



# **Brand building by establishing being Nordic**

Case study: “The Nordic Way” by Finnair

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Master’s Degree Thesis

Media Management

2018

DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
Degree Programme:	Master's Degree Program in Media Management
Identification number:	18620
Author:	Jenni Hänninen
Title:	Brand building by establishing being Nordic Case study: "The Nordic Way" by Finnair
Supervisor (Arcada):	Owen Kelly
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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>This study aims to give Finnair a clearer vision about whether they should use their new brand slogan "The Nordic Way" internally to motivate the staff or also externally in marketing communications. The aim of this research is to investigate how Finnair's target groups in Asia, Chinese, Japanese and South Korean consumers, perceive the Nordics and what they value on the Nordics, in order to use this definition to improve brand building and determine the best visual appearance for each region in order to attract these groups to travel to the Nordic region with Finnair. Therefore this study intends to answer the following questions: <i>How do Asians perceive the Nordics? Which Nordic qualities are valued the most by each target group? Should Finnair establish it being Nordic in their marketing communication?</i> The study was implemented with quantitative research at Helsinki-Vantaa airport to the passengers at the non-Schengen area. The research method chosen proved a good method to gather a lot of data, even though it has limitations in that I will not be able to ask any questions from the focus group if questions arise. The questionnaire was executed using the SurveyMonkey survey platform and responses were gathered individually from each interviewee using a tablet with the Survey-Monkey application. I also made some notes using observation techniques during the interviews. Survey data was analyzed by using the statistics which SurveyMonkey provided. Results show that the most attractive and valued elements for the target group are silence and peace and suggested that we could draw a conclusion that the Nordics is highly associated with pure nature and calmness, which the focus group is also attracted to the most. It could be inferred that these elements should also be underlined in the branding and marketing communications, in order to create an interesting and appealing brand among this focus group. However this research has also shown that the Nordic region and the Nordics are still relatively unknown terms among Asians and the results indicate that "The Nordic Way" slogan should not be introduced or used without reference to familiar associations to the target group.</p>	
Keywords:	brand building, brand slogan, brand image, brand identity, Nordic brand element, Finnair Oyj,
Number of pages:	79
Language:	English
Date of acceptance:	

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## FOREWORD

This thesis has been written with the permission of Finnair Oyj. As many other Northern European companies across industries, Finnair Oyj is using the Nordic theme as one of the brand building elements in order to create differentiation among competitors. I have been particularly interested in brand building ever since I started studying marketing in 2005. I have been passionate about traveling for years and I have found Asian culture to be extremely intriguing. I wanted to combine my interests, so I contacted Finnair in a means to get a topic for my thesis. However, after a brief discussion with their marketing personnel, we came to a better conclusion: In order to avoid bureaucracy, I should write my thesis about Finnair, not to Finnair. We came up with the topic together but I have used only publicly available material for this thesis regarding Finnair.

I want to thank Finnair's marketing team for all their time and effort. I could not have done the empirical without your much needed help. Thank you for helping me to get the permission to Helsinki-Vantaa airport and accompanying me there for five days. It really meant a lot to me that you made it possible to implement the study at the airport for the best possible audience. It would not have been the same to fulfill the survey anywhere else as this was clearly the easiest place to reach the target group in one place.

As the Nordic element is widely used in brand building, I am hoping that my work can provide interesting insights from an Asian perspective to the topic for other companies that are using or thinking of adding this element to their brand building. There lays a big potential in Asian consumer markets. This study has given me a fantastic opportunity to learn, understand and relate to other's perspective of how they see the Nordics. I was extremely lucky to have been able to carry out my thesis on such an interesting topic.

Thank you!

Jenni Hänninen

Helsinki, April 2018

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Nowadays across the industries, Northern European brands want to become associated with being Nordic. Therefore many brands use Nordic as a brand building element. There is not just one definition that would describe how consumers envision the Nordics, as it varies depending on person's knowledge, education and past experiences. People from different cultures also have different values, beliefs, interests and expectations. (Browning 2007)

The Asian market has become more and more appealing to many industries, as it is developing rapidly and the consumers' purchasing power has increased considerably over the last decades (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland 2017, Visit Finland 2017). Tourism has become a great source of income for Finland and other Nordic countries as the travel industry has grown and become more international at a faster pace than other sectors within recent years (Visit Finland 2017, Visit Sweden 2017). Tourists' overall consumption was 14,2 billion euros in Finland in year 2014. The Finnish travel industry is especially focusing on increasing the Asian tourism income among Chinese, Japanese and South Korean travelers. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland 2017, Visit Finland 2017)

The amount of travelers' overnight stays in Finland has risen from 73 701 in year 2009 to 239 310 overnight stays in 2016 (Visit Finland 2017). These statistics indicate a 325% increase in the overall overnight stays within 7 years. Statistics of travelers' overnight stays in Finland show that the amount Asian travelers' overnight stays has increased by 201% within the same time period. The amount of Japanese travelers has increased slowly and steadily over the years but the amount of Chinese travelers has increased rapidly over the last decade. In 2015 the amount of Chinese travelers' overnight stays bypassed the amount of Japanese travelers overnight stays in Finland. (Visit Finland 2017)

Finland's national airline is Finnair. Their strategic plan is to further grow the business in the Asian market. (Finnair Oyj 2017) Finnair aim is to increase the incoming passengers

from this group of rapidly wealthier travelers. According to Finnair's annual report 2016 (Finnair Oyj 2017), their strategy has been updated and Finnair established a new vision:

We want to provide a unique Nordic Experience to our customers. The aim of the new vision is to provide strategic direction after many years of heavy restructuring and cost cutting: Finnair's route network connects Asia, North America and the northern regions of Europe and beyond through its hub at Helsinki Airport. The operations are based on quality, reliability, safety and design inspired by Nordic pure nature. The vision is expressed for example in easy-to-use digital services and in the enhancement of services. The goal is that as a result of the service offered at the airport, in lounges and on board, our customers arrive at their destinations relaxed and with peace of mind. Vision gives direction to all Finnair employees and partners in the areas of customer service, operations or development of the company operations and services. Finnair's organisation has also been adapted to enable reaching strategic targets in best possible way.

Finnair is using its new vision and strategy as the basis for brand building which led them to create a new brand slogan "The Nordic Way". Finnair has not yet decided if the brand slogan will be used internally to guide and motivate staff, or if it also will be used externally in marketing communications. The purpose of this study is to investigate what the Nordics represent to people in the target groups and what kind of image it evokes in the consumers' minds.

## **1.2 Aim and rationale**

A brand creates a basis to the whole image of a service and a guideline to marketing communication. According to Finnair (Finnair Oyj 2017), its brand is in touch with visual identity, applications and marketing communication. Finnair has a new brand slogan "The Nordic Way" but they have not yet defined how this will be implemented in their branding across the business, especially in marketing communications.



The Finnair brand touchpoints on the business. <http://brand.finnair.com/> 8.1.2017

The purpose of this study is to clarify how Asians perceive the Nordics and what the best visual appearance is for each region in order to attract these groups to travel to the Nordic region with Finnair. The research also gives guidelines to other Nordic companies on whether or not they should highlight them being Nordic in their brand building and marketing communication.

The aim of this research is to define what the Nordics represent to Asian travelers and what they value the most in this region, in order to define which sides of the Nordics should be highlighted in each regions' marketing communication. Once the Asian travelers' brand image of the Nordics can be defined more specifically, more guidelines for brand building and marketing communication can be given. The study focuses on gathering enough data to give Finnair a clearer vision on how they should use their new brand slogan "The Nordic Way".

This research will also provide important insights for marketing professionals working with brands originated from the Nordic region. The results of this research benefit multiple industries that have established being Nordic or are considering doing that in the Asian market. The research is not only focusing on the airline industry, but also on the

Nordics as a brand, and it will give insights on the Asian perspective of the Nordics and the conclusions will give suggestions on how it could be used as a brand building element.

Data for this study was gathered with a questionnaire from Asian passengers at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport. In order to name the best practices, this study intends to specify what kind of visual content attracts the customers the most to travel to the Nordic region over other destinations. The study investigates how Asian travelers see the Nordics and what they value the most in the Nordic region.

The Nordics is defined as a region that includes Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland (The Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers 2017). For the purposes of this study all terms Nordic, the Nordics and Nordic region mean the same and the characteristics these countries incorporate.

### **1.3 Research question and objectives**

This research intends to investigate how Asians', especially Chinese, Japanese and South Korean consumers, perceive the Nordics and what they value on the Nordics, in order to use this definition better in brand building. Therefore this study intends to answer the following questions: How do Asians perceive the Nordics? Which Nordic qualities are valued the most by each target group? Should Finnair establish it being Nordic in their marketing communication?

### **1.4 Research methodology**

In order to make the study comprehensive, the study was implemented with quantitative research at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport to the passengers at the non-Schengen area. The research method chosen is a good method to gather a lot of data, even though it has limitation as I will not be able to ask any questions from the focus group if questions arise (Purpura 2003).

The questionnaire was executed on the SurveyMonkey survey platform and responses were gathered individually from each interviewee using a tablet with the SurveyMonkey

application. Research included a survey questionnaire for Asian passengers and it was executed during April 2017. The study focused on gathering sufficient samplings from Japanese, Chinese and South Korean travelers, as these nationalities travel the most to Finland and these passengers are Finnair's target groups in Asia.

The research will analyze and conduct different kinds of comparisons on what different nationalities among the focus group value the most and what kind of images they consider Nordic. These results provide guidelines for Finnair and other Nordic companies on how the Nordics are perceived and which factors are valued by each nationality. These results can be used as guidelines on how the brand building should be done around the Nordic elements in order to get to most benefits from its association.

#### **1.4.1 Unit of analysis**

Finnair is currently focusing on growing its market in Asia. According to Finnair (Finnair Oyj 2017), the purchasing power and ability to travel has grown significantly in this market and especially in China, Japan and South Korea due the growing middle class. Due to this fact, the study was mainly implemented using passengers from these countries.

China's share in global traffic is expected to increase in the coming decade, and the country is expected to surpass the United States by passenger volume as the world's largest traveler market during this period. This will provide substantial opportunities for growth as Asian traffic already represents approximately half of Finnair's passenger traffic. (Finnair Oyj 2017) Due to the high rise of the Chinese travelers, the biggest sample was gathered from this group.

The Asian market is spread and vast. There are big differences in incomes and the standard of living in each region, but the middle class is growing rapidly. Finnair's focus on growth is on Asian airline traffic (Finnair Oyj 2017) and the main target groups in Asia are Chinese, Japanese and South Korean travelers. For the purpose of this research being useful for Finnair, it concentrates on this focus group.

Over the recent years, Asia has been one of the fastest-growing air traffic markets and its growth still continues. Because of this, Finnair's strategic direction and focus has been on Asian traffic for several decades. Finnair is in a good place as it holds a bigger share of the Asian traffic than its competitors. Asian traffic accounted for approximately 50% of Finnair's traffic in 2016 and the company is among the top 5 airlines in terms of market share on the routes it operates. (Finnair Oyj 2017)

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

This article will first provide an introduction to what brand building means in the context of adding the Nordic element to a company brand. There will be a more precise description of the constitution of brand identity and brand equity and some recent research results regarding these themes. It is essential to understand the theory in order to define how the Nordics could be used as a brand building element. The aim of this research is to define how to use the brand element, based on literature and previous studies of the topic. As the empirical study is about the Nordic's brand image, the theory part will include some of the latest country image study results in addition to the study that was implemented for this thesis.

