Consumer’s obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare in Espoo region

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This paper introduces a marketing research. The topic is “Consumers’ obstacles when looking for English speaking daycare in Espoo region”. The goal of this research is to evaluate the market demand and understand the consumers’ needs and obstacles when looking for English speaking daycare. Another aim of this research is to get some information about consumer behavior which can be beneficial to the English speaking daycare business.

This research attempts to use various models, frameworks and theories from different sources to explain the phenomenon. The theoretical part of this research explains the concepts behind market demand and consumer behavior. In addition, the report also describes the research methodology, research approach and data collection methods.

The final two chapters of this research present the findings, conclusions and some suggestions to both consumers and English speaking daycare business owners. The findings present the consumers’ expectation, consumer behavior, consumers’ obstacles and market situation related to English speaking daycare in Espoo region. Moreover, the result shows that there is not enough English speaking daycare in Espoo region. The waiting time and queue for getting a place at English speaking daycare is long. Hence, there is high demand of English speaking daycare in this region which also means the opportunity for English speaking daycare business. All in all, the research findings contain a lot of solid information which can be turned into business strategy.

**Keywords**
Consumer, consumer behavior, marketing strategy, child daycare
Table of contents

1 Introduction........................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Background and purpose of the study ......................................................................................... 1
  1.2 The scope of the study .................................................................................................................. 2
  1.3 Research problem......................................................................................................................... 3
  1.4 The structure of the thesis ........................................................................................................... 3
  1.5 The key concepts......................................................................................................................... 4
2 English speaking daycare as business ............................................................................................... 6
  2.1 Introduction to English speaking daycare ................................................................................... 6
  2.2 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) ........................................................................... 7
  2.3 English speaking daycare business and features ....................................................................... 9
3 Theoretical framework ....................................................................................................................... 11
  3.1 Theory of needs............................................................................................................................ 11
  3.2 Consumer Behavior theories ...................................................................................................... 13
  3.3 Power of reference groups......................................................................................................... 15
  3.4 Market demand environment and buying decision process theories ....................................... 16
4 Research methodology ...................................................................................................................... 19
  4.1 Research approach .................................................................................................................... 19
  4.2 Data collection............................................................................................................................ 20
     4.2.1 Primary data collection ..................................................................................................... 21
     4.2.2 Secondary data collection ............................................................................................... 24
  4.3 Data analyzing method................................................................................................................ 24
5 Research findings .............................................................................................................................. 26
  5.1 Background information of the findings .................................................................................... 26
  5.2 Information of the respondents ................................................................................................. 26
  5.3 Results and research findings.................................................................................................... 28
6 Conclusion ......................................................................................................................................... 32
  6.1 Research conclusion................................................................................................................... 32
  6.2 Open suggestions for an English speaking daycare business ................................................. 33
  6.3 Personal learning....................................................................................................................... 35
  6.4 Reliability and validity............................................................................................................... 36
1 Introduction

The "Consumer" refers to the user who purchases goods or services for use. From an economic perspective, it is the target of marketing research and marketing strategies. Without consumers there would be no business. Thus, understanding the consumer can help to understand the purchasing power and market.

This research attempts to examine the obstacles of the consumer when looking for English speaking daycare for their children. For that purpose the qualitative research method is used and conducted. With the results of the qualitative research method, researcher can find out the current possibility of consumer behavior, market demand, and purchasing power to support English speaking daycare business. In addition, the researcher attempts to use various models, frameworks and theories from different sources to explain the phenomenon. The theoretical part of this research explains the concepts behind the marketing demand, consumer behavior and possible problems of market.

The researcher sees that this topic is important because it explores the consumer behavior and market situation. It gives good information on how English speaking daycare business operates. Moreover, the research findings can be used to increase awareness amongst consumers and business owners. Also, the English speaking daycare business owner can benefit from it, which can turn the findings into practice and business strategy. The researcher believes that this research can provide valuable assets and information to both consumers and English speaking daycare business owner.

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

The idea of this research came from listening to personal experiences of families who live in Espoo. Some of them live permanently in Finland and others come to Finland to work or study for a short period of time. These families have different background and needs when looking for English speaking daycare for their children. However, majority of them face the problems during this process. For instance, some of them have difficulties to get the place at English speaking daycare for their child. Others need to wait for 6 to 24 months to get a place at an English speaking daycare. Few others are
not satisfied with the service. In addition, the Finnish government estimates that in year 2030 the foreign population will increase in Espoo up to 52,000 persons (Espoo city, 2013). This will definitely have an impact on the English speaking daycares in this region. With these mentioned reasons indicate that there will be high demand shown from Espoo community to have more English speaking daycares. Thus, this issue should be handled and studied.

Another reason which makes researcher interested in this topic because of the future business plan. The researcher and his family are planning to establish an English speaking daycare in Espoo region. Therefore, this kind of marketing research can help and support the establishment of business. In addition, the purpose of this research is to exam the consumer behavior, consumer’s obstacles and the market problem. This research also helps to explain the market situation and market demand. Moreover, it presents many hidden information related to English speaking daycare business.

1.2 The scope of the study

To understand the scope of this research, we should understand the purpose of this study. This research attempts to examine the consumer’s obstacles and needs. Hence, it concentrates on below information:

- Consumer’s obstacles while looking for English speaking daycare for a child.
- Consumer needs and expectations towards English speaking daycares.

Also, this research focuses on one particular region, which is Espoo city. Moreover, the interview is conducted with samples or respondents who are selected according to the research requirements, for instance the respondents who live in Espoo or have a child who is currently in an English speaking daycare in Espoo, or who used to be at an English speaking daycare in Espoo. These respondents can provide a lot of information which is related to this study.
1.3 Research problem

In researcher’s opinion, defining the research problem is one of the most important steps in a research process. It is likely the foundation of a research study. In practice, the research problem involves almost every step that is taken in research. In order to start the research, one must know what the research problem is. For this research, the researcher is interested to find the answers to below research questions.

