging coolcation phenomenon and its potential implications for summer tourism development at Ruka Resort.

## 3.2 Research Design

A structured online survey (see Appendix 1) was selected as the primary method of data collection, as it enables access to a geographically varied group of respondents while ensuring standardized and comparable data. The survey was designed to capture both

quantitative and qualitative responses, allowing for the examination of general patterns alongside individual outlooks.

The survey consisted of five main sections. The first section collected demographic information and general travel behaviour, including age group, country of residence, travel frequency, and typical travel companions. The second section focused on activity preferences and travel motivations, examining which summer activities respondents found appealing, how they ranked the importance of different destination factors, their preferred summer climate, and their likelihood of participating in guided activities. The third section explored awareness and perceptions of the coolcation concept, including whether respondents had previously heard the term, their willingness to travel to a cooler destination, the factors that would motivate such a choice, and the perceived appeal of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination, concluding with an open-ended question on what respondents found most appealing about such a destination. The fourth section assessed respondents' awareness of Ruka's current summer offerings and their perceived alignment with personal travel expectations, followed by an open-ended question on additional activities or services that would encourage a summer visit. The final section asked respondents to identify the factors that would most influence their decision to visit Ruka during the summer, concluding with an open-ended question inviting suggestions for improving Ruka's appeal as a summer destination.

The survey incorporated a range of question formats, including multiple-choice questions to gather structured and comparable data, Likert-scale questions to measure levels of importance or appeal, ranking questions to identify key priorities in destination selection, and open-ended questions to elicit more detailed qualitative insights into tourists' motivations, concerns, and expectations. The use of both closed- and open-ended questions supports systematic comparison of structured responses while also allowing respondents to express views in their own words beyond predefined response categories (Dillman et al., 2014).

## 3.3 Data Collection

The survey was hosted on the English-language version of Ruka.fi, the official website of Ruka Resort, and implemented using the Surveypal.fi platform. Hosting the survey on Ruka.fi allowed the study to reach individuals who were actively seeking information about the destination or considering travel options. The survey targeted international tourists, particularly from Europe, as these groups represent a relevant segment in the context of summer travel and the coolcation phenomenon. Data collection took place during April in 2025, covering a period in which prospective visitors are likely to be researching and planning their summer travel.

In total, 495 individuals opened the survey, of whom 203 completed it fully. Respondents residing in Finland were excluded in order to maintain focus on international tourists, resulting in a final sample of 158 complete responses from foreign participants. The survey was conducted in English and included an optional incentive in the form of a gift voucher draw.

A non-probability convenience sampling approach was employed, as respondents self-selected into the survey through engagement with the destination website. While this sampling method does not allow for statistical generalization to the wider tourist population, it is appropriate for exploratory research aimed at understanding attitudes, preferences, and perceptions among potential visitors (Etikan et al., 2016).

## 3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis followed a mixed-methods strategy combining descriptive quantitative analysis with qualitative thematic analysis. Quantitative survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and mean values, to identify general patterns in travel behaviour, activity preferences, and destination perceptions, drawing on Surveypal's built-in reporting functions supplemented by Excel for cross-tabulations. Where relevant, cross-tabulation was used to explore the relationships between demographic variables and key responses. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the relatively small size of several demographic subgroups, inferential statistical testing was not applied to these cross-tabulated

results; they are reported descriptively, and any apparent differences between groups should be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than statistically confirmed relationships. Results were visualised using figures such as bar charts and frequency distributions.

Qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions were analysed using inductive thematic analysis following the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected because the qualitative material consisted primarily of short written survey responses that varied in length and detail. Thematic analysis provided a flexible yet systematic framework for identifying recurring patterns across a large number of brief responses, while allowing for interpretive depth despite the limited length of individual answers.

Prior to analysis, the responses were reviewed on the survey platform and then exported into an Excel spreadsheet. Responses from Finnish participants were excluded to maintain the international focus of the study, and entries containing no meaningful content, such as empty responses or statements indicating no opinion, were removed. The remaining responses were organised into columns for margin notes, codes, and themes to support a transparent and structured analytic process.

The thematic analysis followed the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, familiarisation was achieved through repeated reading of all of the responses, allowing for recurring ideas and patterns to be identified. During this phase, preliminary observations were recorded in margin notes. Second, initial coding was conducted by assigning descriptive codes to words or phrases to capture the meaning of each response. Short responses were typically assigned a single code, while longer responses were often assigned multiple codes.

In the third phase, the codes were grouped into broader themes that represented higher-level patterns across the dataset. This process moved the analysis beyond simple categorisation toward interpretation, allowing the themes to capture shared expectations, motivations, and perceptions related to summer travel and Ruka as a destination. In the later phases, the themes were reviewed, refined, and defined to ensure internal consistency and distinction between categories. Overlapping or narrowly defined codes were merged where appropriate to produce a manageable and consistent thematic structure.

Throughout the analysis, the original responses were compared with the assigned codes and themes to ensure consistency and accuracy. Analytical decisions were documented through margin notes, supporting transparency. Given the shortness of many survey responses, interpretation required careful consideration, particularly where single words or short phrases could potentially carry multiple meanings. In line with Braun and Clarke (2021), the themes were interpreted as patterns identified through engagement with the data rather than as direct or objective representations of participants' views.

The thematic analysis focused on the three open-ended questions addressing perceived appeal, desired additions to summer offerings, and suggestions for improving Ruka's attractiveness as a summer destination. Themes were developed inductively across the combined set of responses to all three questions, and their relative presence was then examined separately for each question. Because the three questions addressed different aspects of the survey, not every theme was expected to recur in every question; where a theme did not emerge in a given question's responses, this is reported explicitly in the corresponding results subsection. This approach enabled a structured interpretation of tourists' motivations, expectations, and perceptions, while acknowledging the constraints and interpretive nature of short open-ended survey data.

## 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The survey data used in this study were collected by Ruka Resort and conducted in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as well as the organisation's internal guidelines. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey, how their data would be handled, and their right to stop participating at any time. Respondents who opted into an optional prize draw, administered separately by Ruka Resort's marketing team, provided an email address and consented to its processing under Ruka Resort's own privacy policy; this process was independent of the academic research and the email addresses were not used in the analysis presented in this thesis. Aside from this contact information, collected and held by Ruka Resort for the purposes of the draw, no other personally identifiable information was collected or analysed as part of the study.

The analysis was carried out in line with the University of Lapland's research ethics principles and the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. The Finnish guidelines for good scientific practice emphasise reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability throughout the research process (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta [TENK], 2023). Overall, the study respects participant privacy and autonomy and follows accepted ethical standards for academic research.

OpenAI’s ChatGPT was used as a supporting tool during the writing and revision process to assist with language editing and improve the clarity and consistency of the text. The author was responsible for the writing, research, analysis, interpretation, and final content.

# 4. Results

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study based on survey data collected from respondents outside of Finland. The results are reported in a descriptive manner and follow the structure of the survey and the research questions. First, the demographic and travel characteristics of the respondents are presented to provide context for the sample. This is followed by quantitative results related to summer travel preferences, motivations, and perceptions of cool destinations, and by results concerning respondents' awareness of Ruka's current summer offering, their perceived alignment with it, and the factors most likely to influence a summer visit. Finally, the chapter presents the findings from the qualitative analysis of open-ended survey questions, highlighting key themes related to the perceived appeal of Ruka as a summer destination, desired activities and services, and suggested improvements.

## 4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1 presents a summary of respondents' demographic and travel characteristics. The data represent a total of 158 fully completed responses collected through the English-language Ruka.fi survey, excluding 45 respondents from Finland. This ensures that the results reflect the perspectives of foreign visitors, which was the main focus of the study. The table provides an overview of the respondents' age distribution (Q1), countries of residence (Q2), leisure-travel frequency (Q3), and typical travel group (Q4), offering a general profile of the international tourists who took part in the survey.

Table 1. Background information of the respondents.

| Variable | Category | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age group (n=158) | 18–24 years | 8 | 5.1 |
| | 25–34 years | 21 | 13.3 |
| | 35–44 years | 44 | 27.9 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 45–54 years | 50 | 31.7 |
| | 55–64 years | 28 | 17.7 |
| | 65-69 years | 3 | 1.9 |
| | 70-74 years | 2 | 1.3 |
| | 75-80 years | 2 | 1.3 |
| | 80 years or older | 0 | 0 |
| Country of residence (n=158) | United Kingdom | 63 | 39.9 |
| | Estonia | 13 | 8.2 |
| | Germany | 11 | 7.0 |
| | United States | 7 | 4.4 |
| | Australia | 6 | 3.8 |
| | Sweden | 6 | 3.8 |
| | Netherlands | 5 | 3.2 |
| | Latvia | 5 | 3.2 |
| | Italy | 4 | 2.5 |
| | Other countries [1] | 38 | 24.1 |
| Leisure-travel frequency (n=158) | None | 1 | 0.6 |
| | Rarely (once every two years or less) | 10 | 6.3 |
| | 1–2 times per year | 55 | 34.8 |
| | 3–4 times per year | 63 | 39.9 |
| | 5 or more times per year | 29 | 18.4 |
| Typical travel group (n=158) | Solo | 12 | 7.6 |
| | With partner or spouse | 50 | 31.7 |
| | With friends | 22 | 13.9 |
| | Family with children | 70 | 44.3 |
| | Other [2] | 4 | 2.5 |

Note. [1] Includes small groups from Denmark, France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Japan, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, and single respondents from several other countries.

[2] Includes answers such as traveling with a partner and a dog, or varying group compositions.

The age distribution of respondents was concentrated in the middle-aged groups. The largest proportion were 45–54 years (31.7%), followed by 35–44 years (27.9%) and 55–64 years (17.7%). Younger participants aged 18–34 accounted for 18.4%, while older age groups were only marginally represented, with 4.4% aged 65 or above. This shows that the sample mainly consisted of middle-aged travellers, with fewer younger and older participants.

The largest share of respondents came from the United Kingdom (39.9%), followed by Estonia (8.2%) and Germany (7.0%). Other notable groups were from the United States (4.4%), Australia (3.8%), and Sweden (3.8%), while smaller proportions came from the Netherlands and Latvia (3.2% each) and Italy (2.5%). Additional responses came from a range of European and international countries, suggesting that the survey reached a diverse group of foreign visitors, though dominated by Northern and Western Europeans.

Most respondents reported travelling regularly for leisure. The largest group, 39.9%, indicated travelling three to four times per year, followed by 34.8% who travelled one to two times annually. A further 18.4% reported travelling five or more times per year, while only 6.3% travelled rarely and one respondent reported not travelling at all. This suggests that the majority of respondents were active leisure travellers who take multiple trips per year.
In terms of travel companions, most respondents reported travelling with others, with the largest share identifying family with children (44.3%) as their typical travel group. Travelling with a partner or spouse was also common (31.7%), while 13.9% reported travelling with friends and 7.6% solo. A small number (2.5%) selected “other.” Overall, these results show that leisure trips to destinations such as Ruka are most often taken as shared holiday experiences, particularly among families and couples.

