

Branding in the Retail Banking Industry in Finland - How to attract and retain young consumers

International Business

Master's thesis

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2012

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Title of thesis Branding in the Retail Banking Industry in Finland - How to attract and retain young consumers

Degree Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration

Degree programme International Business

Thesis advisor(s) Lucas Humphries

Year of approval 2012

Number of pages 138

Language English

Abstract

Research objectives – The financial industry has gone through serious turmoil worldwide during the recent years and in Finland the formerly national and regulated industry has witnessed the entrance of international players through mergers and acquisitions. The increased competition has required new ways of building competitive advantage, and the objectives of this thesis is to study how branding is used and what potential it could have in building competitive advantage, concentrating on young consumers and how branding could be used to attract, commit, and build brand relationships with them.

Research Method – The empirical research consists of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative part of the research is conducted through case study, which explores the three largest banks operating in Finland, Nordea, Sampo Bank, and OP-Pohjola Group. The quantitative part of the research is established through a survey, which explores the perception generation Y consumers have of the retail bank brands operating in Finland.

Main Findings – The main findings indicate that branding is not taken advantage of very efficiently to attract and commit young consumers. The three banks under study offer young consumers similar benefits, which are based on direct functional benefits, mainly in the form of having the basic daily services free of charge. The young consumers have a positive image of the banks, and consider to be loyal customers, but show lack of interest towards the banks and see them mainly as a necessary tool for taking care of their daily banking, having as little personal contact with them as possible. Their loyalty is based mainly on the lack of benefits for changing of their bank, mainly due to the very similar benefits other banks have to offer.

Keywords Branding, retail bank, generation Y consumers, marketing,

Tekijä Joakim Kalliala

Työn nimi Branding in the Retail Banking Industry in Finland - how to attract and retain young consumers

Tutkinto Kauppätieteiden Maisteri

Koulutusohjelma International Business

Työn ohjaaja(t) Lucas Humphries

Hyväksymisvuosi 2012

Sivumäärä 138

Kieli Englanti

Tiivistelmä

Tavoitteet – Rahoitusala on viime vuosina muokannut maailmanlaajuiset muutokset, jotka ovat omalta osaltaan muokanneet aiemmin hyvin säänneltyä ja kansallista alaa myös Suomessa. Rahoitusmarkkinoita Suomessa ovat muokanneet fuusioiden ja yrityskauppojen myötä syntyneet kansainväliset pankit, joiden myötä kilpailu on kiristynyt ja kilpailuedun saavuttaminen uusilla menetelmillä on tullut välttämättömäksi. Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on tutkia miten brändäystä käytetään ja miten sitä voitaisiin hyödyntää kilpailuedun kehittämiseksi, keskittyen nuoriin asiakkaisiin ja miten brändäyksen avulla heitä voitaisiin houkuttaa ja sitouttaa vähittäispankkien asiakkaiksi.

Tutkimusmenetelmät – Tutkimuksessa käytetään sekä kvalitatiivista, että kvantitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää. Kvalitatiivinen tutkimus toteutetaan case study tutkimusmenetelmää hyödyntäen ja tutkimuskohteena on kolme suurinta Suomessa toimivaa pankkiryhmittymää, Nordea, Sampo Pankki ja OP-Pohjola. Kvantitatiivinen tutkimus toteutetaan käyttäen kyselyä tutkimusmenetelmänä, joka keskittyy tutkimaan Y-sukupolven kuvaa eri pankkien brändeistä ja tutkimaan heidän suhdettaan pankkeihin.

Tulokset – Tulokset osoittavat, ettei brändäystä hyödynnetä kovin tehokkaasti nuorten houuttelemiseen ja sitouttamiseen pankkeihin. Kaikki kolme tutkimuksessa olevaa pankkia tarjoavat nuorille asiakkailleen erittäin samankaltaisia etuja, jotka pitävä sisällään lähinnä etuja palvelumaksuista ja tarjoavat nuorille asiakkaille peruspalvelut ilman kuluja. Kuitenkin pankkien samanlaiset etuudet johtavat siihen etteivät ne erotu ollenkaan toisistaan, eikä siten tarjoa nuorille asiakkaille mitään uutta hyötyä pankinvaihdosta. Yleisesti ottaen nuorilla asiakkailta on positiivinen kuva pankeista, tosin he näkevät pankit lähinnä pakollisina välineinä pankkiasioiden hoitoa varten, eivätkä mielellään asioi henkilökohtaisesti pankin kanssa, vaan käyttävät tekniikan mahdollistamia automatisoituja kanavia. Heidän uskollisuutensa pankkia kohtaan perustuu lähinnä siihen, etteivät he näe minkäänlaista hyötyä vaihtaa pankkia, koska kaikki pankit tarjoavat vastaavat palvelut ja edut.

Avainsanat Brändit, vähittäispankit, nuoret asiakkaat, Y-sukupolvi, markkinointi

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to study branding in the retail banking industry, focusing on the target group of young consumers in Finland. This first section will introduce the necessary background information for the setting of the study and identify the research problem and gap. More specific research objectives and questions will be introduced, based on the research problem and gap, and the most important definitions used in the study will be presented.

1.1. Background

The financial industry has gone through serious turmoil worldwide during the recent years, partly to the more globalized economy, monetary unions, easier access (e.g. internet), common currencies, etc. Mainly through technological advances and more globalized economy the financial industry has increased competition, and mergers and acquisitions have created global players in a formerly national and controlled industry.

In Finland the retail banking industry has witnessed radical change in the past few decades, as the formerly regulated and national industry has gone through a period of deregulations, which have resulted in heavy recessions(Korhonen, 2011), and have shaped the industry. The changes have been intensified with the unification of Europe, which has made the industry more open through the European monetary union, and the EU(Suomen Pankki, n.d.), resulting in internationalization of the industry through mergers and acquisitions to form Nordic and European banks. From the three largest bank groups operating in Finland and comprising over 75% market share, two were formed quite recently through mergers or acquisitions, Nordea and Sampo Bank, which operate on an international level. The third bank contributing to the market share, is OP-Pohjola Group, which is the only bank of the three operating solely in Finland.

Global reach and comprehensive financial service offerings have made today's retail banking a very difficult industry to differentiate. Products are easily imitable, provided services similar, prices lowered by competition, eventually making other ways of creating competitive advantage necessary. Branding has appeared as a tool for creating competitive advantage in the past decades, more recently on the service sector, but has not yet been completely taken advantage of or studied and recognized, in traditional industries, such as retail banking. The intensely evolving industry makes it paramount to keep up to pace with the competition, and preferably ahead, and the new technology and markets makes it necessary to take advantage of all tools available, including branding.

Young consumers are the most potential consumers to develop for a retail bank (Paunonen et al., 2012; Simonen, 2011), as they are the most likely to take mortgage for a new house, or are the once who are going to build or inherit wealth. As the wide array of choice is growing and the changing of financial service provider made more effortless, committing the young consumers and building customer / brand loyalty is becoming more important.