After the theoretical part, there is an introduction to the study and to the findings. Findings introduce how the samplings of Asian passengers perceive the Nordics. This will be followed by the conclusions and discussion related to the findings, which elaborate how the findings could be implemented for Finnair's brand building and marketing communications.

This research excludes brand positioning and the effect of competitors because my research is focused on the brand identity building and brand image. Due to the size constraints of the thesis, I have decided to focus on defining how to build an attractive brand identity and how to benefit the brand with associations to an attractive destination brand image. The company I'm writing this thesis for is interested in having the recommendations on how to build their brand identity towards the overall business strategy with the new brand slogan and how the new brand slogan should be used. At the

end of the paper, the conclusions section will summarize some key findings from the study and suggestions for the brand slogan usage are presented.

## **2 COMPANY BRAND BUILDING WITH THE NORDIC ELEMENT**

A brand can be described as a combination of emotional, functional, strategic and relational elements which in conjunction generate a unique network of associations in consumer's minds (Aaker 2010 p. 25, Keller 2013 p. 30). Brand building can be seen as a disciplined process in a means to build brand awareness and extend customer loyalty. This process requires vision and readiness to invest in the future. Branding is all about creating differences (Keller 2012 p. 57) and expressing to consumers why they should choose one brand over another. (Wheeler 2013 p. 6, Aaker 2010 p. 10-15)

Many Northern European companies across industries want to associate their brands with being Nordic in their brand building. A destination brand, such as the Nordics (Browning 2007 Ruzzier& Petek 2012), constructs a network which develops a connection between the destination and other stakeholders and particular target markets in the purpose of verifying its own offer. Thus, a destination brand can only exist if it is able to establish a position in the minds of the consumers, as it does not achieve fame with a recognized name, slogan, distinctive logo or symbol (Tsiotsou, and Ronald 2012 p 52). Finland's new tourism strategy roadmap for growth and renewal presents the aim to make Finland the number-one tourist destination in Northern Europe by 2025. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland) Nordic countries are pursuing to build stronger and more attractive country images (Visit Finland 2017, Visit Sweden 2017) which fosters the Nordic umbrella brand as well.

Humans are emotional creatures that base our purchasing decision on how the product or service makes us feel and how we associate with the brand. Hereby, among many study results, can be claimed, that the brands which succeed have found an intimate emotional connections with their customers. (Yohn 2013 p. 48, Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009, Boatwright, Cagan, Kapur & Saltiel 2009, French & Smith 2013) Therefore the Nordic brand should be appealing to consumers in order to bring value to the brand it is affiliated with. The Nordics has been known of progress, modernization and being better than others in the socio-economic context. (Browning 2007)

Nowadays, consumers have more power to effect brands than ever before due to social media and the sharing culture. Petek & Ruzzier (2013) argue that consumers are co-creators of brand experiences and relationships and this should also contribute to brand identity creation. Brand identity is the core of brand building but brand equity should also be closely considered and examined (Petek & Ruzzier 2013). This study focuses on these parts of brand building and establishing being Nordic.

## **2.1 Brand identity**

Companies are looking for ways to connect emotionally with the customers in order to become meaningful, irreplaceable and create lifelong relationships. Brand identity is tangible and it appeals to all senses. It can be seen, touched, held, heard and seen. (Wheeler 2013 p. 4) Brand identity enhances differentiation and fosters recognition. It takes disparate elements and unifies them into one. (Aaker 2010 p. 68, Wheeler 2013 p. 4)

Brand identity is the core of the brand and a starting point for the brand building (Aaker, 2010 p. 68, Kapferer 2012 p. 149, Petek & Ruzzier 2013). It represents what the company wants the brand to stand for and provides meaning, purpose and direction for the brand (Aaker 2010 p. 68, Kapferer 2012 p. 151). A brand identity should be strategic and actively look forward with a dynamic perspective (Aaker, 2010 p. 70). According to a study by Boatwright, Cagan, Kapur and Saltiel (2009), if brand identity is created by focusing on customer needs, the outcome is strategic and forward-thinking rather than descriptive of the current status quo.

The brand identity of a country should have unique elements that differentiate it from others (Ruzzier & Petek 2012). Browning (2007) argues in his paper that the Nordic identity and the Nordic brand were presented after the Cold War as the promise of a better, more advanced, more peaceful, less militarized future. Nordic was labelled with exceptionalism and being Nordic was equated with being 'different', 'exceptional' and 'better than' others. However, he claims that these elements have become less exceptional and blurred which have led the Nordic brand to merge with Europe and become more Europeanized. (Browning 2007, Lagerspetz 2003)

Aaker (2010 p. 86) suggests that brand identities consist of core and extended identities. The core identity is the timeless essence of the brand of which associations will not change, nor be affected by new markets or products. The extended identity includes and adds elements that make the brand whole for the consumer (Aaker 2010 p. 86-88, Petek & Ruzzier 2013). If a company establishes it being Nordic, it is an additional element to the extended identity in a means to increase the positive brand associations. This study is examining how Asian consumers perceive the Nordics and if the Nordic element should be used in brand building.

When identifying the brand, the characteristic differences from the competitors should be recognized. In the means to ensure integrity and modernity, the evolution of the brand should consolidate the elements that brought the success and modify some elements, if necessary. (Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009) Lagerspetz (2003) defines that the Nordic identity constitutes from the following elements: Social development (the Nordic model), geographic location, linguistic affinity (the Scandinavian languages), the Lutheran faith, historical ties, Nordic cooperative organs (i.e. the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers), legal and administrative tradition (i.e. municipal self-determination) and gender equality. These brand identity elements are more cultural and political aspects and in my opinion, the Nordics is also associated with its nature.

A brand identity should be aligned with its products' and/or services' provided value and benefits. They can also conduct great marketing for the brand themselves by providing experience, establishing meaning and creating relationships with customers. Thus services and products have access to their users without the distraction of media channel's clutter and reduce the need to invest in advertising in traditional channels. Customers who own the product or service proclaim the brand identity daily. (Boatwright, Cagan, Kapur & Saltiel 2009)

### **2.1.1 Brand personality and elements**

Brand personality forms from elements that can be trademarked and they help to differentiate and identify the brand from others. The main brand elements are name, logos, symbols, URLs, characters, slogans, spokespeople, jingles, packages and signage.

(Keller 2013 p. 142, Aaker 2010 p. 142-149) Brand personality can be described with similar characteristics as a person. Such characteristics are demographics (age, gender, social race and class), lifestyle (interests, opinions and activities) or human traits (i.e. dependability, extroversion and agreeableness). (Aaker 2010 p 142, Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009) Brand personality helps differentiating the brand identity from its competitors, it guides the marketing communication, creates brand equity and helps to understand the consumer's perception and attitudes towards the brand (Aaker 2010 p. 150).

The Nordic brand personality perception varies among consumers (Browning 2007). It is a mixture of the customer's past experiences and the brand identity that is displayed to them in Medias. Nordic is a vast concept and it can carry numerous different brand associations and elements among consumers. These brand associations help consumers to process, organize and retrieve information in memory and they have an effect on the purchasing decision (French & Smith 2013).

The Nordic identity has traditionally been associated with being different from others. Nordic exceptionalism and its "good state" has been presented as key elements of the brand for international audiences. (Browning 2007) In destination branding, it is suggested to emphasize one element which reflects the destination's main characteristics. The main element should be included in the branding strategy and highlighted in marketing communications, as it helps consumers to construct the brand identity. (Tasci & Kozak 2006) If a company uses the Nordic brand personality on their brand building, they should nurture the Nordic elements which are relevant, important and appealing to its target group.

According to Keller (2013 p. 142-144) there are six criteria that should be considered while choosing brand elements:

1. **Memorable:** Easily recognized and recalled
2. **Meaningful:** Descriptive and persuasive
3. **Likable:** Fun & interesting, rich visual & verbal imagery and aesthetically pleasing

4. **Transferable:** Within and across product categories, across geographic boundaries and cultures
5. **Adaptable:** Flexible and updatable
6. **Protectable:** Legally and competitively

The effectiveness of brand elements' brand building ability can be tested easily by judging how customers would feel and think about the brand if they only knew that particular brand element and nothing else about the product or how it is marketed elsewhere (Keller 2013 p. 142). Brand personality characteristics are defined by marketing professionals and they have a major influence on how consumers are influenced by their marketing strategy and how they see the brand personality (Heere 2010) as also results of study by Johar, Sengupta and Aaker (2005) advocates (cited by Heere 2010). Positive brand personality associations will create positive emotions among consumers and increase the brand loyalty, prestige and trust. (Choi, Ok, & Hyun 2017, Ruzzier& Petek 2012)

### **2.1.2 Brand Image**

Brand image describes how the consumers view the brand (Aaker 2010 p. 71, Kapferer 2012 p. 151) Most of the time, it is passive and tactical customer perception that looks into the past experiences. This view should be reviewed in the brand building strategy, but the strategy should always look into the future and how the brand should be and what the customers are looking to get. Brand identity should reflect the brand's enduring qualities that may not even be focal in the brand image. The customer brand image should not dictate the brand. (Aaker 2010 p. 69-71) However, consumers now have more power than ever to influence the brands. The credibility of brand personality can be measured with the difference between the brand personality and brand image (Aaker 2010 p. 170). The closer the brand personality and brand image are to each other, the closer the brand image is to the brand strategy.

A good country image helps the business if the consumer associates the brand with the country brand (Kapferer 2012 p. 88). According to Sounio (2010 p. 126), Finnish values are mega trends and the importance of nature and design have risen in the Finnish country brand image researches. She claims that companies and organizations should use these

features as key points to differentiate themselves from the competitors and to improve the services. A study by Hosseini, Kalashi, Sahebkar, Alahmadi & Savari (2017) shows that a positive brand image increases the brand loyalty.

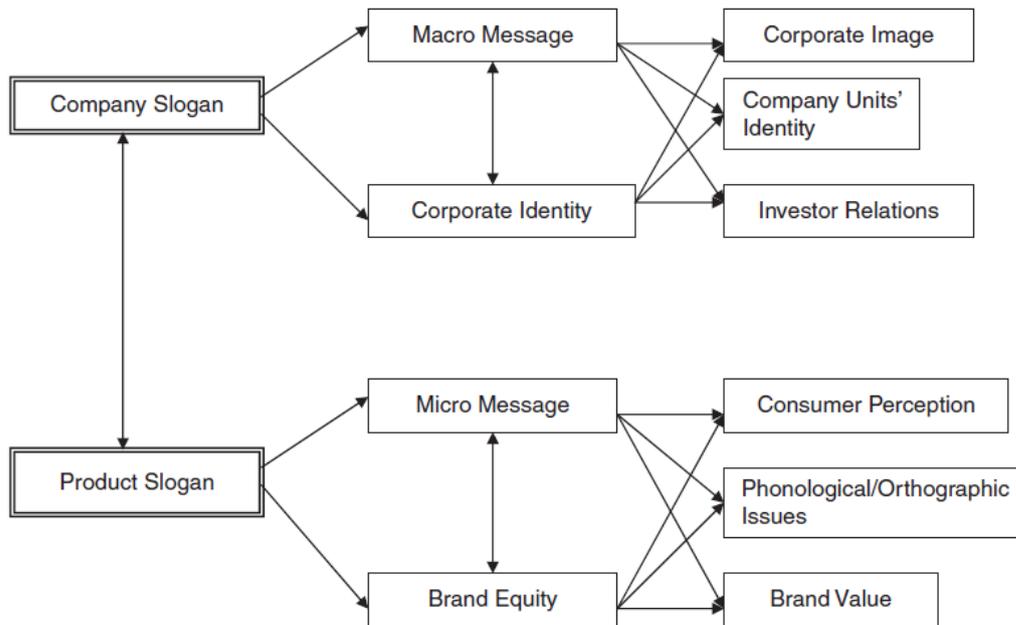
Finland's country brand was ranked 17th, Sweden 10th and Denmark 13th out of 50 nations in The Nation Brands Index. This is claimed to be the most comprehensive country brand survey and country brand comparison. The country brand is compared in six dimensions: governance, exports, culture, people, tourism and immigration/investment. Survey results show that Finland is most valued for good governance, but there is a possibility for growth in culture and tourism sectors. Finland's country image has remained stable, as they change slowly and the image is relatively good in the global perspective. Finland is perceived as a skillful country that functions well, yet it is seen as slightly cold and clinical. (Team Finland 2016) These study results should be considered when a brand is associated with country or region image brand.