- What are the consumer’s expectations from an English speaking daycare?
- What is the market demand and market situation related to English speaking daycares in Espoo region?
- What is the procedure to get a place for a child at an English speaking daycare?
- What are the consumers’ obstacles while looking for an English speaking daycare for their children?
- How to plan and establish a successful English speaking daycare that can fulfill the consumers’ need?

To get the accurate answers, the correct methods should be defined. For this study, the researcher has selected the qualitative research method. This method helps to explore attitudes, behavior and experiences through interviews from the focus group. It attempts to get opinions and real data from respondents. The information about research methods, samplings and data collection are discussed in more details in chapters 3 and 4.

1.4 The structure of the thesis

This subchapter attempts to explain the structure of this thesis briefly. This research has six chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the introduction of the research, the scope of the study and the research problems. Chapter one helps to understand the general and background information of this study.
Chapter 2 describes the information of English speaking daycare as business. It provides a lot of information about English speaking daycares in Finland, its history, features and system. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) has been described in this chapter too.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical frameworks which explain the consumer behaviors, needs, and market demands. The theories of needs, consumer behavior, power of reference groups and market demand theories are mentioned. The theoretical frameworks aim to explain the research phenomenon.

Chapter 4 is about the research methodology. It describes the data collection, research approach and methodology of this study. Primary and secondary data collection is explained. In addition, the samplings and how the interviews are conducted is described in this chapter too.

Chapter 5 presents the results, research findings and research analysis. It describes the background information of findings, the information of respondents and research findings.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion and suggestion from the research findings. It also describes the personal learning and reliability and validity of this research.

The final part of this research is the references. In fact, chapter one, two, three, four, five and six are related and linked to each other.

1.5 The key concepts

This subchapter deals with the essential concepts related to the consumer’s obstacles when looking for English speaking daycare in Espoo. It describes the key concepts and key words of this research.

**Consumer** in general is the one who is feeling the need for purchase, making the purchase, and later disposing it. However, there might be some other people involved in the process. The one, who is buying the product, is not always the final user of the
product. The influence of other people while purchasing the product might affect the final decision-making. The consumer normally appears in different ages, life phases or social backgrounds. (Kardes, Cronley, Cline 2008, 8).

**Consumer behavior** is about the people who make buying decisions or satisfaction level they get when consuming certain goods or having services. Consumer behavior plays a very important role in people’s lives when supporting their basic needs, offering products for rest and comfort, fulfilling the needs for enlightenment and social communication. Further, consumer behavior has a great effect on economic situation of the society. (Wilkie 1994, ix).

**Marketing strategy** is the design, implementation, and control of a plan to influence exchanges to achieve organizational objectives. The marketing strategy is typically designed to increase the chances that consumers will have favorable thoughts about particular products, services, and brands, and will try them or repeatedly purchase them. (Peter & Olson 2010, 12).

**Child daycare** focuses on offering families an environment of care that supports the child’s growth and development. Child daycare is available for all children under school age. Parents are able to choose from municipal day care, a private day care allowance or home care allowance for children under 3 years of age. The place of day care can be a day care center or a family day care center. (Department of social services and health care, city of Helsinki, 2013).
2 English speaking daycare as business

This chapter aims to introduce to English speaking daycare and its business. It describes the English speaking daycare system. The features and functions of English speaking daycare are described. Moreover, it explains the education system and early childhood education and care in Finland.

2.1 Introduction to English speaking daycare

When we think about English speaking daycare we always picture the safe environment to children of the age below 7. This environment normally contains care from daycare teachers or nannies or nurses. The main language at an English speaking daycare is English. The children go through different developmental phases together with learning English language. Furthermore, the English speaking daycares provide early care, learning experience and education in English. It promotes each child's emotional, physical and cognitive development.

In Espoo, there are both municipal and private daycare centers. The municipal daycare centers are open on weekdays between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm depending on the needs of customer and with the exception of holidays (Espoo city, 2012b). The staff of either municipal or private daycare centers primarily consists of kindergarten teachers and child care workers. Every one qualified child care staff is for seven children who are over 3 years old or for four children who are under 3 years old. (Espoo city, 2012b).

The children are divided into groups, depending upon their ages. The number of children in a group will depend on the number of children in the daycare. The children are taken care of and given food during their stay in daycare. Meals are provided by the daycare including breakfast, lunch and snack. Moreover, they have the opportunity to take a nap during the day. The qualified teachers or staffs are to help and support the children and their desire to be life-long learners.

In Finland, the monthly fee is to be paid for the services provided at the day care. The municipal administration provides funds for children who are at daycare. The amount of funds a family gets depending on their income and their size. This is the basic concept of English speaking daycares in Finland.
2.2 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

In Finland, the early childhood education starts from birth to the age of about seven. The children learn language, social, emotional and physical skills at this time of age. However, the ability to absorb things may differ from each child. Therefore, in Finland, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has developed the model to help the early childhood education and care. The Finnish model of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is called “educare” because the basic elements of it are care, education and teaching. (Early Childhood Education and Care policy in Finland 2000, 6-7).

The early childhood education and care is educational interaction taking place in young children’s different living environments, aimed at promoting their balanced growth, development and learning. The ECEC has two main goals. One is to take care of children under school age in safe environment and two is to provide early childhood education. (National curriculum guidelines on early childhood education and care in Finland, 2013, 2-12).

Every child in Finland who is under school age has an unconditional right to day care provided by the local authority once the mother or father’s period of parental allowance comes to an end. According to the Act on children’s day care, the objectives of day care are to support parents in their responsibilities to raise their children and to promote children’s personal and balanced development together with their parents. In addition, the local authorities provide support for day care at daycare centers, at group family day care centers and in family day care at the child care minder’s home or in the form of group family day care. (Early Childhood Education and Care policy in Finland 2000, 22).