## 4.2 Tourist Motivations & Preferences

### 4.2.1 Preferred Activities During a Summer Visit

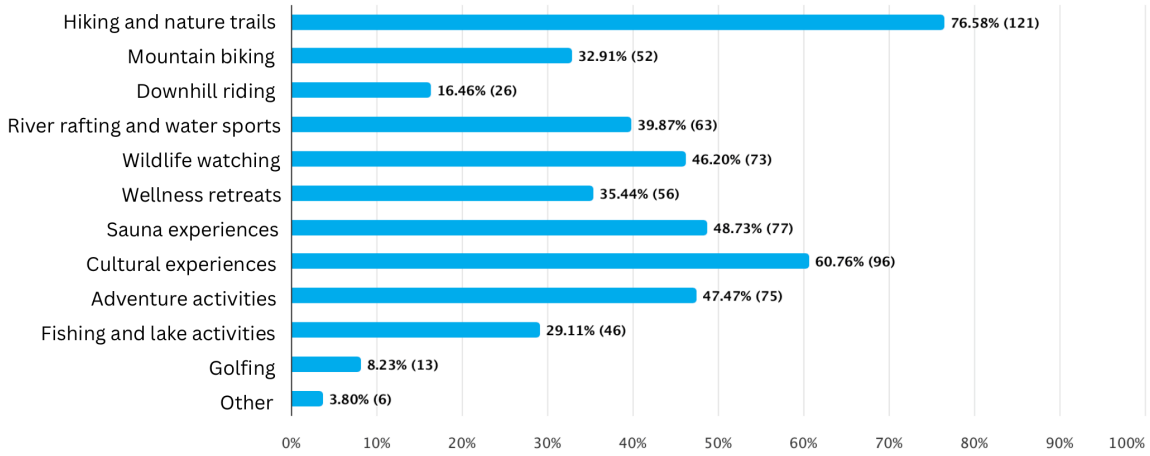



Figure 1. Preferred activities during a summer visit to Ruka (n = 158)

Respondents were asked which activities they would be most excited about during a potential summer visit to Ruka (Q5). As shown in Figure 1, hiking and nature trails were the most popular option, selected by 76.6% of respondents. This was followed by cultural experiences (60.8%), sauna experiences (48.7%), and adventure activities (47.5%). Other nature oriented activities were also widely valued, including wildlife watching (46.2%) and river rafting and other water based recreation (39.9%).

Moderate levels of interest were reported for wellness retreats (35.4%), mountain biking (32.9%), and fishing and lake activities (29.1%). In contrast, downhill riding (16.5%), golfing (8.2%), and activities listed under the open “Other” category (3.8%) were selected less frequently. Overall, the results indicate a clear preference for outdoor, nature based, and experience oriented activities during a potential summer visit to Ruka.

A small number of respondents (n = 6) mentioned additional activities in the open “Other” category, including rock climbing, skiing, snow sports, downhill swimming, and city tours. Some of these responses may reflect a partial misunderstanding of the question, as certain activities mentioned, such as skiing and snow sports, are typically associated with winter tourism rather than summer travel.

### 4.2.2 Importance of Destination Factors

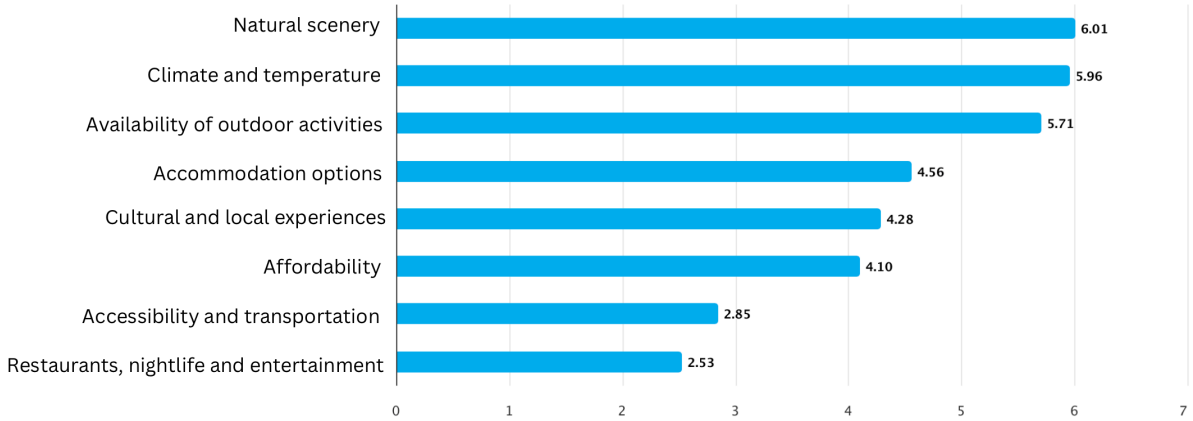



Figure 2. Importance of destination factors when choosing a summer destination (n = 158)

Ranks were converted to scores from 8 (most important) to 1 (least important), meaning that higher mean scores indicate greater importance. Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of different factors when choosing a summer destination (Q6). As shown in Figure 2, natural scenery (M = 6.01) and climate and temperature (M = 5.96) were rated as the most important factors, followed by the availability of outdoor activities (M = 5.71). Accommodation options (M = 4.56) and cultural and local experiences (M = 4.28) received moderate importance ratings. Affordability (M = 4.10), accessibility and transportation (M = 2.85), and restaurants, nightlife, and entertainment (M = 2.53) were rated as less important overall.

Overall, respondents assigned higher importance ratings to natural and climate related factors than to service and infrastructure related factors. These findings provide context for the subsequent analysis of preferred activities and motivations related to summer travel.

### 4.2.3 Preferred Climate for Summer Travel

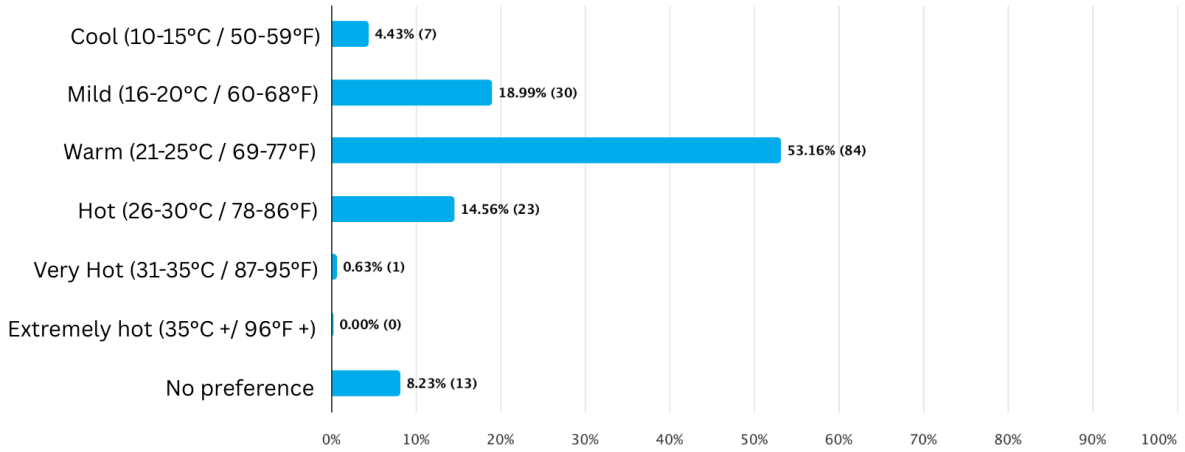



Figure 3. Preferred summer temperature ranges for travel (n = 158)

Respondents were asked to indicate their preferred climate conditions for summer travel (Q7). As shown in Figure 3, just over half of the respondents (53.2%) preferred warm summer temperatures between 21 and 25 °C. This was followed by a preference for mild conditions of 16 to 20 °C, selected by 19.0% of respondents. A smaller proportion (14.6%) indicated a preference for hotter temperatures of 26 to 30 °C, while only one respondent (0.6%) preferred very hot conditions above 31 °C. No respondents selected extremely hot temperatures above 35 °C. Cooler summer conditions of 10 to 15 °C were preferred by 4.4% of respondents, while 8.2% reported having no specific temperature preference. Overall, the results indicate that respondents tended to favour moderate summer temperatures, with relatively limited interest in either very hot or very cool conditions when considering summer travel.

Table 2. Preferred summer climate by age group (n=158)

| Age group | Cool (10–15°C) | Mild (16–20°C) | Warm (21–25°C) | Hot (26–30°C) | Very hot (31–35°C) | Extremely hot (35°C+) | No preference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18–24 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 25–34 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 35–44 | 1 | 5 | 20 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 45–54 | 3 | 16 | 25 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

| Age group | Cool (10–15°C) | Mild (16–20°C) | Warm (21–25°C) | Hot (26–30°C) | Very hot (31–35°C) | Extremely hot (35°C+) | No preference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 55–64 | 2 | 4 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 65–69 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 70–74 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 75–80 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 2 presents a cross tabulation of respondents' age groups and their preferred summer climate for travel. Among respondents aged 18–24 (n = 8), a clear majority preferred summer temperatures of 21–25°C (75%), followed by 26–30°C (12.5%), while an equal proportion reported having no specific climate preference (12.5%). No respondents in this age group selected temperatures below 20°C or above 30°C. Among respondents aged 25–34 (n = 21), preferences were again concentrated around 21–25°C (52%). Smaller proportions preferred 26–30°C (19%) and 16–20°C (10%), while preferences for 10–15°C were relatively uncommon (5%). A minority of respondents in this age group reported no specific climate preference (14%). No respondents selected temperatures above 30°C. For respondents aged 35–44 (n = 44), 21–25°C remained the most frequently preferred temperature range (45%). This age group, however, showed a broader distribution of preferences, with a substantial proportion preferring 26–30°C (32%) and a smaller share favouring 16–20°C (11%). Preferences for 10–15°C (2%), 31–35°C (2%), and no specific climate preference (7%) were relatively limited. No respondents in this age group selected temperatures above 35°C. Among respondents aged 45–54 (n = 50), half preferred summer temperatures of 21–25°C (50%), followed by 16–20°C (32%). Preferences for 26–30°C were less common (8%), while smaller proportions selected 10–15°C (6%) or reported no specific climate preference (4%). No respondents in this age group preferred temperatures above 30°C. In the 55–64 age group (n = 28), preferences were strongly centred on 21–25°C (68%), with fewer respondents preferring 16–20°C (14%). Preferences for 10–15°C (7%) and no specific climate preference (11%) were relatively limited. No respondents in this group selected temperatures above 25°C. In the oldest age groups (65–69, 70–74, and 75–80), response numbers were very small (n = 2–3 per group). Within these groups, preferences were primarily distributed between 21–25°C and 16–20°C, with occasional responses indicating no specific climate preference. Due to the limited number of observations, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 3. Preferred summer climate by region of residence (n=158)

| Region of residence | Cool (10–15°C) | Mild (16–20°C) | Warm (21–25°C) | Hot (26–30°C) | Very hot (31–35°C) | No preference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Europe | 1 | 10 | 54 | 18 | 0 | 10 |
| Central Europe | 1 | 14 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Southern Europe | 2 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Non-European countries | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

Note. Northern Europe includes the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Central Europe includes Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Hungary, and Ukraine. Southern Europe includes Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Portugal, and Bulgaria. Non-European countries include the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Brazil, South Africa, and Ecuador.