### **2.1.3 Slogans**

Brand slogans, sometimes called taglines, are created in order to generate brand identity and enhanced brand presence (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005, Anwar 2013, Keller 2013 p. 158). They are part of creative communication that aims to build branding recall and power, improved brand evaluations and product beliefs (Strutton & Roswinanto 2014, Dahlén & Rosengren 2005). Slogans are short phrases which usually consist from one sentence that includes 1 to 13 words (Anwar 2013) and they communicate descriptive or assertive information of the brand (Keller 2013 p. 158, Anwar 2013, Dahlén & Rosengren 2005).

A successful brand slogan's ability to establish association was traditionally dependent on the following characteristics: substance, memorability, novelty and usefulness/appropriateness. Companies often use the following themes when designing brand slogans: heritage, products, business model and/or company identity. When the brand slogan is in touch with all traditional medias, social media and websites, it should include wordplay. (Anwar 2013, Dahlén & Rosengren 2005)

Companies can design two kinds of slogans; macro level brand slogans that present the whole company and their affiliated units, or micro level brand slogans that present specific product or service (Keller 2013 p. 161, Anwar 2013). Morphology<sup>1</sup> and collection of words matter when the slogan is in contact with the effectiveness of marketing communication and company identity (Anwar 2013).



Theoretical and conceptual framework of company and product slogans (Anwar 2013).

Companies selling products and services need to use shorter slogans (Anwar 2013, Strutton & Roswinanto 2014) that maintain visibility in the corporate communications and corporate identity. In corporate communications and company specific identity building, slogans are used with one purpose in mind: how to create a consistent image and identity when dealing with changing markets, consumers and stakeholders. (Anwar 2013) In this context “The Nordic Way” should be closely examined and it should be determined if it evokes the right kind of a message to consumers or if it should only be an internal guideline for the staff.

Strutton & Roswinanto (2014) found in their study that brand slogans should be vague in order to increase the likelihood of generating deeper levels of cognitive processing and more favorable attitudes among consumers’ minds that are exposed to the slogan. Short

<sup>1</sup> Morphology in linguistics means the study of words, how they are formed and their connection to other words. (Anderson 2016)

and vague brand slogans were favorable among consumers who are making high involvement decisions about familiar brands and products or among newer brands and brand extensions. Whereas when the brand slogans were longer, consumers saw them more positively when the slogan was specific, but these should only be used with specific messages to precisely targeted segment. Short and precise brand slogans should be used rarely as they evoked the smallest group of people's attention positively. (Strutton & Roswinanto 2014).

Slogan uniqueness is more important than attractiveness, as the latter is likely to come automatically for a strong brand (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005). A good and unique brand slogan can also critically enhance the brand positioning among other competing brands (Keller 2013 p 158) and with vague and short brand slogans, the purchase intention increases the most (Strutton & Roswinanto 2014). Most successful slogans have dual meanings (Ries 2012).

Successful brand slogans encourage and provoke to word-of-mouth (Strutton & Roswinanto 2014) and they can act as a direct carrier of the brand's equity, reminding consumers of their liking for the brand and reinforcing the brand equity at repeated exposure (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005). Generally consumers remember an inferred meaning of the claim better, rather than the exact phrase and repeated advertising generalizes the slogan meaning. (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005)

Marketing communications related to the strong brands are liked more and their slogans are easily recalled. Consumers attribute the advertising of strong brands automatically to the brand schema and it reminds them of the brand's equity which also helps consumers learn the slogan. Whereas weak brands won't get this benefit and the brand is more likely not to be evaluated due the effect of exposing onto the brand slogan. Brand equity affects the internalizing of the brand slogans in a way that the slogans become carriers of the brand equity and slogans receive slogan equity. Strong brand slogans have higher slogan equity and their brands are less likely to be influenced by the brand slogan. Whereas weak brand slogans that have lower slogan equity are more prone to be influenced by their brand slogans. (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005)

According to Dahlén & Rosengren's (2005) memory test study, the slogans of highly familiar brands are frequently matched with the wrong competing brands. If the strong brand slogan is matched with the weak brand, it can be harmful for the strong brand and benefit the weak brand. Strong brand's with greater slogan equity goal is not to give away their equity to competing weaker brands. Thereby the link to the product category shouldn't be too extensive and direct on the brand slogan as its primary aim is to remind consumers of their liking for the brand advertised. (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005) Dahlén & Rosengren's (2005) study results are leaning towards a more extreme suggestion for strong brands not to use slogans at all. Ries (2012) claims, though that market leaders should promote the product category, not its own brand or criticize the competitors with the slogans as the market leader will get its share from the increase anyway.

According to the study made by Anwar (2013), in 2007 only 27,67 % of the sample companies used their brand slogan on the website. Anwar (2013) found in his study that over half of their sample companies removed the brand slogan from the company website between years 2007-2013. He argued that the change could be in consequence of the changing business environment and models, newer markets and increased competition.

## **2.2 Building brand equity**

Past marketing activities have created value to the brand, which is called brand equity. Brand equity helps to construe marketing strategies and evaluating the value of the brand. The value of the brand can be exploited or manifested to benefit the company in many ways. (Keller 2012 p. 57, French & Smith 2013) Brand equity also strengthens from increased customer loyalty, higher product quality perception, greater promotional activity and greater barriers to competitive entry (French & Smith 2013). Among other studies, the results of the study made by Hosseini, Kalashi, Sahebkar, Alahmadi & Savari (2017) show, there is a positive and significant relation between factors of brand equity and brand loyalty.

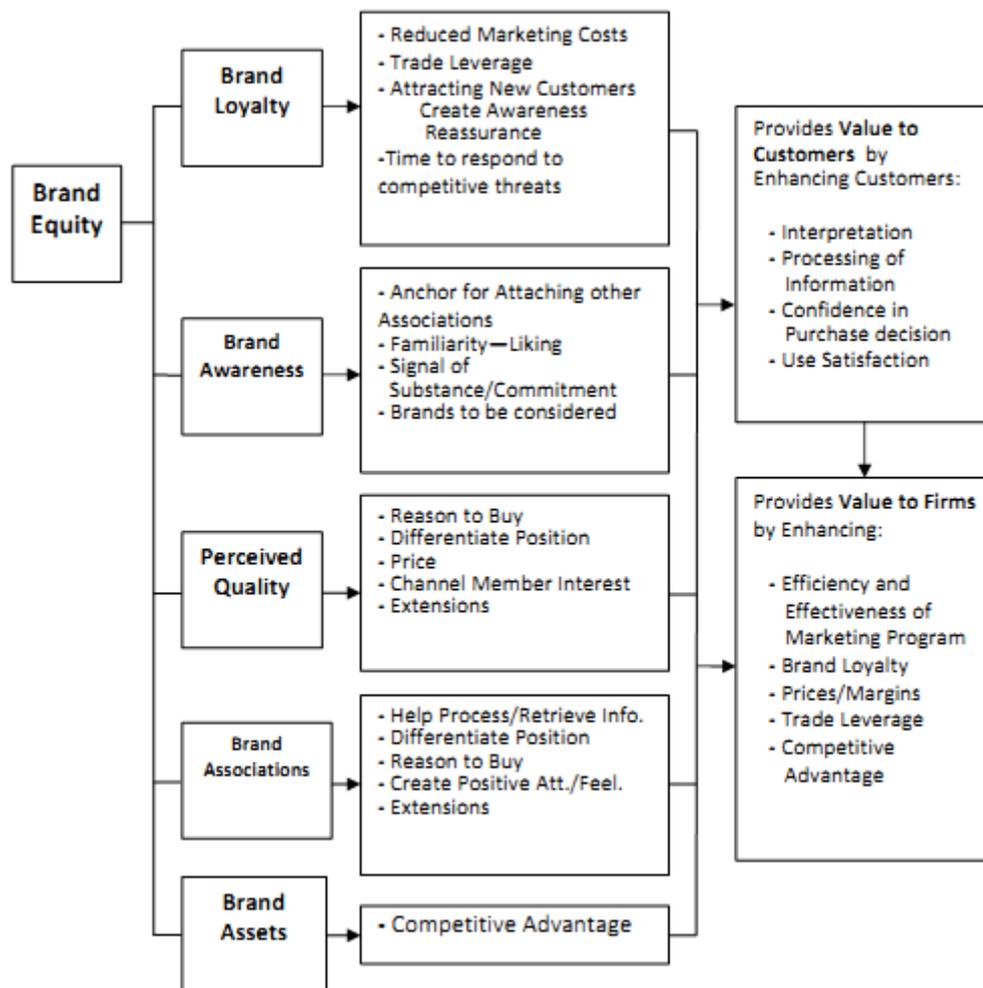
Aaker (2010 p. 7-9) defines brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand's name and symbol. The assets add up to the value of the product or service to

the customers, but the assets need to be created or enhanced in order to build the brand equity. He divided assets into four principal categories that create value to the brand:

1. Brand name awareness
2. Brand loyalty
3. Perceived quality
4. Brand associations

The Nordics is one element in the brand associations but it also creates an image about the perceived quality. In order to build brand equity, brand elements have to be defined clearly and brought out throughout the marketing communication channels (Keller 2012 p. 141-176). In order to enhance the consumers' brand association strength, companies can: enhance the appearance of tertiary and/or second-order associations, form links to the potentially valuable associations and strengthen already existing links to the brand. This can happen if the company can identify the points of parity from the competitors. These activities might enhance the brand association strength and brand recall which generate customer based brand equity. (French & Smith 2013)

Consumers should be able to associate the Nordic element with positive associations that praise the brand it has emerged into, in a means to positively affect the company brand. The success of brand equity could be noted if customers would connect the Nordic automatically to the company brand.



How brand equity generates value (Aaker 2010 p. 9)

According to Srivastava's (2014) study about contemporary marketing, the maximum performance of the brand equity can be attained if brand equity is considered as key asset to the marketing strategy. The marketing strategy is central to the whole business concept. He also suggests that companies should pay attention to brand alliance strategy as its equity influences the strategy. (Srivastava 2014) The Nordic can be considered a brand identity element or a brand alliance.

### 2.2.1 Brand alliance with the Nordic brand

Equity of the brand increases if the brand is capable of representing exclusively differentiating elements with brand alliance in the industry it operates (Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009). Many companies across industries use the Nordic brand

in alliance to their brands in a means to build the brand equity. The Nordics is a destination brand and in different contexts/alliances it associates variously. In this case a trusted well-known brand is trying to increase its market segments by resonating it with a less known brand. Brand alliance researches are showing that consumers will value the unknown brand more if it has an alliance with another brand, than if it does not (Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009). In this context, the Nordics would bring value to the brand it is in alliance with, if the Nordics can be recognized and it is associated positively.

