BRAND IMAGE AND BRAND AWARENESS
CASE STUDY: FINNAIR IN INDIAN MARKET

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Abstract

The broad objective of this thesis is to investigate brand image and brand awareness from the perspective of airline companies, focusing especially on the brand awareness aspect. As a result of this study, the goal is to find out the brand image and brand awareness of the case company Finnair; whether the airline’s name is known in the Indian market. The problematic situation that gave rise to this study was that consumer perception towards airlines is a very sensitive subject from the point of view of airlines. (D. Van Oudheusden, 1990) As a conclusion of the previous statement, airlines can benefit from knowing what kind of perception consumers have of them. An airline which seeks to succeed needs thorough knowledge of current and potential markets for its services: it must be able to identify customers and distinguish them from consumers. (Shaw, 2011) In this regard, this study was decided to carry out in order to research the phenomenon of perceptions that consumers have concerning airlines. This led to research question formulation which is the following: “How do consumers perceive airline companies?”

This thesis has an empirical approach to aggregate and level the analysis by using the frame of references, in which the vital theories are presented and then implicate it with the methodology, which enabled the data collection. Data collection was accomplished via carrying out a Web survey among Indian university students, and an e-mail interview with the Country Sales Manager of Finnair, Desmond Chacko. The results of data collection, both primary and secondary, are presented in the empirical study chapter. Analysis of the empirical data emerged the following results as a conclusion of this thesis: Consumers have a good perception of generally known, big airline companies that possess high publicity, which depends mainly on their level of awareness of a certain airline company.

Keywords: Brand, Brand image, Brand awareness, Consumer perception
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the brand image and awareness of airline companies, focusing specifically on the awareness aspect. Via carrying out a quantitative survey the aim is to find out the perception of airline companies among university students of Dayananda Sagar Institutions, Bangalore and Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida, New Delhi.

1.1 Background

Due to today’s up tight competition (F. Arslan, Altuna, 2010), developing a strong, positive image has become crucial to the maintenance of lasting competitive advantage. (G. Birtwistle, L. Shearer, 2001) In addition, rapidly changing consumer needs and markets, place strong pressure to businesses to sustain their brand image and keep their products and services up to date. (Haeckel, Nolan, 1993) Brand image refers to the perception of a certain brand in the mind of the consumer when a brand name is mentioned (Keller, 1993), whereas brand awareness measures the customer’s ability to recognize the brand when seeing the brand name, logo, symbol etc. (Aaker, 1991) Building up a strong brand is not easy but if a brand could build a better image than its competitors’, then it would enjoy a degree of protection (Cheverton, 2002). With high brand image, a business can gain greater perception of the brand among customers, customer loyalty, high profit margins, less negative attitude to price fluctuations and less vulnerability compared to competitors (F. Arslan, Altuna, 2010).

In the 1980s, the conception of brands changed enormously, when the management started to understand the importance of a brand as an asset of the business (Kapferer, 1997). Nowadays, brands are seen more than just symbols and names: brands are major assets of a company due to the fact that “a brand represents everything that a product or service means to consumer.” (Kotler, 2009, p. 259) That is the reason why brands should be carefully developed and managed. (Kotler, 2009) However, very often firms consider brands just as a tool for advertising, but that is not the case: good brands don’t just sell, they act! (Ind, 2003) Due to the present competitive environment, every firm attempts to generate favorable and positive associations about their brand which result in a positive image of the brand (Keller, 1993). Companies should understand the fact that building up a
positive brand image depends on possessing high brand awareness, because when a brand is well established in the memory it is easier for associations to be created and attached (Esch. et. all., 2006) In other words, this means that before customers can create an image of a brand in their minds they have to get to know and be aware of the brand first.

To sum up, nowadays, brands are considered to be the key element when developing relationships between companies and consumers. (Kotler, 2009) Brands are the key to winning a position in the marketplace because they deliver unique benefits and build deep connections with customers. (Kotler, 2009) In addition, customers are the most critical, though, very important group to take into consideration because customers can always choose from where they buy. Consequently, they will buy from the manufacturer that provides the most value. (Doyle, Stern, 2006)

1.2 Problem

The problematic situation that gave rise to this study was that consumer perception towards airlines is a very sensitive subject from the point of view of airlines. (D. Van Oudheusden, 1990) In conclusion of the previous statement, airlines can benefit from knowing what kind of perception consumers have of them. An airline which seeks to succeed needs thorough knowledge of current and potential markets for its services: it must be able to identify customers and distinguish them from consumers. (Stephen Shaw, 2011) In this regard, this study was decided to carry out in order to research the phenomenon of perceptions that consumers have towards airlines. This led to research problem formulation which is the following: what kind of image consumers have and how aware they are of airline companies.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze the importance of brand image and brand awareness from the perspective of airline companies. As a result of this study the goal is to find out the brand image and brand awareness of the case company; whether the airline’s name is known in the Indian market.

The research question, to which this study is aiming to find answer for, is the following:
How do consumers perceive airline companies?

1.4 Definitions

In this research, the following definitions are used to determine the key words: Brand, Brand Image, Brand Awareness and Consumer Perception:

Brand: ”A trade name used to identify a specific product, manufacturer or distributor” (Pallister & Law, 2009, p. 68).

Brand Image: “Brand image is defined as a set of perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumers' memory.” (Keller, 1993, p. 3)

Brand Awareness: ”Brand awareness measures the ability of a potential customer to recognize or to recall a brand when faced with a purchase decision in a specific product category” (Aaker, 1991, p.61).

Consumer Perception: "Customer perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Shiffman & Kanuk, 1997, p.144)

1.5 Delimitations

The aim of this study is in researching brand image and specifically brand awareness. The focus is not to investigate brand equity or any other aspects related to brands. However, the most important aspects, such as brand knowledge, are described briefly due to the fact that they contribute the understanding of the key elements: brand image and brand awareness. Moreover, this study is not trying to investigate the economical consequences that brands can contribute to airlines.
A case study approach is used in order to investigate the brand image and awareness on the airline industry. The case company used is Finnair, the national airline of Finland, which operates from Helsinki- Vantaa Airport, Helsinki, Finland. The usage of a single- case study and one case company delimits the scope of this study.

The geographical location of the sample group delimits the ability of efficient reaching and primary data collection. This can have an effect to the reliability of the results. The survey will be carried out using an online questionnaire as a tool to collect primary data. The sample group will be formed by university students at the age of 17-25 in Jaipur and New Delhi, India.

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis is combined of six chapters: introduction, frame of references, methodology, empirical study, analysis of empirical data and conclusion. The first chapter, introduction, presents the background, as well as, the research problem and purpose of this study. Followed by frame of references, in which the vital theories are presented: this chapter forms the basis for the research. In chapter three the discussion is about methodology that enabled the data collection, and in chapter four the results of data collection are presented. Chapter five represents the analysis of empirical data: whether the researcher question can be answered to. In the last chapter, the results of the study are drawn into a brief conclusion.
2. Frame of References

This chapter creates the frame of the theoretical part of this thesis. First, the focus is on defining the term brand and determining its characteristics. Second, the concentration is steered to brand knowledge and its components: brand image and brand awareness, which are the critical aspects of this thesis. Third, to conclude this part, the term brand equity is defined. The purpose of this chapter is to help the understanding of the research problem better in detail, as well as creating the base for the analysis.

2.1 Brand

In order to accurately define the term “brand” we selected to use an up-to-date definition of J. Pallister & J. Law. According to Pallister and Law (2009), the term “brand” can be defined as a name of a brand that identifies a certain product, manufacturer or distributor. In comparison to a brand, a strong brand is a product, service, person or place that can be identified and improved in the way that the consumer or buyer gains essential, unique added values which meet their needs in the best possible way. In addition, success of a brand results from being able to maintain added values in spite of competitors’ actions. (De Chernatony, McDonald, 1992) On the other hand, American Marketing Association (AMA) [1] defines brand as a name, term, design, symbol, or any other characteristic that clearly makes an attribute or quality of a good or service distinguishable or recognizable. AMA adds that brand can determine seller’s product or service, multiple products or services or all the products or services of a particular seller. AMA specifies that brand’s legal term is trademark and broadens the definition of the term “brand” to be a customer experience that can be described as a group of ideas and images that often refer to a symbol, a name, slogan or a logo, for instance.

According to Nicholas Ind (1997), brand can be described as a feature of a plain idea of product or service, and it includes the definition or a view of the values that go deeper in the functional performance. In the other words, “--A product is something that is made, in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer.” (Ind, 1997, p. 3) Aaker (1991) noted that the brand signals the source of the product to consumers, and protects the customer, as well as, the producer from
possible competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical. In relation to competitors, Nicholas Ind points out the following crucial notion: “A product can be copied by a competitor, a brand is unique.” (Ind, 1997, p.3)

To gain a wider perspective and deeper understanding of the term brand, we used also other sources of information outside of scientific articles and books. According to Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research (WIMDR) [2], a brand is a promise to the buyer of a product of a certain amount of benefits, services or attributes. WIMDR says brand to reflect in four different ways. First, it reflects to values, such as Tata that stands for quality. Second, it reflects to culture, for example Coca-Cola as an icon of American culture. Third, brand reflects to personality, for example Charlie Chaplin as a person and fourth, it reflects to user, many sports lovers like Ferrari cars, for instance. American Society of Interior Designers [3] defines brand as a competitive business strategy, and Marketing MO [4], which is a marketing agency that delivers integrated marketing services for mid-size companies, describes brand to be more than company’s logo, name or slogan. Marketing MO defines brand as the whole experience of its prospects and customers in relation to company produce or service.

2.1.1 Characteristics of brands

In order to understand how brands work and create value, we have to take a look at the different levels of which they have been conducted. De Chernatony and McDonald (1992) noted that brands can be viewed in four levels. On the first level, buyer’s or user’s basic needs are met. As an example of this, airplane fulfilling the need of transportation. This generic level of viewing brand is also the easiest level for competitors to copy. Second level is called the expected level. On the second level more and more buyers enter the market, and as repeat buying occurs, the brand keeps on developing because there are better chances to match resources to meet customers’ needs, via enhanced customer service, for example. Consequently, the product or service is meant to create extra value to satisfy purchase conditions of a certain target group, availability, pricing, for instance. On the third level, as firms gain more experience, buyers and users become more aware of products and services. This means that the brand should try to become augmented in new better ways. Way to do this is to make added values satisfy non-functional, such as emotional needs, as well as functional needs,
delivery, for instance. Customers, who have the most experience of the brand, tend to be more critical than the other customers. As De Chernatony and McDonald argue in their book “Creating Powerful Brands”, creativity is the only aspect that limits the extent to which the brand can mature to the fourth; the potential level. This can happen by pointing out the potential level of brands through promotion of more intangible, emotional factors, for instance. In order to succeed in the long run, it is vital for a brand to offer added values to the characteristics of the basic product. The main aim of adding values is to prevent competitors copying the functional characteristics of the company. (De Chernatony, McDonald, 1992)

2.1.2 Building Successful Brands

Since every company assumably wants to succeed in their field of business it is therefore beneficial to distinguish a brand from a successful brand. According to De Chernatony and McDonald (1992), a successful brand is defined as a recognizable, identified product, service, person or place. It is augmented in a way that the buyer or consumer receives great added value which answers to their needs. Success of the brand results from sustaining these added values when facing competition. A business that is capable of building a strong, successful brand is able to generate stable, long-term demand and hold better margins than an unsuccessful brand. In conclusion, by adding values that make customers buy products or services, company can become more profitable. At last, brand building helps an organization to create a face for it and this way make it more attractive to work for and deal with. Often, being successful in building brands results from developing a clear statement of intent about the purpose of the service or a product, as well as the target group and equipping the brand with resources that help to achieve the stated purpose. (De Chernatony, McDonald, 1992)