Among respondents from Northern Europe (n = 93), a clear majority preferred temperatures of 21–25°C (58%). Hot temperatures of 26–30°C were the next most common preference (19%), followed by mild conditions of 16–20°C and no specific preference (both 11%). Preferences for 10–15°C were rare (1%), and no respondents selected 31–35°C. In Central Europe (n = 33), preferences were concentrated around 21–25°C (48%) and 16–20°C (42%). A smaller share preferred 26–30°C (6%), and only 3% selected 10–15°C. No respondents in this group indicated a preference above 30°C or reported no specific preference. Respondents from Southern Europe (n = 13) most frequently preferred 21–25°C (62%). Preferences for 10–15°C (15%), 16–20°C (8%), 26–30°C (8%), and no specific preference (8%) were each represented by a single respondent, reflecting the small subgroup size. Among respondents from non-European countries (n = 19), 21–25°C remained the most common preference (32%), followed by 16–20°C (26%) and 10–15°C (16%). Preferences for 26–30°C (11%) and no specific preference (11%) were less common, and one respondent (5%) preferred 31–35°C.

### 4.2.4 Likelihood of Joining Guided or Organized Activities

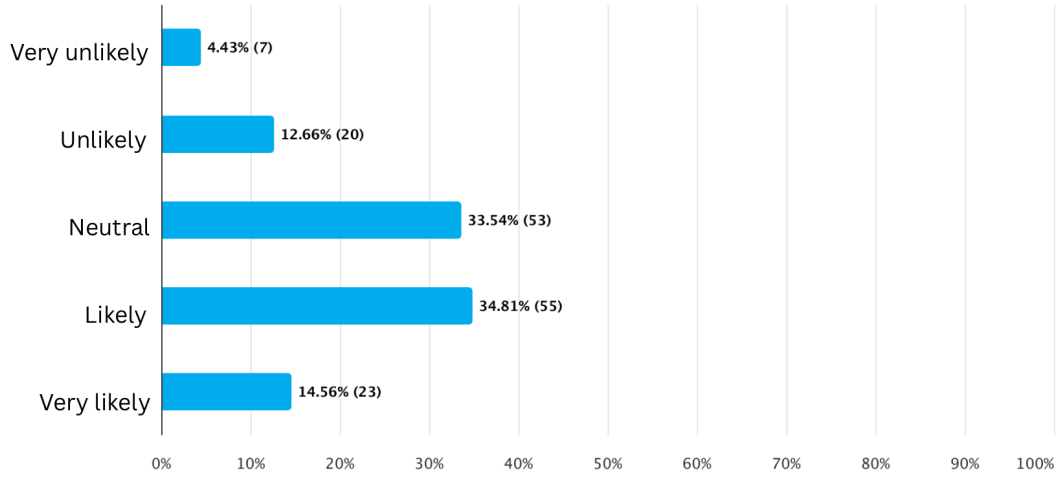



Figure 4. Likelihood of participating in guided or organized activities during a summer visit to Ruka (n = 158)

Respondents were asked to indicate how likely they would be to participate in guided tours or organized activities during a potential summer visit to Ruka (Q8). As shown in Figure 4, a substantial proportion of respondents expressed openness toward such activities. Approximately one third of respondents (34.8%) indicated that they would be likely to participate, while a further 14.6% reported that they would be very likely to do so. At the same time, a similar proportion of respondents selected a neutral response (33.5%), suggesting uncertainty or preferences that may depend on the type, content, or context of the activity offered.

Smaller proportions of respondents reported low willingness to participate, with 12.7% indicating that they would be unlikely and 4.4% very unlikely to join guided or organized activities. Overall, the distribution of responses suggests a generally positive but cautious attitude toward organized summer activities, with the relatively large neutral group indicating that participation may depend on factors such as activity design, pricing, or perceived value.

## 4.3 Awareness and Appeal of the Coolcation Concept

### 4.3.1 Awareness of the Coolcation Concept

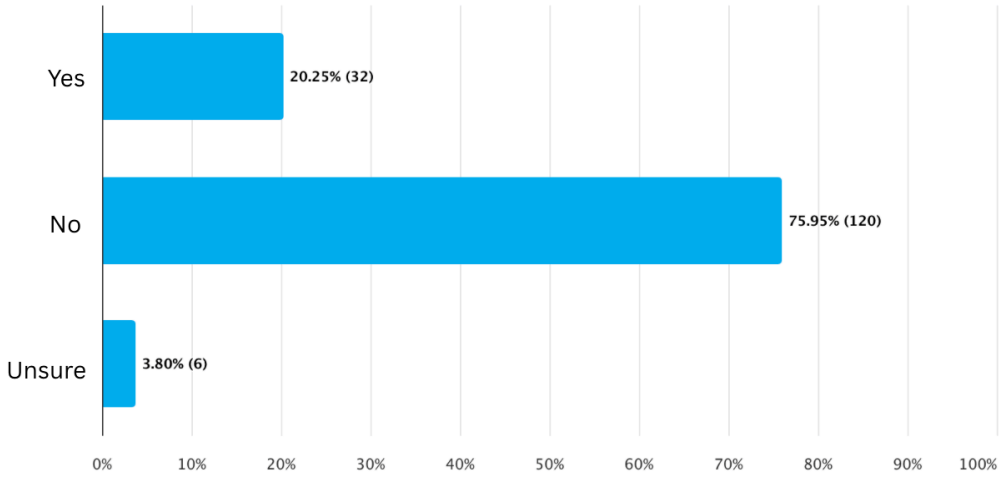



Figure 5. Awareness of the coolcation concept among respondents (n = 158)

Respondents were asked whether they had previously heard of the term "coolcation," (Q9) which refers to a vacation in a cooler climate chosen as a refreshing alternative to hotter destinations. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of respondents (76.0%) reported that they had not heard of the term prior to participating in the survey. A smaller proportion of respondents (20.3%) indicated that they were familiar with the term, while 3.8% reported being unsure. Overall, the results indicate that awareness of the coolcation concept among the surveyed respondents was limited.

### 4.3.2 Willingness to Travel to a Cooler Destination

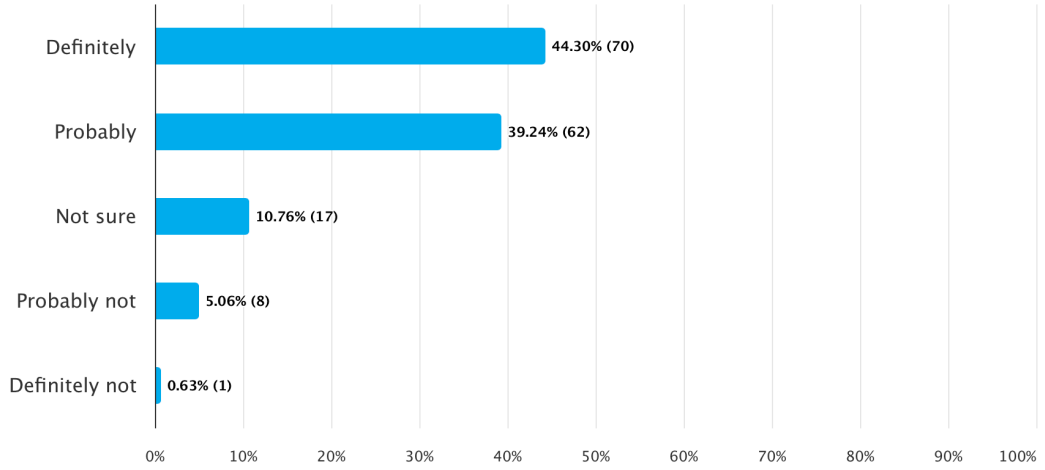



Figure 6. Willingness to travel to a cooler destination during the summer (n=158)

Respondents were asked whether they would consider taking a summer vacation specifically to a cooler destination, such as Ruka (Q10). As shown in Figure 6, a clear majority of

respondents expressed a willingness to travel to a cooler destination during the summer. Nearly half of the respondents (44.3%) indicated that they would definitely consider such a trip, while a further 39.2% reported that they would probably do so. Smaller proportions of respondents reported uncertainty (10.8%), stated that they would probably not consider such a trip (5.1%), or indicated that they would definitely not consider it (0.6%). Overall, 83.5% of respondents reported at least some level of willingness to travel to a cooler destination during the summer.

Table 4. Willingness to consider a summer vacation to a cooler destination (e.g. Ruka) by age group. (n=158)

| Age group | Definitely | Probably | Not sure | Probably not | Definitely not |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18–24 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 25–34 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 35–44 | 16 | 19 | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| 45–54 | 23 | 20 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 55–64 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 65–69 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 70–74 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 75–80 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Table 4 presents respondents' willingness to consider a summer vacation to a cooler destination, such as Ruka, across different age groups. Across all age categories, responses were predominantly positive, with the majority of respondents selecting either definitely or probably. Among respondents aged 18–24 (n = 8), attitudes toward cooler destinations were strongly positive. A total of 62.5% selected definitely, while 25% selected probably. Only one respondent (12.5%) indicated probably not, and no respondents selected not sure or definitely not. In the 25–34 age group (n = 21), willingness remained high, with 52% selecting definitely and 33% selecting probably. A smaller proportion reported uncertainty (10%), while only 5% selected probably not. No respondents in this group selected definitely not. Among respondents aged 35–44 (n = 44), positive responses continued to dominate, though variation increased. A total of 36% selected definitely and 43% selected probably. At

the same time, 11% reported being not sure and 9% selected probably not. No respondents in this age group selected definitely not. The 45–54 age group (n = 50) showed one of the strongest levels of support for cooler summer destinations. Nearly half of respondents (46%) selected definitely, while 40% selected probably. Smaller proportions reported uncertainty (8%) or reluctance, with 4% selecting probably not and 2% selecting definitely not. Among respondents aged 55–64 (n = 28), attitudes remained largely positive. Equal proportions selected definitely and probably (43% each), while 14% indicated not sure. No respondents in this age group selected probably not or definitely not. For respondents aged 65–69 (n = 3), responses were mixed, with 67% selecting probably and 33% indicating not sure. No respondents in this group selected 'definitely' or either negative response. In the 70–74 age group (n = 2), responses were evenly split between definitely (50%) and not sure (50%). Among respondents aged 75–80 (n = 2), all responses were positive, with 100% selecting definitely. No negative responses were recorded in any of the oldest age groups. Due to the small number of respondents in the oldest age categories, results for these groups should be interpreted with caution.

Table 5. Preferred summer climate and willingness to consider a cooler destination. (n=158)

| Preferred summer climate | Definitely | Probably | Not sure | Probably not | Definitely not |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cool (10–15°C) | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mild (16–20°C) | 17 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Warm (21–25°C) | 36 | 34 | 11 | 2 | 1 |
| Hot (26–30°C) | 8 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| Very hot (31–35°C) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No preference | 6 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Table 5 presents respondents' preferred summer climate in relation to their willingness to consider a vacation in a cooler destination during the summer. Across all climate preference groups, a generally high willingness to consider a cooler destination was observed, with the majority of respondents indicating either "definitely" or "probably." Among respondents who preferred cool summer temperatures of 10–15°C (n = 7), all expressed a positive inclination toward cooler destinations, with 43% indicating "definitely" and 57% indicating "probably."

