Branding in the air
A study about the impact of sensory marketing

Bachelor Thesis within Business Administration
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Jönköping December 2009
Acknowledgements

We, the authors would like to acknowledge the special people involved in this study.

First of all, we would like to thank our tutor, Börje Boers for his contribution to, and support during the process. In addition, we would like to thank all the other professors from Jönköping International Business School who helped us with more specific issues.

We would also like to thank our fellow students for their constructive feedback and all the students who participated in the experiment.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Antti Pasila, CEO of Ideair and specialist within scent marketing, for his interest, contribution and encouragement.

A special thank is dedicated to our closest ones for supporting our enthusiasm for this subject.

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2009-12-09
Abstract

Background: Previously, marketing has focused on audiovisual stimulus but as a result from the information overload of the modern society, companies find it harder to differentiate from the competitors through the traditional marketing channels. Consumers of today tend to take functional attributes for granted and seek for an emotional involvement in the purchasing process. Sensory marketing aims at strengthening the relationship between a brand and its consumers on a deeper level through the involvement of the human senses; sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Since the phenomenon is relatively new, the amount of studies concerning the eventual benefits on brand perception is limited.

Purpose: This study investigates how sensory branding can influence the perception of a brand for the consumer.

Method: The use of sensory branding was explored by conducting interviews with specialists within the field. The main basis for this research was an experiment, where the effect of using an ambient scent in the branding process was tested in order to investigate and analyze its effect on brand perception.

Conclusion: Sensory marketing changes brand perception positively when the stimulus is congruent with the other brand elements. It can thus be seen as a suitable tool for reinforcing the value of a brand. A congruent stimulus influences the consumer on an unconscious level and can affect preference positively hence triggering impulse buying behavior.

Adding a sensory dimension to the marketing strategy can strengthen the brand equity implying a stronger bond between the brand and the consumer. However, the authors argue that a strong brand platform is required to benefit ultimately from an investment in sensory branding.

The use of sensory branding is growing rapidly and it is predicted to be the future of strategic branding.
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1  Introduction

In this chapter the background of this study is funneled down from a broader marketing perspective to a more specific area of interest, sensory marketing. The background description is followed by a problem discussion, which discusses the concept of sensory marketing from which a purpose for this study is conducted. The purpose is followed by definitions useful for understanding this report as well as delimitations of the study.

1.1 Background

“One of the most significant features of the total product is the place where it is bought or consumed. In some cases, the place, more specifically the atmosphere of the place, is more influential as the product itself in the purchase decision. In some cases, the atmosphere is the primary product.” (Kotler, 1973, p.48)

The first documented evidence of positive effects of branding appeared less than 50 years ago when it became evident that people are willing to pay more for a branded product (Lindström, 2005). During the 1970s and 1980s the aspect of building a brand personality through brand value and feelings evolved, which created the basis of brand perception of today. The amount of advertising has increased drastically during the last decades making brands visible everywhere. This has resulted in information “overflow” drowning people in commercial messages, hence memorization and interpretation of the messages goes beyond our capacity. In 1965 the average consumer remembered 34 percent of the ads shown on TV where as only 8 percent was remembered in 1990 (Lindström, 2005). Therefore companies need to find alternative ways to differentiate themselves in order to attract customers.

Philip Kotler mentioned in the Journal of Marketing already in 1973 the importance of atmosphere as a marketing tool. “Atmospherics is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability” (Kotler, 1973, p.50). New tendencies on the market showed the inadequacy of only considering the cognitive sphere when analyzing buying behavior and highlighted the affection sphere of the buying behavior as particularly important to consider. However, between 1973 and 1988 only 15 articles of the subject were written (Rieunier, 2009). Starting from the 1990s more studies of the atmosphere stimulus where conducted but it was not until the 21st century that scientific knowledge emerged within this field.

There was a movement from transactional to relationship marketing in the 1980s. Transactional marketing focuses on the short term by putting the emphasis on the product and the transaction of a one time purchase, while relationship marketing is about maintaining relation with the customer and repeating purchase, hence focusing on the long term (Peck, Christopher & Payne, 1999). According to Keller the traditional marketing mix using the 4 Ps- product, price, place, promotion- is not enough for today’s marketing strategies. Today the affective aspect has an increasing importance with brands trying to stimulate consumers through brand feelings (Keller, 2008).

Postmodern society, which occurred in the late 20th century, emphasized individual needs and self-fulfillment. According to Lipovetsky (2005) we are now entering an era of hypermodernism. The hypermodern society is characterized by hyperconsumption, which “encourage individuals to consume for their own personal pleasure rather than to enhance their social status”. It is therefore more important than ever to create a connection between a brand and its customers. The hypermodern individuals, who are worried by nature, seek for pleasure through positive shopping experience affecting their feelings (Lipovetsky, 2005).
As a result of this, experiential marketing has ascended where the idea: “is not to sell something but to demonstrate how a brand can enrich a customer’s life” (Post 2000; Keller, 2008, p.175). Experiential marketing is composed by five actions: surprising, proposing the extraordinary, creating links, use the brand to improve the experience, and stimulating the five senses (Hetzel, 2002). Recently the involvement of the five senses -sight, smell, touch, hear, and taste- in marketing has seen the light. This phenomenon is called sensory marketing and can be defined as “the purposeful design and deployment of the interaction between the senses in order to stimulate a consumers relationship with a brand; and to foster a lasting emotional connection that optimizes purchasing and brand loyalty” (Kahn Consulting, 2007).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Even though Kotler mentioned the positive outcome of using atmosphere as a marketing tool almost 40 years ago, the strategic use of sensory marketing is a relatively new phenomenon. As a result of the increased information flow, companies need to find new ways to communicate with the consumers. The customers of today are used to high quality and take the product functionality for granted. The need for differentiation in other than rational ways is hence progressively increasing. The consumers of the hypermodern society wish to relate emotionally to the brand. Sensory branding allows the use of new communication channels. “Many brands would benefit from an approach that links the actual product experience much more closely to the brand promise, which consumers receive from the advertising. Far too many products actually disappoint when you come to use them after being attracted advertising or a promotion” (S. Harrop, personal contact 2009-10-05).

By using the marketing tools in an adequate manner marketers can achieve results that were not possible with the traditional marketing approaches, focused on a two-dimensional perspective, implying audiovisual stimulus. According to Lindström (2005) by using all the five senses “a total sensory experience would at least double, if not triple, the consumer’s ability to memorize the brand.” The goal should therefore be to include as many sensory touch points as you can while still using traditional media coverage via traditional channels (Lindström, 2005). Since a brand is “nothing more or less than the sum of all the mental connections people have around it” (Brown, 1992; Wood, 2000, p. 665), the goal with sensory branding is to use all the five senses at the same time to create a five-dimensional experience for the consumer. However, the amount of companies using sensory branding is still limited.

Singapore Airlines is one of the companies that have implemented sensory branding successfully. Their sensory brand platform was based on an emotional experience of traveling and presenting themselves as an entertainment company (Lindström, 2005). In addition the company created a unique brand perfume used by the stewardesses and sprayed on the hot towels offered to customers. This perfume directly connects the customer to the brand and leaves them with favorable memories of their experience with the company. Another great user of sensory marketing is the car industry where the automobile brands have distinct, totally artificially produced new car scents, even though a “new car scent” does not exist naturally. Ford has used a single fragrance for all their models since 2000, whereas many of the other brands have different scents for different models. Interestingly, Ford’s fragrance was recognized by 34 percent of the customers in Europe (Lindström, 2005).

It is not until recently that companies have started to use these techniques as a strategic marketing tool. Therefore, the outcomes of these marketing efforts have not been measured to a large extent even though some aspects have been discovered, such as the positive effect on price and mood. Measuring the response to the sensory marketing is not straightforward since perception is individual, hence differs between respondents. What might be noisy to certain people, can add value to the shopping experience of another. To understand the reaction of the clients to different atmospheric variables is therefore essentials in order to know how to influence the shopping behavior as desired (Rieunier,
Lindström claimed in 2005 that within five years, in 2010, the world’s top brands using a sensory brand platform would increase from less than 10 percent to 35 percent. Today, sensory branding is recognized in the field of marketing and the presence of it can be noticed, as the amount of companies applying it is growing. The authors want to explore the underlying potential of sensory marketing and the effects it can have on consumers.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how sensory branding can influence the perception of a brand for the consumers.

1.4 Definitions

**Brand Knowledge**: ‘What consumers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand as a result of their experience over time’ (Keller, 2008, p.49)

**Brand Platform**: The authors refer to it as the overall image and values perceived by customers (see Customer-Based Brand Equity)

**Cognitive Psychology**: ‘The study of human mental processes and their role in thinking, feeling, and behaving’ (Kellogg, 1997, p.4).

**Congruency**: ‘The fit, match, agreement, or similarity between two conceptually distinct constructs’ (Edwards, 1994, p.51)

**Customer-based brand equity**: ‘Occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and hold some strong, favorable and unique brand associations in memory’ (Keller, 2008, p.53)

**Perception**: ‘The act of using only one’s own sense organs to gain knowledge about, interact with, and experience the environment’ (Boothe, 2002, p.2)

**Sensory Branding**: The authors refer to it as branding in a Sensory Marketing context (see sensory marketing).

**Sensory Marketing**: “The purposeful design and deployment of the interaction between the senses in order to stimulate a consumers relationship with a brand; and to foster a lasting emotional connection that optimizes purchasing and brand loyalty” (Kahn Consulting, 2007)

1.5 Delimitations

The experiment related to the study was conducted in Jönköping, Sweden. The respondents participating in the experiment were Swedish citizens, over 18 years old, studying at the university of Jönköping.

1.6 Research Questions

To answer to the purpose of this thesis the following research questions were examined during the research process:

RQ1: *What is the impact of sensory branding on brand perception?*

RQ2: *How will sensory branding affect customer-based brand equity?*
2 Frame of Reference

This part of the report explains the use of theoretical framework related to sensory branding. The theories chosen for this study are applied from a consumer perspective.

2.1 Choice of Theory

In this report, the authors intend to investigate sensory branding with the help of general marketing theories. Therefore, the theoretical framework begins with explaining the concept of brand equity. Brand equity is analyzed from customer perspective in order to understand the impact of sensory branding on consumers. Sensory branding is introduced with a clarification of the psychology behind it. In addition the human senses; sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste are described in a marketing context in order to discover the functionality of the human senses and to what extent they can be used within branding. The theoretical framework ends with the formulation of the hypothesis for this study.

2.2 Brand Equity

As the focus in this report lays on the perception of a brand from a customer’s perspective, brand equity and more precisely, customer equity, will be discussed in order to understand the impact of sensory branding on consumers. The customer-based brand equity model is used to explain how to evaluate customer equity and the different elements constructing brand equity are clarified.

“A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors” (Aaker, 1991, p.7). Branding enhances the value of a product beyond its functional purpose (Farquhar, 1989) and making product characteristics uniquely associated to a brand strengthens the brand identification and differentiates the brand towards competitors, which in turn can generate a competitive advantage (Aaker 1991). When there is a risk involved in buying a product a brand can act as a safety for the customers by reducing anxiety and assuring a certain level of quality (Kapferer 2004). Hence, the trustworthiness of a brand is of major importance since it can facilitate the decision-making process for a customer during a purchase. The customer expects to get the same benefits as with previous purchases and is therefore willing to pay more for this extra value perceived which in turn makes it easier to choose among different products (Ind, 2003).

Brand equity refers to an added value that a brand name, and associations related to it, gives to a product compared to a product without this brand identification (Elliot & Percy 2007; Keller, 2008). In effect, it is the added value that makes the distinction between a commodity and a brand. Branded products can be priced above corresponding non-branded products as a result of these added values (de Chernatony & McDonald 1992). The concept of brand equity has been defined and discussed by numerous marketers resulting in a complexity of the term. Consequently, several aspects to assess brand equity exist today and in short it can be described as the “marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand” (Keller, 1993. p. 1) relating to “how consumers, customers and stakeholders feel about a brand” (Knapp, 2000 p. 3) beyond its functional purpose (Elliot & Percy, 2007).
‘The real value of a strong brand is its power to capture consumer preference and loyalty’ (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders, 2008, p. 521). However, since the value of a brand is based to a great extent on the stakeholders’ feelings and perceptions, implying that it is rather customers than the company that can influence the value of a brand, measuring the exact value of a brand difficult (Ind, 2003). Customers’ personal feelings for a particular brand may change their original preferences, thus their decisions will not only be based upon an objective reasoning (Elliot & Percy, 2007). Important to consider is that a brand is not solely connected to its products through the visual aspects such as the logotype, but also through its underlying values, ideas and philosophy. According to Kapferer (2004) it is these values, referred to as ‘brand religion’, that create the link between a brand and its products.

Aaker (1991) divided brand equity in four categories; brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality and argued that in order to achieve high brand equity maintenance of each aspect of the brand is vital since the combination of these factors will result in a stronger total value added. The value of a brand is founded on the complete perception, and the overall esteem towards the brand in the minds of the consumers (Knapp, 2000). In fact, these aspects creating brand equity are strongly related to each other and can be seen as a chain reaction; from awareness to creating attitudes that is affected by emotional associations which leads to brand loyalty if the brand is being positively associated. All these four categories have the same meaning of evoking memories with a brand thus relating strong emotions to a brand creating brand equity (Elliot & Percy, 2007).

The added value is the measurement of brand equity (McQueen, 1991), which can be evaluated in financial terms or as customer’s perception of a brand (Elliot & Percy, 2007). Kapferer (2004) claims that measuring brand equity should combine both financial and consumer based aspects. However, this study focused only on the consumers’ point of view since the financial success can be seen as a consequence of consumers’ perception of added value. In effect, consumers perceiving positive brand equity will generate a preference for the brand and if a brand gains loyal customers through strong brand equity, it is likely that the brand can charge higher prices and maintain higher market share, which thereafter transfers into financial success (Elliot & Percy, 2007).

### 2.2.1 Customer-Based Brand Equity

‘Understanding brand equity must come from the consumer’s point of view because that is what ultimately will affect brand success’ (Elliot & Percy, 2007, p. 82).

How consumers decide the preference of a brand is based on their perception of the added value, generating a picture of the brand in the consumers’ minds (Elliot & Percy, 2007). Customer-based brand equity exists when the consumer is ‘familiar to the brand and hold some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 1993, p.2). Further on Keller argues that customer-based brand equity can be seen as the ‘differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to marketing of the brand’ (p. 8) where response to marketing refers to perception, preferences etc. Customer-based brand equity can be measured from two aspects; indirect and direct and ultimately these two methods should be combined. The indirect approach aims to find out the underlying reasons that can create change in customer based brand equity by measuring brand knowledge, whereas the direct approach tries to explain the effects of the change (Keller, 1993) by evaluating the results of marketing actions and measuring the value of the change. According to Keller (1993) customer-based brand equity implies the alignment of marketing actions to match consumer brand knowledge rather than making numerical analysis of the customer brand equity. If a customer does not have brand awareness, thus does not recall and recognize the brand, no customer-based brand equity exists either. In that case, it can be the product that is known without relation to a brand (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2009).
2.2.1.1 Brand Knowledge

Brand knowledge can be divided into brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). It refers to the associations held in mind relating to the category of products concerned. Brand awareness and brand image results in different types of customer-based brand equity resulting from the use of different marketing mix components (Keller, 1993). Understanding brand knowledge is vital since it is the basis for brand equity, especially in terms of customer responses to marketing efforts (Keller, 1993). In fact, consumers that have brand knowledge are likely to react favourably to marketing efforts of a brand whereas consumers who are indifferent between a branded and non-branded product are likely to get significantly less affected by the same marketing efforts (Keller, 1993). In addition, the likelihood of choosing a brand, stay loyal and resist temptation from competing brands is higher with high brand knowledge.

Figure 2. Dimensions of brand knowledge (Keller, 1993, p.7)

2.2.1.2 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness concerns the memory of a brand in the minds of the consumers and has been referred to as the ‘likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so’ (Keller, 1993, p. 3) Brand recognition relates to the conviction of previous exposure to a brand by a consumer and brand recall concerns the potential to correctly point out a brand by connecting given information, such as category of products, to the memory of the brand from previous exposure. These factors are together the fundamentals of brand awareness (Keller, 1993). Further on Keller (1993) argues that the level of recall and recognition combined to generate the highest possible awareness depends on the brand and products concerned, more specifically, how the customers are faced by choices related to the
exposure of the brand. According to Keller (1993, p.3) brand awareness affects consumer decision making by ‘influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in the brand image’.

The development of brand awareness involves both conscious and subconscious stimulation generating associations in the minds of the consumer (Zaltman, Braun, Puccinelli & Mast, 2001). From a psychological angle it is important to notice the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge; the first one referring to what the consumers think about a brand based on previous exposure and memories while the latter refers to unconscious associations to the brand (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). Implicit knowledge can be measured by observations; when observing customers implicit associations to a specific brand relative to other brands, a company can understand whether their brand has positive or negative associations (Fioroni & Titterton, 2009). In this study, in order to measure the brand perception the observation was done by conducting an experiment.