2.2 Branding

To justify the commonness of branding, Kotler and Armstrong (2009) state that “Branding has become so strong that today hardly anything goes unbranded.” According to the United Kingdom’s governmental online resource for businesses [5], branding is a way of distinctly highlighting what makes one producer’s product or service different to, and more attractive than, the ones of competitors. Moreover, branding is a terminal phase of a process that involves the company’s
resources and all of its functions, as well as focusing them on a strategic intent which creates the
difference compared to the other companies and their brands. (Kapferer, 1997) Kapferer (1997)
also points out that branding means way more than only giving a name to a brand and signaling to
the world that such a product has been established with a certain imprint of an organization in it.
Additionally, according to the largest nonprofit trade organization in the world called Sempo [6],
brand is what identifies business to consumers: it resides in the hearts and minds of customers and
prospects as the sum total of their experiences with and perceptions of a company. Branding is
important because when done well, it results in loyal customers and existing customers upholding
profitability. This is also why among many companies, branding is the major goal of their
marketing. [6]

2.3 Brand Knowledge

The main focus of this study was to research brand image and brand awareness. In order to do so,
we have to define the concept of brand knowledge first, as it is composed of brand image and brand
awareness. As stated by Keller (1998), brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand
image. Awareness is connected to consumers’ ability to recognize or recall a brand, in turn, brand
image consists of consumers’ perceptions and associations for the brand. (Keller, 1998) Keller
(2003) states that brand knowledge consists of mutually related information to a brand, such as
awareness, attributes, benefits, images, thoughts, feelings attitudes and experiences. All these
information characteristics of brand knowledge become integrated in constant interaction with
customers that brings out forth the real understanding of the product or service. (Richards et al.,
1998) As mentioned earlier, brand image consists of a set of associations that the customer will link
with the brand. (Keller, 1998) These associations are hard to be governed by a company because
they originate from customers and their perceptions of a certain brand. (Keller, 1998) As stated
before by Keller (1993), brand image consists of different associations, such as uniqueness of brand
associations, strength of brand associations, favorability of brand associations and types of brand
associations. Uniqueness of brand associations signifies that consumers consider one specific brand
to be somehow special; superior. (Keller, 1993) Secondly, strength of brand associations stands for
strongly implanted associations in the minds of consumers. (Keller, 1993) Thirdly, favorability of
brand associations implies that consumers favor one specific brand. (Keller, 1993) Lastly, Keller
Keller (1993) classifies types of brand associations into three categories: attitudes, benefits and attributes (product related/ non-product related). Keller (1993) defines brand attitudes as consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand. He divides benefits to functional (often linked to physiological needs), experiential (what it feels like to use the product), and symbolic (e.g. a need for social approval or self-esteem) features. The last brand association is attributes. Attribute stands for the product itself as well as its different characteristics in the minds of consumers. The attributes that Keller (1993) distinguishes are product-related and non-product-related attributes. Product-related attributes relate to physical composition of a product; they can be defined as the necessary ingredients for performing the product. Non-product-related attributes are defined for example as price, packaging, user and usage image. (Keller, 1993)

The other component of brand knowledge is brand awareness, which is split into two forms: brand recognition and brand recall (Keller, 1993). We will tell about brand awareness in more detail in part: 2.5 “Brand awareness”, on page 18.
2.4 Brand Image

Referring to American Marketing Association [1], brand image is defined as a perception of a brand in the minds of people. AMA also states that brand image is described as a mirror reflection of the personality of the brand or product’s existence. De Chernatony (1998) discusses that these brand associations can be divided into groups in accordance to the level of abstraction. The level of abstraction can depend on three different aspects: the amount of information held, whether they are product-related or non-product-related and whether they allegate the attributes believed essential by consumers. (De Chernatony, 1998)

In the other words, brand image is what people believe is true about a brand; their feelings, expectations or thoughts, for instance. (Keller, 1993) Another definition of brand image originates from Keller (1993): Brand image is an insight of a brand that is reflected by the brand associations in customers’ memory. Keller states that brand associations are formed by brand attributes, brand benefits and brand attitudes. In addition, Aaker describes brand image as “—a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way” (1991, p. 109). In conclusion, a brand image is the understanding of consumers, originated from brand-related activities performed in by the firm. (Aaker, 1991) Thus, it should not be perceived alone as a perceptual phenomenon affected by the company’s activities. (Aaker, 1991)

According to Hsieh, Pan and Setiono (2004), a successful brand image makes it possible for consumers to determine the needs that the brand fulfills as well as differentiate the brand from the competitors. Successful brand image also helps to increase the likelihood that the consumers will consequently buy the products or services of the company. (Hsieh, Pan, Setiono, 2004) Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) enhanced that if a company, its product or service, constantly holds a favorable brand image among the public, it will certainly gain a good position in the market, sustainable competitive advantage and increase market share and performance. Finally, many empirical studies have confirmed that a positive brand image will eventually lead, beside loyalty, purchase behavior and brand performance, to brand equity. (Stephen L. Sondoh Jr., 2007)
2.4.1 Measuring the Brand Image

De Chernatony (1998) has listed four tools for measuring the brand image. The first one is Projective Techniques. Projective Techniques can be helpful if consumers are not able or willing to express their feelings. These techniques include picture interpretation, brand personality descriptors and sentence completion. An example of picture interpretation is showing a picture of a man driving his new BMW into a golf club’s parking lot to interviewees and asking “What do the other people in the picture think and would say about the man driving a BMW?” The second one of the Projective Techniques, Brand Personality Descriptors, are used to describe the user of a certain brand, for example by completing the sentence: “The typical driver of a Ford Fiesta is…” (De Chernatony, 1998, p.406). The last one of the latter three Projective Techniques, sentence completion consumers should be used to complete the following kinds of sentences: “I buy a personal computer, I look for…”, for instance. (De Chernatony, 1998, p. 406) Second tool for measuring brand image is called Qualitative Techniques. Qualitative Techniques, free associations, for instance; can be used to find out new associations along with further research during group discussions or depth interviews. By Ratings of Evaluations and Beliefs, it is possible to try to find out consumers’ views on key attributes as well as the strength of their associations with certain brands. The last tool for measuring brand image is Comparison of Brand Associations. Comparison of Brand Associations is used for establishing the identity of the relative weaknesses and strengths of the brand. An example of this is asking the interviewees to identify different juice brands, ask them to define which one of them they believe to be the best or worst one, and explain why it is better than the other brands. (De Chernatony, 1998)

2.5 Brand Awareness

The other part of brand knowledge, which is brand awareness, is the ability of potential customers to recognize or to recall a brand when deciding in a specific product category whether to buy the product or service, or not. (Aaker, 1991) In other words, brand awareness relates to the ability of a customer to identify the brand, link the brand to the brand name, logo, or symbol. (Keller, 2003) De Chernatony (1998) agrees that brand awareness is in connection to the importance of a brand and makes it easier for consumers to identify the brand in a specific product category. In accordance
with BusinessDictionary.com [7], brand awareness measures how well and how correctly a brand is recognized by potential customers with a specific product. It is also the primary goal of advertising at the introduction stage of the product. [7]

2.5.1 The Awareness Pyramid

Since brand awareness is specifically important aspect in this study, it is important to go deep into the different levels of awareness consumers can have. As Aaker (1991) states in his book “Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name”: brand awareness has a ranging of three levels from being unaware of the brand, to an uncertain feeling that the brand exists; as from brand recall, to a belief that the product is the only one in its product class. This theory is named The Awareness Pyramid, represented as follows.

After being unaware of the brand, brand recognition is the lowest level of brand awareness; it is specifically significant when consumer chooses a brand at the point of purchase. The next stage in the awareness pyramid is brand recall. Brand recall is notably more challenging task than brand recognition as well as associated with a stronger brand position. When investigating brand awareness, the first brand name mentioned by a customer, is usually the one top of mind; a brand ahead other brands in consumer’s mind. The strongest recall position, which is not presented in The Awareness Pyramid, is called a dominant brand. Dominant brand stands for a brand that is the one and only brand that is significantly recalled among the respondents.
2.5.2 Achieving Brand Awareness

Aaker (1991) says that achieving brand awareness requires both recognition and recall, and it involves winning brand name identity and linking it to the right product class among the consumers. Also for a new brand, it is said to require both of the tasks. There are few guidelines to improve brand awareness, which are the following: being different or memorable, creating a slogan or jingle, symbol exposure, publicity, event sponsorship, considering brand extensions, using cues, recall requires repetition and the recall bonus. (Aaker, 1991)

2.5.3 The Value of Brand Awareness

Aaker (1991) noted that brand awareness creates value and works to help the brand at least in four different ways:
First, brand awareness works as an anchor to which other associations can be attached. Associations of the firm are linked to the company’s name via chains, which represent links in customer’s memory. Basically, the chain can be thick or weak, and the structure of the chain can be strengthened by the links between the associations. This explains why purchase decision of buyers does not happen often without brand recognition. People tend to like things familiar to them, and this gives an explicit reason for brand recognition providing the brand sense of familiarity. Buying milk or chewing gum, for instance, requires very little involvement, if any. In conclusion, at the stage of familiarity/liking, customers’ involvement in buying decision is low. In brief, this means that if consumers have no motivation to evaluate different attributes of a service or product, familiarity of a product or service might be enough for purchase decision. Aaker (1991) noted that in studies concerning recognition and familiarity, positive relationships can be seen between the numbers or exposure/liking, regardless the stimuli was created through abstract pictures, names or music, for instance. Another example of this is recognition studies that have shown exposure repetitions to affect liking even then, when the recognition level appears to be unaffected (Zajonc, 1980). Aaker (1991) explains that one explanation for this is that the recognition or familiarity can exist below the starting point of measuring recognition. The third way to help brand and create value is called Signal of Substance/Commitment. Awareness can refer to characteristics of presence, commitment or substance. The three last- named signals of awareness are defined as attributes which can be very significant not only to consumer buyers, but also to industrial buyers purchasing notable, big-ticket items. This means that there must be a reason if a name is recognized, for

**Figure 3 The Value of Brand Awareness, Aaker (1991)**

Anchor to Which Other
Associations Can Be Attached

Familiarity $\rightarrow$ Liking

Signal of Substance/Commitment

Brand to Be Considered
example, a firm that advertises broadly usually has already been in the business for a certain amount of time and it is widely distributed, or the brand might be successful and others may use it. Aaker (1991) also says that even then, when it comes to big purchasing decisions: the way how brand is perceived and how familiar it is to the people, can make a remarkable difference; particularly if there is no clear market leader in the industry. Last step in the purchasing process is Brand to be Considered. As an example, travel agencies: When selecting which brand to choose, there are usually at least three to four alternatives to choose from.