1.2. Research Problem and Gap

Young consumers in retail banks in Finland have been under study as their importance to the banks have been established, and most studies have shown the lack of commitment and interest of young consumers, largely formed by the lack of information that they have on their financials and the bank services. Most young adults are hesitant to change banks, as they do not see the benefits of doing so and mainly remain customers of the same bank that their parents belong to. Young consumers are already a customer in their parent's bank, as their parents are responsible for all their financial decisions until they turn 18, thus their parents bank often determines their future bank through convenience of not having to change and being able to consult their parents, or even have them deal with the bank, on more complicated financial decisions.

The studies have looked at the channels that young consumers mainly use to deal with their banking matters, dealing with for example how often they visit branch offices and have defined young consumers to be technologically oriented and ignorant towards banks, which has been the case in other industries as well amongst young consumers of generation Y.

The consumers belonging to generation Y, also known as millennials, have also received a lot of focus in academic research (Carter, 2011; Syrett & Lamminman, 2004; Newman, 2009) and their behavior as consumers has been studied and shown new characteristics, values, and desires compared to earlier generations, even though many things have stayed the same. They have been identified to live in a materialistic world and have grown up with brands and advertising. Brand recognition with this generation has been shown to start as early as at age three and brand loyalty can be influenced already amongst two-year-old children(Syrett & Lamminman, 2004). They are very brand conscious and savvy, and critical and demanding at the same time.

Given the problem of attracting and committing young consumer and building loyalty in retail banking, and the importance of brands to generation Y, there seems to be a clear gap in the research as the effects of brands and branding as a tool targeted to young consumers have not been taken under study amongst retail banks operating in Finland.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

This thesis aims to narrow the gap in the research of young consumers in the retail-banking environment and the importance and effect brands have on attracting new young consumers, committing existing ones, and building brand loyalty through working brand relationships.

The objectives of this Thesis are:

- Research the traditional ways of building brands
- Research the effects that retail banking as an industry has on branding

- Research and analyze how major retail banks operating in Finland target young consumers
- To analyze the effect brands have on bank selection amongst young consumers
- To identify how young consumers in Finland perceive retail bank brands

Research Questions

1. What effect does branding have on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers?
2. How have Nordea, Sampo Bank, and OP-Pohjola targeted their brands to young consumers?
3. How do young consumers perceive the retail banking brands operating in Finland and what characteristics do they value in their brand relationship?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Retail Banking

This section will introduce the retail banking industry in Finland, looking at how it has evolved and been deregulated over the years. Earlier research and statistics on young consumer in Finland will also be looked at in order to form a general overview on the industry and the target group of this study.

2.1.1. Finland

The Nordic countries have been recognized in the banking industry for high adaptation of new technology, especially for automation of processes (such as ATMs) in the 1970s and 1980s, and the Internet provided a platform for more advanced e-services starting in the 1990s. For example in 2007 96% of all payments made in Finland were electronic payments and the number of payments was very high comprising 2% of all payments in EU-countries (Finland's population being 1.13% in comparison) (Nisén, 2008). The number of netbank agreements has also nearly doubled from 2.5 million in 2001 to 5.2 million in 2010 (FKL, 2011), which is nearly equivalent to the population of Finland. According to Bask et al. (2012), the increase in the number of netbank agreements has been accelerated by raised service fees for cash management and cash transactions, such as paying bills in the branch offices, which has forced people to deal electronically through netbanks and by using credit and debit cards. Cash as a payment method in general has decreased its use in all areas due to the same reason, higher costs of cash management, which has been transferred to consumers for example in the form of charging for cash withdrawals at ATMs (ibid.). Apart from technological advances the industry has been affected by deregulations starting from the 1970s, which have opened up the market and increased competition.

Before the 1970s the Finnish financial industry was very regulated and controlled by the Bank of Finland and for example the interest rates and exchange rates were determined politically and a domestic money market did not really exist (Korhonen, 2011). Most of the deregulations on the financial and foreign exchange markets took place during the 1980s and the final regulations were lifted by 1991, and as a result of the deregulations, Finland witnessed a heavy recession in the beginning of the 1990s (ibid.). The national deregulations were intensified through unification of Europe through the different stages of the European monetary union, which took place from 1990 to 1999 when the Euro was taken into use as an accounting currency, and the EU, which Finland joined in 1995 (Suomen Pankki, n.d.). On the European level further modifications are to take place to establish a European clearing system for payments through the Single European Payment Area (SEPA), which started in 2008. (Bask et al., 2012).

In 2011 there were 311 banks operating in Finland (211 banks belong to the OP-Pohjola Group), with 1576 branch offices, and employing 32544 employees (Salminen, 2012). Technological advances and the shift to more automated and self-service systems can also be witnessed in the number of branches and personnel, which has decreased dramatically, being 3300 branch offices in 1990 employing 54 000 employees (Bask et al., 2012). Three of largest groups operating in the market (2011) are OP-Pohjola Group (OP-Pohjola), Nordea Bank Finland Plc (Nordea), and Sampo Bank, which comprise over 75% of market share calculated by both loans and deposits (Salminen, 2012). OP-Pohjola is the only bank operating solely in Finland, with Sampo Bank and Nordea having established a strong presence in the Nordic countries through mergers and acquisitions. Nordea has also been expanding in Europe beyond the Nordic countries and has operations in US and Asia (Bask et al., 2012). These three banks will be looked into in more detail through case studies later in this study.

1.1.1.1. Young Consumers

Young consumers have been in focus in the retail banking industry and their behavior has been the target of multiple studies (Helin, 2011; Peura-Kapanen et al., 2012; Simonen, 2011). Most studies have concentrated on the behavior traits of young consumers and how their banking habits differ from other age groups. The focus that young people have gotten in the banking industry is mainly based on that they are considered to be the most profitable future customers (Paunonen et al., 2012; Simonen, 2011), as they are the ones that are going to take mortgages, earn or inherit wealth eventually, and in general use most of the banks services. As presented in the earlier section, Finland's financial industry is highly concentrated in technological advances, of which the young consumers are the most potential target group, being most informed on new technological advances and having the interest for it (ibid.).

Most banks consider 18 to 28 year olds as young consumers in their pricing offers and loyal customer schemes. According to Helin (2011), a traditional under 28-year old consumer probably is a customer of the same bank as his/hers parents. The general knowledge of banking services is low and visits to the branch office takes place ones or twice a year, with most of the banking matters taken care of through the net bank, which they are very familiar with. The reason for visits at the branch office is usually cash deposit or withdrawals or loan matters, which are common either in the form of student loan or mortgage (ibid.).

Though the level of interest and knowledge on financial matters seems to be rather low amongst young people (Helin, 2011; Peura-Kapanen et al., 2012; Simonen, 2011), it seems to increase with age and education, and is the highest among youth with savings, investments or mortgage (FKL, 2009). According to a study conducted by the Federation of Finnish Financial Services (FKL) in 2009, 66% of 18-19 year olds followed bank and financial information often or rather often, whilst the number amongst 25-28 year olds being 82%. Similarly, the figures on how important the age groups considered bank and financial matters were 80% and 87%, both showing and

increase from earlier years (FKL, 2009, pp.3-4). This contradicts slightly with the amount of financial defaults amongst the age group, as between January and April 2012, 32 400 financial defaults were registered for under 30-year olds, which was a 34% increase from the 2011(Asiakastiето, 2012). Most defaults were caused by consumer credits and impulse online purchases, while mortgage payments were in general taken care of (ibid.).

