

# **Multi-Sensory brand experience in an airport restaurant**

Viktoriia Karasenko

<b>Author(s)</b> Viktoriia Karasenko	
<b>Degree programme</b> Hospitality, Tourism and Experience Management	
<b>Thesis title</b> Multi-Sensory brand experience in an airport restaurant	<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> <b>34+0</b>
<p>This thesis explores phenomenon of multi-sensory brand experience, later on applying the findings to a restaurant Nordic Kitchen, located in Helsinki-Vantaa airport. Nordic Kitchen belongs to a large food-service company HMSHost. The environment of the airport is unique in many ways, but most importantly there is a lot of competition that is very similar to Nordic Kitchen by the type of service, food and experience it has to offer. Hence, the choice of the consumer is solemnly based on the cognitive and emotional processes, which are affected by five senses: olfactory, auditory, vision, haptics and taste.</p> <p>Multi-sensory brand experience creates emotional, sensorial, cognitive and behavioral value to a consumer on a deeper, more bonding level than traditional marketing and branding. Sensory branding is reinforced by the positive feeling created by the smell, sound, vision, taste and touch, forming an experiential value for the consumer and a successful brand image. Each of five core senses has been a matter of research among the contemporary marketing professionals, as the traditional approach is not enough anymore to keep the consumer loyal or interested. The research takes the course towards the recent theories based on the influence of the sensorial strategies towards the brand success, and sensorial stimulation aimed to create a bond between a brand and a consumer.</p> <p>The observation is chosen as the main research method to answer the research questions based on the desk study done. The findings are presented in a narrative manner with regards to the aforementioned theories.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Multi-sensory marketing, sensory branding, sensory perception, brand experience.	

## Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Objectives and purpose.....	2
1.2	Company info.....	2
1.3	Methods.....	3
1.4	Key definitions.....	4
2	Theoretical framework.....	5
2.1	History of sensory perception in hospitality and its development.....	5
2.2	First recognition and role in our life .....	7
2.3	Sensory Marketing and sensory branding .....	9
2.3.1	Sensory marketing .....	9
2.3.2	Sensory Branding.....	11
2.4	Five senses.....	13
2.4.1	Vision.....	14
2.4.2	Olfaction.....	16
2.4.3	Audition.....	17
2.4.4	Taste.....	18
2.4.5	Haptics.....	19
2.5	Sensory strategies .....	20
2.6	Sensory brand pyramid .....	23
2.7	Research questions .....	24
3	Methodology.....	25
3.1	Desk research.....	25
3.2	Observation.....	26
3.3	Data analysis process .....	27
4	Findings and Analysis.....	28
5	Discussion .....	30
5.1	Ethical Considerations .....	31
5.2	Limitations and future studies.....	32
6	Conclusion.....	33
7	References.....	34

# 1 Introduction

The main focus of this work is to do a research on the phenomenon of multi-sensory marketing, sensory branding and the sensory perception in customer service industry in general. The author of this thesis has chosen five core senses as a prism through which the sensory experiences will be described: vision, sound, smell, taste and touch. As the case study, restaurant Nordic Kitchen has been chosen to highlight the sensorial strategies implemented at the current time, analyze them through the observatory research method and provide ideas and suggestions for the future improvements.

After the desk research is done, own theoretical framework will be formed and based on that observation points will be clarified. The next step of the research is to have an observation session inside the restaurant Nordic Kitchen as a regular guest, and evaluate the aforementioned points focusing on the sensorial perspective. Based on acquired results, further actions and sensorial strategies will be suggested for the case of Nordic Kitchen. The long-term goal for this research is to help change the view of a typical airport restaurant into a memorable experience on a sensory level.

Nordic Kitchen is one of the dining units that belong to a large food-service company HMSHost in Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. The airport environment is very unique as it implies certain boundaries when it comes to customer journey and service experience in general. The choice of the premises is limited and in most of the cases the dining appears to be similar from one place to another. Travelers compose the main share of restaurant guests, which means they are on the move, value time and their expectations of the place differ from those of a regular restaurant due to a very specific setting. The single fact that Nordic Kitchen is located at the airport suggests that there is a lot of similar types of premises by the type of service, food and experience they has to offer. Hence, the choice of the consumer is solemnly based on the cognitive and emotional processes, which are affected by five senses: olfactory, auditory, vision, haptics and taste.

Multi-sensory brand experience creates emotional, sensorial, cognitive and behavioral value to a consumer on a deeper, more bonding level than traditional marketing and branding (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Sensory branding is reinforced by the positive feeling created by the smell, sound, vision, taste and touch, forming an experiential value for the consumer and a successful brand image (Hulten, 2017).

## 1.1 Objectives and purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to do a research on the subject of multi-sensory marketing for a better brand experience and apply the findings to an existing brand of a restaurant Nordic Kitchen, to revive its identity. The focal point of the research of the sensorial theories and recent practices is to use Sensory Marketing and Multi-Sensory Brand experience to highlight the authenticity of a brand, bring out more individuality, and level up customer satisfaction and thus better revenue in a long-term perspective. Unfortunately, restaurants that are operating in such places as airports, railway stations, bus terminals do not get that much recognition in regards of a memorable dining experience due to a high speed of table turnover and constant rush.

The overall goal of this thesis is to explore the phenomenon of Sensory Perception as a tool to use in a restaurant business to create a brand and sustain its image. The ideal end result would be to suggest efficient solutions to the issues experienced by the restaurant Nordic Kitchen from the point of sensory marketing, based on the literature research, observation and theory reviews. The place such as airport obliges to follow many rules in order to implement certain concepts or ideas.

## 1.2 Company info

HMSHost is an American food-service company that owns eighteen food units in Helsinki-Vantaa Airport alone. Its main competitor is SSP, British multinational company that operates branded catering and retail services, and overall provides the same type of experiences. Among eighteen units that belong to HMSHost only two offer a la carte dining, the rest are equipped with deli counters with self-service for quick sales and customer rotation. Helsinki-Vantaa Airport has been awarded as the best airport in Europe in 2018. Considering the upcoming opening of two new wings and one new terminal in 2019, it is clear that the number of passengers passing through is increasing (2019).

Nordic Kitchen is about to undergo great changes in the near future. As the new wing right next to it is soon to be opened the competitor enters the market with new concepts, famous franchise name and modern facilities. After being open for four years in Non-Schengen area, Nordic Kitchen has never had a struggle of

sharing its guests with other units since it is the only a la carte service in the area with homemade foods. However, the restaurant soon will be in a position where decent food and quick service is not enough to attract the guests, and most importantly make them come back.

The research done in this thesis looks over the sensory marketing and sensory branding development in general, but the theoretical part is applied to this particular case of Nordic Kitchen. This restaurant has been opened for about four years by the time this work is made. As of September 2019, it remains the only a la carte service in Non-Schengen area of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, which gives it a little boost in comparison to other food units in the same area. The food served is a fusion between popular Italian cuisine and Nordic flavors, such as pasta with reindeer, pizza with salmon, risotto with local mushrooms. Moreover, some local specialties are prepared there as well: toast Skagen, cloudberry crème brulee, Arctic char, etc.

The choice fell on this particular place mostly because the author of the thesis has been working there for the last three years and wishes to make a change in the place to give it the recognition it deserves. The lack of individuality is very obvious as the management's main objective ever since the opening of the restaurant has been to keep it growing and make sure they are able to serve all the passengers passing by. Now, when the competitors enter the ring it is important to keep up with changes and not to fade on a background of newer units.

HMSHost has a certain brand image designated to each of its units, meaning that all the concepts - whether it's about visual arrangement, menu choice or music played in the unit – need to be in line with a brand image.

### 1.3 Methods

This is a research-based thesis, which means that the main outcome of this work is a trustworthy, detailed and elaborated research on a chosen subject. The focal point of this study is the sensory perception, its role in marketing and the phenomenon of sensory branding that is coming out of it (Bastos & Levy, 2012). The majority of this work is a theoretical research on the aforementioned concepts, starting with their first mentions in history, following through the historical and social changes, and leading to their development in recent decades. The author of this

work describes a brief history of the role of sensory perception in a hospitality industry throughout the years and its build up, then moves on to the actual theory on the subjects of sensory marketing, sensory branding and sensory perception. Each of the chosen five human senses - Vision, Hearing, Taste, Touch and Smell – are examined by reviewing the theoretical background on the matter.

The desk research is the first part of this work. It is chosen by the author of this thesis as a thorough review of the previous study needs to be done to acquire a clear view on the subject, before going any further. Next step is the observation inside Nordic Kitchen restaurant from the point of view of a regular guest. This method of research has been chosen by the author of this thesis as the most suitable one regarding the timeframe in which this thesis had to be done. Additionally, observation sets a firm base for the further research. The points of interest are based on the three-level system of Sensorial strategies provided by Hulten (2011) and a part of sensory brand pyramid by Lindstrom (Lindstrom, Brand Sense: Sensory Secrets Behind the Stuff We Buy, 2010). Thus, the results of observation are aimed to highlight positive and negative aspects of sensorial brand experience inside Nordic Kitchen. In the end, the author of this thesis provides analysis and suggestions for further research in the field of sensory marketing and sensory branding and improvements for the specific case of Nordic Kitchen.

