Building a successful and recognizable brand for GastroBar Saimaa

Abstract

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Title of the thesis
Building a successful and recognizable brand for GastroBar Saimaa

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Abstract
We live in a world where brands have become an integral part of life; for a business to be successful, it must be easily identifiable. Customers get a clear first impression from branding, and they have a good idea of what to expect from the business. Consumers are more likely to purchase goods or services from well-known brands than from unknown businesses.
The case company in this study is GastroBar Saimaa, a unique concept business in LAB University of Applied Sciences focusing on organization of pop-up restaurants by students of Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty. The main aim of the research is to analyse the current image of GastroBar Saimaa by conducting a research and offer ways of developing it further.
The research begins with an overview of the subject, the thesis structure, and the research methodology. The authors explain the main principles of brand building based on various academic sources in the theoretical section. The empirical section contains research data as well as a detailed review of the findings that is used to address the study questions. The data was collected by using self-administered survey as well as interview with the owners of the case company. The brand building strategy for GastroBar Saimaa is then based on primary and secondary data. As part of this report, recommendations for further analysis are made.
This study is intended for GastroBar Saimaa employees as well as everyone interested in brand building in the Food and Beverage industry. It may also be useful for other organizations with a similar business model.

Keywords
Brand, brand identity, brand image, brand building

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1   Introduction

1.1   Research background

We live in the world of consumerism culture where brands became an important part of life; to be successful, a company must be easily recognizable. By definition, branding is a marketing process in which name, design or certain symbol are created to make the company easy to identify among the competitors. Branding makes a strong initial impression on customers and gives them a certain idea of what to expect from the company. In most cases consumers tend to buy products or services from popular brands rather than from no-name companies. They wish to buy from a brand which one way or another reflects their own personal identity, or the one they want to create (Slade-Brooking 2016, 11). A brand is meant to be a representation of business and how one wishes to be perceived. It is crucial for a company to build a brand because of the potential benefits it may bring, such as stronger market positioning and increased awareness.

The case company in this research is GastroBar Saimaa, a unique concept business at LAB University of Applied Sciences focusing on organization of pop-up restaurants by students of the Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty. The creators of the company have shown their interest in creating the brand image and gave the authors the permission to offer a brand building plan with an opportunity to implement it if successful.

The aim of this study is to analyse the current image of GastroBar Saimaa by conducting a research and offer ways of developing it further. The authors will study the concept of brand building, image, and identity; thus, the reader shall get a thorough understanding of the basic concepts of brand building. Moreover, a logo and promotional materials design will be proposed. The case company may use the analysed data from the research, brand de-sign materials and authors' suggestions in their further development. This thesis will be focused solely on the case company but also may be helpful in brand building of businesses with similar concept.

The topic is important because it might leverage the potential development of the case company and make it more visible to the target customers, thereby making it more profitable. Although Gastro Bar Saimaa has its own identity and personality, it lacks the visual representation to be considered a strong brand. The authors believe that the study will help with the issue. The study may be beneficial for LAB University of Applied Sciences and its students. The success of the brand is linked to profitability, therefore the more exposure the brand gets, the more valuable it becomes. Making GastroBar Saimaa a strong brand may

not only have the potential to bring additional profit to the university but also make the image even more appealing for the potential students.

1.2 Research objectives, questions and limitations

This thesis will focus on the process of brand building for a food and beverage service provider, GastroBar Saimaa, which is a part of LAB University of Applied Sciences' Skinnarila campus. Before starting the thesis, the company had already thought about the name, slogan and logo and had tried to envision the way it was going to look. However, due to the lack of time and resources, supervisors of GastroBar Saimaa have given the authors of the thesis an opportunity to build a brand for them. GastroBar Saimaa is looking to create a recognizable brand identity for its location and services and the authors' exact objective is to create a recognizable and successful brand for GastroBar Saimaa.

Since the thesis will focus on the process of brand building, the authors will propose a direction in which the brand should be built and describe every step of the process to ensure success of the proposal. Additionally, we will provide examples of marketing materials which can be utilized in the future in the channels that are owned by GastroBar Saimaa.

The main aim of the thesis is to find an answer to the question: "**What kind of brand does GastroBar Saimaa have?".**

The study also aims to answer sub-questions such as:

• What kind of value does GastroBar Saimaa offer to its customers?

• How to build a brand image of GastroBar Saimaa to make it more appealing for the customers?

Based on the nature of research questions, the most appropriate research method was chosen. The authors believe that qualitative research would be the best to suit the concept of the study and give the detailed answer to the research questions.

Furthermore, it is important to define the limitations of this thesis. This study will focus only on the process of brand building. It will not include concepts which are critical for the process of brand building and will not focus on the management of the brand. Moreover, as mentioned before, the authors will present marketing materials examples in the channels owned by GastroBar Saimaa. However, the thesis will not cover marketing communications and public relations. It will be presented only as an example. Likewise, this thesis will not include budgeting and money-related issues because the authors' main concern is to create a brand identity for GastroBar Saimaa. Additionally, it is important to mention the unusual nature of

the business, as it has an unconventional service organization and provision method, referred to as "pop-up". Consequently, the research in this thesis may require a special approach. It also means that other restaurants may not be able to use our thesis as a reference or a model to build their own brand.

1.3   Research methods

According to the definition, research is a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase the understanding of a certain topic or the issue. Generally, it consists of three main steps: posing a question; collecting and analysing data; presenting an answer to the question. (Creswell 2015, 3.) The research can be approached by using two different methods – quantitative or qualitative. The choice between these two depends on the nature of the problem needed to be researched. In Figure 1, the authors have outlined the main research approach and method used in this study.

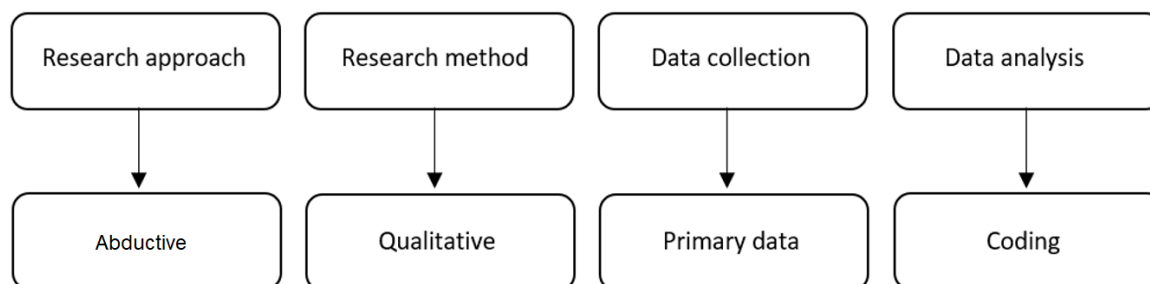| Research approach	Research method	Data collection	Data analysis
Abductive	Qualitative	Primary data	Coding

Figure 1. Research methods outline

The first thing to consider is the philosophy of the study and the approach to theory development. Research philosophy is the first layer of the research onion and the most crucial one since it is the whole basis of the study. According to the definition, research philosophy is a certain belief or the main idea about the collection and analysis of the collected data. Choosing the research philosophy influences the researcher's strategy and approach to the study. The philosophy of this study is pragmatism since it has an emphasis on practical solutions and outcomes and aligns with the research problems and questions. Pragmatism allows the researcher to choose from a range of methods. In this case, the authors focus on the qualitative one. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 130-145.)

After deciding on the research philosophy, the next step is to choose the research approach. There are three different approaches: deductive, inductive, and abductive. Each of them describes the approach to theory development. The abductive approach combines both deductive and abductive one, where the researcher moves back and forth between theory and data. This method is suitable for most business and management research and allows

the authors to continue with qualitative and quantitative methods, which fit the topic of brand building perfectly. Choosing an abductive approach is wise in this situation, since achieving pure induction or deduction is rather difficult. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 155-156.)

In this research, the authors decided to conduct qualitative research using a survey as an instrument. The reason behind choosing qualitative research is that it will give a broader understanding of respondents' views and opinions. Quantitative research, on the other hand, provides numerical data and is mostly suitable for statistical research. The topic of this thesis asks for a deeper perspective, therefore quantitative method would be less appropriate. Qualitative research gives the opportunity to ask open-ended questions, which allows the authors to get greater insight into respondents' emotions about the current situation of the brand and perhaps new perspectives and ideas. (Creswell 2015, 19.)

In order to collect the data for the research, the authors of the thesis decided to use an internet survey. A survey is a general term which includes all methods of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. An Internet survey is a part of a self-completed type of survey, in which the respondent is accessing and completing the question without any interference or observation from the researcher. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 503-506.) In addition to the survey, the interview with the owners of GastroBar Saimaa is conducted to understand the current state of the business as well as the mission and vision to assist the authors in the brand building strategy. An interview is a dialogue between two or more people where the interviewer asks open questions and listens to the respondents to gather data related to the issue of the study. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 434-435.) This interview is conducted to help the authors with development of the case company's branding strategy and logo creation.

Afterwards, collected data will be analysed, going from the full data to the general codes and themes. It is important to keep in mind that qualitative research, unlike quantitative, is interpretative by its nature, meaning that authors will bring their own perspective to the data interpretation. To analyse the large amount of qualitative data, the coding method will be used. Coding is the process of segmenting and labelling text to form certain themes and descriptions in the data. (Creswell 2015, 244-252.)

After the process of coding the data, findings will be presented in the form of narrative discussion reflecting the respondents' opinions. The next step will be interpreting and summarising analysed data, including personal reflections on the results, comparison to the theoretical literature, study limitations and suggestions for future research. Interpretation and reflection will be based on the collected data as well as the authors' personal experience

and observations of GastroBar Saimaa. Ethical issues, validity and reliability of the research will also be discussed in this chapter of the thesis.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis is based on the combination of theoretical and empirical parts following the structure shown in Figure 2.
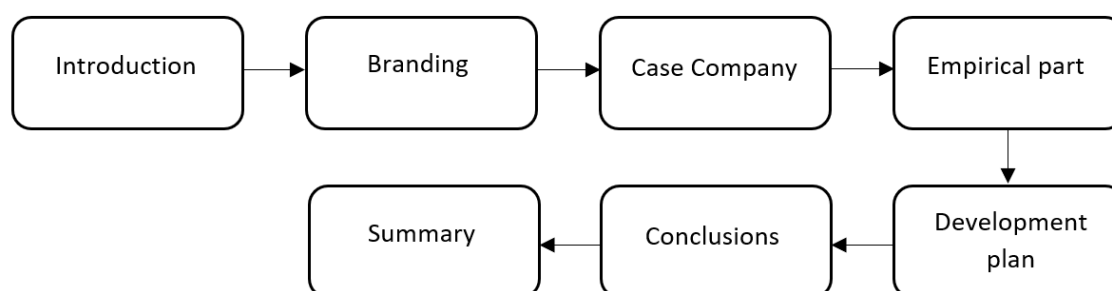
Figure 2. Thesis structure

First chapter is dedicated to the general information about the thesis and provides brief information on the research background, main goals and objectives, research questions and methods, and outline of theoretical framework.

The second chapter introduces the reader to the essential information on branding and its main concepts and models. Future research and empirical part are based on the theory given in this chapter. The main objective of the theoretical part of the thesis is to introduce the reader to the major concepts of a brand and its elements. After studying the literature, theoretical knowledge will be used to create a branding strategy for the case company. First, the key definition of the brand will be reviewed, followed by its aspects such as brand positioning, brand equity, and brand identity. Visual identity will also be briefly touched to gather theoretical information for the logo creation process. The last chapters of the theoretical framework will be devoted to several brand models which the authors will use to apply them for the further development of the empirical part.

The next two chapters are focused on the empirical part of the study, overall view on the case company, collected data analysis and suggestion of the detailed development of the brand based on the research findings. In the final chapter, the authors will provide a brief summary of the study and offer recommendations for further research.

2 Branding

This chapter is dedicated to presenting a theoretical framework for the study that includes main concepts and models related to the brand building process. The main aim is to provide the reader with the information used in the empirical part, explain the key definitions and how they contribute to the actual brand building process.

2.1 Concept of branding

2.1.1 Definition of a brand

The concept of branding has existed for thousands of years. The practice of marking own belongings can be found in cave paintings, even though it got its name much later. Logos and slogans did not exist at that time, but certain engravings existed to distinguish one work from another. Men began to mark objects to reflect an individual's relation to a certain group or indicate ownership of property. Ancient civilizations branded their cattle with hot irons (the tradition is still sometimes used by western cowboys). According to Giles Lury, author of "Brandwatching: Lifting the Lid on Branding", one of the first-known trademarks emerged around 9000 years ago when one Roman oil-lamp maker was stamping the word "Fortis" on his products (Figure 3). (Slade-Brooking 2016, 12-16.)

Figure 3. Factory lamps made in Roman Empire (Slade-Brooking 2016)

During the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century (around 1760-1820), mass distribution of products began due to the rapidly growing population of cities. The rise in literacy among citizens has led to the popularity of different forms of mass communication such as newspapers and created a platform for advertising. Ways of doing business have changed. Manufacturers started developing communication strategies which eventually gave birth to the concept of branding as how we understand it today. But why are customers choosing one brand over another? The answer is simple: trust. Brands back then and now offered

real consumer benefits, higher standards and built their customer relationships throughout the years, earning a strong position in the consumer market. It is hard to say exactly when the concept of branding was fully realized. Many authors argue that modern branding was developed at the end of the 20th century when companies along with marketing managers changed their approach and began to create long-term 'brand strategies' which were supported by research into consumer behaviour. In the last few decades, with the integration of the Internet into our everyday lives, there have been significant changes in customer communication and behaviour. The Internet has provided brands with a great easy way of two-way communication between individuals and companies, allowing them to engage and interact with potential consumers, therefore maintaining a prominent presence in the minds of consumers. (Slade-Brooking 2016, 18.)

The concept of brand has many definitions and by this day stays the point of disagreement between experts as each of them comes up with their own definition or certain nuance. Keller (2013, 30) claims that according to the American Marketing Association, a brand is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller and differentiate them from those of competition." Furthermore, Aaker (1991, 21) suggests that a brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or group of sellers and differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors.

Moreover, there are other definitions of the word brand. Hammond (2011, 7) defines a brand as "the total emotional experience a customer has with your company and its product or service". Brakus (2009) defines a brand as a label, designating ownership by a firm, which we experience, evaluate, have feeling towards, and build associations with, to perceive value (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 4). A brand is something more than a logo, product, or service. It is also the perception and feelings that the consumer has about a certain product, service, or company, that is closely associated with a logo or brand. (McCartney 2012, 3.)

It is understandable that a brand is much more than a combination of symbols and trademarks. It embodies a set of unique values, culture, and a promise to deliver consistent quality of products and services to consumers each time they purchase them. Brands are not trying to be just visual but also seek a deeper level of connection with a customer to create an emotional bond and a long-lasting relationship. If earlier on, the brand existed as a tool to sell more products and services, now these products are made to sustain and boost the

brand's success. The way a brand can represent itself and its position on the market eventually becomes more important than the 'real, tangible' thing a brand represents. (Slade-Brooking 2016, 12.)

Supporting these definitions, Aaker presents a model that helps to see that a brand includes much more than associated product or service (Figure 4). From this model, a brand is not only a product and incorporates such concepts as user imagery, self-expressive benefits, emotional benefits, brand-customer relationships, symbols, brand personality, organizational associations, and country of origin. (Aaker 2010, 68.)
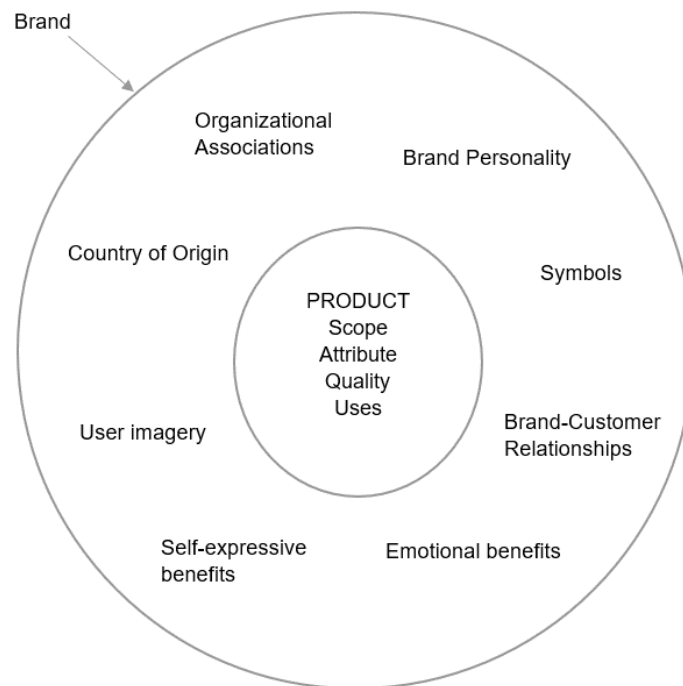

Figure 4. A brand is more than a product (Aaker, 2010)

Each position in the outer circle contributes to brand identity. Brand identity, as described by Aaker, is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. The associations are there to represent the values and essence of the brand and they help establish a relationship with the customer by creating value via functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits. (Aaker 2010, 68.)

Johansson & Carlson offer their view on what makes a good and strong brand and what it does for consumers and firms (Figure 5). Each aspect will be discussed in later chapters as this section focuses on the essence of the brand concept without going into details. Johansson & Carlson compare the brand with a person – it may be born small and given a name, so in time it may grow and become well-known, and, like a mature, well-known person, a brand will have identity, image, and personality, three main components of a strong brand

as seen in Figure 5. They provide a brand with a solid basis and play important roles in management. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 3-6.)

What a brand is...

Identity
-Name
-Logo
-Colors
-Products
-Services

Image
-Positive Associations
-Negative Associations
-Promises

Personality
-Traits the brand elicits
-Gestalt of these traits

Brand

What a brand does for...

