

Evgeniia Gordon

**USING BRAIN FOOD AS NEW  
POSSIBILITY TO CHANGE THE  
ASSORTMENT AND ATTRACT  
CUSTOMERS DURING THE  
BREAKFAST**

Bachelor's thesis  
Hospitality management  
Tourism and business services

2020



**South-Eastern Finland  
University of Applied Sciences**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Degree title</b>	<b>Time</b>
Evgeniia Gordon	Bachelor of Hospitality management	March 2020
<b>Thesis title</b>		
Using brain food as new possibility to change the assortment and attract customers during the breakfast		35 pages 2 pages of appendices
<b>Commissioned by</b>		
Scandic Hotel Mikkeli		
<b>Supervisor</b>		
Eliisa Kotro		
<b>Abstract</b>		
<p>Today tourism and hotel businesses are developing at a high speed and because of this the competition between hotels is growing. At the same time, people care more and more about themselves and their health. Due to the large flow of information and the load on the brain, it is important to take care not only of the health of the body but also of the health of the brain. This thesis was aimed at studying the modern basics of nutrition for the brain and how the hotel can use this trend to their advantage.</p> <p>To study this issue the theoretical foundations and quantitative research method were used. The theoretical foundations were articles and books describing a previous experience, the basics of management and the evidence-based foundations of the usefulness of certain products for the brain. Survey was used like a quantitative research method. It was sent out online via a link 23 people who already had experience in traveling and using the hotel service were interviewed.</p> <p>The study showed that most respondents were interested in trying this service if it was presented at the hotel. Most people would prefer a hotel with this service than a hotel without it. At the same time, taste preferences of people were clarified, and it can be used for future researches.</p>		
<b>Keywords</b>		
Brain food, hotels, proper nutrition, competitiveness		

# CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	4
2	THEORY .....	5
2.1	Definition of Brain Food .....	6
2.2	Proper nutrition in Finland .....	10
2.3	Previous experience of using brain food.....	12
2.4	Breakfast in Scandic hotel.....	14
2.5	Changing the assortment and giving a choice. Assortment Efficiency .....	16
2.6	How to attract customers to a new product .....	18
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	22
3.1	Methodological approach .....	22
3.2	Data collection, analysis, validity, and reliability .....	23
4	RESULTS.....	24
5	CONCLUSION .....	30
	REFERENCES.....	32

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The main topic of this thesis work is brain-friendly food and how it can be used in modern hotels. How do hotels can use this opportunity to promote their restaurant? What does exactly brain-friendly food means? This thesis is aimed at analyzing the current market situation, the relevance of this area and what possibilities open with using brain food as for customers and as for the hotel chain.

The commissioner of this thesis is a Scandic hotel situated in the city Mikkeli, which is the capital of the South-Savo region of Finland. Scandic Hotels is a hotel chain headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. Its main operations in the Nordic countries. Alongside hotels in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark. The company also has a presence in Germany and Poland. The hotel chain is owned by EQT Partners. This hotel also has a restaurant «Bord» where guests can enjoy delicious food from breakfast to dinner.

Scandic hotel has a competitors. At the same time in Mikkeli there is no hotel which provides a service such a brain food service for the customers.

The thesis is focused on changing assortment of food at breakfast time following new trends as using brain-friendly products.

The goal of this thesis is to improve breakfast assortment following the principals of brain food.

The objectives are:

- research the market previous experience of using brain food as a concept
- identify options for changing the menu
- analyze the hotel's breakfast strategy
- study how brain food can be used as attractive factor for customers

## 2 THEORY

Scientific studies of the last decade have confirmed how strong is the relationship between nutrition and the neurological and psychiatric state of a person. The conclusion that most researchers come to is that proper nutrition and good mood while eating provide the most positive conditions for the work of the brain.

The idea that dietary choices can influence health is not new. Most adults know the importance of nutrition in the development of various diseases especially cardiovascular. Modern scientific studies show that a proper diet can also prevent the development of depression, sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, migraines, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other neurological and psychiatric disorders, as well as help in their successful treatment (Mosconi, 2018).

Diverse food is not a problem in developed countries. Nevertheless, people in modern society consume foods that are devoid of fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and the omega-3 fatty acid that is necessary for normal brain function.

Some studies show that nutrition plays an extremely important role in how genetic predispositions to the disease manifest themselves. The disease can depend on the choice of food that is why the wrong choice of food can become a factor that triggered a genetic disease.

The human brain also absorbs 20% of the total energy of our body. Food not only provides energy for the normal functioning of the brain but also supports its structure. It has short- or long-term effects on brain activity and its structure (Avena, 2015).

Sensitive brain cells need the same antioxidant support as the heart. Important B vitamins from food, folic acid, vitamin B12, and vitamin B6, can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Important to understand that changes in the diet, the use of food additives and herbal medicines cannot serve as a substitute for medical treatment. That is why following a nutritional recommendation can be a

supporting factor and a way to prevent the development of diseases, improve brain function but not as a treatment technique (Wenk, 2015).

## **2.1 Definition of Brain Food**

First of all, brain food meaning should be defined. Brain food is a food that has a benefit for brain and brain activity. It helps to improve the memory, energy level and concentration of a person who follows these principals. In the list such food types were included:

### **- Fatty fish**

Mostly it is a fish that contains omega 3 fatty acids because our brain mostly consists of fat. Nowadays people consume omega 6 and omega 9 fatty acids in a very big amount, most people have a lack of omega 3 acids in their body. That is why eating fish is so beneficial for humans (Gorin, 2020).

### **-Coffee**

Coffee contains two main components — caffeine and antioxidants that help brain activity, improve a person's mood and reduce the risk of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases (Jennings, 2018).

### **-Blueberries**

Blueberries provide numerous health benefits, including some that are specifically for your brain. Besides vitamins and minerals, they have plenty of antioxidants. They reduce the risk of diseases connected with neurogenerative nature. These agents improve communicative property between brain cells (Gorin, 2020).

### **-Turmeric**

Turmeric usually is used like seasoning to improve the flavor and taste of a product, but this spice also has one ingredient called curcumin that has a positive influence on memory, reduces the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Depression is the most important problem of the last decade and turmeric helps to improve the

mood of people due to increased dopamine and serotonin levels in the organism (Jennings, 2018)..

#### -Broccoli

A well-known ingredient of proper nutrition because containing antioxidants, vitamin K. This vitamin improves the connection between cells and due to that help to reduce the risk of memory diseases (Gorin, 2020).

#### -Seeds

Seeds contain a lot of microelements that are beneficial for the human body: iron, magnesium, zinc, copper. It is a perfect resource of essential amino acids. Pumpkin seeds are more helpful for the brain due to containing antioxidants that protect brain from free radical damage (Jennings, 2018).

#### -Dark Chocolate

A well-known fact that dark chocolate is healthy in small amounts. It connected with caffeine, antioxidants, and flavonoids. All these compounds have an effect on memory, brain activity, and mood. All this helps to reduce the risk of mental and memory diseases Gorin, 2020).

#### -Nuts

Most nuts have an influence on heart as well but in 2014 researches showed that nuts have an impact on cognition function of brain and memory skills. They contain fats that are considered as healthy fats and plenty of vitamins (Jennings, 2018).

#### -Some fruits

Especially oranges, kiwi, strawberries. Because of the high content of vitamin C that can prevent mental disease, fight against free radicals (Jennings, 2018).

#### -Eggs

Protein one of the most important essential components of our body. It is a material for building new cells. For brain, the most important part is vitamins B6 and B12 that can reduce mental diseases (Gorin, 2020).

#### -Green Tea

Green tea like a coffee contains even more caffeine and it boosts functions of the brain. It has L-theanine, an amino acid that can cross the blood-brain barrier and increase the activity of the neurotransmitter GABA, which helps reduce anxiety and makes you feel more relaxed (Jennings, 2018).

But the main thing about food, that will be good for brain is not that it should be some concrete product. The main idea is in nutritive ingredients, that influence on the human body. Components that are good for brain health you can find in different kinds of products, but what is more important – it is an amount of these useful components that product include.

The main substances that can be found in products are proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. When using and creating a brain food menu it is also necessary to take into account the content of these substances. The differences between proper nutrition and brain food are that following the basics of proper nutrition people focus more on substances like proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, while brain food includes micro and macronutrients that can affect the cerebral functions. The fact is that brain food and proper nutrition have a high connection with each other. Brain food does not contradict the principles of proper nutrition, on the contrary it supports and complies with them (Nancy, 2018).