### 2.5.4 Brand awareness in relation to brand image

Esch. et all. (2006) state that brand awareness is essential in order to form brand image, because when a brand is well established in the memory it is easier for associations to be created and attached. Keller (1991) discusses the same. He says that it is easier for people to learn about the brand if the level of brand awareness is higher. This also helps brand to register better in the minds of consumers. According to Investopedia [8], one of the largest sites devoted to investing education, creating brand awareness is viewed as one of the key steps in promoting a product. To simplify this notion, before brand image can be formed or before it can be known, consumers have to be aware of it. Esch et al. (2006) claim that there is a prominent correlation between brand awareness and multiple valuable image dimensions. Also Bowie & Buttle (2004) agree on this and they have created a matrix (presented below) to display the relationship between brand awareness and brand image. High brand awareness implies that the brand is known and enjoys a high profile, whereas low brand awareness signifies that consumers do not know the brand. High brand image implies that the brand possesses a good reputation, whereas low brand image signifies that the brand has a weak reputation.
2.6 Brand Identity

Brandchannel [9], an online dictionary held by the world’s largest brand consultancy Interbrand, defines brand identity as an outward expression of the brand which includes the name of the brand and its visual appearance. Brand identity symbolizes the brand’s differentiation from its competitors and it is related to fundamental means of consumer recognition. [9] Upshaw (1995) continues by describing building brand identity as a reminder of what brands have always needed to succeed. In the other words, companies can build a stronger presence in the market place by strengthening its brand identity. Kapferer (1997) points out that anything is possible to happen after launching a new brand. However, brand will eventually acquire its autonomy and its own meaning. First, a new brand is given a name, “a non-sense word”, which after some time starts to acquire a meaning among consumers through memories composed of past communication and products. In brief,
brand identity defines an area of valid opportunities which respect its own restrictions. Upshaw (1995) affirms that brand identity is something which defines how a product or service is viewed by the consumers and the main concentration is on how the brand is perceived to perform. Upshaw (1995) continues by explaining that brand identity includes the strategy of how a product or service will be sold and the strategic personality that acculturates it. It is vital to know the way in which those two elements are composited beside the tangible and intangible executional elements which help them to band together. The latter elements mentioned include the brand name, logo and graphic system, for instance. Whereupon, the brand identity is not something that marketers create but what consumers perceive as being created. (Upshaw, 1995)

2.7 Brand Equity

As determined by Kotler and Armstrong (2009), “Brand equity is the differential effect that knowing the brand name has on consumer response to the product or its marketing.” They also state, that a powerful brand has high brand equity, and a brand with high brand equity is an extremely valuable asset. American Marketing Association [1] refers brand equity to the value of a brand. AMA defines brand equity from a consumer perspective. They say brand equity to be based on consumers’ attitudes about positive brand, favorable consequences of using the brand and its attributes. In addition, American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) [3] has another definition for brand equity in connection to the latter. Their definition says brand equity to stand for all the gained value or worth of a brand. They also agree that brand’s name has a set of advantages linked into it and it adds the general value of the product or service. In brief, ASID says brand equity to consist of four different parts: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. [3] Brand awareness is defined as the level of brand’s existence in the consumer’s mind, whereas brand association is called to be anything that is linked in the memory to a brand. Perceived quality stands for consumers’ beliefs and attitudes about the brand’s ability to satisfy their expectations. Finally, the brand loyalty measures customer’s attachment to a brand. [3] Aaker (1991) confirms this by saying that brand equity is a collection of brand assets and liabilities which are in connection to a brand, brand’s name and brand’s symbol. These elements add to or withdraw the provided value from the product or service to a firm, or to firm’s customers. Faircloth, Capella and Alford (2001) add that the main benefit that derives from brand equity is being an instrument for finding out the
differential consumer behavior effect of firms’ marketing mix activities. However, the basis of brand equity can be divided into five different categories and all of those must be linked to the name and/or symbol of the brand (Aaker, 1991). Assets or liabilities for brand equity are the following: Brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations in addition to perceived quality. Other proprietary brand assets are: patents, trademarks, channel relationships etc. (Aaker, 1991). Aaker also argues that brand equity creates value for both the customer and the firm. (1991)

![Diagram of Brand Equity](image)

**Figure 5 Brand Equity, Aaker (1991)**

According to Qualtrics [10], a private research software company, brand equity is largely determined by four key elements: brand awareness, brand attributes and associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Qualtrics states that brand awareness is the key to creating brand equity [10], without awareness it is impossible for a business to succeed and gain profit. They also mention that the associations and attributes of the brand result in brand loyalty and brand equity. Quality is said to affect the consequences of the performance of the attributes. “Key areas of quality are the
focal point of in-depth elaboration techniques to find out what makes quality and what quality improvements can be made to enhance brand loyalty and brand equity.” (16.3.2102) [10] Finally, brand loyalty has been researched exhaustively by academics and practitioners as one of the most vital factors that can have an impact on brand’s success or failure in the marketplace. [10]

Figure 6 Brand Equity, Qualtrics Inc.

Brand equity can help customers to interpret, process and store big quantities of information about brands, as well as give them confidence in the purchasing decision and bring satisfaction to the user of a brand by making them feel more important, for instance. (Aaker, 1991) Keller (2008) continues that companies with high brand equity gain higher perceptions and greater loyalty concerning the brand by the customers. These companies are less vulnerable to competition, they maintain higher profit margins, their customers react less negatively to price increases and they have greater support of middlemen. (Keller, 2008) Companies with high brand equity also enjoy higher marketing promotion effectiveness, their licensing in increased and they have greater brand extension opportunities. (Keller, 2008)
2.8 Conclusion of Frame of References

In conclusion Esch. et al. (2006) state that brand awareness is essential in order to form brand image, because when a brand is well established in the memory it is easier for associations to be created and attached. Due to this, we can state that building a strong brand image depends on possessing high brand awareness. As Aaker (1991) stated, there are few guidelines to improve brand awareness, such as being different or memorable, creating a slogan or jingle, symbol exposure, publicity, event sponsorship, considering brand extensions, using cues, recall requires repetition and the recall bonus. Nowadays, brands need to build a strong image and possess high awareness in order to succeed in highly competitive environments. A brand with higher awareness compared to competitors is able to gain higher brand equity. In other words, the brand is able to generate more profit.
3. Methodology

In this part, detailed information about the methodology and methods used to collect the data are provided and also the information related to data analysis is presented. The main aim of this part is to present the research techniques used to find the answer to the research question: How do consumers perceive airline companies? This is a component of the thesis that also deals with the way the research was conducted.

3.1 Planning an empirical study

According to Pentti Routio, Licentiate of Science Technology and professor in Aalto University, (2007) every research project has important relations to the existing theory of the pertinent field of research, and usually also to empiria. [11] He argues that when the aim of the study belongs to empiria, in the tangible world of people, objects, and incidents, the study is called empirical. Routio specifies that the relations between people, objects, and incidents determine which methods of research are possible and effectual to use, and they also prescribe the general character of the project. [11] Since this research aims to discover an incident (“how things are”), in this case the image and level of awareness of airlines, it can be counted in to be an empirical study.

3.2 Method

According to Creswell (2003), a method can be described as an instrument or a test for gathering information and analyzing data. The two approaches of data collection are qualitative and quantitative research. (Creswell, 2003) Method usually has a focus on one perspective of the research activity at time, and it can be considered to be more important than the actual data that the researcher collects; also other researcher may adopt the method, add further information into final research results and in this way, improve the study. (Thomas, 2003)
3.2.1 Qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that qualitative study is carried out in its natural settings: trying to explain phenomena in terms of the significance the people bring to it. Qualitative research method requires collection and use of variance of empirical data, such as case study, interview and observational; that define habitual and problematic moments and meanings’ in people’s lives. (Denzin, Lincoln, 1994) In the other words, qualitative researchers pursue to become clear with personal stories of the people and the ways they interact with each other (Glesne, Peshkin, 1992). According to Belk (2007), qualitative research methods include several techniques. Churchill (2005) states that the best qualitative research method techniques are the use of focus groups, depth interview, projective technique, ethnography and observation techniques, including those assisted by mechanical devices, such as eye cameras and EEG (electroencephalogram).

3.2.2 Quantitative research

As mentioned by Newman and Benz (1998), quantitative research approaches highlight that in most of the cases there is a common reality on which people can agree, even if their theories behind the research would be different. Quantitative methods concentrate their attention towards different measurements and amounts (such as ‘more and less’, ‘often and seldom’ or ‘similar and different’) of the characteristics demonstrated by the people and the events that the research aims to investigate. (Thomas, 2003) Referring to King, Keohane, Verba (1994), quantitative methods use statistics and numbers in research and they are based on numerical measurements of certain features of phenomena. They intend to find a general description of phenomena or they test causal hypotheses. (King, Keohane, Verba, 1994)

3.2.3 Comparing quantitative and qualitative research

According to Mack et. al (2005), the basic differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods are the following:
• Their analytical objectives
• The types of questions they pose
• The types of data collection instruments they use
• The forms of data they produce
• The degree of flexibility built into study design

Mack et. al. (2005) state that quantitative research seeks to confirm hypotheses about phenomena and uses highly structured methods, such as questionnaires, surveys and structured observation. On the contrary to quantitative research, qualitative research seeks to explore the phenomena and uses semi-structured methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. (Mack et. al., 2005) Mack et. al. (2005), note that the analytical objectives of quantitative and qualitative researches differ. Quantitative research aims to quantify variation, predict causal relationships and describe characteristics of a population. (Mack et. al., 2005) The analytical objectives of qualitative research are the following: to describe variation, to describe and explain relationships, to describe individual experiences and to describe group norms. (Mack et. al., 2005)

Referring to Mack et. al. (2005), quantitative and qualitative researches differ greatly in the flexibility of study design. In quantitative research the study design is stable from beginning to end and the participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next. (Mack et. al., 2005) In qualitative research some aspects of the study are flexible (e.g. wording of particular interview questions) and participant responses affect how and which questions researches ask next. (Mack et. al., 2005) According to Mack et. al. (2005), the data format of quantitative and qualitative researches is very different: In quantitative research the data format is basically numerical and obtained by assigning numerical values to responses, and the data format in qualitative research is, in turn, textual and obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes. Mack et. al. (2005) says that the key difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is flexibility. In general, qualitative methods are more flexible whereas quantitative methods are fairly inflexible. (Mack et. al., 2005) As an example, qualitative methods ask mostly “open-ended” questions (participants are free to respond in their own words, not just “yes” or “no”) whereas quantitative methods ask closed-ended questions. Mack et. al. (2005) notes that the advantage of inflexibility is that it permits for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study
sites. However, it requires in-depth understanding of the important questions to ask, the best way to ask them, and the range of possible responses. (Mack et. al., 2005)

3.2.4 Conclusion of research method

To conclude, in this research we used a quantitative research method. The aim was to find the answer to the research question concerning the brand image and brand awareness of airline companies. In order to do so, we used a highly structured method, such as survey. In simple words, via carrying out a survey we were able to find the answer to our research question: How do customers perceive airline companies? The analytical objective of the survey was to quantify variation, in other words, determine the fluctuation of the case company Finnair’s brand image and brand awareness among the chosen sample group. We chose to use quantitative research also because of its inflexibility; quantitative research method uses closed-ended questions which allow us to compare the responses across the participants.

3.3 Type of research

In order to select the most proper research design for this study, we used the classification of Churchill and Iacobucci. According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005), a search design provides the framework or plan for a study, used as a guide to collect and analyze data. These authors state in their book “Marketing research” that there are three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive and causal.