According to Statistics Finland, the most popular form of accommodation for under 25-year olds is renting, 83%, whilst there is a steep escalation after 25 in home ownership as 25-35 year olds 45% have a mortgage (Statistics Finland, 2009). The amount of loan for first-time homebuyers under 29-years in relation to their income has augmented from 236% in 2002 to 314% in 2009(Statistics Finland, 2010), which is mainly explained by increases in house prices, but shows the willingness for youth to take large mortgages even in the unstable economic circumstances.

Savings of young consumers has remained quite stable in the last decade with 44% of consumers having savings in 2002 compared to 46% in 2009. Most savings are concentrated on savings accounts (29% in 2009), while funds and shares comprising only 9 and 5 percentage of savings(FKL, 2009). The low share of other saving or investment forms than accounts are due to scarce resources and uncertainty and lack of information of the products (Peura-Kapanen et al., 2012). Young consumers are also often hesitant on contacting the bank for information they do not have prior knowledge on and rely often on more familiar sources, such as family and friends (ibid.).

Approximately 40% have some sort of loan or credit, with 25-28 year olds having the most overall credit in all categories (student loan, housing loan, consumer credit, credit cards and other loans) except student loans being slightly higher amongst 23-24 year olds. Consumer credits have shown a decrease in the past few years from 24% in 2007 to 20% in 2009. When applying for housing loans, young consumers show loyalty to their own main bank as 40% are only going to ask for housing loan in their own bank

(decreased from 53% in 2006) and only 16% are planning to ask for an offer from more than two banks. (FKL, 2009)

As in other age groups, especially the young consumers have adapted the use of electronic payments, with 95% (2009) of all bills being paid through a net bank either with a computer or a mobile phone. Cash as a payment method has also decreased and the shift has been towards paying mostly with debit cards (ibid).

2.2. Branding

This section will introduce the basic theories of branding and go through previous research on the field in order to form a theoretical framework on which the research is based on. The basic concepts included in branding will be discussed and the different aspects introduced which have risen on the field.

2.2.1. What is a Brand?

Defining a brand and the concept of branding could easily result in as many variations as there are scholars defining it. The word “brand” originates from Old Norwegian, when it was used to define the burned markings on cattle, which illustrated ownership (Clifton et al., 2003). Later examples of manufactured goods include artists signing their work and clay pottery being marked by the potter (ibid.).

Most definitions have the core ideology of identifying something to belong to someone and the American Marketing Association has a commonly used definition, which captures the basic meaning:

“A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The legal term for brand is trademark. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller. If used for the firm as a whole, the preferred term is trade name.”

(American Marketing Association)

In addition to the basic definitions, many academics link other attributes such as organizational processes (Heding et al., 2009) or more emotional aspects such as consumer associations (Keller, 2001). A common definition, which has been adapted especially in the service branding literature, defines a brand as a promise of attributes that someone buys (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Heding et al. (2009) introduces seven approaches based on analysis of brand literature between 1985-2006, which all provide a differential definition and are summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Approaches to brand definitions

The economic approach	The brand as part of the traditional marketing mix
The identity approach	The brand as linked to corporate identity
The consumer-based approach	The brand as linked to consumer associations
The personality approach	The brand as a human-like character
The relational approach	The brand as a viable relationship partner
The community approach	The brand as a pivotal point of social interaction
The cultural approach	The brand as part of the broader cultural fabric

Source: (Heding et al., 2009, p.3)

Heding et al. (2009) also mention that most academics and marketers tend to take a more holistic approach, which will also be the case in this study, covering several approaches through one view. For the purpose of this study, mainly the economic and identity approaches that reflect the retail bank's point of view will be used, and they will be studied from a consumer perspective, reflecting the consumer-based approach. For definition that incorporates the different characteristics, the one from Berry (2000) on service brands will be used:

“A strong service brand is essentially a promise of future satisfaction. It is a blend of what the company says the brand is, what others say, and how the company performs

the service--all from the customer's point of view. A brand is perceived.” (Berry, 2000, p.129)

The different components of a brand and actual process of building a brand will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.2.2. Brand Equity

Strong brands that are able to leverage positive brand equity gain possible benefits, such as greater customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competition and marketing crises’, larger margins, better response on price fluctuations, and increased marketing communication effectiveness(Keller, 2001). Aaker (1991) has studied brand equity to be one of the most important assets to many firms and defines brand equity as:

“A set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers”(Aaker, 1991, p.15).

Aaker (1992) further recognizes the difference in assets and liabilities depending on the context, but groups the most important assets and liabilities under five dimensions: Brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations in addition to perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets – patents, trademarks, channel relationships, etc.

Brand loyalty provides the company with direct profit streams, as they can be expected to produce predictable sales, and are relatively inexpensive to maintain compared to attracting new customers. Loyal customers also create awareness, thus attracting new customers. Name awareness provides superiority over other none known brands, especially in cases where evaluation and choice takes place. A familiar brand name assures the customer with certain reliability and trust. Perceived quality is often the

reason for a customer to buy a product, especially in cases where they are not able or do not see the need for further analysis, and has direct influence on purchase decision and supports brand loyalty. Perceived quality also provides the possibility for price premiums. Brand associations link the brand to some other context, creating an image to the customer of certain attitudes and feelings from the brand. Often the underlying value of the brand is formed through brand associations and they often aid customers to process and retrieve information on the brand. Proprietary assets are included mainly due to their competitive advantage provided. (Aaker, 1991; 1992)

Keller (2008, p.37) defines brand equity as: “*marketing effects uniquely attributable to a brand*” and states brand equity to provide a common denominator for interpreting marketing strategies and assessing the value of a brand. The benefits mentioned in the beginning of this section are some examples on how brand equity can be exploited. In creating, measuring, and managing brand equity, Keller (1993) bases his view on consumer behavior in his customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model. The basic concept of CBBE is based on the experiences consumers have with the brand and its accompanying marketing programs and Keller (2008, p.48) defines CBBE as: “*the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand*”. CBBE is built on what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand as a result of their experience over time.