Consumers
-Reduces psychological risk
-Reduces functional risk
-Supports self-expression
-Simplifies decision-making

Firms
-Provides strategic protection
-Supports pricing power
-Gives leverage in the channel
-Reduces entry barriers
-Supports product line extension
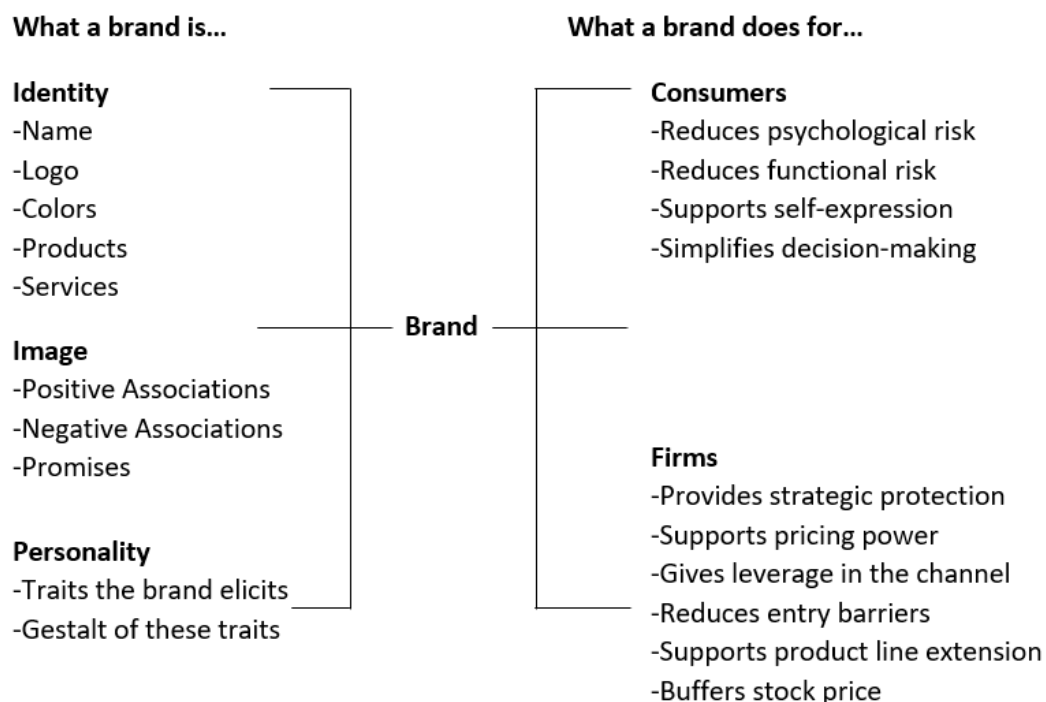-Buffers stock price

Figure 5. How brands work (Johansson & Carlson 2015)

A brand itself consists of many elements (name, logo, symbol, design and so on) which have significant importance in how consumers perceive it. It is an intangible product in a certain way, one that adds value that makes it different from competitors' products. If managed carefully and correctly, brands will offer a considerable number of benefits to consumers and firms and provide competitive advantage. (Keller 2013, 61.)

In the next chapter, the authors would like to define the emotional side of branding, focusing on brand image, identity, personality and how it affects success..

2.1.2 Importance of branding

In this chapter, the authors will examine the benefits of branding both from the consumer point of view and the company itself. First, when a company invents a new brand, it automatically defends it from being copied by competition. Good brands represent a set of important standards in the eyes of customers which add value to the products and services they offer. (Hart & Murphy 1998, 3-4.)

Johansson & Carlson (2015) explain the importance of brands and what they do separately for consumers and firms. For consumers, a brand reduces functional risk meaning that the customer has a trust in the quality of the brand's products and services making the buying

process faster since there is no need to test the product or ask for the third-party advice. Developed brands with a good image also have an influence on psychological risks. As social creatures, humans care for approval from others, therefore, want their choice of product to be supported. Brands with a big follower group reduce the social-psychological risk. Maintaining those two factors is not enough, brand now is a tool for self-expression which gives the customer a certain sense of achievement. This is more applicable to luxury brands but not necessary always the case. The brand helps the customer to support, or even create a certain personality which the customer wants to show off to the world which is linked to social-psychological factor of a brand. What is curious, the role of branding varies depending on the category of product. There are several elements influencing the final decision depending on the category of the product: emotional involvement and rational analysis. In case of low-involvement products (such as cleaning detergents or copy paper) brand loyalty is a strong factor, a customer will rather buy a familiar to them product, this is a matter of a habit. In low-involvement emotional-based products same logic is applied. These are a great example of so called "impulse" purchases, if the customer already knows the product, they are more willing to buy it again. As for expensive products where the risk of disappointment is high, the brand matters the most. Consumers think of all the pros and cons and tend to check the reviews more often to ensure the reliability and stability of the products or services. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 10-17.)

There are a number of benefits brands do for firms. Johansson & Carlson divide those into four main categories: pricing advantages, channel advantages, entry barriers and stock market (Figure 6).

- PRICING ADVANTAGES
  - Reduces customer price sensitivity, yields a price premium

- CHANNEL ADVANTAGES
  - Increases channel leverage, facilitates entry into distribution

- ENTRY BARRIERS
  - Increases customer loyalty, improves customer retention, lower customer acquisition costs

- STOCK MARKET
  - Brand equity is a major intangible asset, raises share values

Figure 6. What a strong brand does to firms (Johansson & Carlson 2015)

Pricing advantage implies that the strong brand will have a benefit over the lesser-known ones because they add value to the product, therefore their prices can be relatively higher.

Weaker brands usually have no other choice but to offer price reduction to compete on the market. Moreover, strong brands are better recognized in the stock market resulting in grater share prices. Channel advantages stand for brand's possibilities to easily access bigger variety of distribution channels and power to negotiate better prices. For new companies without distinguished brand identity this can be a real issue due to high commissions and additional fees charges by retailers. Having a strong brand with loyal customers will give a considerable competitive advantage creating an entry barrier for other companies with the same type of business. At the same time, well-known brands will not face the same issue of entering new or related market as well as international environment. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 18-21.)

In summary, to consumers, brand has a power to change their perception and future experience with a certain product or service. It provides unique, personal to each consumer meanings that help them with self-expression, simplify their daily activities, especially the decision-making process, and reduce possible risks which is priceless in the current complicates and fast lifestyle. (Keller 2013, 35.) Companies benefit from branding by having a monopolistic advantage in pricing and distribution channel penetration. In addition, brand protects the company from new competitors by creating an entry barrier. Last, but not least, investors trust brands better because of the possible risk reduction which results on higher share price of the stock. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 22.) Even considering how long, expensive, and time-consuming process of building a strong, in the long run the company will have a stronger position on the market and have additional valuable benefits which will distinguish it from the competition and lesser-known bands.

2.2   Elements of a brand

2.2.1   Brand identity

Referring to the definition the authors have given in the prior section of this thesis, they believe that for the readers to understand the concept of brand identity, it is necessary to define it in a more practical and lucid form. Johansson & Carlson do exactly that, characterizing brand identity as a "passport" of the brand, which includes nationality, name, birth date, product category and other aspects. Additionally, they also describe identity as an answer to the question, "Who are you?" As mentioned in the previous paragraph, identity is fundamental to creating and maintaining a strong brand. Johansson & Carlson, in their work, create a model, which encapsulates the process of evolution of a strong brand (Figure 7). A strong brand has a unique and distinct identity. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 6-7.)
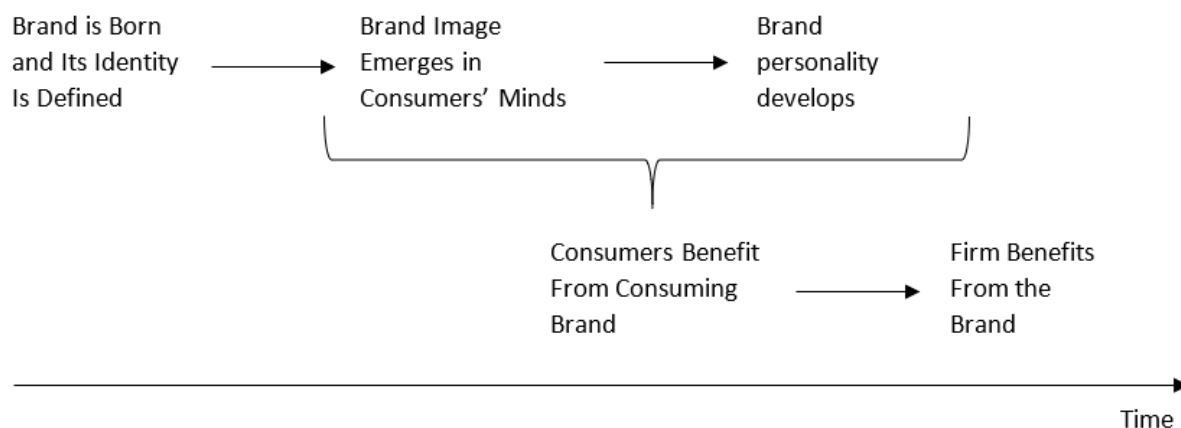
Figure 7. Evolution of a Strong Brand (Johansson & Carlson 2015)

In order for the people to understand the complex nature of brand identity, Aaker and Joachimsthaler have developed a model which clearly represents the parts of which brand identity consists and the perspective from which the reader can see brand identity.
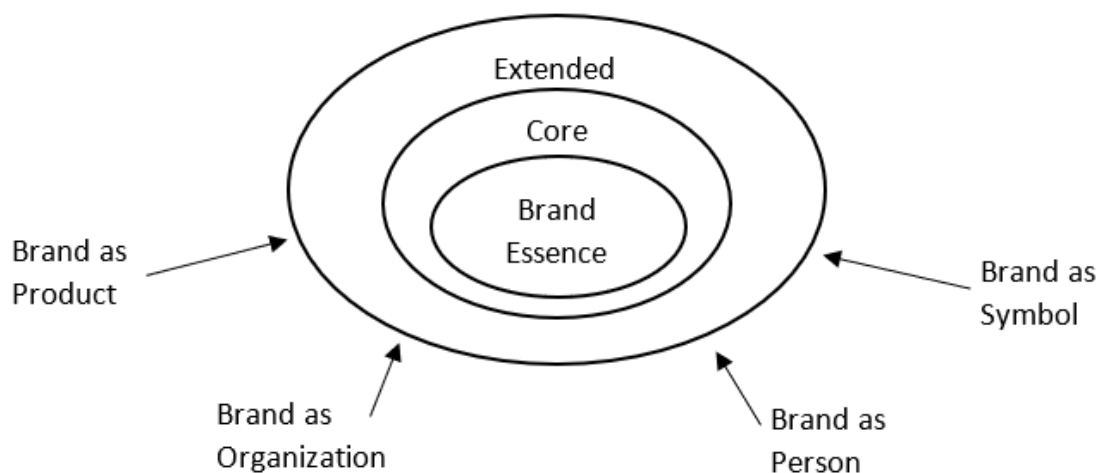

Figure 8. Brand Identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000)

As the model suggests, brand identity structure consists of three fields that are defined by the brand manager. The most important area of the Figure 8 is "Core" because it reflects the strategy and values that brand has to offer, while also trying to resonate with customers and differentiate themselves from other brands. Core brand almost always remains constant, even if brand decides to go to new markets and produce new products or services. Extended identity includes everything that is not included in core identity, organized into meaningful groupings, which provide texture and completeness to the entire image of identity. Brand essence, while considered to be less important and more taxing for a company to create, is a single thought that captures the soul of the brand. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 44-45.)

Aaker has developed this model before, although he did not include brand essence in it until the 2000's. However, he included an excessively detailed description of brand identity perspectives, which are seen in the model as "Brand as…" sections. In total, there are four perspectives of a brand: brand as product, brand as organization, brand as person and brand as symbol. The perspective of a brand as a product includes association with a product or service category, creating associations for the brand on this basis. It includes quality, value, product scope and attributes, users and other. For example, if the authors of this thesis were to ask a reader to name a brand which product category is food, then many would respond with popular fast-food brands, like McDonalds or Hesburger. Brand ties with product groups are really strong. Brand as an organization is presented as an attribute of values and location of the company itself, rather than its product. Brand as person refers to brand personality and brand as symbol usually refers to things that can represent a brand: logo, tagline, product, service – anything that represents a brand can be a symbol (Aaker 1996, 78-85.)

Continuing on the topic of identity, Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000), as well as Johansson & Carlson (2015), present the brand of BWM (Bayerische Motoren Werke) as an exemplary incorporation of brand essence into brand identity (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Logo and tagline of BWM (Johansson & Carlson 2015).

Johansson and Carlson suggest that BWM is a strong brand and customers know what stands behind it, because they meet the expectations that customers have (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 7). Aaker and Joachimsthaler suggest that BWM, in their tagline, encapsulate their brand essence by offering their customers a clear view of the functional benefits of products produced by them. It is important to understand, because not any tagline or slogan created by the company can act as a representation of their essence. While BWM describes itself as "The Ultimate Driving Machine", it is clear that the company is trying to position itself to be the best on the market. Other companies, for example, Apple with their tagline of "Think different" does not describe what a brand is, but rather what it does, which cannot be considered brand essence. (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000, 48-49.)

2.2.2 Brand image

Brand image as defined by Keller (2013), according to Johansson and Carlson, are percep-tions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. These associations come in all forms and may reflect characteristics of the product or aspects independent of the product itself. Thus, while brand identity is based on facts and what managers can control, brand image is determined by the perceptions of customers and outside observers. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 8.) Kapferer presents a great model of showing how brand image is formed (Figure 10).
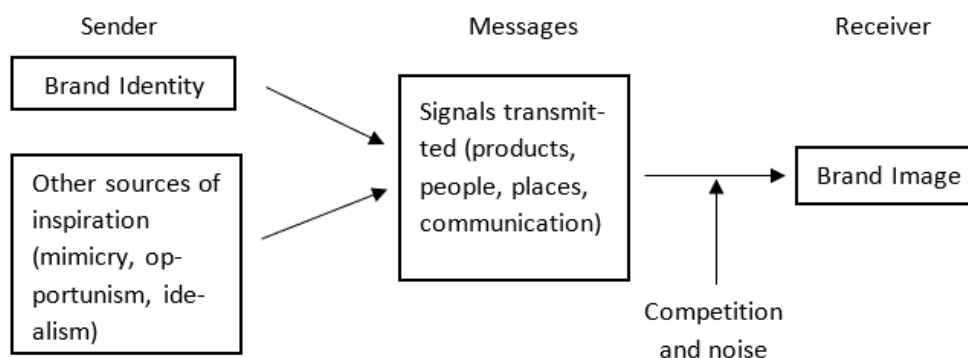

Figure 10. Identity and Image (Kapferer 2008)

In this model, Kapferer shows that a company can act as a "sender" and a consumer can act as a "receiver". In order for the consumer to create brand image in their head, they first have to be relayed certain "messages", which consist of products or services, people, places, and communication. Ultimately, this model represents that in order for the company to grow their image, they first must communicate their brand identity to their consumers. In order for consumers to create brand image in their head, they must connect the identity to something. In Kapferer's model, it is something tangible, like products or people. (Kapferer 2008, 174-175.) However, Johansson and Carlson (2015) go even further, and while they connect brand to image associations, which can be represented as people or products, ultimately, they believe that the company and its identity and image are tied to the product category that they are set in. This, in the end, ties to the Aaker's and Joachimsthaler's model of brand identity.

2.2.3 Visual identity of a brand

In this chapter the authors would like to discuss the visual identity of brands and why the design has such a significance in the brand building process. Certainly, branding is not solely a visual form of communication, there are far more possibilities to communicate a

certain message by appealing to all the human senses (Slade-Brooking 2016, 30). How-ever, here the authors would like to focus mainly on the visual identity of a brand.

It is well-known fact that people often judge books by their covers, no matter if it is fair or not, thus the perceived value of a product or service is frequently greater than the actual one. That is why visual identity is important to build trust among possible consumers. Like putting a face to the name, logos and visuals help people memorise the brand and the experiences related to that. (Airey 2010, 21.) Brand perception and appreciation are facili-tated by a visual identity that is easily recognizable. It is true that sight, more than any other senses, provides us with information about the world. There is a sequence of cognition which describes in which order individuals recognize and interpret sensory stimuli (Figure 11). (Wheeler 2018, 24.) Before any context and information, the customer will remember these elements, which explains the significance of visual identity while building a brand strategy.
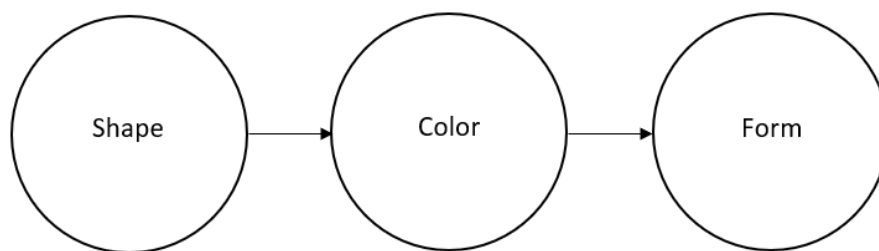

Figure 11. The sequence of cognition (Wheeler 2018, 149)

Visual identity is an important part of establishing a successful brand identity. In Figure 12, Wheeler presents his approach to the visual identity designing process. All of the aspects should be carefully considered and be aligned with the message the brand wants to send. (Wheeler 2018, 149.)
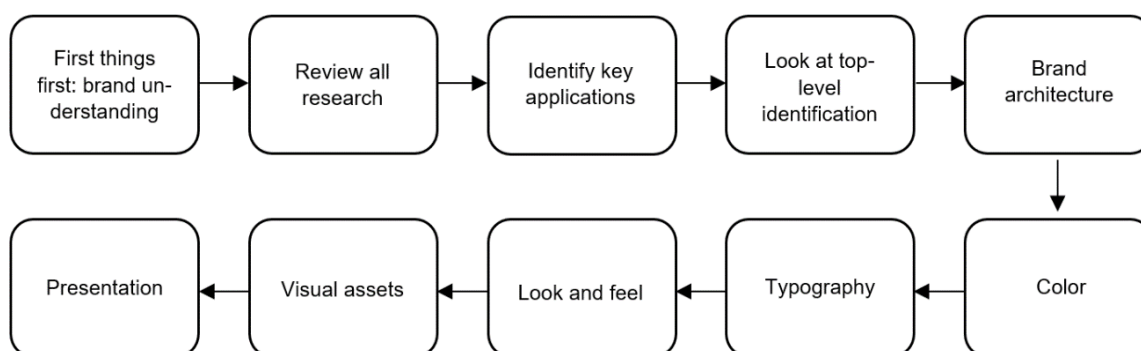

Figure 12. Designing brand identity (Wheeler 2018, 149)

All components of a visual language should be designed with the intention of improving brand strategy, each working on its own but together they create a whole which unifies and

distinguishes a brand from competition. Inevitably, the elements of a visual branding have a great effect on a customer. For instance, colour can evoke emotions and stimulate brand associations among buyers. They see the colour and instantly think of something familiar to us connected with that, it triggers memories. According to statistics, almost sixty percent of buying decisions are based on colour. (Wheeler 2018, 152-154.)