There is also the concept of a diet that aims to enhance brain health. This diet combines the DASH diet and the Mediterranean diet. It strongly intersects with the principles of brain food and is directly related to them. This principle of nutrition is called the Mind Diet. This diet has passed many clinical trials and is currently considered one of the best diets for maintaining health. It is based on the results of many studies that have identified the effect of food products and individual components on the prevention of obesity-associated with the work of the brain, as well as on maintaining its functioning and improving functions.



Basically, studies have revealed the effect of the glycemic index level on the level of brain function and have shown that the higher its level, the more brain diseases progress. In addition to the proven effect on reducing the risk of Alzheimer's in people following these principles of eating behavior, this diet has proven properties in reducing the risk of depression (Nancy B., 2018).

The main components of the diet are the consumption of fish, legumes, whole grain bread, vegetables, and fruits, as well as olive oil. Products such as sugar, red meat should be excluded. In general, recommendations in different articles may vary slightly (Marcason, 2015).

Each article has a difference in the quantities and type of products used but the main recommendations are as following:

- consume more products of plant origin than animal products (try to avoid them, especially red meat);
- exclude various products processed by industry, especially meat;
- reduce consumption of processed carbohydrates and sugars;
- eat whole foods such as seafood, nuts, legumes, seeds.

A visual representation of this diet can be found in Figure 1.

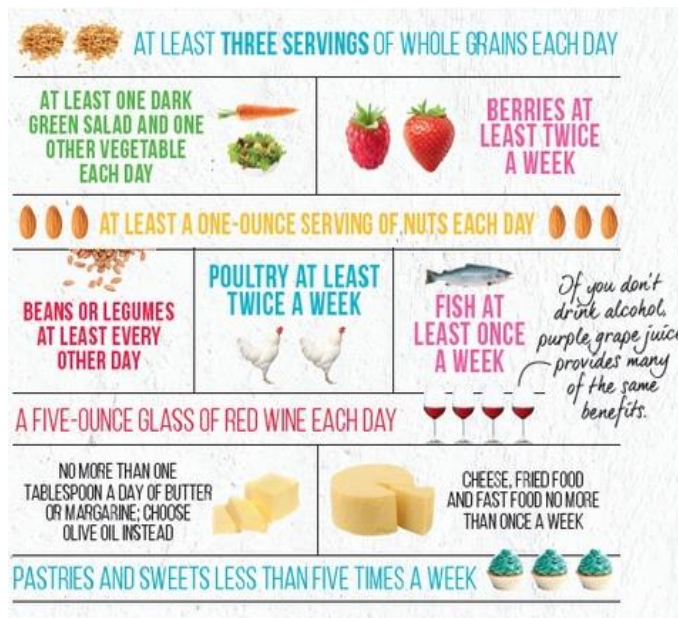


Figure 1. Mind diet recommendations (Alban & Alban, 2019)

## 2.2 Proper nutrition in Finland

Finland is one of the most healthiest country in the world (Goodnews journal, 2016). Finnish nutrition policy is based on Nordic Nutrition Recommendations. The British magazine about medicine “the Lancet” wrote that 188 countries were evaluated by indicators of the state of health of citizens, the level of medical indicators. Finland took 6th place among countries which is a very high level.

There are Finnish dietary guidelines that give recommendations for healthy and proper nutrition published in 2014. The main idea of this project was how to have health using food. Food is an everyday activity that a person needs to do. The question is if a person has to eat why do not use this opportunity for improving life. They give information amount of what should be increased or decreased in the menu of a person. It provides quantities of substances that a person has to consume every day for better health (Eat goodeat, 2015).

Increase	Change	Limit
Colorful roots, vegetables, fruits, berries; seafood including fatty fish, seeds and nuts, beans and pears	White bread and rice, pasta, fat dairy products, kinds of butter, fast food	Salt and sugar, alcohol, sausages and processed meat, sweet drinks

Table 1. Nutrition recommendations (The Finnish Dietary Guidelines, 2015)

There is food divided into three groups. Each group shows what kind of product a person should limit or increase. It is important to notice that these recommendations provided to people of middle age cause for example children need to have totally different requirements according to their age.

Quantities that are given in this guideline are the following. Every day person should consume approximately:

- 500 g of fruit and vegetables;
- 20-35 g of fiber;
- 1-1.5 liters of water;
- Processed meat and red meat maximum 500 g per week.

In the usual diet of Finns, there are many whole grain cereals, fish, vegetables, and fruits. They prefer home-made food to snacks and fast food. All these habits greatly affect eating behavior and form the right attitude to food (Mäkelä & Rautavirta 2018). That is, it cannot be said that people are very worried about their health. Basically, they have the right eating habits that contribute to improving well-being and do not contribute to the development of diseases.

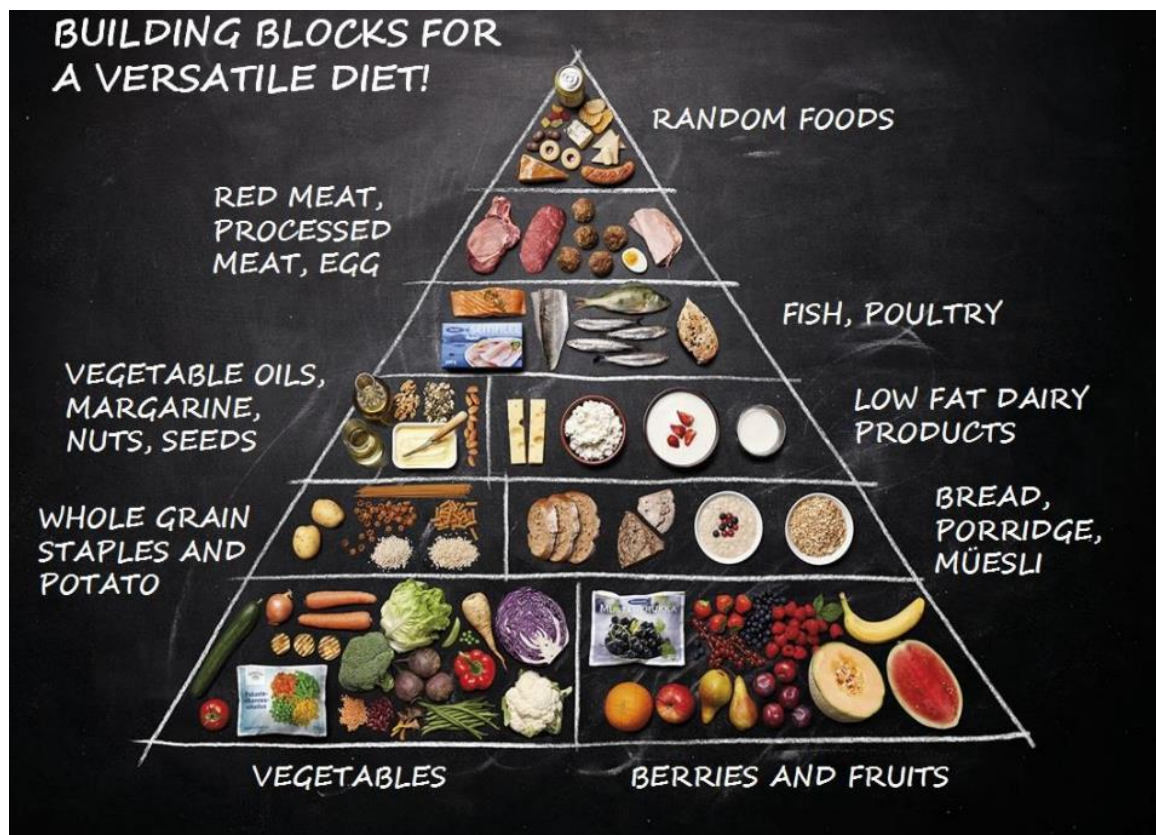


Figure 2. Proper food ratio (The Finnish Dietary Guidelines, 2015)

In Figure 2 can be found proper nutrition recommendations illustration. This pyramid perfectly describes the amounts of food that person should follow. As can be noticed brain food recommendations have the same rules.

### **2.3 Previous experience of using brain food**

Fazer is a famous Finnish company which mainly produces bakery and confectionery. It has a lot of factories around the world: in Scandinavia, Russia, The UK and a number of restaurants that provided different kinds of food in Finland. This company made a special menu called Fazer Brainhow and it was useful snacks that have a good influence on cognitive function. The menu was presented in January and February 2018.