#### 1.4 Key definitions

##### Sensory Marketing and Sensory Branding

Typically, sensory marketing could be described as a tool to make products attractive and sell them to a consumer using five senses, that humans use to perceive the environment. Harvard Business Review magazine (2015) mentions that the majority of modern research in the industry of branding and marketing centres on “embodied cognition”—the idea that without our conscious awareness, our bodily sensations help determine the decisions we make. Other sources explain sensory marketing as a set of techniques with intention to attract the consumer by using his senses to influence his feelings and behaviour (Valenti, 2008). American academic and well-known researcher of sensory marketing Aradhna Krishna defines this term as a “marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their behaviours” and affects their judgements, perceptions and behaviour (Krishna A. , Sensory Marketing: Research on the Sensuality of Products, 2010).

The research done by Martin Lindstrom (2005) proves that sensory marketing creates is a powerful tool for creating a memorable brand image and assuring a strong brand loyalty.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

Next chapters are focused on a closer look into development of sensory perception in hospitality business. The author gives a little historical overview into the subject first, and then proceeds further into the research specific subjects of sensory marketing, sensory branding, five senses, one by one, and the theories chosen for the base of own theoretical frame described in further chapters.

### **2.1 History of sensory perception in hospitality and its development**

In this chapter we look at a brief history of travelling and the development of hospitality facilities along the way. From the times of Homer's the Odyssey where hospitality had a specific name *xenia* and until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when travelling becomes somewhat enjoyable and bearable for people of wealth and possibilities.

The initial idea of hospitality dates back to the times when the aim of it was to provide a shelter to the traveler. In ancient times it was extremely dangerous to travel, and to stay protected from the harsh weather, deadly animals, robbery and murder, traveler needed a place to spend the night in, restore their strength and stay safe. Back in the days the host-guest relationships were mainly built on a mutual agreement: the host is bound to protect the guest, maybe even provide with the comfort bedding, food and entertainment; whilst the guest is obliged not to do harm to the host and provide a monetary remuneration.

(Leed, 1991) Leed discusses the significance of travels throughout the history. For centuries voyage represented hardships, suffering, escape or a search for the destiny. The concept of such as a freedom, escape or a pleasurable activity is rather new (King, 1999). As mentioned above, in the ancient times travel did not bring much joy or pleasure, thus there were simply no need to provide more than just a bare minimum when it comes to facilities.

First mention of concepts of hospitality as well as the related vocabulary date back to the earliest recorded poetry of ancient Greece, Homer in particular (c.770 BC).



In his monumental *The Odyssey* the guest-friend relationship is mentioned as *xenia*, and following it benefits main character on his goal of returning home throughout the journey. Back in that era, the inns for travelers were not that common if existed at all, and in most of the cases the traveler would rely on a hospitality of locals for food and shelter (Biggs C., 2019). The focus on sensory perception was rather shifted towards the psychological side of the custom, relying more on the feelings of gratitude for the virtue of a host, and less on the importance of the quality of surroundings. Later on, at the end of the same century, when Roman Empire came to power, the travel industry flourished with the building of roads, bridges and highways throughout the Empire. The previous inns took on a role of hotels, stores, saloons and even brothels for a regular traveler. Although, they were full of robbers and vermin, and were avoided by all costs if possible. The innkeepers or the hosts of such a place, would often try to rob their guests, too. (White, 1970). With the development of civilization, the plain need for safety now goes along with the need for comfort. Although it will take centuries to create a mindset that responds to the environments on a sensory level and acknowledges that experience.

In the Middle Ages, with the growth of religious influence, a vast amount of accommodations was provided by monasteries, specifically along the route that was followed by pilgrims and religious travelers. The monks saw service to travelers as part of their service to God; the Benedictines received all guests as though they were the Christ (Durant, 1944). Their purpose was to serve God by meeting a human need, and not to provide the traveler with physical comfort or pleasure. The conditions were harsh and ascetic due to historically formed neglect to physical comforts built on religious beliefs of more important purpose in life. Cold and hard surfaces, simple food and strict rules of existence did not make much for a pleasant stay.

Not until the coaches with springs came into the scene, the travel became endurable. Up until the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the roads were suitable for traveling with coaches, expanded enough to travel long distance, and the development of the hotels and taverns step onto a next level, the travelling could be called somewhat enjoyable and the art of hospitality stepped onto a next level. Not everyone could afford a coach, thus only wealthy people would enjoy such trips. The growth of hospitality took a strike as there was a need and there was someone with the money to pay for it.

## 2.2 First recognition and role in our life

The first recognition of five senses as we know them now – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch – came from Aristotle and his students, in his *De Sensu et Sensibiliu*. Even though initially philosopher mentions only four of them (sight, sound, smell and touch), believing that taste is a form of touch, which he considered as a primary sense amongst them. People would also call them “the windows of the soul”, addressing the fact that we process our surroundings through those senses and inside our consciousness. Although Aristotle's works greatly influenced our current understanding of the subject, throughout the centuries of research science proved there are other sensory receptors that affect other types of environmental senses, such as kinesthetic sense and sense of balance, sense of hunger and thirst (Pfaffman, 2017). This part of the work is focused on five main senses and their role in human life, their influence over the hospitality industry and an effect they have over decision-making process.

For many years people would recognize the elements of sensory marketing and channels they affect in the hospitality business. Numerous researches were done on the subject of one or two senses, rarely combined into a structured system that covers all the five senses and processes involved when it comes to perception, recognition and “digestion” of a brand through senses (Krishna A. , *Sensory Marketing: Research on the Sensuality of Products*, 2010). Just around the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century-beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> the subject of sensory marketing became somewhat popularized and spoken about. In 2005 Martin Lindstrom releases a data-packed book “*Brand Sense – Build Powerful Brands through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight, and Sound*”, which is based on a vast global research conducted by Millward Brown, the main subject of which was the relationship between branding and sensory awareness.

In his study Lindstrom focuses mainly on neuromarketing. The crucial point he delivers in his research is that sensory marketing largely contributes to the development of a certain reflex for the consumers of a brand, creating a link between senses and brand reception. The author suggests that the effective application of all five senses while developing a brand, leads to a stronger connection with the consumer and higher chances of market success (Lindstrom, *Brand Sense: How to Build Powerful Brands Through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight & Sound*, 2005).

The results of the conducted research show the effect of sensory stimuli during the purchase:

- pleasant background music – 65% of the consumers are more likely to make a purchase
- pleasant look – 46%
- pleasant smell – 40%
- pleasant to touch – 26%
- tastes good – 23%

Combining all the elements in a single experience would create a powerful impact on consumer's brand recognition on a sensory level. The complete immersion of all senses is assumed to have a stronger effect on both mind and emotions (Leonardis, 2014) In 2008 Aradhna Krishna organized the first academic conference on the subject of sensory marketing, bringing together psychologists, neuroscientists, marketing academics and practitioners, stressing once again that sensory marketing is a complex combination of many studies.

Arndt Traindl in his book "Neuromarketing: the Innovative Visualization of Emotions" (Traindl, 2007) defines neuromarketing as an interpreted assemblage of reactions towards specific branding attributes, such as: name, logo, colour combination, audio signals, symbols, etc. All while the heartbeat, brain activity, sweat production, pupil activity and other spontaneous human reactions are being studied. Apart from physical reactions that depend on one's physical abilities alone, there are more aspects that shape the whole perception of sensory stimuli. Sheehan (Sheehan, 1967) talks about how not only vision out of all senses can be imagined, but all of them. People can recreate the sounds, smells, feeling of touch and taste in their imagination. Although, he also pointed out the differences in one's imaginary abilities, since they tend to base on one's previous experiences. Prior literature mentions that similar sensory stimuli can produce different responses depending on an individual.

Our judgements and reactions to various experiences are based on the synthesis of sensory inputs. Thereby, while engaging consumer's senses more often and effectively, using diverse sensory marketing techniques, the businesses can impact the decision-making process and increase the sales (Krishna A. , 2011). In the recent years academics became very interested in the subject of sensory perception. The term "embodied cognition" appears to be a center point in newest researches.

The idea behind it is that most of our decisions are made with the help of our bodily sensations, when our conscious awareness is off or not focused on the subject of decision-making process. (HBR, 2015). In the next chapter the phenomenon of sensory marketing is discussed, along with branding and how five senses are involved into creation of one.