No respondents in this group reported uncertainty or reluctance. Respondents preferring mild summer temperatures of 16–20°C (n = 30) also showed strong interest in cooler destinations. A majority reported they would "definitely" consider such a destination (57%), while 37% selected "probably." Only a small proportion expressed uncertainty (7%), and none indicated negative responses. Among respondents who preferred warm summer temperatures of 21–25°C (n = 84), willingness to consider a cooler destination remained high but more varied. While 43% indicated they would "definitely" consider a cooler destination and 40% selected "probably," a notable share reported being unsure (13%). Negative responses were uncommon, with 2% selecting "probably not" and 1% selecting "definitely not." Respondents who preferred hot summer temperatures of 26–30°C (n = 23) showed more mixed responses. While 35% reported they would "definitely" consider a cooler destination and 26% selected "probably," an equal proportion (26%) indicated they would "probably not" do so. A further 13% reported being unsure. The single respondent who preferred very hot temperatures of 31–35°C selected "probably," indicating some openness toward a cooler destination. Among respondents reporting no specific climate preference (n = 13), responses were evenly distributed between "definitely" (46%) and "probably" (46%), while 8% indicated uncertainty. No respondents in this group expressed negative willingness.

### 4.3.3 Motivations for Choosing a Cool Summer Destination

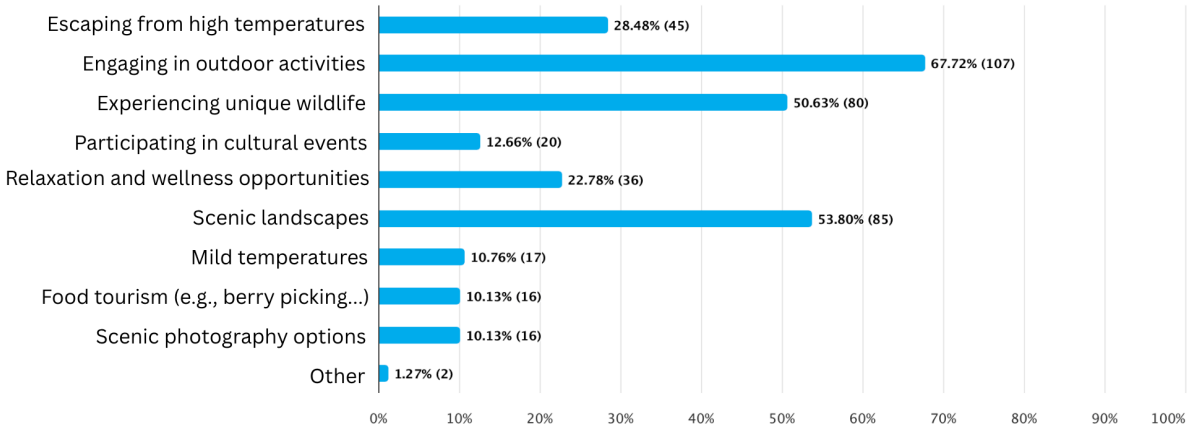



Figure 7. Motivations for choosing a cooler summer destination (n=158)

Respondents were asked to indicate which factors would inspire them to choose a cooler destination such as Ruka for a summer vacation (Q11). As shown in Figure 7, the most frequently reported motivations were engaging in outdoor activities (67.7%) and experiencing scenic landscapes (53.8%). Experiencing unique wildlife was also a common

motivation (50.6%), followed by escaping from high temperatures (28.5%). Around one fifth of respondents indicated relaxation and wellness opportunities (22.8%) as a motivating factor. Smaller proportions selected participating in cultural events (12.7%), mild temperatures (10.8%), food tourism such as berry picking (10.1%), and scenic photography opportunities (10.1%). Only a very small share of respondents selected other motivations (1.3%). Overall, the results indicate that motivations related to nature, scenery, and outdoor activities were most prominent when respondents considered travelling to a cooler summer destination.

### 4.3.4 Appeal of Ruka as a Cool Summer Destination

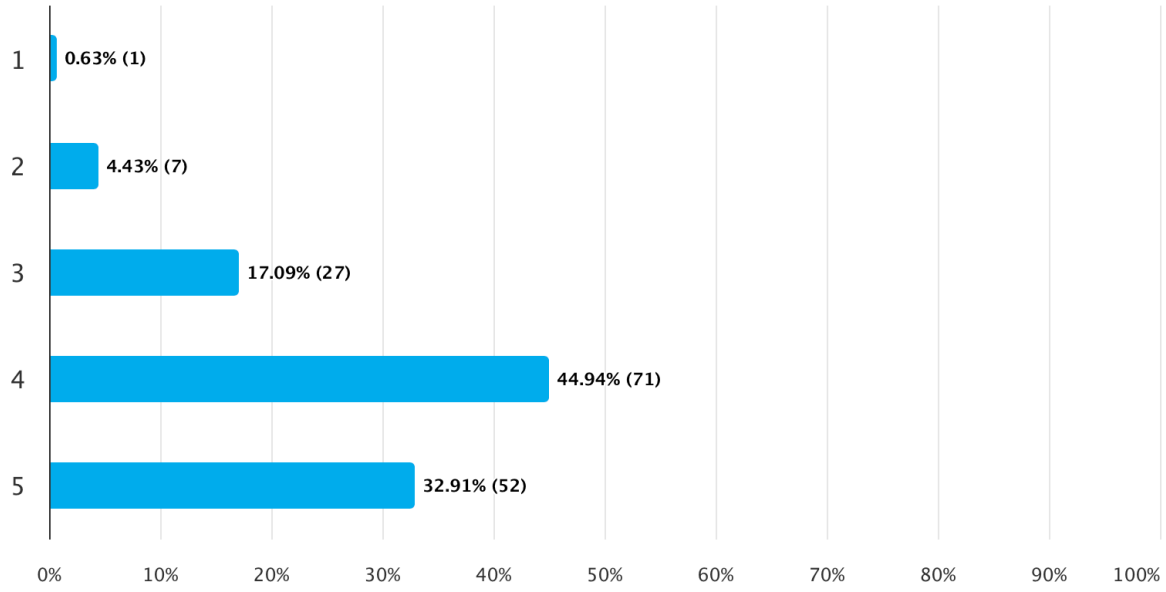



Figure 8. Perceived appeal of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination (n = 158)

Note. Appeal was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from not at all appealing (1) to very appealing (5). Mean score=4.05 & SD=0.86

Respondents were asked to evaluate how appealing they found the idea of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination (Q12). As shown in Figure 8, the majority of respondents perceived Ruka as an appealing or very appealing summer destination. Nearly half of the respondents (44.9%) rated the idea as appealing, while 32.9% selected very appealing. A smaller proportion of respondents expressed a neutral view (17.1%), and only a limited share rated the destination as slightly appealing (4.4%) or not appealing at all (0.6%). Overall, the mean appeal score was 4.05 (SD = 0.86) on a five point Likert scale indicating a generally

positive evaluation of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination among the surveyed respondents.

## 4.4 Awareness of and Alignment with Ruka's Current Summer Offering

### 4.4.1 Awareness of Ruka's Current Summer Offerings

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of Ruka's current summer offerings (Q14). As shown in Figure 9, awareness was generally limited: 33.5% of respondents (n = 53) reported no awareness at all, while the largest group, 57.0% (n = 90), reported having some awareness but not in detail. Only 9.5% (n = 15) reported being well aware of the current offerings. Combined, over 90% of respondents had at most partial awareness of what Ruka currently offers during the summer season.

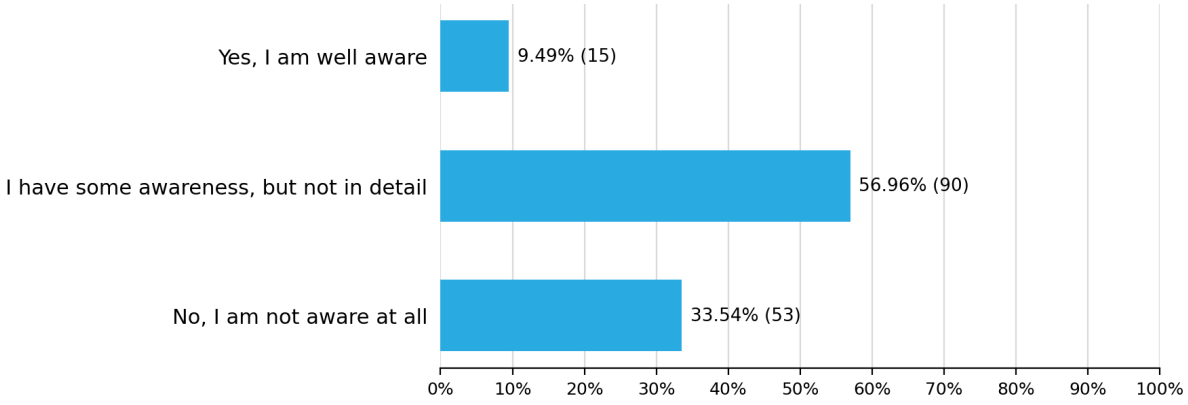



Figure 9. Awareness of Ruka's current summer offerings among respondents (n = 158)

### 4.4.2 Perceived Alignment with Travel Expectations

Respondents were also asked to rate how well they felt Ruka's current summer offerings aligned with their own travel expectations (Q15), using a five-point scale ranging from not at all (1) to very well (5). As shown in Figure 10, the most common response was neutral (46.2%, n = 73), followed by well (32.9%, n = 52). Smaller proportions rated the alignment as very well (11.4%, n = 18), somewhat (7.0%, n = 11), or not at all (2.5%, n = 4). The mean alignment score was 3.44 (SD = 0.88), indicating that, on average, respondents' assessment of

the current offering sat between neutral and well aligned, rather than strongly positive. This contrasts with the appeal rating reported in Figure 8 (M = 4.05), where respondents evaluated Ruka's overall concept as a refreshing summer destination considerably more favourably than they evaluated its concrete current offering.

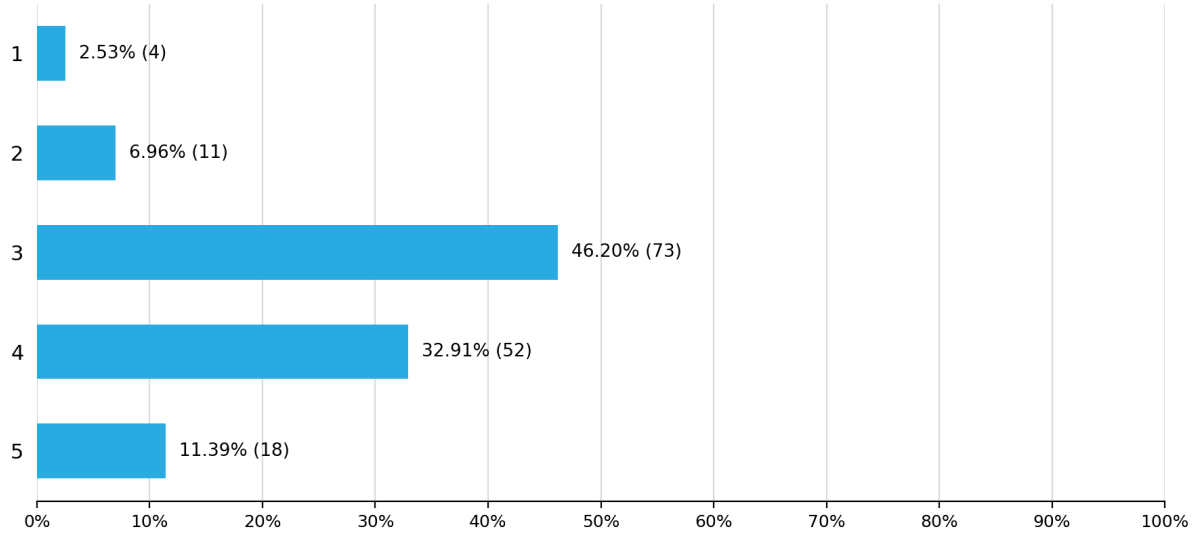



Figure 10. Perceived alignment between Ruka's current summer offerings and respondents' travel expectations (n = 158)

Table 6 presents alignment scores cross-tabulated with awareness levels. A clear pattern emerges: respondents who reported no awareness of Ruka's summer offerings had the lowest mean alignment score (M = 3.08, n = 53), followed by those with some awareness (M = 3.51, n = 90), while respondents who reported being well aware of the offerings had the highest mean alignment score (M = 4.27, n = 15). This gradient suggests that the moderate overall alignment score reflects, at least in part, an information gap rather than a fundamental mismatch between Ruka's summer attributes and respondents' preferences.