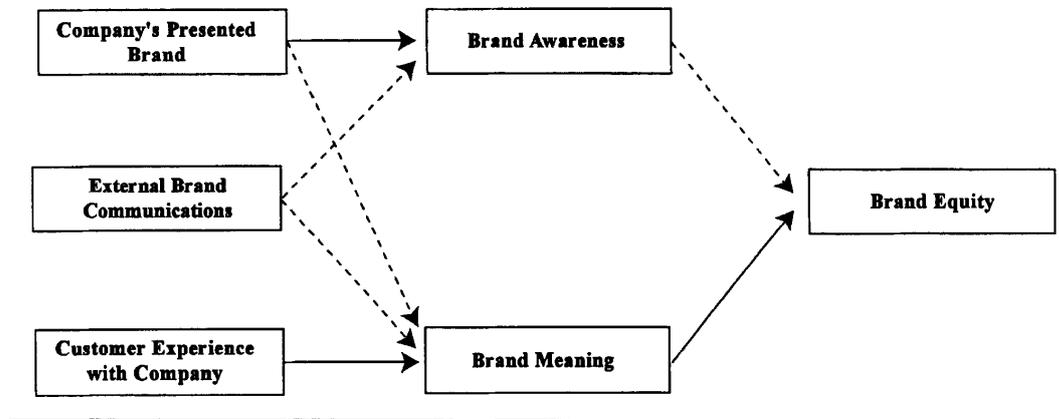
According to Keller (2008), brand knowledge consists of brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness consists of two elements, brand recognition which determines the consumer’s ability to recognize the brand due to prior exposure, and brand recall which is determined by the consumer’s ability to retrieve the brand from memory when certain cues such as product category, usage situation, or need fulfilled by the category are presented (ibid.). Brand image is defined as: “*...consumers’ perceptions about a brand, as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory*” (Keller, 2008, p.51). Associations can be formed from any sources and can reflect for example product characteristics or be completely independent from the product. Regardless of the source,

for positive brand image, strong, favorable and unique associations are required (ibid.). Brand image can also vary greatly among consumers and especially amongst different consumers or market segments.

Though most traditional theories (Aaker 1991, Keller 1993) focus on product branding and base their theories on consumer goods, they offer a basis applicable for service brand equity. Keller (2008) also includes services in his holistic definition of a product that can be branded: “*a product is anything we can offer to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a need or want*”(p.3). The significance of a strong brand is emphasized in services and as Berry (2000, p.128) refers to their intangible nature as an “*invisible purchase*” to the customer, where a strong brand increases the customers’ trust of the transaction and reduces the risk of purchasing something that can be difficult to evaluate prior to the purchase. Mainly due to its intangible nature, branding a service differs from the branding of a tangible product (Berry 2000, Keller 2008).

Berry (2000) presents a service-branding model where he uses Keller’s(1993) definition of brand equity (using brand meaning as brand image), and shows the relationship of different components specifically designed to create service brand equity. In Berry’s (2000) service branding model, brand equity is comprised of the presented brand, customer experience, external brand communications, brand awareness, and brand meaning. Figure 1 shows the relationships between the different components, which are all reflected from the point of view of the customer.

Figure 1. Service-Branding Model



Source: Berry, 2000, p.130 (bold lines indicate primary impact and dotted line secondary)

Brand equity is formed by brand awareness and brand meaning, with the latter having a stronger influence, and refers to the different impact these two elements have on the customer's response to the marketing of the brand (Berry, 2000). "Positive brand equity is the degree of marketing advantage a brand would hold over an unnamed or fictitiously named competitor. Negative brand equity is the degree of marketing disadvantage linked to a specific brand." (Berry, 2000, p.130).

The process of creating and sustaining brand equity will be discussed in more detail in the following section, which explains the process of building a brand, focusing on the service sector.

2.2.3. Building a Service Brand

This section will firstly review some themes rising in the service branding literature, which are recognized crucial to be taken into consideration in building strong service brands. Keller's (2008) CBBE model will be introduced and used as basis for the brand building process with additions from other models (Berry, 2000; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003) in order to create a framework for building a service brand applicable for this study.

As mentioned earlier the intangible nature of services is one of the main features influencing the brand equity of service brands (Berry, 2000; Keller, 2008), but the process behind the “invisible purchase” has a large number of features influencing the brand. Compared to the production of most products, the process of creating a service is more interactive and visible to consumers, as in most services the consumers are active participants in the process (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). This emphasizes the importance of the service encounter, where the actual service experiences is formed (Berry, 2000), and not only the role of consumers as co-producers, but the importance of service staff and the effect they have on the customer experience (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Berry, 2000; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010).

Consistency has been recognized in service literature as one of the key features affecting service quality, brand image and the overall service experience (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Keller, 2008; Berry, 2000; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2010). Though important for products, for services the importance of consistency is multiplied as there are more contact points with consumers and the service is a sum of personal interaction with all stakeholders (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Through right communication of the brand and effective marketing, an externally strong brand can be created, which connects emotionally with consumers and has a good image overall (Berry, 2000; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). What finally determines the brand is the service experience, when the brand is transformed into a customer-experienced brand (Berry, 2000). Communicating a constant message in product based companies is mainly the task of the marketing division, but in services the service staff have to communicate and live the message and most importantly it has to be inline with what the company wants to communicate and meet the expectations created by advertising (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). *“Negative customer experiences are difficult for a company to overcome in its branding efforts, no matter how effective its marketing communications. Superior customer experiences are difficult for competitors*

to imitate, no matter how effective their marketing communications” (Berry, 2000, p.135).

Closely related to consistency is the basis of the service culture. Successful service brands base their culture on strong core values that are embedded in the organization. These values have to be enacted not only by the frontline service staff, but have to be seen all across the organization, in managers, support service providers, etc.(de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Communicating brand values to the service providers and internalizing the brand so that the company believes and acts according to it is crucial in transferring the values to the consumer. Many service companies do not only use advertising for external purposes but their employees and service providers are one of their key target audiences (Berry, 2000). De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) argue that values should already be taken into consideration when recruiting staff, as people who already possess a certain ideology, makes it easier for them to genuinely adsorb the corporate values. Organizations with a passion for their values, show it in all contact with stakeholders and is reflected in their brand, creating a competitive advantage which is difficult for competitors to imitate or copy (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Effective internalizing of the brand not only provides great service performance but also creates overall consistency in the quality of the performance (Berry, 2000).

Keller’s (2008) CBBE model is comprised of six components: salience, performance, imagery, judgments, feelings and resonance and the process of building a brand with these components requires four consecutive steps:

- 1) Building brand awareness
- 2) Creating brand meanings through imagery and brand performances
- 3) Building brand responses through brand feelings and judgments
- 4) Building relationships between the brand and its customers.

The basic function of **brand awareness** is identification of the brand and to ensure customers identify what basic functions does the brand provide them and which of their “needs” the brand is designed to satisfy (brand salience)(Keller, 2008). According to Berry (2000), brand awareness is created partly through the presented brand, which is an element controlled by the company and is influenced by elements such as, the company name or logo, facilities, advertising, appearance, but is influenced also by external brand communications, which refers to all communication from other sources that are not controlled by the company. As mentioned earlier brand awareness consists of two elements, brand recognition which determines the consumer’s ability to recognize the brand due to prior exposure, and brand recall which is determined by the consumer’s ability to retrieve the brand from memory when certain cues such as product category, usage situation, or need fulfilled by the category are presented(Keller, 2008). According to Aaker (1992) name awareness provides superiority over other none known brands, especially in cases where evaluation and choice takes place, as a familiar brand name assures the customer with certain reliability and trust.