## **2.3 Sensory Marketing and sensory branding**

The development of any industry goes hand in hand with history, progress and historical changes in economy. Stepping further from the hospitality concept of ancient Greece and travelling conditions during medieval times, the post-Depression era in 1950-1960s became a time when people lived carefully looking into the prices and what was offered by the product or service. The dollar-shops had a boom on the market, plast-a-ware entered the scene, and the plastic industry started to grow out of proportion bringing cheap replacement to more expensive and more difficult to obtain materials (Krishna A. , 2010). In 1970s the branded goods became popular and the visual representation grew significantly strong amongst marketing professionals. Firms realized the importance of “branding” and looked at the opportunity as a way to create premium product by creating a brand name.

As mentioned above, the popularization of sensory marketing took place only in the few recent decades. This chapter discusses the phenomenon of sensory marketing, branding and their correlation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Later on, the research goes directly into the five senses and their development in the field of marketing in the recent years.

### **2.3.1 Sensory marketing**

One and foremost used definition of sensory marketing belongs to Aradhna Krishna, professor at the University of Michigan that directs in Sensory Marketing Laboratory and the expert in the field, and goes as follows:

“Sensory Marketing is marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their perception, judgment and behavior. It studies consumers’ behavior as it reacts to sensations and perceptions of brands and products” (Krishna A. , 2010) (2011).

American Marketing Association defines sensory marketing as a set of techniques that are aimed to influence consumer's feelings, emotions and behavior through their senses. While traditional, classic marketing is rather rational and based on the idea that consumer's decisions are made according to offer, competition, and delivery to their needs (Rieunier, 2002), sensory marketing recognizes the cognitive experiences, feelings and emotions involved in the decision-making process. (Minh, 2015).

Lindstrom (2005) defines primary functions of sensory marketing as:

- Recognition of subconscious motives and stimuli of the consumer;
- Definition of the marketing that has an emotional impact on consumers of different social and age groups;
- Minimizing of the harmful impact on the mental health of the consumer done by the marketing;
- Creating a link between smell/touch/sound/taste/vision and a certain brand;
- Building an environment that encourages the process of purchase.

People take in the world through senses. Majority of the experienced emotions are evoked through smells, tastes, sounds, etc. The “taste” of childhood, the smell of Christmas, the sound of the sea. Sensory marketing is a successful tool to create such emotions and memories, to associate them with a brand on a market.

(Lindstrom, Brand Sense: How to Build Powerful Brands Through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight & Sound, 2005). The traditional advertisement has always involved sight as a main sense, then the sound joined the process as radio and TV appeared in consumers' home. With the development of technology and shape-shifting of a lifestyle, modern marketers understood that the more senses the advertisement appeal to, the stronger and more successful is the message (Minh, 2015).

The quote by Aradhna Krishna summarizes very well the importance of sensory marketing in the modern age, and the increasing demand for it:

“In the past, communications with customers were essentially monologues—companies just talked at consumers. Then they evolved into dialogues, with customers providing feedback. Now they're becoming multidimensional conversations, with products finding

their own voices and consumers responding viscerally and subconsciously to them.”  
(Krishna A. , 2013)

The proximate environment around the consumer of any type of service is never neutral. As the contemporaries of Aristotle were referring to our senses as “the windows of the soul”, individuals are influenced by the environment in a unique way, based on their unique experiences. The environment the brand creates for its consumers is a set of clues and messages for the senses to decipher (R.J. Markin, 1976)

Spence (2002) states that a big part of the life’s most memorable and exciting experiences are multisensory. People thrive for the sense of belonging and relatability. The ability to build such a connection with a consumer for a brand should be of an utmost importance in times when products are hardly different from one another and marketers cannot rely on the traditional safe marketing anymore. As mentioned earlier, human brain detects sensory stimuli and send a response to it, a reaction. Multisensory affinity increases the chances of such reactions and the likelihood of a memorable experience of the interaction with a brand (Barry Stein, 2008)

Sensory marketing is born inside human mind and senses. Dan Hill (2007) emphasizes the influence sensual perception has over the brand image. Based on that consumer more often falls for an emotionally based choice rather than rational one. Through psychological processes and reactions, mental flows and previous experiences a multi-sensory brand-experience is formed. The emotional, cognitive, sensory and symbolic values are based on the subjective interpretation of the interaction with the brand for each individual (Schmitt & Holbrook, 1999).

### **2.3.2 Sensory Branding**

Brand as a term has its roots in the very beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it referred to a trade or a proprietary name, says research made by Stern (2006). Early publications on the subjects of branding that come from 1920s and 30s indicate the birth of a concept as such, although they do seem to struggle with the clarity of its definition. The newly appeared marketers would parallel success of a brand with the market success and have it directly proportional to the sales. As the years were passing by, the meaning of a brand and its importance would shift and become deeper.

An immense historical change happened after a great tragedy, such as Second World War, and was followed by a “Consumer Revolution” in early 50s, which had a significant touch on brand self-awareness and brought a dense competition to the market. Smaller names entered the market to challenge big ones and sustained the outpouring of goods to the consumer after the challenging times of the war. That development led marketers to take into consideration the importance of brand loyalty, ways of achieving and maintaining it. The brand imagery became a direct link to the brand loyalty (Levy, 1999).

The significance of the brand identity developed throughout the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and by the end of it became inseparable from the marketing campaign, going further it coordinated the latter, controlling and developing marketing plans (Low, 1994). However, as the progress does not stay in one place, the ways brands would conquer their market were changing, becoming more accustomed to the consumer needs and wants. Rather than making sure the consumer stays and keeps purchasing the product, branding managers and marketing professionals took an aim at building a personal relationship with every user, humanize the brand, creating the sense of relatability and belonging between a brand and a consumer (Loureiro, 2012).

The original use of a brand was very specific and rather lacked flexibility. Nowadays, the branding professionals are allowed to create and recreate the very essence of an identity, brands are multi-dimensional and flexible. All of the human senses are aspired to be involved and the concept of relatability to the brand is used ubiquitously. From a certain point of view, the concept of a brand itself is way more important than the concept of a marketing involved in the creation of that brand (Bastos & Levy, 2012). Modern researchers identify brands as so-called outlets for self-identification and communication between individuals (Schulz, 2010) and even as the identifications of the whole nation, its past, present and future (Dong, 2009). The overall idea of branding is exciting and challenging at the same time; it requires courage and creativity, draws in fans and enthusiasts, holds whole communities together and unifies them on a bigger scale than just buyers and users. The art and tech sides of the business unite, bringing the humane appeal to the consumer and pragmatism of engineering together. The brand manager is seemed as an upgraded and stepped-up version of a simple marketing manager (Bastos & Levy, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, during the last couple of decades the traditional view on brand image has undergone a change that now allows to experience a brand from a multi-sensory perspective (Bastos & Levy, 2012). The identity of a brand and ways it is defined in the mind of a consumer are closely linked to the sensory stimuli the brand manages to convey on the market. The consumers of a brand would be referred to as regular receivers of the passed information in the more traditional, outdated approach (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The main channels for establishing a brand and doing an impact from that point of view would be simple advertising and communication with the consumer (Frow, 2007). As discussed earlier, in the modern times of overconsumption, when the consumer is not easily amused or tied down to one particular brand, the demand for a multi-sensory brand experience is higher than ever as it affects the quality of the interactions with a brand. Doug Hall, an honorable former Master Marketing Inventor at Procter & Gamble, mentions: "...the most successful new products appeal on both rational and emotional levels to as many senses as possible."

Multi-sensory brand experience supports the creation of a personalized value to a consumer. The alignment of all five senses helps to create a better customer experience overall, generating customer value and a good brand image (Hulten, 2011). The goal of this work is to study the phenomenon of sensory branding along with sensory marketing and create a memorable brand image to the airport restaurant in Helsinki-Vantaa, that will appeal on all sensory levels to the consumer. The next chapters focus on each of five senses specifically.

## **2.4 Five senses**

In this chapter the five senses mentioned earlier will be looked at from the perspective of sensory marketing and sensory branding. One by one, the senses will be studied more thoroughly than when talking about the case of multi-sensory perception in general. The history of sensory involvement within the field of service has been developing together with the development of the mankind. As historians describe the rise and fall of various civilizations, the certain pattern of value development becomes clear: once the basic human needs are covered, people are safe, fed and relatively healthy, the hedonistic approach to the everyday life is accustomed by individuals (Murray, 2014).



Good example of such a thing would be the rituals of ancient Greeks, references to which are painted on the pots and walls and vases that are found by our contemporaries. In their works, Homer and Hesiod would refer the usage of baths by their characters as the sign of hospitality, *xenia*. The drawings that belong to that era found by archeologists often include use of alcohol (taste), burning of scented wood and herbs (smell), candle lights (vision) and servants, that would take care of more elevated citizens by rubbing oil and perfume into their skin (touch) (Nenova, 2015). Sources describe the spa baths that were first used primarily for the rituals to heal certain diseases by Greeks and to ease the aching wounds of the soldiers later on by the Romans, and it did not take long for the citizens to see baths as the place of rest and relaxation, socialization and a way to profit by delivering a certain type of experience (Durant, 1944). Afterwards, the wealthy layers of society accustomed having a private premise that served as a bath layer in their own houses, and this tradition of self-care would preserve and develop throughout the years till the modern times.