Churchill and Iacobucci (2005), state that exploratory research aims to discover ideas and insights. This research study is helpful when large problem statements are broken down into smaller statements, to specific hypotheses. (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005) They also notify that exploratory research is not only characterized by flexibility with respect to the used research methods but also appropriate for any problem about which little is known. The major emphasis of descriptive research study is on the concern to determine the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between two variables and this type of research method is characteristically guided by
an initial hypothesis. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) In a causal research study the goal is to determine cause-and-effect relationships, and these are studied via experiments. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005)

The three research designs are put into a brief matrix below to ease the understanding of each research design:

![Figure 7 Types of Research Design (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005)]

According to Pentti Routio, Licentiate of Science Technology and professor in Aalto University (2007), there are two different methods in the empirical study to be categorized on the basis of the expected results from the study: descriptive and normative. [11] The descriptive approach, also called informative approach, aims to gather information (i.e. descriptions and explanations) of the object of the study, without trying to modify the object. In that case, the aim is to describe the target;
what sort of an object is now, or has been. Routio (2007) notifies that it is common to explain why the object is how it is. [11] In some cases additional information is collected; this includes criticism concerning the positive and negative aspects of the object, but it does not include planning any improvements. The normative approach aims to determine how things should be. This approach includes improvement planning to the studied object. [11]

3.3.1 Degree of universality

Another dividing line between research methods is based on the presumed degree of universality of the results of the study. (Routio, 2007) [11] This decision has to be considered when determining the extent of the study, that is to say; how much material has to be collected, and this in turn influences the choice of analysis method. [11] According to Routio (2007), the two main alternatives are intensive and extensive study. In the first study method there is just one or few objects, and it searches facts which concern specific cases such as specific models of products. Due to the restricted number of objects, it is possible to study them throughout in their genuine environment with all their relevant properties and relationships (a holistic study), which results in achieving a deep understanding of their position and meaning in the social and cultural context. On the contrary to intensive study, Routio (2007) notifies that extensive study method looks for information which is common to all or most of the objects in the category, in other words “generally valid” knowledge. When examining a great number of objectives, it will be necessary to limit the amount of information collected from them, and abandon the goal of a holistic study. Thus, the researcher is forced to select and analyze only those attributes of the objects that are important and interesting concerning the project. [11]

Combining these two categorizations we are able to constitute the following matrix which contains four approaches or styles of studies with distinctly different methods:
As it is possible to see from the matrix; combining two categorizations result in different styles of studies. Combining descriptive and intensive styles of studies, in other words Intensive descriptive approach, result in a case study approach. In this thesis a case study approach was used in order to investigate the brand image and brand awareness: brand image and awareness were investigated from the airline perspective and Finnair, the national Finnish airline, was used as a case company.

In conclusion, in this thesis both exploratory and descriptive research designs were used. Firstly, exploratory research was needed in order to understand the studied subject. This research design didn’t directly help in finding out the answer to the research question but it provided information to deepen the authors’ understanding of the topic. The secondary data was collected from scientific articles and books and it helped to gain insights and understand the subject in more detail. To support this research and to gain even more knowledge concerning the researched subject, qualitative research method was also used, such as e-mail interview. For this research the case company’s Country Sales Manager, Desmond Chacko was interviewed by e-mail. This qualitative method decided to be used, because according to Taloustutkimus Oy [12], an independent Finnish service market research company, a qualitative research can be used as well, to deepen the study results of quantitative research. As stated before, this research design didn’t only help us to discover ideas and insights but also allowed the authors to gain greater understanding of the case company. Secondly, descriptive approach needed to be used in order to collect and analyze the data.
To collect primary data, a descriptive method, such as a survey, was used. The survey provided the answer to the research question: How do consumers perceive airline companies? Descriptive approach was appropriate research design to use due to the fact that this research was not aiming to plan any improvements that would have been carried out in practice.

3.4 Population and sample

To collect data we needed to choose a population and determine a sample to be used in the research. According to Churchill (2005), population is defined not only as people, but also to manufacture and retail firms, organizations, marketers, countries or even inanimate objects. Target population instead, “-- is defined as the totality of cases that conform to some designated specifications. The specifications define the elements that belong to the target group and those that are excluded (Churchill, 2005, p. 321).” Churchill defines sample as a “selection of a subset of elements from a larger group of objects”, and in sample survey it is meant to represent the target population (Churchill, 2005, p. 679). Defining the target population refers to the group of people which researchers want to draw a conclusion about. “Relevant elements thus are the objects on which the measurements are taken.” (Churchill, 2005, p. 322) This means that it must be decided “-- whether the target population consists of individuals, households, business firms, other organizations, credit-card transactions, Web pages, or some other unit (Churchill, 2005, p. 322). Churchill also states that a combination of different respondent characteristics, such as age, gender, education and ethnicity, can be used. In this research, the target population consisted of Indians.

According to Kotler (2009), there are two main types of sample techniques: Probability and nonprobability sampling methods. “Using probability samples, each population sample has a known chance of being included in the sample, and researchers can calculate confidence limits for sampling error; but when probability sampling costs too much or takes too much time, marketing researchers often take nonprobability samples; even thought their sampling error cannot be measured” (Kotler, 2009, p. 140). Probability sampling methods can be divided into three different categories called simple random sample, stratified random sample and cluster (area) sample (Kotler, 2009). Regarding to Churchill, probabilities of the sample selection do not necessary have to be equal; “only that one can specify the probability with which each element of the population will be
included in the sample” (Churchill, 2005, p. 324). According to Kotler (2009), when creating a simple random sample, all the members of the population have a known and equal chance of selection. He also states that the sample population of stratified random sample can be divided into similarly exclusive groups (e.g. age groups), and random samples that are drawn from each of these groups (Kotler, 2009). In the contrary to stratified random samples, cluster sample, divides the population into similarly exclusive groups (e.g. as blocks), from which the researcher draws a sample of the groups to interview (Kotler, 2009). Regarding to Kotler (2009), second type of sample technique is called nonprobability samples. It is contrary to probability samples; as it is not possible to estimate whether any population element will be included in the sample. Due to this, Churchill (2005) states, that it is not possible to ensure that the sample is representative of the whole population. Kotler (2009) continues that nonprobability sampling methods can also be divided into three different types: Convenience, judgment and quota samples. In convenience sample the researcher selects the members of the population that are easy to obtain information from. (Kotler, 1999) When creating a judgment sample, “The researcher uses his or her judgment to select population members who are good prospects for accurate information” (Kotler, 1999, p. 141) According to Kotler (1999), quota sample is created by the researcher via finding and interviewing a prescribed number of people in each of several categories.

The sample group used in this study was Indian university students from Dayananda Sagar Institutions, Bangalore and Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida, New Delhi. The sample group in this study was defined as simple random sample, because every member in the sample group had a known and equal chance of selection. Besides, the group consisted of Indian university students and it was divided into exclusive groups by the age (17-25 years old), geographical location (India) and occupation (university student).

In addition, Indian people were chosen to be the target population for this research due to the fact that the fast economic growth of India interests airline companies. [13] Between the periods of 1995-2000 the outbound tourism of India has grown 20, 8 per cent. [14] Moreover, Indian university students were chosen to be the sample group for this research because the researchers of this study assume that Indian university students are potential future consumers of airline services since they study and their general knowledge about the world and their economical situation is probably better
than those young people who do not have education in India. In this regard, the sample group was formed by taking into account the attractiveness of the population from the airline perspective.

3.4.1 Sampling control

According to Churchill (2005), sampling control signifies the anxiety of a researcher to be able to direct the inquiry to planned respondents and co-operate with them in a desired way. Regarding inquiry directing, no researcher wants to collect inadequate data. Therefore, directing the inquiry to the desired respondents is vital. (Churchill, 2005)

Either in this research, the desire was not to collect data from people who did not belong to the sample group. Thus, the questionnaire was not posted on a random, public website but on a social media webpage of Facebook. More specifically, the questionnaire was posted on the Facebook group of Jaipuria Institute of Management and Dayananda Sagar Institutions. Using social media as a channel to reach the sample group had it pros and cons. It provided a quick and efficient way to reach the target sample group fast but we had no control over whether the respondents really were the ones intended. In assumption of the authors, just the students studying in these two universities belong to their Facebook groups and are concerned on the news posted on these groups’ walls. All in all, we assume that the university students, belonging to either one of the two the Facebook groups, were the ones to respond to the questionnaire.

3.5 Instrument to collect the data

In this research a method of descriptive research design, such as case study, was used in order to collect data concerning the topic.

Yin defines in his book “Case Study Research Design and Methods” case study research as an empirical inquiry that explores a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not obviously evident.” (Yin, 2003) In other words, in comparison to other methods, the strength of the case study method is its ability to investigate, in- depth, a “case” within its “real life” context. (Yin, 2004) Yin (2004) suggests that
the best situation to use a case study method is when the research deals with exploratory or descriptive questions and strives for producing, in the first place, understanding of people and events. A case study research is not limited to a single source of data: a good case study benefits from having a variety of sources of evidence, e. g. questionnaire, interview etc. (Yin, 2004) Whereupon, this research is a case study and we used variety of sources of evidence, such as questionnaire and interview.

The case that was studied in this research was how known Finnair is in the Indian market, and what its brand image among Indian university students is. In this case study, Finnair, the national airline of Finland, was used as a case company. Firstly, the reason laying behind the choice of Finnair was that the authors were extremely interested in investigating how consumers perceive one of the oldest operating airlines in the world. Secondly, since we are studying tourism as their major, we already knew that Finnair’s positioning strategy is to be the airline that serves both business and leisure passengers travelling between Europe and Asia. Thus, the eagerness to find out whether their name was known in a new and fairly unknown Indian market was great.

3.5.1 Data Collection

Data collection can be done using secondary or primary data. (Churchill, 2005) According to Churchill (2005), different features of the data define the purpose of the research. Secondary data consists of statistics that already exist and they have been gathered for a previous purpose (Churchill, 2005). In contrast, primary data consists of data collected for the purpose of the immediate investigation at hand. (Churchill, 2005) Glass & Hopkins (1984) stated that “Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection.” It repeatedly uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the data distribution. (Glass, Hopkins, 1984) The data collection of this research can be seen in figures in the 4th section called “Empirical Data”.
3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data consists of information that has been collected for another purpose and already exists somewhere. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009) Kotler and Armstrong (2009), state that generally speaking researchers start by gathering secondary data. Churchill (2005) shares the same point of view as Kotler and Armstrong, since he states the following in his book “Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations”: “Secondary data possess important advantages over primary data, so the researcher should always start with secondary data, particularly given the “information explosion” and the enormous volume of existing data” (Churchill, 2005, p. 168) In comparison to primary data, secondary data can usually be obtained more quickly and at lower cost. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009) In other words, using secondary data can help to create significant cost and time advantages. (Churchill, 2005) Problem is generally not totally soluble when using only secondary data because it rarely can answer to the question perfectly, even if it can give a good insight into the problem, beside the information required to solve it as well as the ways in which the problem can be seen. (Churchill, 2005) According to Churchill (2005), secondary data consists of internal company data, published external secondary data, as well as data supplied by commercial marketing information services. Churchill (2005) continues by saying that secondary data can be gathered from primary sources, meaning the original sources of data, which should always be seem as the first option when choosing the source of information. The other way to collect secondary data can be done by using secondary sources, which are sources that secure the data from an original source. (Churchill, 2005) Regarding to Kotler and Armstrong (2009), secondary sources can every now and then provide data that an individual company cannot collect by using only its own resources. This includes for example the information that may not be directly available or the information that would be too expensive to collect. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009) Secondary data provides a starting point for research and sometimes it helps to define research objectives, as well as, problems. However, it is a necessity to collect relevant, accurate and unbiased primary data. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009)

In this study, the secondary data has been obtained from using such tools as data mining and interviewing, and primary data has been acquired from a questionnaire. Data mining is a method of researching for already published works. [15] The secondary data has been collected from the following sources: we have used the data base of Halmstad University, as well as Emerald - world’s
leading scholarly publisher of journals and books in business and management- for searching scientific articles and researches, which we have used as a source of many theories and definitions. The library of Halmstad University has been used for gathering theoretical data from printed sources, such as books and articles. Interviewing has been used as a tool to collect secondary data considering our case study about Finnair’s awareness and brand image in India from Desmond Chacko, the Country Sales Manager at Finnair.