Developing a successful and strong brand image and identity demands an understanding of how fonts, colours and shapes convey particular emotions and unique meaning. Everything can be communicated by just a simple picture. Even brand positioning can be communicated visually, even though not so many consumers pay attention to it consciously. There are certain 'visual clues' which determine how a customer perceives the value of a product, service, and brand as a whole. (Slade-Brooking 2016, 55-57.)

2.2.4 Brand personality

Johansson and Carlson define brand personality as an amalgamation of consumer interaction and exposure to the brand. Consumers and non-consumers can observe the brand, its users, its advertisement, and other public materials. While, brand personality is tied to identity and brand image, it proceeds further in two ways. In the first way, the brand is personified and is given human characteristics (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 9), like gender, age, socioeconomic class and human personality traits like concern, warmth, sentimentality (Aaker 2010, 141). Aaker (2010) gives many examples of such personification. Aaker proceeds to highlight one in particular, which is Harley-Davidson – an American motorcycle manufacturer. Harley-Davidson personifies masculinity, ruggedness, and rebelliousness. Aaker describes it to be more than a product, claiming for many it is an attitude, an experience, and a lifestyle. However, there is also a second approach to creating brand personality. Johansson and Carlson (2015) suggest a second way in which brands try to connect the characteristics mentioned previously to a "typical" user of this particular brand. As an example, we are given a contrast of Apple and PC users. Apple's brand in their advertisements claim, that PC users are unimaginative and strict, while Apple's users are rebellious, creative, and independent. Consequently, these characteristics got attached to the users of their respective brands. Aaker (2010) also presents a model in which he describes what kind of factors can affect the creation of personality.

PRODUCT RELATED CHARACTERISTCS	NON-PRODUCT RELATED CHARACTERISTICS
Product category Package Price Attributes	User imagery Sponsorships Symbol Age Ad style Country of origin Company image CEO Celebrity endorsers

Figure 13. Brand Personality Drivers (Aaker, 2010)

Aaker presents us with a model (Figure 13), in which he defines the drivers of personality creation. He divides them into two categories: product related characteristics and non-product related characteristics. The first group includes everything that can be derived from the product, like its category, packaging, price, or attributes of a product. As mentioned previously, category plays a major part in defining brand's identity, image and personality, and Aaker reinforces that in his model. The latter group includes everything that is not related to the product itself, but rather to the company and the brand itself, like symbols, advertisements, company image or CEO. (Aaker 2010, 145-148.)

To measure the personality of a brand there are five defined dimensions in the United States: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness. These apply only for companies based in the US, because these dimensions were tested on the companies based there. Each dimension had certain characteristics tied to it. For example, excitement was given characteristics like daring and spirited, while competence was given characteristics like intelligent and successful (Aaker 1997). Aaker (2010) and Johansson & Carlson (2015) review this work in their books and proceed to draw certain conclusions. Aaker claims that these dimensions can describe a brand personality from the position of humane traits, while also providing richness to the scope that the brand might have. (Aaker 2010, 142-143.) Johansson & Carlson claim that brand personality transcends the specific product or service and involve more generalized traits and this study proves their point. And while some companies do not create a personality for their brand or they just do not want to, it helps gather like-minded consumers around them and cement the personification of the brand. (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 9-10). Brand personality helps to create recognition and awareness, because it is easier for people to attach to something humane, with traits

that are similar to human. Further building of recognition can also be helpful for creating and maintaining brand equity.

2.2.5 Brand equity

A variety of academics and marketing specialists have given brand equity a definition. Brand equity is defined as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add or subtract from the value provided by product (Aaker 1991, 15). Another definition is given by Keller, that described consumer-based brand equity as differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand (Keller 2008, 48). Aaker and Keller (1990) give a definition to brand equity together in their work, describing it as net value of brand image. Kapferer (2008) defines brand equity as current financial value of the flow of future profits attached to the brand itself. In their work, Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan compare definitions given by academics and marketing executives and they conclude that both groups see brand equity similarly: added value either in financial terms or in how consumers perceive the brand. (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 100-101.)

However, for the reader to fully understand the concept of brand equity, it is necessary to talk about perspectives of brand equity: consumer-based brand equity and financially based brand equity. Financially based brand equity can be understood from the perspective of importance of brands in terms of their asset value to the company. In earlier times, the notion was that only traditional assets had value, like R&D, patents or any other. After 1980, when stronger brands started to emerge, financial and marketing specialists started to recognize the value of brand name (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 100-102). Kapferer claims that brand assets, like awareness, image, consideration affect future revenues of the brand (Kapferer 2008, 143-144). Strong brands possess less risks, because strong brands proceed to stay strong even during financial recession of their operations. Strong brands contribute to the financial value of the company in these aspects: high brand loyalty sustains future sales, greater trade cooperation and support, sustainable higher price points, higher margins versus competitors, low price elasticity, barrier to new competitors. In simpler words, strong brands with positive brand equity enjoy larger market share and generate greater profit. This makes brand even stronger. Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan provide a small model (Figure 14) of how strong brands generate greater profitability (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 100-102).
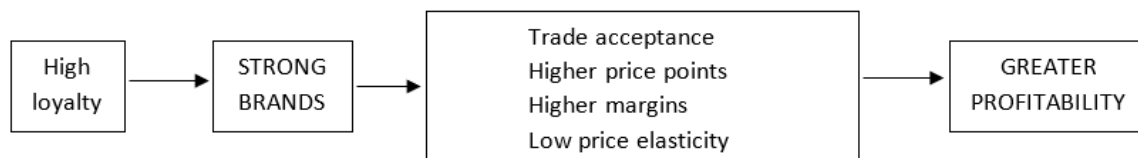
Figure 14. How strong brands generate greater profitability (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018)

While financial value of brand is important, many academics see it as a result of consumer-based brand equity and recognize certain superiority of consumer-based brand equity compared to financially based brand equity. For example, Kotler and Keller in their work recognize customer-based brand equity. It is defined as differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to marketing of that brand. Brand knowledge is defined as feelings, images, experiences, beliefs, and other associations which are connected to brand. This means that stronger brand, with better brand knowledge will have better response to marketing from the consumers (Kotler & Keller 2006, 277). Kapferer, as mentioned in the previous paragraph about financially based brand equity also puts big importance into brand assets, which are defined as part of consumer-based brand equity (Kapferer 2008, 143). Johansson and Carlson see brand equity in their work as measure of allegiance to the brand from its target segment. Brands with high equity usually boast deeper relationships with their customers, with favourable attitudes and high customer loyalty (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 30). Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan also believe that brand equity should be seen from the consumer perspective, reflecting overall attitude towards it and resulting in financial value. This attitude is created through brand associations. To summarize, consumer-based brand equity follows from the positive experience with the brand, beginning with getting familiar with the brand and gradually building relationship with it. This results in positive attitudes towards the brand, which in turn leads to higher brand equity.

In their work they also talk about Aaker's brand equity model (2010), which introduces major groups of assets in order to easily identify them: brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations (Figure 15) (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 103-104).
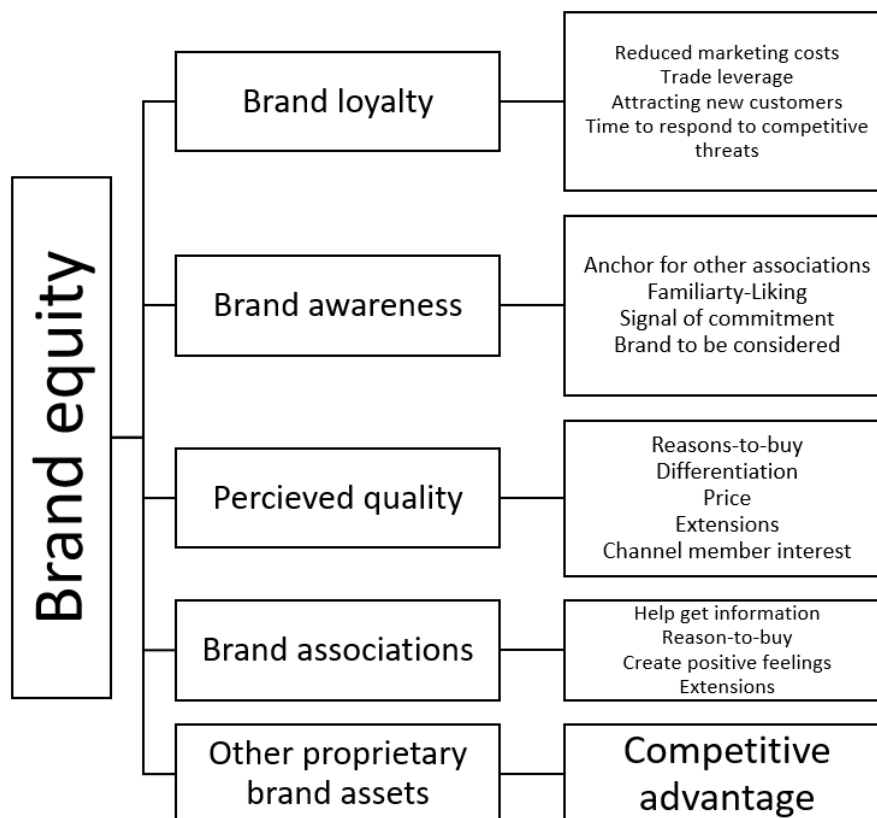
Figure 15. Capitalizing on the value of the brand name (Aaker, 2010)

All these categories define various attributes, emotional associations, and characteristics, that help create the needed positive attitude. Aaker also proceeds to show what kind of advantages or values brand equity offers to customers and firms alike. According to Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan, Keller (2008) suggests his own customer-based brand equity model, which consists of differential effect, brand knowledge and consumer response to marketing. It is implied in that model, that different brands are different, and consumers react differently to their advertising. Power of brands lies in what consumers know about the brand and their experience with it (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 103-104). Keller presents another set of elements which are used to create brand equity: memorability, meaningfulness, likability, transferability, adaptability and protectability. Brand identity, brand image and brand personality all contribute towards creating equity which also enhances the entire brand (Keller 2008, 47-49). Furthermore, Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan (2018) present a certain model, which shows evolution or progression of brand awareness and brand attitudes towards loyalty and overall stronger brand (Figure 16).
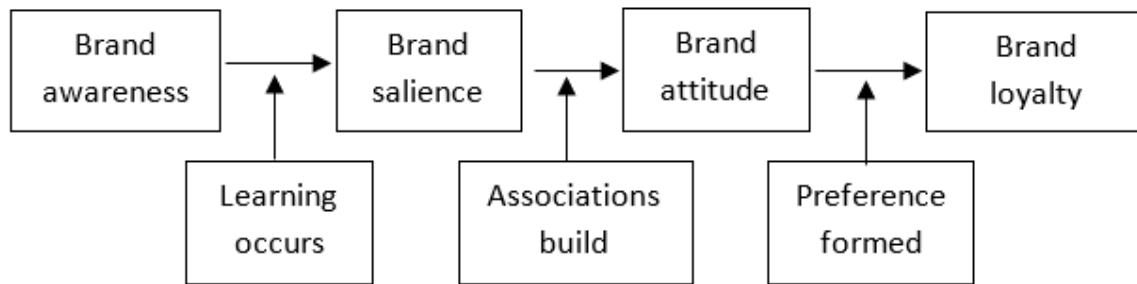
Figure 16. Brand awareness, salience, and attitude leading to brand loyalty

The first component of this model is brand awareness. Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan claim that in a study among managers, they were asked to identify things that give certain competitive advantage to businesses. Name recognition was third on the list. Schachter (2001) points out familiarity, which is crucial because it involves a feeling of knowing without having any specific details. Aaker (1998) suggests that with familiarity, brand awareness also brings a presence, substance, and commitment to brand. The next component is brand salience, which means the level of familiarity of a brand in certain situation. Brand attitude comes next and as mentioned before brand attitude is very important for creation of brand equity. It can be easily described as a function of all things known about the brand weighted by how important these things are to someone. The more a brand is seen as strong in terms of these characteristics, the more positive the consumer's attitude will be towards the brand, which in turn makes brand equity to be perceived to be stronger. These associations can be built on the basis of different attributes and characteristics, for example, Keller's or Aaker's attributes, which were described in previous paragraph. These associations created by brand attitude can be attached not only to products, but also to brand identity, personality, or image. As a result of strong brand equity, brand loyalty is formed. Brand loyal customers are described by Franzen (1999), according to Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan, to have high degree of bonding with the brand and to have no urge to switch. Loyalty which results from genuine preference of certain brand to others contributes to brand equity, however, if brand loyalty is habitual, it does not. Usually, high loyalty comes from high satisfaction with brand and its products or services. However, even highly satisfied customers can switch their preferred brand. It is manager's job to maintain high satisfaction of customers, but also control other brands which offer an opportunity for loyal customers to switch (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Parvan 2018, 106-112). To sum up, brand equity provides great value for firms, which wish to build and maintain it, and for customers, whose brand is focusing on creating equity from financially based and consumer-based perspectives.

2.2.6 Brand positioning

While it is important to build brand equity for the benefits of value, it is also important to relay what value the brand has to the consumers. This process of called brand positioning and is defined by Aaker as the process of actively communicating brand's value proposition to the target audience and demonstration of advantages over competing brands (Aaker 2010, 176). Kapferer defines it similarly to Aaker, claiming that positioning means emphasising the distinctive characteristics that make it a brand different from its competitors and appealing to the public (Kapferer 2008, 175). However, Kotler and Keller define positioning in a different manner, writing that it is an act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market. From their perspective, it is important for the company to locate the brand inside consumers' heads in order to maximize the potential benefit to the firm (Kotler & Keller 2006, 310). Johansson and Carlson also view it from Kotler's and Keller's position, emphasizing on defining target audience and competitors before diving into positioning the brand (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 50-51). Every author offers different takes on what brand positioning is, and they offer different elements that make up brand positioning. Aaker introduces a model (Figure 17) that helps us better understand what brand positioning is from his perspective by asking four questions: Which elements of brand identity (value proposition) should be part of the position? What are primary and secondary target audiences? What are the communication objectives? What will be the point of the advantage? (Aaker 2010, 176-184.)
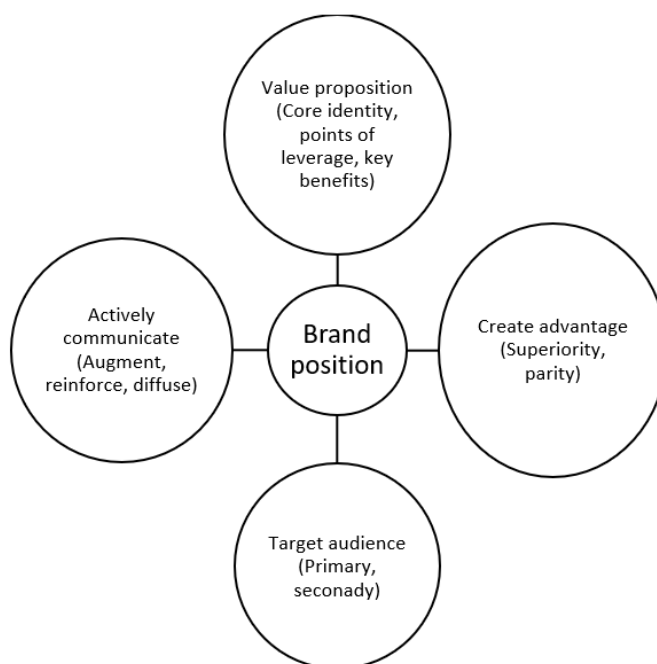

Figure 17. Brand position (Aaker 2010)

Aaker in his work proceeds to explain the model and the process that the brand should take to position itself. Firstly, brand is required to create the value proposition for itself. Aaker sees value proposition as a part of subset of brand identity and suggests that the brand should look to its core identity and identify points of leverage. After value proposition is formed, target audience needs to be selected and active communication commences. Aaker suggests that active communication is aimed at changing or strengthening the brand image and brand-customer relationship. There are three actions that can be realized with brand image as part of positioning: augmenting the image, reinforcing the image or diffusing the image. Depending on the needs of positioning, these actions can be taken to further the growth of brand image. After active communication, it is necessary for the brand to demonstrate an advantage when using it and differentiate itself from other brands. However, it is also suggested by Aaker that brand should not try to be superior in every aspect and choose its focus wisely. (Aaker 2010,176-183.)

Kotler and Keller suggest their own view of brand positioning and how it is formed. In order to start forming a membership, brand has to establish a competitive frame of reference. Such frame can be, for example, category membership – products or sets of products with which a brand competes and which function as close substitutes of this product or products. After that, brand needs to establish points-of-parity and points-of-difference. Points of parity, as defined by Kotler and Keller, are associations that your brand has but which can be shared with other similar brands. There are two categories of points-of-parity: category points and competitive points. Category points are associations that consumers see as essential to be a legitimate member of a certain category. For example, travel agency cannot be considered a travel agency unless it is able to make air and hotel reservations, offer packages and share other services with other companies. Competitive points can be defined as associations that try to negate competitor's points-of-difference. If a brand successfully negates these points, then the competing brand will be seen on par with your brand, which makes it harder to compete with you. Points-of-difference can be defined as attributes or benefits strongly associate with a brand, positively evaluate, and believe that they could not find to the same extent with a competitive brand. In simpler words, this is what makes brand different from other brands. In order to achieve points-of-parity, consumers need to see you as "good enough" for them among the competition in your category. In order to reach points-of-difference, the brand must demonstrate clear superiority to other brands in that aspect. After establishing your category membership, the brand must then choose what kind of points-of-parity and points-of-difference they wish to pursue and in order to do that, they need to establish 6 key factors: relevance, distinctiveness, believability, feasibility,

communicability, and sustainability. After that, the brand creates these points and proceeds to work on them. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 310-318.)