Keller (2008) measures brand awareness through two dimensions, depth and breadth, which determine how easily the customer recognizes and recalls the brand, and in what kind of situations the brand comes to mind. In services the purchase decision and arrangements are often made away from the service location, which makes brand recall crucially important (ibid.). Berry (2000) emphasizes the importance of word-of-mouth communication in services, where due to the intangible nature and the inability to test the product prior to purchase, customers tend to trust experiences of other customers more. Yet, the company’s own marketing communication has a greater impact on brand awareness as publicity and word-of-mouth communications usually reaches fewer people and are not determined to strengthen the brand, as is the case in company’s own marketing communication (ibid.).

Building on brand awareness, the next step is creating **brand meaning**, which refers to creating a brand image in the customer’s mind of what the brand is made of, and

characterized by. According to Keller (2008), brand meaning concentrates on associations made in customer's minds relating to either functional, performance related characteristics and more abstract, imagery related considerations. Brand associations link to brand awareness through easing processing and retrieving information, but also offer valuable basis for differentiation and extensions, and provides a reason for purchase in many situations (Aaker, 1992). Brand associations defining brand meaning are gained mainly through experience (either own or word-of-mouth) with the brand, or through advertising or other sources of information and Keller (2008) profiles them with three key dimensions: strength (how strongly the brand is identified with a brand association), favorability (how important or valuable the brand association is to customers), and uniqueness (how distinctively the brand is identified with the brand association). Strong, favorable and unique brand associations with consumers are essential for building positive customer based brand equity (ibid.).

Brand performance refers to how the product or service attempts to meet customer's more functional needs. Keller (2008) emphasizes the basic prerequisite of a successful brand is designing and delivering a product or service that fully satisfies' customer's needs and more hopefully surpasses their expectations. Keller (2008) defines five basic categories, which often underlie brand performance and are involved in brand positioning: Primary characteristics and supplementary features; Product reliability, durability, and serviceability; Service effectiveness, efficiency, and empathy; Style and design; Price. These performance dimensions are often used to differentiate the brand from competition and position the brand for example in a certain price category (e.g. luxury) and create related associations in customer's minds (ibid.). The perceived quality of a product or service has direct influence on the purchase decision and supports brand loyalty, especially in a case where the consumer is unable analyze the product or service further or in some cases due to perceived quality, they do not see the necessity to do so (Aaker, 1992). Perceived quality also provides the possibility for price premiums (ibid.). De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) emphasize focused

positioning, by associating the brand with a restricted amount of benefits, which have to be clearly communicated to service staff and consumers.

Brand imagery concentrates more on the customer's psychological and social needs and Keller (2008) divides them into four basic categories: user profiles, purchase and usage situations, personality and values, and history, heritage, and experience. User profiles include mental images of a stereotypical user, measured for example through age, gender, political views, social status, etc. Purchase and usage situations create associations of typical sales channels or for example where or when the product or service is used. Personality and values refer to descriptive usage imagery, such as daring, spirited, upper class, etc. History, heritage, and experience related associations can be formed from certain earlier personal experiences or experiences of others. (ibid.)

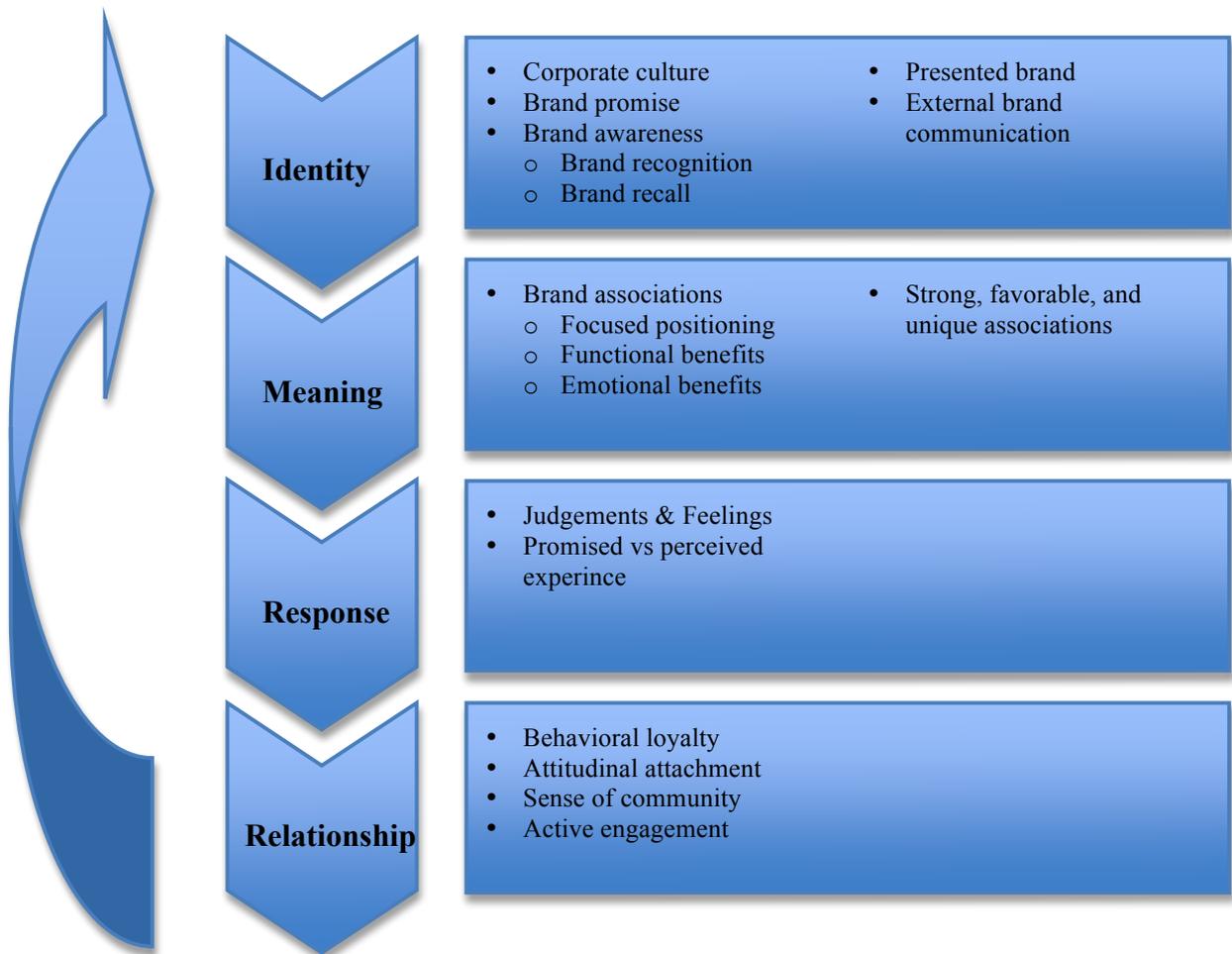
Brand responses determine how customers feel or what they think of the brand and are formed as a response to the brand's marketing efforts and experiences with the brand. De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) emphasize the importance of the brand experience matching the brand promise made through advertising and marketing, which reinforces the brand image and positive consumer responses. Delivering the brand promise also creates trust in consumers, which is one of the fundamentals of a successful brand (Barwise & Meehan, 2010). Keller (2008) divides these responses to judgments and feelings, depending on whether they are more personal opinions based on performance and imagery associations or emotional reactions. In both cases, the responses are assessed by how positive they are. If a customer has positive responses in all encounters with the brand, preferably internalize them, judgments and feelings will eventually only have favorable influence on consumer behavior (ibid.).