Director of Gastronomy and Food Development at Fazer Food Services Finland mentioned on Fazer's webpage that the main idea is that clients need to be healthy not only physically but mentally also. Brain well-being is important for people of all ages. Children and students spend a lot of energy on learning. The population of Finland is aging, and older people also want to enjoy life. Proper nutrition helps the brain get more out of the day (Fazer. Brainhow food, 2020).

The company intends to engage in further development in this direction. The main goal is to increase the scientific understanding of the effect of food on health among the population and provide consumers with the opportunity to choose a healthy alternative that is not inferior in taste to junk food.

Since the company is engaged in large-scale production, this provides a good opportunity to study the habits of customers and encourage them to make a choice in favor of a healthy diet.

Also in Finland, there was research considered that eggs make brain activity faster and help to prevent Alzheimer's disease. A research study of 2017 published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition shows that older adults have better health if they control their meal (Dearing, 2019). It is important to notice that a lot of hotels and restaurants provide brain food, but they did not use it as a way to advertise their company.

Marriot hotel chain has hotels around the world. Besides using different activities that considered as boosters for brain such as sport exercises, useful brain activities during watching tv, modern skincare. Their main idea builds around productivity and brain health. In every hotel they provided people brain-healthy

food that supports their activities for the whole day (Nativa World Magazine, 2019).

This idea mostly directed on business travelers who also want to be productive during their business trips and takes care of health. Good start of the day and all activities that promise increase working skills sounds attractive for every worker (Magaletska et al, 2015). Retreat, recharge and refocus – these three postulates that hotel chain follows.

Menu of Marriot hotels gives different possibilities to their customers during the day. For example, for breakfast they have food that supplies energy, for evening something that could make guests sleep better (Marriot Hotel mind menu, 2020).

Well-known Radisson Blu hotel developed Radisson Blu Hotel Brain Food in collaboration with hotel managers and nutrition specialists. The mission of Brain Food is to ensure the well-being of guest meetings and meeting efficiency through proper nutrition. Creators of this idea consider that this will keep guest's vigilance and productivity at a high level, and all this has been thought out in the Brain Food concept, which allows the meeting participants to focus on the most important thing.

Radisson Blu Hotel Brain Food has a different strategy compared to the Marriot hotel. They use mostly plant origin products and use the seasonality factor for it. It is not only about giving other possibilities for vegans and vegetarians but also it supports local business and production (Brain Food – kohti kokonaisvaltaista hyvinvointia, 2020).

Intuitive nutrition is also included in the concept of well-being in this chain. People listen to their body, eats as much as they feel in a stress-free environment. It is important to learn how to eat as much as you feel good not too little or too much as both of them can be bored. It is also has a good ecological influence on nature and helps to reduce leftovers (Radisson Blu website, 2020).

Postillion Hotels in the Netherlands provide their customers with brain food. Brain food, prepared by Postillion Hotels made from fresh ingredients mostly fruit, vegetables, and nuts. Their menu includes dishes such as fig balls, blueberry

muffins, pumpkin seed cookies, and lentil chips. They also give the opportunity to choose something for people who follow a gluten-free diet or a vegan diet. In their menu main points are slow sugars and good taste. They promised that this food can give to the customers increasing concentration and level of energy, essential nutrients and a perfect balance between them (Postillion Hotels Brain Food, 2020).

## **2.4 Breakfast in Scandic hotel**

Scandic hotel has rather strict rules about breakfast strategy. The rules are described separately in a special breakfast concept. It is valid from 2017 to this day. The concept contains various chapters on the rules of behavior with visitors, recommendations for the appearance, serving of dishes as well as a list of what should be presented at the hotel for breakfast and what can be modernized.

To make guests feel comfortable in every destination around Europe, Scandic has an equal menu for all hotels that they have. But to add something new and to diversify the menu each hotel can add something local in their assortment. There are rules that must be performed in each hotel.

Breakfast is the main product in the Scandic restaurant, and it is the main instrument to present its brand. Food should be always fresh and tasty, and the atmosphere should be presented as comfortable and warm. A variety of food is a good possibility to make your guests feel comfortable. For quality during breakfast time main chief is responsible (Scandic aamiainen konseptikasikirja, 2017).

Goals of Scandic hotel are:

- Breakfast should be the best part of the day;
- Breakfast should be tasty;
- Breakfast should support the brand of the hotel.

Breakfast starts at 6 am and ends at 9 am on weekdays. On a Saturday it begins from 7 till 10 am and on Sunday from 8 till 11 am. Every person has time to find something to their taste and has enough time to enjoy the meal (Scandic Mikkeli website, 2020).

In every hotel Scandic uses the same assortment but five local products can be added. The hotel has a concrete list of suppliers. Breakfast includes eight stations each of them responsible for special kinds of food. It is connected with food safety and also helps customers to find what they want. Each of the products has to have the designation (Scandic aamiainen konseptikasikirja, 2017)

Consider the concept of breakfast includes:

- Vegetables (cucumber, tomato, salat, souses);
- Hot food (bacon, sausages, scrambled eggs, boiled eggs, egg butter, rice pies, porridge, beans, fried vegetables);
- Bread (different types of bread, pastry);
- Fruits (apples, oranges, other fruits except for bananas);
- Dairy products and muesli (also nuts, dry fruits);
- Hot beverages (coffee, tea, hot chocolate);
- Cold beverages (juices, water, coffee milk)

As can be noticed Mikkeli is a small town and there are not so many tourists. Mostly in hotel business travelers are performed. For them it is very important to start their day in a good way. That is why brain food can be used as a market product to attract new business customers to this hotel.

In this city Scandic has a few competitors. One of the main – Original Sokos Hotel Vaakuna Mikkeli, which has almost the same breakfast assortment and quality of service and also has a location in the center of the city. There are also a few smaller hotels: hotel Uusikuu, Marija Hotels chain (Huoneistohotelli Marja, Hostel Marjan Matkakoti, Marja's Guesthouse), etc. All of them provides different kind of service, mostly directed on travelers with family. For business tourists there are not so many possibilities to choose.

According to brain food rules, Scandic already has some products considered as healthy for brain, but customers do not know about this. This brain food stand can be used as a good possibility to attract business customers and make it different from the main competitor because in Original Sokos Vaakuna Mikkeli there is no food considered as brain food, but they have almost the same assortment.

A suggestion is in changing assortment by using some new ingredients and create some new dishes as a smoothie, for example, by mixing them together.

## **2.5 Changing the assortment and giving a choice. Assortment Efficiency**

Changing an assortment always has some advantages and disadvantages. First of all, customers want to try something new or local, but at the same time, it is good for them to see the food that they used to eat. Some customers that traveled a lot at the same destinations noticed that they want to see some changes in the assortment of a hotel. But not always a wide selection has a beneficial effect on the buyer. It may also make it difficult for him to make a purchasing decision. (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The number of sellers in the market affects a variety of services. The development of social networks has made searching for services easier for consumers. Websites such as TripAdvisor, Trivago have appeared that help users quickly get information about hotel services in a couple of minutes. One of the solutions to the problem is to change the assortment. Especially compose and form an assortment mainly of unique products (Preddy, 2011). When an assortment meets the needs of consumers it is called assortment efficiency. An effective assortment has several characteristics:

- allows at any time to offer sets and variations of goods that match the request;
- contributes to profit;
- ahead of customer inquiries and ideas about product modifications;
- satisfies the most common (basic) purchase set;
- stimulates the target client to increase the frequency of visits to place;
- attracts non-target groups of buyers;
- distinguishes the store and its assortment offer among similar enterprises.

For managers it is always difficult to introduce new products into a sustainable assortment selection. But the ratio of the constant and experimental (new) assortment is precisely the way to increase competitiveness. But buyers tend to try new products and services (Preddy, 2011).

The need to include new products in the assortment is due to several reasons. Even the most loyal and regular customers need vivid emotional impressions and



they are prone to periodic experiments. Regardless of their overall satisfaction, there is always an interest in discovering something new.

Following the concept most positions should be saved to provide to the customers home feeling – they already know what to expect from breakfast. Brain food is a food made mostly from fruit, vegetables and spices, and the concept says that these products can be different so these positions can be changed (Scandic aamiainen konseptikasikirja, 2017).