Johansson and Carlson present their view of positioning elements, while also adapting them from other academics and authors. In their view, brand positioning starts with positioning statement. Positioning statement can be defined as a statement that captures the desired brand position. It follows a standard template: brand is positioned towards targeted segment and offers product superior in terms of distinction to other competition. After positioning statement is defined, brand can move onto value proposition. Johansson and Carlson present in the similar way as Aaker: unique value of brand that is offered to costumers over competing brands. After combining positioning statement and value proposition, some brands develop brand platform. Brand platform is a comprehensive statement moving from the values to brand vision and communication strategy. The positioning and value proposition is often abbreviated into a slogan or mantra. Slogans is what traditionally used in advertising. Mantra, however, is not as widely used. Mantra is utilized to communicate the essence of the brand. It usually consists of 3 to 5 words that focus on brand's activities and avoid extending the brand too far. In order to build the positioning, the brands can use the positioning map, which is a mental map of consumer's minds. It can be depicted as two-dimensional graph and it usually contains functional, psychological-emotional and personality brand attributes characteristics. When selecting your target position, Johansson, and Carlson present three elements that can be considered: target segment, relevant competitors, and salient attributes. The first two attributes have already been mentioned in previous paragraphs. However, salient attributes offer an interesting adaptation of Kotler and Keller's ideas about points-of-parity and points-of-difference. In order to make your positive attributes more salient, the brand must stress positive points-of-difference over negative points-of-difference, using points-of-parity as a basis for it. They present this model (Figure 18) to better understand it (Johansson & Carlson 2015, 50-65).
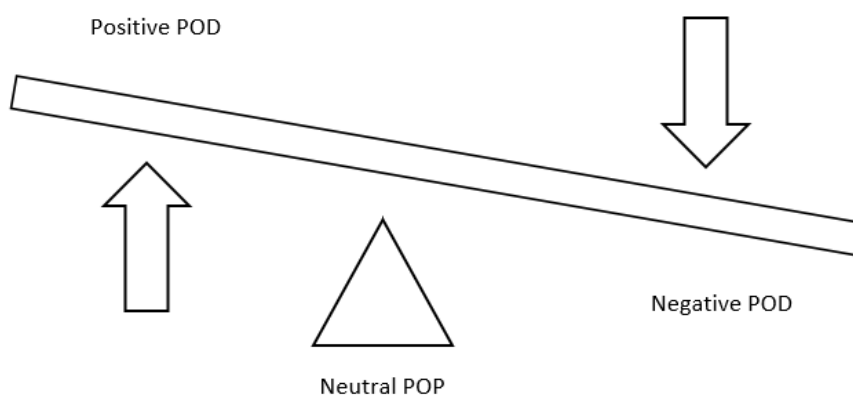

Figure 18. Making positive attributes more salient (Johansson & Carlson 2015)

To summarize brand positioning, we have to understand that academics view it differently, establishing their own elements that they deem necessary in order to create brand positioning. However, the positioning in all these perspectives have a similar outcome – positioning leads to differentiation of your brand from others through active communication.

2.3 Brand models

2.3.1 Brand essence wheel

In Figure 19, the authors present a brand essence wheel model. Brand essence wheel was created in 1995, by Bates Advertising Agency in order to help the company understand how customers view their brand. This model presents an efficient way of expressing the brand essence by highlighting unique points of the brand (Visual Paradigm Online). The authors of the thesis present an updated and modern version of the brand essence wheel mode, adapted by the professionals at Dachshund Digital marketing agency. In their article, they present this model as a template for businesses to use, in order to define their brand essence through collected data.

What does the brand do for the customer?

How would the customer describe the brand?

Facts & Symbols

Essence

Brand personality

How does the brand make customer look?
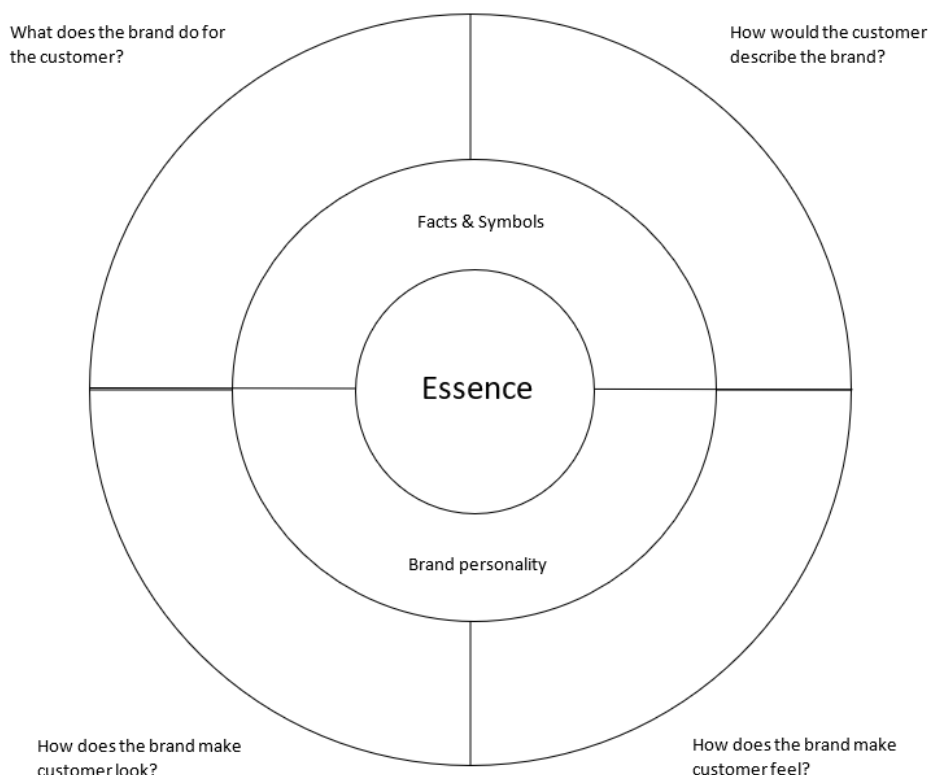
How does the brand make customer feel?

Figure 19. Brand essence wheel (Dachshund Digital 2019)

The brand essence wheel model consists of several parts: four outer parts, two inner parts and one central part. In order for the reader to understand the model better, the authors of

the thesis decided to elaborate each part in detail: how it is defined, what it consists of and what kind of role it plays. The four outer parts are questions, that have to be answered by the customers or by yourself, in order to understand the general image, the brand has. It consists of such questions, as: What does the brand do for you? How would you describe the brand? How does the brand make you look? How does the brand make you feel? All of these questions, as noted by Dachshund Digital, can be modified by changing words, like 'you' to 'the customer' or 'brand' to 'product'. To each section, multiple, simple answers are given, primarily focusing on one-word adjectives or single phrases. (Dachshund Digital, 2019.)

When all the words and phrases are collected, they are then used to define the inner parts of the model, labelled, 'facts & symbols' and 'brand personality'. In 'facts & symbols', certain factual information about the brand is gathered. If brand has positive points, for example, good quality of the products, it is put in that section. The authors of the thesis note, however, that the additions to this part can be done from previous parts, as well as on your own accord. In 'brand personality' section of the model, the brand is given more humane traits. These attributes make the brand feel alive, more human and more relatable to the customers of the brand. After these sections are defined, the essence of the brand begins to take shape. After combining all of the parts, the brand essence becomes more visible and easier to identify. After defining the essence, it must be applied to every aspect of the brand in order to work. (Dachshund Digital, 2019.)

In order to conclude the analysis of this model, the authors of the thesis believe that it will be beneficial to use when defining the brand identity for GastroBar Saimaa's brand due to its simplicity and overall comprehensiveness.

2.3.2 Brand identity planning model

Aaker and Joachimsthaler present a brand identity planning model (Figure 20). It was presented previously by Aaker in 1996, but the current model was modified, with core identity getting brand essence. For their thesis, the authors have adapted the model even further to suit the needs of brand building in GastroBar Saimaa. A part of this model was presented in brand identity part of this thesis, describing the brand identity and parts it consists of. However, this model cohesively connects every theoretical concept that was covered in the thesis and creates a great planning framework for the authors of the thesis to follow.

The model consists of three major parts: strategic brand analysis, brand identity system and brand identity implementation. The strategic brand analysis consists of customer analysis and self-analysis. The customer analysis entails the analysis of the current customers of

the company, with customer segmentation, motivation, and current trends. The self-analysis is the analysis of the existing brand of the company, its image, strengths, and organization values before the implementation of the new identity. This helps the authors of the thesis to establish what kind of band the company already has and use it as basis of creating a better brand identity. The next section is the brand identity system. It consists of explanation of brand identity, using an onion model with essence being in the center, followed by the core identity and extended identity. Essence could be described as the soul of the brand, which closely works with core identity. Extended identity can be described as everything, that is not included in the core identity. For the identity to work, Aaker and Joachimsthaler suggest that it needs from six to twelve dimensions, which were consequently grouped into four groups, shown as "Brand as…" aspects. Brand identity contributes towards relationship building with the customers of the company, as well as defining value proposition of the company, which are functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits that the company offers their customers. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 43-50.)

The last position of the identity planning model is the brand identity implementation. It begins with the elaboration of the brand identity to the customer with further growth into brand position. The brand position in the model is described as the part of identity and value proposition, which is to be actively communicated to the target audience. After active communication, the company may start brand-building programs, like advertising programs and others. And then, the company can track its progress and operations of the brand identity planning system. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 43-50.)

This model allows the authors of the thesis to make GastroBar Saimaa a more recognizable brand and further build its identity and generally build the brand for GastroBar Saimaa. Authors of the thesis that this model will suit the empirical part of the thesis and coherently represent the improvements that they would like to make.
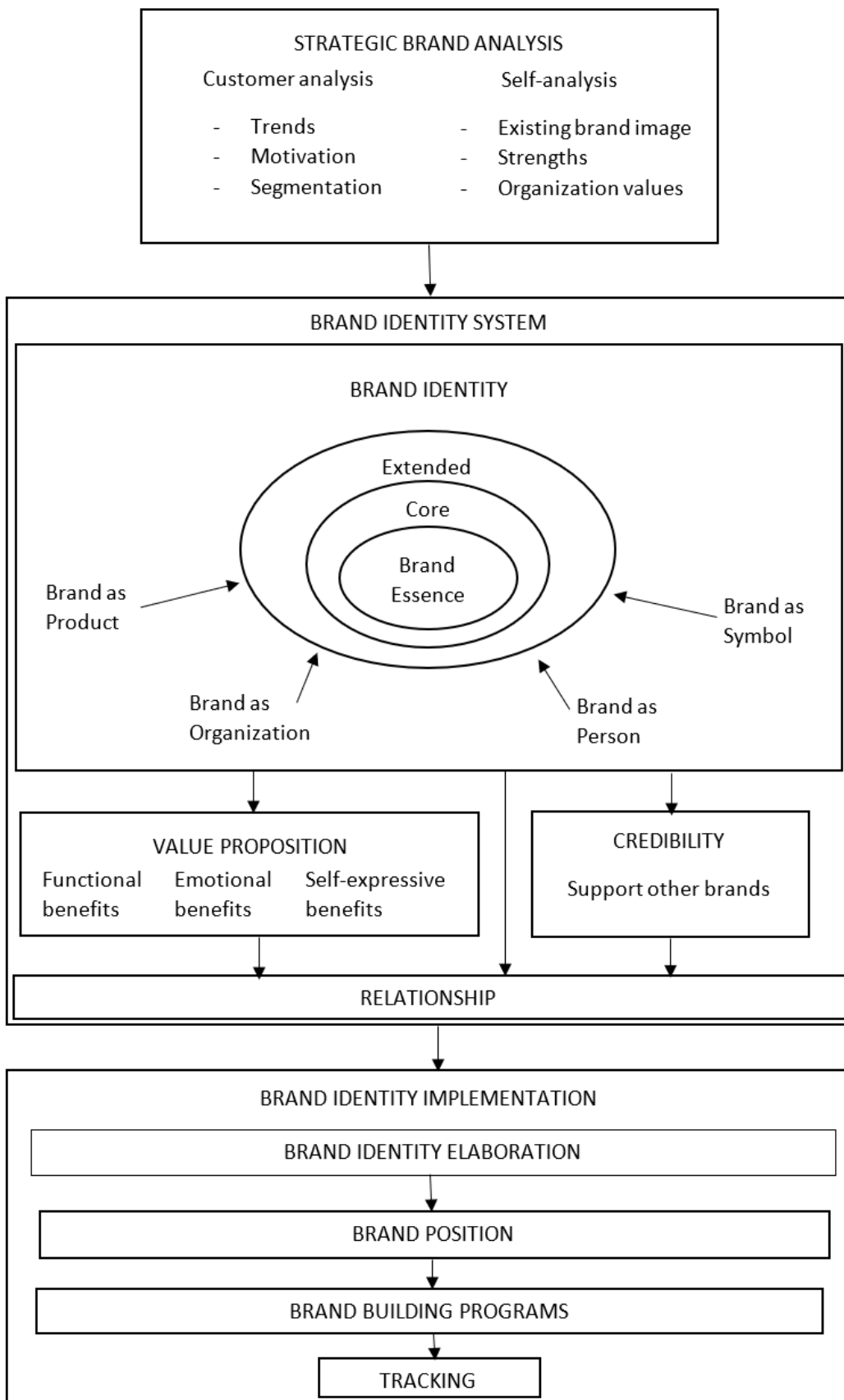
Figure 20. Brand identity planning model (adapted from Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000)

3 Empirical research and data analysis

This chapter is dedicated to the data collection process. First, case company will be presented. Then, the authors will give a deeper explanation of the research methodology used in this study and data analysis. The results of the survey will also be presented and analysed to obtain information on the current state of case company. This will in further chapters used as a base for brand building along with the theoretical part.

3.1 Case company: GastroBar Saimaa

GastroBar Saimaa is a restaurant, which is a part of faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Lappeenranta campus of LAB University of Applied Sciences. Establishment is used to simulate the work and organization of a restaurant for students of the Tourism and Hospitality Management program in different aspects: management, cooking, decorating, waiting, marketing, accounting etc. The restaurant usually acts in the form of a "pop-up restaurant" – a temporary restaurant with a general duration of one day, during which campus students, professors and locals are free to come and dine at GastroBar Saimaa.

The idea of GastroBar Saimaa was developed by Jukka Moilanen and Ann-Mari Karvinen – professors of Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty at LAB University of Applied Sciences. They act as supervisors during the courses and pop-up events, which take place on the premises of the restaurant. In an interview, given to the authors' by Jukka and Ann-Mari, they defined GastroBar Saimaa's mission statement and vision statement. The mission of the restaurant is to "to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application during courses and pop-up restaurant events." Jukka Moilanen and Ann-Mari Karvinen have also stated in the interview that they want to create an atmosphere of excitement, surprise, adventure for customers with great cuisine and for students with freedom of pursuing and working on their ideas. As for the vision statement, Jukka and Ann-Mari see great potential in developing and growing GastroBar Saimaa. While they understand that it is important to grow the popularity of the restaurant among the students and professors at LAB University of Applied Sciences and Lappeenranta University of Technology, they believe that it can become a favourite among the locals. They have also stated that they see GastroBar Saimaa providing catering services and that they have already received an order for preparing food and beverages for a wedding ceremony. Additionally, an idea was proposed for international catering during the International Week or Teacher Exchange Week – an event that takes place among the universities that LAB University of Applied Sciences is partnered with. An event will be organized, during which catering services are provided.

For GastroBar Saimaa to grow as a restaurant and get more customers, a brand is required to be established. The authors' main mission is to build a successful and recognizable brand for GastroBar Saimaa with which they can ensure that their ideas are possible to be achieved. Establishing a brand will have benefits for courses and restaurant organization work. Students would sense that they are a part of a brand and would incorporate a certain demeanour associated with the brand. Moreover, a unique identity can be attached to a brand that will help the establishment be recognizable, memorable and create emotional and financial value. (Moilanen & Karvinen 2021.)

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The primary data collection took the form of a self-administered survey which included several open-ended questions about Gastro Bar Saimaa, specifically concerning the emotions the brand emerges in respondents, opinions on the image of the company and potential improvements. The survey was available online and sent to the students and staff members of LAB University of Applied Sciences (Lappeenranta Campus) and LUT University. Members of LAB and LUT, both students and professors, were chosen, because they are primary customers of GastroBar Saimaa. Another source of primary data was the interview with the managers of GastroBar Saimaa, Jukka Moilanen and Ann-Mari Karvinen, which was conducted to get more information on the mission and vision of the case company. Secondary data was not used for this research.

Prior to administering the survey, the authors of the thesis decided to conduct the interview of the managers of GastroBar Saimaa. The interview took place on the premises of the establishment on 19 of January. The chosen questions, as stated before, were primarily concerning the view of the managers of GastroBar Saimaa, their mission, values, expectations. The authors of the thesis were primarily interested in gathering that information, because they needed more background data on the company. This, in the opinion of the authors, would be the basis for creating the brand identity and forming questions during the survey part of the research. The interview had five open-ended questions related to the background information of the company. The interview was conducted through Zoom and consequently recorded and used. Interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The internet survey was decided to be used by the authors of this thesis due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential unavailability of the majority of students on the LAB and LUT campuses. The authors also decided to use this type of survey because of the easiness of distribution and data collection. The survey was made to be anonymous and self-completed, because the authors of the thesis felt like their observation could also have a negative effect on the respondents' answers. The survey was distributed through

such platforms as Moodle, Facebook, Yammer, WhatsApp and through personal contacts of the authors.

It is important to decide the questions the data needs to answer prior to the data collection process (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2019, p.510-511). Therefore, the authors decided that the questions that the data needs to answer concern the current feelings of GastroBar Saimaa's customers about the brand and the establishment and how it can be improved. The authors chose the questions that they chose according to the theoretical part of their research. The main reason for choosing exactly these questions was that the authors wanted to define brand identity for GastroBar Saimaa. After consulting the theory, these questions were chosen, as they would gather the information that is needed to define and build the identity of a brand. The data was collected through the mixture of close- and open-ended questions. Certain close-ended questions were accompanied with open-ended commentary-questions, which added more data for the research. There were several forms of questions, like open-ended commentary fields, lists, ranking questions, category questions and other. After collection, data was appropriately coded.