The more positive the consumers see the Nordic brand, the greater is the probability that they will travel to this region and/or associate the brands related to this brand more positively. Hereby, Tsiotsou and Ronald (2012 p 52) argue that effective destination branding improves destination competitiveness and brand positioning. Research by Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen (2009) suggests that a brand-consumer-relationship is the best approach to create passionate and mainly emotional feeling for the consumer and the brand. It involves a new communicational client approach especially if there is a brand alliance with a destination brand.

### **2.2.2 Integration to marketing communication strategy**

Marketing communications play a crucial role in the brand building process (Petek & Ruzzier 2013, Keller 2013 p. 218) and it is believed to contribute to building high customer-based brand equity (Petek & Ruzzier 2013). Marketing communications is the voice of the brand for the consumers (Keller 2013 p. 218). Studies show that an integrated marketing communications strategy has a positive effect on brand image and awareness whereas it has a great effect on brand purchasing intention. All these factors also increase the brand equity. (Adetunji, Nordin and Noor 2014, Srivastava 2014) A robust communication strategy will contribute to consumers understanding the brand better and developing a strong brand personality. It also increases differentiation among competitors (Srivastava 2014).

Brand recall and awareness defines the way the brand should be communicated in a means to build brand equity. Those brands that have clear and relevant values need constant nurturing or the brand might suffer from it. Familiar brands should be nurtured by

executing constant marketing communication which reminds consumers of it. Weak brands should have a different kind of marketing strategy as they do not yet have strong value and clear positioning in the consumers' minds. Weak brands should use highly consistent messages as they increase brand recall and to build desirable brand on this stage of the brand building. (Delgado-Ballester, Navarro & Sicilia 2012) Consistent marketing messages are the first step to build brand equity for new and weak brands (Keller 2013 p. 219).

Delgado-Ballester, Navarro and Sicilia (2012) found in their study that there are two stages that should be considered in the communications strategy while building brand equity:

1. **Introduction stage:** The goal is to make consumers familiar with it and establish a clear image with consistent brand communication.
2. **Establishment stage:** The goal is to revive the interest of mature brands by moderately consistent communications that strengthen the secondary brand associations. These associations can excite the consumers to re-think the brand.

In case the company target audience does not have clear brand image or they do not know the Nordic brand element, the company should follow the introduction stage communication strategy. This way they can introduce the Nordic brand to their audience and increase the awareness and positive associations.

### **3 CASE STUDY – “THE NORDIC WAY” BY FINNAIR**

According to Gillham (2010, p. 1-2), a case study searches for evidence from different angles of the setting and intends to answer a particular research question by examining the case as a unit of human activity embedded in the real world. This can only be understood and studied in a context that constitutes from the current time and place. Yet it merges in with the context so that accurate boundaries are hard to qualify. (Gillham 2010, p 1-2)

This study intended to gather a sufficient amount of data of Asians’ perception of the Nordics. How they see and define it, which elements are valued and how it is visually seen in order to clarify if the new brand slogan “The Nordic Way” should be used in marketing communications.

I chose to implement the research with the quantitative method as it seemed to be the best alternative for this purpose. Finnair wanted to measure using pictures, which aspects the target group considered Nordic. The sample had to be sufficient so that the study could be considered reliable.

#### **3.1 Background information and research execution**

After hearing the brief and discussing with Finnair’s marketing department personnel, we chose to execute the survey at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport, as this is where I could reach the target group the easiest. Finnair could not share their loyalty customer registry for this purpose so the survey had to be executed at the airport in person.

It wasn’t straightforward to get the permit to access the airport, especially the non-schengen area. Finavia<sup>2</sup> has strict security control requirements for the permits. In order to get the permit for the interviewer which enables her to access the airport without a companion, Finavia requested a special signed agreement between thesis customer Finnair and my faculty Arcada University of Applied Sciences. Also, I had to apply for a security clearance document from the Australian police department for this purpose due to my student exchange in Melbourne, Australia during spring 2016. The agreement

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<sup>2</sup> Finavia is a national airport operator that provides international flight connections through its airport network in Finland. (Finavia 2018)

between the faculty and Finnair was done only till the end of April 2017 which would have allowed me to access the departure gates independently. Due to time restrictions, this process would have taken too long to get all the paperwork done, so I needed to change the plan in order to implement the survey at the requested place during the requested timeframe. At this stage, the only option was to get a temporary permit that allowed me to access the airport accompanied by Finnair staff members only.

The research took place at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport non-Schengen area departure gates between 19<sup>th</sup> April and 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2017. The aim was to gather 50 responses from each target group nationality; Chinese, Japanese and South Korean. This aimed for a total of 150 responses, whereas the minimum target was to get 30 responses per nationality group. Responses were gathered with an iPad tablet. The language barrier caused some limitations to the questionnaire as Chinese, Japanese and South Koreans are not native English speakers and the questionnaire was conducted in English.

It proved to be more difficult to gather the results due to the language barrier and the fact that there were only 3-4 hours a day when there were a lot of travelers from the target groups. Flights to China, Japan and South Korea mainly departure from 5 pm to 6.30 pm, so the best time to gather the results was from 2.30 pm until 6 pm when the passengers were waiting for their flights to start boarding. It took 5 days to gather a total of 130 responses and at that time we decided together with Finnair marketing personnel that the sample was big enough to give accurate results. One Finnair staff member was accompanying me the whole time at the airport due the airport safety restrictions.

### **3.2 Development of the survey questionnaire and choosing the platform**

As the survey was gathered at the airport in person, it was decided that it should not take longer than a maximum of 10 minutes to respond, in order for the respondents to have enough time to complete the whole survey. The time at the airport can be hectic and travelers do not have more time, not the patience to concentrate on the survey. This proved to be the right decision as even now some passengers claimed that it took quite a long time to respond to the survey.

The SurveyMonkey platform was chosen to be used for the survey questionnaire as it is the world's leading provider of web-based survey solution (SurveyMonkey 2017). In order to get more than 10 questions and better data analysis, the SurveyMonkey plan had to be upgraded to the SELECT plan, which is billed monthly (35€/month during 2017). This plan also enables the template customizing features for the survey. The survey template was customized using Finnair's logo and brand colors in order for the survey form to follow the Finnair brand guidelines.

The SurveyMonkey platform appeared to be the best possible alternative to gather the survey data as the survey worked well with different devices, it was easy to use, allowed picture usage and the program had different filters and crosstabs to analyze the data. The SurveyMonkey analyzing tool was sufficient and there was no need to analyze the data with other programs. Other survey platforms were considered (i.e. Limesurvey) but SurveyMonkey seemed to be the best alternative for this purpose because of the analyzing tool.

The full survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. in the form how it was displayed with the tablet to the respondents. The survey questionnaire include twenty (20) questions and one (1) open comment field.

- Questions 1-5 are regarding the respondents' personal data and their reason to be at the airport.
- Questions 6-8 measure how the Nordic region is perceived, what attracts them the most and what the key element is that describes the Nordics the best. The last question is accompanied with images.
- Questions 9-12 are measuring the images' look, feel, sound and taste on a scale from "Not at all Nordic" to "Extremely Nordic" (scaling 1-5). All the themes have 5-6 images to measure it.
- Questions 13-16 are defining the reasons to travel to the Nordic region, destination uniqueness, willingness to travel to the Nordic region again and likeliness to recommend the destination to others.
- Questions 17-20 are related to Finnair; how Nordic the Finnair brand is, how many times the respondent has used Finnair, how the experience was and the reason for using the airline.

- Question 21 is left for open comments.

### **3.3 Data analysis**

The quantitative research method chosen is a good method to gather a lot of data. Finnair's survey data was analyzed based on the data that was digitally gathered using the SurveyMonkey application. The raw data was examined and the sub totals were recalculated after each day of the interviews in order to check that the main total of responses was correct. The amount of answers were double checked at the end of the interviews to prove the data to be logical and credible. The data received from the questionnaire was current and up to date.

The data was analyzed by using the statistics which the SurveyMonkey platform provided. According to Gillham (2010 p. 80), there are two statistic types to analyze quantitative data; descriptive and inferential. Descriptive means ways to summarize numerical data and inferential provides techniques that allow to draw inferences.

In case studies, the quantitative data often comes in categories or it can be put into them. This enables one to make comparisons from different groups, such as gender, age, occupation etc. (Gillham 2010 p. 85)

Observation constructs from watching the respondents' actions, listening to them and sometimes asking them clarifying questions. Observation can be done as participant observation by the researcher being involved, or as detached structured observation, where the researcher follows the participants from the outside. These techniques can also be mixed. (Gillham 2010 p. 45-46)

The respondents had some questions during the answering process, so some qualitative data was added to the analysis. I was there handing the tablet to the respondents and they often asked clarification to some terms. However, most of the time I just observed the respondents while they were answering the questionnaire.

### **3.4 Validity, reliability and limitations**

The research was mostly implemented with Chinese, Japanese and South Korean passengers, who are not native English speakers. The questionnaire is written in English and some interviewees had challenges with the language as they could not understand all the terms used in the questionnaire. This might affect the truthfulness of some responses, but in my opinion this does not affect the results significantly.

In the questionnaire there were terms used, such as Nordic, the Nordics and the Nordic region. As the research started, I quickly noticed that these terms were not familiar to all interviewees and sometimes they needed to be described more specifically in order to obtain the right perspective to the answers. However, due to the language barrier some interviewees might have not understood these terms correctly.

The chosen quantitative research method is a good method to gather bigger quantities of data, but it has limitation as it delimits the ability to ask any questions from the focus group if questions arise. Qualitative research could be done for the purpose of further research in the future. (Purpura 2003)

### **3.5 Results and findings**

#### **3.5.1 Background information of the respondents**

In order to be able to analyze the data more in depth, the respondent's background information was gathered. The answers provided data to analyze what age, gender and home country groups' the sample included and the reasons that brought them to the Helsinki-Vantaa airport. The respondents also answered where they live. Using the respondents' background information we can make comparisons in order to find the possible differences in the answers among different groups. Research was able to gather a total of 130 started responses and 123 responses that were fully completed in the survey's questionnaire. There were seven respondents who needed to exit the survey before they were finished with the questionnaire. 54,62% of the respondents were Female

and 44,62% of them were Male. One respondent answered the gender to be Other. (Table 1)

Table 1. The gender of the respondent

Question: What is your gender?

Percentages and amounts of the respondents in each group.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	54.62%	71
Male	44.62%	58
Other	0.77%	1
Total		130

As table 2 shows, most (83,03 %) of the respondents were under 44 years old. The study in the field showed that it was difficult to find passengers who were older than 45 and could speak English. This was extremely difficult among women in this age group, but also for men. Therefore, the biggest group of respondents were 25-34 years old by 35,38%, the second biggest groups were under 24 years old and 35-44 years old, both with 23,85% of the responses. (Table 2)

Table 2. The age groups of the respondents

Question: What is your age?

Percentages and amounts of the respondents in each group.

Answer Choices	Responses	
>24	23.85%	31
25-34	35.38%	46
35-44	23.85%	31
45-54	10.00%	13
55-64	3.85%	5
65<	3.08%	4
Total		130

There was a difference between the focus group's respondents' ages according to their country of origin. If we take a closer look at the responses that came from the focus group,

we can see that most Chinese and South Korean respondents were under 44 years old whereas there was more variety in the respondents' ages among Japanese travelers (Table 3). There were also older Chinese and South Koreans at the airport, but they claimed that they could not speak English and therefore could not respond to the survey questionnaire. The rest of the responses (six answers) came from other nationalities that were not in focus in this survey.

Table 3. The age groups of the respondents by focus group

Question: What is your age?

Percentages and amounts of the respondents in each group between the target groups.