A large assortment makes the company convenient for the client. This is especially true for the restaurant business (Clark & Wood, 1998). Now it's hard to find a hotel that provides meager breakfast options. Breakfasts at hotels are more than cereals and therefore it is becoming increasingly difficult to surprise and attract customers. The hotel market as every market is growing today. Each company has different options considering customer service and because of it, a competition between hotels is very high. It is very important to give a customer feeling of choice. Though the mass media customers can follow new trends of this field easily (Kotler et al, 2017).

According to the information given in the Revine magazine, one of the trends in the development of the hotel business is the trend of using organic products and offering people food that will make them healthier. The trend for healthy food is spreading quite quickly and many restaurants have already made it their feature. Personalization is another trend of this year, it can be manifested not only in the approach to communication of the client but also in the personalization of offers for breakfast in the restaurant as well (Revine magazine, 2020).

Most companies try to give customers a different assortment of services. They understand that if there are clients from different generations, then they can get a service that suits them. This creates a good image of a hotel thanks to recommendations.

There is a strong difference in reaction to a product between the modern generation and the older. Different marketing approaches for product promotion affect different target groups. For example, social networks are mainly aimed at

generations of Millennials, while the older generation is used to receiving information personally. But this difference includes not only reaction to promotion methods but also in the difference in choice. This is also one of the reasons why it is important to have a wide range of products. (Gursoy, 2018).

The importance of choice for a person is an important factor in their satisfaction with the restaurant. Giving a choice shows the level and success of a company. But at the same time, a large number of choices makes a customer unable to make a decision. That is why it is important to be a leader in the crowd offering something special to the customers (Newman, 2016). Making the decision easier for clients is another point that can predict this situation. Giving a choice but at the same time companies offer already packed service. For example, restaurants offering certain dishes for lunchtime, shops offering gift sets for Christmas, etc. Through difference but simplified choices companies increase the level of customer satisfaction (Kotler & Bowen, 2017).

## **2.6 How to attract customers to a new product**

Catering and hotel services are an important part of financial turnover. Nevertheless, the catering industry has its own characteristics that are different from hotels. But these two areas are closely related and cannot exist without each other. Restaurants, including those located at the hotel, connected with it are more volatile in relation to fashion and depend on current trends (Johns & Pine, 2002).

Customers usually focus on the quality of services and products offered. Therefore, organizations must improve existing products as it benefits them more than creating a completely new product. If the business does not change in accordance with current trends, then it will face a loss of competitiveness. There are also disadvantages for the business as sometimes it is necessary to sacrifice innovation in favor of the continuous improvement of existing services (Gursoy, 2018).

Consumers consider restaurant service from the point of view of having characteristics that they find attractive. For example, it can be a low price, food,

location, atmosphere, etc. Modern sites such as Airbnb, TripAdvisor, etc. offer to find a suitable hotel already have this function and select a hotel in accordance with the user's requests comparing offers among themselves. Consumers choose the service that in their opinion is most consistent with these characteristics that can be important for them.

Everyone knows that demand creates supply. Many studies in the field of marketing and the provision of services to customers indicate that if the offer is constant the client is able to easily refuse the service if he is given a choice with additional options at the same price (Lynch, Staelin, 2005).

This assessment consists of two types. The first is the assessment of expectations, the second is assessment after using the service. Then, according to the theory of refuting expectations, the consumer compares the experience of expectation with the experience gained. In practice, this can be seen in the reviews and ratings of the hotel. TripAdvisor and Booking.com sites, for example, show them.

Consumers are repelled by a bad attitude and when the company takes care of the client this will help attract the client. In our case, it can be a slogan: "Try our new product! It will be useful for you and will help you work and be productive all day." This creates the opinion in the buyer's mind that he is not indifferent to the company and because of this increases his confidence in it.

Parasurman (1986) theory defines 5 aspects of the service provided, which attracts customers to try and choose a service:

- Empathy;
- Reliability;
- Responsiveness;
- Tangibles;
- Assurance.

His theory is based on expectations from the use of the service. But this theory also does not take into account such important aspects for the restaurant as the quality and taste of food. Johns concluded that there is a clear line between service and food. Therefore, when introducing a new product, it is necessary to

focus not only on service but also on the quality of the starting material . (Johns & Pine, 2002). There is still no universally accepted concept and universal model for measuring the quality of service, so this model of measuring perception of quality and expectations of a product is still used (Gursoy, 2018).

Promotion is understood as action aimed at informing, persuading and reminding people of their goods, services, images, ideas, etc.

Promotion performs some critical functions:

- creates the image the company needs (prestige, low prices, innovation, etc.);
- gives information about the product and its parameters;
- makes the product popular;
- creates enthusiasm among buyers;
- convinces buyers to switch to more expensive products;
- creates a favorable image of the company.

Consumers should be informed about new products and their characteristics while they do not yet have any relation to them. For goods and services that are well-known for consumers, the emphasis is on reminders - strengthening the existing consumer relationship with the product.

Restaurant managers communicate with consumers both existing and potential through a set of promotion the ultimate goal of which is to change consumer behavior in the desired direction. In the context of the restaurant business, this means to induce him to visit a restaurant.

To induce the buyer to try a new product it is necessary to induce his interest. To do this use various methods that can pull out interest. For example, the emphasis is not on the product itself but not on the benefits to the buyer or the repetition of the most important aspects of the product. At the same time, it is important not to overload the client with professional information, this can push him away (pn et al, 2007).

To determine the goals and objectives of promotion in management SMART technology is used. This technology is used in project management and is used to set project goals to make them effective (Islamia & Mulolli, 2018). The principals can be found in Figure 3. This abbreviation of SMART means:

- S – specific
- M – Measurable
- A – Achievable
- R – Realistic
- T – Time-bound

In our specific case, we are going to present brain food for the Scandic hotel as one more option for breakfast. Connected to the SMART technology goal of the project is to create 4 brain food options for Scandic hotel to increase the competitiveness for 10% before January 2021.

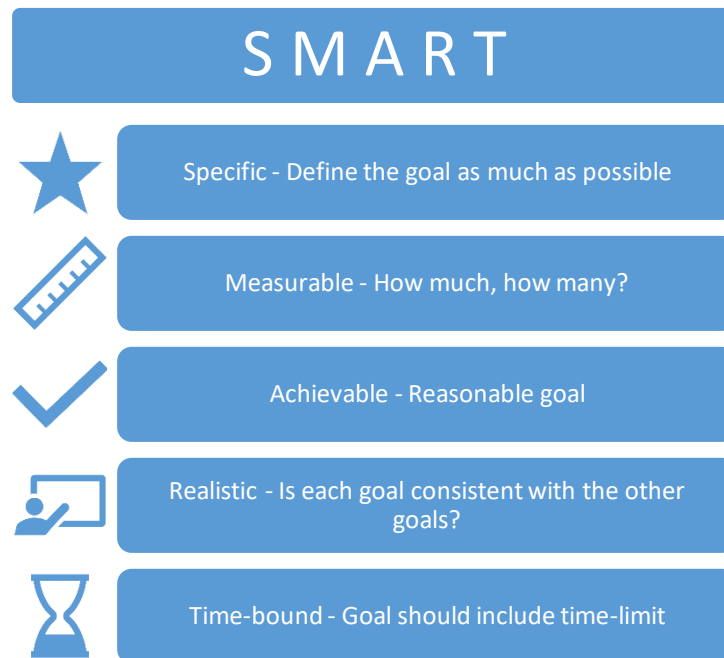


Figure 3. SMART management technique (Islamia & Mulolli, 2018)

The appeal to the buyer is considered correct when it is clearly formulated, believable, stand out from others and stimulates to try the service. It should cause a desire to take advantage of what is being offered. In addition, it must be designed in the style specific to this company so that the consumer immediately understands that this is a product of a specific firm.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Methodological approach**

The theoretical basis of this study consists of several parts: analysis of previous experience and theory, obtaining input data, analysis of input data and processing of results, conclusions.

This study is based on a quantitative research method. These are the most commonly used primary information collection methods. Their popularity is connected with the possibility of disseminating the results of the study to the entire population of target consumers since quantitative surveys cover a large number of respondents.

The main questions that can be answered using quantitative survey methods are: who, what, when, how much, how often? For example, who buys a given product which brand does it prefer, when and how often does a need for a given product arise, how much is consumed by the market. The area of use of the results of quantitative survey methods is the substantiation of decisions on choosing the target market or target segment marketing tools or investment decisions (Plonsky & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2014).