Since the questions are understood differently by different people, Hardy and Ford define three forms of miscomprehension: instructional, sentinel and lexical (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2019, p.516). In order for the validity and reliability of the questions to be established, the authors of the thesis created a mock survey, which was distributed among several randomly chosen people. The commentary received from mock survey respondents helped the authors of the thesis to establish correct wording of questions and the way the questions are represented. Several dictionaries and websites have also been consulted for the proof of grammatical correctness.

After administering the survey on 8 of February, the authors of the thesis decided to wait approximately three weeks, before closing down the survey, ending on the 1 of March. In due time, 52 answers were collected. In order to incentivize the people to answer the survey, the authors of the thesis collaborated with GastroBar Saimaa in order to create a raffle for the respondents. The prerequisite for the respondents to enter the raffle was to leave an email, through which the authors of the thesis could contact them upon the conclusion of collecting answers of the survey. The winner of the raffle would receive a coupon for a free meal during one of the GastroBar Saimaa pop-up events. The winner was chosen, using random number generator. Each answer with submitted email would be given a single number. Then, from the range of these numbers, one would be chosen.

To summarize, the data collection method the authors of the thesis used was an internet survey and an interview of the managers of GastroBar Saimaa. Before data collection, the

authors established what questions need to be answered and have done a mock survey to establish the correct wording of questions before distributing the final version. After, the data was collected and coded accordingly.

After data collection, the authors performed the analysis of collected data. Analysing qualitative data needs understanding of how to make sense of text so that the researcher can look for answers to the research questions. As shown in the Figure 21, in qualitative research first data is collected and then prepared for the analysis. The analysis consists of developing a common sense of the data and after coding description and themes about the main research problem. Initial goal of the analysis is to generate a solid picture of the collected data which is done by reading it several times and finding similar themes in the big pieces of text which helps to develop a deeper understanding about the information given by the respondents. By its nature, qualitative data analysis is interpretive, meaning that the researcher has a freedom to make personal assumptions, therefore each interpretation differs from another. (Creswell 2015, 236-237.)
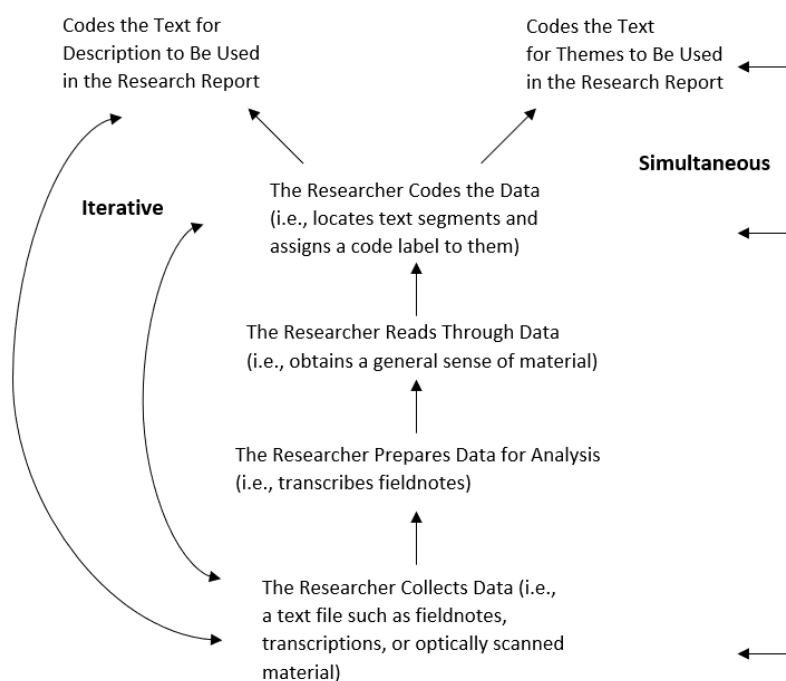
Figure 21. The Qualitative Process of Data Analysis (Creswell, 2015)

There is no single approach to the qualitative data analysis, however certain guidelines exist to help with the process. The authors are using a model from the Figure 21 as a main guide to analyse the survey results. Collected information is being explored to obtain a general understanding of the data, starting from a bigger picture to details. The authors have collected fifty-two responses, each of them is studied separately several times. Simultaneously the list of notes and keywords (codes) is created to proceed with the next step of the

data analysis, coding. In coding text segments are identified and assigned with a certain code or phrase which describes this segment the best. The codes then are grouped into themes or categories which form a major idea of the data collected. (Creswell 2015, 243-244.)

From these themes and categories, the authors form the general understanding of the collected data, interpret it, and finally present in a form of narrative discussion. In this study coding was a fairly simple process, because many respondents had similar feelings about the issue in question. The main themes which emerged from the data analysis are related to the suggestions for future growth of GastroBar Saimaa, problems of marketing communications and overall perception of the current state of the brand. From this analysis the authors got the understanding of the main challenges of the case company to continue with the development plan, which is presented later in the study. The authors also believe that the gathered information has helped them properly establish the identity of the brand of GastroBar Saimaa and suggest a correct course of action in order to improve the brand.

3.3   Results and discussion

First three questions of the survey have a quantitative nature presenting numerical data and give the outlook on the background information of the respondents: to which organization do they belong, their position (staff member of student) and whether they are familiar with GastroBar Saimaa. First question shows to which educational organization does the respondent belong. Most of the respondents, around 87% are from LAB University of Applied Sciences and other 15% belong to LUT University or exchange students from other countries. The results are presented in Figure 22 below.

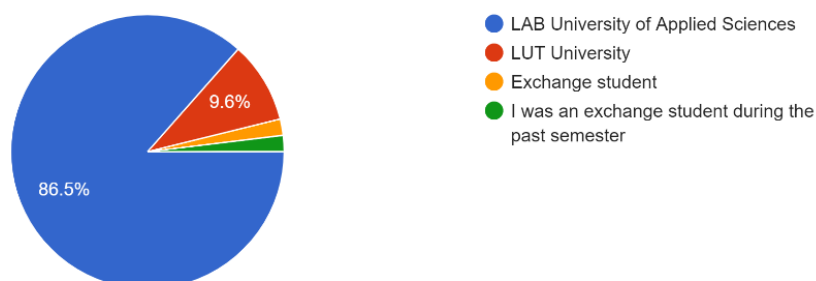1. To which organization do you belong?
52 responses

Figure 22. To which organization does the respondent belong

Second question asks about the occupation of the respondent. The survey was distributed evenly among the students and workers to represent the views of different groups of people. In accordance with the results, most of the respondents are students, however there are around 31% of staff members who has taken a survey (Figure 23).

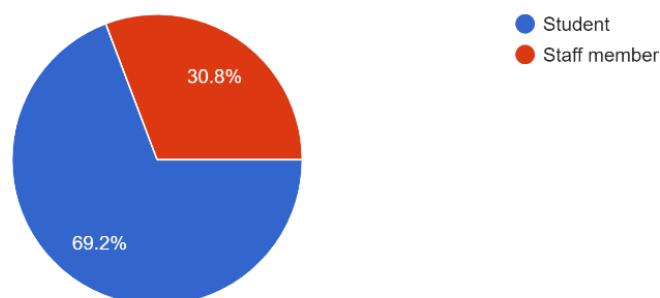2. Are you a student or staff member?
52 responses

Figure 23. Respondents' occupation

The third question represents the percentage of respondents who are familiar with Gastro-Bar Saimaa or have used their services. Respondents could choose more than one answer. According to the results, every person is familiar with GastroBar Saimaa and around 71% have used their services earlier and 40% have worked with them (Figure 24). What is interesting, some of the respondents have used services provided by GastroBar Saimaa but did not know the name of it. This shows that the case company has certain issues with the brand image which will be discussed in later chapters.

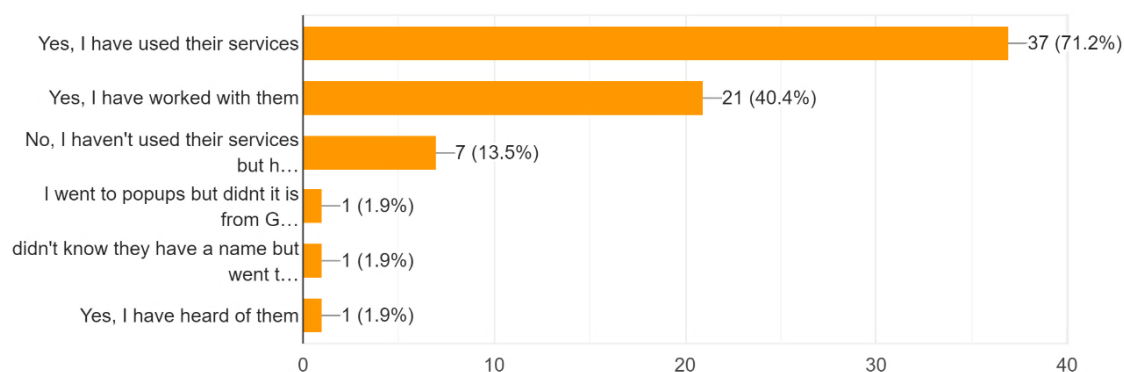3. Are you familiar with GastroBar Saimaa?
52 responses

Figure 24. Respondents' knowledge of GastroBar Saimaa

Next three questions are directly related to the marketing of the GastroBar Saimaa, current state of marketing communication and comments of the respondents on the issue.

Fourth question represents the different marketing channels which case company uses to distribute the information about the latest events and other important news. It was possible to choose more than one answer. Figure 25 shows the top three channels which customers use to learn more about the company. Most of the respondents get to know about the upcoming events through social media (around 71% of responses) and traditional poster advertisements (63% of responses). Additionally, word of mouth plays a big role in marketing of GastroBar Saimaa. Almost 62% of respondents get the information from their friend or colleague. This information helps to understand the strong and weak sides of marketing communication, what channels are popular among potential customers and what kind of changes can be done during the brand building phase.
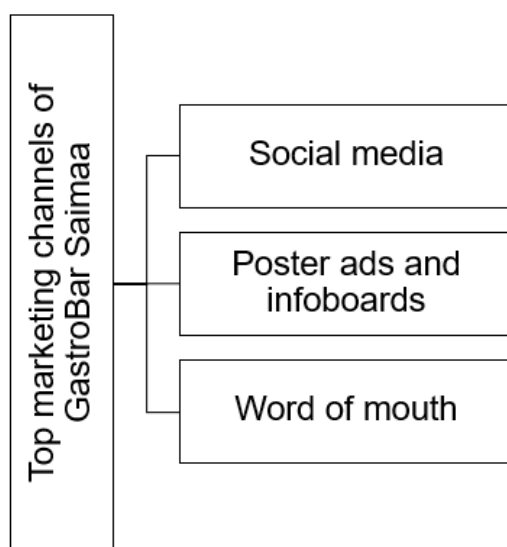

Figure 25. Top marketing communication channels of GastroBar Saimaa

Fifth and sixth questions ask about the effectiveness of the current state of marketing communication of GastroBar Saimaa. The respondents had to evaluate the performance on a scale from one (not effective at all) to five (very effective) and briefly explain their opinion. According to the results, around half of the respondents think that the current effectiveness of marketing communication is somewhat effective but there are still improvements to be done. And only 5% of them think that the communication is very effective. From the comments given by the respondents, it is rather difficult to find the information about the upcoming events. There is not enough exposure, therefore it is very easy for the potential customers to miss the events. Some of the answers suggest that there is a need to take care of the marketing by having someone to manage the channels, so the message is clear, and the visuals are cohesive and informative enough to attract the customers. Social media marketing needs to be improved by being more interactive and responsive, for instance, couple of respondents have noted that it might be beneficial to collect

feedback after each event to avoid the mistakes in the future. Email marketing has been also heavily suggested, especially among the staff members because it makes it easier to get the latest updates without the need of scrolling the social media for those who is not actively involved in it and schedule the plans. Even though traditional marketing is still an essential way to advertise GastroBar Saimaa, more attention should be put into digitalization, not only through social media but in addition other possible channels such as university's infoboards and emails. More detailed take on the suggestions will be introduced by the authors in the next chapters of the study.

Following questions are related to the overall experience of the respondents at GastroBar Saimaa. Question seven asks respondents to choose three most important reasons to visit the events organized by the establishment. Following Figure 26 shows the results of the survey.

7. Why do you visit events organized by GastroBar Saimaa? (choose 3 most important)
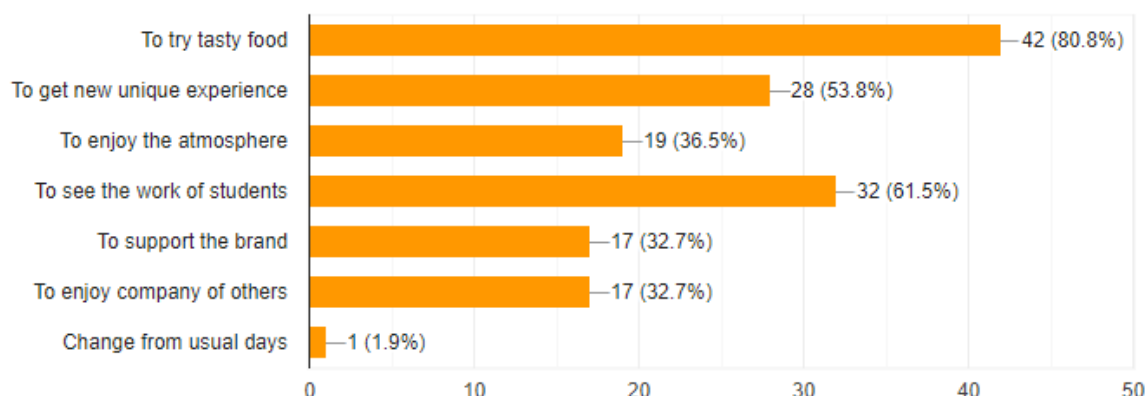52 responses

Figure 26. Most important reasons to visit GastroBar Saimaa's events

It is clear, that respondents mostly visit events to experience new food. However, many of the respondents also wish to receive unique experiences and see the work of students for themselves. It is followed by the atmosphere that GastroBar creates with their events and general support for the brand. The least answered response was "Change from usual days" with only 1 respondent choosing this option. This question allows the authors of the thesis to see why people visit the events organized by GastroBar Saimaa and focus on putting relevant aspects into the creation of the brand.

Question eight is aimed at understanding the respondents' overall experience in GastroBar Saimaa. The establishment was presented using 5 aspects: the atmosphere, the quality of services, the friendliness of staff members, the quality of food and overall value for money. Figure 27 presents the results of the survey.

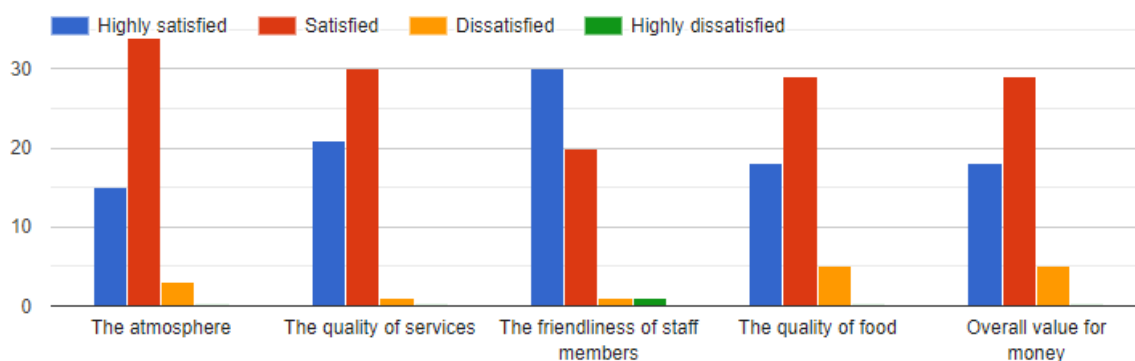8. How would you describe your overall experience with GastroBar Saimaa?

Figure 27. Overall experience with GastroBar Saimaa

From the Figure 27, the authors of the thesis determine that the respondents are prevalently satisfied with the establishments' services. Mostly, the respondents were satisfied with the friendliness of staff members, with quality of services following. The quality of food and overall value for money have also left many respondents satisfied. Several respondents, however, were unsatisfied primarily with the quality of food, value of the services for the money paid and the atmosphere. The next question investigates reasons why people were either satisfied or unsatisfied.

Question nine is an optional question, which brings more attention as to why the people were satisfied or unsatisfied with their experience in GastroBar Saimaa. From the 52 respondents, only 16 decided to give their response to this optional question. While most of the respondents, like in question eight, were satisfied with the services. The main reason for satisfaction came from the quality of services, new and tasty food, and general atmosphere. However, respondents also used this question to voice their dissatisfaction with the services. The respondents mainly blame students' inexperience as the reason for their dissatisfaction with the events organized by GastroBar Saimaa. Due to the inexperience, many believe that students cannot fully open and provide quality service.

Question ten asks the respondents to tell how they would describe GastroBar Saimaa to their friend or colleague. Overwhelming majority of the respondents have answered that they would describe GastroBar Saimaa to their friend as an "interesting place". The respondents often referred to the originality of the organized events and that there is always an opportunity not only to see the work of the students, but to also try new food. However, several respondents would describe GastroBar Saimaa to their friend or colleague as a

place of learning for students and to expect mistakes and generally have lower expectations. Overall, however, people describe it as a nice and a cozy establishment and they highly recommend it.

Question eleven asks respondents to tell how likely they are to recommend GastroBar Saimaa to their friends or colleagues, using a scale from 1 to 5. Figure 28 shows the results of this question.