	>24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65<	Total
Q3: China	37.93% 22	36.21% 21	18.97% 11	6.90% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46.77% 58
Q3: Japan	9.38% 3	18.75% 6	28.13% 9	21.88% 7	9.38% 3	12.50% 4	25.81% 32
Q3: South Korea	17.65% 6	50.00% 17	23.53% 8	5.88% 2	2.94% 1	0.00% 0	27.42% 34
Total Respondents	31	44	28	13	4	4	124

The biggest amount of responses came from Chinese passengers (Table 4). Their total amount was 58 responses, which equals to 44,62% of the total responses. The second biggest group was South Koreans with 34 responses (26,15%) and the third biggest group was Japanese with 32 responses (24,62%). (Table 4)

The aim was to gather as many responses from Chinese, Japanese and South Korean passengers as possible, but there were a few other nationalities that responded to the questionnaire as well. All the respondents had Asian heritage, and therefore it can be claimed that the results are truthful. Only six respondents (approx. 3% of the respondents) answered that their home country was not among the focus group. (Table 4) This study will draw further analysis only from the data from the respondents among the focus group, as Finnair wanted to target these countries.

Table 4. Home countries of the respondents

Question: Where are you from?

Percentages and amounts of the respondents in each group.

Answer Choices	Responses	
▼ China	44.62%	58
▼ Indonesia	0.00%	0
▼ Japan	24.62%	32
▼ Malaysia	0.00%	0
▼ Philippines	0.00%	0
▼ Singapore	1.54%	2
▼ Taiwan	0.00%	0
▼ South Korea	26.15%	34
▼ Thailand	0.77%	1
▼ Other (please specify)	2.31%	3
Total		130

Most passengers were only passing through Finland, as 66,92% of the passengers were on a transit at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport (Table 5). 29,23% of the passengers were departing from Finland and only 3,85% of the respondents were arriving in Finland. Most of the respondents were gathered at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport's departure gates, which affected these results and contributed to the lack of arriving passenger responses. The amount of transit passengers came as a slight surprise. These passengers may have never visited any Nordic country. There was not significant difference between the answers in this question among the focus group's country of origin, so this is not separated in the table.

Table 5. Reason for being at the airport

Question: What is the reason you are at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport?

Percentages and amounts of the total respondents in each group.

Answer Choices	Responses
▼ I'm arriving to Finland	3.85% 5
▼ I'm departing from Finland	29.23% 38
▼ I have a transit here	66.92% 87
Total	130

Only 15,39% of the respondents claimed that they were on a holiday either in Finland or in other Nordic countries (Table 6). The biggest group of respondents (30,77%) answered that that they were on a holiday in Europe. There were quite many business travelers (23,85%) and 6,92% claimed they live in Finland. There were quite a significant amount (23,08% of the responses) of answers in the group Other. The most common answers were transit and studying in another country, but there was also one (1) respondent who came to meet a Finnish woman and a few lived in some other countries nearby. There were a bit more business travelers among the Japanese passengers than in other groups, whereas South Koreans mainly were on a holiday in Europe. (Table 6)

Table 6. Reason for being at Finland

Question: What brings you here?

Percentages and amounts of the total respondents in each group.

Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Holiday in Finland	10.77% 14
▼ Holiday in the Nordic countries	4.62% 6
▼ Holiday in Europe	30.77% 40
▼ Business trip	23.85% 31
▼ I live here	6.92% 9
▼ Other (please specify) <span style="color: green;">Responses</span>	23.08% 30
Total	130

### 3.5.2 Perceptions of the Nordics

Respondents were able to choose from a list as many countries as they thought are part of the Nordic region (Table 7). The list included 12 different countries (Appendix 1, question 6). For the purpose of this study, The Nordic region is defined to include five

(5) countries; Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. 72,31% of the respondents listed Finland as a part of it whereas Norway, Sweden and Denmark all were chosen by a little less than 50% of the respondents and Iceland was chosen by only 30,77% of the respondents (Table 7). Finland may have gotten the most responses because the survey took place in Finland. On an average, 47,69% of all respondents could identify four countries from the Nordic region.

According to my observations during the survey, not many respondents knew what Nordic means. There were a significant amount of respondents who needed some guidance to the answer of what countries they see as a part of the Nordic region. These respondents were told that this means Northern Europe, yet some respondents couldn't still identify the countries correctly. One respondent claimed that the right country wasn't in the list as she thought it Nordic region meant Hungary.

Table 7. Perception of the Nordic countries

Question: Choose the countries which you see as a part of the Nordic region.

Percentages and amounts of the countries respondents' perceived to belong to the Nordic region.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Denmark	47.69%	62
Estonia	7.69%	10
Finland	72.31%	94
France	10.00%	13
Germany	10.77%	14
Iceland	30.77%	40
Norway	47.69%	62
Spain	8.46%	11
Sweden	48.46%	63
Russia	6.92%	9
United Kingdom	10.00%	13
United States of America	3.85%	5
Total Respondents: 130		

There was a difference in the respondents' knowledge about the Nordic region. The least correct answers came from South Koreans (Table 8, Appendix 2). Less than 30% of the

South Korean respondents knew that Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden are part of the Nordic region and only 55,88% of the South Korean respondents answered Finland. Japanese and Chinese respondents had better knowledge, but even then, the percentages of other Nordic countries than Finland was around 50%. Only 12,5% of the Japanese respondents thought that Iceland is part of Nordic region whereas 41,38% of the Chinese respondents answered Iceland. Respondents age and education might effect the knowledge. The Chinese respondents demographic was younger than for the Japanese. (Table 8)

Table 8. Perception of the Nordic countries by focus groups

Question: Choose the countries which you see as a part of the Nordic region.

Percentages and amounts of the countries respondents' perceived to belong to the Nordic region by focus groups.

	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Iceland	Norway	Spain	Sweden	Russia	United Kingdom	United States of America
Q3: China	55.17% 32	5.17% 3	77.59% 45	6.90% 4	8.62% 5	41.38% 24	55.17% 32	1.72% 1	46.55% 27	6.90% 4	10.34% 6	1.72% 1
Q3: Japan	53.13% 17	12.50% 4	78.13% 25	15.63% 5	12.50% 4	12.50% 4	53.13% 17	9.38% 3	62.50% 20	6.25% 2	12.50% 4	9.38% 3
Q3: South Korea	29.41% 10	5.88% 2	55.88% 19	11.76% 4	14.71% 5	23.53% 8	26.47% 9	20.59% 7	32.35% 11	5.88% 2	8.82% 3	2.94% 1
Total Respondents	59	9	89	13	14	36	58	11	58	8	13	5

I wanted to find out what the most valued and attractive element in the Nordic region is, so the respondents were only able to choose one element from the list below. Cleanliness and fresh air got the most responses, as 33,08% of the respondents chose this. The next valued element from the Nordics was Silence and peace, which got 26,15% of the responses. Ecological lifestyle got 15,38% and Safety 10% of the total responses. People's friendliness got 7,69% and Urban city life only 3,08% of the responses. None of the respondents thought that prosperity is the most attractive element in the Nordic region. (Table 9)

Table 9. Perception of the Nordic countries

Question: What attracts you the most in the Nordic region?

Percentages of the respondents' attractive element choices.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Silence and peace	26.15%	34
Cleanliness and fresh air	33.08%	43
Safety	10.00%	13
People's friendliness	7.69%	10
Urban citylife	3.08%	4
Ecological lifestyle	15.38%	20
Prosperity	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	4.62%	6
Total		130

If the answers are divided into focus groups according to the respondents' country of origin, there are differences among the responses (Table 10). Chinese respondents valued Silence and piece the most (37,93% of the total Chinese respondents), whereas not that many Japanese and South Korean respondents chose this as the most attractive element. All of the respondent focus groups valued Cleanliness and fresh air (over 30% of the responses in each group) and among Japanese and South Koreans this was the most attractive element. 25% of the Japanese respondents said that Ecological lifestyle is the most attractive element and it got the second best votes among the Japanese respondents. Most variety within a group was among the Japanese travelers' responses. (Table 10)

Table 10. Perception of the Nordic countries by focus group

Question: What attracts you the most in the Nordic region?

Percentages of the respondents' attractive element choices by focus group.

	Silence and peace	Cleanliness and fresh air	Safety	People's friendliness	Urban citylife	Ecological lifestyle	Prosperity	Other (please specify)	Total
Q3: China	37.93% 22	32.76% 19	6.90% 4	3.45% 2	3.45% 2	10.34% 6	0.00% 0	5.17% 3 Responses	46.77% 58
Q3: Japan	15.63% 5	31.25% 10	9.38% 3	15.63% 5	0.00% 0	25.00% 8	0.00% 0	3.13% 1 Responses	25.81% 32
Q3: South Korea	17.65% 6	38.24% 13	11.76% 4	5.88% 2	5.88% 2	14.71% 5	0.00% 0	5.88% 2 Responses	27.42% 34
Total Respondents	33	42	11	9	4	19	0	6	124

The respondents were only able to choose one picture that describes the Nordics the best according to their opinion. A snowy picture got the most responses in all of the target

groups, but among South Koreans it was less descriptive of the Nordics than in the other focus groups. South Koreans had the most variety in the answers and also pictures of a green field with a windmill (21,88% of South Korean respondents), a hugging couple (12,50% of South Korean respondents) and a blue sky with some clouds of (15,63% South Korean respondents) got some responses as well. A laughing child (symbol of happiness), a safety belt (symbol of safety), a busy metro (symbol of busy life) and coins (symbol of prosperity) did not get many votes in this question. (Table 11)

Table 11. Perception of the Nordic countries by focus group

Question: Which picture describes the Nordics the best?

Percentages of the total respondent by focus group.

										Other (please specify)	Total
Q3: China	60.71% 34	1.79% 1	16.07% 9	3.57% 2	3.57% 2	1.79% 1	10.71% 6	1.79% 1	0.00% 0	46.67% 56	
Q3: Japan	65.63% 21	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	0.00% 0	9.38% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.67% 32	
Q3: South Korea	46.88% 15	3.13% 1	15.63% 5	0.00% 0	12.50% 4	0.00% 0	21.88% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.67% 32	
Total Respondents	70	3	17	3	9	1	16	1	0	120	

In the next questions, the answers wanted to be measured on a scale from “Not at all Nordic” to “Extremely Nordic” (1-5 weight), on how the respondents saw the images. There were different factors that the respondents were asked to answer, such as looks, feelings, sounds and tastes of the images. The looks were measured first.

There was not much of a difference in the responses between different focus groups (Appendix 3). Most (92,06%) of the total respondents, with an average weight of 4,53, said that the picture of the northern lights looked “Extremely Nordic” (69,84% of the total respondents) or “Very Nordic” (22,22% of the total respondents). The Japanese respondents had a higher percentage (81,25%) on the “Extremely Nordic” than other groups. 64,29% of the Chinese and 65,63% of the South Koreans responded “Extremely Nordic” to the picture. (Appendix 3) Snowy scenery was also seen as “Extremely Nordic” (65,87% of the total respondents) or “Very Nordic” (27,78% of the total respondents) equaling 93,65% of the total respondents with an average weight of 4,56. (Table 12)

Forest (50,79% of total respondents) got an average weight of 4,1 and a fjord (44,44% of total respondents) got an average weight of 3,78, so they were both seen as “Very Nordic” while pictures of a concert (2,71 average weight) and technology (3,08 average weight) were both seen as “Somewhat Nordic” on average. (Table 12)

Table 12. Perception of how the Nordic looks

Question: How Nordic do these images look?

Percentages of the total respondent.