The limitations of these methods are associated with the need for large-scale data collection. Therefore, the accuracy and reliability of the information received depend on the structure of the sample which is provided by special methodological techniques.

The need for a large number of respondents limits the possibilities and duration of each individual interview (questionnaire) so it is rather difficult to obtain extended information using this method. Quantitative methods use more structured techniques which increases the requirements for the structure of questions in the preparation of questionnaires. To reach a large number of respondents more diverse communication methods are used than with qualitative survey methods (interview) (Oflazoglu, 2017).

The advantages of the chosen research method are the lack of information distortion. The respondents also answer questions at a time convenient for them

and in a comfortable environment, which makes the results of the study more correct. Ensuring anonymity can also play an important role in conducting the survey (Plonsky & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2014).

### **3.2 Data collection, analysis, validity, and reliability**

In this study, a quantitative survey method was used. The survey itself was the primary source of data. As a secondary source of information, the theoretical potential of the topic was used - information that is accessible and already written by someone.

The study contained a quantitative survey created on a platform called SurveyMonkey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>). Surveymonkey is one of the most popular platforms for creating questionnaires. It is available in many languages and is an easy-to-use program capable of quickly and accurately collecting and processing the results for the research.

Ease of use of this service is included in the ability to quickly and efficiently send a survey, quickly collect and analyze information. The respondent can answer the question at a convenient time and in a place convenient for him.

The survey itself was presented in English, which was a limitation for some respondents who did not know the English language. Therefore, the study group included English-speaking people.

The survey was aimed at people of different ages but most adults who have travel experience and can compare the service that they used to have with the service offered. Due to the experience, respondents are easier to find the answer to the questions, but this is not a prerequisite for passing it. The group of respondents can be very wide to determine the relevance of the service.

The survey consisted of 9 questions that were sent to potential hotel guests and people with travel experience. A questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. The survey began by welcoming the survey participants and explaining the reasons, goals, and objectives of the study. At the beginning was indicated information

about what is “brain food” means for people was indicated who have not encountered this term before.

The survey has rating questions where the participants had to evaluate the level of their interest, open-ended questions, and questions with the choice of answer where the participant selects one answer that is most suitable for him. All this allows us to further determine the relevance of the product and determine the limits of the service provided. Rating questions were with a scale of 1 to 5 stars where one star means not interested and 5 means maximum interest.

It was also important to keep the survey quick and simple, to avoid long formulations of questions. If the survey is long, respondents will quickly get tired of it and are unlikely to be able to fill it out to the end (Vannette, 2015).

The SurveyMonkey service is designed so that it provides the survey results in a convenient format so that it is easier to analyze them. The results were analyzed using a statistical data analysis method (Plonsky & Gurzynski-Weiss, 2014).

The aim of the study is to study the behavior of the research group, to understand their behavior and the principles of choice. Statistical analysis methods help to do this. By combining the results in tables and diagrams you can clearly see the priorities of the respondents and visually present the results.

## **4 RESULTS**

This chapter will describe the results of the survey. To determine the results, a survey of 9 questions was compiled. The questions were aimed at identifying the interest of buyers in this product and their taste preferences. The survey was conducted online and was sent mainly to adults who already had travel experience. The survey took an average of 2 to 3 minutes. The questions that were asked to the respondents can be found in Appendix 1.

There were 23 people in total and they can be divided into the following age groups:

- 1) 21-30
- 2) 31-40



- 3) 41-50
- 4) 51-60
- 5) 61-70

The people who were interviewed were mostly in the fourth age group. The percentages of the survey are presented in the chart below, in Figure 4.

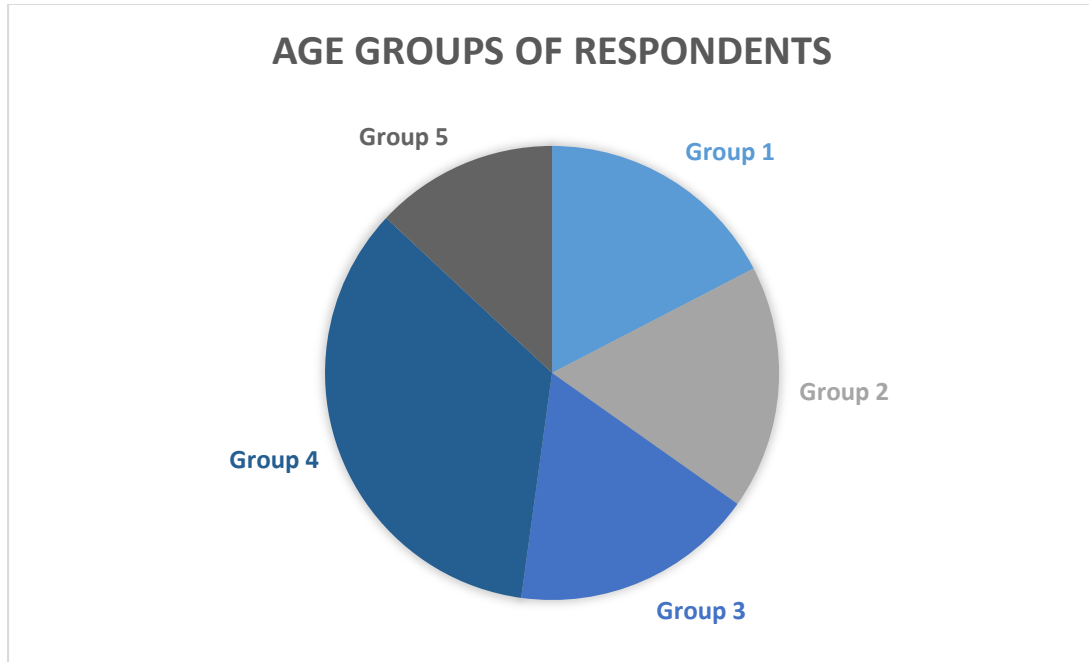


Figure 4. Age groups of respondents

Figure 5 shows the ratio of answers to the question about employment. According to the answers, the majority of respondents are employees – 18 answers. The rest are students – 3 and pensioners – 2. None of the respondents said that they are unemployed. It can be assumed that all respondents have the opportunity to travel.

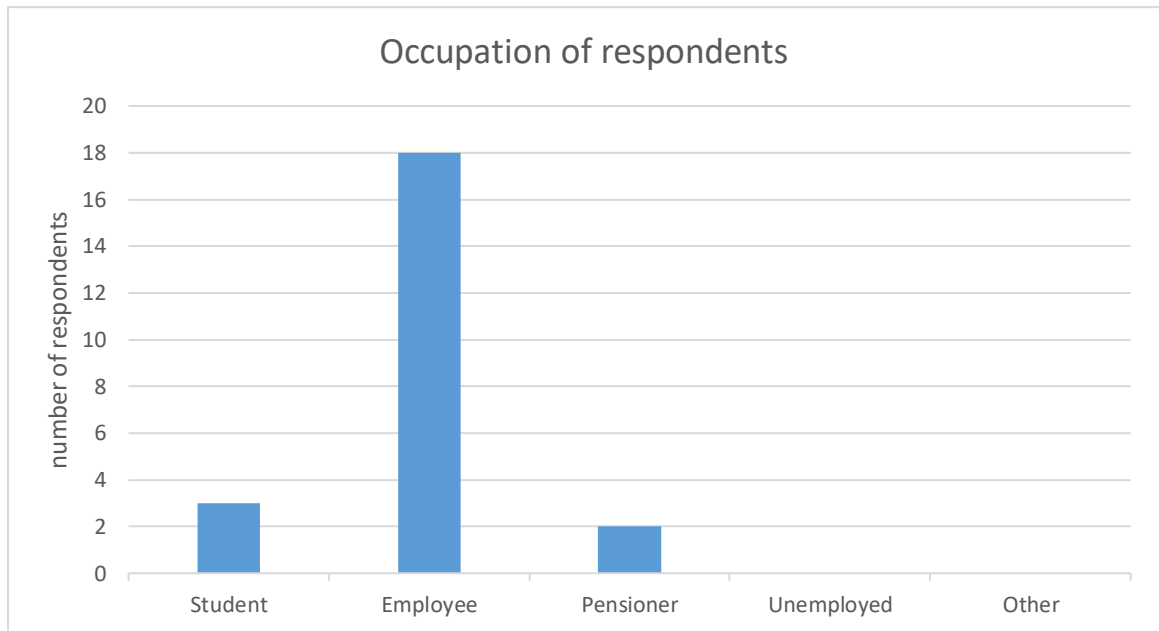


Figure 5. Occupation of respondents

In order to understand the preferences of potential buyers, it is necessary to understand how often they use the service and for what reasons. For this, questions were asked about the frequency of use of hotels and the reasons. In Figure 6 the reasons for traveling can be found.