In fact, there are many forms of daycare in Finland where the parents of children under school age have the legal right to select and choose to educate and care their children. The goal is to give families the chance to choose a day care place or other early childhood education service that suits the needs of the child and the family and facilitates the balanced growth, development and learning of the child. (Espoo city, 2012a). The ECEC and child care system for children aged 0-6 years old in Finland can be presented in figure 1.
From the figure 1, the municipal daycare is one of the daycare forms. It is a designed school and daycare for small children. It has a suitable environment and a good curriculum. Their aim is to create a community which cares for the children's individual growth, development and learning. Municipal daycare includes the “family day care” which is mostly used as a form of care for the smallest children. A family child minder may have a maximum of four children in full-time care. The “in group family day care” is where 2 or 3 family child minders care for children usually in facilities provided by the local authority. Two child care minders may have eight children in fulltime care. The “open daycare center” is a place for parents or child-care minders to visit along with their child or children. Activities in open daycare center vary by municipality and unit. (Early Childhood Education and Care policy in Finland 2000, 23).
The private daycare is another form of children’s daycare in Finland. It is possible for parents of children under seven years old receive a private childcare allowance in order to provide their children with private care. Private care includes private child care center, family child care or private care givers whom parents choose and who are recognized by the municipality. (Anupama 2010, 14).

Moreover, the National Curriculum Guidelines on Early childhood education and care in Finland are drawn up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Curriculum guidelines aim to promote the provision of ECEC on equal terms throughout the country, to guide the development of the content of activities, and to contribute to developing the quality of activities by introducing uniform principles for organizing such activities. (Early Childhood Education and Care, 2011). The child’s human dignity is the core value in the convention on the Rights of the child that underlies ECEC in Finland. This core value is related to the four overall principles which are respectively non-discrimination and equal treatment, child’s best interest, child’s right to life and full development, and giving due weight to the views of the child. (Twumwaa, 2001, 11-12).

2.3 English speaking daycare business and features

Each business has its specific features and mission. According to Kotler & Keller (2009, 49) the business can be defined in terms of three dimensions: customer group, customer needs, and technology. In fact, the English speaking daycare business is selling services to fulfill consumer needs. The main feature is to support the comprehensive development and growth of a child. It offers children a safe daycare environment where there is possibility to learn English through play, stories, and structured activities. The English language and self-expression is the main emphasis.

The features of English speaking daycare focus on the growth of children which include emotional, intellectual, cultural, social, language, physical and moral skills. Children adopt basic knowledge and skills according to their age and preconditions. They learn for instance to consider the difference between right and wrong, to understand equity and accept differences between human beings. They learn how to cope in everyday life situations and familiarize themselves with the local and national culture, as
well as nature and their own immediate surroundings. (Early Childhood Education and Care, 2011).

Regarding to English speaking daycare as business in Finland, establishing an English speaking daycare business needs a license. The license is issued by the Finnish authority such as city of Espoo as required by Finnish daycare center laws. The health, safety and well-being of the children are requested and inspected by law. In addition, the law requires having an insurance, hygiene standards, outside playtime, ratio of 1 qualified child care staff for every 7 children aged 3-7 or for every 4 children for age under 3 years old. (Early Childhood Education and Care policy in Finland 2000, 22-23). First aid training and other health and safety regulation is required and inspected. The requirements which are related to daycare and how to establish daycare business in Finland can be found at Ministry of Education and culture and Ministry of Social affairs and health websites.
3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research is based on concepts of consumer behavior, principles of marketing, understanding the power of reference groups, consumer buying decision, concept of needs and demand environment. These concepts and theories are used to explain the phenomenon related to consumer's obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare. Below, the researcher attempts to explain theoretical framework one by one and explore relationship between theoretical framework and this research.

3.1 Theory of needs

Human needs are the basis of modern marketing. Needs are the essence of the marketing concept. Every individual has needs: some are innate, others are acquired. Innate needs are physiological; they include the needs for food, water, air, clothing, shelter and sex. Because they are needed to sustain biological life, the biogenic needs are considered primary needs or motives. Acquired needs are needs that we learn in response to our culture or environment. They may include self-esteem, prestige, affection, power and learning. Because acquired needs are generally psychological; they are considered secondary needs or motives. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 83).

The theory of needs can be explained further by Maslow (2010) as “Maslow's hierarchy of needs” as following:

- Physiological needs: they are first priority of needs. They are the requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body simply cannot continue to function such as air, water, and food.
- Safety needs: they include personal security, financial security, health and well-being, safety net against illness and their adverse impacts.
- Love and belonging: the third priority of human needs is social and involves feelings of belongingness. This aspect of Maslow's hierarchy involves emotionally based relationships in general.
- Esteem needs: Once a person feels a sense of "belonging", the need to feel important arises. Esteem needs may be classified as internal or external. Internal es-
teem needs are those related to self-esteem such as self respect and achievement. External esteem needs are those such as social status and recognition.

- Self-Actualization: Self-actualization is the summit of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It is the quest of reaching one's full potential as a person.

![Maslow's hierarchy of needs](image)

Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Communication theory, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, 2013)

Therefore, it can be noted that the need normally comes in form of both behavior science and practice. The theory of needs can explain partly why the obstacle occurs in some situation. It can present the hidden information which is related to consumer behavior and market situation. In addition, the Maslow’s theory is consistency with Kotler & Keller (2009, 103) who argued that some needs are biogenic; they arise from physiological states of tension such as hunger, thirst, and discomfort. Other needs are psychogenic; they arise from psychological states of tension such as the need for recognition, esteem, or belonging. A need becomes a “motive” when it is aroused to sufficient level of intensity to drive us to act.
The consumer need related to English speaking daycare can be explained partly by using this theory. It can identify the consumer wants, behavior, market situation, competition and obstacles that consumer experiences. Whenever the need exists and supply is low, competition occurs. It occurs naturally between living organisms which exist in the same environment. For instance, humans compete for what they need such as food, job and education which can be considered as the market economy life cycle. Whenever market has high demand for English speaking daycare from people who are increasingly to come and live in Espoo, there should be more suppliers to fulfill market needs. Nevertheless, in case the supplier is limited and there is more needs, the problems occur. In today stage, the researcher thinks that the English speaking daycare places are limited in Espoo, therefore, problem of long waiting list can be found. This has mentioned by the respondents that several parents need to wait many months in order to get the place for their child in an English speaking daycare.