2.2.1.3 Brand Image

Keller (1993, p.3) defines brand image as the ‘perception about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory’. The brand image involves a deeper sense of the brand in terms of different associations in the minds of the consumers (Keller, 1993). Each individual have numerous associations that together make up the total picture of a brand from their perspective. Naturally, these associations vary from person to person, yet, associations are classified into three major groups; attributes, benefits and attitudes (Keller, 1993). Attributes refer to what the consumers think about a brand in terms of product characteristics, either be directly related to the product such as functional aspects, or not related to the product such as price, packaging, and imagery (Keller, 1993). User imagery refers to an imagination of who else uses this product whereas usage imagery concerns associations to when the product can be utilized (Keller, 1993). These associations are highly individual and rise from a personal frame of reference thus brand image can vary between persons depending on previous experiences involved in the evaluation of the product. Imagery contributes to the forming of a brand personality and these associations not only describe the characteristics of a brand, but also the sensations triggered by the brand (Keller, 1993).

Benefits, on the other hand, consists of expectations of what the brand can deliver for the consumer hence are the personal values linked to the product (Keller, 1993). Further on, Keller (1993) distinguishes these into functional, experiential and symbolic benefits where the functional benefits refers to basic attributes linked to the product, experiential benefits fulfil needs such as ‘sensory pleasure, variety, and cognitive stimulation (Keller, 1993, p.4) and symbolic benefits concerns the intangible benefits such as dreams and identification with a lifestyle. Finally, a brand attitude is to be seen as the overall impression a consumer has of a brand implying that it is the foundation of how customers behave in a marketing context, for example in the decision process when faced by multiple brands (Keller, 1993).

2.2.1.4 Brand Perception

Perception is defined as ‘the act of using only one’s own sense organs to gain knowledge about, interact with, and experience the environment’ (Boothe, 2002, p.2) and in terms of branding, perception is of major importance. In effect, the consumers’ perception of a brand regarding for example quality and values, will affect the success of a brand in the long run (de Chernatony & McDonald, 1992). Aaker (1991) defines perceived quality as the perception of superiority of a product with respect to a brand’s competitors in terms of quality.

Perceptions are not permanent but continually shifting (Buchholz & Wördemann, 2000). Important to consider is that perception is individual hence it differs among receivers depending the individual’s personal frame of references (see 2.3.). In fact, the perception of an item depends on a large scale on the context where it is presented and how relevant it is (Lindström, 2005). Nevertheless, consumers’ perception of a brand changes over time as it ‘can be updated or overwritten with the objective of
Branding in the air

linking a brand to a compelling purchase motive’ (Buchholz & Wördemann, 2000, p. 69). In other words, a costumer’s perception can be affected by marketing efforts so that a brand can receive its desired image and positioning for a specific target in line with its identity. Understanding customers’ perceptions of a brand is important in order to forecast their responses to different types of stimuli (Fioroni & Titterton 2009). Underlying factors of perceptions such as traditions, routines and habits may be difficult to define. However, it is possible to influence individuals’ perception to a certain extent hence these factors can be formed after the consumers (Buchholz & Wördemann, 2000).

2.2.1.5 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a ‘measure of the attachment a customer has to a brand’ (Aaker, 1991 p.39) hence is an indication of how likely a consumer is to change to another brand, especially as a consequence of changes in the brand (Aaker, 1991). It has been defined as what occurs when “favourable beliefs and attitudes are manifested in repeat buying behaviour” (Keller, 1993, p.8). A high brand loyalty signifies that the customers automatically choose a product without consciously considering the purchase decision (Kapferer, 2008); hence the risk of ‘loosing’ a customer to a competitor if any of the product characteristics would change is low. Customer’s attachment to a brand indicates how willing the consumer is to maintain a relationship with the brand and in order to assure brand loyalty, it is vital that the company respect, and pay attention to, the original features of the brand that attracted the consumers in the first place (Kapferer, 2008).

The major motive for having a high brand loyalty is that acquiring new customers is both more time-consuming and in general more costly than satisfying and retaining actual customers (Aaker 1991). In addition, a high customer loyalty is a decisive factor influencing profitability in the long term (Robinette & Brand, 2001). Customer satisfaction is achieved when the perception of product performance corresponds to the customer’s expectations (Kotler et al., 2008). However, a satisfied customer does not guarantee brand loyalty; even customers that consequently repeat purchases may be willing to switch to another brand if the barriers to change are low enough (Elliot & Percy 2007). Therefore, creating barriers to switch can be a way for companies to retain their level of brand loyalty since it will make the change more complicated for the consumer thus linking them to the brand.

There is a strong correlation between positive brand equity and high level of loyalty towards the brand (Elliot & Percy, 2007). Brand equity is made up by the image of the brand in the consumer’s minds and the feelings of the brand in their hearts (Czerniawski & Maloney, 1999) and can consequently be seen as the result of an invisible bond between customers and a brand. In order to build a strong brand, implying high brand loyalty, there need to be a consistency between the brand identity and the brand image; how the brand wishes to be perceived and how it is actually perceived by the consumers. This consistency is essential for assuring customers that a brand is trustworthy, a crucial aspect since trust is the foundation of loyalty. In addition, the emotional aspect of brand loyalty should not be neglected as emotions strongly influence consumers’ perception of a brand (Robinette & Brand, 2001). In fact, loyalty is often made up by emotional relations to a brand and these ‘feelings’ does not necessarily have to be closely linked to the actual characteristics of the product (Haig, 2005).

2.2.1.6 Customer-Based Brand Equity Model

The Customer-Based Brand equity model is a helpful tool in building stronger brands (Keller, 2001). It is a brand management approach that looks at the effect of branding from a customer point of view from an ‘outside-in’ perspective (Heding et al., 2009). The model focuses on how consumers’ associations relate to a brand on a cognitive level thus consumers are seen as the owners of a brand as the perception is created in their minds based on their experiences (Heding et al., 2009; Keller, Apéria & Georgson, 2008). According to Keller (2001) building a strong brand consists of four steps; brand awareness, brand meaning, brand response, and brand relationship. Alongside with the four-step model, a six-block pyramid is conducted conjointly (Keller, 2001) as seen in Figure 3. The following section will describe the pyramid in more detail.
Figure 3. Customer-Based Brand Equity Pyramid (Keller, 2008, p. 60)

Brand salience aims at ensuring recognition of the brand in the minds of the consumers by creating awareness of the brand (see 2.2.1.2). The consumers should know which basic needs the brand can satisfy as well as understand the brand category where the brand belongs to, a concept known as brand identity. In the next level, the firm should create brand meaning by linking both tangible and intangible associations to the brand. Brand meaning implies defining what should characterize the brand in the consumers’ minds; here an image of the brand should be created. Keller distinguishes between performance and imagery, where performance describes objectively how well the product or service meets the customers’ functional needs (Keller 2008). A strong brand performance can be the foundation for competitive advantages from a functional perspective where reliability, durability, service and price are some of the features involved. Nevertheless, “performance can also depend on sensory aspects such as how a product looks and feels, and perhaps even what it sounds or smells like” (Keller 2008, p. 65). Imagery on the other hand is related to how the brand wishes to attract consumers on a more abstract level by meeting their psychological or social needs. Imagination and intangible associations such as experiences, situations, personality and values are important, since they could result in romanticized picture of the users of the brand, which triggers the demand for a brand.

Brand judgements are formed by the consumers’ total perception of the associations of brand performance and brand imaginary to the brand. The emotional reactions and associations evoked by a brand are referred to as the brand feelings. Brand resonance measures the relationship between a customer and a brand. In effect, the bond between them indicates how strong the consumers feel towards the brand and how intense this relationship is (Keller 2008).
2.3 Brand Perception from a Cognitive Psychology Perspective

“It is not possible to draw a line where sensation ends and perception begins”

(Kellogg, 1997, p.31)

An individual experiences the world through ‘sensing and perceiving the environment’ (Kellogg, 1997, p.31). Cognitive psychology studies mental behavior where the dimensions related to this study are memory, gaining of knowledge, decision-making and perception (Kellogg, 1997). How we experience the world around us is actually an internal interpretation of external stimuli, such as hearing and seeing. More precisely, a signal of the sensory stimulus is registered in the brain, which is the starting point of interpreting and processing the stimulus into an internal illustration. From the first sensory registration the brain processes, the process of perception begins (Kellogg, 1997). A parallel to sensory branding (see 2.4.) and customer-based brand equity can be drawn as the process to bonding is affected by the use of sensory stimulus in the branding process.

The process of identifying a stimulus is referred to as pattern recognition and includes such environmental factors as color, material and location, involved in the understanding of the stimulus as a whole (Kellogg, 1997). The pattern recognition can start for example from identifying a brand by its visual stimulus such as the brand name or logotype, however if more than one sense is used the probability to recognize the brand is higher. In effect, perception can be defined as ‘the multifaceted process of pattern recognition and attention that results in conscious awareness of an environmental input’ (Kellogg, 1997). Conscious awareness helps interpreting the perceived sensations, which can be turned into positive brand perception when recognizing the preference to a brand. However, a preference of a brand is to a great extent non-rational. Instead, it is the emotional connection to a brand, which affects the perception of a brand and this is formed on an unconscious level (Elliot & Percy, 2007). Each person has a personal preference frame through which the thoughts are processed (Reisberg, 1997). Therefore in order to convince a receiver of a message, using personal involvement may strengthen the power of the arguments (Burnkrant & Unnava, 1989). The process from a stimulus of a message to an action can be seen as a chain of reactions where all the links are of equal importance since the weakest link represents the strength of the chain (Simons, 2001).

Individuals are faced with numerous messages and information inputs everyday. Organizing and interpreting these are thus vital for understanding our environment and making rational choices. However, a great extent of our choices is made on an unconscious level. In fact, most of our thinking is unconscious. Our daily operations would not be possible without cognitive unconscious activities. Indeed, the unconsciousness is a necessity for the human brain to process, understand and memorize information, and even with a limited capacity, such as when being tired, people are still able to perceive messages unconsciously (Reisberg, 1997). Already in the 1800s von Helmholtz stated that ‘perception involved unconscious inferences’ (Kellogg, 1997, p.32). He claimed that the human mind receives sensory stimulation that is automatically concluded to a corresponding picture in our minds. Taking the example of scent as an input stimulus, it can be argued that it is hard to measure the amount of a scent that is obviously perceptible to an individual, and the amount where the smell is still affecting the person on an unconscious level (Kellogg, 1997). Indeed, there is a fine line between conscious and unconscious choices, however, if a choice is first made on unconscious level the repeating of it becomes conscious.
2.4 Sensory Branding

“Let’s not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it”

(Vincent Van Gogh, 1889)

The fundamental of sensory branding is to establish a connection between a consumer and a brand on an emotional level through interaction of the five human senses; sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch in the buying process (Lindström, 2005). Even though the importance of the human senses has been known for a long time, it is not until recently that the senses became a crucial element in strategic marketing. Today, it is a “hot topic” within the world of marketing, and the amounts of companies employing it are rapidly increasing (A. Pasila, personal communication, 2009). Hultén, Broweus & Dijk (2008) claimed that in the individualistic, contemporary society, consumers tend to take functional attributes such as price and quality for granted. Given the information-overload implying that consumers are faced by thousands of messages everyday, it is harder to attract the attention of the consumers (Lindström, 2005). In addition, technological improvements, such as Internet have made it possible to purchase products or services and get them delivered to your home, without having to move from the house. Consequently, stores have to offer something more than just the core product so that consumers will make the effort to actually come to the point of purchase (Rieunier, 2009).

According to Schmitt and Simonson (1997), when typical attributes of a service or a product are not enough to differentiate the brand, positive intangible attributes such as experiences, will become dominant decision makers in the customers’ minds. Hultén et al. (2008) argue that an experience around the purchase can be achieved by connecting the consumers emotionally to a brand through the involvement of the human senses. When defining the objectives for the sensory branding strategy it is vital to identify the desired emotions to evoke and what message should be delivered through the brand. This should be done by carefully analyzing the impacts of the actions and setting the core message in order to define the intentions of the sensory branding in a perfectly clear manner (Lindström, 2005).

To explain the importance of involving the senses a parallel can be made to a chat with a friend. It is today possible to stay at home, connect to the Internet and have a conversation on line. But even though you may even be able to see your friend on the computer screen during your conversation, you would probably prefer a physical meeting in a cozy café in real life because there is a sensation involved in a physical meeting that is not comparable to a virtual meeting. According to Rieunier (2009) the atmosphere in stores can be strengthened by the use of sensory marketing where the aim should be to create a ‘soul’ of the place, evoking positive associations for the consumers. She argues that Sensory involvement can be reinforced by the use of congruent music and a recognizable ambient scent in the room, and ultimately by offering the consumers something to eat or drink involving their sense of taste. In addition, the visual presentation of the products and the pleasure of touching them should not be neglected.
2.4.1 The Human Senses from a Marketing Perspective

In the figure 4 below the importance of the human senses, in a marketing context, are presented. Sight is the most importance of the senses, followed by smell, sound, taste and touch (Lindström, 2005).

![Figure 4. Sensory Importance (Lindström, 2005, p. 69)](image)

2.4.1.1 Smell

“You can close your eyes, cover your ears, refrain from touch, and reject taste, but smell is a part of the air we breathe.”

(Lindström, 2005, p.24)

Smell is the only sense that cannot be turned off. It is the sense with the greatest emotional impact since smell transfers directly to the limbic system, the part of the brain where the emotions are handled, which is the most ancient and primitive part of the brain (Fox, 2006). The sense of smell emotionally affects humans up to 75% more than any other sense. Studies show that smell, of your product and sales environment, is actually more important than sight and sound in the purchasing process (S. Harrop, personal contact 2009-10-05). Already in 1932 Laird found a positive link between the perceived quality and the use of scent (Bone & Jantrania, 1992). The fact that smell is strongly linked to memory makes it a strategic tool for creating connections between customers and a brand. Further on, it is argued that smell, as a strategic branding tool, can be used to persuade and influence the unconscious thinking in order to influence the behavior and mood of customers (Lorig & Schwartz, 1988). In fact a brand specific odor is likely to evoke connections to the brand and strengthen the brand identity (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997).

Fox (2006) claims that how we react emotionally to a certain smell depends on the receiver, since smell evokes individual memories based on past experiences and is therefore to be seen as a powerful attention catcher. Associations to smell are highly individual implying that what is positive for one person can be negative for another. This is thus important to consider when using smell as a strategic tool, since the intended reaction may vary between individuals and cultures (Lindström, 2005). According to Fox (2006), smell is closely linked to society and culture, which points out the cultural differences related to the perception of a smell. For example in the USA sweeter scents are preferred, such as vanilla and cinnamon, whereas natural odors such as coffee, forest and freshly cut grass, are more preferred in Scandinavia (A. Pasila, personal communication 2009). This shows the importance of adapting the smell to different target groups and finding a congruent scent that will evoke indented reactions and associations.
An ambient scent is an environmental scent that is not necessarily directly related to a brand but instead is more of an atmospheric tool to affect the mood of consumers (Rieunier, 2001). One of the classic examples of the use of ambient scent is a study by Alan Hirsch of the use of ambient scent on Nike shoes. Identical pairs of Nike running shoes where presented in two different rooms; one room was diffused with a floral scent and the other room was without scent. Interestingly, the shoes presented in the room with the floral scent were estimated to be 10$ more expensive, and the participants were 84% more willing to purchase the pair in the scented room (Hirsch, 1993). This study clearly demonstrates the power of ambient scents as a marketing tool.

Ambient scents can be used to attract customers to products in a store (Shifferstein & Blok, 2002) by influencing their mood and associations. Pleasant odors can result in a consumer spending longer time in a store and underestimate the actual time spent in the store (Daucé, 2000). This increases the number of times a product is investigated (Spangenberg, Crowley and Henderson, 1996). In order to attract customers and highlight different departments in a store, different kind of ambiance scents can be diffused in order to distinguish the departments from each other. For instance, imagine a fruit shelf in a supermarket smelling of peach during the summer season and clementines or ginger during the winter, the washing powder section smelling of lemon while the garden equipment section smells of wood and forest. In the same manner, a sport store can add a discrete smell of freshly cut grass to promote football shoes or golf equipment, and a cosmetics store can use coconut smell to attract attention to tanning lotion. A study was made by Spangenberg et al. (1996) in a prêt-à-porter store to investigate the effects of ambient scents. A smell perceived as feminine, in this case vanilla, and another smell called ‘Moroccan rose’ that was perceived to be masculine, was diffused in the store and the study showed that the customers tended to spend more money when the smell was congruent with their gender. In average the consumers bought products for an amount of approximately 55 dollars in the case of a congruent smell compared with an amount of 23 dollars where the scent was incongruent.