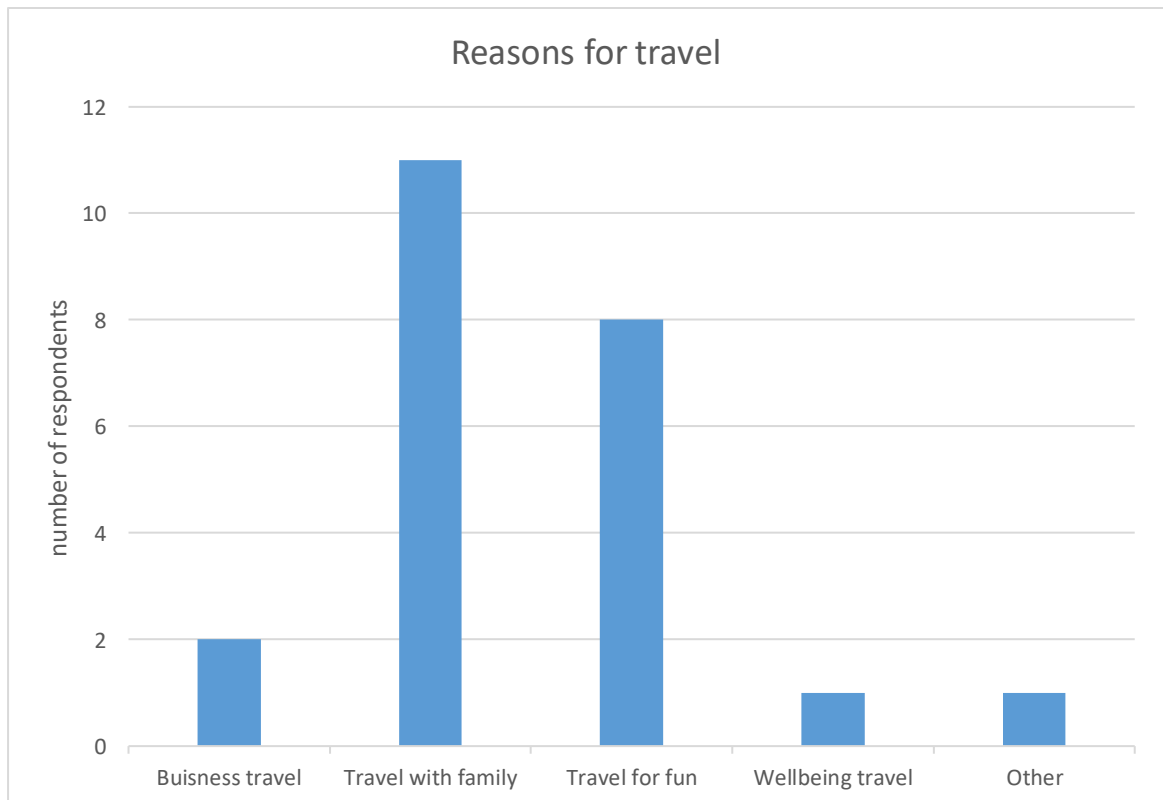


Figure 6. Reasons for travel

When were asked about the reasons for traveling, the respondents answered about traveling with family or traveling for fun. But among the respondents, there are also people who travel for wellbeing and for a business trips. One respondent indicated that he likes to travel because of interest in different destinations.

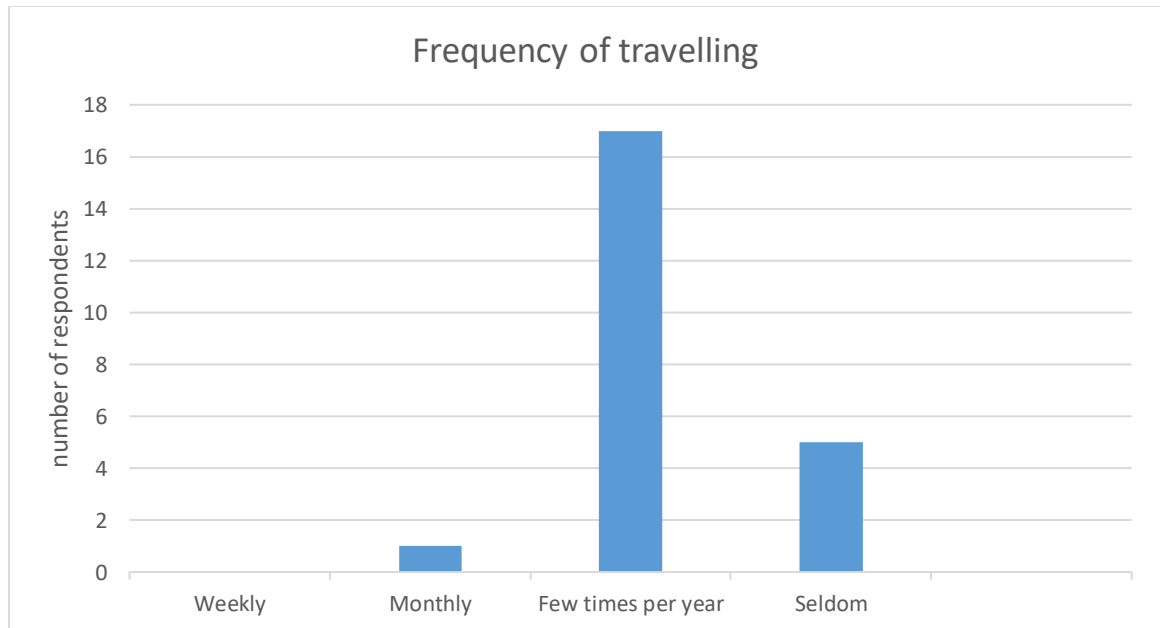


Figure 7. Frequency of traveling

As can be seen from Figure 7 which indicates the frequency of using hotels the majority of respondents use hotel services several times a year. The rest use hotels either rarely or monthly. So no one uses hotels more than once a month.

When asked about the importance of breakfast at the hotel, the respondents answered that it was important for them. The average result is 4.6 out of 5. 14 people replied that breakfast is very important for them. The rest rated the importance of breakfast at 4 out of 5. The lowest indicator is 3 out of 5. It was noted by 2 people. No one rated the importance of this service as 1 or 2. This is a good indicator that for people breakfast is a necessary service that will be always relevant.

Figure 8 shows the interest of potential customers in brain food. When were asked if the respondents would be glad to consume brain food during breakfast at the hotel, the majority replied that they would appreciate it fairly much. It is 13 replies which means a major number of the respondents. Other people answer

that they would appreciate it little – 8 answers. 2 respondents would appreciate it very much. No one answers that they would not appreciate it at all.

These statistics show that people are interested in this product and they would use this service if it will be presented at the hotel.