3.2 Consumer Behavior theories

This theory was presented by Kotler & Armstrong (2008, 131) who stated that the consumer purchases are influenced strongly by cultural, social, personal, and psychological characteristics. These influenced factors can be divided into two parts. First is the “cultural and social factors” which are consumer’s settings. Second is the “personal and psychological factors” which are the individual consumer elements. Many times, the researcher sees that human behavior is influenced by these factors directly or indirectly. Hence, this theory seems to be true and it can be described in more details as below:

Cultural and Social factors

The cultural and social factors include role, family, social class, belief, and social group. They are defined as the ways of living and institutions of population that are passed down from generation to generation such as codes of manners, religion, rituals, dress, language, norms of behavior and morality. These are different from society to society and country to country. These factors are the basic cause of a personal behavior and reaction. They are the fundamental determinant of person motivation, needs and wants. People who come from different cultural and social background may react differently to the same thing. Also, they may see and understand things differently.
Culture has considerably powerful influence upon consumers' views towards any product. Consumption choice can be understood with recognition of cultural backgrounds of people. The effect of culture is not easy to measure. Culture as phenomenon includes both values, ethics, traditions of people and also objects, made or appreciated by certain group. Culture is a base for our values, behavior, beliefs, priorities and certain perceptions towards different products. These characteristics compose what values of the consumer represent the way of consumer's actions. (Kardes et al. 2008, 407-408).

This theory explains about motivation and how human behavior and way of thinking are related to cultural and social factors. It can explain the case of consumer behavior when looking for an English speaking daycare for their children. Some parents speak English as mother tongue. Others are foreigners and they have no plans to stay in Finland for long period. Some would like their children to learn English language and study about other cultures and language. Therefore, they choose to send their children to English speaking daycare based on their needs and influenced factors.

**Personal and psychological factors**

Normally, thinking and acting can be influenced by personal characteristics. They are the dynamic set of characteristics possessed by a person who influences his cognitions, emotions, motivations, and behaviors in various situations. The personal factors are age, occupation, lifestyle, personality, economic situation and self-concept. The psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. These factors could drive individuals and impel them to action. They are the basic cause of a person’s behavior and reaction. Schiffman & Kanuk (2007, 83) mentioned that the motivation as a state of need-induced tension that drives the individual to engage in behavior that he or she believes will satisfy the need and thus reduce the tension. Weather gratification is actually achieved depends on the course of action pursued. These goals are selected on the basis of their thinking processes and previous learning. This theory is also supported by Kotler & Armstrong (2008, 143) who mentioned that perception is the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world.
In conclusion, this theory focuses on the core of person’s behavior and buying choices. It helps us to understand the influenced factors, reasons why parents send their children to an English speaking daycare and what are their motivations, perceptions and reactions. For instance parents believe that English language becomes important in the current world and English speaking daycare can provide the knowledge of language and skills to their children. With these mentioned reasons the buying behavior and decision making can be influenced.

3.3 Power of reference groups

Within the context of consumer behavior, the concept of the reference groups is important and powerful idea. A reference group is any person or group that serves as a point of comparison for an individual in forming either general or specific values, attitudes or specific guide for behavior. The basic concept provides a valuable perspective for understanding the impact of other people on an individual’s consumption, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. It also provides insight into the methods marketers sometimes use to effect desired changes in consumer behavior. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 312).

This theory attempts to explain how group involvements and memberships influence consumer actions. It deals with how nationality or race or family or group understands and values thing. The reference group usually influences its members mostly via ideology, advice and way of thinking. “The degree of influence that a reference group exerts on an individual’s behavior usually depends on the nature of the individual and the product and specific social factors. An individual, who has firsthand experience with a product or service or can easily obtain full information about it, is likely to be influenced by the advice or example of others. Moreover, a reference group that is perceived as credible, attractive or powerful can induce consumer attitude and behavior.” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 313-314).

The influence of reference group on decision making or purchase decision varies depends on relationship, history, moral, norm, product, interesting, awareness and attitude. It is obvious in everyday life that the basic functions provided by the reference group or family to individual emotion and motivation are strong and powerful. This theory is consistent with our research findings which indicate that some parents select
an English speaking daycare for their children because of the reference group and
friends. Moreover, the parental socialization seems to influence the consumer decision
making in a way that parents prefer their children to learn English language to be able
to co-operate with their society. Hence, it can be noted that understanding the refer-
ence group could lead to understand consumer behavior, market direction and com-
prehend the consumer’s obstacle.

3.4 Market demand environment and buying decision process theories

Kotler & Keller (2009, 68-72) stated that the important step of evaluating marketing
opportunities is to estimate market demand. Market demand for a product or service is
the total volume that would be bought by defined customer group in a defined geo-
graphical area in a defined time period in a defined marketing environment under a
defined marketing program. According to Lahtinen & Isoviita (2001) the psychological,
social, and buying power factors form the demand environment. This environment has
a valuable role in the business environment since this is from where the marketer
learns about the customer needs, purchase motive, and expectations. This environment
emphasizes the customers: their behavior, needs, wants, values, and expectations as
well as the fashion and trends that need to be taken into consideration. (Lahtinen &
Isoviita 2001, 19-20). This can be noted that understanding market demand leads to
understand market and consumer reaction.

In addition of that, the buying decision process is another important factor. It is a
complex matter as many internal and external factors have an impact on the buying
decisions of the consumer. According to Kotler & Keller (2009, 61) marketing mana-
gers must have a continuous flow of information to understand and track changes in
customer needs, wants, preferences and consumption patterns. Kotler & Armstrong
(2008, 145-47) have explained the buyer decision process step by step. It starts with
understand the need or the need recognition, searching information, evaluating alterna-
tive service suppliers, purchase decision, requesting service or post-purchase behavior.

To explain this statement clearly, Groucutt, Leadley, & Forsyth (2004, 96) developed a
model about the buying decision process which can be seen at figure 3. They explained
that customers go through all five stages when acquiring a new product or service. The
process starts with the “problem recognition” or “need recognition”. It is the point where a potential buyer determines about his unfulfilled need or desire. The “information search” is the stage which the consumer is aroused to search for more information. The information may be used to eliminate some options or products or limit choice set. The “evaluation of alternatives” is the stage which the consumer uses the information to evaluate alternative brands in the choice set. The “purchase decision” is the stage which the consumer chooses the product or brand to be bought. The “post-purchase behavior” is the stage which is after the purchase. The consumer evaluates the purchase decision and product such as does the product meet expectations. All in all, each stage is important and can effect to consumer buying decision.