For a scent to be efficient as a marketing tool, it has to be congruent to the context in which it diffused (Rieunier, 2001). The congruence of stimulus and the objectives are crucial to achieve the intended results of introducing an ambiance scent. It is thus vital to consider the target customers and carefully analyze their preferences as well as reactions to different scents. When using scents to attract attention to specific products it is important that the scents correspond to the product. According to Rieunier (2001) the combination of a relaxing smell and calm music increases the impulse purchases and the customer satisfaction whereas when music and smell was incongruent no change in customer behavior was noticed. Likewise, the congruence between color and taste is essential; if a product tastes strawberries, it is most likely to be red, and if we are looking at a yellow drink, we naturally expect it to taste lemon. A study done on soft drinks showed that when the color on the drink corresponded to the taste, the taste was easy to recognize whilst where the color did not match the taste, identifying the actual taste was not evident (Lindström, 2005).

2.4.1.2 Taste

Since what we eat is closely linked to our survival, taste provides the most specific function of any of the five human senses. Smell and taste are closely linked together and referred to as the chemical sense (Korsmeyer, 2002). In effect, ‘different tastes are distinguished by various combinations and a more sophisticated sense of smell’ (Lindström, 2005 p. 28). A person can be exposed to aroma without including the taste but it is practically impossible to taste something without smelling it (Lindström, 2005), something that can be experienced when eating a delicious meal while having a flue. The link between these senses are especially clear when people are asked to describe a brand involving both the taste and the smell aspect, for example McDonald’s. Here, customers tend to like either, both the smell and the taste, or hate both the smell and the taste, and almost never like one and dislike the other (Lindström, 2005).
Gobé (2001) argues that eating and drinking is strongly associated to joyful, positive memories, which is one of the reasons why the taste aspect should not be neglected in marketing. To strengthen the perception of a brand all the senses should ultimately be included, but there are a limited number of brands, which actually include taste in their branding strategies today (Lindström, 2005). However, taste should not be deserted in branding process since adding this extra dimension will lead to a stronger emotional connection for the consumer. Adding taste to the brand increases the value for the customers, and the perceived benefits of a symbolic gesture such as offering a cup of coffee in a store, will differentiate the brand positively in the minds of the consumers (Gobé, 2001). Even if a product is not directly linked to oral use, the taste aspect could still be included by offering something to eat or drink at the point of purchase, or by including cafés and restaurants within a store, which create a pleasant atmosphere around the brand resulting in the costumers feeling more relaxed (Gobé, 2001).

2.4.1.3 Touch

Skin is the largest organ of the human being. It is our warning-system as well as a powerful tool for communicating our thoughts and emotions non-verbally. When vision and hearing are taken away, touch is the most important mean to identify and manipulate objects (Wolfe, 2006). However, relatively little marketing consideration has been given to this sense yet touching involves action to a greater degree than any other sense. In effect, touch enhances the brand experience for a costumer by adding sensory information of a brand such as the touch of opening the doors to a store, the feeling of walking on the floor or the sensation of touching an exclusive leather bag (Gobé, 2001).

According to Gobé (2001) the lower their brand recognition is, the more the customers tend to investigate products by touching them. In fact, touching a product is a way of ensuring its quality and is consequently more important when faced to unfamiliar brands. The weight and material of the product are important factors in the sensory process. The texture of a material influences our emotions hence our perception (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). In effect, once touching a product you will find yourself more attached and more willing to buy it. Lindström (2005) argues that the feeling of brand is closely linked to the perception of product quality. The weight of a product can reflect a certain level of quality; high technology companies make their products heavier to assure customers of a high level of luxury (Lindström, 2005). The feeling of the product, such as the weight of a cell phone, can have more importance than the look in the purchasing decision.

One way to include touch to a brand is the use of touch screens in the purchase process. This is increasing and can be seen in numerous point-of-purchases today, for example McDonalds letting their customers make their orders by touch screens. Involving the customers in the purchasing process by touch strengthens the emotional connection to the brand further. According to Gobé (2001) companies that include even the touch aspect will have greater chances for creating superior customer satisfaction.

2.4.1.4 Sight

Vision is the most powerful of the senses since the cooperation between brain and eyes is said to be better than any machine ever invented (Winter & Winter, 2003). Sight is also the most seductive sense often overruling the others; therefore it has traditionally been the most utilized sensory stimulus in marketing (Lindström, 2005). Vision plays a significant role in the perception of a brand and studies have shown that a person who has been exposed to a product will prefer it over similar choices, even in cases when the person cannot actually remember seeing the product (Bornstein, 1987). Factors affecting the brand through vision are for example logo, design, use of colors, and lighting. In fact, vision is all about light since colors are just distributions of different wavelengths being analyzed by our particular visual system (Wolfe et al., 2006). Important to consider is that visual elements are harder to adjust since they are stable unless efforts are made to change them, an exception being video. This is to compare with other types of stimuli such as music that is constantly changing and implies a greater variation at a lower cost (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997).
Colors are fundamental in the perception of a brand and can highlight the most important attributes and associations to a product or a brand. They are used to 'set the mood of a brand through logos and packaging' (Gobé, 2001 p. 79), as these attributes are still one of the major attention catchers implying that it is vital to select colors carefully. If colors are chosen correctly, they can be used strategically to reinforce and communicate the desired image of a brand (Gobé, 2001). In addition to colors, the lightening in a store should be designed to fortify the brand identity and reflect values held by the brand. The use of lightening can transform an atmosphere at a point of purchase, and can easily be changed depending on the season (Gobé, 2001).

2.4.1.5 Sound

Sound helps to generate mood by creating feelings and emotions. It has ‘an immediate and, to a large extent, cognitively unmediated effect on recall and emotions’ (Gobé, 2001, p.71) and can thus be used as a trigger for creating desired reactions when building an emotional attachment to a brand. Together with sight, sound is used as the traditional element in brand-building process (Lindström, 2005). The combination of these is referred to as auditoryvisual branding and it is the ground of marketing efforts for most of the companies today.

As a result of the possibilities to affect store atmosphere and brand image through emotions, having an ambient sound at the point of purchase has during the last years become a must (Rieunier, 2009). Music is a powerful tool for evoking emotions, in effect, when listening to music endorphins are released, which generates sensations of pleasure (Gobé, 2001). Because of these positive feelings resulting from the endorphins using sound as an ambiance enhancer can be a very powerful way to bond customers emotionally to a brand (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). Music can be used to affect the buying behavior of consumers in desired direction (Rieunier, 2009) and can therefore be seen as ‘a devise used for constructing brand identity’ (Gobé, 2001, p. 73). Since sound activates the emotional part of the brain instead of the rational, it can be an efficient tool for communicating to the unconscious desires of consumers (Gobé, 2001). A study made on consumers in a wine store showed that when French music was played 77% of the customers chose a French wine whereas when German music was played instead, the majority of the customers bought German wine. Even though they all heard the music only 2% of the customers could link their buying behavior to the music (North, Hargreaves & McKendrick, 1999).

Ambiance music can furthermore be used to influence the speed at which customers shop (Gobé, 2001). According to Rieunier (2009), the objectives of using ambiance sounds can be divided into affective, cognitive and behavioral. She argues that the affective objectives includes involving the consumer on an emotional level to generate sensations such as happiness and pleasure while the cognitive objective should be used to indicate the target and positioning by creating a corresponding atmosphere and using the music to draw attention to an event or a product. Finally, the behavioral objectives aims at changing the behavior of consumers during a purchase where the costumer’s time spent in a store optimally should be a function of the music played. Relaxing music may result in that they stay longer in a store whilst faster music can accelerate the shopping visit. In effect, music can modify the consumers’ perception of the time they spent in the store (Rieunier, 2009).

The importance of sound in branding should not be underestimated and sound can according to Lindström (2005), even be the deciding factor in a consumer’s choice. Adding a dimension of sound is relatively easy and affordable, making it a flexible choice for reinforcing the image of a brand (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). Apart from the use of ambience sound at points of purchases, the distinctive sound of a brand is an important aspect to consider since making product attributes brand specific, will increase differentiation from the competition (Lindström, 2005). The car industry is one of the most well developed industries using sound as sensory stimulator where value is put on every small detail, such as the sound of a door closing or the sound of an engine, distinguishing one brand from another.
2.4.2 Gestalt Psychology

Gestalt movement was a response to theories in the early 1900s to combine scientific and experimental psychologies (Koffka, 1999). Gestalt psychologists believe that the whole, or Gestalt, is more than the sum of the parts. The entire Gestalt is what counts but it is the small changes in underlying dimensions or their interactions that can cause massive changes in the Gestalt (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). The theory of Gestalt can be related to sensory branding, and more precisely to holistic view where a small change in sensory stimulus can cause a greater change in the total perception of the brand. In other words, the use of all the senses in a branding process can result in stronger outcome compared to if only one of the senses would have been used. This is referred to as 5-D branding, since it includes all the human senses, giving a brand five-dimensional perspective. The ultimate goal with sensory marketing is thus to create a holistic brand.

2.4.3 Bonding with Consumers

Lindström (2005) argues that the aim of sensory branding is to stimulate the bond between the consumers and a brand and that it ‘optimizes impulse purchasing behavior, and allows emotional response to dominate our rational thinking’ (p.104). He claims that creating an emotional engagement between consumers and a brand with the use off sensory branding can lead to an optimized match between perception and reality and create a brand platform for future product extensions. The ultimate goal of sensory branding is to create synergies between the senses resulting in a chain reaction where the involvement of one sense activates the use of another, referred to as synesthesia (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). In effect, the use of senses evokes strong memories in the receiver, which can facilitate the marketing efforts to create desired brand image (Schmitt & Simonson, 1997). ‘Emotional impulses lead to action, bridging the gap between consumers’ unconscious needs and the behavior required to satisfy them’ (Robinette, Brand & Lenz, 2000, p.33).

Robinette et al. (2000) claim that by adding emotional value, organizations can achieve and sustain long-term competitive advantages. The strongest enhancement is attained if the action becomes intuitive, and if managed correctly, sensory branding can create the strongest possible bond between a consumer and a brand. This will be obtained when the sensory stimulus is unique and consistent making it familiar and recognized by the consumers resulting in a “routine” choice. If the brand succeeds in stimulating the senses in an inimitable manner, the customers will remain loyal and the brand can be seen as distinguished from its competitors (Lindström, 2005). The sensory brand pyramid in figure 5 below explains the relation between loyal customers and the ‘smashability’ of a brand (see 2.4.4.1). When the consumers are influenced by the sensory stimulus their loyalty towards the brand increases, the relationship with the brand gets enhanced and the consumer moves up in the pyramid towards the top. Simultaneously, the ‘smashability’ of a brand increases as the brand moves up the sensory pyramid implying that the higher the ‘smashability’ of the brand, the stronger the bond between the consumer and the brand.
2.4.4 Consistency between Sensory Elements

In order to strengthen brand’s sensory platform, every sensory component should be branded to make them recognizable uniquely to the brand. The core values and communication should be reflected in each of the elements thus creating strong links between the sensory touch points. However, they should still be recognizable individually. The importance of consistency to core values should not be overseen since consistency convinces consumers to trust the brand, which can lead to loyalty. When implying a sensory branding strategy, achieving the full potential is only possible when there is synergy across the sensory touch points. In effect, Lindström (2005) claims that the effect of the brand communication can be doubled with the presence of sensory synergy.

A multidimensional access to a brand will demand the use of all the five senses in order to build a strong link between the brand and the consumers Lindström (2005). Creating a consistent integration of the five senses in the communication, product and services is thus vital, as it will help to enhance the product and strengthens the bond between consumers and the brand. The strength of this bond depends of the strength of the synergy between the senses (Lindström, 2005). As mentioned earlier (see 2.4.3) bonding the customer to the brand by effecting customers on a multidimensional level creates emotional attachment beyond rational thinking (Lindström, 2005). As the goal is to apply the use of the senses in every aspect of the brand it is important to break down the brand into several sensory touch points where each of these supports the core values associated to the brand. These touch points should subsequently be combined in order to create a synergy that should be spread, and shared throughout the whole brand.

Lindström (2005) argues that ‘emotions are based on information gathered from our senses’ (p.103) thus the stimulation derived from the senses will strengthen the customers’ relationship with the brand. In effect, most of the customers are not aware of the sensory stimuli they are receiving, but the sender of the stimuli, i.e. the brand, has to have a complete understanding of the effects of the stimuli (Gobé, 2001). In order to keep brand unique in the minds of the consumers it is therefore important to stimulate these sensory touch points (Lindström 2005) since this will catch the consumers’ interest to the brand, and influence their rational buying behaviour by generating emotional commitment to a brand.
2.4.4.1 Branding each Element

The following theory is based on Lindström (2005)

In the traditional marketing a lot of effort has been put on the logo when creating a brand visibility, however, the visual aspect is only a small element in the total brand image. To evaluate a brand’s consistency and differentiation Lindström has created a philosophy called “smash your brand” which refers to branding each element related to the brand beyond the logo. The purpose of smashing your brand is to create a strong brand platform, by identifying each component of the brand separately – and together as one, enabling a multisensory expression. A strong brand should be ‘smashable’, implying that each part of the brand should be as clearly related to the brand that it should be recognized even without the other parts. If customers are not able to distinguish a brand without its logo, smashing a brand into pieces could be a solution in order to determine the ‘weakest link’ and strengthen these in line with the brand image. For example, if the logo would be removed from a packaging, the design should be enough to distinguish the brand from others.

Understanding the characteristics behind each sense strategy is essential and the value of each ‘ingredient’ in the strategy should be understood so that they can be combined in the most optimal way. This can be achieved by controlling the underlying motives for choosing a special feature and how to combine them in order to create the best synergy. Once each part of the brand as a separate entity is well understood, combining them in an efficient manner will be easier since a better knowledge of the separate parts will make it easier to boost these qualities when combining them as one. The fundamentals of the “smash your brand” theory can be explained by using the example of Coca-Cola. The brand image of Coca-Cola is very well established, and even with eyes closed, most persons would probably be able to recognize the classic glass bottle of Coca-Cola. In fact, the entire bottle is designed and branded so that if you drop the glass bottle in the floor and it breaks into pieces, it is still possible to relate the pieces to Coca-Cola.

2.5 Hypothesis

Hypotheses are referred to as “statements that are taken for true for the purposes of argument or investigation” (Burns & Bush, 2000). Hypothesis was set in order to test the relationships between the independent variable and the affect on the dependent variable. The hypothesis tested in this study is:

H1: “The adding of a scent changes the brand perception positively”
3 Method

The method part describes the research approaches applicable for this study. The reasoning and relevance of the research methods used for data collection and analysis are explained in this chapter. Validity and reliability of the chosen methods are further discussed.

3.1 Deductive Research Approach

Business research consists of two main approaches, deductive and inductive (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The deductive approach moves from theory to data with a purpose to confirm a hypothesis whereas the inductive approach has the objective to gain understanding of the nature of the problem by using qualitative data collection (Saunders et al., 2009).

Following the purpose of this thesis; to investigate the impact of sensory branding on brand perception, the authors formulated a hypothesis based on theory within the field of sensory branding; H1: ‘the adding of a scent changes the brand perception positively’.

In order to test the hypothesis an experiment was conducted to measure the changes in brand perception that can be linked to sensory branding. Since the collection of data related to the experiment was of quantitative nature, the research approach of this study is to be seen as deductive (Saunders et al., 2009). The characteristics of a deductive research approach are that the research is guided by theory (Bryman & Bell, 2007) and results in the rejection or confirmation of the hypothesis as explained in the model (Figure 6).

However, in addition to the quantitative data collection qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews in order to generate a solid background and understanding of the phenomenon before conducting the experiment.

Figure 6. The process of Deduction (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.11)

3.1.1 Exploratory, Descriptive and Explanatory Research

Research approach can in addition be divided into descriptive, exploratory and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009). The aim of descriptive studies is to produce an accurate representation of the situation where the problem is well known (Saunders et al. 2009; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). The exploratory research puts emphasis on comprehension of an issue and assessing it in a new light (Saunders et al., 2009; Robson, 2002). Explanatory research on the other hand seeks to establish relationships between variables by studying a problem or a situation (Saunders et al., 2009). It is also known as causal study, since it explains the cause-effect relation and the extent of it (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). This report develops from exploratory to descriptive and further on to explanatory research as it starts by finding information and understanding the phenomenon sensory branding. In the descriptive phase the framework work for sensory branding is structured and finally in the explanatory phase the structured
problem is tested against the hypothesis to see to what extent the variables change (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Primary and Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to all previous collected data within the subject. It is important to consider that secondary sources might have been constructed for different purposes hence the data is not directly applicable, and the information can be biased (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). However, using secondary data is more time efficient (Kerin, Hartley & Rudelius, 2003) and it can facilitate the decision making for the researchers because as it provides a greater understanding of a situation or phenomenon (Smith & Albaum, 2005). In this report the authors used a combination of primary and secondary data collection. The primary data collection consisted of interviews as well as an experiment with a questionnaire.