The single case of spa baths shows that sensory stimuli were taken into account in order to deliver a fuller experience thousands of years ago. And that can regard numbers of cases, such as inns and hotels, taverns and restaurants, shops and boutiques, the adaptation to consumer's needs and wants along with historical progress shaped the sources and ways of delivery to those needs and wants. As the marketing professionals were developing their field of influence and adjusting to the historical changes, the traditional look at the marketing campaign as something strictly visual and "flat" began to shift, revealing other dimensions of the influence on the consumer. The deeper look into the processes involved within the decision-making formation showed that it takes professionals from the various areas of business and science (e.g. psychologists, neuroscientists, marketing and branding academics, and practitioners) to understand it, or to at least have an idea of its ways. It is still difficult to judge if a justice has been made to all of the senses to the same extent, but the further discussion will evaluate the amount of effort put into the study of each of them in recent years. Further, a more specific take will be given regarding each of five senses in sensory marketing, the case of their involvement in a restaurant business is taken in consideration as well.

#### **2.4.1 Vision**

It is safe to assume that out of all five senses the sense of sight is the most studied, invested into and developed one. For centuries researchers in marketing art,

psychology, and aesthetics studied the ways in which the eye translates visual input into the information that it believes to be veridical (Krishna, 2010). Having the ability to learn through audition and haptic senses, our brain still heavily dependent on the visual processing and uses it as a base for all the aforementioned activities. Scientists believe that the amount of everyday information from the external environment in our life is collected through the eyes and comes close to 80 - 90%. Numerous studies have been done on the perception of biases consumer creates towards the amount of visual clutter (Rosenholtz, 2007), the orientation of the image (vertical and horizontal lines, the elongation, volume and length) (Krishna, 2008), categorization (Pieters, 2008) (Wedel, 2008), etc. The image of the product carries an important impact in itself, since more often than not the first impression is based on the visual qualities, and then with the ways of interaction, other senses come into the scene. There are quite a few researches done specifically on the subject of interest of this thesis, concerning the hue preferences among cultures and visual presentation in the restaurants.

The research done on the matter of hue preferences across the cultures shows different responses and emotional relations of people from different nationalities to the same set of colors. There is a strong attachment to the blue color among the Caucasian individuals, whilst majority of Asian cultures prefer red and orange colors instead. Airport is an extremely diverse of cultures place, and the fact that the restaurant this work is focusing on in the future is located in a non-Schengen area cannot be ignored, too. The multicultural environment demands either a very specific color scheme, that is targeted on a certain group of consumers, and is built to please their eye, or a color scheme that is suitable for the most, goes with the brand and does not stand out too much, trying to fit in with the preferences of the majority of travelers.

The ambient lighting would be another matter of crucial importance for the visual perception in the place of service. The atmosphere of the place is influenced by many factors, but as mentioned earlier, the visual factor is the first player in the game for most of the cases. Since the case described in this work is of a specific character, being placed at the airport, it requires certain authorities to decide on the lighting and the number of light sources in the place. Finavia is the owner and a main operator of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, and it shapes the brand image, brand guidelines to its standards and needs. The sense of smell is taken a look into in the next chapter.

### 2.4.2 Olfaction

Medical research has shown that out of all senses, smell is the one most directly connected to the part of our brain responsible for the recognition, differentiation and processing of our emotions. It is believed that smell can be used to drive one's behavior (Cookson, 2016). For decades marketing professionals from different fields of customer service have been using scents to attract new clientele and secure a place in minds of the existent ones. Especially in regard to the hotel business, the sense of smell has been used as a trademark for many of well-established brands, such as Ritz-Carlton New York hotel in Central Park, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts in Hong-Kong, Hôtel Ritz in Paris, etc.

Olfaction being present in the service environments does not include hotels only. Scents are considered powerful stimuli when it comes to the dining experience, and a restaurant experience overall, they impact the creativity and ambience of the place. The memory created by a scent, no matter good or bad, lasts longer than a visual memory (Hulten, Branding by the five senses: A Sensory Branding Framework, 2017). Smell perceptions are closely linked to gastronomic taste perceptions, and from the scientific point of view, there is only three synapses lie between the olfactory nerve and the hippocampus, making it the only sense having a direct connection to the memory (Krishna A. , 2011). The importance of the sense of smell, combined with other cognitive processes stimulated by the senses, often comes off as the crucial factor of them all. Especially if the odor is not pleasant to the individual, the whole experience is luckily to be avoided to begin with (Barnett, 2016).

Smell is a particularly strong sense in bypassing our emotions, memories and thoughts on the conscious level and creating associations in-between. The study by Lindstrom done in 2005 has shown that only 3% of 1000 studied companies used the leverage of a sense of smell in their marketing or branding campaigns, despite the fact that 75% of our emotions are generated by what we smell (Lindstrom, Brand Sense: How to Build Powerful Brands Through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight & Sound, 2005).

While there is quite a lot of research done on the subject of connection between the sense of olfactory and memory, the rest of the senses and their link to the brain activity are not as developed, with the exception of the vision. This leads to

the subject of the next chapter, where the author describes the studies done on the matter of audition.

### **2.4.3 Audition**

Throughout the day an average person is exposed to the auditory marketing for about 3-5 hours altogether (Krishna A, 2010). Morning news on TV, radio show on a way to work or a podcast online, the sound of advertisement in a public transport or in a shopping mall, YouTube videos with endless midrolls and sponsored content, Instagram paid advertisements via stories or InstagramTV, the list goes on. The background sound of some sort became such a usual thing in a modern world that it feels rather absurd and uncomfortable to remain in a complete silence while experiencing a customer service of any sorts.

It is important to take into account the ambient sounds of the environment. In the case of an airport it could be the sound of high-pitched voices and children, the loudspeaker noise coming from the nearby gates, luggage and high heels clicking, the construction works since the airport has been undergoing major changes in the last few years, etc. Empty premise creates an echo and at the same time suggests an uneasy feeling that might be not very pleasant. When arranging the setting of the restaurant, bar or deli, it is important to remember about the sound transmission and ways to direct it in order for the guests to have an ability to speak to each other and with the service staff, without trying to over scream the surrounding sounds, or bothering people around.

The background music in the food service industry has been a matter of research for many years now and the results are quite peculiar. The studies show the fast paced, loud music in the background affects the patron's drinking habits, making them go faster with one drink after another (Guéguen, 2008). Owners of fast food restaurants, diners and take away lunch places tend to have an upbeat, cheerful music in the background during the service hours. Studies show that it helps to make a table turnover faster and assure a bigger capacity for the customers. Buckley (2012) describes such tactics with the example of world known chain of Hard Rock Café:

“...the Hard Rock Café had the practice down to a science, ever since its founders realized that by playing loud, fast music, patrons talked less, consumed more and

left quickly, a technique documented in the International Directory of Company Histories.”

More upscale places with the experience that is supposed to be enjoyed at a slower pace, choose to have a classical music, soft jazz or an ambient lounge music at the background, ensuring that the guests are able to stay and enjoy their dining experience as long as possible and spend as much as they can.

The next chapter will take a look over the sense of taste and what are the sources that create our general understanding of the taste as it is.

#### **2.4.4 Taste**

A sweet memory, bitter feeling, salty attitude and sour note – are idioms that describe strong emotions of pleasure or displeasure, by using the descriptions of taste. Throughout centuries a sense of taste guided people through survival, implying the quality of the food and drink they were consuming. If the taste was bitter or sour, it could have been an indicator of a bad, poisonous foods, whilst sweet and salty tastes could indicate a sign of good, rich food.

Many studies show that in most of the cases people taste what they expect to taste, an assimilation effect, with these expectations based on visual cues that surround the individual, or on the base memory-based beliefs (Krishna, 2010; Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Interestingly enough, there is no such concept as a taste, when it comes to the sensory perception if compared to other senses. The ways individuals feel the taste of whatever they are consuming is largely based on a number of factors, but most importantly on the perceptions monitored by other senses. The smell, texture, temperature of the meal – all of these and more factors play a role at how the dining experience is formed (How does our sense of taste work?, 2016). Generally speaking, it would be extremely difficult or even close to impossible to differentiate the potato from an apple, and red wine from a coffee in a complete darkness, without being able to smell it.

Regardless sense of a taste being crucial during the dining experience, the total combination of all five senses brings an overall experience together. In the case of this research all senses are taken into consideration to study the multi-sensory experience potential of Nordic Kitchen. The next chapter discusses the effect a sense of touch has on a consumer.

#### 2.4.5 Haptics

Touch must be one of the least taken into consideration senses when it comes to the brand creation, specifically in regards of restaurant business. The development of the senses inside the embryo during pregnancy goes in the following order: touch, smell, taste, audition and only then – vision. By virtue of sense of touch human embryo learns its place inside the womb and finds itself. Often while trying to make a choice of buying something, people tend to feel the need to touch it prior the purchase. Specifically need for touch is a large factor in modern marketing strategies (Petit;Velasco;& Spence, 2018).