Figure 3. The buying decision process (Groucutt et al. 2004, 96)

This Groucutt et al.’s process in figure 3 is supported and consistent with the buying decision process at figure 4 which suggested by Lovelock & Wright (2002). The figure 4 describes the buying decision process stages as awareness of the need, evaluating alternative service suppliers, searching information, requesting service from the chosen supplier, service delivery, and evaluating the service performance and future intentions.
Figure 4. The buying process theory (Lovelock & Wright. 2002, 88)

All in all, these above theories attempt to understand the market demand and the buying decision process which help to comprehend the consumer’s obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare for their children. They help to identify the major components of marketing system and improve marketing decisions through marketing systems. Also, they can help to identify demand forecast, market problem, customer buying process problem and trends. Moreover, they can present the desired path of consumer and market. With these theories, the researcher believes that they can identify the reasons behind market problems and obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare.
4 Research methodology

This chapter aims to explain the research methodology. It describes the research approach, data collection and data analyzing method. The primary data and the secondary data are described in this chapter too. Moreover, it explains why these methods were selected and how they are conducted.

4.1 Research approach

The marketing research is rooted in the marketing study. It usually provides the information that express by market or consumer. It provides relevant data that presents marketing challenges and situations. “Marketing research is the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation.” (Kotler & Keller 2009, 62). The qualitative research method is widely designed and used in marketing research. It helps to explore the deep data. It provides deep understanding of human behavior, motivation and experiences. This method answers such questions as “how” or “why”. Details are chosen instead of statistics. (Silverman 2010, 118-119). The foundation of qualitative research describes the real phenomenon which allows the respondents views to be brought out.

With these reasons, this research is based its searcher on qualitative research method and data collection. According to Schiffman & Kanuk “Qualitative research methods include depth interviews, focus groups, metaphor analysis, collage research, and projective techniques... Qualitative methods are also used by consumer behavior researchers who are interested in act of consumption rather than in the act of buying. They view consumer behavior as a subset of human behavior, and increased understanding as a key to reducing negative aspects of consumer behavior.” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007, 22).

The approach of this research focuses on the “data collection” and “interviews” which explore the information and quotations from respondents about their knowledge, opinions, experiences and feelings. Moreover, this research uses the “document analysis” such as texts, documents, reports, publications, books and studying quotations to support and explain the phenomenon. In addition of that, the researcher follows the way
of doing research which is called “the six steps” that described by Kotler & Keller (2009, 63-67). They suggest that in order to be successful in marketing research, the following steps should be taken into consideration:

1. Define the problem, decision alternatives and research objectives: this is the first phase of research. The researcher must know the objectives and define the research problem.
2. Develop the research plan: this is the designing step for gathering the needed information. This includes how to get the data and sources. The scope of sampling and research approaches should be set properly in order to get the right data.
3. Collect the information: according to Kotler & Keller, the data collection phase of marketing research is generally the most expensive and take time.
4. Analyze the information: this step is to extract findings, tabulating data, developing frequency distributions, applying statistical techniques to findings and strength the conclusion.
5. Present the findings: this is the step of how to bring the data to life and presenting information and reality. In this research, the chapter 5 presents the research findings.
6. Make the decision: This step belongs to the person, organization or manager who commission the research need to weigh the evidence. He can turn the research findings into action and profit. In this research, the researcher presents chapter 6 as suggestion for any organization or people who are interested in this topic.

4.2 Data collection

The researcher has mentioned before that this research is based on the qualitative research method. Hence, the collected data is not presented in the numeric form. In fact, there are two types of data that are used in this research: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the data that researcher has collected by using interview to get the information. Secondary data is the already existing data such as books, reports, publications and documents. It helps to support, notify and contribute the primary data.
4.2.1 Primary data collection

The primary data refers to the information collected by the researcher. According to Kotler & Keller (2009, 65) the marketing researcher can collect primary data in five main ways. The first way is “observational research”; fresh data can be gathered by observing the relevant actors and setting. The second way is “focus-group research”; it is a gathering of few or some people who are carefully selected based on certain consideration to discuss at length various topics of interest, assisted by a professional research moderator. The third way is “survey research”; this way research moderator can learn about people’s knowledge, beliefs, preferences and satisfaction and can measure these magnitudes in general population. The fourth way is “behavioral data”; customers can leave traces in many ways. Marketers can learn much by analyzing these data. The fifth way is “experimental research”; the most scientifically valid research is experimental research. Its purpose is to capture cause-and-effect relationships by eliminating competing explanations of the observed finding.

For this research, the “focus-group research” and “survey research” have been focused on for gathering the primary data. The sampling plan has been designed and the questions are developed and directly linked to the areas of this research. The semi-structured interview is used and constructed for data collection. Kotler & Keller (2009, 67) stated that the personal interview is the most versatile method because researcher can ask more questions and record additional observations about respondents. The aim of the semi-structured interview is to build up open discussion in order to get information related to the topic and encourage the interviewee to share freely point of views. The semi-structured interview helps to keep each individual interview on the same track by using the same questions, but at the same time gives the freedom for the discussion to bring up issues and new information.

Questions

In this research, part of data collection comes from the semi-interviews. It is based on questions and answers from respondents. The questions are created based on the research questions, interest and scope of research. It attempts to get the answer from respondents as much as possible for gathering data. The module of question is the open format questions. It gives respondent an opportunity to express his or her opin-
ions. This type of question does not set responses and it is free to be answered meaning that the respondent chooses. By including open format questions, the researcher can get the true story and even unexpected answers. Moreover, the questions are reviewed by language expert and also tested before the real interview.

Regarding to the questions, the researcher uses the main open questions below for the interview.