Table 6. Perceived alignment with travel expectations by awareness of Ruka's current summer offerings (n = 158)

| Awareness level | 1 (Not at all) | 2 (Somewhat) | 3 (Neutral) | 4 (Well) | 5 (Very well) | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not aware at all (n=53) | 1 | 6 | 35 | 10 | 1 | 3.08 |
| Some awareness (n=90) | 3 | 5 | 37 | 33 | 12 | 3.51 |
| Well aware (n=15) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 4.27 |

*Note. Due to small subgroup sizes in some cells, results should be interpreted as indicative rather than statistically confirmed.*

## 4.5 Factors Influencing the Decision to Visit Ruka in Summer

Respondents were asked to identify which factors would most influence their decision to visit Ruka during the summer, selecting all that applied (Q17). As shown in Figure 11, the appeal of unique summer activities was the most frequently selected factor (74.1%, n = 117), followed by the cost of travel and stay (65.2%, n = 103). Awareness of activities and events offered (53.2%, n = 84) and ease of transportation to and from Ruka (51.3%, n = 81) were also selected by a majority of respondents. Variety and availability of accommodation options was selected by 39.9% (n = 63). Smaller proportions selected time availability or scheduling flexibility (15.2%, n = 24) and the availability of alternative destinations with similar offerings (10.1%, n = 16). A small number of respondents (1.3%, n = 2) selected other factors.

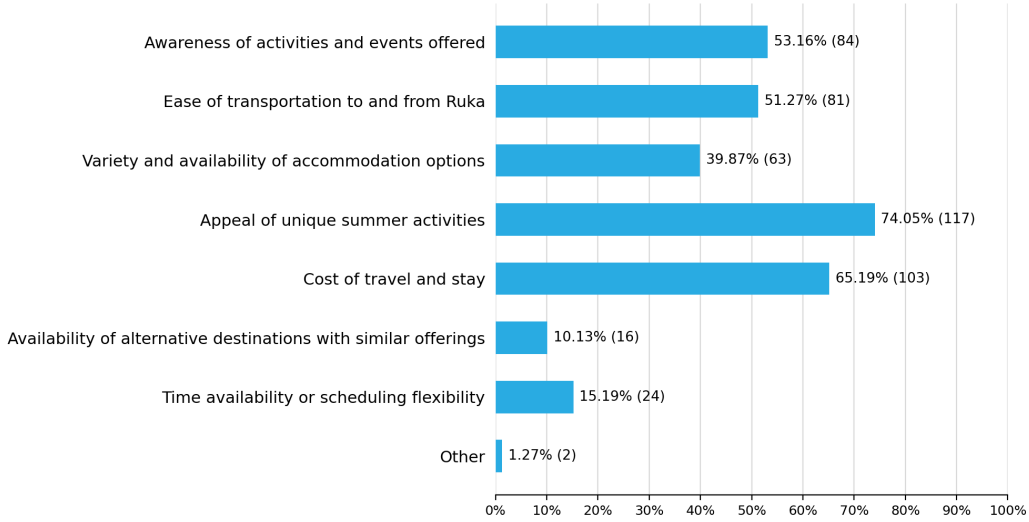



Figure 11. Factors influencing the decision to visit Ruka during the summer (n = 158)

Overall, the appeal of specific summer activities and cost considerations were the two most influential factors, followed closely by awareness of what is on offer and the practicalities of transport. Notably, over half of respondents identified awareness of activities and events as an influential factor, reinforcing the pattern identified in section 4.4.2, where greater familiarity with Ruka's offerings was associated with more favourable alignment ratings. Together, these findings suggest that increasing the visibility of Ruka's summer offering may be as consequential for encouraging visitation as expanding the offering itself.

## 4.6 Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Perspectives on Ruka's Summer Appeal and Development

To complement the quantitative results, three open-ended questions invited respondents to share their thoughts on Ruka’s appeal and potential development as a summer destination. These questions were:

> *Q13: What would you find most appealing about a refreshing, cool summer destination like Ruka? (N=100)*

> *Q16: What additional activities, events, or services would inspire you to visit Ruka during the summer? (N=52)*

*Q18: Do you have any additional suggestions for how Ruka could become a more attractive summer destination? (N=46)*

Responses that were blank or irrelevant (e.g., “NA,” “none,” or similar) were excluded prior to analysis. The remaining responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and ideas.

The analysis of the three open-ended questions produced the following seven overarching themes that describe the recurring patterns in the data. These themes were broad enough to encompass the full range of responses yet distinct enough to represent separate areas of meaning. Because the three questions addressed different aspects of the survey, not every theme recurred across all three; their relative presence is reported separately for each question below.

1. Climate Refuge & Seasonal Appeal
2. Nature, Scenery & Wildlife
3. Outdoor Activities & Adventure
4. Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment
5. Culture, Food, Wellness & Events
6. Accessibility, Value & Relaxation
7. Information, Communication & Marketing

### 4.6.1 Perceived appeal of a cool summer destination

When respondents were asked what they would find most appealing about a refreshing, cool summer destination such as Ruka (Q13), 100 substantive responses were analysed. The most prominent theme was Nature, Scenery & Wildlife, which appeared in 53 responses. Respondents frequently referred to Ruka's natural landscapes, scenery, wildlife, clean environment, and opportunities to spend time in nature. Comments included "great nature and beautiful scenery" and "Walking in nice nature watching birds and wildlife."

Outdoor Activities & Adventure was the second most common theme, appearing in 35 responses. Hiking, cycling, swimming, wildlife-related activities, and other forms of outdoor recreation were frequently mentioned. In several responses, outdoor activities were directly connected with cooler climatic conditions. For example, one respondent described the appeal

as "being outdoors but not too hot temperatures," while another highlighted the opportunity "to do outdoor activities without too much heat." This overlap between climate and outdoor activity was common across the responses.

Climate Refuge & Seasonal Appeal appeared in 31 responses. These responses referred to escaping excessive summer heat, experiencing milder temperatures, or seeing Finland and Ruka during a different season. For some respondents, the cooler climate was attractive specifically because it made outdoor activity more comfortable. Others were interested in experiencing Ruka without snow or in seeing the destination during summer rather than winter. One respondent explained that "the summers in Australia are so hot and humid, that the thought of a cooler summer holidays is extremely appealing," while another referred to experiencing "the beauty of the country in a different season." However, this preference was not universal, as one respondent from Ireland indicated that they would still be more likely to choose a warmer sun holiday.

Culture, Food, Wellness & Events appeared in 14 responses and included references to Finnish culture, local food, sauna experiences, and the welcoming atmosphere of the destination. Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment appeared in 10 responses, generally in connection with peacefulness, space, and the absence of mass tourism. One respondent described the appeal as "Wild untouched natural landscapes and few people around," while another referred to "The peace and quiet - no crowds…& the beautiful natural surroundings."

Accessibility, Value & Relaxation appeared less frequently in this question, with six responses referring to issues such as affordability, accessibility, accommodation, or opportunities to relax. Information, Communication & Marketing appeared in only three responses. These responses mainly reflected limited knowledge of Ruka as a summer destination, including one respondent who stated, "Ive never thought about it as a summer holiday destination however if it offered the right outdoor events it would be something id consider." Overall, the responses to Q13 were dominated by Ruka's natural environment, outdoor activities, and the possibility of enjoying these experiences in comparatively mild summer conditions.

### 4.6.2 Activities and services that could encourage a summer visit

The second open-ended question (Q16) asked what additional activities, events, or services would inspire respondents to visit Ruka during the summer. A total of 52 substantive responses were analysed. In contrast to Q13, the responses focused less on the general qualities of the destination and more on concrete activities and services.

Outdoor Activities & Adventure was clearly the most prominent theme, appearing in 28 responses. Respondents proposed a wide range of activities, including mountain biking, hiking, trail running, kayaking, wild swimming, wakeboarding, water-based activities, guided nature activities, and activities suitable for families and different ability levels. One respondent specifically requested "Mountain biking trails suitable for all ages and abilities," while another wanted "Nature trails, hiking with a small group. Just a lot of guided activities in nature." Several responses also emphasised activities that were accessible rather than highly demanding or extreme, particularly for families.

Culture, Food, Wellness & Events appeared in 13 responses. Suggestions included spas and wellness services, music and cultural events, family-friendly festivals, concerts, photography experiences, and other events that could complement outdoor recreation. Examples included "Festival / music/ children's entertainment" and a suggestion for a "Luxury spa experience" alongside novelty or cultural tours.

Accessibility, Value & Relaxation appeared in 11 responses. Here, respondents raised practical issues such as direct flights, public transport, affordable accommodation, package deals, and the overall cost of visiting. One respondent highlighted the need for "Good public transport to the places of interest," while another suggested "Direct flights from the UK."

Information, Communication & Marketing appeared in five responses. Some respondents indicated that they did not know enough about Ruka's existing summer offering to suggest additions, with one stating simply, "I know nothing about Ruka." Others called for more advertising or clearer information about available activities and services. Only one response reflected a clear preference for Ruka as a winter rather than summer destination, with the respondent stating that they would rather have visited during the ski season. Notably, two themes that were prominent in Q13 — Nature, Scenery & Wildlife and Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment — did not appear at all in responses to this question.

Overall, Q16 shifted the emphasis from the scenery and atmosphere that made Ruka appealing in Q13 toward the concrete activities, services, and practical conditions that might encourage respondents to make an actual summer visit.

### 4.6.3 Suggestions for developing Ruka as a summer destination

The final open-ended question (Q18) asked respondents for additional suggestions on how Ruka could become a more attractive summer destination. A total of 46 substantive responses were analysed. The emphasis shifted again, with practical accessibility and cost becoming considerably more prominent than in the previous two questions.

Accessibility, Value & Relaxation was the dominant theme, appearing in 21 responses. Direct and affordable flights, local public transport, car rental costs, accommodation prices, package holidays, and special offers were repeatedly mentioned. Several respondents specifically requested direct summer flights between the United Kingdom and Kuusamo. One respondent stated that "The most important thing is the transportation to and from with not too high cost," while another suggested that direct flights or package holidays would make a summer visit considerably more attractive.