	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
	2.38% 3	3.97% 5	1.59% 2	22.22% 28	69.84% 88	126	4.53
	0.00% 0	4.76% 6	31.75% 40	44.44% 56	19.05% 24	126	3.78
	11.90% 15	33.33% 42	34.92% 44	11.90% 15	7.94% 10	126	2.71
	0.79% 1	1.59% 2	11.11% 14	50.79% 64	35.71% 45	126	4.19
	0.79% 1	1.59% 2	3.97% 5	27.78% 35	65.87% 83	126	4.56
	9.52% 12	19.05% 24	36.51% 46	23.81% 30	11.11% 14	126	3.08

Respondents see happy times with friends in a park as “Very Nordic”, with an average weight of 3,83 and there was not much difference in the responses among different groups (table 13, appendix 4). The Chinese and South Koreans see life in the Nordics as slightly busier than the Japanese (appendix 4), but on an average the life in the Nordics still does not feel so busy to the respondents (2,40 average weight).

The respondents see silence and calmness (forest in the picture) as mostly “Very Nordic” (40,80% of the respondents) or “Extremely Nordic” (48,00% of the total respondents) with not much difference among the different groups. The average weight for the pictures’ feeling of “Nordicness” is 4,34. There is some difference how loneliness is perceived to reflect the Nordics. Chinese respondents have more “Very Nordic” and “Extremely Nordic” answers than other groups. While the Japanese do not see the Nordics as a lonely

place and South Koreans are somewhere in the middle of these two groups. (Appendix 4)  
 The average weight for loneliness is 3,01 among all of the respondents. In my opinion, these answers reflects the culture of the responders' and what is considered lonely there.

On average, the respondents did not feel like the Nordics is fashionable and it has modern design as most people answered it is "Somewhat Nordic" (3,25 average weight). Friendliness was on average perceived "Very Nordic" (3,66 average weight). (Table 13)

Table 13. Perception of the Nordic feelings

Question: How Nordic do these images feel?

Percentages of the total respondent.

	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
	0.79% 1	3.17% 4	32.54% 41	39.68% 50	23.81% 30	126	3.83
	20.00% 25	41.60% 52	23.20% 29	8.80% 11	6.40% 8	125	2.40
	0.80% 1	0.80% 1	9.60% 12	40.80% 51	48.00% 60	125	4.34
	8.73% 11	26.98% 34	29.37% 37	24.60% 31	10.32% 13	126	3.01
	2.38% 3	18.25% 23	42.06% 53	26.19% 33	11.11% 14	126	3.25
	1.60% 2	10.40% 13	28.80% 36	39.20% 49	20.00% 25	125	3.66

The respondents also answered how Nordic they perceive the sounds in the images. Silent forest got the most responses and the average weight for it was 4,33. 44,80% of the respondents answered that it is "Extremely Nordic". Running water got an average weight of 3,91 and Laughter 3,30. (Table 14)

Technology and games had a little difference among the focus groups as the Chinese gave it an average weight of 3,43 while the Japanese gave it a 2,74 and the South Koreans 2,56. The Japanese gave Busy traffic only a 1,53 average weight for its Nordicness, while the

Chinese and South Korean both gave it a little over 2. There was not much of a difference among focus groups on other pictures. (Appendix 5)

Table 14. Perception of the Nordic sounds

Question: How Nordic are these sounds?

Percentages of the total respondent.

	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
	3.25% 4	17.07% 21	34.15% 42	37.40% 46	8.13% 10	123	3.30
	0.80% 1	0.80% 1	8.00% 10	45.60% 57	44.80% 56	125	4.33
	1.60% 2	3.20% 4	26.40% 33	40.00% 50	28.80% 36	125	3.91
	28.80% 36	36.80% 46	28.80% 36	3.20% 4	2.40% 3	125	2.14
	4.88% 6	27.64% 34	35.77% 44	23.58% 29	8.13% 10	123	3.02

The comments I received during the interviews were that tastes were the most difficult for the respondents to measure. The highest average weight of 4,16 was on salmon on top of rye bread. Blueberries got an average weight of 3,89 and it was mostly selected as “Very Nordic”. Coffee and cinnamon bun both got average weights of 3,55 and 3,54. Sushi was still considered “Somewhat Nordic” with an average weight of 2,98. McDonalds got an average weight of 2,54 and it was considered the least Nordic of the tastes among the respondents. (Table 15) There was not much of a difference among the focus groups’ responses.

Table 15. Perception of the Nordic tastes

Question: How Nordic are these tastes?

Percentages of the total respondent.

	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
	0.81% 1	8.13% 10	21.95% 27	39.84% 49	29.27% 36	123	3.89
	1.64% 2	1.64% 2	17.21% 21	37.70% 46	41.80% 51	122	4.16
	18.70% 23	34.96% 43	24.39% 30	17.07% 21	4.88% 6	123	2.54
	11.67% 14	20.83% 25	34.17% 41	25.00% 30	8.33% 10	120	2.98
	4.07% 5	13.82% 17	28.46% 35	30.08% 37	23.58% 29	123	3.55
	1.64% 2	11.48% 14	33.61% 41	37.70% 46	15.57% 19	122	3.54

### 3.5.3 Reasons to travel

I wanted to find out what motivated these people to travel to the Nordics, so I asked them why they chose to come to the Nordic region. 33% of the respondents had some other reason to travel to the region, which was not specified on the list. The biggest amount of comments included that the respondent was only on transit in Finland. 21,14% of the respondents had heard about the destination from a friend or a relative and they decided to travel the region. 26,83% had read about the Nordics online and 8,13% had seen advertisement that inspired them to travel to the region. 10,57% of the respondents claimed that they read about the destination elsewhere. (Table 16)

Table 16. Reason to travel to the Nordic region

Question: Why did you choose to come to the Nordic region?

Percentages of the total respondent.

Answer Choices	Responses	
I heard about it from a friend or relative	21.14%	26
I read about it online	26.83%	33
I saw an advertisement	8.13%	10
I read about it	10.57%	13
Other (please specify)	33.33%	41
<b>Responses</b>		
Total		123

Respondents were asked to determine on a scale from “Not unique at all” to “Extremely unique” (scale 1-5) how they see the Nordic destination as a travel destination. Interestingly almost 80% of respondents said that the Nordics is either “Quite unique” or “Extremely unique”. (Table 17)

Table 17. Nordic uniqueness

Question: How unique is the Nordic region as a travel destination?

Percentages of the total respondent.

Not unique at all	Not very unique	Neutral	Quite unique	Extremely unique	Total	Weighted Average
0.00% 0	3.25% 4	19.51% 24	54.47% 67	22.76% 28	123	3.97

43,90% of the respondents answered that “I would like to travel again” and 41,46% of the respondents said that “I will definitely travel again” when they were asked if they would travel to the Nordic region again. (Table 18)

Table 18. Likeliness to travel to the Nordics again

Question: How likely are you to travel to the Nordic region again?

Percentages of the total respondent.

I won't travel again	It isn't likely I will travel	I might travel	I would like to travel again	I will definitely travel again	Total	Weighted Average
0.00% 0	0.81% 1	13.82% 17	43.90% 54	41.46% 51	123	4.26

The majority (55,28%) of the respondents answered that they will recommend to their friend or family to visit the Nordic region. 35,77% said that they “could likely recommend” it and 8,94% said they “could recommend” it. No one answered that “I wouldn’t recommend” or “I won’t likely recommend” the Nordic region as a travel destination. (Table 19)

Table 19. Likeliness to recommend the Nordics as a travel destination

Question: How likely are you to recommend friends or family to visit the Nordic region?

Percentages of the total respondent.

I wouldn't recommend	I won't likely recommend	I could recommend	I could likely recommend	I will recommend	Total	Weighted Average
0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.94% 11	35.77% 44	55.28% 68	123	4.46

### 3.5.4 Perceptions of Finnair and the reasons of usage

Finnair’s new strategy has been implemented well, as most passengers said that they see Finnair as a “Quite Nordic” or “Extremely Nordic” brand (Table 20). Only 13,82% of the respondents claimed that the brand is “Neutral” and just one respondent said that the brand is “Not Nordic at all”. (Table 20)

Table 20. Finnair’s Nordicness

Question: How Nordic is Finnair as a brand?

Percentages of the total respondent.

Not Nordic at all	Not very Nordic	Neutral	Quite Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
0.81% 1	0.00% 0	13.82% 17	45.53% 56	39.84% 49	123	4.24

Approximately half of the respondents (47,97%) said they were using Finnair for the first time and half have used it before (Table 21). Passengers mainly thought that the experience flying with Finnair was “Good” by 59,50% of the respondents or “Extremely good” by 34,71% of the respondents (Table 22).

Table 21. Travel times with Finnair

Question: Is this your first time using Finnair?

Percentages of the total respondent.

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	47.97% 59
No, I have used Finnair 1 time before	16.26% 20
No, I have used Finnair 2-3 times before	16.26% 20
No, I have used Finnair over 4 times before	17.89% 22
I have not used Finnair	1.63% 2
Total	123

Table 22. Experience traveling with Finnair

Question: How was your experience flying with Finnair?

Percentages of the total respondent.

Poor	Not that good	Neutral	Good	Extremely good	Total	Weighted Average
0.00% 0	2.48% 3	3.31% 4	59.50% 72	34.71% 42	121	4.26

Travelers mainly chose to travel with Finnair as they felt it offers the shortest, cheapest and most convenient flights to these passengers. Some respondents also think that Finnair is the best airline and that it offers direct flights for them. (Table 23)

Table 23. Experience traveling with Finnair by focus group

Question: Why did you choose to fly with Finnair?

Percentages of the total respondent.

	Shortest flight	Cheapest flight	No other options	Most convenient flight	Best airline	Unique airline	Direct flights	Other (please specify)
Q3: China	35.19% 19	31.48% 17	1.85% 1	42.59% 23	16.67% 9	3.70% 2	20.37% 11	5.56% 3 Responses
Q3: Japan	60.00% 18	46.67% 14	0.00% 0	30.00% 9	13.33% 4	0.00% 0	16.67% 5	3.33% 1 Responses
Q3: South Korea	29.03% 9	32.26% 10	16.13% 5	25.81% 8	16.13% 5	9.68% 3	16.13% 5	3.23% 1 Responses
Total Respondents	46	41	6	40	18	5	21	5

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to clarify how Asians perceive the Nordics and what the best visual appearance is for each region to attract these groups to travel to the Nordic region with Finnair. This research has provided a lot of useful data regarding the Asians' perception of the Nordics. The most attractive element in the Nordic region was Cleanliness and fresh air (33,08% of all respondents) and the second most valued element from the Nordics was Silence and peace (26,15% of the responses). Ecological lifestyle got 15,38% and Safety got 10% of the total responses. (Table 9)

When we take a closer look at the responses by the respondent's home country of origin, we can discover a variety on the most attractive Nordic element. The most attractive element for the Chinese is Silence and peace, whereas the Japanese and South Koreans were most attracted to Cleanliness and fresh air. However, Chinese respondents were also highly attracted to Cleanliness and fresh air element. (Table 10) This data indicates to a direction that we should highlight these elements from the Nordics in order to build a more attractive brand among the focus groups. It could be wise to use this kind of imagery that represent the most attractive elements in each region and do some A/B testing on the marketing campaigns in order to see if some imagery works better than others and gets better conversions or clicks online. It is the easiest method to measure the campaign effectiveness with digital marketing, as marketing gets numeric data from the campaigns.