3.5.3 Primary Data

As stated by Kotler and Armstrong (2009), primary data consists of information collected for the specific purpose. It is said that marketing researchers who cannot find the information needed for their marketing questions from the secondary data, approach primary data collection. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009) Regarding to Churchill (2005), demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, psychological and lifestyle characteristics, attitudes and opinions, awareness and knowledge, intentions, motivation, and behavior of individuals and groups, are in the center of interest for marketing researchers. Churchill (2005) also stated that the different ways to collect primary data are nearly endless. The first rank decision is whether to use communication or observation techniques. (Churchill, 2005) Churchill notes that there are two main techniques called Communication and Observation. Communication usually involves a questionnaire or survey, and it is called a technique where researchers ‘ask people’; question the respondents direct. On the contrary, observation can be called ‘watch them’ – technique, because observation does not involve questioning, instead, it lays more on recorded facts and actions or behaviors (Churchill, 2005, p. 212). However, when choosing the communication method for data collection, several decisions must be made, such as, should the questionnaires be administered by mail, over the Internet or in person at a shopping mall. (Churchill, 2005) Churchill (2005) points out that the communication methods may be categorized by their degree of structure, disguise or method of administration.

Questionnaires can be classified by the method of administration. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) The prime methods are the following: personal interview, telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, and Web surveys. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) A personal interview is a direct conversation between the interviewer and the respondent. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) A telephone interview, basically,
consists of few questions and it takes no longer than two to three minutes and mail questionnaires can be used when the want is to collect large amounts of information at a low cost. (Kotler, Armstrong, 2009). For B-to-B research a fax survey is suitable option. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) There are two types of Web surveys: a researcher can send an e-mail with an embedded Web address in the message to the respondents, or s/he can place a banner on Internet vendor’s site and the respondent can just click it to get to the survey. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) In this research, the method of Web survey was used in order to collect primary data. The risk of using a Web survey is big because if the intended target sample group doesn’t find the survey topic very interesting, the amount of responses can be fairly scarce. As Churchill and Iacobucci (2005) state, the response rates of Web surveys are starting to collapse due to the lacking of novelty. A structured questionnaire can be used in descriptive or causal research and has a well-defined sequence and standardized response categories. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005), when the research is exploratory, unstructured questionnaires can be used. They also mention that in an unstructured questionnaire, the response categories are not predetermined; respondents are allowed to answer in their own terms. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005)

In this research, the primary data has been acquired from the survey. We chose to use a survey because, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2009) it is the most widely used method to collect primary data and it also is the approach that best suits for gathering descriptive information. The survey helped us to find out the answer to our research question: by creating a Web survey - and using Indian university students as a sample group - was one of the most up-to-date data sources in this study.

3.5.3.1 Information control

The various data collection methods (personal interview, telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, and Web survey) differ in the amount and accuracy of the information that can be obtained, and the questions that can be asked. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) Each has it pros and cons. Personal interviews can be carried out by using nearly any type of questionnaire: structured or unstructured, disguised or undisguised, but the aspect that can affect to the results of a personal interview is the presence of the interviewer. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) In personal interviews the interviewer may bias the responses of the interviewee. Likewise, a telephone interview can reflect interviewer bias due to the
perception that the respondent has of the interviewer. This is why mail questionnaires can offer a more pleasant form of interview for the respondent: mail questionnaires are often anonymous, thus people are more willing to answer to sensitive issues (sexual behavior. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) Web surveys allow respondents to feel anonymity too. However, mail questionnaires and Web surveys entail big risks in the accuracy of the information. When the respondent is able to see the whole questionnaire before answering it may affect to their responses: they can skip questions and answer to them in a craved way. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) This is phenomenon is called “sequence bias”. (Churchill, Iacobucci, 2005) In this research the risk of sequence bias is somewhat probable due to the use of Web survey. The information obtained from the target sample group may not reflect the full truth of their knowledge concerning brand image and awareness of airlines.

3.6 Developing a survey

According to the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006), a survey is a research method for gathering information from a selected group of people by using standardized interviews or questionnaires. Many people think of a questionnaire as “the survey” but actually, the questionnaire is just one part of the survey process. Surveys, as well, call for selecting populations for inclusion, pre-testing instruments, determining delivery methods, ensuring validity, and analyzing results. [16] In order to continuously improve quality, surveys can be used to help to identify customer expectations, measure satisfaction levels, and determine areas for improvement. [16]

3.6.1 Initial decisions when developing a survey

To make sure that the survey measures what it intends to measure, it is vital to define all the possible error enters of the survey process. [16] Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006) points out few sources for possible error enters. Validity of the survey is dependent on how many error enters there are in the survey process. [16] According to the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006), the error enters are the following: First, persons who are being surveyed might not represent the whole true population under study. Second, respondents might not understand the question asked
right. Third, respondents might not be very willing to participate in the survey process and at the last; results may not always be analyzed in a right way. [16] Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006) also notes that when undertaking a survey, few questions should be considered. They are the following: “How will the survey be used? Who should be surveyed? How many should be surveyed? Who will design and administer the questionnaire and analyze the results?” [16]

As mentioned in an earlier paragraph, surveys should be conducted through following ways: face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, paper questionnaires, online questionnaires or a combination of these methods. According to Kahn and Cannel (1957), an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people that can help you not only gather valid and reliable data, but that also is relevant to your research objectives. Referring to Churchill (2005), telephone interview is an interview conducted via telephone and paper questionnaires are surveys written on paper, and often distributed via mail or personally at the mall, for instance. Conversely, online surveys are distributed on Internet. Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006) notes that what affects on the chose of the type of research method for the survey, is usually the cost of implementing the survey, the length of the project (for example, creating an online survey takes least time) and sampling bias (for example, older persons might not be reached well via e-mail). [16] Basically, questionnaires consist of a cover letter, the questions, and a concluding page. [16] At the beginning of the questionnaire is the cover letter which should be brief. [16] This cover letter should present the purpose of the survey, the persons conducting the survey, the date by which the form should be returned, an estimate of the time required for completion, the confidentiality policy and a person to contact. [16] As stated in the article “Using Surveys for Data Collection in Continuous Improvement” by the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006), at the end of the questionnaire there should be a text in which the respondents are thanked for their participation and again the name of a person to contact in case if the participants have questions concerning the survey. [16]
3.6.2 Question formulation and pre-testing the questions

Regarding to the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006), there are two categories of different kind of questions. Those are called open-ended questions and closed questions. In open-ended questions respondents answer to the questions by their own words, and in closed questions the participants respond to a certain set of questions, for example, to categorical or scaled responses. Categorical response means answering to a question about the gender of the participant or the type of transportation to work, for instance. On the other hand, scaled responses have a clear order, and they can be scaled by numbers or by questions, which define the level of agreement or disagreement of the respondent.

Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006) notes that writing the questions for the survey should begin with simple questions. They explain that the language and vocabulary should be such that every responder understands questions. Only one item should be asked per question and also neutral response should be offered for the responder. Plenty of space should be included for written comments and the survey should be kept as long as possible. Questions should have a natural flow; be in rational order, and it is important to “- create categories that cover all possible responses and are mutually exclusive.” (Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University, 2006)

Referring to the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University (2006), the survey should be tested before taking it in to use; preferably with 5-10 people. “Items to cover with the persons pre-testing the questionnaire include: any terms or words that were unfamiliar, the clarity of the questions, the flow of the questionnaire, ability to access the form if online and the actual time required to complete the questionnaire.” (Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvania State University, 2006) This kind of personal feedback can help to improve the quality of the survey. After sending the surveys, it is possible to increase response rates by different methods. The assistant Professor in Department of Political Science in Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy J. M. Jensen, says that the best ways to achieve the desired increase of responses is to target your audience, personalize e-mail invitations, keep the e-mail invitation short, make the first survey page simple and send reminder e-mails, for instance. [17]
Once received all the surveys back, begins the data tabulation. (Churchill, 2005) Data tabulation means that all the answers are classified into certain categories to be evaluated easier. [18] Tabulation of data happens in a table that is “a symmetric arrangement of statistical data in rows and columns. Rows are horizontal arrangements whereas columns are vertical arrangements. [18] It may be simple, double or complex depending upon the type of classification.” [18]

3.6.3 Calculating descriptive statics and analyzing the results

Ali writes in his article How to Calculate Descriptive Statistics Using Analysis ToolPak, that “Descriptive statistics is a branch of statistics that organizes and summarizes the information for a given set of data.” (10.04.2012) [19] However, Investopedia completes the definition by saying that the data “-- can either be a representation of the entire population or a sample.” (10.04.2012) [20] When calculating simple descriptive statistics, components that matter are, for example frequency and percentage distributions that provide the basic information researchers need “-- to answer the questions for which they initially started the survey process.” (Investopedia, 10.04.2012) [20]

The actual analyzing of data begins after frequency tables and percentage distributions are done. [16] The Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvanian State University (2006) presents four different ways to analyze the results. [16] First one is comparison with the survey. This basically means that response patterns for specific questions may stand out from the others and may refer to an area for improvement. Second one is comparison across the subgroups. Comparison across the subgroups means that the questionnaire responses by certain characteristics are broken out and this might help to diagnose whether certain groups have disparate experiences. Third one is called comparison across time. Comparison across time is normally created for the purpose to find out whether implemented process improvements are not only having the wanted effect, but also to identify areas with declining performance or satisfaction for process improvement. To make sure that the apparent change is an actual change and not the result of differences in measurement, the questions and sampling population must be the same across both surveys. [16] The last one is comparison with specific goals. Some researchers might work with processes that have established goals. “In addition, teams may want to benchmark with other areas within the University or other institutions. Similar to comparisons across time, the same question
format and sampling methodology should be used.” (Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment of the Pennsylvanian State University, 2006) [16]

3.6.4 Questionnaire formulation

The questionnaire used in this research consisted of ten questions, including an opening question, demographic questions, as well as questions considering brand awareness and brand image. The goal was to create feasible, functional and clear survey that would help in answering precisely to the research question: How do customers perceive airline companies?