In 2008 Krishna and Morrin concluded a study in which they researched how the need for touch affects the perception and decision-making process (Krishna & Morrin, Does touch affect taste? The perceptual transfer of product container haptic cues, 2008). In a university cafeteria 180 participants were given a mix of water with Sprite, and half of them has touched the cup it was served in, whilst the other half did not touch it. The cup was very flimsy and those students that have touched it evaluated the drink to be of a lower quality, whereas the participants that did not touch it have given the drink a better score. This study shows the importance of haptic feeling of a product, brand or service. The need for touch varies amongst people, for some might have a higher susceptibility towards the effect of a touch, while others might not give it any attention at all.

Another research done by Lawrence E. Williams and John A. Bargh show the effect a temperature of a drink briefly held in a hand of the participant have had on their perception of a stranger they have met afterwards (2008). The study has shown that people who held a warm drink were more likely to think that a stranger was friendly, rather than people that held a cold drink in their hands. A bit further in time, a research by Tu, Yang and Ma (2015) has shown a difference in the perception of coldness, iciness and overall quality of the tea presented to the participants in a glass container and a paper cup. Participants generally gave their preference to the glass container, showing the consumer's evaluation of the quality through the haptic feeling.

In the next chapter sensorial strategies that involve all of the aforementioned five senses are presented. A better view is given to the actual links between the senses and their usage in the sensory marketing.

## 2.5 Sensory strategies

In 2011 Bertil Hulten has done a thorough research on the subject of sensory marketing in his *Sensory marketing: the multi-sensory brand-experience concept*, specifically working on a clear classification of the sensory inputs. The accomplished studies of the time were mentioned in his work in an exploratory manner, in addition to the results of his own research based on multiple personal interviews with experts and managers in the business. Hulten takes on an explanatory approach to present his outtake on a multi-sensory brand experience concept and develops a table on the grounds of his findings, summarizing them in an organized manner. This study serves as the main prism through which own theoretical framework of this thesis is created in further chapters.

Hulten suggests classification of sensory interaction on three levels, that form the multi-sensory brand experience and create customer equity out of it. The levels include sensors, sensations and sensory expressions and are described more specifically further in the chapter. The author justifies the decision to leave exactly these three levels as a way of narrowing down an immense number of related subjects and theories, and classifying all the previous research made by the professionals in the industry in a facilitated construction. Each of the levels contains a number of experiences that are based around the multi-sensory context. The author himself explains the aim of the research as:

“to simplify the process, by grouping possible choices together into the three key explanatory levels of means; ... to offer an exhaustive classification, when no other could be found in the marketing literature” (Hulten, 2011)

Another key advantage of this theoretical research is the fact that three described levels of sensory influence are both related to and independent of each other at the same time. They can be seen as one entity whilst joint, but can also be identified separately on their own. The author of this theory also implies that each of the levels, and their composing elements, can be used in the marketing process, allowing differentiation of the process. The described strategies are aimed to highlight brand's or product's identity in relation to human senses and thought. The main reason this theory is taken as a base for own theoretical framework is that it helps to distinguish a brand from the competitors, specifically when the environment, price range and type of service are the same, as it is in the case of Nordic Kitchen in the airport. The author of the theory stresses that the main point of it is

to study and expand the multi-sensory brand experience through sensors, sensations and sensory expressions in relation to all five senses. Onwards, three levels of sensorial strategies are explained.

Sensors serve as so-called communicative platforms between a brand and a consumer on a sensory level, transmitting and receiving sensory stimuli and signals through materials, devices, employees, etc. Usually this is the step where communication happens before the factual interaction between a brand and a consumer. The usage of sensors is aimed to ensure sensorial differentiation of a brand or a product amongst the competitors on a daily basis.

Sensations focus on an emotional level of interaction between a brand and a consumer. Here the multi-sensory brand experience is expressed through the feelings that link human mind and senses, experienced during the interaction. Sensations are used by the firms as a tool to remain the mind of the consumer on an emotional level and distinguish the brand once again amongst the competitors.

Sensory expressions aim at highlighting the uniqueness of a brand and its identity in relation to each of the five senses. It serves as a memento a brand leaves in consumers mind, creates a value only that specific brand can deliver and forms a stronger bond with the consumer. The author of this theory implies that sensory expressions should be used by the brands to become deeply imprinted in consumer's mind.

The figure below (Figure 1) shows the relations between the levels of sensorial strategies, along with their autonomy on their own.



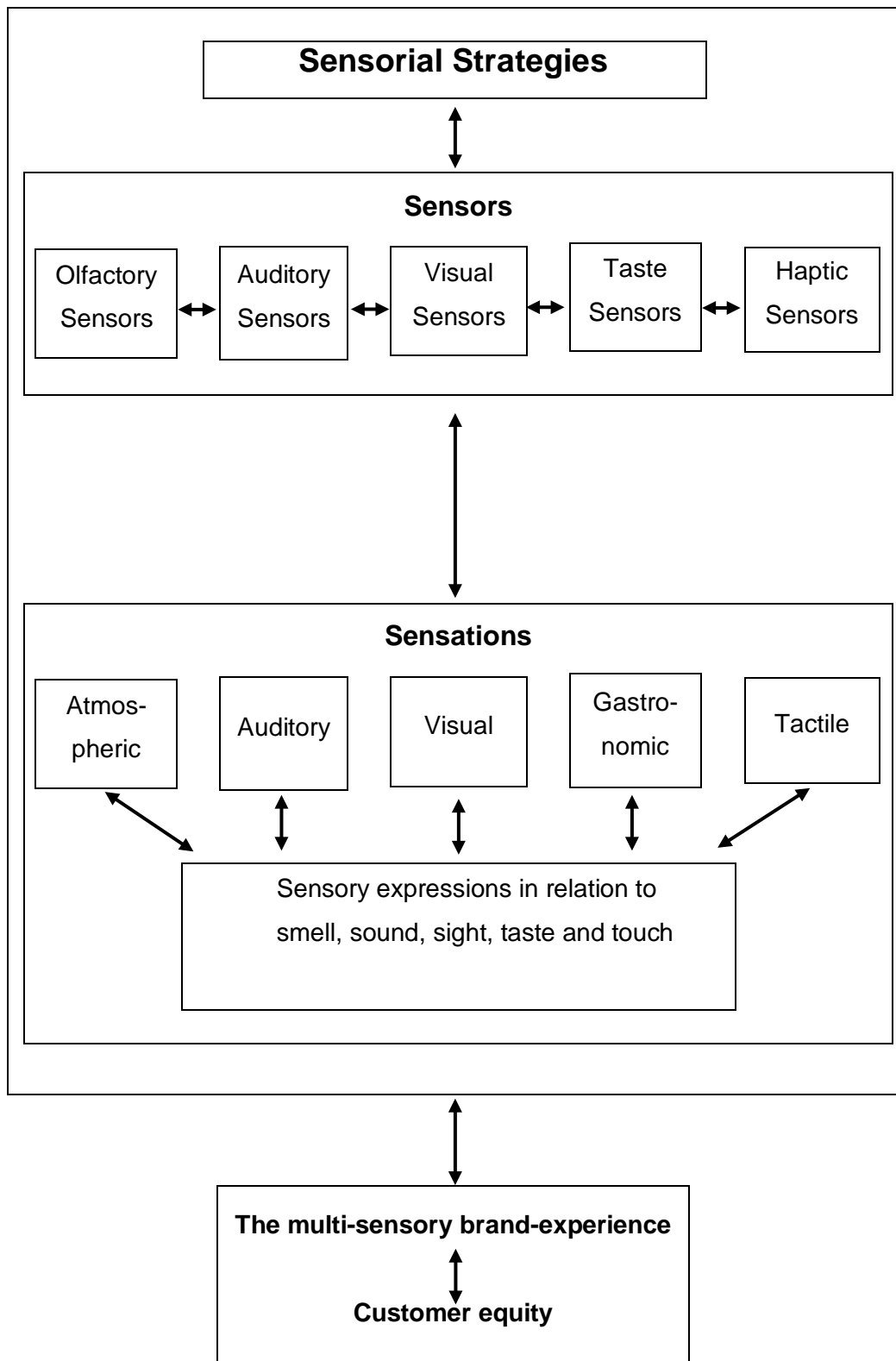


Figure 1. Sensorial Strategies by Hulten, B. (2011)

The next chapter gives a brief overlook of the theory of sensory brand pyramid by Martin Lindstrom and the ways it binds a consumer with the brand on a multi-sensory level.

## 2.6 Sensory brand pyramid

Martin Lindstrom is a global branding expert and writer, that has been working with such companies like Reebok, Nestle, Lego and McDonald's on their brand image. He has written a number of books on the subject of a successful branding, stressing a lot on the importance of sensory perception (Lindstrom, 2010). Many researchers consider Lindstrom the most famous populariser of the sensory branding and sensorial involvement within the field of marketing.