The secondary data refers to the books, articles, and previous studies within this subject that the authors consulted during the research process. The company, Brand B (see 3.2.5.1) has already done research related to sensory branding, however, the authors did not include previous researches done by the chosen company in the study, since those results are not relevant or in line with the purpose of this study.

3.2.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Study

Qualitative data refers to all non-numerical data or non-quantified data (Saunders et al., 2009). Using qualitative techniques to gather information is preferable when the researcher aims to understand the meaning of a phenomenon rather than the frequency (Van Maanen, 1983). As the aim with this study was to analyze how sensory branding can influence the perception of a brand, the authors believed that utilizing a qualitative approach of collecting data was necessary. By using a qualitative approach the authors expected to assess the problem from different perspectives and obtain personal reflections, which will contribute to a broader knowledge of the phenomenon sensory branding.

On the contrary, quantitative data consists of numerical data, which has to be processed and analyzed statistically to find trends and patterns. The collection of quantitative data results in standardized data (Saunders et al., 2009). As the authors believed that assessing the problem from multiple angles would strengthen the results, the qualitative interviews were combined with quantitative questionnaires related to the experiment. Quantitative results can be used to generalize information and draw conclusions in order to understand the ‘real’ impact of sensory branding.

3.2.3 Sequential Exploratory Design

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative collection of data is referred to as mixed methods aiming at complementing and confirming the results from different research methods used (Marchshon-Piekkaari & Welch, 2004). The choice of mixed method used in this report, sequential exploratory design, is a combined research approach that includes both the use of qualitative and quantitative data, with an emphasis on the qualitative data (Creswell, 2003). The aim with the sequential exploratory strategy is to understand a phenomenon by making a qualitative analysis of a situation and to add quantifiable data in order to support the qualitative findings (Creswell, 2003). This is in line with the purpose of this study as the initial aim is to understand the phenomenon sensory branding and its effects on consumers. The authors believe that by combining the collection of qualitative and quantitative data they would obtain a more representative result than if choosing only one of the data collection-approaches. Consequently, the investigation of the phenomenon sensory branding was assessed from both perspectives, as an attempt to increase the accuracy of the results.
As described in the model above, a sequential exploratory design of the research starts with collecting and analyzing qualitative data and continues with the collecting and analyzing quantitative data (Creswell, 2003). Later on, in the interpretation phase, the results from the qualitative and quantitative data collection were brought together and analyzed simultaneously (Creswell, 2003).

Following a sequential exploratory design the authors therefore conducted in-depth interviews where they obtained qualitative data. Interviews were done with one marketing manager of an international company wishing to strengthen its brand through the use of sensory branding, and one marketing company offering sensory branding solutions (see 3.2.5.1). In addition to this, an experiment was conducted on random persons exposed to a product subject to a sensory marketing adjustment in order sensory marketing solutions to companies. The aim with the experiment was to measure the change in brand perception that can be linked to sensory branding. Performing an experiment was valuable since a quantitative data collection allowed for generalization of the findings (Creswell, 2003).

3.2.4 Background Study

3.2.4.1 Exploring the Presence of Sensory Branding

In order to get an understanding of the presence of sensory branding, the authors decided to make a preliminary investigation of the market to see the potential stores using sensory branding. The authors therefore chose randomly 15 shops in Jönköping. The purpose of this investigation was to get an overview of the current use of sensory branding. The authors noticed that none of the stores were aware of the sensory stimulus, even in stores where there was a clear aroma, the use of it was unintentional.

In order to find additional information and theory within the field of sensory branding, the authors contacted Simon Harrop, the CEO of BRANDsense agency based in the United Kingdom. The agency helps companies to create holistic understanding of their brand’s sensory impacts and offers strategic marketing solutions. During the discussions with Harrop the authors were provided with applicable information by getting access to unpublished files and case studies performed by BRANDsense. This was of great importance in the beginning of the research process since there is a limited amount of secondary data available within this field. In order to investigate the purpose of this study, the authors wished to find a company using sensory branding in Scandinavia in order to apply the theory on an actual brand and therefore contacted Ideaair, a scent marketing company in Finland (see 3.2.5.1).
3.2.5 Interview

Interviews can be categorized as structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Saunders et al., 2009) where the two latter interview types are categorized as qualitative research interviews (King, 2004). Structured interviews can also be referred to as quantitative research interviews since they are used to collect quantifiable data. When using structured interviews the questions are predetermined and standardized. Unstructured interviews on the other hand are to be seen as more informal interviews since the objective is to explore in-depth an area of interest. The respondents answer more freely in relation to the topic area hence the perceptions of the respondents guide the interview (Saunders et al., 2009).

As the authors intend to gain a deeper understanding of the impact on sensory branding and more specifically, how sensory branding influences the perception of a brand, in-depth interviews were conducted with a specialist within the field of sensory branding and with a company applying sensory branding in their marketing strategy. An interview was therefore conducted with the CEO of Ideair, Antti Pasila and another one with the Global Marketing Manager of Brand B. In the meeting, Junior Marketing Manager of Brand B and Antti Pasila from Ideair were also present. The authors chose to conduct ‘face-to-face’ interviews by meeting the interviewees in their respective offices, both located in Helsinki, Finland. Face-to-face interviews are appropriate when ‘depth of meaning is central, with only some approximation to typicality’ (Gillham, 2000, p.11). This approach was moreover suitable as the interviewees had a limited time-schedule hence could not set a side a lot of time for the interviews. Even though phone interviewing was an even more time efficient option, the authors choose to conduct face-to-face interviews since phone interviews can result in lower quality of the data (Gillham, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date &amp; Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antti Pasila</td>
<td>Ideair</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>16.11.2009 Helsinki</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Brand B</td>
<td>Global Marketing Manager</td>
<td>16.11.2009 Helsinki</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Interviews

The questions posed in a semi-structured interview will follow a pre-designed logic, however, the order of the questions may differ depending on the respondents (Saunders et al., 2009). Additional questions and themes may appear as the participant has the chance to guide the interview to a certain extent. Both of the interviews were undertaken in a semi-structured manner following a semi-structured questionnaire and the questions were discussed in-depth allowing the interviewees to guide the discussion to some extent (Churchill, 1999). This was important since human experiences are not easy to express clearly in an organized manner and it therefore may be necessary to guide the interviewee to assess certain questions further (Gillham, 2000).

The authors found it essential that the persons interviewed could talk freely in order to express their opinions and beliefs about the concerned phenomenon, which is the main advantage of using in-depth interviews (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). In-depth interviews will allow a deeper understanding of the situation as the respondent has the possibility to associate to the question and elaborate his/her answers. This is advantageous because the ‘real’ attitude of the respondents can be comprehended.
(Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005) compared with data collection using closed-ended questions where the participants are forced to choose among given alternatives which may not be sufficient for an accurate explanation. On the other hand, in-depth interviews will demand a greater understanding of the phenomenon of investigation from the interviewees (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005) and is more time-consuming (Churchill, 1999). As the authors have gathered a general knowledge of sensory branding and expected to get further clarification by conducting interviews they believed that semi-structured, in-depth interview was a suitable technique for collecting the desired information. In addition, since the experiment related to this study was conducted on behalf of brand B, the authors got the possibility to discuss their submission with the top management and hear their opinions concerning the process of performing the experiment. Both interviews were audio-recorded in order to ensure a high validity of the findings, explained further in 3.3.2, and because it can be helpful when transcribing the interview into written form (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.2.5.1 Choice of Interviewees

Finding companies using sensory branding was not easy, since it is not well developed in Scandinavia, yet. Therefore, the authors contacted different marketing companies that could have some insights of the topic, since they might know other companies that are using this kind of marketing today. Subsequently, the authors came in contact with Antti Pasila, the CEO of a Finnish company, Ideair, who is specialized in sensory branding. Ideair focuses on scent marketing by providing their customers with specifically designed scents and scent marketing solutions, in addition to their audiovisual marketing strategies. Pasila, who has been the authors’ main contact during this project, provided the authors with additional information about the subject by sending previous studies within the field of scent marketing. The authors wished to conduct an experiment with a company using, or planning to use sensory marketing in order to analyze the possible impacts on brand perception. As Ideair is working with companies implementing these strategies the authors came, through a discussion with Pasila, in contact with one of the customers of Ideair, Brand B, who is planning to introduce sensory branding.

In order to collect qualitative, in-depth, face-to-face interviews (as described in 3.2.5) the authors travelled to Finland to meet the CEO of Ideair as well as the global marketing manager of Brand B. The authors found that interviewing a specialist within the field of sensory branding would contribute to the understanding of the subject and that it would add an insider point of view. Since the experiment was conducted in co-operation with Brand B, the authors found it necessary to have an interview with the marketing manager in order to get an understanding of how the Brand B believed they can benefit from implementing sensory branding.

3.2.5.1.1 Confidentiality

A confidentiality agreement was made with the participating company. Therefore the company is referred to as Brand B in this report. The interview with the representative of Brand B can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2.6 Experiment

Experiment wishes to explain relations between independent and dependent variables and how changing one or more independent variables affect the dependent variable (Hakim, 2000; Lancaster, 2005). The use of experiment it suitable for studies seeking stimulus-response relationship (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Therefore, two test groups, experimental and control group will be used in order to see whether and to what extent the perception differs between the groups when exposed to different kinds of sensory stimulus (Saunders et al., 2009). The experimental group received manipulation of independent variable whereas the control group did not experience this intervention. Thus, by
comparing these two groups the effect of manipulation on the dependent variable could be observed (Saunders et al., 2009).

An experiment was made to test how adding a sensory stimulus can change brand perception to answer to the purpose of this study. The independent variable in the experiment was a scent, produced to correspond the flavor of the product, as it is a controllable factor hence a subject for manipulation (Williamson, 2002). The dependent variable was the brand perception from consumers’ point of view, as it cannot be controlled directly but through the manipulation of independent variable (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). By conducting the experiment the authors wanted to see how manipulation of the conditions by varying the independent variable scent, between the rooms, would cause a change in the dependent variable brand perception.

Figure 8. Manipulation of the experiment (Williamson, 2002, p. 131)

3.2.6.1 Pilot Experiments

The authors conducted three pre-experiments before valid settings for the final experiment were found. The settings for the experiment were sent from Finland but four out of six bottles, only of the competing brands, broke during the transportation thus the authors had to buy new ones from Sweden even though corresponding bottles could not be found in Jönköping. In addition, the scent machine was slightly damaged during the shipping, as the contact wire did not hold, which was not noticed in the beginning. The first experiment was tested only with 10 persons the evening before the planned experiment to assure the functionality of the settings. This was followed by performing an experiment, later referred to as the pre-experiment since the products chosen for this experiment resulted in noise and bias of the results (see 3.2.6.2). The third experiment was therefore conducted solely with the product X that was the subject of this study. In addition, all these three experiment were conducted by having the rooms in separate buildings, one in the campus library and one in the business school. The authors noticed the groups to be heterogeneous with a lot of exchange students and relatively younger persons participating at the room situated at the business school. Therefore, for the final study the rooms were placed in the same building next to each other and only the product X with an other flavored vodka from the same brand were included in the final experiment to reduce the bias and noise of the other factors.

3.2.6.2 Pre-Experiment

Before conducting the experiment discussed in 3.2.6.3, an experiment with a different kind of setting was performed. The settings for the rooms were equal to the experiment, but the choice of products was different. In this pre-experiment, three different brands of vodka were part of the test; flavored vodka X from Brand B as in the final experiment, Brand A, Swedish vodka with strawberry-lime flavor, and Brand C, a pure Russian vodka.

The sample size for this experiment was decided by using the “rule of thumb” (see 3.2.6.4) implying that as there was 12 questions asked in the questionnaire related to the experiment and there should be at least five persons per each question per group, a total sum of 120 persons should participate in the experiment. This was divided between the test groups to have 60 in each, control and experimental
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group. However, by using judgment technique based on the small sample reasoning (West, 1999), together with the Brand B’s research department demand for minimum of 70 respondents, the authors believed that a total of 100 respondents implying 50 participants in each group, was enough to conduct a credible experiment and questionnaire. Finally, the authors had 110 respondents in the pre-experiment. However, the authors quickly noticed the dominance of the non-flavored vodka, which can be explained by the fact that in the global market only 3-6% of sold vodkas are flavored (interview with Brand B representative). Therefore the authors wanted to have a more applicable and valid experiment to find out the possible difference in perception of the Brand B, yet the most significant results of this pre-experiment are presented in the empirical findings (see 4.2).

3.2.6.2.1 Reasons for bias in Pre-Experiment

There are several reasons why the first experience can be seen as biased and later referred to as the pre-experience. First some complications regarding the scent-diffuser occurred which may have resulted in weaker validity of the findings. During the pre-experiment the machine did not work perfectly resulting in weaker concentration of the ambience scent than intended. There are several reasons for why the scent was not strong enough; the machine may have been damage prior to the experiment during the transport, resulting in the technical complications concerning the fan diffusing the scent. Further on, the fact that the scent was produced especially for this experiment within 2 weeks, thus much faster than during normal conditions, may also have affected the quality of the scent. One aspect to consider is that the gel containing the scent was dry in the beginning of the experiment as a result of the transport, something that was removed later on for the real experiment. The fact that the concentration of the scent was not ultimate may have influenced the reactions to the scent among the participants negatively since they may not have perceived it enough to even be affected by it.

In order to create a ‘real life situation’ there were three different vodkas presented in the test rooms to make the participants choose between the competing brands. The fact that the experiment was conducted in a ‘real life’ setting implied the use of both pure vodka and flavored among the alternatives for choice, which also contributed to the uneven distribution in terms of choice.

3.2.6.3 Manipulation of Experiment

The experiment was performed at Jönköping University campus and took place during week 49 given the following characteristics. Two separate “rooms” were built on the university campus (see Appendix 6 for a picture), one room for the control group and another room for the experimental group. The two rooms were identical implying that it was impossible to determine which of them that was the experimental room, and which one that was the control room.

The reason for having a control group was to see how much the consumers were influenced by the sensory stimulation, indicating the degree of “manipulation”. It was controlled that no person could take part in the experience in both rooms, implying a between-group design where the participants are exposed to only one condition of the experiment; with or without the scent (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). In comparison, with the use of within-group design the participants would have been exposed to the product both before and after manipulation, which would have resulted in biased answers since the participants would most likely notice the manipulation (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). Moreover, persons knowing the subject of this thesis were not allowed to take part in the experiment, as the authors believe that it would evidently lead to biased results as with within-group design. In order to attract more respondents to the experiment, a lottery was made between the participants with the price being gift vouchers to a local restaurant.

The control room was equipped with a bottle of Brand B vodka product X together with its competing product Y from the same brand. In the experimental room the product X and the competing product Y were presented, as in the control room, but in addition to this, a subtle scent corresponding to the product X was dispersed in the air from a scent diffuser machine. The scent was produced with the aim
to reflect the chosen flavor of the vodka X, in this case blackcurrant. The participants entered the room, one person at a time, and were exposed to these products. Each person was encouraged to analyze the products by looking and touching the bottles presented in the room. However, because of the legal policies concerning alcohol on the campus area no participants were allowed to taste the actual products. In the experiment, the two rooms were placed next to each other as the authors noticed from the pre-experiments that the scent did not disperse outside the room. This positioning of the rooms also assured similarity between the groups as the previous studies (see 3.2.6.1) showed that placing them on different buildings on the campus created heterogeneous groups in terms of age and nationality.

Ensuring that all the other components beside the independent variable were stable was vital for the validity of the experiment. A detail of the attempt to make the rooms as similar as possible was to have wires going to both of the rooms to “hide” the wire of the scent machine in the experimental room. The actual machine was hidden under a table so that it would not be visible for the participants, but would diffuse the scent to the whole room. Consequently, the only difference between the groups was that the experimental group was introduced to the product under the influence of the sensory trigger, scent. This design is referred to as laboratory setting (Saunders et al., 2009). Both the participants in the control group and the experimental group judged the core product and were thereafter asked to describe their experienced sensations and perception of the brand by answering to a questionnaire inside the room.

The fact that the taste stimulus was not present in the experiment reduced the dimensional view on the stimulus to 3-D for the experimental group as the sensory stimulus included sight, smell and touch and to 2-D for the control group since they did not have the smell stimulus. However, the authors believe that the lack of taste did not make significant difference in the results compared to if both rooms would have had the possibility to taste the product as well. This would just have confirmed the stableness and similarity of the experiment in both rooms whereas in this case the effect of scent can be more easily studied without additional independent variables. No additional music was used in the experiment in attempt to create more “real-life” environment for the products since there would not be any music in Systembolaget, the liquor store monopoly in Sweden.