Brand relationships and personal identification with the brand is the peak of creating a strong brand. Brand relationships are created through brand resonance, which refers to the nature of the relationship and how attached the consumers are with the brand(Keller, 2008). Keller (2008) divides brand resonance further into four categories, which are

looked with the strength of attitudinal attachment and sense of community (intensity) and the frequency the consumer buys or uses the brand or engages in other activity not related to purchase or consumption (activity). 1) Behavioral loyalty includes repeat purchases and the amount of category volume attributed to the brand. 2) Attitudinal attachment is created by consumers perceiving the brand as something special, something they look forward to, and not buying/using it only out of necessity 3) Sense of community is created by consumers feeling that they are part of something associated with the brand, other consumers, employees, representatives, etc. 4) Active engagement is the strongest form of brand loyalty, involving consumers investing time, energy or other resources into the brand beyond what is required in purchase or consumption. (ibid.)

According to Berry (2000) brands that reflect customer's core values are able to connect emotionally, form a relationship, which creates closeness, affection, and most importantly trust. A long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand is reflected back on the corporate values and culture, reinforcing and shaping it, thus creating an ongoing processes (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003) as presented in figure 2. The corporate values and culture are then again transferred to the brand promise, which needs to be continually improved in order to stay competitive in the market (Barwise & Meehan, 2010). In order for the relationship to have the desired effect and basis, the significance of service staff's conviction to the corporate culture is highlighted (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003).

Figure 2. Components of a Service Brand



2.2.1. Country of Origin (COO) Effect on Branding

As companies and brands become more global, the actual origins of the company might become difficult to distinguish. According to studies on the effects of country of origin (COO) to the image of a brand, consumers tend to form an image of the brand in their mind from the companies origins (Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Pappu et al., 2006; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Khare & Popovich, 2010; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2011). Mostly based on stereotypes of country images, the effects may be positive or negative, but in either case COO can provide an effective tool in international marketing, to either highlight or disguise the COO to form a certain brand image. The dilemma of COO gets more complicated especially with consumer goods, which can

have different COO for the company, design, manufacturing, assembly, and purchase point.

Especially in traditionally national industries, such as retail banking in Finland, the effects of the COO can have a large effect on consumers' perception of a foreign new entrant. In addition, trust is one of the key features when dealing with one's personal financials (Raich & Crepaz, 2009), thus the local presence and personal interaction can become large factors. On the other hand the international turmoil on the industry has had an effect on many smaller banks, so the financial solidity of large international banks could have a positive effect.

Brands can be linked to a specific country or region and consumers often generate brand associations that link to their perception of the brand image (Keller, 2008). Though the COO is often required to appear on products by legislation, many brands emphasize the location in their brand name, such as Bailey's Irish Cream or South African Airways, which strengthens the perception of the COO, but on the other hand often also places the brand under the influence of events occurring in the country such as riots, wars, etc. (ibid.). Pappu et al. (2006) argue that some countries are more strongly related to certain product categories, thus the effects of COO depends according to the product category and they discuss "product category-country" associations, which work bi-directionally and bring a country to a consumer's mind when a product category is used as a cue and a product category when a certain country is presented.

According to Verlegh & Steenkamp (1999) COO has cognitive, affective and normative aspects, with the strongest connection of associations being formed between the COO and perceived quality. Perceived quality is often linked to the level of development of the COO in question, favoring products coming from more developed countries, and is affected by the economy, workforce and culture. Though not as strong associations as perceived quality, the affective aspects include more symbolic and emotional associations, such as status, identity, and national pride, whilst the normative aspects are

present through an opinion to support or disagree with the country's policies and practices (ibid.).

Khare and Popovich (2010) studied COO effects on different categories of services, which they had categorized as professional services (e.g. financial, law, medicine) and more generic services, and found that more professional services had more effect from COO. This was due to the more deep, customized and interactive relationship the consumers had with the service provider and the relationship is dependent on the professionalism of the service staff who are required to have a recognized group identity (ibid.). Khare and Popovich (2010) suggest for brands coming from countries with a negative image, to emphasize adapting to the local market and disguising their COO, and on the other hand brands from countries with a positive image, can exploit the positive image in promoting their service. Similarly Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) describe COO as an informational cue, which is a cue among other features or characteristics, and suggest brands originating from a less favorable COO to emphasize other product features, which consumers base their purchase decisions on.

Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2011) have studied the effects of COO misinterpretations by consumers to the brand image or the inability to classify a brand to a COO. The inability or misconception of the COO can be deliberately intended by the company, either disguising the true COO or trying to associate the brand to a country with a more positive image, or unintentionally due to a brand name that is misleading or difficult to associate with a country, or due to a global approach of a company through cross-border acquisitions, where the true COO is often difficult for consumers to distinguish (ibid.). Nevertheless, in any case of misclassification of a brand's COO (even with a more favorable COO), the results would lead in adverse effects in brand image perception and purchase intentions and the effects were emphasized in strong brands compared to weak brand, with the exception of weak brands being associated erroneously to the domestic country of purchase as their COO and favored as a local brand (ibid.). The difference between strong and weak brands could be explained due to weak brands being more

easily associated with a wrong COO, or because in the case of a strong brand a consumer is often more familiar with other attributes that they use to form their brand image perception (ibid.). The study was limited to a single product category, consumer electronics brands, and country, the UK, thus other regions or product categories might have differential result as discussed by Pappu et al (2006). The patriotism of consumers can also become a strong determinant in their purchase intentions, wanting to support the local economy and thus preferring local brands opposed to foreign (Keller, 2008), which would explain the positive effect on brand image of weak brands being associated to domestic COO. In the case of consumers not being able to classify the brand to any COO, in the study by Balabanis & Diamantopoulos (2011), the effects were negative in all cases. Controversially Berentzen et al. (2008) argue a positive brand image to be able to overcome a negative COO effect.

In addition to the effect of COO to the perception of brand image, Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) argue that consumers are willing to pay a price premium for branded products from a COO with a positive country image, compared to products from a less desirable country image. In high involvement situation, where consumers have a perception of personal relevance, and are familiar with the brand, they tend to use other factors, mainly their own earlier experience or the experience of others, to determine their perception of the brand image, which contributes to their willingness to pay more than the actual COO of the product or service, but with unfamiliar brands, the COO has more effect and directly influences the consumer's willingness to pay (ibid.). In low involvement situations the effect of COO is increased significantly. Similarly, Berentzen et al. (2008) state COO to be a secondary association in the case of a familiar brand, but in case where less information is available to the consumer to evaluate the product or service, the brand's COO becomes more important. Especially in the case of a new foreign brand entering a market, the perceived risk can be high, due to the lack of reliable information such as own or others experience, thus any available information cues gain more importance (ibid.).