Culture, Food, Wellness & Events appeared in 12 responses. Suggestions included festivals, spa and wellness services, summer events, outdoor restaurant and café spaces, and seasonal adaptations of experiences usually associated with winter. Some respondents also proposed maintaining elements of Ruka's established winter identity during the summer, such as Santa-related experiences or summer snowboarding events.

Information, Communication & Marketing appeared in 10 responses and was more prominent here than in either of the previous questions. Respondents asked for clearer information about Ruka, its transport options, hiking opportunities, services for solo travellers, and available activities. One respondent stated, "I don't know anything about Ruka, so to consider it as a holiday destination I'd want to know a lot more about it." Another suggested greater international promotion and cooperation with influencers to improve recognition of Ruka as a destination.

Outdoor Activities & Adventure appeared in four responses and included suggestions such as hiking camps, water sports, and family-oriented outdoor activities. Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment appeared in three responses. These respondents emphasised the importance

of preserving Ruka's natural and relatively uncrowded character while developing tourism. One respondent advised Ruka to "Keep the masses away and promote the natural beauty and outdoor activities on offer," while another stressed that increasing tourism should not result in the resort becoming overly developed or crowded.

Nature, Scenery & Wildlife appeared in two responses, including suggestions related to conservation and ethical wildlife observation. Climate Refuge & Seasonal Appeal appeared in one response, where the respondent indicated that the survey had prompted them to consider Ruka as a summer destination for the first time. A small number of respondents also stated that they were already satisfied with Ruka and did not consider major changes necessary.

Taken together, the three open-ended questions reveal a clear change in emphasis depending on the focus of the question. When respondents described what made a cool destination appealing, they focused primarily on nature, scenery, outdoor activities, and climate. When asked what would inspire a visit, they focused more strongly on concrete activities and services. When asked what Ruka should develop, practical issues such as transport, affordability, and information became increasingly prominent. This shift in emphasis across the three questions is examined further in Chapter 5.

# 5. Discussion

## 5.1 Overview of the Discussion

This chapter discusses the empirical findings presented in Chapter 4 and interprets them in relation to the theoretical framework and previous research. The study examined how the coolcation trend relates to tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort as a summer destination. The main research question guiding the study was: In what ways does the coolcation trend relate to tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort as a summer destination? Two sub-questions further specified this focus: (1) What motivates tourists to consider cooler destinations for summer travel? and (2) How do tourists perceive Ruka's current summer offerings in relation to their preferences and expectations?

The results presented in Chapter 4 identified several patterns related to climate preferences, motivations for considering cooler destinations, awareness of the coolcation concept, and perceptions of Ruka's summer attributes. This chapter interprets these findings in relation to existing tourism research and the push-pull motivation framework introduced in Chapter 2. The discussion first examines tourists' climate preferences and what they reveal about the nature of the coolcation appeal (5.2), before turning to the push and pull factors underlying interest in cooler destinations (5.3) and the process by which that interest translates, or fails to translate, into an actual decision to visit (5.4). The discussion then addresses how respondents perceive Ruka's current summer offering specifically (5.5), before drawing out the practical implications of these findings for Ruka's summer seasonality (5.6), the study's theoretical contributions (5.7), and its limitations (5.8). Together, these sections build toward an explicit answer to the study's research question and sub-questions, presented in section 5.6.

## 5.2 Climate Preferences and the Nature of the Coolcation Appeal

An important starting point for interpreting the coolcation phenomenon in this study is understanding what "comfortable" means to respondents. As reported in section 4.2.3, the clearly dominant preference was for warm summer temperatures of 21–25°C (53.2%, Figure

3), with much less interest in either hotter (14.6% for 26–30°C) or cooler (4.4% for 10–15°C) conditions. This finding is consistent with previous research on tourism climate preferences: it closely matches Lise and Tol's (2001) finding that tourists generally favour destinations with average peak summer temperatures around 21°C, and it broadly agrees with the comfort range Steiger et al. (2016) found among mountain summer tourists in Southern Germany.

This preference sits above Ruka's average summer climate, which section 1.3.3 reports as approximately 13–17°C in July and 12–15°C in August. This figure, however, is a full-day average that includes cooler nights and mornings. The survey introduction given to respondents themselves noted that daytime highs "often exceed 20°C," while nights and early mornings can drop below 10°C (Appendix 1), and section 1.3.3 similarly notes that daily maximums can occasionally exceed 25°C. This suggests that, on warmer summer days, Ruka's daytime temperatures can fall within, or close to, respondents' preferred range of 21–25°C, even though the average statistic alone makes the destination look considerably cooler than this.

Despite this, willingness to consider a cooler destination such as Ruka was high across the sample. As reported in section 4.3.2, 83.5% of respondents said they would definitely or probably consider a summer vacation to a cooler destination (Figure 6). This willingness was not limited to respondents who already preferred cooler conditions. Among those who preferred warm temperatures of 21–25°C, 83% expressed the same willingness (Table 5). Even among the 23 respondents who preferred hot conditions of 26–30°C, a majority (61%) remained open to a cooler alternative, although this group also showed the highest rate of outright reluctance of any climate-preference group (26% selecting "probably not," compared to 5% or less in every other group). This detail is worth noting, since it suggests that willingness to consider a cooler destination is not simply enthusiasm shared by everyone, but a real trade-off that some heat-preferring travellers are less willing to make.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the appeal of a cooler destination like Ruka is not primarily about wanting cold conditions. Most respondents still prefer warm summer weather, and Ruka's own daytime temperatures can, at times, meet that preference directly, while its cooler average likely reflects nights and mornings rather than the hours when most outdoor activity actually takes place. At the same time, the large majority of respondents remain willing to consider the destination even accounting for its cooler reputation. This is

easier to understand in the context outlined in Chapter 1: summer heat in much of Europe has become increasingly extreme, with heat-related mortality rising across the region (Copernicus Climate Change Service, 2024). Read this way, willingness to accept a cooler climate appears less like a rejection of warm summer conditions and more like a willingness to accept a trade-off when familiar warm-to-hot conditions become less appealing. This is in line with Grillakis et al.'s (2016) argument that rising temperatures are gradually increasing the appeal of northern destinations, and with Rutty and Scott's (2010) observation that the point at which a destination becomes "too hot" for comfort is not fixed. What these data add is a clearer picture of the trade-off itself: respondents are not abandoning their preference for warmth, but many are nevertheless willing to consider cooler conditions, and Ruka's climate may in practice be a closer match to that preference than its average temperature suggests. What might make that trade-off worthwhile, beyond escaping the heat, is examined in the next section.

The preference for warm conditions over both hot and cool extremes was also broadly stable across demographic subgroups. Some variation was present: for example, respondents aged 35–44 showed a greater tolerance for 26–30°C (Table 2), and Southern European respondents showed a stronger concentration around 21–25°C than other regions (Table 3). Even so, 21–25°C remained the most common preference in nearly every age and regional subgroup examined. This suggests that the main finding of this section, a stated preference for warm rather than cool conditions that still coexists with high willingness to consider genuinely cooler destinations, applies to the sample as a whole rather than to just one subgroup.

## 5.3 Push and Pull Factors Behind Interest in Cooler Destinations

Section 2.1 introduced Push and Pull Motivation Theory as the main framework for this study, distinguishing between push factors, the conditions that make someone want to leave a destination, and pull factors, the qualities of a destination that draw someone toward it. The results reported in section 4.3.3 make it possible to examine how strongly each type of factor is actually reflected in respondents' stated motivations for choosing a cooler summer destination.

The data show a clear imbalance between the two. Pull factors dominate the results reported in Figure 7. Engaging in outdoor activities was the most commonly selected motivation (67.7%), followed by scenic landscapes (53.8%) and experiencing unique wildlife (50.6%). Escaping from high temperatures, the most direct push factor offered in the survey, was selected by only 28.5% of respondents, less than half the rate of the leading pull factor. Mild temperatures were selected even less often (10.8%), though this item is arguably closer to a pull factor than a push factor, since it describes something respondents would be moving toward rather than away from.

This pattern is also visible in the qualitative results. As reported in section 4.6.1, the theme most closely tied to a push factor, Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment, appeared in only 10 of 100 responses to the open-ended question on Ruka's appeal, well behind Nature, Scenery & Wildlife (53) and Outdoor Activities & Adventure (35). It is worth noting that avoiding crowds was not offered as a fixed option anywhere in the survey; it only appears because respondents raised it unprompted in an open-ended answer. This makes its comparatively modest presence still a meaningful, if secondary, signal, since it does not depend on the survey having suggested it as a factor.

Taken together, these results suggest that although both push and pull factors are present in respondents' motivations, consistent with Crompton's (1979) argument that the two often work together, pull factors are doing considerably more of the work in this sample. Respondents appear to be drawn toward Ruka primarily by what it offers, rather than driven away from their usual destinations by discomfort. This nuances the emphasis in some of the literature reviewed in sections 1.3.1 and 2.1, where climate-related push factors such as heat and overcrowding are treated as central drivers of the coolcation trend (Khatib, 2023). The present findings do not contradict this, since a meaningful minority of respondents did cite escaping heat as a motivation, but they suggest that push factors alone are unlikely to explain the scale of interest observed in this study.

This split also maps reasonably well onto the seeking–escaping framework proposed by Iso-Ahola (1982) and applied empirically by Snepenger et al. (2006), which was introduced as an alternative perspective in section 2.1. In Iso-Ahola's terms, escaping high temperatures and avoiding crowds represent the escaping side of travel motivation, while the pursuit of outdoor activities, wildlife, and scenery represents the seeking side. Read this way, the imbalance

found here suggests that respondents' interest in a cooler destination is motivated more by what they hope to gain from the experience than by what they are trying to get away from. This is broadly consistent with the reasoning behind selecting Push and Pull Motivation Theory as the primary framework for this study, since it allows both dimensions to be examined together, but it also shows that the two frameworks point toward a similar conclusion despite their different terminology.

A further point suggests that this interest does not depend on prior familiarity with the term itself. As reported in section 4.3.1, only 20.3% of respondents had heard of the term "coolcation" before taking part in the survey (Figure 5), while willingness to consider a cooler destination was high across the sample. Most respondents were therefore open to the idea despite the generally low awareness of the term. This suggests that interest in cooler summer destinations may exist independently of familiarity with the "coolcation" label itself.

Having established that respondents are motivated mainly by what a cooler destination offers rather than by what they are escaping, the next section examines how this interest is expressed differently depending on what, specifically, is being asked of respondents, and what this reveals about the path between finding a destination appealing and actually deciding to visit it.

## 5.4 From Appeal to Action: A Motivational Funnel

Comparing the three open-ended questions in section 4.6 reveals a pattern that is not visible from any one of them alone. Q13 asked what respondents find appealing about a cool summer destination in general, Q16 asked what concrete activities or services would inspire an actual visit to Ruka, and Q18 asked what Ruka specifically needs to develop. Although the same seven themes were used to code all three questions, their relative importance shifts considerably depending on which question is being answered.