To begin with, the first question was formed in a way that it introduced the topic smoothly to the respondent of the questionnaire. “Do you like to travel?” was a soft opening question that aimed to help the respondent to get an insight of the overall theme of the questionnaire, retreat information from their memory and generate considerations of own experiences. The second and third question considered the age and the gender of the respondent. The demographics basically tell who the respondents were. In this research the reason for asking specifically the gender of the respondent was to urge to find out whether men were more aware of airline companies than women and whether men had a different image of airline companies than women? The age was an important aspect to define to make sure that the respondent belonged to the intended age group, which in this case was 17-25- year- olds. The fourth question was “Which of the following airlines do you know?” There were eight options defined, and they were the following: Lufthansa, Air France, Finnair, British Airways, Swiss International Airlines, SAS Scandinavian Airlines, Jet Airways and Air India. The main reason for choosing these airlines was that they all operate between India and Europe. Another reason was that Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways and Swiss International Airlines belong to the group of biggest airlines operating from Europe. In addition, Finnair was our case study company and SAS Scandinavian Airlines represents Nordic airline companies beside Finnair. In turn, Jet Airways and Air India represented Indian airline companies. Thus, it was interesting to know the brand awareness of Finnair, and other European airlines in relation to Indian airlines among the Indian university students. This question provided, most importantly, the level of the awareness of Finnair. After this question the respondents were kindly asked not to proceed
further in the questionnaire in case Finnair was unknown to them. The respondents were thanked for filling out the questionnaire as far as they were capable to.

The respondents to whom Finnair was familiar were able to proceed in filling in the questionnaire. The fifth question was formed like this: “Based on your current knowledge of these airlines, how would you rank these service providers against one another? Please respond to this question as if you were considering purchasing one of these airlines’ services?” The ranking in this question was from one to eight. Number one stood for the most known airline, as well as, the one that the respondent would like to purchase a travel from. Number eight stood for the least known airline that the respondent would not like to purchase a travel from. The airline company options were the same as in question number four. This question measured the attitude the respondent had towards a specific airline. In this regard, the meaning of attitude is a preference or liking regarding a specific object that affects on a person’s tendency of acting. (Churchill, 2005) The question number six pursued to investigate the ways how the respondent came to know the case company, Finnair. The options were the following: Word-of-Mouth, when searching airline services, advertisement (for example, Internet or printed media), travel agency, online travel agency and other. In the question number seven the respondents were asked whether they had seen an advertisement of Finnair. The options to choose from were: Yes; online, yes; on social media, yes; on television or radio, yes; on newspaper or magazine, and finally; no, I have not seen an advertisement of Finnair.

The eighth question helped to find out which different attributes the respondent linked to Finnair and most importantly it pursued to investigate the brand image of Finnair. The options that the respondents were able to choose from were the following: Safe, expensive, affordable, modern, reliable, innovative, organized, efficient, punctual, sustainable, popular, friendly, fun, competent, sophisticated, and none of the above. The created options stem from Finnair’s group strategy: the aim of Finnair is to be e.g. Competitive, sustainable and the preferred airline choice. [21] The ninth question, “Do you trust Finnair?” measured the level of trust respondents had towards Finnair and the image of Finnair: whether the respondents found Finnair as a reliable airline. The tenth question asked the respondents to identify Finnair’s logo from a group of eight airline logos. The airline companies were the same as in the earlier questions. Beside brand awareness, this question helped to investigate brand image of Finnair, as logo can be defined as a symbol for the company as a whole in the marketplace and it can communicate the identity of the company (Clow, Baack, 2007)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1.</th>
<th>This question was asked in order to retreat information concerning psychographics, such as respondents’ interest and opinions. Closed-ended, single choice question.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 2. &amp; 3.</td>
<td>These questions were asked to determine demographics of the respondents: the people belonging to the sample group of the study. Closed-ended, single choice questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4.</td>
<td>This question was asked in order to discover whether the respondents know the case company Finnair. This question measured brand awareness; it was a closed-ended, multiple choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5.</td>
<td>This question was asked to measure the attitude the respondent has towards a specific airline and which of the airlines they prefer. Closed-ended, single choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 6.</td>
<td>This question was asked in order to investigate the sources from which the respondents became aware of the case company Finnair. This question was a closed-ended, multiple choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 7.</td>
<td>This question was asked in order to determine the respondents’ perception of marketing mix tools used by the case airline. This question was a closed-ended, multiple choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 8.</td>
<td>This question was asked in order to find out which attributes the respondents linked to Finnair and most importantly it pursued to investigate the brand image of Finnair. This question was a closed-ended, multiple choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 9.</td>
<td>This question measured the level of trust the respondents have towards Finnair, whether the image of Finnair is reliable. Closed-ended, simple choice question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 10.</td>
<td>This question was asked to evaluate brand recognition among respondents. This question was a closed-ended, single choice question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Online questionnaire: Questions and justifications
To ensure that our survey was applicable in practice, we pre-tested the questions with five students from Halmstad University. We made sure that there were no unfamiliar words, the questionnaire was easy to fill out and the questions itself were easy to understand correctly. Also the link to Web survey was tested. The official questionnaire used in this research can be found in appendix 1.

3.7 Reliability, Validity and Ethics

In quantitative research validity and reliability are the most important factors of the instrument. (Polit and Hungler, 1997) Validity defines how well the measuring instruments reflect on the differences in the results of measurement and also how well the measurement reflects true differences among individuals, groups or situations in the characteristic that it seeks to measure. (Polit and Hungler, 1997) Additionally, validity can reflect true differences in the same individual, group or situation from one occasion to another instead of constant or random errors (Churchill, 2005). Churchill (2005) says that validity of the correlations between two measures of the same concept should be seen even when the methods are different. Thus, in this thesis, the questionnaire and an e-mail interview are meant to support each others’ study results, as validity refers to the truthfulness of the study and answers to a question: Does the study measure the attributes of the phenomena that it seeks to measure.

Referring to Churchill (2005), reliability defines how trustworthy and how repeatable, independent but comparable, measuring methods are. Reliability tells about the similarity of the results obtained from the same object, trait or construct. (Churchill, 2005) Churchill (2005) describes reliability as an index of consistency. Correlations between two measures of the same concept should be seen when using the same measure. (Churchill, 2005) According to the latter statement, the measure is coherent if the measuring instrument continually keeps measuring the same thing as a whole. In the questionnaire and in the e-mail interview, the questions asked from the respondents were created in a way to support each other, and provide data that won’t be affected by incidental mistakes or different conditions. The reliability of the questionnaire was attempted to be raised by measuring the same variables through different questions. However, the results of the research cannot be coincidental, and the methods used in the research must measure the exact problem that is to be investigated. (Polit and Hungler, 1997) The validity of the conclusions of this thesis and reliability
of the study must be analyzed throughout the whole research process. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2000) The problem of analyzing the study results of the questionnaire may turn out troublesome if the respondents do not understand the questions precisely, or if they do not answer to all of the questions. (Hirsjärvi et. al. 2000) In this thesis, most of the respondents answered to all of the questions. Only few of the questionnaires included missing answers in some of the questions. This is a probable sign of that not all of the respondents completely understood the questions, the answer-options were too narrow, or that the questions did not concern all of the respondents.
4. Empirical Study

In this part the results of data collection are presented, both primary and secondary. Firstly, a brief recitation of the case company, Finnair is exhibited. Secondly, this chapter continues with presenting the results of secondary and primary data: an e-mail interview with Mr. Desmond Chacko, the Country Sales Manager at Finnair and the results of the online questionnaire.

4.1 Presentation of Finnair Plc

Finnair is one of the world’s safest, most innovative and, oldest operating airlines. The company was founded on the 1st of November 1923. Finnair operates to over 70 destinations, including domestic destination and destinations in Europe, Asia, and North-America. Finnair is part of OneWorld-alliance which broadens the destination network. The focus of Finnair’s operations is to transport passengers between Europe and Asia via Helsinki. The vision of Finnair is to be the number one airline in Nordic countries, but it also strives to be the most wanted airline to travel with to Asia. Finnair aims to be among the three largest operators in transit traffic between Asia and Europe when the passenger needs to change the aircraft within the journey. The growing Asian markets, fast flight connections and competitiveness form the basis of Finnair’s growth strategy. The Finnish government is the major shareholder with a holding of 55.8 per cent. Other shareholders include public corporations, financial institutions, private companies and private households. Foreign shareholders own approximately 12 per cent of the shares. [22]

Today the position of Finnair in the transport between Europe and Asia has become established and is constantly gaining strength. The geographical location of Finland supports the corporation’s plans to expand its operations to Asia: the shortest routes from Europe to “Far East” pass via Helsinki. At the moment Finnair is operating to 15 long-haul destinations: Tokyo, Osaka and, Nagoya in Japan, Beijing, Shanghai, Canton and, Hong Kong in China, Bangkok in Thailand, Delhi and Mumbai in India, Seoul in South-Korea, Singapore, Toronto in Canada and New York in the United States. The long-haul fleet consists of 15 wide-bodied aircrafts. The Finnair Group’s fields of business consist of scheduled passenger and leisure flight operations, technical services and ground handling,
as well as catering operations, the travel agency sector and travel sector information and reservation services. The number of personnel of the Finnair Group is approximately 7500. [22]

4.2 E- mail interview

In order to gain deeper insight of the case company and the research topic, the Country Sales Manager of Finnair, Desmond Chacko, was interviewed by e- mail. Desmond Chacko is an experienced aviation management professional who provided specific answers to the questions concerning Finnair’s operations in India. He also provided rare material of the qualitative survey Finnair has carried out, in the form of a power point presentation that is usually not unveiled to public or private parties. In this interview, the questions were embedded in the text of the e- mail that was sent to Desmond Chacko. The e- mail interview was carried out the 19th of April, 2012. The interview was accumulated with few, but deep questions. These specific questions were asked since the aim of this interview was to gain deeper insights of the researched topic from the case company point of view.

1. How does Finnair carry out marketing in India to improve its brand awareness?
2. How does Finnair utilize marketing to improve its brand image?
3. What are the different marketing tools Finnair uses and which ones of them are the most/less used?
4. Which marketing channels Finnair uses and which ones of them are the most/less used?
5. Would it also be possible to receive statistics considering Finnair’s outbound and inbound flights (from and to India)?

According to the answers of Mr. Chacko and the provided Power Point- presentation the following compendium was combined by the researchers as a conclusion of the knowledge obtained.

Mr. Chacko pointed out that when Finnair decided to launch operations into India, several actions were undertaken, such as qualitative surveys and personal interviews. Qualitative surveys were carried out by a professional research organization to evaluate brand awareness and airline decision making processes of a business man, in order to map the key drivers in the choice of carrier amongst
target group. Since, the awareness was low at the beginning, it was vital to advertise the brand and communicate brand attributes and USP’s (unique selling point). In order to do so, Finnair organized media education trips to familiarize media with the product and destination, as well as, road shows for distribution channels (Travel Agents). Last, but not least, Finnair brought up its awareness by brand advertising using a vast number of multimedia tools, such as printed material, OOH-advertising (“Out- of- Home”), radio and TV. Mr. Chacko stated that the overall key focus of Finnair is to convey a positive communication message of the brand attributes, both in advertising and communications. To convey this message, Finnair uses conventional advertising, newsletters and media interactions that lead to editorials. To transmit this positive image the communication messages and advertising focus on the following aspects: new aircraft fleet, reliability, environmental consciousness, pricing flexibility (value for money), efficient hubs, keeping customer in focus, freshness and Finnishness. The use of different marketing tools depends primarily on budget availability. Mr. Chacko points out that when a brand is new in a market, the expenses spent on advertising are high till the brand is well recognized and accepted. Finnair uses a mix of marketing tools, primarily public relations and advertising. Public relations are used in a form of press releases and interactions with media organized by the public relations agency. Advertising is carried out by traditional print media (business publications, trade media), OOH- advertising (billboards at strategic locations; roadsides, airports), TV and radio (used for tactical campaigns), digital advertising (search engine marketing) and point- of- sale campaigns (product brochures and giveaways). Marketing spend was high in the initial years of Finnair’s operation in India but it has been gradually decreased over the years. Nowadays the prime marketing channels are internet based. Mr. Chacko states that route specific statistics of Finnair cannot be given to public use or independent parties. However, the overall performance of Finnair can be obtained from the Finnair Group’s web page. In general, the average seat load factor on the Indian routes is close to 80% at present. This has been growing over the years.