In many multinational companies, the product could be designed and manufactured in different locations and in some cases the COO might change, for example due to the move of production facilities, outsourcing, or cooperation, and according to Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) the new COO can play a major role as it may have a tremendous effect on consumers' willingness to pay, thus cutting margins, especially in low involvement products or high-involvement products with low familiarity. On the other hand Verlegh & Steenkamp (1999) argue the difference of design and manufacturing countries not having any substantial effect on COO, as most consumers tend to rely on the brand origin or the country where the company headquarters are located. Intentionally the manufacturing countries with a more favorable country image can be emphasized, which has a positive effect on the COO perception (ibid.). Brands moving their production facilities to less developed countries due to lower cost have to also pay close attention to sustainability issues, which according to Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012) could have major effects on the brand image and perception if the country has less strict laws and conditions, even if the brand in question would not be exploiting them.

In the Finnish retail-banking context, which is classified as a professional service (Khare & Popovich, 2010) thus increasing the importance of COO, the impact of COO has to be taken into consideration. As discussed earlier, Finland is known for its technologically advanced banking industry, which has a history of a regulated and national industry. New international bank groups have been formed through mergers and acquisitions, and new foreign banks have entered the market, have widened the scope of COO present in the market, thus emphasizing the correct identification of the COO. As discussed by Koschate-Fischer et al. (2012), the move of production facilities, or outsourcing could have major influence on the brand image and willingness to pay of consumers. In the retail banks, different operations are outsourced and in a more globally oriented company, different functions are usually centralized to a specific location, which in the case of Finland could be somewhere else, as the production costs in Finland might not be the cheapest.

2.2.2. Branding and Retail Banking

The financial industry has been greatly affected by globalization and liberalization of the market, which has provided an opportunity for new entrants to the market, both national and international, and the technological improvements have affected consumer behavior (Raich & Crepaz, 2009, p.480). These changes have provided change, with opportunities and necessities to keep up with the competition, in the field of branding financial services. Financial services, including retail banks, have aimed for higher profitability through cost cutting, but cost cutting can only go to a certain limit without crucially affecting service quality and the focus has been shifting in the recent years towards revenue growth, mainly through developing lifelong customer relationships through cross- and up-selling amongst existing customers and acquiring new relationships (Hinshaw, 2005). As seen in the previous sections, the aim for branding is creating long-term brand relationships that are based on emotional connections and preferably involve the customer in an active role beyond consuming, thus providing an efficient tool for engaging in long-term loyal customer relationships and creating revenue growth.

O'Loughlin & Szmigin (2007) challenge the traditional way of using service branding as a relationship building tool in the financial industry, which they argue is becoming more depersonalized as more processes are automated. This has decreased personnel and personal interaction between stakeholders, though O'Loughlin & Szmigin (2007) still recognize the appreciation customers have for high level service. Raich & Crepaz (2009) emphasize the importance of every contact point with the customer, and the consistence of high level service and expertise in them. Even with the use of more automated channels, the personal interaction might be decreased, but even automated contact points with customer can be taken advantage of and have influence on customer satisfaction.

Hinshaw (2005) identifies the lack of brand and marketing information, systems to track and evaluate it, and the appreciation for the meaning and value of a brand as the two

key issues shadowing marketing and branding activities in financial companies. The importance of these themes amongst the companies he studied and the actual performance show a large gap, which are mainly hindered due to the lack of measurement tools to provide accurate data for the value and return on investment for branding and marketing activities, resulting in them being perceived more as an expense (ibid.). The value of the brand and the value customers give to more functional values, such as interest rates, are seen as a confusion to many financial service providers, resulting in a tradeoff between the two, instead of incorporating these functional values as part of the brand appeal (O'Loughlin & Szmigin, 2007).

Banks are often seen as commodities (O'Loughlin & Szmigin, 2007), partly caused due to their inability to differentiate, which has resulted in the price oriented approach by customers and factors such as range of service are seen as one of the key determinants for selecting a bank. The role of service staff and quality of service should be used more efficiently(O'Loughlin & Szmigin, 2007; Raich & Crepaz, 2009), especially as the financial products offered are often difficult for customers to understand and differentiate (Raich & Crepaz, 2009). When dealing with one's own money and savings, it brings out the anthropological need of security, which should be well taken into consideration in branding strategies (Raich & Crepaz, 2009) and staff behavior especially when dealing with complex financial instruments.

2.2.3. Branding and the Internet

The Internet has had an impact on most industries on some level and most importantly has become a part of the daily life of consumers. It has provided a new platform for information, opened new markets and enabled access to a larger audience, provided new possibilities for marketers, but at the same time requires more from brands. Information flow has accelerated due to the Internet and this can have tremendous positive effects for a brand, for example word-of-mouth communication, but at the same time can have

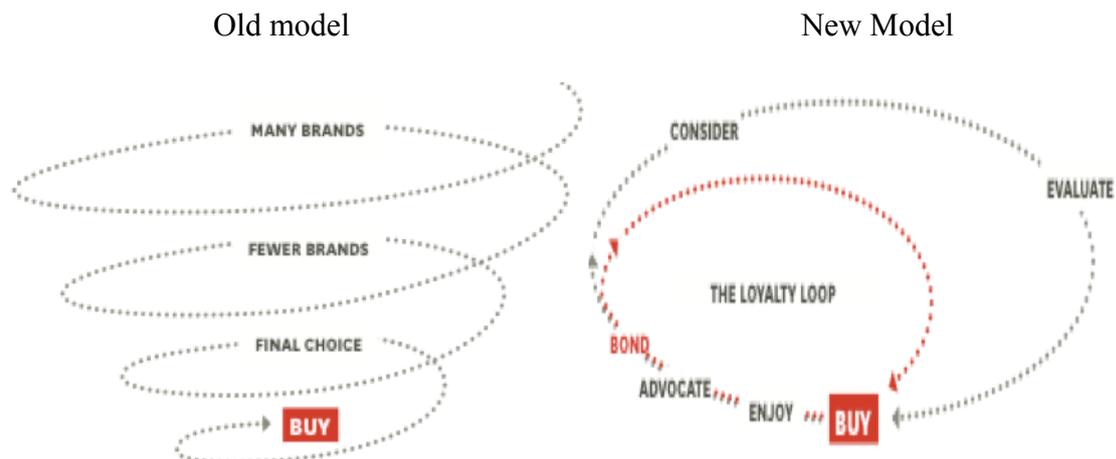
treacherous effects as well, as negative experiences spread at the same speed(Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

For the purpose of this study the impacts of the Internet has in the perception and creation of a brand are crucial, as many of the young consumers under study have grown with the Internet and have not lived in a world without it. For example online-banking has always been accessible for them and many do not know any other way of paying bills than through their netbanks.