In response to Q13, Nature, Scenery & Wildlife was the most common theme by a clear margin, present in 53 of 100 responses (section 4.6.1), ahead of Outdoor Activities & Adventure (35) and Climate Refuge & Seasonal Appeal (31). In response to Q16, this changes: Outdoor Activities & Adventure becomes the dominant theme, present in 28 of 52

responses (section 4.6.2), while Nature, Scenery & Wildlife does not appear at all. Freedom from Crowds & Overdevelopment, the other theme in Q13 describing an atmosphere rather than an activity, also disappears in Q16. In response to Q18, the picture shifts again: Accessibility, Value & Relaxation becomes the leading theme, present in 21 of 46 responses (section 4.6.3), while Outdoor Activities & Adventure falls to just 4 responses.

These three questions describe a sequence rather than three unrelated sets of results. Scenery and atmosphere draw attention to a destination like Ruka, but they are not what respondents mention when asked what would actually encourage them to visit; at that point, they mention things to do. When the question turns to what Ruka should develop, practical issues such as cost and ease of travel become more prominent. What makes a destination attractive to think about, what would make a visit worthwhile, and what may make that visit easier to realise are therefore not necessarily the same things.

Push and Pull Motivation Theory, as applied in section 2.1, does not fully account for this distinction. The theory treats pull factors as destination qualities that draw travellers in, but it does not separate the factors that create initial interest from those that determine whether that interest develops into a stronger intention to visit. The pattern found here indicates that this separation matters: a destination's pull factors, in the sense of what makes it appealing to imagine, are not necessarily the same factors that help translate that appeal into a potential visit. This is taken up again as a theoretical contribution of this study in section 5.7.

This finding also shapes how Ruka's summer offering should be understood in this thesis. Ruka's natural surroundings are a genuine and strong source of appeal, consistent with its established reputation for nature-based tourism (section 1.3.3). This appeal alone, however, does not appear to be what moves a potential visitor toward an actual trip. Practical considerations, mainly cost and transport, become increasingly prominent once the question moves from general interest toward visiting Ruka. This has a direct bearing on how Ruka's current summer offering is perceived, examined next, and on what kinds of development may matter most in practice, addressed later in this chapter.

## 5.5 Perceptions of Ruka's Current Summer Offering

The previous two sections examined why tourists find cooler destinations appealing in general. This section turns to the second sub-question of this study: how respondents perceive Ruka specifically, once the discussion moves from the idea of a cool summer destination to the actual, existing offering.

Awareness of Ruka's summer offering is limited. As reported in section 4.4.1, only 9.5% of respondents said they were well aware of it, while 57.0% had only partial awareness and 33.5% had none at all (Figure 9). Most respondents, then, were being asked to evaluate something they knew relatively little about.

This is reflected in how the offering was rated. Section 4.4.2 reports a mean alignment score of 3.44 (SD = 0.88) between Ruka's current summer offering and respondents' own expectations, with the largest single group (46.2%) giving a neutral rating (Figure 10). This is noticeably lower than the mean appeal score of 4.05 found when respondents were asked, more generally, how appealing they found the idea of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination (section 4.3.4, Figure 8). Respondents therefore rated the general concept of Ruka as a cool summer destination more positively than the alignment of its current offering with their expectations. Table 6 shows that alignment ratings rise steadily with awareness, from a mean of 3.08 among respondents with no awareness of the offering to 4.27 among those who described themselves as well aware. This study cannot establish the direction of this relationship with certainty, since it is also possible that respondents who already felt Ruka suited them sought out more information as a result, rather than awareness itself improving how the offering was perceived. Even so, the pattern is consistent with the possibility that limited awareness contributes to the more moderate evaluation of the current offering.

This gives empirical weight to the theoretical point introduced in section 2.2, that a destination's pull factors can only influence a traveller's decision if that traveller is aware of them. Ruka's natural surroundings and outdoor opportunities were established in sections 5.2 to 5.4 as things this sample finds genuinely appealing, yet a large share of respondents were not in a position to judge how well Ruka delivers on that appeal, simply because they did not know enough about what it currently offers.

The same pattern runs through the study's three open-ended questions. The theme Information, Communication & Marketing was mentioned rarely when respondents described what is generally appealing about a cool destination (3 of 100 responses to Q13, section 4.6.1), somewhat more often when asked what would inspire a visit to Ruka specifically (5 of 52 responses to Q16, section 4.6.2), and considerably more often when asked what Ruka should develop to become more attractive (10 of 46 responses to Q18, the second most common theme after Accessibility, Value & Relaxation, section 4.6.3). The closer the question comes to an actual decision to visit, the more often respondents raise the lack of information about Ruka in their own words, echoing the pattern from section 5.4, where practical barriers such as cost and transport also became more prominent the closer a question came to asking about an actual visit. Awareness works as a second, related barrier alongside those practical ones, and section 4.5 reflects this directly: over half of respondents (53.2%) named awareness of activities and events as a factor influencing their decision to visit, a rate close to that of cost (65.2%) and transport (51.3%).

Ruka's summer offering, then, is not being judged unfavourably so much as it is being judged from a position of limited information. What this means in practice for Ruka, and how it compares in importance to the practical barriers identified earlier in this chapter, is addressed in the section that follows.

## 5.6 Implications for Addressing Ruka's Summer Seasonality

This study set out to answer one main research question: in what ways does the coolcation trend relate to tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort as a summer destination? Bringing together the findings discussed in the previous four sections, the coolcation trend relates to Ruka in three distinct ways. First, the appeal of a cooler summer destination among this sample is not primarily a preference for cold, but a willingness to accept a cooler climate in exchange for comfort and outdoor experiences, at a time when conditions in more traditional summer destinations are becoming harder to tolerate (section 5.2). Second, this appeal is driven considerably more by what a destination offers, its scenery, wildlife, and activities, than by a direct wish to escape heat or crowds, even though both are present as secondary motivations (section 5.3). Third, this general interest does not

translate evenly into perceptions of Ruka specifically: what draws attention to a destination like Ruka, what would make a visit worthwhile, and what may prevent that visit from happening appear to be three separate things, and Ruka's own summer offering is currently being evaluated by a sample that mostly does not know much about it (sections 5.4 and 5.5).

This also allows the two sub-questions guiding this study to be answered directly. In response to the first, what motivates tourists to consider cooler destinations for summer travel, the findings suggest this is driven mainly by the prospect of comfortable outdoor activity, scenic surroundings, and a less crowded environment, with escaping heat present as a secondary factor rather than the primary driver. In response to the second, how tourists perceive Ruka's current summer offerings in relation to their preferences and expectations, the findings suggest that respondents' underlying preferences are a reasonably good match for what Ruka can offer, but that this fit is often not recognised because awareness of Ruka's actual summer offering is limited.

Read together, these findings suggest that Ruka's summer seasonality challenge, introduced in section 1.4, may have less to do with whether Ruka is a fundamentally appealing summer destination and more to do with how visible that appeal currently is and how easily interested travellers can act on it. A few more specific implications follow from this:

- **Awareness may matter alongside the offering itself.** Since alignment ratings rose steadily with awareness (section 4.4.2, Table 6), and since a large share of respondents had little or no awareness of Ruka's summer offering (section 4.4.1), efforts to raise awareness of what already exists may be an important complement to developing new attractions.
- **Some of this audience may already be reachable through existing channels.** The survey was hosted on Ruka's own English-language website, reaching respondents who were, by definition, already engaging with the destination in some way (section 3.3). This suggests that at least part of the awareness gap identified in this study may be addressable by more directly surfacing summer content to people who are already visiting Ruka's own channels, rather than solely through new external marketing.
- **Practical barriers appear to matter alongside underlying interest.** Cost and transport were among the most frequently cited factors influencing a decision to visit (section 4.5), and cost and accessibility were also dominant themes when respondents were asked directly what Ruka should develop (section 4.6.3). This suggests that

addressing these practical barriers may be at least as important as expanding the range of summer activities on offer.

- **Marketing built mainly around "escaping the heat" may undersell Ruka's appeal.** Since pull factors, activities, scenery, and wildlife, were considerably more prominent in respondents' motivations than the wish to escape heat (section 5.3), a positioning that leads with comfort and experience, rather than heat avoidance alone, may better reflect what this sample says actually draws them to a destination like Ruka.
- **The value of coolcation-specific marketing may lie in the underlying idea, not the term itself.** Awareness of the term "coolcation" was low (20.3%, section 4.3.1), while willingness to consider a cooler destination was high across the sample. This suggests that Ruka does not necessarily need to rely on the term itself to communicate the underlying appeal of cooler summer travel.

These implications should be read with some caution. As discussed further in section 5.8, this study measures stated preferences and intentions rather than observed booking behaviour, and the sample was drawn from visitors to Ruka's own website rather than the wider population of potential summer travellers. Within these limits, however, the findings offer a reasonably consistent picture: Ruka's summer offering appears to align with what this sample of international travellers is looking for, and the more immediate challenge may lie in awareness and accessibility rather than in the underlying appeal of the destination itself.

## 5.7 Contributions to Tourism Research

This study contributes to tourism research in four ways, building on the push-pull framework introduced in Chapter 2 and the findings discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.

First, the findings suggest that climate should not be treated as a simple push or pull factor in its own right, but as a condition that enables or constrains other pull factors. Section 5.2 found that respondents' interest in a cooler destination like Ruka was not primarily a wish for cold, but a willingness to accept a cooler climate given the opportunities it makes possible, comfortable outdoor activity in particular. Section 5.3 reinforced this: pull factors such as scenery, wildlife, and activities were considerably more prominent in respondents' stated motivations than the wish to escape heat. Together, these findings suggest that climate

functions less as a motivator in itself and more as a condition that influences whether a destination's other qualities can be enjoyed. This offers a more precise way of applying push-pull theory to climate-related travel decisions than treating climate as symmetrically both a push and a pull factor.

Second, this study offers empirical support for a theoretical point introduced in section 2.2: that a destination's pull factors can only influence a traveller's decision if that traveller is aware of them. Section 5.5 found that respondents' evaluation of Ruka's current summer offering was more positive among those with greater awareness of it, even though the underlying destination attributes were, by definition, the same regardless of what any individual respondent happened to know. This suggests that awareness can be understood as a precondition for a pull factor to operate, rather than as a separate, unrelated variable sitting outside the push-pull framework.

Third, the comparison of the three open-ended questions in section 5.4 points to a distinction that push-pull theory does not clearly draw: between the factors that make a destination appealing to think about and the factors that may influence whether that appeal develops into an actual visit. This has a methodological implication beyond this study. A single question asking what makes a destination appealing may overstate how ready travellers actually are to visit it, since it does not capture the more specific, and sometimes quite different, factors that would inspire an actual trip or that may stand in the way of one. Studies of emerging travel patterns such as coolcations may benefit from asking about appeal, motivation, and barriers as separate questions, rather than treating general appeal as a proxy for likely behaviour.

Fourth, this study suggests that interest in cooler summer destinations does not depend on prior familiarity with the term "coolcation." As found in section 5.3, awareness of the word "coolcation" was low, while willingness to consider a cooler destination was high across the sample. This is consistent with Fernández-Villarán et al.'s (2025) observation that coolcation marketing strategies are still developing unevenly across the Nordic countries, and it suggests that the underlying travel motivations associated with cooler summer destinations may exist independently of how well-known the term itself has become.

Taken together, these contributions suggest that climate-sensitive travel behaviour, and the coolcation phenomenon in particular, is best understood not as a single motivation but as a

combination of conditions, comfort, awareness, and practical accessibility that may shape whether interest in a destination develops into an actual visit. Push and Pull Motivation Theory captures part of this process, particularly the initial appeal of a destination, but this study suggests it benefits from being read alongside a closer look at what stands between that appeal and a traveller's eventual decision.