The aim of this research was to define what Nordic represents to Asian travelers and what they value the most in this region, in order to define which sides of the Nordics should be highlighted in each regions' marketing communication. As we found out in the study, the most attractive and valued element to the target group is Silence and peace. We also measured the focus groups' perception of the Nordics when we asked them to choose one picture that describes the Nordics the best. A snowy picture got the most responses in all of the target groups, but among South Koreans it was less descriptive of the Nordics than in the other focus groups. South Koreans had the most variety in the answers and also pictures of a green field with a windmill (21,88% of South Korean respondents), a hugging couple (12,50% of South Korean respondents) and a blue sky with some clouds of (15,63% South Korean respondents) got some votes as well. A laughing child (symbol

of happiness), a safety belt (symbol of safety), a busy metro (symbol of busy life) and coins (symbol of prosperity) did not get many responses on this question. (Table 11)

## **4.1 Associations from the Nordic region**

In order to get a clearer image on how Asians' associate the Nordics currently, we measured people's association of the Nordics with different images. Visuals represented four (4) different elements that we wanted to measure: looks, feelings, sounds and taste.

The Nordics looks are mostly associated to the northern lights, snowy sceneries and often also with forests. This indicates that people associate this region as being close to nature, whereas technology and cultural activities were not seen as that Nordic.

The Nordics feel mainly like a silent forest, but happy times with friends and laughter felt very Nordic among the respondents as well. This came to me as a little surprise, as we have often heard other nations to declare Finns to be cold and hard to get to. This indicates that the perception of Finns has gotten more positive.

The Nordic sounds were mainly associated to the sounds from nature. Silent forest got the most responses and running water came second which indicate that the respondents associate the Nordics to sound silent and feel calm.

The Nordic tastes from nature got the most responses. Salmon on top of rye bread got the most responses and blueberries also got very Nordic associations. These responses indicate that Nordic tastes are associated with pure tastes from the nature that are not highly processed.

From these perceptions we could draw a conclusion that the Nordics is highly associated with pure nature and calmness, which the focus group is also attracted to the most. It could be inferred that these elements should also be underlined in the branding and marketing communications, in order to create an interesting and appealing brand among this focus group.

## 4.2 Key findings

This research has showed that the Nordic region and the Nordics are still relatively unknown terms among Asians. This research was implemented among the sample of travelers in Helsinki-Vantaa airport, so it can be presumed that even less people from the focus group's home countries know these terms, if they have never traveled to the Nordic region or elsewhere in Europe. Appendix 2. shows the difference among the focus groups. A little bit over 50% of all Japanese passengers knew that Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are part of the Nordic region but only 12% of them knew that also Iceland is part of the region. Similar results apply to the Chinese respondents' answers, but about 41% of them also knew that Iceland is part of the region. The South Koreans' knowledge was the poorest among these groups. On average only about 25% of South Koreans could specify other countries than Finland to be included in the Nordic region. (Appendix 2)

Finnair's new vision stated that they want to provide a unique Nordic Experience to their customers. Their strategy notes that operations are based on quality, reliability, safety and design inspired by Nordic pure nature. Even though only 30,77% of the study respondents knew all the five countries included in the Nordic region, the results from this study show that the new strategy has been internalized by the customers as most passengers said that they see Finnair as a "Quite Nordic" or "Extremely Nordic" brand (Table 20). Only 13,82% of the respondents claimed that the brand is "Neutral" and just one respondent said that the brand is "Not Nordic at all". (Table 20)

Ruzzier and Petek (2012) stated in their study that a country's brand identity should have unique elements that differentiate it from others. This means that if the Nordics is used as a brand building element, the target group should be educated in what separates it from others. If customer do not know this, they should be educated about it.

People associate the Nordics to the elements that they are attracted to and what they value, but the term Nordic is unclear to a lot of people. These results indicate that "The Nordic Way" slogan should not be introduced or used without familiar associations to the target group. Otherwise Finnair might benefit some competitor with the marketing, if the consumers cannot match the slogan to the right region.

### 4.3 Discussion

Browning (2007) stated in his research that the old Nordic practices have failed to live up to and market the brand which has compromised the brand, as consumers cannot recognize the brand as easily anymore. Browning suggests that the Nordic brand should be rethought as it is losing its marketability and distinctive position. (Browning 2007) This study has proved a similar outcome.

The whole concept of Nordic did not seem very clear to consumers. Not everyone knew what it meant and even though I tried to clarify this to the respondents while they answered the survey, many still answered wrongly to the question: “Choose the countries which you see as a part of the Nordic region.” According to my experience, based on the discussions during the survey, only Asians who currently live, or have lived or studied in Europe, knew what Nordic means. Due to this I suggest that the brand slogan “The Nordic Way” should only be used together with some visuals that support and evoke the desired message and image of the brand.

Asian consumers need some further education and brand building about what Nordic means as Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa and Kitchen (2009) stated in their brand equity research. The brand communication should be illustrative when the new term is limited to a specific environment in the adaption process (Cuomo, Metallo, Tortora, Testa & Kitchen 2009). This study’s results show that the Nordic brand is still in its early adoption process, so the brand communication should include a lot of visuals from the direction Finnair wants to take on the Nordic theme. In my opinion, it should highlight the most valued aspect from the Nordics in each focus group’s region. This would most probably increase the brand equity and value among the customers, as their brand image would get clearer and they would associate Finnair more with the elements they value the most in the Nordics.

However, when the interviewees were shown pictures from northern lights, a fjord, a silent forest and a snowy landscape, most of them responded that they were very or extremely Nordic (Appendix 3.). So most of the interviewees recognized these sceneries as Nordic and if we compare these response to answers’ on what was the most attractive

element from the Nordics, which were Silence and peace & Cleanliness and Fresh air (Table 9), we can draw conclusions that these are the factors that should be highlighted in branding and marketing among these regions and target groups. An ecological lifestyle should be highlighted as well. As Boatwright, Cagan, Kapur and Saltiel (2009) stated in their study, if brand identity is created by focusing on customer needs, the outcome is strategic and forward-thinking, rather than descriptive of the current status quo. As we know, Japan, China and South Korea can be busy, noisy and polluted. From the answers we can draw conclusions that imagery with clean, silent and crispy air should be used in the branding pictures in order to create interest among the target group. This kind of a brand building would create differentiation among competitors. Also the brand loyalty, prestige and trust will increase when these positive brand personality associations create positive emotions among consumers (Choi, Ok, & Hyun 2017, Ruzzier& Petek 2012).

This new slogan does however reflect Finnair's new strategy when it is used correctly. Finnair should keep in mind that this Nordic element is a part of an extended brand identity and it should not affect the brand if the associations change in the future. Brand slogans should be short and vague like "The Nordic Way" is. Strutton and Roswinanto (2014) stated this as well their study in order to increase the likelihood of more favorable attitudes among consumers. "The Nordic Way" can associate different elements to different people, such as the style, direction, manner or habit. The most successful slogans, such as "The Nordic Way" have dual meanings (Ries 2012). "The Nordic Way" slogan uniqueness is more important than attractiveness, as the latter is likely to come automatically for a strong brand. (Dahlén & Rosengren 2005).

In the context where the respondents knew that the study was conducted for Finnair, they were still unable to identify what Nordic means. Therefore, my suggestion is that the Nordics should be educated to consumers extremely visually in order to obtain the benefits from the tagline "The Nordic Way". There should be a lot of visuals to back up the claim in order to establish the brand image Finnair intends to in order to create positive and desired associations.

However, the study provides data from Asians' current state on how the Nordic is associated and perceived. Most consumers' responses are limited by their current

knowledge and they can only respond to the things they have seen, heard or felt. Therefore we can also teach the audience new things via branding and marketing regarding the Nordic. As the Nordic changes, so should the brand element that the brand is using for brand building. Companies should choose the Nordic elements that are relevant and important to their customers and highlight these elements in branding and marketing communications. This study proved that the Nordic is not that familiar of a term in the Asian market. If a company wants to be associated with being Nordic in the Asian market and use it as a brand building element, they should remember to enlighten their audience about what it means. Otherwise the message may not serve the purpose it was meant to serve.

#### **4.4 Implications for future research**

There is no previous systematic data from the topic, but it is recommended to acquire this kind of information every once in a while in order to measure the development of the perceptions and branding associations. Feedback should be asked with similar questions and scales as in this study, in order to be able to compare the findings. This questionnaire can be repeated with small improvements in the coming years. For the purpose of future studies to measure how the term Nordic has been internalized, I suggest using pattern-matching and time series analysis. Pattern-matching is a predictive approach to intervention, which can predict a post-intervention pattern of results/incidents that would either show if there are or are not effects. Both of these techniques gather a series of data for different intervals over some period of time. When there is enough pre-intervention data gathered, we can verify the claims for changes and improvements to be credible. (Gillham 2010 p. 82)

Conclusions must be drawn with caution, as the sample is still relatively small and it does not take part among the big mass of population that have not traveled to the Nordic region yet. However, the practical conclusions can be validated when they are compared and measured with real campaigns' performance data.

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# APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

 **FINNAIR**

**BRAND SURVEY**

Personal data

**\* 1. What is your gender?**

Female

Male

Other

**\* 2. What is your age?**

>24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65<

**\* 3. Where are you from?**

China

Japan

Singapore

South Korea

Thailand

Other (please specify)



Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

**\* 4. What is the reason you are at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport?**

I'm arriving to Finland

I'm departing from Finland

I have a transit here

**\* 5. What brings you here?**

Holiday in Finland

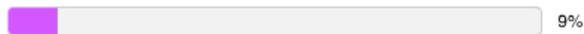
Holiday in the Nordic countries

Holiday in Europe

Business trip

I live here

Other (please specify)



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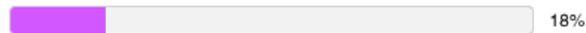
**FINNAIR**

**BRAND SURVEY**

Nordic region

**\* 6. Choose the countries which you see as a part of the Nordic region.**

- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Iceland
- Norway
- Spain
- Sweden
- Russia
- United Kingdom
- United States of America



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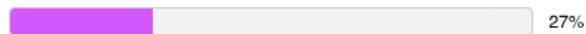
**FINNAIR**

**BRAND SURVEY**

Nordic region

**\* 7. What attracts you the most to the Nordic region?**

- Silence and peace
- Cleanliness and fresh air
- Safety
- People's friendliness
- Urban citylife
- Ecological lifestyle
- Prosperity
- Other (please specify)



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FINNAIR

BRAND SURVEY

Nordic region

**\* 8. Which picture describes the Nordics the best?**

Silence and peace



Safety



Ecological lifestyle



Laughter



Friendliness and happiness



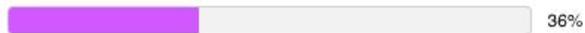
Prosperity



Cleanliness and fresh air



Urban citylife



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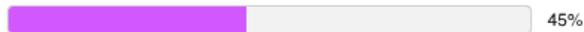
FINNAIR

BRAND SURVEY

Look

**\* 9. How Nordic do these images look?**

Not at all Nordic    Not so Nordic    Somewhat Nordic    Very Nordic    Extremely Nordic



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\* 10. How Nordic do these images feel?

Not at all Nordic    Not so Nordic    Somewhat Nordic    Very Nordic    Extremely Nordic

Happy times with friends



Busy life



Silence and calmness



Loneliness



Fashionable and modern design



Friendliness



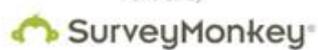
              



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BRAND SURVEY

Sound

\* 11. How Nordic are these sounds?

Not at all Nordic    Not so Nordic    Somewhat Nordic    Very Nordic    Extremely Nordic

Laughter



Silent forest



Running water



Busy traffic



Technology & games



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FINNAIR

BRAND SURVEY

Taste

\* 12. How Nordic are these tastes?