In his book *Brand Sense: How to build powerful brands through touch, taste, smell, sight & sound* he introduces three stages of involvement of the consumer with the brand (2005). The stages are stimulate, enhance and bond, and are shown in a form of a pyramid (Figure 2). The author implies that by the time a brand reaches the last stage of bonding with the consumer, the sense of a brand becomes a part of consumer's everyday life.

First stage that aims to stimulate the sensorial interaction with the brand by using touch, taste, scent, sound and sight, make it anticipated. It focuses on ensuring that a brand is reaching out to the potential customer on all of the aforementioned levels successfully and remains noticeable. Then the second stage comes into the scene, making sure that the sensory stimuli are enhanced to intensify a brand experience and imprint in the mind of the customer. And last but not least, the third stage of sensory brand bonding finalizes the pyramid by creating a strong link between the consumer and a brand. By the time the last stage is successfully implemented, a brand becomes a part of consumer's everyday life.

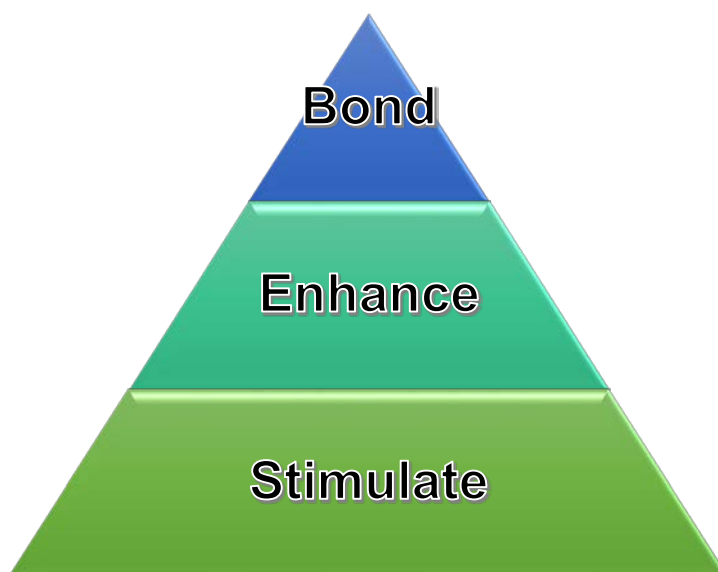


Figure 2. Sensory Brand Pyramid by Lindstrom, M. (2005)

## 2.7 Research questions

In this chapter author of this thesis presents the research questions that form their own theoretical framework for a further research of the specific case of multi-sensory marketing in the restaurant Nordic Kitchen. The research questions are based on the findings of a desk research that has been completed while working on this study. Each of the questions is related to a specific theory mentioned above and will be explained accordingly.

The first research question goes as follows: How does the brand of Nordic Kitchen create a multi-sensory communication platform with its potential guests through the sensory signals of five senses? The first stage of the sensory strategies studied by Hulten (2011) describes the sensors as the communicative platforms between a brand and a potential consumer, before the actual interaction, and in regards of each of five senses. In this part of research, the main objective is to look for sensorial clues available to the potential consumer at Helsinki-Vantaa airport that would identify a brand of Nordic Kitchen and convey a message of its presence amongst competitors.

The second research question reads: What sensations express brand identity to the potential customer of Nordic Kitchen in an airport environment and distinguish it amongst other units? The second stage of sensory strategies in an aforementioned work by Bertil Hulten describes the sensations as the emotional responses to the sensory stimuli. These responses aim to create a link between the mind of a consumer and a brand on a cognitive, emotional level. Here the objective is to find out what emotional responses the process of interaction with the brand of Nordic Kitchen creates in the mind of its guest.

The third research question of this thesis goes as follows: How is the uniqueness and brand identity of Nordic Kitchen characterized in relation to each of five senses? The next step in a line of sensorial strategies by Hulten (2011) is the sensory expressions that aim to highlight the uniqueness of a brand and its identity in relation to each of the five senses. The main objective of this research question is to find the exact instances of brand experience of Nordic Kitchen that are unique, related only to this brand in a given environment, are related to five senses and create a strong brand image in the mind of a guest.

The fourth and the last research question of this thesis reads: In what ways sensory brand experience is stimulated in Nordic Kitchen? In this case a theory of sensory brand pyramid by Lindstrom (2005) is taken as a main reference. Considering that it is fairly difficult to reach the third stage of the pyramid, a strong bond with the consumer that ensures a connection to the brand on a daily basis, only two first levels are evaluated through this question: stimulate and enhance. The objective of this research question is to see how the brand of Nordic Kitchen is stimulating consumer's senses by creating a sensorial interaction on different levels, and how are those interactions enhanced to ensure the brand of Nordic Kitchen remains in the mind of the consumer after the experience.

The next chapters will go in depth about the used methodology in this study and the results brought by these research questions.

### **3 Methodology**

This study is a research-based thesis and the main objective of the implemented research was to learn about the phenomenon of multi-sensory marketing, sensory branding and the sensory perception in customer service industry and apply discovered theories on example of Nordic Kitchen, restaurant in Helsinki-Vantaa airport. Four main research questions were prepared based on two main sources of data collection, desk research and empirical study that involved an observation.

Will you use specific theoretical perspectives to help you analyze a text or explain observed behaviors?

#### **3.1 Desk research**

The overall methodological approach of this thesis is qualitative, as it focuses on gathering of data and its analysis. Naturally, because it is a research-based thesis, the desk research was chosen to study the problem to get a clearer view on the topic before creating own theoretical framework. The author of this thesis has decided to start with secondary research because of several reasons.

First of all, the field of sensory marketing is fairly young and does not have a vast number of existing sources comparing to the field of traditional marketing. The desk research has been done with already existing theories and materials gath-

ered from books, articles, webpages, surveys, public libraries and university libraries, which ensured the reliability of collected data and created a trustworthy base to create the research questions of this study. This research method has helped to get a better understanding of a subject of sensory marketing, sensory branding and of an overall involvement of five senses within the theories.

The author of this thesis went through various sources to get a wide perspective on the origins of sensory marketing, its first acknowledgement in the history of hospitality, and identified its place in a modern day of marketing industry. During the gathering and analyzing of the existing data, the author of this thesis came across the issue that a lot of reliable and credible sources have been completed long time ago, and could not be applied to the modern picture anymore, or could not guarantee that the progress have not developed beyond their findings. On the other hand, the majority of the recent sources available online were not trustworthy enough or lacked solid research behind them. Overall, the author of this thesis tried to involve mostly the reliable findings by established authors and researchers in the industry. Based on the studied materials research questions were compiled.

### **3.2 Observation**

The method chosen for a data collection to answer the research questions was an observation. This method was chosen mainly because it required a complete immersion of the author of this thesis into the environment of Nordic Kitchen to observe the phenomenon of sensory marketing and answer the main research questions. Generally speaking, observation is the way individuals perceive the world around them, understand it and reflect on it. Since this thesis work's objective is to research the type of sensory marketing, sensory branding and its application in an airport restaurant Nordic Kitchen, the interpretative method such as observation from the field was a perfect choice.

As the timeframe in which this thesis had to be done was shortened by external reasons, the author of this thesis has decided the observation would work for the purpose of this research, giving the base for future studies and further research on related subjects. The method itself was implemented in a restaurant Nordic Kitchen from 1pm and until 4:30 pm. This exact timeframe was chosen as it covers the times of a quiet operation of the restaurant and its transformation into the rush hour.

The main challenge of the observation happened to be the fact that the author of this thesis has been working in Nordic Kitchen for the last three years, and the perception, regardless of how hard they have tried, still was shifted due to a close knowledge of internal operations of the restaurant. Thus, such elements of customer experience as interaction with the staff, novelty of the environment, decision making during the menu browsing, etc. were lost in the process of observation. On the other hand, the author of this thesis had definitely had a new perspective on sensory elements around the restaurant, as the main task was to stay there and observe, whilst for the last three years it has been strictly work related.

The answers to the research questions created on the base of desk research were given on the base of observation study in the restaurant. Since the observation was related specifically to the internal processes of the observer, the author of this thesis, on a sensory level, no ethical issues arose.

### **3.3 Data analysis process**

The thorough desk research of the existing studies on the subject of sensory marketing and sensory branding prepared a theoretical build up for the own theoretical framework of this thesis. As the four main research questions were gathered on the basis of desk research from various theories and sources, the data to answer those questions was assembled through an observation from the field and presented in a narrative analysis. Each of the research questions refers to a specific part of the studied theory:

- How does the brand of Nordic Kitchen create a multi-sensory communication platform with its guests through the sensory signals of five senses? - Sensors from sensorial strategies (Hulten, 2011)
- What sensations express brand identity to the potential customer of Nordic Kitchen in an airport environment and distinguish it amongst other units? – Sensations from sensorial strategies (Hulten, 2011)
- How is the uniqueness and brand identity of Nordic Kitchen characterized in relation to each of five senses? – Sensory expressions from sensorial strategies (Hulten, 2011)

- In what ways sensory brand experience is stimulated in Nordic Kitchen? – Stimulate and Enhance from sensory brand pyramid (Lindstrom, 2005)

Thus, the analysis was implemented by applying own theoretical framework upon the process of observation. The findings show different sensorial levels on which a brand of Nordic Kitchen can be identified, in addition they also show in which areas of sensory marketing and sensory branding the brand of Nordic Kitchen is not involved. Based on the findings, further suggestions and development ideas are presented by the author of this thesis.