3.2.6.4 Sampling of Experiment

According to Hooley and Hussey (1999) in quantitative analysis the sample size does not have to be measured relative to the population size, as it is the quality and the representativeness of the sample that increases the validity. In addition, the sample size does not have to be as large for frequently purchased products, such as food and drink, since even a small sample will represent the population (West, 1999). The sample size in this experiment was decided by using two techniques, judgment and statistical methods (West, 1999). The statistical “rule of thumb” implies that there should be five respondents per question. Since there were 8 questions in the questionnaire, a suitable sample size would have been 40 respondents per test group. Despite this statistical fact, the authors believed that 60 respondents, 30 in each group, was enough to get valid results and confirmed it by consulting with statistics professor, Thomas Holgersson. In addition, the sample size of 120 from the previous experiment (see 3.2.6.2) reduced the need for a larger amount of participants since those answers could be used in the analysis to some extent. The judgment technique had to consider also the limited time resources left, and therefore the sample size 60 was chosen.

Non-probability sampling method was used to collect the participants to the experiment, more precisely referred to as purposive sampling, implying that the potential participants were selected ‘by hand’ at the point of performance since it was necessary to include a balanced sample that was relevant to the experiment (Williamson, 2002). Extraneous factors are variables that act as independent variables that can affect the dependent variable, though they are hard to control (Smith & Albaum, 2005). Randomization is used in order to reduce the noise of extraneous factors and to assure that the possible
noise is similar in both groups by spreading the effect evenly between the groups (Smith & Albaum, 2005; Patzer, 1996). Since an alcoholic product was involved in the experiment, the authors wished to eliminate eventual noise from people not consuming alcohol for personal reasons, as their attitudes towards alcohol may bias their analysis of the product. Therefore randomization was controlled by asking screening questions to potential participants in order to ensure homogenous groups including only students who consumed alcohol. The questions asked were ‘are you a student?’ and ‘do you consume alcohol?’ thus the known and measurable extraneous variables in the experiment were age, gender and occupation (students). Another aspect to consider is that since students tend to consume a lot of alcohol their attitude concerning alcoholic beverages may affect their perception of the product and result in indifference between brands and absence of brand loyalty when choosing alcoholic beverages. The authors therefore believed that the changes in brand perception could be easy to remark.

3.2.7 Questionnaire Design

To support the experiment, the participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire to describe their relation to the brand. Questionnaires are commonly used for exploratory studies since it is a cost efficient data collection approach resulting in quantitative data, which can be standardized (Saunders et al., 2009). As this data can explain relations between variables and draw conclusion from the relations (Saunders et al., 2009), the use of questionnaire was an essential support for the experiment conducted in this report. The questions can be divided in to opinion, behavioral and attribute variables (Dillman, 2007). The attribute variables describe the background of the respondents, rather what they are than what they do; in the questionnaire these were age and gender. The other questions were opinion variables thus the most important for this questionnaire as they measure the respondents’ feelings related to the brand, making it possible to see the actual perception (Dillman, 2007).

To test the variables and hypothesis of the questionnaire, which in this case was to see if the brand perception changes positively when respondents are exposed to sensory stimuli, the design of the questionnaire was a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions as well as questions in the form of scale ranking. The open-ended questions were included in order to get more qualitative data in addition to standardized result from questionnaire (Creswell, 2003). Open-ended questions do not have options to choose from thus they aim at gaining spontaneous answers from the respondents (Brace, 2008). Spontaneous questions are often used to gain knowledge of brand awareness and attitudes towards a brand (Brace, 2008) thus the use of them is relevant for this report to get the respondent’s impression of the experiment; an example of this design was question 5 (see Appendix 2). All the other questions were closed-ended questions, where the respondents were given choices to answer. Using closed-ended questions reduced time used on and increased the convenience of answering and later on processing the data (Brace, 2008). However, Brace argues that using closed-ended questions can be misleading to biased results if suitable categories for answers are not provided. Therefore in this report closed-ended questions, more specifically scaling questions were used, as rating scales is the most accurate manner to measure brand perception (Brace, 2008).

In order to measure the respondent’s attitude towards the brand a Likert scale was included in the questionnaire (Kumar, 2005). It is a five-point scale to measure the level of agreement of statement varying from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” where each of the statements were of the same importance (Wrenn, Stevens & Loudon, 2006, Kumar 2005). In the questionnaire, the question 8 was constructed on a Likert scale to analyze the respondents’ image of the brand and their relation to it.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is likely that I will purchase <strong>Brand B</strong> within the near future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

The questionnaire had a semantic differential scale to see how the respondents’ perceive the brand on a scale where opposite alternatives are given at the end of scales (Brace, 2008). When giving the two alternatives, bias is reduced as the respondents take both options into account instead of agreeing or disagreeing with statement (Brace, 2008). It is important not to place all the “positive” adjectives on one side of the scale since the respondents might answer in the same way by habit which would lead to bias (McBeath, 1992).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Feminine</th>
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<th>☐</th>
<th>☐</th>
<th>☐</th>
<th>☐</th>
<th>☐</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
</tr>
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Both of the scales, Likert and semantic differential, were done on a five-point scale, as it is sufficient enough to distinguish between alternatives and by using an odd number there is a so-called midpoint, which can be useful if the respondents do not have a specific preference or opinion (Brace, 2008; Wrenn et al., 2006). Using a seven-point scale might have increased the strength of the direction, however, the authors thought that a five-point scale was sufficient, and more time-efficient.

As the questionnaire was handed in to the respondents directly at the experiment the reliability increased and non-response could be limited to great extent (Saunders et al., 2009). This is called self-administrated questionnaire, which is an effective way to reduce bias and to get relevant sampling (Oppenheim, 2001). The authors believed that having a questionnaire beside the experiment helped to understand the factors affecting brand perception as well as to measure the actual difference in brand perception between the two test groups. Since the questionnaire was conducted at place of the experiment the respondents still had the experiment in their fresh memory and their intuitive feelings could be recorded.

### 3.2.7.1 Pilot Questionnaire

The authors conducted a pilot study in order to test the questionnaire before performing the real experiment. This was done in order to refine the questions and to get an understanding of the ease or difficulty of filling out the questionnaire. In addition, the pilot study helped to approximate the time it takes to fill out the form and to discover eventual difficulties encountered by the participants (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). By conducting a pilot study the validity and reliability of the questionnaire could also be increased (Saunders et al., 2009).

In order to get an as accurate picture as possible the pilot study was performed by handing out questionnaires to five randomly picked persons at the university campus in Jönköping. The test participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire form as if they would have participated in the real experiment. As the pilot study could not be conducted together with the experiment, the participants were instead provided with a short introduction of how the experiment should have been carried out. In the cases where the persons could not recall the vodka from Brand B the authors showed them a
picture of the bottle and the logotype. The pilot study did not include any kind of experiment, which caused insufficient information to get any relevant result out of the questionnaire. However, the actual findings of the pilot study were not of any importance as the objective was to assess the clarity and the structure of the questions.

As intended with the final questionnaire, the participants in the study received the questionnaire together with a cover page explaining the process of answering. The authors wanted to see whether these instructions were clear enough or if sufficient information was provided for understanding the structure and design of the questions. Therefore, no interventions were made during the time the participants were writing. Once the questionnaires were filled in, the participants were asked to describe how they perceived the questions. The remarks of the test-persons were noticed, and considered when refining the final questionnaire. Refining the questionnaire in this manner is important, as it will diminish the level of eventual bias in the real experiment. In addition, after conducting the pilot study with the questionnaire, it was sent to the company whose product was used in the experiment. The company’s research department in the USA went through the questionnaire and sent their suggestion of changes. However, the authors found the new version to be non-coherent for the purpose of the study and applied the original questionnaire with additional changes adapted from the feedback.

As described in 3.2.6.1, pilot experiments were conducted, which implied that the questionnaire was also tested several times. The authors changed the original choice of having three different vodka brands to having only Brand B with two different flavors, which consequently affected the design of the questionnaire. The final version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2 and the previous one’s first page in Appendix 3, which included the same pages as Appendix 2.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Study

‘No experiment can be perfectly controlled’ (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p.21) nevertheless, the authors tried to control the threats affecting the validity to the greatest extent possible. Important to remember is that eliminating noise in one factor can result in increased noise in another factor leading to in an increased total error. Ensuring a high validity thus implies striving for a minimum of the total error (Smith & Albaum, 2005). Robson (2002, p.101) refers to reliability as the ‘stability and consistency with which we measure something’. Reliability and validity are closely related, however, a highly reliable measure is not a guarantee for high validity (Reuman, 1982).

3.3.1 Validity and Reliability of Experiment

When conducting an experiment it is vital to assure a high credibility of the results implying that the data is unbiased and appropriate to the purpose of the experiment (Smith & Albaum, 2005). Validity is divided into two main categories; internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the validity of the results obtained within the frame of the experiment, whilst external validity concerns the degree to which the results can be generalized (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005). The external validity is discussed in 3.3.3.

Internal validity concerns whether the independent variable X (scent) and the dependent variable Y (perception) are causally related (Smith & Albaum, 2005). According to Smith and Albaum the experiment is internally valid when the change in the dependent variable is solely due to the independent variable and not resulting from extraneous variables. As mentioned in 3.2.6, ensuring that all the other components beside the independent variable are stable is thus vital for the validity of the experiment. In order to assure a high validity of the experiment, the only thing that differed between the two rooms was the independent variable; the ambient scent. In addition, the eventual effects of extraneous variables should be equally distributed between the control group and the experimental group to ensure validity (Gliner & Morgan, 2000).
The test groups should be as similar as possible to assure a stable and comparable environment eliminating systematic bias due to differences among the participants (Smith & Albaum, 2005). As the authors wished to have homogenous groups, they asked two screening questions to the persons intending to take part in the experiment to eliminate bias due to atypical characteristics. Error and bias in the findings was therefore minimized by the use of screening questions related to the attitude of alcohol, see 3.2.6.4 (Smith & Albaum, 2005). This was an attempt to control that the respondents were to some extent consumers of alcoholic beverages to eliminate the “noise” of the persons not drinking alcohol. Since the purpose of the experiment was to investigate the change in brand perception, which is closely linked to brand loyalty, non-consumers were therefore excluded from the study as they will never become loyal to a brand representing something that is against their values, thus the eventual change in brand perception linked to these persons was not relevant.

Further on, the control group and the experimental group should not communicate with each other as their way of answering can be influenced (Creswell, 2003). Informing the participants that they were not allowed to discuss with their friends who intended to perform the experiment was a way to control this issue. Moreover, persons knowing the subject of investigation were not allowed to take part in the experiment, as the authors believe that it would evidently lead to biased findings due to their knowledge. In addition, the validity was further strengthened by the use of between-group design implying that none of the participants were exposed to the product both before and after the manipulation, as the use of within-groups would imply biased answers when the participants would be noticing the manipulation (Gliner & Morgan, 2000).

The risk associated to misinterpreting the questionnaires was minimized by careful design of the questions, which were tested by conducting a pilot study (see 3.2.7.1). As the participants in the experiment were randomly chosen at the place for the experiment and the participation was voluntary the risk of people dropping out during the experiment was consequently minimized implying a low mortality rate (Smith & Albaum, 2005). Another factor that reduced mortality was that each participant spent less than 5 minutes completing the experiment, including the questionnaire hence the motives for finishing the questionnaires outweighed the motives for dropping out.

Another threat to the internal validity was the hour of the day as the mood of the participants during different times of a day may change. The mood of the participants may affect the associations to the product in the sense that one person may be tired in the morning hence associate negatively to alcohol related products. In addition, whether the participants were going to party that day, or had a party the day before can be seen as an extraneous factor as alcohol often is related to partying. Therefore the authors attempted to control this by performing the experiment during a whole day. Another aspect to consider was the fact that most of the participants were students who tend to have a strong connection to alcohol, which was controlled by conducting the experiment at the university campus, which is to be seen as a neutral place. The option to conduct the experiment in an alcohol related area such as Systembolaget, liquor store monopoly in Sweden, or a bar was replaced by conducting the experiment in a neutral place to avoid obvious connections to alcohol linked to the point of purchase. Conducting the experiment in a neutral place hence increased the validity of the findings since the “true” brand perception rather than perception of alcohol in general was revealed. The fact that the experiment took place in Sweden and the language chosen for the questionnaire was English may have influenced the results, but as the all of the participants were students at Jönköping University they were expected to have a sufficient level of English hence the authors believe that the risk of misinterpretation of the questions because of the language could almost be eliminated.

### 3.3.2 Validity and Reliability of Interview

To ensure a high validity of the outcome from the qualitative study of the phenomenon sensory branding, the authors chose to conduct interviews. In line with the principle of triangulation implying the use of two or more sources of data collection within the same study (Saunders et al., 2009) two
persons were interviewed as more than one angle of the problem implies a stronger credibility of the outcome (Creswell, 2003). As the authors had been in contact with the interviewees during a long period of time prior to the actual interview, a high level of trust was created between the participants minimizing the risk of mortality. However, informing the interviewees about the interview in advance and deciding a time for the meeting further decreased the risk of the interviewees dropping out. Both of the interviews were conducted face-to-face thus implying physical meeting with the interviewees. The authors claim that conducting this type of interview strongly increases the validity of the results because the aspect of misunderstanding can be diminished by clarification of the misunderstandings during the discussion. The fact that there was a physical presence also made it possible to evaluate body language and the reactions of the interviewees, which strengthened the credibility of the findings.

Even though both of the interviewees were Finnish, Swedish is their native language. Therefore both interviews were performed in Swedish and the results were later summarized in English since it is more appropriate to conduct the interviews in the native language and afterward translate the results into the research language (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). The authors however believe that the eventual bias due to translation did not influence the findings significantly, as the underlying meanings of the interviewees could still be completely comprehended in line with the purpose of conducting the interviews. Both interviews were audio-recorded given the interviewees permission and the validity was consequently increased as the answers could be reviewed several times, which was useful during the transcription (Saunders et al, 2009). Recording the interviews also increased the quality of the results as it helped eliminating loss of information, misinterpretation and avoided disagreement of the answers between the authors. Despite the audio recording, both of the authors wrote notes during the interviews, which were used as the primary source for findings whereas the audio recording was used as a back up to remember all the aspect of the interviews. Nevertheless, if there had been a problem with the technical equipment, the handwritten notes would have covered from the data loss.

An additional threat to the validity was that the author’s guidance of the interview might have affected the outcome negatively if the expected answers would have been different as a result of the intervention by the interviewers. This was controlled by avoiding leading questions and by designing an interview structure and letting the interviewee elaborate freely when answering. Another important aspect to consider was that when analyzing the results from an interview the interviewers interpret the answers from their personal frame of references, which may threaten the objectivity of the answers, hence might bias the outcome (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005).

### 3.3.3 External Validity

External validity refers to generalizing the results to be applicable in another environment (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It is used in addition to internal validity to confirm whether the independent variable was the reason for change in the dependent variable thus generalization is more used with quantitative data. To make generalization possible it is crucial to decide carefully who to include in the experiment and how the respondents are selected (Bryman & Bell, 2007), as they have to represent the population in order for the results to be externally valid (Saunders et al., 2009).

From an external point of view, the fact that the experiment was conducted at the campus, in a so-called laboratory settings (Saunders et al. 2009) could influence the generalization negatively. The experiment participants were only students, in order to have homogenous groups and these students were randomly chosen at the place of the experiment (see 3.2.6.4). Using only students as respondents can imply that generalizing beyond the test group might not be valid. According to Ferguson and Mook (1983) theory testing should be the goal when conducting an experiment, instead of building an external validity. The reason for this is that the theory itself can be generalized into every-day life, which decreases the need for the actual experiment to be generalized. Therefore the authors claim that the experiment is also of external validity when conducted in laboratory settings since after all, the theory can be generalized (Gilbert, Fiske & Gardner, 1998) and the purpose of the experiment was to
investigate the causal link between sensory branding and brand perception derived from theory. This was done by testing the hypothesis H1: ‘the adding of a scent changes the brand perception positively’.

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the results statistically from the questionnaire the authors decided to use Statistical Package for the Social Science data software, known as SPSS. The answers were separated into the two test groups, control and experimental, to assure the ease of comparison between them.

Before transferring the results to the computer system, the questionnaires had to be manually confirmed to find out whether all the answers could be used in the analysis (West, 1999). There are three main steps involved in the process to assure quality analysis, defining categories, editing and coding, and tabulation (Smith & Albaum, 2005). The defining of categories has already been done in the questionnaire design section (see 3.2.7), however, additional definition was needed for open-ended question to find similarities between them as they are not transferrable to SPSS. By editing the questions the authors found out whether all the questions were answered and rejected the blank answers and sheets. In addition, the accuracy and clarity of the responses had to be verified manually so that they were consistent with the questionnaire content (Smith & Albaum, 2005; West, 1999). The coding process consists of giving answers and variables numerical correspondences. This can be applied also for open-ended questions where coding is used to find the most frequent answers (Smith & Albaum, 2005; West, 1999). Moreover, before entering the data into SPSS, an Excel sheet with the coded variables and measures was generated to make the transferring to SPSS easier and more accurate. This process is called tabulation, which helps to “clean” the data from outliers (Smith & Albaum, 2005). The tabulation process is the first step in the actual analysis of the data.