11. On a scale of 1 - 5, how likely are you to recommend GastroBar Saimaa to your friend or colleague?
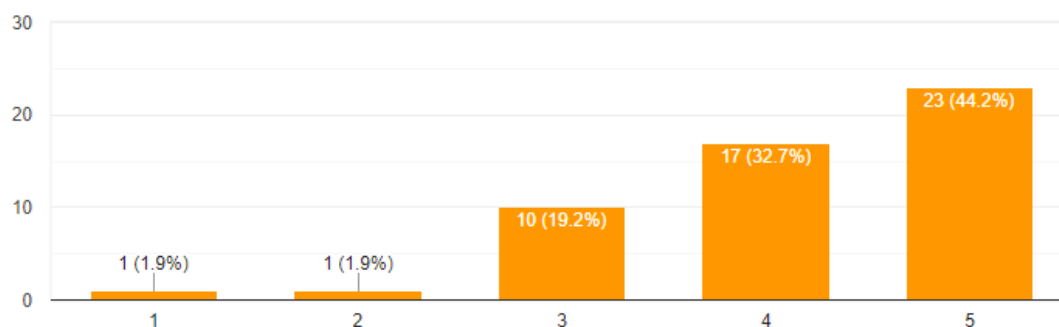
52 responses

Figure 28. Likeliness of GastroBar Saimaa being recommended to a friend or colleague

From the Figure 28, the respondents are very likely to recommend GastroBar Saimaa to their friends or colleagues. Most of the respondents are very likely to recommend it and thus have chosen 5 as their answer. However, the authors believe that it is important to focus on the people, who have chosen to answer 3 or 4. While they are relatively close to the answer 5, certain aspects of the events organized by the establishment made them disappointed. It is in the interest of GastroBar Saimaa to find these mistakes and work on them.

In question twelve, the respondents were asked to tell the adjectives which come to mind when talking about GastroBar Saimaa and the reason behind it. Many of the respondents have responded with words, such as "unique", "tasty", "creative". The reason behind it was that the students, who organize the events, always come up with new ideas to impress their clients. It was also noted that no other university that they know of has such a unique teaching experience like GastroBar Saimaa. When it comes to tastiness, it was said that the events always bring out new, exciting dishes, that the customers have never tried before. Many also noted the friendliness of staff and the professionalism, with which the students try to approach this learning experience.

In question thirteen the authors wanted to know how GastroBar Saimaa is perceived by the respondents by choosing the words from the list which relate to the company the

most. This data is needed to form a brand personality and visual identity. The list of words goes as followed: excitement, fun, positivity, reliability, stability, freshness, creativity, formality, and discipline. The respondent had to answer whether this word describes the GastroBar Saimaa or do not relate at all. In Figure 29 you can see the top words representing the case company the most and the least according to the research.
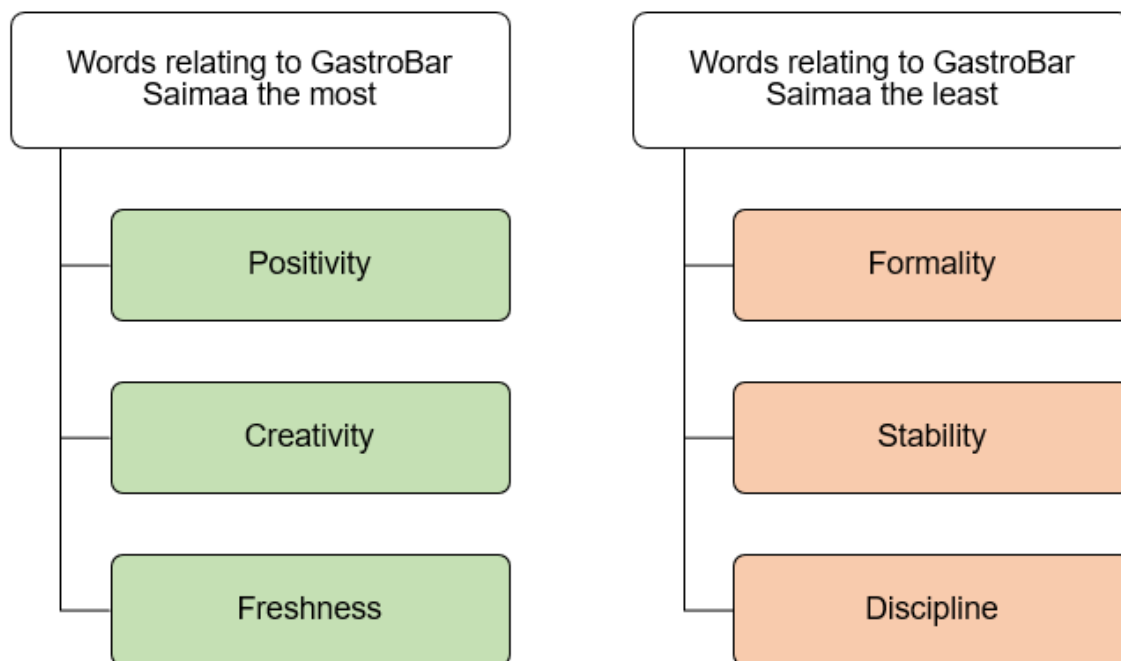

Figure 29. Words representing GastroBar Saimaa

According to the results, GastroBar Saimaa is perceived as a positive and fresh brand. The aesthetic or mood of the brand is light and fun. Question number fourteen is quite similar, respondents had to describe how they feel when they think of GastroBar Saimaa. The feelings which were mentioned the most are: hungry, excited, curious, good, and interested. This aligns with the last question and shows the general emotions and associations customers have with a brand. This data is very valuable in the logo creation process and building of identity and will be applied in the future chapters of the study.

Question fifteen asks the respondents their emotional attachment to GastroBar Saimaa. The Figure 30 below shows the result for the question. It clearly shows that most of the respondents feel relatively attached to GastroBar Saimaa. The authors believe that the attachment to GastroBar Saimaa comes from the fact that many respondents have previously worked there before, as described in answers for other questions of the survey. Not only that, but many lectures also take their place on the premises of GastroBar Saimaa, especially for Tourism and Hospitality Management students. Authors believe, however, that the worldwide pandemic has affected the attachment of certain people to GastroBar Saimaa,

as there are no events organized and no way to visit the establishment. Figure 30 shows the results of this question.

15. On a scale of 1 - 5, how would you describe your emotional attachment with GastroBar Saimaa?
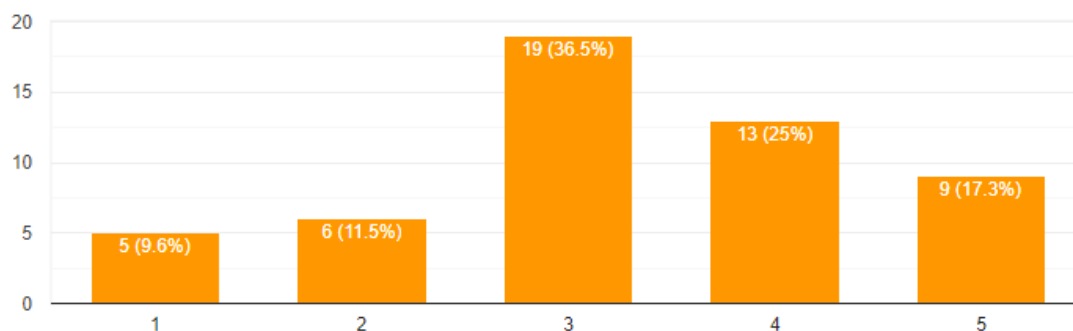
52 responses

Figure 30. Emotional attachment of respondents to GastroBar Saimaa

For question sixteen, respondents were asked to tell what kind of developments the brand of GastroBar Saimaa should make to attract them even more. An overwhelming majority of the respondents of the survey have answered that GastroBar Saimaa, to attract them even more, requires better marketing. More advertisements, especially visual advertisement. Several respondents have also noted that the quality of services provided needs improvement. Respondents also believe that the students who organize the events should not be afraid to experiment and create unique ideas. For many, uniqueness of GastroBar Saimaa is an attraction and they wish for students to work more on it. Figure 31 presents the main aspects of GastroBar Saimaa that require further improvement.
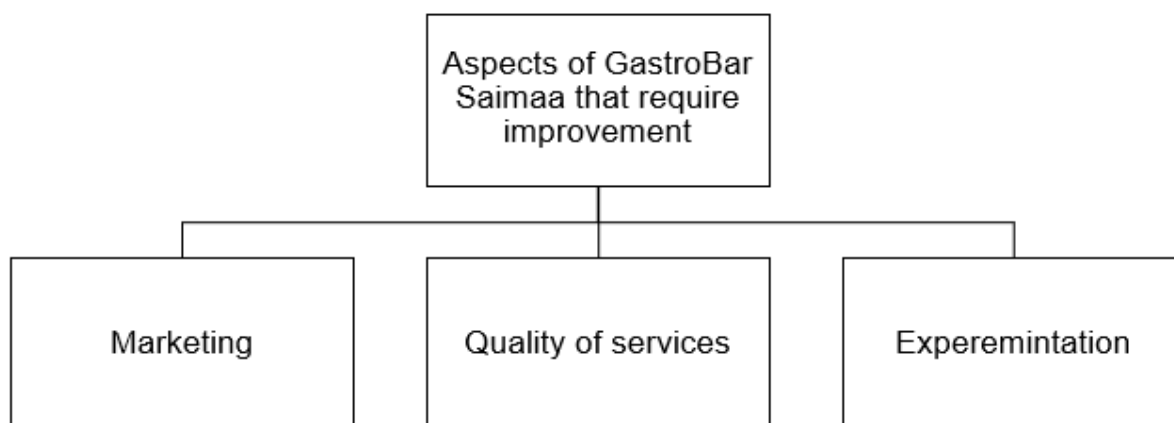

Figure 31. Aspects that require improvement according to respondents of the survey

Overall, this research is an essential part of the brand building process of GastroBar Saimaa. Respondents gave open, informative, and honest answers which allow the authors to create a branding plan as authentic and efficient as possible. Background questions has given the authors the overview of the main target markets of GastroBar Saimaa. The information gathered from the research shows the specific preferences of each segment which will help the authors to create the branding plan. All the suggestions of the customers will be considered.

In the marketing section of the survey the authors wanted to evaluate the effectiveness of current state of marketing of GastroBar Saimaa to offer certain recommendations on the improvement of the communication for the case company to gain more exposure in the future. At this moment GastroBar Saimaa lacks consistent social media presence. Certainly because of the pandemic, there were no events happening on campus, hence nothing to post about. However, there is still a chance to be interactive with customers even in times like this to keep them interested in what is going to happen next. Another problem is that marketing materials can be confusing for the audience. Pop-up restaurants are organized by the students, so they take care of the posters and other promotional materials, hence there are major differences in styles and information. To make advertisements look more cohesive, the authors have created a logo and visuals which can be used in future pop-up restaurants by the students of the courses organized in GastroBar Saimaa. The results will be presented in the final chapters of the study.

In overall experience section of the survey, the authors of the thesis wanted to analyze the customers, who have visited GastroBar Saimaa before, to understand their feelings about the establishment. As mentioned previously in the paper, the main research question of this thesis is to understand what kind of brand GastroBar Saimaa already possesses, and the secondary question is to determine the ways the brand could be built up and improved. In this section, the authors tried to combine these two questions and answer them at the same time. For the authors to determine what kind of brand Gastro-Bar Saimaa already has, it was important to determine the current identity of GastroBar Saimaa, the values that the brand offers and understand how the brand positions itself.

The identity of GastroBar Saimaa was determined throughout all the questions of overall experience part of the survey. By determining identity, the authors of the thesis also believed that they could determine the benefits and values that the establishment and the brand could offer to the customers. From the beginning questions of the survey, it was established that most of the respondents did not hear the name "GastroBar Saimaa" when referred to

the establishment and mainly recognized it by attaching the events organized in the establishment to the place where the events were commenced. It is important to note, that while the identity of the brand may not be attached to a particular name, logo, or tagline, it is, nonetheless, existent. From the information gathered in the survey the respondents see GastroBar Saimaa's identity as unique. Ranging from the uniqueness of the concept to the unique-ness of every organized events, the survey answers have noted that the establishment brings new experiences to the customers. It was also prominently mentioned that the establishment is utilized as a learning environment for the students, who organize the events. Because of that, establishment is seen as a training ground for those, who study hospitality and tourism management. Moreover, the establishment is viewed as very modern and tasty. Much of the positivity in the answers of the survey is attributed to the taste of food. At the same time, however, the respondents have noted that students are often inexperienced, so they often do not have high expectations when visiting GastroBar Saimaa. In a summary, GastroBar Saimaa's identity can be seen as unique, tasty, modern, and related to learning, but also lacking in experience.

As mentioned previously, the survey tried to learn more about why people visit GastroBar Saimaa and what kind of benefits do they receive from visiting it. Question number seven directly asks the respondents to choose three reasons for their visit to GastroBar Saimaa. Most of the respondents, as mentioned in the previous part of the thesis, chose trying tasty food as their number one answer. As seen before, the food and its quality are heavily commended by the respondents of the survey and it is prominently connected to the identity of GastroBar Saimaa as an establishment. People clearly see a benefit in tasting the food during the organized events. It is strongly connected with the urge of the customers to have a unique experience when visiting GastroBar Saimaa. The atmosphere, the menu, the dishes, the work of the staff – all these attributes influence the uniqueness not only on the concept of GastroBar Saimaa, but on the concept of each organized event. It is clear, that benefits that the customers get in GastroBar Saimaa are directly connected to uniqueness of the events, dishes, and student's work. Moreover, students themselves could see a benefit in working in GastroBar Saimaa, as it offers an in-sight into how to properly organize an event in a practical manner.

In terms of positioning, GastroBar Saimaa is clear in the value proposition and they target the right audience for the events. The main problem, however, is that the establishment fails to actively communicate their events and the existence of their brand to their customers. Many respondents, when asked how they would improve GastroBar Saimaa mentioned, that the establishment requires more marketing. Customers often miss the organized events

because they did not know that they were scheduled. As mentioned previously, certain respondents did not know of GastroBar Saimaa's existence and have just heard about certain events being organized. Most of the marketing comes from posters, which the students put up and are very easy to miss, and personal connections (acquaintances telling one another about the event). If GastroBar Saimaa wants to position its brand, then it is very important to actively communicate it to the customers. With proper marketing planning and utilization of marketing opportunities, the brand of GastroBar Saimaa can easily spread around the university and be known by all the people that the establishment may target as a customer.

4 Development plan

4.1 Brand analysis

The authors will create a comprehensive brand building plan for GastroBar Saimaa using the model proposed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (Figure 20). The first section of the model is devoted to strategic brand analysis, which includes consumer and self-analysis of the case company and its current state of operations.

According to the findings, the majority of customers who have already used GastroBar Saimaa's services are satisfied with the quality and eager to participate in future events. However, due to marketing challenges, GastroBar Saimaa's main concern is attracting more new customers. The authors discovered that a lack of a consistent brand message influences their purchasing decisions. That is why, in this case, defining the brand identity as well as the marketing plan is effective in obtaining visibility among potential clients.

The research identified the primary motivation for consumers to use the case company's services. The majority of respondents attend events to taste delicious food, see the work of students in charge of project management, and gain new unique experiences in a relaxed atmosphere. The authors created a typical customer profile for GastroBar Saimaa based on the research responses (Figure 32).

Figure 32. Typical customer profile of GastroBar Saimaa

A typical customer is a LAB University of Applied Sciences student who enjoys attending university activities, trying new foods, and socializing with his peers. When it comes to selecting a restaurant, he prefers affordable high-quality food with elements of surprise and

uniqueness. His strength lies in the fact that he has a large number of university friends whom he can invite to GastroBar Saimaa's activities, thereby increasing awareness among potential customers. His involvement and behaviour drive his decision to use the case company's services. Understanding customer segmentation and traditional customer profiles helps to customize your marketing communications strategy and overall branding strategy.

To assist with self-analysis eight-field SWOT analysis is introduced as a tool to define main elements of GastroBar Saimaa (Figure 33).

	Strengths (S) -Unique concept of the company -Loyal customers -Reliability -Motivated employees -Flexibility in pricing -Strong values	Weaknesses (W) -Marketing and visibility -Lack of strategic management -Time-consuming development -Need of additional resources
Opportunities (O) -Potential of expansion -Ability to develop and offer new services -Consumer interest in events -Potential for partnership with other companies	Opportunity-Strength Strategies -Plan the ideas for further development and expansion of services -Find potential partners to collaborate with	Opportunity-Weakness Strategies -Interact with potential customers and gain additional feedback -Develop marketing plan
Threats (T) -Closure of restaurants -Changes in operating costs -Competition	Threat-Strength Strategies -Develop strategy to increase customer loyalty -Possibilities of remote services (e.g., online courses)	Threat-Weakness Strategies -Work on exposure to help with competition

Figure 33. SWOT analysis of GastroBar Saimaa

A company's main strength is its unique concept and versatility. It has a lot of growth potential because more services can be added over time. GastroBar Saimaa is a relatively new brand, but students from the Tourism and Hospitality faculty arranged pop-ups before the business had a name and vision. This allowed the company to achieve loyal clientele represented by employees and students at LAB University of Applied Sciences. The majority of survey respondents believe GastroBar Saimaa is a trustworthy company with strong principles, implying that it has a positive reputation among consumers who have already used the company's services.

The majority of the weaknesses are internal, particularly when it comes to marketing and communications. Since GastroBar Saimaa does not yet have a clear brand name, consumers are a little confused about the full range of services available. The authors of this study are attempting to create an identity that can be further established by the company's owner and communicated to the public. However, since the brand is new and requires more exposure, the complete establishment of the branding and marketing plan can take some time.

External factors such as public involvement in activities and future cooperation with other organizations in the food and beverage industry affect GastroBar Saimaa's opportunities. Despite the fact that the pandemic situation poses a threat to GastroBar Saimaa, there are several positive aspects to the situation. Consumer behaviour has been greatly influenced by long-term isolation. Many customers will be interested in the events after the crisis has stabilized, so there is a good possibility that even more people will attend future events. This also opens up the possibility of collaborating with other Lappeenranta companies on a mutually beneficial basis.

Threats to GastroBar Saimaa are mainly related to the current state of the Finnish restaurant industry. The university, as well as other public catering institutions, are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it difficult to continue working or cooperate with other organizations.