The qualitative survey that Finnair carried out investigated the quality attributes on trips from India to Europe and from India to USA via Europe. The airline companies that Finnair used in their research emerged to be the same as in survey used for the research of this thesis, except Scandinavian Airlines SAS. Surprisingly, the research carried out by Finnair resulted in a similar outcome from the quantitative research conducted for this thesis. The results obtained from the research used in this thesis will be explained deeply in the next chapter. In brief, the study
concerning the quality attributes on trips from India to Europe and from India to USA via Europe shows that there is no clarity about brand Finnair even though people seem to remember it. The airlines that were the most familiar to the sample group used in the research were Lufthansa and Jet airways. It emerges from the same study that among Indian business fliers Finnair was perceived as budget airline, and only used by cost-conscious fliers travelling to Finland. However, the exposure of Finnair’s leaflet helped to change the image of Finnair into a modern airline with good connectivity, but the change of image occurred only in Europe. According to the survey, Indian business fliers are viewed as very cost-conscious, and many of them are members of frequent flier program called Star Alliance, which Finnair does not belong to. Due to the lack of Finnair’s connections to Indian carriers, non-approves the airline’s membership in this frequent flyer program. This study also discovered that unique offerings concerning package deals or other benefits would increase the interest of new airline such as Finnair in the Indian market among Indian business fliers.

4.3 Online questionnaire

The online questionnaire was carried out in order to collect primary data for this study. The questionnaire was formed by using an online survey tool called Kwik Surveys. In total, 216 responses were able to be gained from the online questionnaire. The results were analyzed by using Excel as a tool; the amount of responses to be analyzed for this study was 126, due to the fact that 90 of the respondents provided invalid data; 88 of the respondents did not fulfill the desired age requirements, one respondent forgot to determine his age and one respondents answered just to question number 2. The data was preprocessed (edited, coded and tabulated) by using Excel, in order to get it ready for analysis which is presented in the next chapter. The results of the questionnaire were the following:
Firstly, the respondents were asked whether they like to travel. According to the results, 123 (97.62%) of the respondents like travelling and 3 respondents (2.38%) responded that they do not like travelling.

2. What is your age?

Figure 10 Age of respondents
Secondly, the respondents were asked to determine their age. 88 (40, 93%) of the respondents were either under 17 or over 25 years old, which implies that they do not belong to the sample group of this study. 2 (0, 92%) respondents did not determine their age which signifies that they do not belong to the sample group either. In turn, 126 (58, 15%) of the respondents were between 17 to 25 years old, and therefore they represent the sample group of this study, which is used to analyze the following questions.

![Figure 11 Gender of respondents](image)

Thirdly, the respondents were asked to determine their gender. The gender identifies the difference in brand knowledge between men and women, which was a significant aspect to discover: due to the imbalance between genders it was challenging to determine. Accordingly, 98 (77, 78%) of the respondents were men and 26 (20, 63%) were women, thus the difference in brand knowledge between genders was rather negligible to determine. Due to an unknown reason, 2 (1, 59%) respondents did not determine their gender.
In question 4 the respondents were asked to select among eight airlines the ones they know. The first matrix exhibits the results according to the amount of clicks each airline obtained. In total, all the options were clicked 799 times: the respondents were able to choose multiple options, which resulted in more than just one click per person. In general, all the airlines were quite well-known among the sample group. According to the results the three most known airlines were Lufthansa (13, 89%), Air France (13, 14%) and British Airways & Jet Airways (12, 76%). Finnair (12, 26%) was the third least known airline. The least known airline was Scandinavian Airlines (10, 76%).

**Figure 12 Known airlines (1)**
In the second matrix the results are displayed according to respondents: each pillar represents the number of respondents among 126 people that know the specific airline company. As an example, among 126 people 111 respondents know Lufthansa. The other airlines were known according to the following ranking: Air France (105), British Airways and Jet Airways (102), Air India (101), Finnair (98), Swiss International Airlines (94) and SAS (86).

The respondents were asked to stop filling in the questionnaire if Finnair was not familiar to them. To 28 respondents Finnair was unknown: 13 of them were women and 15 were men. However, seven respondents out of 28 continued filling in the questionnaire, which delimits the reliability of the results.

5. Based on your current knowledge of these airlines, how would you rank these service providers against one another? Please respond to this question as if you were considering purchasing one of these airlines’ services? (Ranking from 1 to 8)

The purpose of this question was to investigate how known Finnair was compared to the other airlines, and whether the respondents would prefer purchasing airline services from Finnair. Due to
a technical problem when using Kwiksurveys as a questionnaire formulation tool, it was not possible to formulate the option choices of the question to be single choice: this caused that the respondents were able to pick multiple options to each ranking level instead of choosing only one on each row, thus, this question cannot provide exact results. In this regard, the information provided by this question is not what was aimed and therefore, it is not usable for this study.

In question six, the respondents were asked to clarify the source from which they had come to know Finnair. The first matrix displays the results according to the amount of clicks each of the options obtained. In total, all the options were clicked 284 times: the respondents were able to choose multiple options, which resulted in more than just one click per person. The three greatest sources of which the respondents came to know Finnair were the following: when searching airline services (32, 39%), word- of mouth (31, 33%) and advertisement (28, 52%). Minority of the respondents has come to know Finnair through a travel agency (5, 28%) and online travel agency (1, 41%). 1, 06 % have come to know Finnair through other sources.

**Figure 14 Source of coming to know Finnair (1)**
Figure 15 Source of coming to know Finnair (2)

In the second matrix the results are displayed according to respondents: each pillar represents the number of respondents among 126 people that have used a specific source to come to know Finnair. As an example, among 126 people 92 respondents came to know Finnair when they were searching for airline services. The other options were used according to the following ranking: word-of-mouth (89), advertisement (81), travel agency (15), online travel agency (4), other (3).
In question number 7 the respondents had to clarify where they have seen advertisement of Finnair. The matrix displays the results according to the number of clicks each of the options obtained as the respondents were able to choose multiple options. The most common sources of seeing advertisement among respondents were online (94) and on social media (90). The other options, TV or radio gained 29 clicks, newspaper or magazine only four clicks. Four respondents answered that they have not seen advertisement of Finnair at all.

Figure 16 Advertisement of Finnair
Question number eight investigated which attributes the respondents attached with brand name Finnair. Respondents were able to choose multiple options and the results of the matrix are displayed according to the number of clicks each of the options obtained. According to the results, the respondents considered Finnair to be safe (55), sustainable (49), punctual (46) and efficient (43). Respondents also found Finnair to be innovative (44), organized (34), modern (35) and friendly (32). Although, Finnair’s services were not found very affordable (26), they were also not seen as expensive (24). Finnair was seen reliable (33), popular (31) and fun (29) in an intermediate level among respondents. Respondents did not perceive Finnair as a very competent (20) or sophisticated (7) airline. Only one person did not associate any of the attributes with brand name Finnair. However, the results show that Finnair has a positive image among the respondents.
The ninth question addressed whether the respondents find Finnair trustworthy. The majority, 100 respondents (79, 37%) answered that they trust Finnair as an airline. Just 3 (2, 38%) of the respondents replied that they do not trust Finnair as an airline. Due to an unknown reason, 23 (18, 25%) respondents had not answered to this question.

10. Can you identify Finnair's logo?
The last question measured the depth of knowledge concerning Finnair. The majority of the respondents (79, 37%) were able to recognize the logo of Finnair. 23 respondents (18, 25%) had not responded this question. 98 people who stated that they know Finnair in the question number four, 97 of them have been able to recognize the logo of Finnair, which stands for 98.97%. One respondent had chosen all of the logo options to represent Finnair, possible due to a misunderstanding of the question. The picture of the logos used in the official questionnaire can be found from appendix 1.

It took approximately four minutes for a respondent to fill in the questionnaire.
5. Analysis of Empirical Data

This chapter represents the analysis of empirical data. The purpose of this analysis is to obtain meaning from the data: all previous steps in this study have been carried out to subsidize the search for meaning. The data was analyzed by using the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2. Thorough analysis of the empirical data aided in answering to the research question which will be represented in the last chapter.

5.1 Background of the analysis

The overall goal of this thesis was to answer to the research question “How do consumers perceive airline companies?” The Frame of References is used to provide an overview of what literature says about different theories that are directly or indirectly implied to the research problem.

The following concepts were introduced in The Frame of References: Brand, characteristics of brand, building successful brands, branding, brand knowledge, brand image, brand awareness, the awareness pyramid, achieving brand awareness, the value of brand awareness, brand identity and brand equity. The aim was to discover the central concepts related to brand image and brand awareness to justify the best theories to use for answering to the research question. In this study, the main concentration was in brand awareness which, by Keller, makes it easier for consumers’ to identify the brand in a specific product category. (2003)

The essential parts of literature review have been encapsulated in chapter 2, The Frame of References, which provides the basis of this study. The Frame of References is mainly based upon the findings of Aaker (1991), DeChartony & McDonald (1992, 1998), Kapferer (1997), Keller (1993, 1998, 2003, 2008).

5.2 Discovering the answer to the research question

The analysis of the research findings are divided into two themes: Brand awareness and Brand image. First, the awareness is determined by using the both primary and secondary data: answers
obtained from the questions 4., 6., 7., and 10. in the online questionnaire, as well as, answers to questions 1., 3., and 4., of the e-mail interview. Second, the image is determined by using also primary and secondary data: answers obtained from the questions 8., and 9. of the online questionnaire, as well as, answers to question number 2. of the e-mail interview.

5.2.1 Determination of Brand awareness

Aaker (1991) states that brand awareness, is the ability of potential customers to recognize or to recall a brand when deciding in a specific product category whether to purchase the product or service, or not. Aaker (1991) created the Awareness Pyramid to describe the process of a consumer of being unaware of the brand to the recognition of a brand. Brand recognition is the lowest level of brand awareness (it is significant when consumer chooses a brand at the point of purchase). The next stage in the awareness pyramid is brand recall. Brand recall is notably more challenging task than brand recognition as well as associated with a stronger brand position. The strongest recall position, which is not presented in The Awareness Pyramid, is called a dominant brand. Dominant brand stands for a brand that is the one and only brand that is significantly recalled among the respondents.

According to the findings of this study, the airlines of which the respondents were the most aware of are Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways and Jet Airways. The case company Finnair was among the least known airlines: precisely, it was the third least known airline among eight airlines. Since, brand recognition is the lowest level of brand awareness, and 28 respondents stated that they are unfamiliar with the airline brand Finnair, the conclusion could be that the sample group is slightly unaware of the airline company Finnair. However, the awareness in between the most known airline and the least known airline among the respondents is barely anything: e.g. difference between Lufthansa (111) and Finnair (98) is only 13 responses. Thus, it can be stated that the sample group is somewhat aware of Finnair. In case of purchase, it can be assumed that the respondents, however, would prefer to buy an airline service from an airline that possesses the strongest recognition in their mind: in this case the airline would be Lufthansa, Air France, British Airways or Jet Airways. It is rather difficult to determine whether Lufthansa is, at the end, a top of mind brand since the question in the questionnaire was a closed-ended question, which means that the respondents had to choose
from given options and they were not able to freely mention airline brands that they would have in mind. However, according to the results Lufthansa was the airline that possessed the most conspicuousness among the sample group.