- Why did you look for an English speaking daycare for your child? Can you explain?
- What are your expectations from an English speaking daycare?
- Was it easy to get a place for your child at an English speaking daycare? If not why?
- How long did it take to get a place for your child at an English speaking daycare?
- What was the procedure to get a place for your child at an English speaking daycare?
- Do you think there are enough English speaking daycares in Espoo?
- Can you explain the problems you faced while looking for an English speaking daycare for your child?
- Can you explain the problems you faced while waiting for getting a place for your child at an English speaking daycare?
- Is there anything you would change or improve regarding English speaking daycares in Espoo?
- Other suggestion for English speaking daycare business?

These questions are used to find out the information related to consumers’ expectation, consumer behavior, market demand and market situation related to English speaking daycare. Moreover, they are used to understand the consumers’ needs and obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare for their Children. These questions are simple, direct and easy to understand. The researcher believes that the answers of these questions can provide a lot of information and can answer to research objective.
Samples and sampling plan

In this research, the sampling plan is used as the selection of subset of individuals from population to estimate characteristics of the whole population. It is the detailed outline of measurements which will be taken in what manner, how and whom. To explain this in details, the researcher has designed sampling plan based on three following outlines.

− Sampling unit: the researcher has chosen the sampling unit that covers or at least present the target population. The simples or respondents are selected according to research requirements which should fall into one of following categories: the respondent has a child who is at English speaking daycare in Espoo, or used to send a child to an English speaking daycare in Espoo. Moreover, the sampling frame is developed so that everyone in the target population has chance of being sampled.

− Sample size: The researcher knows that the large samples can provide more reliable results than small samples. Hence, the researcher has determined to have at least 15 sampling units.

− Sampling procedure: this is how researcher chooses the respondents and calculates the limits reliability, time and others. Researcher has stated earlier that simples are selected according to research requirements. The sampling size is set to be at least 15 units. The interview is planed properly. Questions are reviewed and tested. From the question testing, the researcher comes into conclusion that the interview will not exceed 30 minutes. This is to comfort the respondents and the researcher notices that 10 to 30 minutes is enough for gathering data from respondents.

Furthermore, the research also uses the sampling method which is called “judgmental sampling”. It means that the simples are chosen based on who researcher thinks would be right and appropriate for this study. Basically, they have personal and long experiences with English speaking daycare or they are customers of English speaking daycare in Espoo. Moreover, the researcher attempts to select equal number of respondents between male and female respondent, and local Finn and foreigner. But the result shows that female respondents are somehow more interested in participating in the interview.
4.2.2 Secondary data collection

The secondary data is the data that has already been existed or collected by someone or organization before or from other sources. It is normally used as reference or open up the idea or support the primary data. According to Chisnall (1997, 39-64) there are two main types or categories of secondary data namely “internal secondary data” and “external secondary data”. Internal secondary data is data that already exists in some form which is from internal source for example as company reports and internal memos. External secondary data includes all data which exists outside, for example published books, information from internet, external report, external survey, and so on.

For this research, the secondary data is mostly from books, reports, journals and e-journals, research documents and internet. There are many advantages to use the secondary data such as it is easy to access, low cost to acquire and it helps to clarify some research question and finding. Moreover, it opens up the extra information and other view point related to this research topic. In this research, the secondary data are mentioned at the references page.

4.3 Data analyzing method

Data analyzing is one of the steps in research process. It is a process of organizing and inspecting data with the goal of highlighting useful information. It is the way how to interpret the data finding. It is how to extract the data which can be done in many ways.

The data analysis process of this research starts with gathering data and collecting the information, reviewing the finding, organizing data into categories for analyzing, defining patterns and connections between categories, identifying key text which can be used to explain the research questions. The data analysis process of this research is presented at the figure 5.
In addition, the researcher has extracted the data by using different methods such as tabulating the data and developing frequency distributions. The graph, Window excels and social sciences methods are adopted as tools to analyze the data. Some data can be entered to the Window excels to produce the chart and graph as percentage figures and frequency figures. Others are not able to enter to excel for figures, thus, the researcher analyzes and describes them in separate section.
5 Research findings

This chapter presents the collected data and research findings in accordance with logical order of theoretical framework. It is the principal outcomes of a research. It includes the information from primary data which research receives from interview, the information from secondary data which researcher gets from internal and external information and the research analysis.

5.1 Background information of the findings

The respondent is one of the important study sources in data collection. They give the information to understand the research phenomenon. For this research, the researcher attempted to invite 40 respondents for short interview. However, only 24 respondents are participated in the interview which calculates as 60% of the requested respondents. These 24 respondents are valid according to academic marketing research. All respondents could finish the semi-structured interview in less than 30 minutes. There was no pressure in the interview. They could answer the questions in friendly and relaxed situation. The answers were collected and recorded in paper. They could represent the reality, experience and current thoughts of people. Below table 1 presents the respondent data information.

Table 1. Participated respondents in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number (people)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participated respondents</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total requested respondents</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Information of the respondents

This topic discusses about the information of respondents. It includes gender, age, and background. The researcher always sees that the equality of gender of respondents is quite important. Hence, the researcher has invited 20 male respondents and 20 female respondents for participating in the interview. The result is that female respondents are
participated in the interview more than male respondents. It could be because of many reasons such as time, work, family and personal reasons. Participated male respondents can count as 37.5% of all participated respondents and participated female respondents counts as 62.5% from all participated respondents. The gender of respondents is shown as table 2.

Table 2. Gender of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-respondents</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When entering the above number and data into word excel. The researcher can generate the pie chart as figure 5. The pie chart presents the numbers of female respondents are more than male respondents. The percentage of male and female respondents are shown in the figure 5 too

The researcher also sees that the culture and type of respondent might influence this research. Therefore, the researcher has analyzed the type of the respondents in the table below. It shows that more foreigners participated in the interview than Finnish. This could be because of several reasons such as family behavior or most of foreigners send their children to an English speaking daycare while most Finns send their children to Finnish speaking daycare. From the table 3, foreigner respondents can count as

Figure 6. Gander of respondents in percentage
66.66% of all participated respondents and Finnish respondents count as 33.33% from all participated respondents.