Enhanced eight-field SWOT analysis allows to look at each element and work on the brand development strategies. GastroBar Saimaa's internal strengths can be used to optimize the opportunities' maximum potential. For example, the company's unique concept, combined with enthusiastic employees, opens the door to entirely new offerings and market expansion. External risks can be minimized by using these internal strengths. During the interview with the founders, Jukka Moilanen and Ann-Mari Karvinen said that they are excited about the possibility of offering extracurricular courses that will be more appealing to potential customers. Given the likelihood of continuing restaurant closures, these courses may be brought to the next stage and organized remotely.

External opportunities can also be used to minimize internal weaknesses. The problem of marketing visibility may be addressed by creating a set marketing strategy. This can also be accomplished by maintaining constant contact with customers and collecting feedback via social media and at future events. Minimizing weaknesses will inevitably lead to their elimination in order to avoid threats.

To conclude this section, the thesis authors defined the current state of business by analysing customer segmentation and the case company's key strategies. The major problem is clearly a lack of established brand identity, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

4.2 Brand image and identity

Prior to suggesting development plan for GastroBar Saimaa, the authors of the thesis find it necessary to clearly define the brand essence of GastroBar Saimaa, the benefits of using the brand and general image and identity of the brand. The collected data from the survey will be utilized in the brand essence wheel model, which uses the collected data to describe not only the personality of the brand, but also the associations and most importantly – brand essence.

In Figure 34, the authors of the thesis present their vision of GastroBar Saimaa's brand essence, based on the results of the survey. The wheel consists of seven parts: four major parts describe how customers feel about GastroBar Saimaa, what kind of benefits does GastroBar Saimaa offer them, how they would describe GastroBar Saimaa and how does GastroBar Saimaa make customers look. These parts combine into factual and symbolic information about the establishment, as well as information about its personality. All parts of the wheel make up the brand essence, which is located in the centre.

Describing the brand will begin from the services and benefits provided to the customers. From the gathered information in the survey, it was clear that people come to GastroBar Saimaa mainly for five reasons: trying new and tasty food, unique experience, atmosphere, place to meet with others and to support the brand and their acquaintances. The most popular reason, among these five, is to try new food. Respondents put large emphasis on the food and beverage aspect of the brand. They often commend students' creativity when creating menus and thinking of cuisines. Majority of the respondents is satisfied with the quality and taste of food. The second reason as to why people come to visit GastroBar Saimaa is because customers often wish to support and see the work of their friends or the brand. Many students, as a part of their curriculum, have to organize the pop-up events in the establishment, which means that they are under pressure. GastroBar Saimaa offers an opportunity to support them in a stressful moment, which inadvertently leads to customers supporting the brand. Third reason is the uniqueness of the experience. Due to every event being different from one another, people often visit GastroBar Saimaa in order to not miss out on unique food and beverage and to create memories of these unique encounters. The brand and the respondents emphasize the importance of experimentation and freshness of the new ideas that students bring forth. The last ones are the atmosphere and a place to enjoy company of others.
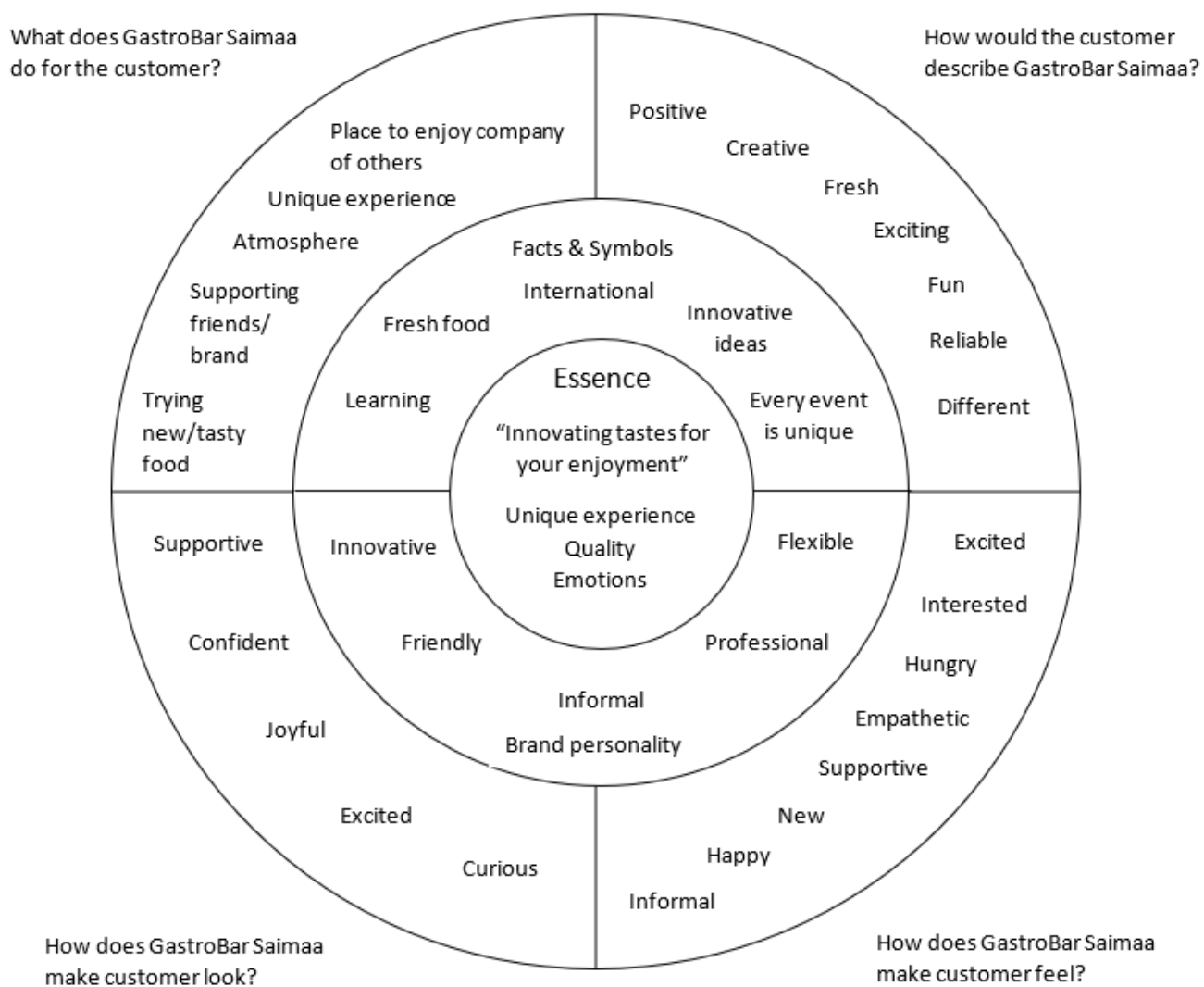
Figure 34. Brand essence wheel of GastroBar Saimaa.

The respondents of the survey indicate that GastroBar Saimaa's atmosphere – friendly and informal – act as a positive conduit for setting up meetings and use the premises of the restaurant to meet with their friends and significant others. These aspects make up the benefits that the brand of GastroBar Saimaa does for its customers.

The next part of the circle details the words the customers would describe GastroBar Saimaa with. In total, there are seven words, which were taken directly from the answers of the respondents of the survey. These words could be put together into three groups. The first group are the words, that describe the uniqueness and innovativeness of the brand. These words are creative, fresh, and different. Clearly, as mentioned previously, the respondents enjoy the uniqueness of the brand's events and products. Every event is creatively different from one another, which brings freshness every time customer visits Gastro-Bar Saimaa. Freshness, at the same time, can be referred to the freshness of food, because

the establishment is using quality ingredients. The second group of words describes the emotions that are associated with GastroBar Saimaa – fun, exciting, positive. Since people feel these emotions when visiting the establishment, they start to associate them with GastroBar Saimaa's brand. The last word is reliable, which addressees two the brand in two ways: its reliability to deliver uniqueness and reliability of providing quality food. Respondents clearly trust the brand, despite the inexperience that students have. In total, respondents describe GastroBar as unique, positive, and reliable.

The following portion of the circle describes how GastroBar Saimaa makes customers feel. The circle consists of eight words, some of which could be related to each other. The first word that the authors would like to address is empathetic, which can be related to supportive. When saying empathetic, the authors try to allude to the fact, that many customers, who visit GastroBar Saimaa, have previously worked there themselves as a part of their courses. These people often come to support and empathize with the organizers of the event. Furthermore, using GastroBar Saimaa's brand, the students and professors feel supportive not only of the students, but of the university and education. The brand acts as a mediator of support between customers, organizers, and university. The next words that can be related are excited, interested, new and happy. These words, once again, relate to how people felt when visiting GastroBar Saimaa and now associate it with the brand. The respondents, once more, point out the uniqueness of the concept and events of GastroBar Saimaa with words, like interested and new. Excited and happy refer to general feeling of enjoyment when visiting the establishment and using the provided services. The word "informal" directly describes the atmosphere when visiting GastroBar Saimaa and the word "hungry" speaks of the feeling of hunger in regard of tasty food, when GastroBar Saimaa is mentioned. To summarize, people feel very supportive, excited, and happy about the brand of GastroBar Saimaa.

The last portion of the outer circle mentions how the brand of GastroBar Saimaa makes its customers look, when used. Five words are used to describe the general look when using the brand. Once more, the word supportive is used, because when using the brand, it makes the customer looks supportive of it and other aspects, mentioned previously. Joyful and excited can be grouped up together to describe the feelings when the services of GastroBar Saimaa are being used. The respondents are often pleased with the experience provided by GastroBar, so these words are there to represent the enjoyment of attending the organized events. Curiosity, once again, alludes to the fact that GastroBar Saimaa's events are unique in their organization, menu, and atmosphere, so the customers are curious when trying it, as, most likely, they have never tried anything compared to these events before. And the last word to describe how the customer looks, is the word confident. Confidence

relates to customers, who visit GastroBar Saimaa in a way, that they are not afraid to try new, unexperienced before cuisines. This makes them confident not only in themselves, but also confident in GastroBar Saimaa's ability to deliver quality food. To conclude, when using the brand of GastroBar Saimaa, the customers look confident, supportive, and joyful.

As mentioned previously, the bigger portions make up smaller portions of the wheel. The brand personality section is made out of looks and feelings of the respondents about the brand. All the words that were used in the bigger sections make up the words in the brand personality section. The first word is innovative, which is attributed to the innovativeness of the brand of GastroBar Saimaa. The brand, always, strives to create something new or modify the already-existing concepts, which makes them even fresh. That is why innovativeness is an inherent trait of brand's personality. Friendly and informal could be combined together to describe overall feeling, when interacting with the brand of GastroBar Saimaa. As the respondents mention, they find the students working there to be amicable, while also maintaining the relaxed atmosphere of the establishment. Therefore, these traits can also be attributed to the brand because the workers and the establishment are associated with the brand's image and identity. While the brand is informal, relaxed and friendly, it is also professional, which is shown in its strive to provide quality products and services. While it is true, that students often lack the experience, they make it up with the professional attitude with which they receive criticism and approach their own education. And the last word is flexible, because the personality of GastroBar Saimaa can be modified according to the different events. Personality of the establishment can assume different images, depending on the nature of the organized events. Personality of GastroBar Saimaa can become formal or traditional, if needed, which makes it very flexible and easy to modify.

The facts & symbols part is made up from the benefits and the way the respondents described GastroBar Saimaa in the survey. The information, however, is more factual and certain words reflect the way GastroBar Saimaa functions. Firstly, it is important to note, that the establishment is international. Students come from different backgrounds, which means they have differing experiences and skills. This is beneficial towards innovativeness and creative thinking, as people often utilize their knowledge to create something new together. Internationalism can also be attributed to innovative ideas and the fact, that every event is unique, because they are usually organized by different groups of students. Internationalism of GastroBar Saimaa is also used as a symbolic measure. Similarly, to the factual information, we can attribute the fact, that GastroBar Saimaa uses fresh goods in order to prepare their produce. Ordering is done through official suppliers and students themselves decide how much of what is needed to be ordered. And, of course, the fact that the entire concept of GastroBar Saimaa was created in order to teach students about how to

organize their own events and work. These, in total, make up the factual information about GastroBar Saimaa's brand.

After examining every portion of the wheel, the authors were able to understand the essence of GastroBar Saimaa's brand. The essence was collected from all the words and concepts utilized in other portions of the wheel. In authors' understanding, the brand essence of GastroBar Saimaa can be summarized into a short sentence, "Innovating tastes for your enjoyment." This sentence tries to highlight the uniqueness of each event organized, where students often try to try new, innovative ideas, whilst also maintaining the high quality of the produce. Moreover, it is aimed directly at the customers, with entire purpose of the brand to make customers joyful. However, since the sentence is supposed to be small, the authors' had to focus on certain aspects of the brand, while neglecting others. This essence, in the opinion of authors, represents the image and identity of the brand very well. Despite that, the essence acts primarily as a suggestion and could be reworked to suit other values represented in the brand essence wheel, if needed.

After closer examination of GastroBar Saimaa's brand through the brand essence wheel, the authors were able to determine the identity, personality, image and benefits of the brand. This allows the authors to start making suggestions for improving overall brand image. The authors prepared a small model to show what parts require improvement. Figure 34 presents the brand of GastroBar Saimaa, using four aspects: product, organization, person and symbol.

In brand as a product, the authors make suggestions for improvement of services and products, provided by GastroBar Saimaa (Figure 35). While the majority of the respondents of the survey were satisfied with the quality of food, several found it not to match the value for which it was offered. Even though it is understandable, that students are inexperienced, GastroBar Saimaa must ensure the quality of their product. Organizers must check the quality of food and ingredients during the events. Similarly, due to inexperience, many students are often afraid of experimenting with new ideas and concepts. Since it is a learning experience, students should be encouraged to deliver unique or modified products, which will support the essence of the brand.

In brand as organization, the authors primarily suggest creating a brand-wide attitude for students. As mentioned in previous paragraph, students are afraid and inexperienced because of the new environment.
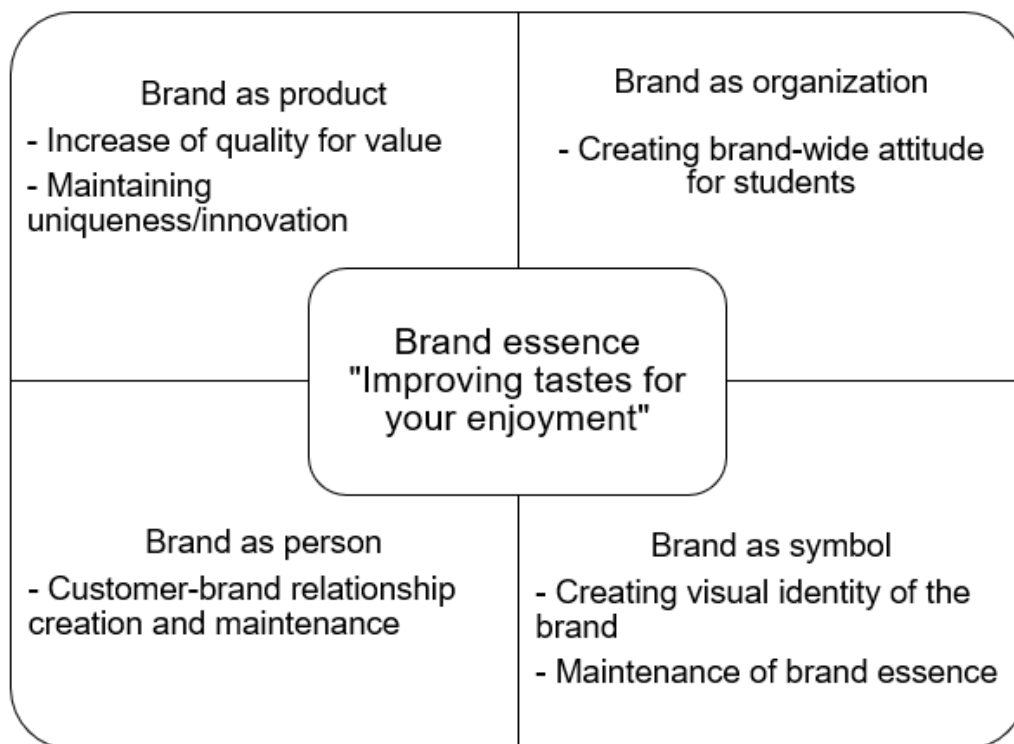
Figure 35. Suggested improvements for brand image and identity of GastroBar Saimaa.

However, this can be solved by educating students on the correct approach towards working in GastroBar Saimaa. While employing this attitude, the workers of GastroBar Saimaa will not only gain knowledge and learn, but also maintain the image of the brand, through transferring the values of the establishment onto themselves and the customers.

In brand as a person, the authors suggest creation and maintenance of customer-based relationships for GastroBar Saimaa. Even though certain respondents already feel attached to GastroBar Saimaa either due to frequent visits or working there, people are relatively unattached. From the results of the survey, the majority of the people feel neutral towards GastroBar Saimaa. By facilitating customer-brand relationship, either through events or special occasions, the establishment will gain an even broader loyal customer base. Creation can be done through individualizing the people's experience at GastroBar Saimaa, by making them feel unique to the brand.

In brand as a symbol, the authors suggest creation of visual identity for the brand and maintenance of the brand essence. By creation of visual identity, the authors imply, that the respondents of the survey do not attach GastroBar Saimaa to a certain logo or a tagline, but rather they attach it to the fact, that pop-up restaurant events happen in these premises. Furthermore, several respondents have not heard of the name GastroBar Saimaa before, which is very damaging for the recognition of the brand. This can be solved by actively

promoting the brand through visual means, like photos, pictures of the logo, tagline. Similarly, brand essence also acts as a symbol, which can be utilized as a tagline. The brand must, at all times, maintain its validity, because it has a direct effect on the image and identity of GastroBar Saimaa.