Therefore, to be able to use the SPSS software, the answers of the questionnaire were conducted into numerical presentation. For example, question 3 (see Appendix 2) options of the choice of vodka were turned into 1 and 2 to correspond each of the options. The same process was done for all the questions that could be quantified. Two of the scaling questions, questions 4 and 6, were already numerical and the other two, questions 7 and 8, were turned into numerical measurement by converting them into a scale from 1 to 5 to enable the transformation of the data to SPSS to be analyzed. The category variables, concerning age and gender, were used to classify whether there was a noticeable difference between the groups.

The authors wished to have graphical presentation, since it allowed having clearer understanding of the variance of the answers. According to Jacoby (1997) having a graphical presentation is critical for description of the statistics (Smith & Albaum, 2005). To be able to draw graphs, statistical measures of central tendency and dispersion were used to transfer the data into a graphical presentation (Smith & Albaum, 2005). The used measurement of central tendency was the mean value, whereas for dispersion, variance and standard deviation were calculated. These measurements are all descriptive statistics (Aczel & Sounderpandian, 2006). In addition, bivariate statistics were used by performing a t-test. T-test was used to compare the mean values and to test whether the hypotheses could be accepted or rejected. Since the standard deviation of the population was not know, the standard deviation of a sample was used assuming normal distribution when conducting the t-test (Aczel & Sounderpandian, 2006). More specifically, an independent-samples t-test was used to compare the two sets of measurement, control and experimental group to see whether there existed a difference between them. A confidence interval of 90% was used to test the accuracy of the hypotheses. Before comparing the mean values, Levene’s test results were controlled to see if there existed equality of variance between the groups, implying a value equal or less then 0,1 was a sign of equality and more than 0,1 illustrated non-equal variance. Based on this equality, the choice for testing the mean values was decided. If the p-value was equal or smaller than 0,10, the mean values had significant difference between the groups.
In addition, correlations between two variables were tested to see whether some of the variables were related to each other, such as if one variable was positive, it affected that another variable was seen as positive as well and there was a link between this choice. In other words, a correlation coefficient was used to test the strength of the relationship between two variables (Pallant, 2009). The correlation coefficient can vary between -1 and 1, with zero implying no relation between variables. According to Cohen (1988) the strength of a correlation from 0,1 to 0,29 illustrates a small correlation, 0,3-0,49 medium, and 0,5-1,0 indicates a large correlation. The negative or positive sign defines the direction of the relationship (Pallant, 2009).
4 Empirical Findings

This section presents the empirical data collected from the interview and the results from the questionnaires related to the experiment.

4.1 Results from Interview

An interview with Antti Pasila was performed in order to get insight of the sensory marketing and where it stands in today’s market. In the following chapter the results from the interview are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date &amp; Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antti Pasila</td>
<td>Ideair</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>16.11.2009 Helsinki</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Interview for Empirical findings

‘The main argument for investing in sensory branding is the emotional aspect’ (Pasila, 2009)

According to Pasila, it is after the year 2000 that the phenomenon of sensory branding started to expand globally, and he believes that it is growing at fast increasing rate. Pasila explains that today sensory branding is more developed in the United States and that it still exists to a relatively smaller extent in Europe. Nevertheless, Pasila argues that the future of this market looks very positive since many brands understood the benefits of emphasising their scent and started to add this element to their marketing strategy.

‘The number of companies using sensory marketing will increase significantly as the technology has made it less expensive and more cost-effective for companies to apply it’ (Pasila, 2009)

The process of producing a brand specific signature scent can both take time and be costly. However, Pasila claims that it is a good investment since once produced, it can be used in all of the stores belonging to the brand, in case of several points of purchase. Today, high qualitative ambiance scents cost relatively little compared to before, and Pasila argues that sensory branding is a way to obtain loyal consumers, increase perceived quality and change the positive picture of the company. For example, adding a scent can make a brand appear more luxury. Ultimately, a five dimensional sensory involvement should be implemented, even if it is not a necessity. Further on, he believes that if a sensory element such as a smell is used to strengthen a brand image rather than just a pleasant atmosphere, as many of the sensory components as possible should be considered.

Pasila highlight the importance of congruency between a smell and believes that as long as the ‘correct’ smell is used, it will always stimulate a positive response to the brand perception. It is thus important that the smell used in the marketing campaign, or in a store, is closely related to the other aspects of the brand such as the logo or other visual elements since that it will help consumers identify the brand and connect to it. However, an important aspect to consider is that when exposed to a scent, the consumers will get higher expectations thus the product needs to be able to respond to these expectations if the brand perceptions should increase. Whether a scent is infinite or needs to be updated depends on the brand, but he does not see a problem in updating the smell to adjust it to the market and explains that while there are some scents that can not be changed without destroying the brand, other scents should
in contrast be updated from time to time to remain attractive. Chanel no.5 is an example of an infinite scent that can never be changed.

Another important aspect to consider is the cultural differences associated to smell and customer preferences should be understood before introducing a scent. For example, Pasila believes that it can be dangerous to introduce a scent of vanilla in the northern countries where they prefer natural scents since it may destroy the image and associations to the brand. Thus, it is important that the brand message, image, and visuals get analyzed carefully in order to match them against the scent.

‘Not knowing your consumers is one of the biggest risks involved in using scent marketing’ (Pasila, 2009)

According to Pasila a scent can easily attract customer and he gave an example of the use of coffee scent in a supermarket. If the smell of a coffee cannot be related to a specific brand in the coffee shelf, it cannot differentiate from its competitors. Therefore additional audiovisual marketing efforts should be done in order for the customers to recognize the brand sending sensory stimuli. The aspect of manipulation is not worrying Pasila as he believes that all marketing is some kind of manipulation and that it would not be required if no one else employed it.

4.2 Results from Pre-Experiment

Despite the attempts to conduct the experiment with three equivalent vodka brands, an important difference in brand awareness between the chosen vodka brands was revealed throughout the testing. In fact, the Russian vodka, Brand C, had a remarkable superiority in terms of brand recognition resulting in a majority of the participants choosing that brand without considerations. The claim that this choice is based on brand awareness can be supported by the question concerning explanation of choice where 51.5% of the persons answered that they choose Brand C because of familiarity to the brand whereas only 15.2% of the participants choosing Brand B motivated their choice with brand familiarity. In addition to the answers in the questionnaires several participants commented that they did not know the Brand B and that they never tried it, which confirms the lack of brand knowledge. Further on, the price estimation of the products pointed out the superiority of the Russian brand, which was evaluated 14 SEK more expensive than its retail price at Systembolaget, whereas the prices for the Swedish vodka Brand A, and Brand B were respectively 11 and 24 SEK less than their retail price. The most remarkable difference is in the price estimation of Brand B (see Table 3 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimated Price</th>
<th>Price at Systembolaget</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand A</td>
<td>187,6819</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>-11,3181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand B</td>
<td>220,87585</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>-24,12415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand C</td>
<td>233,1278</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>14,1278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Price estimation

Despite the problems with the choice of products some interesting findings from this experiment were observed, which are presented in Table 4 below. In general people chose more Brand B in the experimental group than in the control even though Brand C still dominated the choice in both groups. However, as the purpose of this study was to see if there was a change in brand perception with the use of sensory branding the results were not enough to fulfill the purpose if this study since the real brand perception of the Brand B brand could not be noticed with the presence of ‘superior’ brand. In Table 4 the most distinctive differences are marked and even though the results are not to be seen as the main source for the final analysis, some of the results can be analyzed and used to understand the effects of sensory branding.
### Table 4. Mean values from pre-experiment

Based on the Levene’s test for variances, non-equal variances for the variables were assumed, with exceptions of ‘taste and flavour’ (p=0.038), ‘tempting vs. forbidden’ (p=0.063), and ‘recognizable taste’ (p=0.083). A clear pattern in the mean values of the variables between the groups could not be found, neither to positive nor negative direction. However, the significant differences found from the experiment were promotion, exotic versus ordinary, feminine versus masculine, appealing versus unattractive, attachment to the brand, success, and future. The figures for these differences can be found in Appendix 7.

The mean values from the significant differences explain the direction of the perception (see Table 4). Brand B vodka was perceived more appealing in the experimental group than in the control group and the purchase intention Brand B vodka in the future was higher in the experimental group. The experimental group thought that promotion was more important when buying Brand B vodka than the control group did. Further on, the participants in the experimental group felt more attached to the brand and involved in the success of Brand B. Interestingly, the control group believed that Brand B vodka was feminine and the experimental group, subject to the smell, found Brand B vodka more masculine. The biggest difference between the two groups was concerning exotic versus ordinary where Brand B vodka was perceived as more exotic in the control group.

#### 4.3 Results from Experiment

Below, the results from the experiment are presented and illustrated in tables and graphs derived from independent sampling t-test of SPSS. The results are presented according to the test groups, zero (0) corresponding to the Control Group and one (1) to the Experimental Group, in order to show the difference between the two groups. Further on, the significant results based on accepting or rejecting the null-hypothesis are highlighted and presented.

The use of a random sample resulted in an uneven distribution between men and women within the two groups. Consequently there were more women than men represented in both the control group, and the experimental group. In total, there were 58,1% women and 41,9% men in the experiment. Between the groups, there were 61,3% women and 38,7% men in the control group whereas there were 54,8% women and 45,2% men in the experimental group. Nevertheless, there was a relatively similar gender distribution between the groups as illustrated in Figure 9.

![Figure 9. Gender distribution](image-url)
When comparing the mean values for the two groups based on the questionnaire a difference in brand perception was noticed in all of the questions tested during the experiment (see table 5). The answers of the experimental group differed from those of the control group throughout the entire questionnaire, however, determining the direction of the cause was in some cases not evident since some of the questions, such as exotic vs. ordinary is not necessarily negative, nor positive, but rather depending on the receivers personal frame of reference of how exotic and ordinary is perceived (see layout of questionnaire in Appendix 2.) The results that from a general perspective can be interpreted as *positive* for the experimental group are presented in table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>1,5700</td>
<td>1,1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak-Superior</td>
<td>2,8710</td>
<td>3,1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste and Flavor</td>
<td>4,0323</td>
<td>4,3226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempting-Forbidden</td>
<td>2,8621</td>
<td>2,7742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior-Mediocre</td>
<td>3,1290</td>
<td>2,5484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural-Artificial</td>
<td>2,9677</td>
<td>2,5484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-priced-Expensive</td>
<td>2,9000</td>
<td>3,0645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing-Unattractive</td>
<td>2,5484</td>
<td>2,4194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle Design</td>
<td>3,6452</td>
<td>3,8387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>2,7419</td>
<td>3,0323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>2,9032</td>
<td>3,1613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3,6774</td>
<td>3,9355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>2,3871</td>
<td>2,7079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>1,9032</td>
<td>2,1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>3,2581</td>
<td>3,8710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase intention</td>
<td>2,9677</td>
<td>3,0647</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Mean Values of findings from the experiment

### 4.3.1 Comparison of Mean Values

Each question in the questionnaire is in this section referred to as a hypothesis to be accepted or rejected. To test the hypothesis independent samples $t$-tests were conducted. Before comparing the equality of the means, the variation of the groups was tested by Levene’s test. The test showed results over the significant level of 0,1 for all the other variables except ‘choice of the vodka’ and ‘liking of the sound’. This implies that equal variances could be assumed only for these two variables while all the other variables *did not* have equal variances between the groups, which showed that there was a difference in the size of the intervals between the groups. The hypotheses testing was conducted based on 90% confidence interval, implying that variables that had a $p$-value equal or below 0,1 were accepted whereas the ones with a $p$-value larger than 0,1 were not significant on the basis of the equality of the mean values.
The question concerning choice did only include two variables, which explains why the variance was equal between the groups. As can be seen from the Figure 10 above, there was a significant difference between the choices of vodkas from Brand B ($t(59) = -3.203, p=0.002$). The choice number 1 represents the flavour blackcurrant and choice number 2 represents cranberry flavoured vodka from the same brand. In the control room, the choice between the flavours was relatively equal even though cranberry was slightly more preferred. In the experimental room, which had a congruent smell of blackcurrant, the preference for blackcurrant was evidently higher. The mean value of choice was 1.57 in the control group and 1.19 in the experimental group implying a preference for blackcurrant.

Figure 10. Choice of product

A grouped bar graph was derived in order to test whether there was a noticeable difference between the choice of vodka, test group and gender. The figures correspond to; gender (1= man (blue), 2= woman (purple)); choice (1=blackcurrant, 2=cranberry); test group (0=control, 1=experimental). In the control group men had no preference of the vodka whilst women preferred cranberry. When comparing to the experimental group, a clear shift from relatively equal preference of vodkas to blackcurrant can be noticed. For men the preference doubled from 23.1% to 46.2% choosing blackcurrant in the experimental group whereas for women the change was slightly smaller yet noticeable as can be seen from the graph 11. Nevertheless, the difference in the choice was evident as stated in figure 10, but from this graph the effect of gender is more visible.

Figure 11. Relation between test group, choice and gender
In addition, other variables that showed significant difference in their variances were *importance of brand* (t(54.07)= 1.927, p =0.059), *importance of design* (t(58.81)= 2.414, p=0.019), positioning between *superior versus mediocre quality* (t(59.54)= -2.695, p=0.009), ‘*natural vs. artificial*’ (t(59.98)= -1.958, p=0.055), and *trustworthiness* of the brand (t(59.24)= 2.977, p =0.004). The graphs illustrating the differences can be found in the Appendix 7. By looking at the mean values of these significant attributes one can identify the direction of the change in the perception between the groups. The experimental group thought that the brand was more important when choosing vodka with a mean of 3.3571, which differed a lot from the mean of the control group 2.8000. The importance of the design of a bottle was also higher in the experimental group indicated by the mean of 3.8387 to compare with the mean in the control group of 3.6452. Further on the quality was perceived as higher in the experimental group where the mean value of 2.5484 indicated that the brand was perceived to have superior quality whilst the mean value of 3.1290 in the control group pointed towards more mediocre quality. The vodka in the experimental room was also perceived as more natural than artificial with a mean of 2.5484 in the experimental group and a mean of 2.9677 in the control group. Finally, the trustworthiness of the brand increased in the experimental group where the mean value was 3.8710 compared to the control group mean of 3.2851.

![Figure 12. Superior vs. Mediocre Quality](image1)

![Figure 13. Natural vs. Artificial](image2)

**4.3.2 Relationship between Variables**

A Spearman correlation rank test was conducted in order to find out whether the different variables had a correlation, in other words any relation with each other. The variables showing a strong or medium correlation (see 3.4) are described below. The correlation was significant if the one-tailed p-value was less than 0.01 and the strength of it was then evaluated based on a scale from 0 to 1.

The strongest correlation was noticed between positive attitude towards the brand and the perceived quality compared to competitors. The more superior the brand was perceived the more positive was the attitude as well. Also the purchase intention of Brand B increased when the brand was perceived more positive. The most surprising strong positive correlation was between the positive attitude and sound of pouring the vodka.
Further on, a correlation was found between the perception attributes Exotic-Ordinary and Trendy-Traditional (see Table 6) implying that when the Brand B was perceived as exotic it was also seen as trendy. Similarly, when the brand was perceived to be ordinary it was as well perceived more traditional. In addition, a correlation was found between exotic and feminine and between their opposites ordinary and masculine. An interesting finding was that the attribute trendy-traditional did not follow the same pattern as the other attributes in relation to the adding of a scent. When scent was added, the brand was perceived as more exotic and feminine, but surprisingly, the brand appeared more traditional. In effect, the factors; exotic, feminine, and traditional were dominant in the experimental room whereas ordinary, masculine, and trendy were more frequently associated to the brand in the control room.

### 4.3.3 Open-Ended Question

The experiment revealed an interesting difference between the two test groups in terms of brand associations. The participants were asked to describe the Brand B with three words, which yielded the following results, listed in table 7 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasty</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish/Finland</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design/Nice bottle</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/Vodka</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheap</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear/Clean</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Most frequent words associated to Brand B
5 Analysis

In this section the results from empirical findings are analyzed and applied on the theoretical framework and the hypothesis of this study is tested based on the empirical results. The analysis of the interview is combined with the analysis of experiment in the section 5.3.

5.1 Analysis of Pre-experiment

It can be argued that Brand B vodka does not have well-established brand knowledge among the persons performing the experiment, or for Swedish people in general. An important factor to consider when evaluating the results is that there were a great variety of nationalities among the participants, which may have influenced the findings. Since Brand B vodka is a Nordic brand with its major market share in the east of Europe, the brand awareness may diminish outside of Europe. Yet, even among Swedish students the brand awareness seems to be relatively low given the outcome of the experiment (see 4.3). The bias related to cultural aspects should not be neglected, since the personal frame of references varies among individuals, and cultures, resulting in different perception of the same input of stimulus. For example, the flavor blackcurrant might have been interpreted as ordinary by Nordic students, and as exotic by foreign students, since the taste blackcurrant may not be common within their frame of references. Since the participants were chosen randomly there was a larger distribution of foreign students participating in the control group, thus one can assume that this could be an explanation for the exotic perception of Brand B blackcurrant in the control group in the pre-experiment.