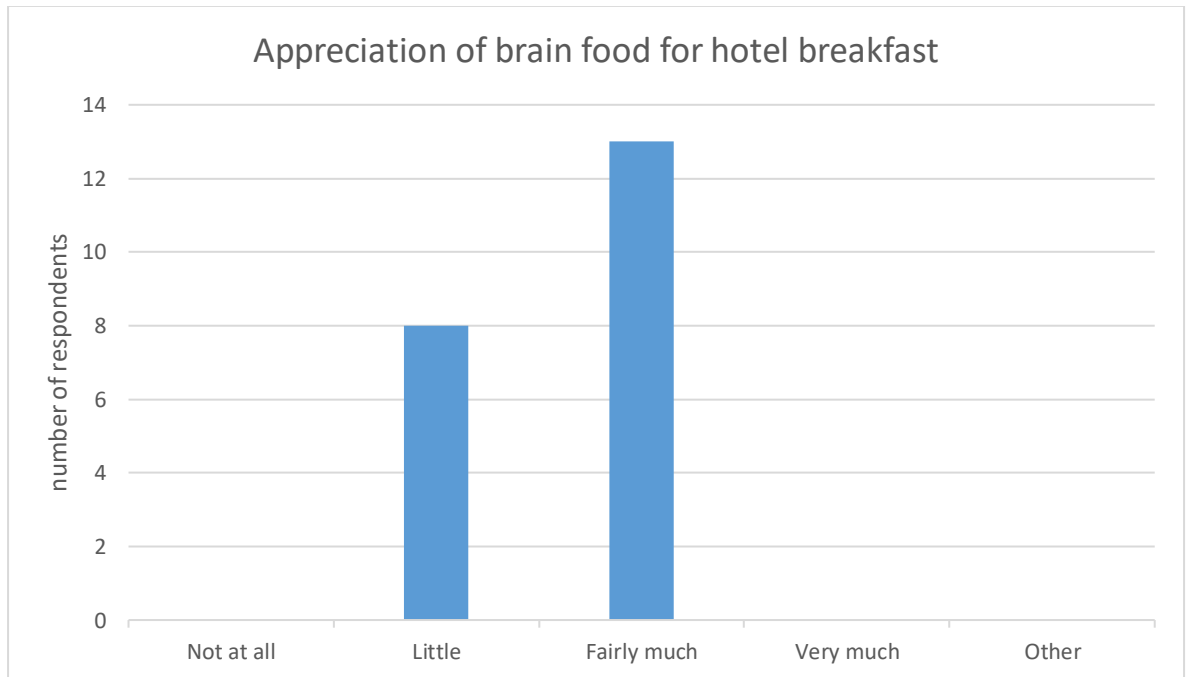


Figure 8. Appreciation of brain food at the hotel breakfast

Figure 9 shows the preference of a hotel with the Brain Food service over a hotel without this service.

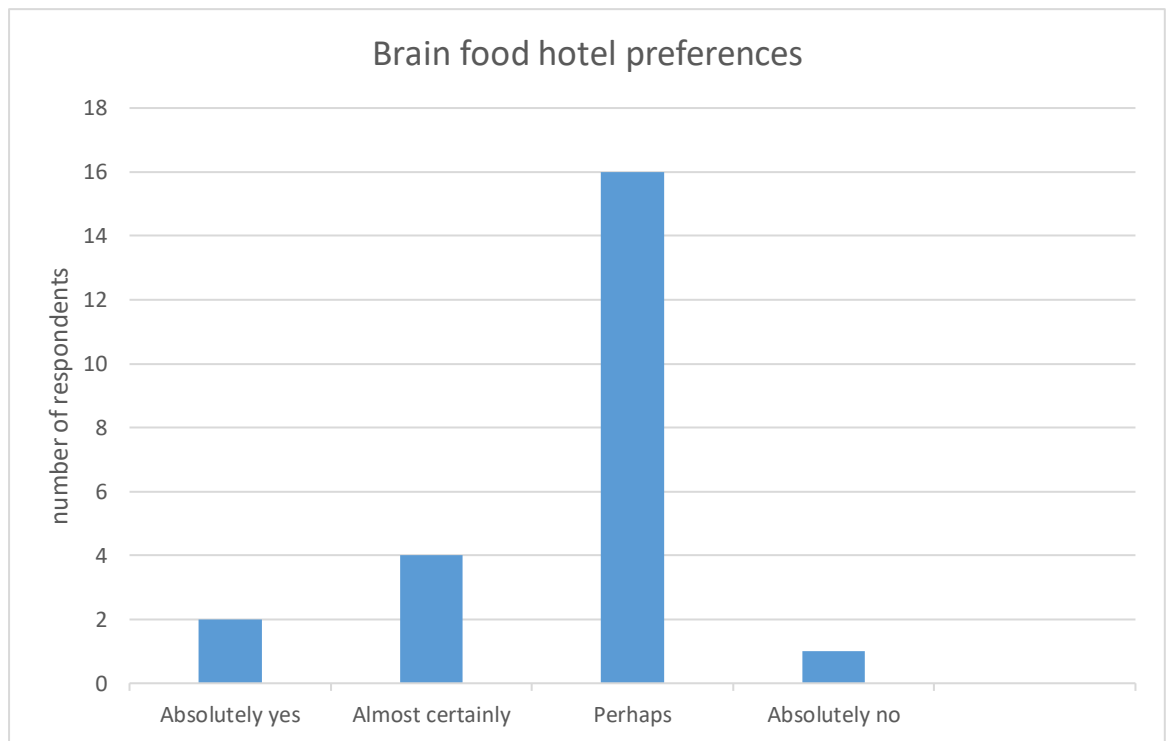


Figure 9. Preferences of respondents

As can be noticed most of the respondents are not sure but tend to prefer a hotel with brain food service to a hotel without it. Nowadays competition between hotels plays a big role in the business. This can be a good indicator showing that this service can be used as a competing service that encourages customers to choose this particular hotel.

The respondents rated the attractiveness of services on 3.3 out of 5. This is an indicator above the average number. Most of the respondents replied that the service was attractive for them on 3 out of 5. The remaining votes were equally divided between ratings 2, 4 and 5. Nobody rated this service at 1.

The last question was asked about food preferences. The respondents supposed to choose what they would like to eat at breakfast time. The following list of food included in brain food. The answers are shown in Figure 10.

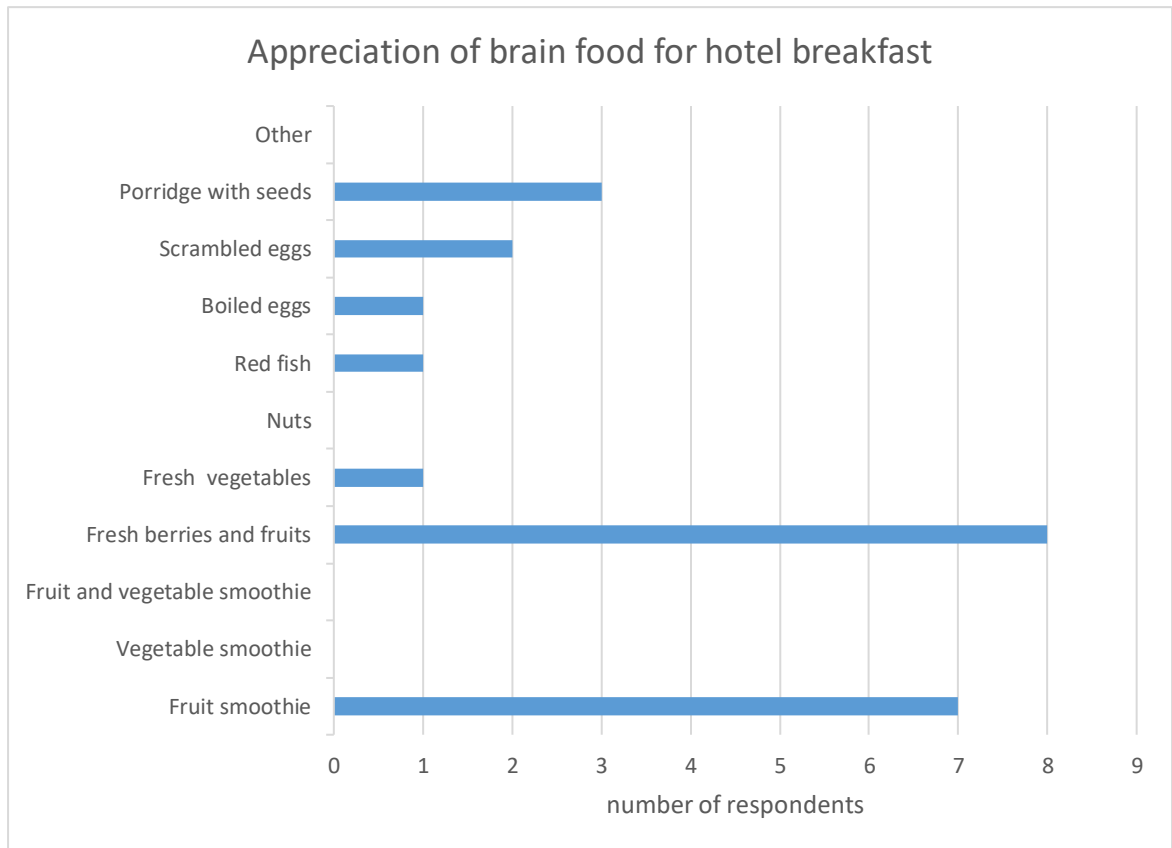


Figure 10. Food preferences of the respondents

As can be seen from the picture most people prefer fruit smoothies and fresh fruits and berries for breakfast. Scrambled eggs and porridge with seeds can be also considered as popular answers.