Table 3. Type of respondents in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Foreigner</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66.66%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age of respondents is another interesting factor in the research. It can provide a lot of information. For instance, the result presents that majority of respondents are between 30 to 40 years old of age. This can be noted as the majority of the parents in Finland are between 30 to 40 years old. Moreover, there is no respondent who is below 20 years old of age participated in this research. This is because of the lack of respondent who is below 20 years old of age and has a child in English speaking daycare.

Table 4. Age of respondents in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Age below 20</th>
<th>20-30 yrs</th>
<th>30-40 yrs</th>
<th>Above 40 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Respondents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Results and research findings

This section describes the results and research findings. It is about what the researcher has found in relation to research questions, primary data and secondary data. It includes the information and answers which were received from respondents. To make it clear, the researcher organizes the research findings into different categories according to the research questions.

Why did respondent choose or look for an English speaking daycare for his/her child?

The respondents stated clearly that the English language is an international and universal language. This language becomes more and more important in current world. Hence, they choose to send their children to English speaking daycare because they
want their children to learn the English language in early age or from their childhood. The researcher agrees with them that nowadays the English language is very important. Sending the children to an English speaking daycare can help children to be able to communicate in English. They also can learn new culture and language at English speaking daycare.

In addition, some respondents are working in the international company and there is possibility for them to move abroad or transferred to different parts of the world. Choosing the English speaking daycare is a part of their preparation and plan. Whenever they go abroad their children can have possibility to continue their study in another English speaking daycare or international school. Moreover, there is another reason that the respondents choose to send their children to English speaking daycare. That is because of the service and friends’ recommendation.

What do parents expect from an English speaking daycare?
The researcher has asked this question to all respondents and found out that there are many expectations from parents toward English speaking daycare. The parents expect their children can play, have fun and enjoy learning at daycare. They expect their children to develop language, physical, social and communication skills at daycare. Importantly, they expect their children to learn English language and be able to communicate in English language.

Learning the good behavior, right manner and value from English speaking daycare is expected from parents too. Furthermore, some parents expect to get the international service from English speaking daycare. All in all, the researcher can note that the parents have really high expectation for their children to learn English language together with playing and developing their emotional, physical, cultural and social skills.

What was the procedure to get a place for a child at an English speaking daycare?
The respondents have answered this question in similar way. They mentioned the steps on how to get the place for their children at English speaking daycare. They start with searching for the information of English speaking daycare in Espoo region. They take
many things in their considerations while searching for the information such as location, price, daycare size, daycare history and reputation. Actually, this consumer buying decision process was explained in details in chapter 3. Normally, the process starts with the awareness of the need, searching for information, then evaluating alternative suppliers or options, after that requesting service from the chosen supplier, and then evaluating the service performance and future intentions.

From this question, the respondents also mention that there are not many English speaking daycare options or places in Espoo. Some of them realize about the limitation and competition while searching for the English speaking daycare information. Hence, majority of them try to fill in the application form online for several English speaking daycares, and then wait for a call from daycares and sometimes, they follow up the application by phone. Furthermore, there are some respondents who visit the English speaking daycare by themselves to fill in the application form and to talk to daycare owner in order to get the place for their children. However, the research findings show majority of respondents still need to wait for certain period of time in order to get the place at an English speaking daycare.

What were the problems and obstacles related to an English speaking daycare or while looking for a place for his/her child at an English speaking daycare? There are many important answers and findings which researcher receives from this question. The main problem that the respondents like to mention is; there is not enough English speaking daycare in Espoo. This means there is low supplier in this region. On other hand, there is high demand from consumer. This finding shows the imbalance of demand and supply of English speaking daycare business. It is consistency with the theories in chapter 3 where described about the consumer needs, market situation, competition and obstacles. Whenever the need exists and the supply is low, the competition occurs.

The lack of English speaking daycare in Espoo region leads to another important finding of this research which is the long waiting time. Majority of respondents face the long queue for getting a place at English speaking daycare. Parents have to wait for long period of time. 4 respondents wait for about 1 year to get the place at an English
speaking daycare in Espoo region. 5 respondents wait for about 1.5 years. 2 respondents wait for about 2 years. One respondent wait for 6 months, even though, she tries to visit many English speaking daycares herself. But few others do not face this problem or see this queuing problem as minor problem due to they have good preparation. They make the advance application when their children are 6-18 months old. As a result, some parents have to send their children to Finnish daycare while waiting for a place at English speaking daycare.

The problem of location was mentioned in the answer of this question too. Many respondents see that they cannot find the English speaking daycare in many areas in Espoo. The English speaking daycare where their children are currently at is far from home. Moreover, there are other problems which mentioned by respondents that are related to this question such as English speaking daycares do not really follow Finnish curriculum. The group at daycare is not organized properly. One respondent mentions that her child is 3.5 years old but she has to be with children under the age of 3. Thus, her child cannot develop learning, communication and physical skills as 3.5 years old.

**Other findings and suggestions related to English speaking daycare?**

There are several suggestions and comments from the respondents related to this question. Some parents prefer to leave their children at home if they are capable and have time. Some parents have different social and cultural background may have different needs towards English speaking daycare such as they believe that English speaking daycare can provide extra knowledge of language and skills to their children. In addition, few respondents are not satisfied with the staffs at English speaking daycare. They mention that the staffs at English speaking daycare do not have good level in English language (non-native speaker). Moreover, one respondent mention that she is not satisfied with an English speaking daycare service. It does not meet her standard. Thus, she had to move her child to another English speaking daycare.
6 Conclusion

This chapter aims to provide the conclusion of research. It describes and analyses the results. After reviewing the findings, the suggestion for English speaking daycare business is presented. The own learning and research reliability and validity are described in this chapter too.

6.1 Research conclusion

This research is considered as the marketing research. The marketing research is generally used for four reasons:

- Identifying market opportunities: Companies or individuals try to find opportunities in the market place.
- Generate and evaluate potential marketing actions: marketing research provides managers with information on the effectiveness of the current marketing strategy, and thereby certain changes can be made if necessary.
- Monitor marketing performance: companies use marketing research to monitor how well their products or services are performing in the market place.
- Improve marketing as a process: marketing research is conducted to expand our knowledge of marketing. Typical of such research would be attempts to describe, explain, and predict marketing phenomenon.