## 4 Findings and Analysis

In this chapter the findings of the observation from the restaurant Nordic Kitchen are presented and analysed by the author of this thesis based on the theoretical research made prior the observation and through the prism of studied theories, Below the main research question are listed and the observation results are narrated accordingly.

*How does the brand of Nordic Kitchen create a multi-sensory communication platform with its guests through the sensory signals of five senses?*

In this question the main objective is to analyse the sensors that serve as communicative platforms between a brand of Nordic Kitchen and the potential consumer before the interaction. Nordic Kitchen does not have strong sensorial communicators on a level that would immediately grab the attention of a passing by traveller. However, there are sensors that make sure the brand stays noticeable.

The screens with promotion work great for visual advertisement, as the pictures are colourful, vivid and show food that is served at the restaurant at all times. Traditional advertisement might not regard sensorial perceptions to far extent, but in case with Nordic Kitchen it helps to attract foreign tourist as the brochures and posters with the advertisements are written in Mandarin and Japanese language. Another sensor that works as a communicative platform between a brand of Nordic Kitchen and a potential consumer is the industrial design implemented in the restaurant. The used materials of copper, wood, bare bricks and leather even without a direct interaction convey a strong message to the future guest.

*What sensations express brand identity to the potential customer of Nordic Kitchen in an airport environment and distinguish it amongst other units?*

Here the objective is to find sensorial responses that aim to create a link between the mind of a consumer and a brand on a cognitive, emotional level. The observation has shown that as soon as the potential customer enters the restaurant there is no place to escape loud noises, especially during the rush hour, and specifically because of how busy the environment of the airport is and the fact that Nordic Kitchen is very open and is not separated by any walls. On a good side, Nordic Kitchen is the only a la carte dining experience in the non-Schengen area of the airport, which makes this experience unique and valuable. The sense of smell is very much suppressed by the strong air conditioning, which adds up to the rather negative emotional undertones aligned with the noisiness. Crowded and limited spaces create a feeling of anxiety and a need to rush out of the restaurant to catch a flight. The amount of space is rather limited, even though the restaurant has a large premise. The emotional links between the brand and a consumer are not very positive due to the nature of the environment and an unfortunate layout of the place.

*How is the uniqueness and brand identity of Nordic Kitchen characterized in relation to each of five senses?*

Here the observation aimed to detect sensory expressions that aim to highlight the uniqueness of a brand and its identity in relation to each of the five senses. The main objective of this research question is to find the exact instances of brand experience of Nordic Kitchen that are unique, related only to this brand in a given environment, are related to five senses and create a strong brand image in the mind of a guest. Sensory expression detected during the observation are definitely related to the design choice of the place. It might not be the strongest case of implementation of industrial design, but it definitely serves the purpose to convey the message with its copper lanterns, leather couches, bare brick walls and wooden table surfaces. The seasonal menu would be another good example of sensory expression that makes the brand of Nordic Kitchen unique for its guests. The restaurant is changing its menu every 3-4 months, always trying to get local ingredients and follow the seasonality of the products. The last highlight of sensory expression is the availability of unique alcohol choices, as the restaurant has a selection of beers that is sold only on the company that owns Nordic Kitchen, HMSHost. It is locally brewed and cannot be found anywhere else.

*In what ways sensory brand experience is stimulated in Nordic Kitchen?*



Considering that it is fairly difficult to reach the third stage of the pyramid, a strong bond with the consumer that ensures a connection to the brand on a daily basis, only two first levels are evaluated through this question: stimulate and enhance. The objective of this research question is to see how the brand of Nordic Kitchen is stimulating consumer's senses by creating a sensorial interaction on different levels, and how are those interactions enhanced to ensure the brand of Nordic Kitchen remains in the mind of the consumer after the experience. Main points of sensory enhancement of a brand Nordic Kitchen during the observation were the smell of food, even though the aforementioned ventilation blocks any sorts of olfactory feelings, the food that is delivered to the table smells good and conveys the message of a Nordic cuisine being served in this restaurant. The haptic feelings of the interior once again serve a purpose and deliver on a sensory level, stimulating and enhancing interaction with the brand.

## **5 Discussion**

While working on this research the author of this thesis has acquired a general understanding of such terms like sensory marketing, sensory branding, sensory strategies, sensorial stimuli. The desk research has helped to get a better picture on the background of these studies and the historical view on them. The main purpose of this thesis was to do a research on the subject of multi-sensory marketing for a better brand experience and apply the findings to an existing brand of a restaurant Nordic Kitchen, to revive its identity. Also, to use Sensory Marketing and Multi-Sensory Brand experience to highlight the authenticity of a brand, bring out more individuality, and level up customer satisfaction and thus better revenue in a long-term perspective.

Unfortunately, restaurants that are operating in such places as airports, railway stations, bus terminals do not get that much recognition in regards of a memorable dining experience due to a high speed of table turnover and constant rush that distracts a consumer from getting a pleasant interaction with the brand. The long-term goal for this research would be to start a conversation about changing the view of a typical airport restaurant into an experience on a sensory level. After the research is done and the main research questions are answered, several suggestions and development ideas could be provided to the case of Nordic Kitchen.

Since this restaurant belongs to a large food service company HMSHost, they are the ones determining the brand concept of a restaurant. If there is any change in

the image of a brand of Nordic Kitchen to be done, it has to be consulted first within the owner company. As the suggestion after this research, the author of this thesis recommends acknowledging the importance of sensory stimuli in the unit of Nordic Kitchen and actually making sure that such a big customer flow enjoys their stay there regardless the fact that the restaurant is placed at the airport and is surrounded by the constant busy movement.

But the bigger challenge than reconvincing HMSHost would be trying to adjust to the regulations set by Finavia, the main operator of the airport. Finavia delegates all the processes inside Helsinki-Vantaa airport and decides on the concepts of its restaurants. The conversation between HMSHost and Finavia on a matter of sensory marketing should take place to broaden the horizons of regular airport experience.

This study is a conversation starter of a bigger topic of the importance of sensory stimuli and multi-sensory marketing in restaurant business, specifically at the airport. And whilst it is not a major research, it serves a good purpose as the base for future studies and improvements in the field. Next, the authorities of Finavia and HMSHost can be contacted and interviewed about their view of a concept. Passengers of Helsinki-Vantaa airport could also express their opinion in a survey to see what a more diverse number of potential customers think. There is a lot of room for the future research and findings.

## **5.1 Ethical Considerations**

As the acquired ethical norms help different societies, governments and businesses cooperate and co-survive, there are certain ethical considerations that need to be taken onto account while writing a research paper.

Objectivity in the research needs to be always remembered. The author of this thesis cannot be biased towards the case study of Nordic Kitchen, and cannot minimize the importance of the findings.

Integrity. The objectives set in the beginning of this research work must be met by the end of it.

Honesty. All the analysis and received data is shared in a clear honesty for the sake of the research and fair scientific communications.

Social responsibility. As one of the parts of the research is the actual observation inside of the restaurant, it is important to remember the rule of “no harm” while conveying the research.

Confidentiality. Even though this thesis did not require any confidential information either from Finavia or from HMSHost, it is important to remember that the matters of confidentiality in any case when the third party between a researcher and the researched question is involved and act accordingly.

Since the research did not require physical interaction or any involvement of any other participants other than author of this thesis, a lot of potential ethical issues were avoided.

## **5.2 Limitations and future studies**

The main limitation of this thesis was a shortened timeframe in which the research had to be presented. Due to the personal reasons the author of this thesis had to finish the research earlier than planned and cut short most of the previously made plans for this research. The author of this thesis admits not dividing the time for this research successfully and thus suffering due of the poor time management afterwards. The fact of limited time to conduct a fully blown research has definitely limited its potential.

The other limitation of this study is the fact that the research is made in a manner of self-reported data and can be considered very subjective, since all the perspectives on the matter of research questions are given from the point of view of the author of this thesis. On the other hand, it could serve as a groundwork for more complete research in the future, with more participants involved and a better attention to details, better look into existing theories and a more diverse own theoretical framework.

Another limitation would be the inevitable involvement of the authorities in case this research would need to go any further into details of what are the views on a brand and brand image when it comes to Finavia or HMSHost. Generally speaking, for the level this research has been implemented on, there was no need yet to involve an upper management, but any further studies of this subject would need their consent.