In fact, according to the global marketing manager of Brand B, only between 3 to 6% of the vodka sold in the global market is flavored, implies that the market for flavored vodka is still relatively unexplored. It was thus natural for the participants to choose pure, non-flavored, vodka since they might have been more familiar to it. Consequently, the authors believe that the fact that there were both flavored vodka represented in the experiment and non-flavored resulted in biased results. Brand C can be seen as ‘noise’ in the study since the aim is to examine the change in brand perception of Brand B vodka, which was hard having the focus on Brand C.

5.2 Analysis of Experiment

The hypothesis H1: “The adding of a scent changes the brand perception positively” cannot be measured as a change in a single variable, as perception is a sum of the associations related to the brand in the mind of the consumer (see 1.4). Therefore the rejecting or accepting of the hypothesis is based on a sum of the analysis of the relevant variables.

5.2.1 Choice

The variable choice of the vodka revealed a significant preference of product X when scent was introduced. The mean between control and experimental group differed from 1,57 to 1,19, which was the most significant change in the whole experiment (see 4.2.1). This indicates that the adding of a scent indeed had an effect on the choice between product X, blackcurrant and Y, cranberry. In the control group the distribution of choice was relatively similar, however women seemed to prefer the product Y, whereas men were indifferent between the flavors. An interesting aspect was that both men and women seemed to be influenced by the scent; however, the difference was more noticeable among the men (Figure 11). Surprisingly, by the results, it seems that men preferred the smell of blackcurrant more than women. However, generalizations that men are more affected by the scent cannot be drawn, as this is dependable also from the type of the scent.
Branding in the air

Suhonen & Tengvall, 2009

A parallel from the choice of the flavors can be drawn to impulse buying behavior (see 2.4.3) since even though there was no purchase involved in the experiment, the test clearly indicates that the persons in the scented room differed compared to the control room regarding the choice of vodka. One can therefore argue that scent affects the preference in terms of choice and that if applied in a retail context the use of a product-specific scent would attract consumers’ attention and influence their purchase decision. This is thus one of the most critical findings, since it shows that sensory branding, in this case scent, can be used to affect the buying behavior of consumers when they are faced by choices between several products.

5.2.2 Attributes

In the experiment, the importance of taste and flavor was similar to the pre-experiment, with a total mean of 4.18. Interestingly, the participants in the scented room ranked the importance of taste higher than their friends in the control room and they also believed that Brand B was more recognizable from its taste. The increasing importance of taste in the scented room can be connected to the adding of the scent of blackcurrant. Since scent and taste are closely related and used in combination when determining taste (see 2.4.1.2) the scent of blackcurrant might have evoked associations of the taste of blackcurrant, and affected the perception of the taste for the participants. Even without tasting the actual product, a person that reads the word ‘blackcurrant’ and sense the smell of blackcurrant, while exposed to a drink, is likely to assume the drink to taste of blackcurrant following the principles of congruency (see 2.4.4) As a consequence of these associations, it can be argued that the participants ranked the general importance of taste higher, even if the question was not directly linked to blackcurrant.

Despite the fact that not all of the variables showed significant difference in their mean values, there was a difference in all the mean values (see 4.3). This indicates that the participants were affected by the sensory stimulus, in this case the scent of blackcurrant, since the direction was positive for all variables in the sense that the experimental group had a significant movement in the mean values towards positive attributes. In addition, the variables that could not be categorized as “positive” were nevertheless moving in the same direction as the variables categorized as positive. Therefore, it can be assumed that the reason for this change is the use of scent and that scent generally affected the respondents positively. One should not compare only the mean values where there was a significant difference, but it is also important to analyze the actual values of all the means and evaluate their position on the scale (from one to five, see 3.4). This is important, since the actual brand perception can be evaluated from the mean value and it gives an indication of the level of brand knowledge including brand awareness, brand image and associations to the brand.

The answers from the question concerning the perceived quality of Brand B relative to other vodka brands revealed a significant difference in the mean values between the test groups, where the results were more positive in the experimental room. However, when looking at the actual mean values (2.87 in control) (3.13 in experiment) it can be claimed that the overall brand image of Brand B among the participants was relatively low compared to its competitors. In fact, in the control group the quality of the brand was perceived to be below three (3) implying that the perceived quality of Brand B was below “average”. In the experimental group, on the other hand, the mean value was slightly above the average implying a stronger perception of the quality. Since the participants were Swedish students, it can be argued that the lack of brand knowledge is correlated to the Swedish nationality and that Swedish persons in general do not have strong associations to the Brand B that may have resulted in a lower perception of the quality. Another reason why the quality was perceived poor was the age of the participants. The average age in the control group was 23.11 and 21.48 in the experimental group. Since the participants were relatively young, their brand preferences may not have been well developed and established yet. In line with the theory, the last question (number 8) regarding smashability indicated all a positive change between the groups. Positive, in this context refers to that the elements involved in strengthening the smashability were perceived as more recognizable to the brand. Even though no actual
smashability testing was done it can be claimed that these attributes were seen as more central when the scent was present. If Brand B would communicate the product specific scent of blackcurrant, and make it uniquely associated to their brand, their smashability would increase resulting in a stronger bond with their consumers (see 2.4.4.1).

When comparing the results from the two groups concerning the product related and non-product related attributes the difference in the ranking of the importance was remarkable (see Appendix 7). Not surprisingly, ‘taste and flavor’ was the most important attribute in both of the groups (table 5). Further on, both groups believe that quality is important which is also understandable, however, the control group ranked price as the second most important attribute whereas the experiment ranked quality and brand before price. This certainly indicates that there is a possibility to increase prices for persons exposed to a sensory stimulus, since price seems to be of less importance to these persons. A probable assumption is that persons subject to a sensory stimulus disregarded the price as a result of increased focused on other attributes, triggered by the senses. In line with this theory, the quality, as well as the brand, were more important for the experimental group. Therefore, it can be argued that when the stimulus is congruent to the brand, the brand image becomes stronger and consequently, the brand becomes increasingly important to the consumers.

The results from open-ended questions revealed that in both groups the most common named characteristics of Brand B were ‘strong’, ‘Finland’ and ‘tasty’, which were mentioned equally between the groups. These can be seen as the general brand image of Brand B, which explains why both of the groups associated these features to the brand. Interestingly, there was a significant difference in perception concerning the other associations. The overall tone in the control group was cold, describing a ‘realistic’ evaluation of the brand, whereas the response from the experiment group was warmer and seemed to include feelings in their judgement rather describing the desired values of Brand B. This confirms previously described differences in perception related to a sensory stimulus.

The words mentioned in the control group included alcohol, cheap, drunk and sweet and even the word disgusting was mentioned. In the scented room, on the other hand, common words were instead nice design/bottle, traditional, interesting and tempting and the words juicy, fruity and forest were mentioned. What is interesting is that no one in the control room perceived the brand as ‘tempting’ and no one in the experimental room described it as ‘cheap’. These answers clearly points out the differences between the groups in terms of perception and can be directly linked to the adding of a congruent scent, in this case blackcurrant. It can be argued that the adding of a congruent scent to one of the products increased the perception of the brand as whole.

5.2.3 Brand Knowledge

The persons in the experiment that were subject to manipulation in terms of scent, reacted positively to the sensory stimulus. In five attributes the difference was significant, nevertheless, there was difference in all the variables. In general, the participants perceived the quality to increase when exposed to the scent. They also felt stronger attachment to the brand, and valued price as less important. When the level of brand awareness is low, image attributes are harder to relate to a brand, making it more difficult to evaluate the product. Affecting perception towards a desired direction, for example repositioning the brand, is thus harder when the existing brand knowledge is weak. This is due to the fact that the basic attributes are not uniquely linked to the brand. It can be argued that attributes with sensory stimulus would be meaningless, if their basic benefits are not yet established in the mind of the consumers.

The lack of knowledge concerning Brand B may have resulted in that the participants based their evaluation on attributes related to the brand that they were familiar to. It is therefore likely to assume that they relied their judgment on factors that were already presented in their frame of reference, such as colors, logotypes and brand. In the pre-experiment, this behavior was clearly shown as the majority chose Brand C probably on the basis of the familiarity to the brand name, colors and logotype rather
than by a close evaluation of the vodkas. It was especially hard to evaluate the products for those who never tried these beverages before since no tasting was involved in the experiment. Ironically, taste and flavor was ranked as the most important attribute when choosing vodka with a total mean of 4.45 out of 5 in the two groups of the pre-experiment. When the same persons answered the question of how recognizable Brand B is from its taste, the total mean was only 3.18, which confirms the lack of knowledge of Brand B, or is an indication of the unpopularity of the brand among the participants.

Another interesting aspect was found when correlations between variables were explored. The four strongest correlations (see table 5) all included the “positive attitude”. These findings showed that if the brand was perceived as positive, many of the other variables related to the brand perception were also perceived more positively increasing the total positive brand perception. Further on, the superiority and trustworthiness of the brand as well as the purchase intention increased in correlation with more positive attitude towards the brand. It can thus be argued that these factors are a function of a positive attitude towards the brand. In other words, once brand knowledge is achieved the total brand attitude is likely to be more positive resulting in increased trustworthiness, perception of high quality and future purchase intention; factors that together result in stronger bonds implying more loyal consumers (see 2.4.3).

Even though Brand B might not have succeeded in delivering their desired values to the participants, the experiment confirmed that the use of sensory branding can indeed help transferring this message. With the use of sensory branding the authors believe that they got closer to their desired values. The effect was easily seen between the groups since there were only products from the same brand represented and the distraction of other brands was eliminated. The communication of the other stimulus seems to have been highlighted in combination of the scent. It is likely that the use of the scent stimulus strengthened the effect of the other sensory stimulus vision and touch thus increasing the total perception of the brand compared to a chain reaction. This can be the reason why many of the core values were represented among the answers in the experimental group, even though the brand awareness was low and the participants might not associate these values to Brand B without the adding of the scent.

The attribute ‘tradition’ was relatively important in the control group (ranked 4th) while the experimental group found it to be the least important aspect in the decision-making process (ranked 7th). This can be explained by the fact that the sensory stimulus strengthens the emotional thinking over rational thinking (see 2.4.3) thus allowing impulses to influence their decision making based on emotions evoked by the stimulus. In this case, the participants did not have strong brand knowledge and it is therefore likely that they based their evaluations of the product on spontaneous intuitions triggered by the smell. Also due to the lack of brand knowledge, it is likely that the participants did relate emotionally to the attribute ‘tradition’, but instead perceived attributes such as quality, price and design to be more decisive, as they could be easily evaluated and associated to the brand on an emotional level from a general frame of reference.

It seems like when there is high brand awareness and the overall brand image is positive, the sensory marketing will indeed have a stronger effect as a marketing tool. Sensory branding, when used correctly nevertheless increased positive brand image, so the sensory stimulus should be maintained, aiming to strengthen the bond continuously. Sensory branding cannot work as a separate unit, it is dependent from existing brand knowledge, which could be concluded from the experiment results. From a customer-based brand equity point of view, if sensory stimulus is added after brand knowledge, the process to achieving brand equity is stronger and can happen faster with the aid of sensory stimulus. This can be related to falling in love, where the bonding becomes faster the stronger the emotions are. Nevertheless, the “quality” of the partner has to correspond to the expectations, so that loyalty can be achieved and maintained. If the loyalty is unstable, the consumer will “cheat” and search for new brands that will maintain the expectations. Therefore a constant and congruent stimulus is essential.
5.2.4 Bonding through Sensory Branding

In the resume experiment, the importance of brand when choosing vodka was significantly higher in the experimental room. It can be argued that the persons subject to the scent felt more touched emotionally, or deeper involved than the persons in the control room, and possibly they related these feelings to the brand on the products in front of them. It is important that the product actually corresponds to the expectations evoked by the sensory stimulus in order to make the customers satisfied and loyal. To attract attention towards the core values of Brand B the scent is certainly of major importance. Yet, additional stimulus involving several senses would give a stronger effect and the scents of blackcurrant in combination with a music congruent with the values related to tradition would surely be an effective way to create a stronger brand image and strengthen the values of the brand. However, because the brand platform of Brand B is not well established in Sweden it is hard to affect all the attributes in the desired direction.

The goal of sensory marketing is closely related to the customer-based brand equity concept within traditional marketing, and when comparing these theories the increased strength of the bond between consumer and a brand can be understood. Traditional marketing uses audiovisual marketing tools to create attachment with the consumer, and when introducing additional sensory stimulus the bonding reaches a new level yet keeping the brand equity as core criteria. With traditional marketing measures, brand equity does not include the strategic use of the sensory aspect, whilst successfully sensory integrated 5-D brand is most likely to reach an even higher level of brand equity than traditional marketing. This is due to the fact that 5-D brand generates emotional attachment to the brand strengthening loyalty, awareness and perceived quality on both a conscious, and an unconscious level, which links the consumer to the brand from multiple angles.

Brand perception increased in the experimental group, as a result of the use of a correctly managed stimulus. This can in turn result in a stronger, positive brand perception, eventually leading to higher brand equity and stronger bonds between the consumers and the brand. In addition, a strong sensory bond and satisfied customers will ultimately result in a higher brand loyalty. However, the authors believe that is necessary to have a strong brand platform before introducing sensory branding. The authors therefore argue that sensory marketing should be seen as tool to strengthen a brand and is not a solution to save a struggling brand. Therefore, creating a brand specific sensory touch point to an unstable brand is not a guarantee for loyal consumers and can never save the brand from avoiding a brand failure.

5.3 Analysis of Sensory Marketing Today

Sensory branding is indeed a “hot topic” today. From the collection of primary and secondary data one can see that it is still a relatively unexplored subject, especially in Sweden. The evolution of the sensory branding expands at significant speed and during the research process several articles have been published, which indicates that this is a subject in focus of the research in marketing today. It has been argued, that we are in the beginning of a new marketing era, which most certainly seem to be case. Everything points towards the fact that involving the human senses in strategic marketing will be in the near future as obvious as the traditional marketing strategies are today. This can be explained by the fact that the consumers in the hypermodern, individualistic society are searching for personal pleasure and have higher expectations on brands and product attributes than the generation before them. Beyond this increasing demand lays a tendency to always expect something extraordinary and take the basic features for granted. It appears to be hard to distinguish high quality brands from mediocre brands in the information overload drowning in the thousands of messages every day. The major reason for the growth of sensory marketing is thus the need to stand out in the crowd. As there are no signs that the information flow will diminish, it can be argued that sensory branding will be more and more important in the coming years.
The technological innovations are the basis for the growth of sensory marketing, and given this technology, the price of initial investments has decreased. Important to keep in mind is that technological improvements will make it possible to add more features also to the audiovisual aspects; therefore the sensory marketing techniques has to be developed in line with the traditional marketing. Easier access and increased cost-efficiency have and will open new doors for smaller enterprises to invest in a sensory branding company profile. In the future, there is a risk involved in the uses of scents as branding tool, since if everyone will use scents to attract attention to their brand, it will be hard to distinguish a special smell, which may result in a smell overload. Another eventual risk is that an increasing use of sensory stimulus on the market will make consumers habitual and acclimatized to the sensory stimulus, making the effect to increase at a diminishing rate. Therefore the “early birds” are the winners in this when it comes to product branding. The use of sensory branding as an atmospheric tool in stores is expecting to have a brighter future. “Early birds catch the worms” since they can create strong bonding to their consumers when they are still ‘special’ in the market. They will therefore already be established when the followers enter the market. Creating brand unique attributes is an excellent way to strengthen the loyalty and create barriers to entry for competitors, which in turn leads to fortified loyalty. As a consequence, the followers thus have to fight to win over the already established advantages related to bonding.

As confirmed from the results of the experiment, emotional connection resulting from multiple sensory stimuli is indeed a more efficient way to create a bond with the consumers than by only using audiovisual communication channels. The emotional connection to a brand gets more and more important thus the brands have to make sure that they follow the evolution of their consumers. By creating attributes that evoke emotions the consumers will be affected unconsciously and triggered by their feelings towards the brand rather than by rational decisions. This makes it possible to charge higher prices, as consumer will still demand the product/brand because they fulfill emotional desires. If the brand equity is high the bond is likely to be higher than the price aspect making it possible to higher prices. Sensory stimulus can be also used to increase impulse purchase as it speaks to the emotional part of the consumer and not the rational. It is thus possible to affect the preference of consumers especially if they originally are indifferent between choices, which was the situation in the experiment. As a marketing tool sensory marketing can thus be used to increase sales, and to attract attention to a product by highlighting the product related attributes such as taste.