Aaker (1991) says that achieving brand awareness requires both brand recognition and recall, and it involves winning brand name identity and linking it to the right product class among the consumers.

According to the findings of this study, the majority of the respondents who said to know Finnair, became aware of the case company when they were searching for airline services or/ and through word-of-mouth. This indicates that the respondents, who became aware of Finnair when they were searching for airline services, were able to recognize the brand Finnair and recall the brand by linking it to the airline service class. In addition, those of who became aware of Finnair through word-of-mouth addresses that they were able to link the brand name Finnair to the right product class, which in this case is airline service, when hearing it.

Aaker (1991) argues that there must be a reason if a brand name is recognized, for example, it can be due to the broad advertisement actions of the firm.

In accordance with Aaker’s statement, a vast number of questionnaire respondents became aware of the case company via advertisement. Accordingly, majority of the respondents had seen an advertisement of Finnair online and more specifically, on social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter. Just a slight minority of the respondents had not seen an advertisement of Finnair at all. According to the Country Sales Manager of Finnair, Mr. Chacko, Finnair has been bringing up its awareness particularly by brand advertising, using a vast number of multimedia tools. It seems that the heavy investing in advertising of Finnair has obviously paid off since the majority of the respondents of the questionnaire had seen an advertisement of Finnair.

Keller (2003) argues that brand awareness relates to the ability of a customer to identify the brand, link the brand to the brand name, logo or symbol.

According to the findings of the study, 98, 97% of the respondents who were familiar with Finnair in question number four in the questionnaire were able to link the brand name Finnair to its logo.
This would imply that Finnair possesses high brand awareness among the sample group. However, the fact that has to be taken into account is that it is possible to link the logo with brand name Finnair without actually being aware of the company: the logo of Finnair is shaped of the letter “F” and formed to look like an airplane. Due to the lack of sampling control, it is uncertain whether the respondents really can identify the logo of Finnair. Moreover, it is possible that some respondents have simply guessed right without actually possessing real knowledge concerning the logo of Finnair. Thus, it can be stated that Finnair possesses relatively high awareness among the sample group.

5.2.2 Determination of Brand image

According to Keller (1998), Brand awareness is connected to consumers’ ability to recognize or recall a brand. In turn, brand image consists of consumers’ perceptions and associations for the brand. Esch. et all. (2006) continue by saying that brand image cannot exist without brand awareness, because when a brand is well established in the memory, it is easier for associations to be created and attached. These brand associations are formed by brand attributes, brand benefits and brand attitudes. Keller (1993) classifies types of brand associations into three categories: attitudes, benefits and attributes (product related/ non-product related). Thus, it is beneficial for Finnair to investigate which attributes consumers link to its brand “Finnair”, because the attributes stand for the product itself, as well as to its different characteristics in the minds of consumers. (Keller, 1993)

According to the findings of this study, the respondents considered Finnair to be a safe, sustainable, punctual, efficient and innovative airline. It can be construed from the results that Finnair has a positive brand image among the respondents.

According to De Chernatony (1998), the level of absorption of brand associations depends on three aspects: the amount of information held, whether they are product- related or non-product- related and whether they allege the attributes believed essential by consumers. De Chernatony (1998) adds that brand image describes how consumers perceive the brand; what are their feelings, expectations and thoughts about the brand. In addition, Keller (1993) defines brand attitudes as
consumers’ overall evaluations of a brand and verifies that brand image is the understanding of consumers, originated from brand-related activities performed in by the firm.

According to the results of this study, the majority of the respondents of the questionnaire define Finnair as a trustworthy airline. Thus, it can be stated that the attitude of the respondents towards Finnair is positive, since they state to trust Finnair as an airline. Generally, trust as an attribute has a really strong meaning (including feelings, expectations and thoughts) among the consumers of airline companies. It may be advantageous for the case company to know whether the respondents of the questionnaire perceive company as trustful, because trust may have an effect on creating loyal customer relationships.

According to Hsieh, Pan and Setiono (2004), a successful brand image makes it possible for consumers to determine the needs that the brand fulfills as well as differentiate the brand from the competitors. Successful brand image also helps to increase the likelihood that the consumers will consequently buy the products or services of the company. Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) enhanced that if a company, its product or service, constantly holds a favorable brand image among the public, it will certainly gain a good position in the market, sustainable competitive advantage and increase market share and performance.

According to the findings obtained from Mr. Chacko, the overall key focus of Finnair is to convey a positive communication message of the brand attributes, both in advertising and communications. To transmit this positive image the communication messages and advertising focus on the following aspects: new aircraft fleet, reliability, environmental consciousness, pricing flexibility (value for money), efficient hubs, keeping customer in focus, freshness and Finnishness. It can be assumed that Finnair focuses on the above-mentioned aspects in order to differentiate the brand from competitors and to create a successful brand image. The use of different marketing tools of Finnair depends primarily on budget availability. For example, when a brand is new in a market, the expenses spent on advertising are high till the brand is well recognized and accepted.
6. Conclusion

In this chapter the conclusion of the research is presented including the answer to the research question and suggestions for the case company, as well as, for further researching of this topic.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the importance of brand image and brand awareness from the perspective of airline companies. The aim was to determine what kind of image consumers have and how aware they are of airline companies. Specifically, the goal was to find out the brand image and brand awareness of the case company Finnair; whether the airline name is known in the Indian market.

The approach of this thesis has been both exploratory and descriptive, as explained accurately in the methodology chapter. The perspective of this study has mainly been quantitative in a form of a Web survey and qualitative in the form of an e-mail interview.

In order to answer to the research question (How do consumers perceive airline companies?) we can observe that the airlines that were the most-known in this study were big airline companies. Due to this finding we can state that consumers have a good perception of generally known, big airline companies that possess high publicity. We cannot find out the broader perception that consumers have of the brand image of other airlines used in this study since the study was a case study about Finnair. Thus, the answer to the research question is that consumers have a good perception of generally known, big airline companies that possess high publicity which depends mainly on their level of awareness, of a certain airline company. In conclusion, we can say that consumers may tend to perceive those airline companies of which they are aware of more positively than those of which they are not aware of. We also assume that in case of purchase, the consumers prefer to purchase brands that they are able to recognize. Aaker (1991) supports this notion since he argues that purchase decision of buyers does not happen often without brand recognition. This is why it is important for airlines to find out whether consumers are aware of them what kind of image consumers have about them.
6.1 Conclusion concerning the case company Finnair

According to the research of this study, consumers in the Indian market are somewhat aware of the airline company Finnair. In addition, the consumers who replied to be aware of Finnair have a relatively positive image of the airline company.

6.2 Limitations

There were various limitations concerning this study. The biggest limitation was the geographical location of the sample group: it was rather difficult to reach the sample group efficiently and be sure that all the respondents fulfill the intended requirements. Since, the sample group was hard to reach the time to collect primary data was comparably short. Due to this, the time sequence left for analysis was also short which can have an effect to the findings of the research. In addition, the lack of experience and knowledge of the researchers concerning the composition of an empirical study limits the depth of the insight of this study. One major limitation concerns the scope of the sample group: we were able to obtain 216 responses to the online questionnaire but just 126 respondents fulfilled the desired requirements. This decreases the reliability of the study results. A factor that also limits the results of the research is the incident with question number five in the online questionnaire that resulted in a procedure of deleting this question. Due to this procedure, the questionnaire consisted only of nine questions and we lost one important question that would have assumably provided significant information about brand preference.

6.3 Suggestions for further research and the case company

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis, consumer perception towards airlines is a very sensitive subject, from the point of view of airlines. (D. Van Oudheusden, 1990) In this regard, the continuation of researching this topic can benefit airline companies to a great extent. In the future, the airline personnel together with researchers should examine this topic more deeply in order to gain deeper insights of consumer perceptions. Due to possessing greater resources and interest towards this topic it is possible for airlines themselves to carry out surveys and interviews to receive more accurate results.
According to Claire Watson (2003), creating brand awareness is the first step towards building customer understanding about the product or service as it can influence opinion and motivating behavior. However, especially at an early stage of introducing a product or service to the market, building deep customer understanding is crucial to a product or service to succeed. To build customer understanding, companies need to investigate the most profound insights of customer needs by using research methods, such as in-depth qualitative research. (Arken, Andrew, 2002) This is why the future research suggestion for the case company Finnair would be to try to find out the best tools for increasing the abilities of customers to recognize and recall (brand awareness) the brand Finnair among Indians by using qualitative research methods since Indians are heavy users of social media. [23] The main tool in concentration of the investigation for the future research for Finnair could be using social media in order to strengthen the brand awareness. [24] To support this, for example Lufthansa uses Twitter to build brand awareness and it has nearly 95 000 followers. [25] Finnair instead has only approximately 2,500 followers. [26] Thus, intense use of social media could be used as an effective marketing tool to reach consumers by following the steps of improving brand awareness on Twitter by Carol Chapman, which are e.g. creating own public timeline, creating multiple accounts and posting tweets regularly and creating own Twitter account for Indian people, for instance. [24]

In conclusion, the authors of this thesis suggest that the case company Finnair should keep on investing to improve its awareness in the Indian market in order to create brand equity: without awareness it is impossible for a business to succeed and gain profit.
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Online questionnaire

Brand Image and Brand Awareness of Finnair in Indian Market

The purpose of this survey is to investigate Finnair’s brand awareness and brand image among Indian university students. This survey was created by Maiju Laiho and Eini Inha. We are two marketing students from Halmstad University, Sweden. The information is going to be used for our Bachelor thesis. Your answers will be treated anonymously and taken into account for our analysis.

1. Do you like to travel?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2. What is your age?
   □ 17<
   □ 17-25
   □ 25>

3. What is your gender?
   □ Male
   □ Female

4. Which of the following airlines do you know?
   □ Lufthansa
If Finnair is unknown to you, thank you for your time.
You do not have to continue filling the survey any further.

5. Based on your current knowledge of these airlines, how would you rank these service providers against one another? Please respond to this question as if you were considering purchasing one of these airlines’ services? (Ranking from 1 to 8)

<table>
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<th>Lufthansa</th>
<th>Air France</th>
<th>Finnair</th>
<th>Swiss International Airlines</th>
<th>SAS Scandinavian Airlines</th>
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6. How did you come to know Finnair?

☐ Word-of-Mouth
☐ Searching airlines services
☐ Advertisement (for example, Internet, printed media)
☐ Travel agency
☐ Online travel agency
☐ Other

7. Have you seen advertisement of Finnair?

☐ Yes, online
☐ Yes, on social media (Twitter, Facebook)
☐ Yes, on television or radio
☐ Yes, on a newspaper or magazine
☐ No, I have not seen advertisement of Finnair

8. Which of the following attributes do you associate with brand name Finnair?

☐ Safe
☐ Expensive
☐ Affordable
☐ Modern
☐ Reliable
9. Do you trust Finnair as an airline?

☐ Yes
☐ No
10. Can you identify Finnair's logo?

☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5
☐ 6
☐ 7
☐ 8

Thank you!