4.3 Brand equity and positioning

In this part of the development plan, the authors look at what kind of assets the brand of GastroBar Saimaa has and how they work toward building and maintaining the brand's image and identity. The following model (Figure 36) suggests the assets, both positive and negative, which directly affect the brand.
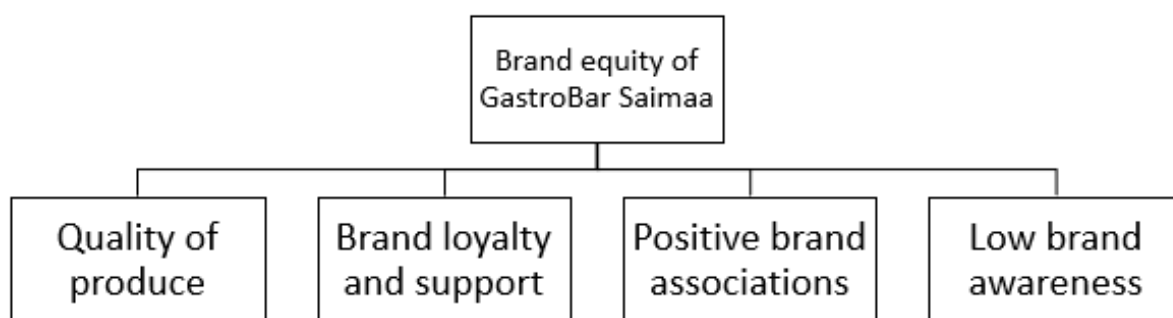

Figure 36. Brand equity aspects of GastroBar Saimaa.

The figure recognizes four major assets that the brand has. Beginning with the quality of produce, this asset was mentioned numerous times through the course of the development plan. The level of produce directly contributes towards maintaining the brand image of GastroBar Saimaa and sustaining the loyal brand supporters. Continuing on the topic of loyalty, the brand of GastroBar Saimaa has already gathered a loyal base of customers, who are mostly students and professors at LAB University of Applied Sciences. Since many customers visit and use services of GastroBar Saimaa to support their friends or to see the work of students, they inadvertently support the brand and make a base of loyal customers. Since every event is unique and almost every group of students is different, many wishes to come and experience the work of students for themselves. This uniqueness also contributes to people becoming loyal to the brand of GastroBar Saimaa. With that, positive brand associations come to minds of customers. GastroBar Saimaa, through their frequent events have developed very positive brand associations. Ranging from the food to the atmosphere and emotions that the customers experience there, these associations directly act as an asset for the brand. These associations can help with building a bigger customer base or satisfying the already-loyal customers. The model ends with the asset, which is named "low brand awareness". Even though so many people know about the brand and associate it with great

emotions, there are students who have never heard of GastroBar Saimaa before. Many people are not aware of the existence of the brand, which is a result of poor positioning.

When it comes to positioning, there are four aspects that need to be maintained, in order to utilize the brand positioning. The brand must actively communicate their superiority over competing brands and create advantage. However, since there are no competing brands, GastroBar Saimaa must actively communicate their own advantages, benefits, assets and values in order for the people to learn about the brand's existence. For example, the brand of GastroBar Saimaa could communicate the existence of their brand through offering customers fresh and innovative food and atmosphere to meet with others. The communication has to be active, in order to not only remind people who already know of the brand, but also to bring in new customers. The communication can be done through a variety of means, like social media, on-campus marketing, word-of-mouth and many other. The students, as a part of their attitude, should seriously approach the positioning of the brand, as it creates the needed marketing and awareness, which brings in more customers on the day of the event.

To conclude this part, the authors of the thesis have defined primary assets of the brand and addressed the positioning of the brand. The positioning is lacking activity in its implementation, which needs to change if the brand wishes to attract new and old customers.

4.4   Brand visualisation

A logo is undoubtedly one of the most critical visual elements of brand building. Customers may recognize a company by its logo, which helps them differentiate it from the competition. Since GastroBar Saimaa previously lacked a logo or other identifying marks, some consumers were confused by the company's name or were unaware that GastroBar Saimaa was a brand. To address the issue, the authors designed a logo that can be used in promotional materials, social media, and other marketing purposes.

The authors created the logo (Figure 37) by thinking about the company's essence, personality, and the message it wants to convey. There are several main elements in the logo: colour, symbol, and design. Because of its ability to invoke those emotions, colour plays an important role in the development of the brand's visual identity. Many survey participants defined GastroBar Saimaa as fresh, creative, and educational brand, which is why the logo's primary colour is blue, which represents learning, nature, freshness, and Lake Saimaa. The symbol consists of wave-like pattern shaped in a form of a bowl. The logo is designed in a minimalistic manner in accordance with modern trends. Even though the original version of the logo is blue, it would be possible to change the colour scheme according to the season

or the purpose of the event. The authors consulted with Ann-Mari Karvinen and Jukka Moil-anen, the founders of GastroBar Saimaa, to discuss the visuals' outline and finalize the logo.

Figure 37. Logo suggestion for GastroBar Saimaa

GastroBar Saimaa's brand now has a distinct "face" thanks to the visual elements. These elements can be used by marketing managers in social media accounts and other adver-tising materials in the future to further brand growth. The mock-ups of social media networks used by the organization are shown in Figure 38. This is not the final edition, but rather a concept that should be further developed in the future.
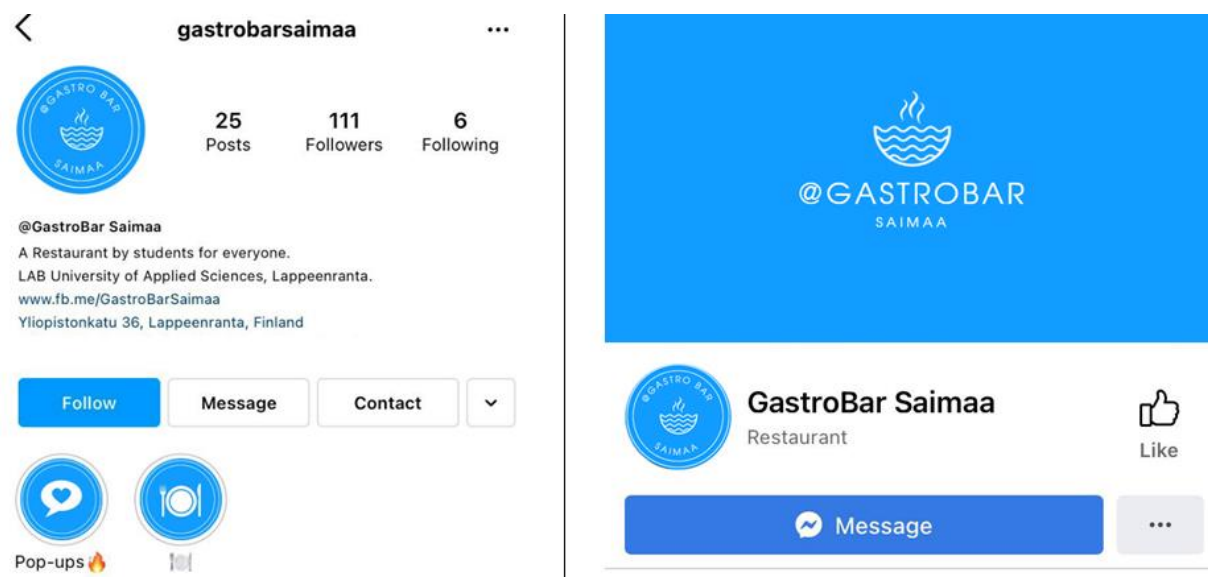

Figure 38. Social media mock-ups of GastroBar Saimaa (Instagram, Facebook)

Existing and prospective customers will be able to recognize GastroBar Saimaa more easily now that the logo has been identified. It allows for further work on the brand's overall aes-thetic and coherent promotional materials. The authors believe this solution will help to overcome the marketing communication problems that have been mentioned in the survey,

establish relationship with the public and encourage better exposure among potential clientele.

To conclude this chapter, the authors of the thesis examined the key elements of Aaker and Joachimsthaler's brand building model using the results of the conducted survey. Furthermore, the authors have suggested which aspects of the brand should be changed based on the same findings in order to not only create a better image for the brand, but also to preserve the one that already exists.

5   Conclusion

5.1   Answer to research questions

In order to conclude the research, authors of the thesis must clearly answer their research questions, highlight the positive sides of their research and knowledge gained and suggest topics for further research. The authors also look at the fulfilment of the research questions and general overview at the amount of information presented in this thesis.

The first and the main question of the studies was to determine what kind of brand does GastroBar Saimaa have. From the survey, it was determined, that the brand already possesses positive image and identity in the minds of its customers, with notable features being its uniqueness, informal and relaxed atmosphere and quality of produce. However, at the same time, a significant part of the respondents has shown through their answers, that they do not know of GastroBar Saimaa as a brand. This was a result of poor identity visualization, as no logo existed to be attached to the positive emotions. Instead, these emotions were attached to the frequent pop-up restaurants.

The second question of the studies was to determine what kind of values does GastroBar Saimaa, as a brand, offer its customers. These values were clearly defined in the identity and image part of the development plan. The brand essence, the main offering of GastroBar Saimaa to its customers, was defined as "innovating tastes for your enjoyment". This alludes to the fact, that GastroBar Saimaa, during their events, offers fresh, unique and innovative ideas in order to attract customers. The uniqueness of experience is not the only offering of GastroBar Saimaa. The brand also offers its customers relaxed atmosphere during their events, positive emotions associated with the events and the brand and an opportunity to support the university and customers' acquaintances, who work at GastroBar Saimaa.

The third, and the last question of our studies, has covered the suggestions for improvement the overall image of GastroBar Saimaa. The authors suggest a number of actions, which must be taken by GastroBar Saimaa, to ensure the growth of the brand and improvement of the brand image. The primary suggestion for GastroBar Saimaa was to im-prove their visual identity. The authors have also made suggestion as to how to do it and have suggested their variant of a logo. Furthermore, the brand was suggested to further improve quality of their produce, to create brand-customer relationship and to devise a brand-wide attitude for the students to adhere to.

The authors of the thesis believe that the information gathered from the survey and the interview fulfils all the research questions to their logical capacity. They also believe, that

the there is more information presented than necessary. This is relatively beneficial for the brand because the information does not cover only the aspects of the research questions, but also other, related aspects of the research. This information can be used or ignored by GastroBar Saimaa on their own accord.

The highlighted areas of interest, in the opinion of the authors, are the survey and data collection area and the empirical part of the research. The authors of the thesis also note that brand and brand-building theory was personally interesting for them to not only read and learn, but to also write about.

To conclude, the authors were glad to conduct this research for GastroBar Saimaa. It offered not only a great opportunity to further a brand, but also to learn. The authors are hopeful, that other like-minded individuals will continue research for the brand of GastroBar Saimaa to better it even further and make it recognizable among the township of Lappeenranta.

5.2   Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are used to measure the quality of the research, and whether it should be trusted. Validity represents the accuracy of the research results analysis and suitability of the used measures. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 213.) In this study the authors have used qualitative research method, hence overall validity measurement is based on the validity of the interview and the survey. To guarantee the validity of the interview, owners of the case company were questioned so the data is collected from the primal sources. As for the survey, the authors have tried to achieve the highest level of validity possible by designing a detailed and understandable questions to avoid potential bias and misinterpretations.

Theoretical framework of the study is carefully chosen and based on the information gathered from the trusted scientific sources. Empirical part is clearly defined by the authors and follows all the steps of brand building outlined in the theory. All these elements ensure that this study is valid to the possible extent of the qualitative research method.

Reliability indicates a consistency of a research and possibility of replication, in other words, if a researcher can replicate the study and accomplish the same results as the previous one (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 213). In qualitative research the data is highly interpretive, therefore the results may not be fully replicated which creates certain limitations for the reliability of the study. Nevertheless, the authors have tried to avoid the factors which could produce unreliable data by designing valid and clear survey, using standardized process of data collection, and analysing the results in accordance with theoretical framework.

To conclude this part, the authors of the thesis have followed the scientifically proved guidelines to make sure that the data collection and analysis is as valid and reliable as possible in qualitative study considering all the possible misinterpretations. This research is suitable for further examination and development, however, there might be several differences in the results due to the nature of the study.

5.3   Suggestion for further research

The authors of the thesis would also like to suggest certain topics for research, concerning GastroBar Saimaa as a brand and as a company. The first topic that the authors suggest is the topic of brand credibility. Brand credibility occurs, when two brands work in co-operation, so the image and identity of one brand is affected by the image and identity of the other brand. This is a particularly interesting topic, as GastroBar Saimaa may start interacting with other brands in the future or create extensions of their own brand, which will interact with each other.

Furthermore, authors suggest a marketing communications plan for GastroBar Saimaa as a research topic. From our research, it was clear that GastroBar Saimaa is not being marketed enough and is suffering because of this. The brand image could be further improved with a compelling marketing communications plan, which will make the brand even more recognizable.

Authors also suggest the topics, related to improvement of GastroBar Saimaa's brand, like a topic of creation of brand-wide attitude for students, who work in GastroBar Saimaa. Worker behaviour has a direct impact on the quality of the produce, which affects image and identity of the brand. Certain measures have to be defined and taken in order to ensure that every student, who works in GastroBar Saimaa follows this attitude.

Creation and maintenance of customer-brand relationship is also a relatable topic. Since GastroBar Saimaa, with the help of the authors of the thesis, will upgrade their brand, it would be very beneficial and interesting to look into how a relationship between customer and brand is created and maintained. Covering this topic will be useful not only for Gastro-Bar Saimaa, but also for general understanding of how these relationships are created and maintained.

6   Summary

The primary goal of this study is to aid GastroBar Saimaa in developing a brand strategy. Although the company already had a certain brand identity and personality, it was not well established. The authors of the thesis identified the key study questions and conducted a research to find answers to these questions. This study is split into two sections: theoretical framework and empirical study.

The authors have defined the key concepts and elements of branding, such as brand image and identity, equity, positioning, and visual identity of the brand, in a theoretical context. The data was compiled from a variety of books and scientific publications from reputable sources. The theoretical framework's final chapters are devoted to brand building models, which are then used empirically to develop the branding strategy of the case company, GastroBar Saimaa.

The following chapters are devoted to the compilation and interpretation of research results. The authors used a self-administered online survey and an interview with the case company's owners to gather empirical evidence. Since this is a qualitative study, the next move was to analyse and interpret the information gathered. The findings were viewed as a narrative discussion with accompanying figures. According to the report, the GastroBar Saimaa's key problem is a lack of a well-defined marketing plan and brand image. In the final chapters, the solution to this dilemma is proposed.

The final chapters were written based on the collected data and theoretical framework. In this section, the authors developed a brand strategy for the case company using Aaker and Joachimsthaler's brand building model. The customer and self-analysis of the company, brand identity, equity, and positioning are all part of the brand building model. Additionally, the authors have designed a logo for the case company, which can be used in marketing materials. Finally, the authors have completed the analytical portion of the study and made further suggestions for the research.

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Appendix 1. Interview questions

1) What is the story behind GastroBar Saimaa? How and when was this idea created?

2) What is the mission and vision of GastroBar Saimaa?

3) How do you see the future of GastroBar Saimaa? Do you see it becoming something more than a pop-up establishment for students and teachers?

4) How important it is to have GastroBar Saimaa for our faculty? For students? For courses?

5) If you see GastroBar Saimaa becoming something more than it is, are you ready to take in new customers besides students, like locals?

Appendix 2. Survey on the perception of GastroBar Saimaa

Survey on the perception of GastroBar Saimaa

Dear participants!

We are working on the brand building of GastroBar Saimaa and would like to ask you to answer the following questions. We would like to know your opinion on what kind image does the brand have. Please note, that in order to complete the survey you need to be familiar with services provided by GastroBar Saimaa. The completion of the survey takes around 10-15 minutes. The questionnaire is fully anonymous (emails will only be collected if you choose to participate in the raffle).

GastroBar Saimaa is a brand, which is a part of faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Lappeenranta campus of LAB University of Applied Sciences. You might have heard of their pop-up restaurants which are organized by students every month.

This questionnaire is a part of a bachelor's thesis of Tourism and Hospitality Management faculty of LAB University of Applied Sciences. If you have any questions concerning the survey, please do not hesitate to contact us through this email: iuliana.fadeeva@student.lab.fi or boris.royz@student.lab.fi.

Thank you for participation, it means a lot!

1. To which organization do you belong? *

○ LAB University of Applied Sciences

○ LUT University

○ Other: _____

2. Are you a student or staff member? *

○ Student

○ Staff member

○ Other: _____

3. Are you familiar with GastroBar Saimaa? *

☐ Yes, I have used their services

☐ Yes, I have worked with them

☐ No, I haven't used their services but heard of them

☐ Other:

4. How do you get information about latest events organized by GastroBar Saimaa? *

☐ Social media (Facebook, Instagram)

☐ Poster advertisments

☐ From a friend/colleague

☐ LAB/LUT Intranet

☐ Yammer

☐ Infoboards inside of the univerisity

☐ Other:

5. In your opinion, how effective is GastroBar Saimaa's marketing communication? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not effective at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very effective

6. Please briefly explain your opinion (optional)

Your answer

7. Why do you visit events organized by GastroBar Saimaa? (choose 3 most important) *

☐ To try tasty food

☐ To get new unique experience

☐ To enjoy the atmosphere

☐ To see the work of students

☐ To support the brand

☐ To enjoy company of others

☐ Other:

8. How would you describe your overall experience with GastroBar Saimaa? *

	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied
The atmosphere	○	○	○	○
The quality of services	○	○	○	○
The friendliness of staff members	○	○	○	○
The quality of food	○	○	○	○
Overall value for money	○	○	○	○

9. Please briefly explain your opinion (optional)

Your answer

10. How would you describe GastroBar Saimaa to your friend or colleague? *

Your answer

11. On a scale of 1 - 5, how likely are you to recommend GastroBar Saimaa to your friend or colleague? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not likely	○	○	○	○	○	Most likely

12. When you think of GastroBar Saimaa, which adjectives come to mind first and why? *

Your answer

13. How well do following words relate to GastroBar Saimaa? *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Excitement	○	○	○	○
Fun	○	○	○	○
Positivity	○	○	○	○
Reliability	○	○	○	○
Stability	○	○	○	○
Freshness	○	○	○	○
Creativity	○	○	○	○
Formality	○	○	○	○
Discipline	○	○	○	○

14. When you think of Gastro Bar Saimaa how do you feel? *

Your answer

15. On a scale of 1 - 5, how would you describe your emotional attachment with GastroBar Saimaa? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
No emotional attachment	○	○	○	○	○	Strong emotional attachment

16. How do you think GastroBar Saimaa's brand should develop in order to attract you even more? *

Your answer