(Burns & Bush 2003, 8-10).

The researcher stated earlier that the objective of this thesis is to demonstrate current information about the consumer behavior and consumer’s obstacles when looking for English speaking daycare in Espoo region. It basically presents the market information, objective collection and analysis of data. The consumers who have children in English speaking daycare in Espoo could be the target respondents of the interview and be involved in data collection. With the responses that obtains from 24 respondents and the analyzing primary data and secondary data, the research problem of this study has been answered.
The research findings are already mentioned in previous topic. However, the conclusions of this research can demonstrate as following:

- The reasons why parents send their children to English speaking daycare.
- Parents’ expectation from the English speaking daycare.
- The process on how to get a place at English speaking daycare.
- The problems and obstacles when looking for an English speaking daycare.
- Demand and supply chain in this business.
- Opportunity and improvement on how to manage this business.

Regarding to the consumer behavior, there are several factors which can influence the consumer behavior and market demand such as culture, language, family background, family type, nationality, race and other. These factors influence on consumer decision making when looking for English speaking daycare. Sometimes, they can generate the problems in market environment. Therefore, they should be examined properly and regularly. In addition, the increasing number of population has some influence to the market too. Finnish government expects the demand for daycare to increase through the turn of the century. Especially, the popularity of foreigners in Espoo is expected to increase from 23,250 to 52,000 persons by 2030 (Espoo city, 2013) or from 10.3 percent to 17 percent. On another hand, English speaking daycare business continues to grow and to face challenges. This is based on the fact that the number of foreigners is increasing in capital region and there will be high demand from the Espoo community to have more English speaking daycare in this region.

6.2 Open suggestions for an English speaking daycare business

In this final topic, the researcher would like to emphasize on some important points and gives some suggestions to whoever is interested in starting or continuing managing English speaking daycare business. These suggestions are mostly from interviewees and experienced people in this business filed.

The Finnish market is a potential market for English speaking daycare business. In order to be successful in this business, firstly; the business owner should understand
the market need and demand. Whenever a business owner is able to fulfill to the market demand, the profitability and successful business occurs. Secondly; we cannot forget to always analyze and study the market, competitors, location and other factors that help to be successful in this business. Researching, testing and measuring market is one of many ways. Likely, people cannot change what they don't measure. There is a sentence that people keep saying “Offer what people want to buy, not just what you want to sell”. This means that business owner should understand the market and consumer. Understanding them can help business owners to implement the right business strategy. For instance, this research finds that majority of respondents think there are not enough English speaking daycares in Espoo and there are very long queues of customers who look for English speaking daycare for their children. This shows the high demand in market which also means the high opportunity in success. Thirdly; be organized and provide great service. This includes focusing on service, perseverance and discipline. Furthermore, in order to improve the profitability, the business owner should apply the marketing mix strategy effectively in different dimensions in business.

Furthermore, to operate a successful English speaking daycare business is not easy. The business owner should turn the research findings into action such as:

- Having proper licenses and permits that were mentioned earlier in this research (see chapter 2).
- Selecting the right employees as research finding shows that some English teachers are not at a good level in English language.
- Having a good operating plan and business assistance.
- Finding a good location and zoning for the business. The research findings show that parents prefer to leave their children closer to their home. If there are many families live in particular area then the business owner can expect high demand in that area too.
- Advantage from demand and supply chain. The research findings show that there are not enough English speaking daycares in Espoo. Therefore, it can create the business opportunity which can be used as business advantage.
- Maintaining good service and environment. The building and the environment should be safe and healthy for children. Service should be at standard level as one
respondent moved her child from one English speaking daycare because of bad service. Also, Finnish standard curriculum should be followed.

In conclusion, researcher would like to recommend the business owner to carry the marketing research continuously because it helps to understand and presents the full view about what happens in the market. By understanding the market and consumer, the business owner can react to business situation correctly. Moreover, the researcher hopes that this research can help to explore the information about consumer behavior and market situation related to English speaking daycare. Also, it provides good information on how English speaking daycare business operates and how the business owner can benefit or turn marketing research into practice and business strategy.

### 6.3 Personal learning

Marketing research provides the information about the market situation. It helps to understand the consumer expectation and the consumer behavior. During the research, the researcher learns and gains the understanding on how to plan the research process, how to select the suitable method, how to collect the data by using qualitative research method, how to create the research questions, how to select the right theories which can be used to explain the marketing phenomenon. Moreover, the researcher gains the understanding on how to communicate and contact with people and respondents. Furthermore, it can be noted that the researcher gains a lot of knowledge by acting and doing this research. In fact, the learning starts when the research starts and it ends when the research ends.

In addition, during the interview the researcher starts to understand why the marketing research is very important for both consumer and business owner. The qualitative research method presents the current information and also the hidden information. It helps to have deep understanding about the market phenomenon. From the research results, the researcher has clear view that there is no enough English speaking daycare in Espoo. There is imbalance between demand and supply in this region. The results also show to researcher that there is high possibility for a successful English speaking daycare business in this region.
There is another learning which researcher gains while doing this research. That is how to present the research information to public or to other people. To be a good writer or information teller needs time, experience and skill. All in all, the research gains a lot of knowledge by doing this research.

6.4 Reliability and validity

The reliability of this research is supported by the relevance between theoretical study, research questions and research findings. The questions are neutral and standardized. It is formed based on the factors which connect the theoretical frameworks and the research findings. The interview questions are checked and reviewed few times by several relevance and educated persons to avoid misunderstanding and language mistakes. It has been tested with few people to ensure that all expressions are proper and results are related to the research’s scope. Furthermore the question testing is made to understand the nature of questions and how long the interview can take. Concerning to the semi-structured interview, there is no reward or any influenced object or person which can lead the respondents to answer untruly.

To ensure the reliability and validity of this research, the researcher has set the target that at least 15 respondents should be interviewed and collected the information. However, there are 24 respondents who participated in the interview which exceeded the target. In addition, the validity of the research is supported by similar response from respondents and number of references. The data which is collected from respondents also meet the marketing research theories.
References


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