The fact that sensory branding is affecting the consumers on an unconscious level makes it a subject for ethical discussions. Consumers may be “fooled” to purchase a product or service as a result of sensory stimulus that they were not aware of. It can therefore be seen as a manipulation tool since it causes peoples buying behavior to change unconsciously. However, all marketing is about manipulation to make the consumers think that a brand is somewhat superior over its competitors; otherwise only price and quality would differ the products from each other. Previously with the use of traditional marketing, people have been somewhat aware of marketing triggers, at least they were possible to remark them if wished. Sensory branding, on the other hand, is harder to detect, especially the use of scents. People may link an exposure to a visual advertising message to an actual purchase while it may be harder for them to explain their purchasing behavior when it only smells good in a store. Background music has a similar effect; it has a strong impact on perception, nevertheless the effect of it is rarely noticed by the consumers.

An important market today is the Internet, which as a result of technical improvement is today a market place where most of the brands are represented. Nowadays internet is mainly based on audiovisual communication, however, new technologies has already made it possible to include touch in the marketing process, as an attempt to involve the consumers and creates a stronger sensory bond between them and the brand. Competing on an electronic market implies the use of strong audiovisual communication. From a sensory branding point of view this is challenging, however the technological innovations are allowing for improvements and there is a lot of potential of sensory branding on the
Internet linked to technological improvements. The touch can already be included in the Internet marketing, however, only in the use of touch screens implying more stimuli for the users. Using touch as a strategic tool is thus already possible, even though touching the actual product through Internet is still not possible.

The ultimate goal of sensory branding is to stimulate the customer from a holistic perspective; however, the effects of this marketing effort will be smaller if there is no stable ground to build additional value on. Important to remember is that the same brand can apply the same marketing strategies to several markets, but given that perception is individual and brand knowledge may differ between markets, it is vital to analyze consumers and their preferences before implementing the sensory branding strategy. This is especially important since there is a risk involved in using incongruent stimulus both regarding the consumers, preferences and between all the sensory dimensions. An ultimate outcome of the sensory branding strategy can only be achieved when there is consistency between the elements, where each element supports each other resulting in synergy and stronger and more convincing brand image (see 2.4.4) When sensory stimulus is added to a stable ground of brand knowledge, it can be a perfect tool for adjusting or affecting brand perception in the mind of the consumers. When consumers get emotionally involved, on a conscious or unconscious level, they get more easily affected by sensory triggers resulting in less rational behavior. As a result associations to the brand will increase resulting in stronger brand equity.

Figure 14. Customer Based Brand Equity created through Sensory Marketing (Suhonen & Tengvall)

The advantages of using sensory branding are numerous and as mentioned before it can be a way for companies to distinguish from competitors and reach out to new consumers. However, implying sensory branding in the marketing strategy will demand stronger efforts than before. In general, the uses of sensory stimulus, such as an ambience scent, lead to higher expectations about the product, which might be hard to meet. Ultimately, perception should always match the reality in order to reach, or exceed, customers’ expectations. In fact, it is vital that the brand deliver in line with the expectations of the consumers in order to keep them satisfied and remain loyal to the brand.

5.4 Hypothesis testing

Based on the analysis of the findings from the experiment the hypothesis H1: “The adding of a scent changes the brand perception positively” is accepted.
6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the analysis and answers the purpose of the study by analyzing the research questions.

The purpose of this thesis,

‘To investigate how sensory branding can influence the perception of a brand for the consumer’

is answered through the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the impact of sensory branding on brand perception?

The adding of a congruent sensory stimulus, in this case scent, as a strategic marketing tool had a positive effect on the overall brand perception. The experiment revealed that both product-related and non-product-related attributes were perceived more positively as a result of the adding of the sensory stimulus. Generally, quality is perceived higher and price has less importance. Involving the human senses activates unconscious reactions on an emotional level resulting in a stronger attachment towards the brand. Brand associations evoked by the sensory stimulus strengthen the value of the brand as long as the stimulus is congruent with the other brand elements and adjusted for the target. It can therefore be used as a communication tool to highlight the strategically important brand attributes in order to affect consumers on an emotional level.

The use of a congruent scent significantly affected the preference for product X concluding that consumers’ buying behavior is affected by a congruent sensory stimulus. This finding is relevant since it signifies the possible use of sensory branding to increase impulse purchasing, especially if the consumers are indifferent between competing brands or products. Further on, purchase intention was significantly higher among the persons in the scented room, which confirms the theory that stronger connection can be created between a brand and consumers through the use of sensory marketing.

RQ2: How will sensory branding affect customer-based brand equity?

The experiment revealed that the effects of sensory branding efforts are weaker when there is not a well-established brand platform. It can therefore be concluded that sensory branding is not applicable as a separate unit but instead should be used as a part of a bigger marketing mix to support the core values of a brand/product. The sensory stimulus generates brand preferences on an unconscious, or conscious level, thus the bonding will be stronger and accelerated with the use of sensory marketing, implying higher level of brand loyalty compared to traditional marketing setting.

Consequently, in order to benefit from an investment in sensory branding, it is essential to have a well-established brand platform implying a positive overall brand image and values associated to the brand. Sensory branding is not efficient if this basis is not well established, and thus cannot be used to save a weak brand, but instead it strengthens the brand equity.
7 Discussion

This section assesses additional delimitations of the study and discusses the future of sensory branding where the authors give recommendations for possible future research within the subject.

7.1 Experiment

In order to get an understanding of the impact of sensory marketing, the authors decided to conduct an experiment to apply the theory on a real-life situation. The report started off with a broader aspect on the concept of sensory branding highlighting the importance of 5-D branding, however during the research process the authors realized that the use of 5-D sensory branding was in fact limited. Even if it is still the ultimate goal, it is not always realistic or feasible. In effect, not all the brands can be touched, or tasted, and this is something that needs to be considered. Due to legal conditions, there was no tasting of the product involved in the experiment, which evidently cut off the holistic impact. Another reason for not including taste in the experiment, in addition to legal restrictions, was the lack of existing technologies that could have enabled to involve taste in the process.

The fact that the product involved in the experiment was vodka should be considered, as people tend to have strong opinions about alcoholic beverages making it complex to analyze. In addition, it is not a product that is bought on a daily basis hence choosing among vodkas might demand greater effort than choosing among, ex shower gels. Further on, the fact that there were many young persons participating in the experiment may have affected the critical evaluation of the products.

Due to confidentiality agreement with Brand B it was harder to analyze the brand perception ultimately since the perception to a great extent depends on the brand name. Many of the brand associations are linked to the brand name not being capable to argue for all the aspects that are a part of brand equity was limiting the depth of the analysis.

The report focuses on brand equity and perception solely from a customer perspective since the authors believe that the financial benefits are an outcome of strong customer-based brand equity. In addition, since perception is individual and this report investigates perception, it was natural to focus on consumers, as they are the ones directly affected by the sensory stimulus. However, the effects of sensory branding on impulse purchase were taken into account as the experiment revealed the potential of sensory marketing on impulse purchase. Another aspect to consider is the fact that sensory branding is used differently depending on whether it is a product or an environment that is branded. The theory in this report is based, and applicable for, both product-related and environment related sensory branding, even though the experiment was conducted to reflect sensory branding only on products. Branding a single product can be harder than branding an entire point of purchase since a product has to stand out among its competitors, which implies a need for strong differentiation.

7.2 Future

The ethical aspect of sensory branding is a topic that had been discussed lately. The main reason for this is the fact the stimulus caused by the sensory triggers is mainly on an unconscious level. It has raised the question of whether sensory marketing is a manipulation tool or if it has been created as a natural result of the contemporary society. Despite the ethical dilemmas the possibilities created by sensory marketing are opening up new doors for companies to connect with their customers and stand out from the crowd.

The development curve of sensory branding can be compared with the curve of Internet. In the beginning it was the bigger companies who took the risk to invest in this new technology and later on
ended up being the ‘winners’. The same pattern can be predicted for sensory branding, where the ‘early birds catch the worm’, in other words the first-movers are the ones who are likely to benefit the most. The first-movers can attract and bond consumers on an early stage and create strong relationships and loyal consumers through this early-mover advantage. However, a major limitation for smaller companies has been the initial investment in the sensory process. The technological innovations have improved the related equipment, thus the potential for smaller companies to start their own sensory marketing has increased as it has become more cost-effective and accessible to invest in sensory marketing. The new technologies enable to invest both in environmental and product based sensory marketing.

FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) is likely to see the biggest change in few years as it can profit the most from the product specific sensory stimulus to distinguish from the competitors on the same shelf space, for example a washing powder promotion with a scent congruent to the product. The FMCG uses mainly promotion to attract tension towards specific brand or product. This has to be communicated together with a visual stimulus so that consumer will be able to connect these stimuli to the intended product. A future threat related to the use of sensory branding, especially in terms of FMCG is the risk of “over stimulus”. This can be an outcome when there are too many sensory elements presented at the same place resulting in chaos making it hard to separate the stimulus from its source. Here the first-movers will thus have a huge advantage over the followers since the customers have already created a preference and stronger bond towards the first-mover brand.

The technological innovations will most likely improve the potential of adding of a taste in the sensory marketing. It will therefore be possible to include taste in promotion and also to create a brand specific taste for products that at the moment do not have this functionality. Taste might be more advantageous for promoting a product rather than using it as an atmospheric tool since taste is a product-related attribute and atmosphere can be created without the adding of a taste when it comes to promotion. At the point of purchase, on the other hand, the taste sense can be involved through offering of something to eat or drink, making the consumers feel more relaxed and emotionally affected.

We are still today in the ‘early bird’ stage but sensory branding is an aspect of marketing that is rapidly increasing. The strongest potential is right now but in the future it will be a natural part of marketing. The authors are convinced that sensory branding is the beginning of a new era within strategic marketing and recommend the following areas for future research:

- The possibilities of sensory branding on the FMCG market
- The importance of brand equity when designing a sensory branding strategy
- The effects of sensory branding on impulse purchase

*Sensory branding is not only in the air, it is here to stay.*
References


Appendix 1

Interview with Representative of Brand B

An interview with a brand representative of Brand B reveals the brand is already investing in scent marketing. Sensory branding is familiar to the company and they have already used similar marketing strategies in previous campaigns for the brand. They regularly use experiential marketing, which includes a high level of sensory involvement during their events. At their global events the scent marketing plays a part of a much bigger installation that incorporates all senses. An example of this is the brands ‘experience lounge’ where a full summer scene, complete with Brand B planted grass and flowers, is built in during the finish winter, in order to create a sensational experience around the brand.

One of the reasons why Brand B will rely even more on scent marketing in the future is to a great extent because of improvement in technology making scent marketing more cost-effective and more available. Current activation methods of scent marketing used by Brand B are very labor intensive and thus very expensive. In addition scent used is in effect the ‘real’ product in miniature packages used to present, and to promote, the available tastes of the product, which further complicates the activation.

Previous research done by the company has shown a positive correlation between scent marketing and customers’ associations to the brand. The scents (corresponding to the different tastes) were associated with positive memories such as childhood, family, summer etc. hence not directly related to alcohol, which they found beneficial.

One of the main competitive advantages of Brand B as outlined by their brand representative is that they have high qualitative, natural products and the aim is to strengthen this further through the use of smell. The brand sees its as a major competitive advantage that their products ‘deliver against the aroma’ meaning that they actually can fulfill the promises they send to the costumer, something they claim most of the competitors cannot do. As the brand is seen as the naturally pure vodka by its consumers, it is important that the scents involved in the marketing campaign are natural so that they do not send conflicting images, or scents in this case, to the customers.

The purity and authenticity of the product should be communicated via the smell. If desired responses to the smell are reached the brand believes that it can strengthen the brand equity of exponentially as they will have both the smell, and the corresponding, actual, taste. The aspiration is that the costumers should get curious and tempted to try the new flavors and not get disappointed when tasting the product but rather do it to ‘verify’ the perfection of its taste in relation to the expectations given by the smell.

By introducing a subtle scent corresponding to the taste of the product they believe that they will tap into people’s emotions and create a stronger emotional connection to the brand. Their specific aims with this investment would be to increase loyalty and thus sales of their vodka. Brand B believes that it can open doors to new target groups such as women and people who are not used to drinking vodka or even ‘vodka-haters’ through its flavour portfolio. The market for flavored vodka is increasing around the world, even though brand B is already a top ten vodka world-wide, they want to increase their share of the flavoured vodka category.

The biggest market for brand B are in Eastern Europe where there is a clear preference for focus on the product itself rather than on the image of the brand, which is more important for example in the United States. This success is attributed to the communication strategy of the brand B which has traditionally relied more on substance / product related communication vs. image communication.

By using scent marketing, in this case adding a brand-specific smell to the marketing of the latest vodka taste, Brand B hopes to create a stronger emotional connection to the brand. Research shows that an
emotional connection drives loyalty and that by using scent marketing the emotional connection to a brand can increase enormously. Brand B does however realize that there are risks involved when using scents as a marketing tool as a scent can be very personal. Special attention should be given to when and how the scent is used as a bad association can be irreversible.
Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this experiment!

Please read the questions carefully before answering. However, follow your intuition! Follow the order of the questions and do not go back to your previous answers.

This is a totally anonymous questionnaire and the results will be treated confidentially. Please answer honestly.

Now turn the page and start the questionnaire...

Thank you for your time and participation!
Questionnaire

1. Age ______

2. Gender
   Man ______  Woman ______

3. Which of the vodkas (in front of you) would you choose?

   ☐ Brand B Cranberry

   ☐ Brand B Blackcurrant

4. How do you perceive the quality of Brand B relative to the other vodka brands?

   Weak 1 2 3 4 5 Superior

5. Describe Brand B with three (3) words

   _________________________________________________________________
6. What is important for you when choosing vodka? Evaluate on the scale below.

<table>
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7. Where do you think Brand B belongs? Cross a box to position them:

Trendy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Traditional
Tempting ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Forbidden
Classic design ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Innovative design
Exotic ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Ordinary
Superior quality ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Mediocre quality
Natural ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Artificial
Feminine ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Masculine
Low-priced ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Expensive
Sophisticated ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Vulgar
Youthful ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Mature
Appealing ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Unattractive
8. Please evaluate the following statements:

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<td>I like the sound of pouring <strong>Brand B</strong> into a glass</td>
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<td>The overall impression of <strong>Brand B</strong> vodka is positive</td>
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<td>I feel a strong attachment to the brand <strong>Brand B</strong></td>
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<td>I feel involved in the success of <strong>Brand B</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Brand B</strong> is a trustworthy brand</td>
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<td>It is likely that I will purchase <strong>Brand B</strong> within the near future</td>
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Appendix 3

Original Questionnaire (first page)

1. Age _______

2. Gender
   Man _______    Woman _______

3. Nationality _______________________

4. Which of the vodkas (in front of you) would you choose?

   - [ ] **Brand A** Jordgubb Lime
   - [ ] **Brand B** Blackcurrant
   - [ ] **Brand C**

5. What made you choose this vodka?
   - [ ] Design    [ ] Taste and flavor
   - [ ] Familiarity to the brand    [ ] No preference
   - [ ] Impulse    [ ] Other _______________________

6. Estimate the price of the vodkas (in SEK)

   **Brand A** Jordgubb Lime ______ kr

   **Brand B** Blackcurrant ______ kr

   **Brand C** ______ kr
Appendix 4

Basis for Interview with representatives of Brand B

1. Have you used sensory marketing before, what is your experience with it?
2. Why did you decide to invest in sensory marketing? Why now?
3. What are your expectations with scent marketing?
4. What is your goal with scent marketing? (brand image, emotional attachment...)
5. How do you think it can change your brand perception?
6. Do you see sensory marketing as a complimentary to your marketing strategy or as a necessity?
7. What is Brand B's image? Values?
8. Do you think your customer’s have emotional attachment to Brand B? What kind of emotions?
9. Do you think that adding a scent can strengthen your brand equity? Competitive advantage?
10. What risks do you think can be associated with the use of scent marketing?
11. Do you think your brand is “smashable”?
Appendix 5

Basis for interview with Ideair

1. Describe the presence of sensory branding in Finland/Scandinavia/world?
2. To you opinion, why do companies want to invest in sensory branding?
3. How do you see the evolution of this market in the future?
4. How do you think sensory branding affects the brand perception?
5. Do you think it is a manipulation tool? Ethical aspect?
6. How do you deal with allergies and “over-smell” especially in the future?
7. How do you design a smell for a company?
8. What is the difference when using scent marketing for a product vs. shop?
9. Is scent marketing a part of 5D-strategy or a separate marketing tool?
10. Have you noticed difference in consumer behavior after introducing scent?
11. Can sensory marketing increase the emotional attachment to a brand?
12. What type companies profit most of sense marketing?
13. What are the risks with sensory marketing?
14. When you introduce a scent, is the effect of it “infinite” or does it have to be updated?
Appendix 6

Pictures related to the experiment

Setting inside the rooms

The rooms from outside

Scent diffuser

Pre-Experiment setting
### Statistical Results

**Group Statistics of the Experiment**

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Correlation between Positive attitude and Attachment to the brand:

![Graph showing correlation between Positive and Attachment]

Importance of Brand:

![Graph showing frequency distribution of Brand]

Recognizable from taste:

![Graph showing frequency distribution of Taste]
Trustworthiness of Brand B:

Weak vs. Superior Quality

Classic vs. Innovative Design