Not at all Nordic    Not so Nordic    Somewhat Nordic    Very Nordic    Extremely Nordic



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FINNAIR

## BRAND SURVEY

### Reasons to travel

#### \* 13. Why did you choose to come to the Nordic region?

- I heard about it from a friend or relative
- I read about it online
- I saw an advertisement
- I read about it
- Other (please specify)

#### \* 14. How unique is the Nordic region as a travel destination?

Not unique at all      Not very unique      Neutral      Quite unique      Extremely unique

#### \* 15. How likely are you to travel to the Nordic region again?

I won't travel again      It isn't likely I will travel      I might travel      I would like to travel again      I will definitely travel again

#### \* 16. How likely are you to recommend friends or family to visit the Nordic region?

I wouldn't recommend      I won't likely recommend      I could recommend      I could likely recommend      I will recommend



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**FINNAIR**

**BRAND SURVEY**

Finnair

**\* 17. How Nordic is Finnair as a brand?**

Not Nordic at all      Not very Nordic      Neutral      Quite Nordic      Extremely Nordic

**\* 18. Is this your first time using Finnair?**

- Yes
- No, I have used Finnair 1 time before
- No, I have used Finnair 2-3 times before
- No, I have used Finnair over 4 times before
- I have not used Finnair



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**FINNAIR**

## BRAND SURVEY

### \* 19. How was your experience flying with Finnair?

Poor      Not that good      Neutral      Good      Extremely good

### 20. Why did you choose to fly with Finnair?

- Shortest flight
- Cheapest flight
- No other options
- Most convenient flight
- Best airline
- Unique airline
- Direct flights
- Other (please specify)

### 21. Open comments

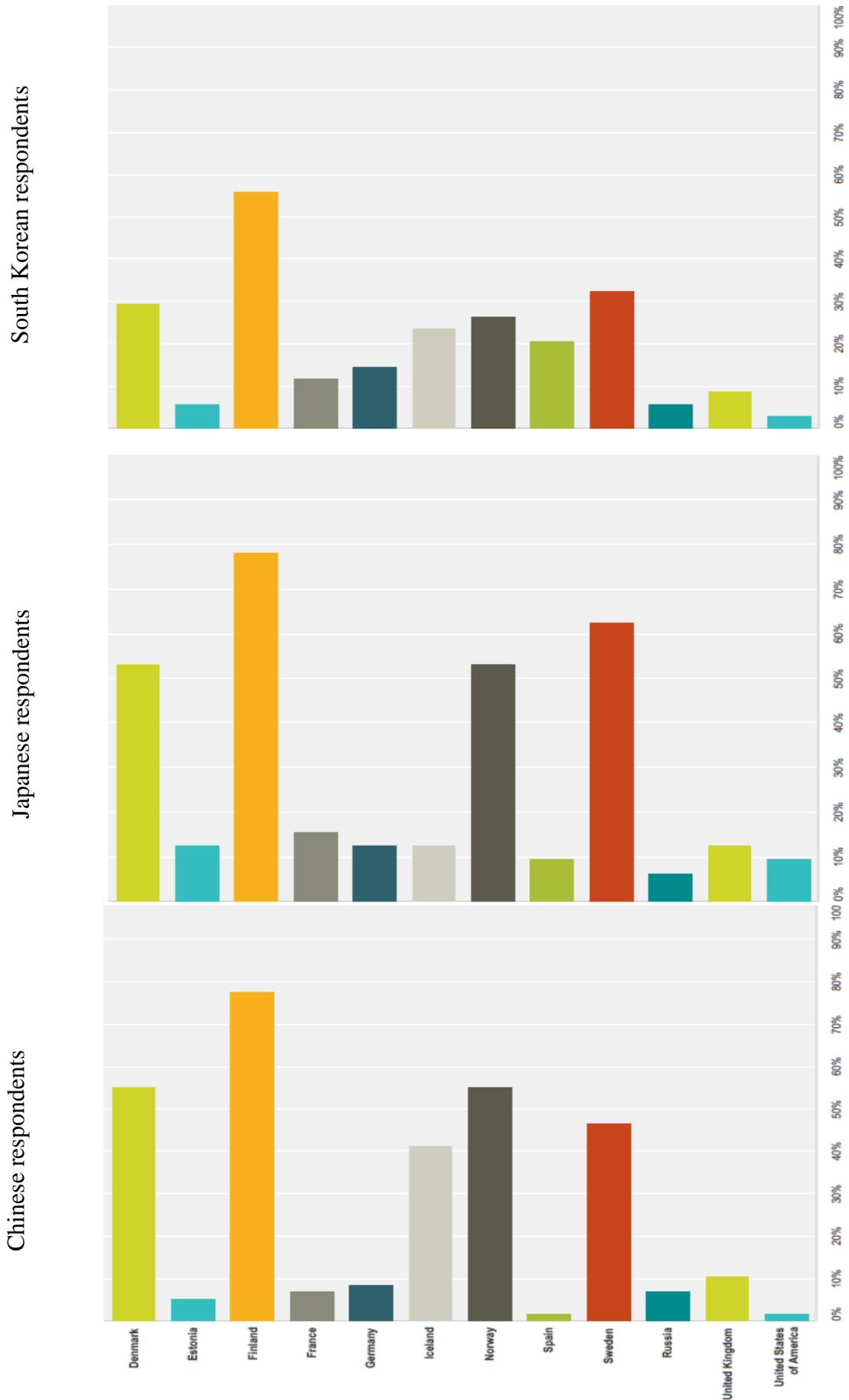


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## APPENDIX 2. NORDIC REGION PERCEPTION AMONG THE FOCUS GROUPS



### APPENDIX 3. HOW NORDIC DO THESE IMAGES LOOK? ANSWERS BY FOCUS GROUPS.

							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	5.36% 3	3.57% 2	3.57% 2	23.21% 13	64.29% 36	46.67% 56	4.38
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.75% 6	81.25% 26	26.67% 32	4.81
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	9.38% 3	0.00% 0	25.00% 8	65.63% 21	26.67% 32	4.47
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	0.00% 0	7.14% 4	44.64% 25	35.71% 20	12.50% 7	46.67% 56	3.54
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	28.13% 9	40.63% 13	28.13% 9	26.67% 32	3.94
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	12.50% 4	62.50% 20	21.88% 7	26.67% 32	4.03
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	14.29% 8	30.36% 17	30.36% 17	17.86% 10	7.14% 4	46.67% 56	2.73
Q3: Japan	9.38% 3	40.63% 13	37.50% 12	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	26.67% 32	2.56
Q3: South Korea	12.50% 4	34.38% 11	37.50% 12	6.25% 2	9.38% 3	26.67% 32	2.66



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.79% 1	3.57% 2	14.29% 8	51.79% 29	28.57% 16	46.67% 56	4.02
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	50.00% 16	46.88% 15	26.67% 32	4.44
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 4	46.88% 15	40.63% 13	26.67% 32	4.28



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.79% 1	1.79% 1	5.36% 3	30.36% 17	60.71% 34	46.67% 56	4.46
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 8	71.88% 23	26.67% 32	4.66
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	28.13% 9	68.75% 22	26.67% 32	4.66



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	8.93% 5	12.50% 7	32.14% 18	33.93% 19	12.50% 7	46.67% 56	3.29
Q3: Japan	3.13% 1	31.25% 10	43.75% 14	18.75% 6	3.13% 1	26.67% 32	2.88
Q3: South Korea	15.63% 5	15.63% 5	40.63% 13	12.50% 4	15.63% 5	26.67% 32	2.97

## APPENDIX 4. HOW NORDIC DO THESE IMAGES FEEL? ANSWERS BY FOCUS GROUPS.

							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.79% 1	5.36% 3	30.36% 17	37.50% 21	25.00% 14	46.67% 56	3.79
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.63% 13	40.63% 13	18.75% 6	26.67% 32	3.78
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	21.88% 7	46.88% 15	28.13% 9	26.67% 32	4.00
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	10.91% 6	41.82% 23	27.27% 15	14.55% 8	5.45% 3	45.83% 55	2.62
Q3: Japan	37.50% 12	43.75% 14	15.63% 5	3.13% 1	0.00% 0	26.67% 32	1.84
Q3: South Korea	18.75% 6	40.63% 13	25.00% 8	6.25% 2	9.38% 3	26.67% 32	2.47
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.79% 1	1.79% 1	14.29% 8	30.36% 17	51.79% 29	46.67% 56	4.29
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	46.88% 15	50.00% 16	26.67% 32	4.47
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.45% 2	51.61% 16	41.94% 13	25.83% 31	4.35



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.79% 1	19.64% 11	25.00% 14	32.14% 18	21.43% 12	46.67% 56	3.52
Q3: Japan	18.75% 6	37.50% 12	31.25% 10	12.50% 4	0.00% 0	26.67% 32	2.38
Q3: South Korea	6.25% 2	28.13% 9	34.38% 11	28.13% 9	3.13% 1	26.67% 32	2.94



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	0.00% 0	17.86% 10	41.07% 23	32.14% 18	8.93% 5	46.67% 56	3.32
Q3: Japan	6.25% 2	12.50% 4	37.50% 12	31.25% 10	12.50% 4	26.67% 32	3.31
Q3: South Korea	3.13% 1	25.00% 8	46.88% 15	15.63% 5	9.38% 3	26.67% 32	3.03



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.82% 1	5.45% 3	23.64% 13	41.82% 23	27.27% 15	45.83% 55	3.87
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	12.50% 4	34.38% 11	37.50% 12	15.63% 5	26.67% 32	3.56
Q3: South Korea	3.13% 1	18.75% 6	25.00% 8	40.63% 13	12.50% 4	26.67% 32	3.41

## APPENDIX 5. HOW NORDIC ARE THESE SOUNDS? ANSWERS BY FOCUS GROUPS.

							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	3.70% 2	12.96% 7	29.63% 16	42.59% 23	11.11% 6	45.38% 54	3.44
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	21.88% 7	40.63% 13	34.38% 11	3.13% 1	26.89% 32	3.19
Q3: South Korea	6.45% 2	16.13% 5	35.48% 11	35.48% 11	6.45% 2	26.05% 31	3.19
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	1.82% 1	0.00% 0	9.09% 5	43.64% 24	45.45% 25	46.22% 55	4.31
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	46.88% 15	50.00% 16	26.89% 32	4.47
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	3.13% 1	53.13% 17	40.63% 13	26.89% 32	4.31
							
	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	3.64% 2	3.64% 2	23.64% 13	36.36% 20	32.73% 18	46.22% 55	3.91
Q3: Japan	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	28.13% 9	46.88% 15	25.00% 8	26.89% 32	3.97
Q3: South Korea	0.00% 0	6.25% 2	25.00% 8	40.63% 13	28.13% 9	26.89% 32	3.91



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	16.36% 9	36.36% 20	36.36% 20	7.27% 4	3.64% 2	46.22% 55	2.45
Q3: Japan	56.25% 18	34.38% 11	9.38% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26.89% 32	1.53
Q3: South Korea	25.00% 8	34.38% 11	37.50% 12	0.00% 0	3.13% 1	26.89% 32	2.22



	Not at all Nordic	Not so Nordic	Somewhat Nordic	Very Nordic	Extremely Nordic	Total	Weighted Average
Q3: China	0.00% 0	16.67% 9	37.04% 20	33.33% 18	12.96% 7	45.38% 54	3.43
Q3: Japan	9.68% 3	32.26% 10	32.26% 10	25.81% 8	0.00% 0	26.05% 31	2.74
Q3: South Korea	9.38% 3	40.63% 13	37.50% 12	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	26.89% 32	2.56