## 5.8 Limitations and Future Research

As with any exploratory study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was self-selected and recruited through Ruka's English-language website, meaning respondents likely had some prior interest in Ruka or Nordic destinations already. The sample may therefore be more positively disposed toward the destination than the broader European travel market, and findings should be read as indicative rather than representative.

Second, the geographic distribution of respondents was uneven, with the sample concentrated in a small number of European markets, particularly the United Kingdom. This limits how far the results can be generalised, since climate preferences and motivations may vary across cultural and economic contexts.

Third, the study captures stated preferences and intentions rather than observed behaviour. High willingness to consider a cooler destination does not guarantee it will translate into actual bookings, since practical factors such as cost, accessibility, and timing also shape final travel decisions.

Fourth, the cross-sectional design means the study reflects a single point in time and cannot establish causal direction, a limitation directly relevant to the awareness-alignment relationship discussed in section 5.5. Related limitations include the use of self-reported data, small subgroup sizes in some cross-tabulations, and the English-only survey, which may have limited participation among non-English-speaking travellers. Several questions, including those measuring willingness to travel to a cooler destination and the appeal of Ruka specifically, also described Ruka using positive framing such as "refreshing," which may have encouraged more favourable responses than a more neutrally worded question would

have produced. The high willingness and appeal scores reported in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.4 should be read with this in mind.

Fifth, the qualitative data consist of relatively short open-ended survey responses rather than in-depth interviews. While these responses allow participants to highlight issues they consider important, they provide limited contextual depth and do not allow for follow-up questions or clarification. Interpretation therefore relies more heavily on researcher judgement, particularly where responses are brief or ambiguous. To address this as far as possible, responses were coded using multiple codes where appropriate when a single response referred to more than one idea.

Sixth, the funnel comparison across the three open-ended questions (section 5.4) should be read as suggestive rather than conclusive. The number of respondents answering each question declined from 100 (Q13) to 52 (Q16) to 46 (Q18), which may partly reflect survey fatigue, so the shifting pattern of themes may also reflect who continued answering rather than a consistent shift within each respondent's own thinking.

One further point concerns how these findings might be applied. As discussed in section 5.2, Ruka's appeal appears to rest on comfortable, moderate conditions rather than genuine cold, and its average summer temperature sits below what most respondents say they prefer. Marketing built heavily around the word "cool" or "coolcation" risks setting expectations of colder conditions than most visitors would actually want.

These limitations point to several directions for future research: longitudinal studies to assess whether stated openness translates into real travel behaviour over time; comparative research across other destinations positioned as coolcation alternatives, to test whether these patterns are specific to Ruka; and the use of booking or visitation data to check stated intentions against actual outcomes. The appeal-motivation-barrier distinction identified in section 5.4 would also benefit from a design that tracks the same respondents across all three question types, rather than relying on a declining sample as in this study. Future work could further benefit from a broader sampling frame beyond destination-specific website visitors, from more in-depth qualitative methods such as interviews, and from exploring these questions across different linguistic and cultural markets.

Overall, while this study offers exploratory insight into coolcations, travel motivations, and perceptions of Ruka, further research is needed to test and extend these findings across broader and more diverse tourism populations.

# 6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how the coolcation phenomenon relates to tourists' summer travel preferences, motivations, and perceptions in the context of Ruka Resort as a potential year-round destination. It asked one main research question, in what ways the coolcation trend relates to tourists' preferences, motivations, and perceptions of Ruka as a summer destination, supported by two sub-questions on what motivates tourists to consider cooler destinations and how tourists perceive Ruka's current summer offering.

The findings show that coolcation interest in this sample is not a preference for cold. Most respondents favour warm summer temperatures of 21–25°C, and Ruka's own average summer climate sits below this, though its daytime conditions come closer to this comfort zone than the average alone suggests. Despite this gap, willingness to consider a cooler destination such as Ruka was high across the sample, including among respondents who prefer warmer conditions themselves. This willingness is driven considerably more by what a destination offers, its scenery, wildlife, and outdoor activities, than by a wish to escape heat or crowds, though both are present as secondary motivations. A further pattern in the data shows that what makes a destination appealing to think about, what would inspire an actual visit, and what may stand in the way of one are three distinct things: this sample was drawn to Ruka's scenery, motivated to visit by its activities, and concerned mainly with cost, transport, and limited awareness of what the destination currently offers. Notably, this willingness was high even though most respondents had never heard the term "coolcation," suggesting that interest in cooler summer destinations does not depend on familiarity with the label itself.

In answer to the research question, then, the coolcation trend relates to Ruka not as a demand for a cold-weather alternative, but as a broader openness to trading some warmth for comfort, space, and outdoor experience, an openness Ruka appears well placed to meet. In answer to the two sub-questions, tourists are motivated to consider cooler destinations primarily by what they offer rather than by what they escape, and they perceive Ruka's current summer offering as a reasonable match for their preferences overall, though this perception is weaker among those who know little about what Ruka actually provides.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Push and Pull Motivation Theory by suggesting that climate may function less as an independent push or pull factor and more as a condition that enables or limits other pull factors, and by highlighting that a pull factor can only shape a traveller's decision once that traveller is aware of it. It also identifies a distinction the theory does not clearly draw: between what makes a destination appealing, what would motivate an actual visit, and what may stand in the way of one, a distinction that may be useful in future research on emerging travel patterns more broadly.

For Ruka specifically, the findings suggest that important obstacles to summer visitation may include limited awareness of the summer offering and practical barriers around cost and accessibility, rather than a lack of underlying appeal. Since much of this audience is already engaging with Ruka's own channels, at least part of this gap may be addressable through improved visibility of existing summer content. The findings also suggest that marketing built mainly around escaping heat, or too heavily around the promise of cold, may undersell what actually draws this audience: comfort, space, and things to do.

As with any exploratory study based on stated preferences from a self-selected sample, these conclusions should be treated as indicative rather than conclusive, and further research using booking data, broader sampling, and more controlled comparisons across destinations would help confirm whether the patterns identified here hold more widely. Even with these limits, the findings suggest that as summers in much of Europe grow harder to tolerate, destinations like Ruka may increasingly compete not on cold itself, but on comfort, and understanding that distinction may matter for addressing seasonality more than the coolcation label itself.

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# Appendix

Appendix 1. Survey

**Welcome!**

Thank you for participating in our survey. This survey is part of a master's thesis research project at the University of Lapland, focusing on better understanding the coolcation phenomenon and how Ruka Resort can enhance its summer offerings. The survey will take approximately 5–10 minutes to complete, and your responses are anonymous.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may exit the survey at any time. All data will be securely stored in alignment with GDPR regulations.

Your feedback is valuable and will help us shape the future of summer experiences at Ruka Resort. At the end of the survey, you'll have the chance to enter a lottery as a thank-you for your time.

Section 1: About You and Your Travel Preferences

**1. What is your age group?**

18–24

25–34

35–44

45–54

55–64

65–69

70–74

75–80

80+

**2. Where are you currently living?**

Dropdown list of countries

Other (Please specify): _____

**3. How often do you travel for leisure each year?**

0 times

Rarely (e.g., once every two years or less)

1–2 times

3–4 times

5+ times

**4. How would you describe your typical travel group?**

Solo

With partner/spouse

With friends

Family with children

Other (Please specify): _____

Section 2: Activities and Motivations

**5. Which of the following activities would you be most excited about during a summer visit to Ruka? (Select all that apply)**

Hiking and nature trails

Mountain biking

Downhill riding

River rafting and water sports

Wildlife watching

Wellness retreats (e.g., yoga, spa)

Sauna experiences

Cultural experiences (e.g., local festivals, reindeer farm visits, food)

Adventure activities (e.g., zip-lining, summer sledding)

Fishing and lake activities

Golfing

Other (Please specify): _____

**6. When choosing a summer destination, how important are the following factors to you? (Rank the options from most to least important)**

Climate and temperature

Availability of outdoor activities

Natural scenery

Cultural and local experiences

Accommodation options

Restaurants, nightlife, and entertainment

Accessibility and transportation

Affordability

**7. What type of climate would you prefer for summer travel?**

Cool (10–15°C / 50–59°F)

Mild (16–20°C / 60–68°F)

Warm (21–25°C / 69–77°F)

Hot (26–30°C / 78–86°F)

Very hot (31–35°C / 87–95°F)

Extremely hot (above 35°C / 96°F+)

No preference

**8. How likely would you be to participate in guided tours or organized activities during your summer visit to Ruka?**

Very unlikely

Unlikely

Neutral

Likely

Very likely

Section 3: Exploring the Concept of Coolcations

Kuusamo experiences mild to warm summers, with average temperatures of 15–17°C in July, the warmest month. Daytime highs often exceed 20°C, while nights and early mornings can drop below 10°C. This variation offers a refreshing summer climate.

Kilotavu. (n.d.). *Kuusamo Välikangas sääasema - taulukot*. Retrieved January 28, 2025, from https://kilotavu.com/asema-taulukko.php?asema=107081

**9. A "coolcation" is a vacation in a cooler climate, chosen as a refreshing alternative to hotter destinations. Have you heard of the term "coolcation" before?**

Yes

No

Unsure

**10. Would you consider taking a vacation specifically to a cooler destination, such as Ruka, during the summer?**

Definitely

Probably

Not sure

Probably not

Definitely not

**11. What would inspire you to choose a cooler summer destination like Ruka? (Select up to three)**

Escaping from high temperatures

Engaging in outdoor adventures

Experiencing unique wildlife

Participating in cultural events

Relaxation and wellness opportunities

Scenic landscapes

Mild temperatures

Food tourism (e.g., berry picking, local cuisine experiences)

Scenic photography opportunities

Other (Please specify): _____

**12. How appealing would you find the idea of Ruka as a refreshing summer destination?**

Scale: Not at all appealing | Slightly appealing | Neutral | Appealing | Very appealing

**13. What would you find most appealing about a refreshing, cool summer destination like Ruka?**

Open-ended

Section 4: Enhancing Ruka's Summer Offerings

**14. Are you aware of the current summer offerings available at Ruka?**

Yes, I am well aware.

I have some awareness, but not in detail.

No, I am not aware at all.

**15. How well do you feel Ruka's current summer offerings align with your travel expectations?**

Scale: Not at all | Somewhat | Neutral | Well | Very well

**16. What additional activities, events, or services would inspire you to visit Ruka during the summer?**

Open-ended

Section 5: Your Feedback and Suggestions

**17. Which factors would influence your decision to visit Ruka during the summer the most? (Select all that apply)**

Awareness of activities and events offered

Ease of transportation to and from Ruka

Variety and availability of accommodation options

Appeal of unique summer activities (e.g., hiking, wildlife watching, cultural experiences)

Cost of travel and stay

Availability of alternative destinations with similar offerings

Time availability or scheduling flexibility

Other (Please specify): _____

**18. Do you have any additional suggestions for how Ruka could become a more attractive summer destination?**

Open-ended

Thank You!

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us! Your feedback will play a vital role in shaping the future of Ruka's summer experiences.

Would you like to participate in a lottery for a chance to win a prize? *(Optional)*