## 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis was aimed at developing and changing the assortment of the Scandic hotel located in the city Mikkeli, South-Savo region of Finland. Changing the assortment was taking into account the new trend of using brain food which helps improve brain function.

This method would help diversify the hotel's breakfast assortment and increase its competition among other hotels in the city since not one hotel in this city provides such a service, but all other conditions are more or less the same. According to the survey most people are interested in trying a new product and choosing a hotel that has this service which suggests that this method can attract more visitors to the Scandic.

Although this idea was originally aimed at business travelers who dominate in the city Mikkeli a survey showed that for people who travel with their families, for entertainment or for other reasons, this product is interesting too. This confirms the theory that increasing the selection and changing the assortment towards the introduction of new, unique products contributes to increased attendance and increased competitiveness.

According to the survey, people's preferences were also revealed according to what they would rather have for breakfast. According to the indicators, the most popular products are fruit smoothie, fresh fruits and berries, porridge with seeds, scrambled eggs.

These products will already be considered popular with guests and they are related to brain food products. To make them related more to brain food and to make them more interesting this type of products can be suggested to offer at the hotel:

- Green tea smoothie with mint, kiwi and strawberries and a pinch of cinnamon;
- Dessert from different layers of natural yogurt, fresh blueberries and crumbs of ginger cookies;
- Oatmeal with sunflower seeds and ground hazelnuts and a pinch of turmeric;
- Scrambled eggs with fried broccoli.

Mikkeli mostly consists of business tourists. For them, there are not so many possibilities to choose. That is why brain food provides a lot of advantages for the commissioner. Brain food concept will help to:

- increase competitiveness
- attract new clients
- increase relationship with regular customers
- develop hotel using new trends in the industry
- explore customer preferences
- show that the hotel cares about customers

## REFERENCES

Alban, D., Alban, P. 2019. The MIND Diet: How to Eat for a Healthy Mind. E-article. Available at: <https://bebrainfit.com/mind-diet-recipes/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Alison, K., John, G., Staelin, R. 2007. How to Attract Customers by Giving Them the Short End of the Stick. Article. Journal of Marketing Research, 44.

Avena, N. 2015. Hedonic Eating: How the Pleasure of Food Affects Our Brains and Behavior. Oxford University Press, 221.

Clark, M., Wood, R. 1998. Consumer loyalty in the restaurant industry: a preliminary exploration of the issues. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 10, 139–144.

Dearing, T. 2019. How eating eggs can help boost your brain power. E-article. Available at:

[https://www.nj.com/healthfit/2017/05/how\\_eggs\\_can\\_help\\_boost\\_your\\_brain\\_power.html](https://www.nj.com/healthfit/2017/05/how_eggs_can_help_boost_your_brain_power.html) [Accessed 17 February 2020].

EAT GOOD The Finnish Dietary Guidelines. 2015. Available at: <http://syohyvaa.fi/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Fazer. Brainhow food. Available at: <https://www.fazergroup.com/well-being/brainhow/brain-friendly-ingredients/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Fazer. 2020. Brain Food – kohti kokonaisvaltaista hyvinvointia. Webpage. Available at: <https://www.raflaamo.fi/fi/radisson-blu-brain-food> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Goodnews journal. 2016. Finland one of world's healthiest countries. Available at: <https://www.goodnewsfinland.com/finland-one-world-s-healthiest-countries/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].



Gorin, A. 2020. 25 Brain-Boosting Foods That May Keep You Sharp. E-article. Available at: <https://www.thehealthy.com/aging/mind-memory/foods-that-will-make-you-smarter/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Gursoy, D. 2018. The Routledge Handbook of Hospitality Marketing. Book. Routledge, 652.

Islamia, X., Mulolli, E. 2018. Using Management by Objectives as a performance appraisal tool for employee satisfaction. Future Business, 94-108.

Jennings, K. 2017. 11 Best Foods to Boost Your Brain and Memory. E-article. Available at: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/11-brain-foods> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Johns, N., Pine, R. 2002. Consumer behavior in the food service industry: a review. International Journal of Hospitality 21, 119-134.

Kotler, P., Bowen, J., Makens, J., Baloglu, S. 2017. Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism. Book. Pearson, 681.

Kotler, P. Keller, K. 2016. Marketing Management. Book. Pearson, 834.

Magaletska, I., Vinogradova, D., Popenko, V. 2015 Guidelines for developing healthy nutrition in business hotel. E-article. Available at: <http://journals.uran.ua/sciencerise/article/viewFile/48285/44563> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Mäkelä, J., Rautavirta, K. 2018. Chapter 5 - Food, Nutrition, and Health in Finland. Nutritional and Health Aspects of Food in Nordic Countries. Academic Press 16, 127-143.

Marcason, W. 2015. What Are the Components to the MIND Diet? E-article. Available at: [https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672\(15\)01251-4/fulltext](https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(15)01251-4/fulltext) [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Marriott hotel. 2020. The mind menu. Webpage. Available at: <https://marriott-hotels.marriott.com/mind-menu/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Mosconi, L. 2018. Brain food: the surprising science of eating for cognitive power. Avery, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 368.

Nancy, B. 2018. These Brain Foods Can Improve Your Thinking and Mood. E-article. Available at: <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/brain-foods-improve-thinking-and-mood/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Nativa World.Travel Magazine. 2019. When Brain Food Supports Business Travel. E-article. Available at <https://www.nativa-world.com/brain-food-supports-business-travel/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Newman, E. 2016. Give Choices to Customers. E-article. Available at: <https://corp.yonyx.com/customer-service/give-choices-to-customers/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Oflazoglu, S. 2017. Qualitative versus Quantitative Research. Book. IntechOpen, 110.

Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., Berry, L. 1986. SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring customer perceptions of service quality. Journal of Retailing, 12-40.

Plonsky, L., Gurzynski - Weiss, L. 2014. Research Methods. Book chapter, 31-49. Available at: [https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1474606/1/Plonsky\\_Gurzynski-Weiss\\_2014\(RM\).pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1474606/1/Plonsky_Gurzynski-Weiss_2014(RM).pdf) [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Postillion Hotels. 2020. Brain Food. Webpage. Available at: <https://www.postillionhotels.com/en-gb/company/over-ons/brainfood#> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Revine magazine. 2020. Hospitality Trends: The Latest Trends in The Hospitality Industry. E-article. Available at: <https://www.revfine.com/hospitality-trends/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Scandic. 2017. Aamiainen konseptikasikirja. Scandic Hotels OY, 20.

Scandic Mikkeli, 2020. Webpage. Available at:

<https://www.scandichotels.com/hotels/finland/mikkeli/scandic-mikkeli/restaurant-bar> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Preddy, S. 2011. How to Run a Successful Design Business: The New Professional Practice. Gower Publishing, 434.

Vannette, D. 2015. 10 Tips for Building Effective Surveys. E-article. Available at: <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/10-tips-for-building-effective-surveys/> [Accessed 17 February 2020].

Wenk, J. 2014. Your Brain on Food: How Chemicals Control Your Thoughts and Feelings. Oxford University Press, 233.

1. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your occupation?

- student
- employee
- pensioner
- unemployed
- Other:

3. For what reasons do you travel most often:

- Business travel
- Travel with family
- Travel for fun
- Wellbeing travel
- Other:

4. How often do you use hotel services?

- weekly
- monthly
- few times per year
- seldom

5. How would you rate the importance of breakfast at the hotel? (1 is not important at all, 5 is very important)

6. If the hotel offered brain food on its breakfast menu, would you appreciate it? (Brain food - food believed to be beneficial to the brain, especially in increasing intellectual capabilities)

- not at all
- little
- fairly much
- very much

7. Would you rather have a hotel with a brain food service than a hotel without this service? (with the condition that all other services are the same)

- absolutely yes
- almost certainly
- perhaps
- absolutely no

8. Rate the attractiveness of «brain food» service for you from 1 to 5 (where 1 is not interesting at all, 5 is very interesting)



9. Which of these products would you prefer for breakfast?

- fruit smoothie
- vegetable smoothie
- fruit&vegetable smoothie
- fresh berries and fruits
- fresh vegetables
- Other:
- nuts
- fish (sandwich with red fish)
- boiled eggs
- scrambled eggs
- porridge with seeds

Done