## 6 Conclusion

During this research a good look has been given to the term of sensory marketing and sensory branding in the modern market, and a specific case of Nordic Kitchen, a restaurant in Helsinki-Vantaa airport has been given as a main example to test the theories on. A brand can use sensory marketing and sensory branding in order to leave a deep imprint on the cognitive, emotional level in the memory of the consumer, more internal than the traditional marketing. The studies of the marketing professionals in the last few decades show that cognitive experiences and sensorial strategies are the next stem of marketing, as with every day it is more and more challenging to attract the consumer. The market is growing, and all the competition is inherently the same, providing similar services for the similar prices, thus the need for a deeper level of influence is clear, and sensory marketing is the exact tool for this.

Apart from this, while working on this thesis it became clear that the scientific field of sensory marketing and sensory branding is very young and needs more research and more professionals. Even though there are enthusiasts that work hard on promoting this study, there is still plenty of room for new findings, new researches, new experiments and surveys. The involvement of neuroscience and psychology has already given a great boost into the study of sensory marketing, and there is more to learn in this field of science. The author of this thesis will definitely try to proceed within this direction of a research in the future studies.

And the last point of the conclusion of this thesis is an overlooked importance of an airport dining experience. Unfortunately, it seems so far that the dining at an airport restaurant is seen as an uneventful out of need kind of process, that happens in between point A and point B of the travel, rather than a memorable experience. The lack of good sensorial involvement in the brand image of the airport food units might be the reason of the issue here. Thus, the author of this thesis hopes that further studies on the matter of multi-sensory brand experience within the airport restaurant will be done and will uplift and positively shapeshift the experience that has so much potential.

## 7 References

- Barnett, R. (2016, February 23). Ambient-Scenting for Restaurants: Does it Make Sense? Modern Restaurant Management.  
URL: <https://www.modernrestaurantmanagement.com/ambient-scenting-for-restaurants-does-it-make-sense/> Accessed 18 July 2019
- Barry Stein, T. S. (2008). Multisensory Integration: Current Issues from the Perspective of the Sinle Neuron. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, Vol.9, 4, 255.
- Bastos, W., & Levy, S. J. (2012). History of the Concept of Branding: Practice and theory. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, Vol.4, 347-368.
- Biggs C., J. M. (2019, July 4). The Value of Hospitality.  
URL: <https://minerva.union.edu/wareht/gkcultur/guide/8/web1.html> Accessed 18 July 2019
- Buckley, C. (2012, July 19). Working or Playing Indoors, New Yorkers Face an Unabated Roar. .  
URL: [https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/nyregion/in-new-york-city-indoor-noise-goes-unabated.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/nyregion/in-new-york-city-indoor-noise-goes-unabated.html?_r=0) Accessed 22 July 2019
- Cookson, C. (2016, November 7). Smell, taste, sound: Getting sensory branding right.  
URL: <https://landor.com/thinking/smell-taste-sound-getting-sensory-branding-right>  
Accessed 16 July 2019
- Diamond, S. (2013). *The Visual Marketing Revolution*. Indianapolis: Pearson Education, INC.
- Dong, L. T. (2009). The use of western brands in asserting Chinese national identity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 504-523.
- Durant, W. (1944). *The Story of Civilization: Part 3 Caesar and Christ*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Finavia. (2019, January 11). A record-breaking year in 2018 — Helsinki Airport hit the 20 million mark and passenger volumes at Finavia's airports increased by 10 per cent. URL: <https://www.finavia.fi/en/newsroom/2019/record-breaking-year-2018-helsinki-airport-hit-20-million-mark-and-passenger-volumes> Accessed 18 July 2019
- Frow, P. P. (2007). Towards the "perfect" customer experience. *The Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 15, 89-101.
- Guéguen, N. J. (2008). Sound Level of Environmental Music and Drinking Behavior: A Field Experiment With Beer Drinkers. *Alcoholism Clinical and Experimental Research* , Vol 32, 1-4.
- HBR. (2015, March). The Science of Sensory Marketing. URL: <https://hbr.org/2015/03/the-science-of-sensory-marketing> Accessed 26 July 2019
- Hill, D. (2007). *Emotionomics: Winning Hearts and Minds*. Paperback. Minnesota: Adams Business & Professional Publisher.
- Holbrook, M. (1999). *Consumer Value*. London: Routledge.

- Hulten, B. (2011). Sensory marketing: the multi-sensory brand-experience concept. *European Business Review*, Vol.23, n.3, 256–273.
- Hulten, B. (2017). Branding by the five senses: A Sensory Branding Framework. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, Vol.6, 1-12.
- King, C. (1999). What is hospitality? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 219-234.
- Krishna, A. (2008). Spatial perception research: An integrative review of length, area, volume, and number perception. In M. P. Wedel, *Visual marketing: From attention to action* (pp. 167-192). New York: Erlbaum.
- Krishna, A. (2010). *Sensory Marketing: Research on the Sensuality of Products*. New York: Routledge.
- Krishna, A. (2011). An integrative review of sensory marketing: Engaging the senses to affect perception, judgment and behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22, 3, 332-351.
- Krishna, A. (2013). *Customer Sense: How the 5 Senses Influence Buying Behavior*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Krishna, A., & Morrin, M. (2008). Does touch affect taste? The perceptual transfer of product container haptic cues. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol.34, 807-818.
- Leed, E. (1991). *The Mind of the Traveler. From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Leonardis, D. B. (2014). Multisensory Feedback Can Enhance Embodiment within an virtual walking scenario. *Presence Teleoperators & Virtual Environments*, Vol. 23, n 3, 253-266.
- Levy, S. (1999). *Brands, Consumers, Symbols, and Research: Sydney J. Levy on Marketing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Lindstrom, M. (2005). *Brand Sense: How to Build Powerful Brands Through Touch, Taste, Smell, Sight & Sound*. London: Kogan Page Publisher.
- Lindstrom, M. (2010). *Brand Sense: Sensory Secrets Behind the Stuff We Buy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Loureiro, S. (2012). Consumer-brand relationship: Foundation and state-of-the-art. In H. Kaufmann, *Customer-Centric Marketing Strategies: Tools for Building Organizational Performance: Tools for Building Organizational Performance* (pp. 413-434). Hershey: IGI Global.
- Low, F. (1994). Brands, brand management, and the brand manager system: a critical-historical evaluation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol.45, n.3, 49-61.
- Minh, D. (2015). An Emerging Marketing Technology: Sensory marketing applied in Retail industry. *The Secrets of Japanese Economy*, (pp. 1-10). Ho Chi Minh City.
- Murray, O. (2014). Hedonism and History. In M. W. O'Connor, *Feast - Play - Celebration in the Ancient World* (pp. 99-116). Warsaw: Sub Lupa.

- Nenova, S. (2015, October 27). Ancient Greek and Roman Bathing. URL: <http://www.ancientworldalive.com/single-post/2015/10/27/Ancient-Greek-and-Roman-Bathing> Accessed 13 August 2019
- Petit, O., Velasco, C., & Spence, C. (2018). Digital Sensory Marketing: Integrating New Technologies Into Multisensory Online Experience. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 42-61.
- Pfaffman, C. (2017, February 17). Human Sensory Reception. URL: <https://www.britannica.com/science/human-sensory-reception> Accessed 30 July 2019
- Pieters, R. W. (2008). Informativeness of eye movements for visual marketing: Six cornerstones. In M. Wedel, *Visual marketing: From attention to action* (pp. 43-72). New York: Erlbaum.
- Prahalad, C., & Ramaswamy, V. (2004). Co-creation Experiences: The next Practice in Value Creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol.18, n.3, 5-14.
- R.J. Markin, C. L. (1976). Social-Psychological Significance of store space. *Journal of Retailing*, 52, 43-54.
- Rieunier, S. (2002). *Le comportement du consommateur et le point de vente*. Paris.
- Rosenholtz, R. (2007). Measuring Visual Clutter. *Journal of Vision*, Vol.7, 17, 1-22.
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol 15, 53-67.
- Schulz, H. . (2010). Negotiating the boundary between the self and the other: individuation and association through socially-visible brand use. *Association for Consumer Research Conference*, (pp. 13-16). Jacksonville.
- Sheehan, P. W. (1967). A shortened form of Bett's questionnaire upon mental imagery. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 23, 386-389.
- Spence, C. (2002). *The Secrets of the Senses*. London: Oxford University.
- Stern. (2006). What does brand mean? Historical-analysis method and construct definition. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, vol.34, n2, 216-23.
- Traindl, A. (2007). *Neuromarketing: the Innovative Visualization of Emotions*. Trauner.
- Valenti, C. R. (2008). *The Concept of Sensory Marketing*. Halmstad: Högskolan i Halmstad.
- Wedel, M. (2008). *Visual marketing: From attention to action*. New York : Erlbaum.
- White, A. (1970). *Palaces of the People: A Social History of Commercial Hospitality*. New York: Taplinger.
- Williams, L. E., & Bargh, J. A. (2008). Experiencing Physical Warmth Promotes Interpersonal Warmth. *Science*, Vol.322, 606-607.