Edelman (2010) presents a new purchasing pattern of consumers of the digital age and Internet (figure 4), which has changed from the prior pattern, when the company controlled most of the touch-points with the brand and the purchase decision was made in a much straightforward fashion. The evaluation process involved comparing different brands, narrowing the options down and making the purchase. The contact with the retailer or service provider usually came to an end with the purchase and consumers concentrated on using their product. In today's digital age the consideration phase involves online research through websites, forums, and other sources of information before the actual evaluation stage, that are often conducted through resources not controlled by the company/brand(Edelman, 2010). Chau and Ho (2008) on the other hand found trials on company websites to ease in the information gathering process significantly when a service was in question and showed positive correlations with the brand perception. The follow-up is the most significant change as many consumers do research after purchase, give feedback and review the products and services, discuss them in online medias such a forums and social media, and build a more demanding relationship(Edelman, 2010). When consumers have positive experiences with the brand, this will result in them becoming advocates for the brand, attracting new consumers and strengthening the brand image more easily and effectively than before, and usually skipping completely the consider and evaluate phase on repurchases (ibid.). Negative experiences will naturally have the opposite effect and in some cases can have

tremendous influence on other consumers, especially new potential consumers not having their own experiences and currently conducting their evaluation phase (ibid.).

Figure 3. Purchase Pattern



Source: Edelman, 2010, p.64

Depending on the product or service in question, many consumers often use mainly other sources than the companies' own website, which might be the final point of purchase, but the evaluation is done through reviews and experiences of others (Edelman, 2010). The traditional model gave the companies the possibility to invest in the point of purchase where the purchase decision was often made and the consumer was the most influential. The new model has raised the importance of other touch points and often the purchase decision is already made and not dependent so much on the point of purchase, thus shifting the need for focus on other possible touch points with the consumer in the evaluation and consideration phases and the after purchase relationship. (ibid.)

In the retail banking context, the main operation facility is the branch office or the banks own website, but banks are very widely present in other online forums, such as providing payments in online stores, providing identification for other services, etc. Also the Internet makes it easy to search different customer experiences (blogs, forums,

social media) and many other medias such as online periodicals, news articles, reviews, etc. requiring the banks to invest and be present in these forums as well.

Customization has been an ongoing trend in the offline world, but even more so online. Customized advertising and product recommendations are based on previous purchase patterns and research conducted and more interactive interfaces are developed to interest consumers (Ha, 2004). Though consumers often appreciate customized services, the reliability of privacy and security are often questioned online and the use and collection of user data have to be made in a fashion that builds trust in the consumers (ibid.). In banking, privacy and security are some of the main features that consumers require in their customer relationship and branch offices. The same features have to be present, and even more importantly than in the branch offices, online.

Websites designed for a company, or brand specific sites, offer marketers a wide array of tools and gives them control over the medium. It also provides them data on the effectiveness of their investment through user information, traffic, and can be specified on what parts of the websites are most used. Dou & Krishnamurthy (2007) emphasize the importance of using interactivity on websites to enhance learning about the brand and to build bonds and relationships between consumers and the brand. Interactivity was more present in product oriented brands than with services (ibid.), which contradicts with the offline world, where services are mostly produced by an interactive relationship with the consumer. Many websites offering plenty of information about the products and services often directed to new consumers, lacking tools for existing users and brand advocates, such as forums for recommendations (Dou & Krishnamurthy, 2007).

Social medias, such as Facebook and Twitter, have created spaces where people can easily interact with one another and have formed a new media where information flows to a massive audience very rapidly. As mentioned earlier, this can have an immense effect on companies not living up to their brand promises or exceeding the customer expectations. These two situations also complement each other as in cases when

consumers are not happy with a brand and express it online, social medias offers a tool for a quick response from the company and if used correctly can avoid a problem becoming a PR disaster or in the best case be turned into a positive outcome(Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

In many cases the social media networks can eventually boost sales through brand awareness, but according to Barwise and Meehan (2010) the most valuable asset of social medias *“is that through social media they can gain rich, unmediated customer insights, faster than ever before”*(p.82). This has resulted in increases of ethnographic research, which can be conducted in a new form not only focusing on the brand or products, but on the consumer opinions and how they act in an online community (ibid). Some companies have also been able to exploit social medias and online communities for innovation, getting ideas directly from online users and organizing workshops for creating applications for social media users to complement their product or service offerings (ibid.).

Chau and Ho (2008) have studied the effects that personalization and trialability on brand websites have on customer-based service brand equity (CSBE). Through the internet and websites, personalization of information and services can be conducted in numerous manners and have shown to provide similar positive benefits to brand equity as in the offline world, where services are often very personalized due to the simultaneous production and consumption and personalization is seen as one of the key benefits of services (ibid.). In their study, Chau and Ho (2008) discovered trialability to have immense effects on positive CSBE, as due to the intangible nature of services, in the offline world it is impossible for the consumer to test a product prior to purchase. Online trial services lets the consumer test the service and in general gives the service a visual image and presentation, which enables the intangible service to get a more tangible image and has shown to positively affect their perception of the brand (ibid.).

2.2.4. Branding and the Millennials (Generation Y)

Millennials, which are also known as Generation Y, are classified differently depending on the analyst, and Chung et al (2009, p.120) defines people born between 1980 and 1994 to belong to this category. Some analysts and marketers have extended the range to 2000 (Miller & Washington, 2012). For the purpose of this study we will use the definition of Cheung et al (2009), as it is the most generally used and for most independent banking decisions the age of 18 is required.

Carter (2011, p.1) describes generation Y as extremely savvy and educated, highly dynamic, media-focused, yet skeptical consumers. They have lived in a world where the Internet and mobile communication has always been accessible to them, which has had the most effect on them becoming so savvy and educated audience. Yet, according to Carter (2011) they still possess the same basic daily concerns as earlier generations, with the top concerns comprising of happiness, independence, and financial stability.

According to Newman(2009) the generation Y consumers are very brand conscious and demanding, as they demand more personal and customized offerings, with the focus on brands that support their search for individuality(Carter, 2011). They are also very tech savvy being able to research alternatives, reviews, and places for purchases easily, making them very demanding for brands(Newman, 2009). They also wait for a brand to upgrade its products constantly and wait for new developments from known brands and are always expecting something new (ibid.). This could be a result from the generation having lived during a time of fast technological advances, especially in electronics and technology, where the trend seems to be that a new product is already in development or production when the current one is being launched.

Though young people of generation Y are very price conscious, according to Jim Hartford (in Newman 2009 p.18), they look for a “*cool factor*” – *a mixture of style, quality and brand status – that far outweighs considerations of price among teens.*”

Generation Y is the first generation who have grown with having internet and mobile technologies from their early childhood (some their whole life) and it has become an important part of their daily lives (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004). Text and instant messaging, social media platforms (for example Twitter and Facebook), and email are used constantly to communicate with peers and interactivity is something that they use and require also from companies (Carter, 2011; Newman, 2009). Posting videos, pictures, blogs, etc. are part of the way millennials are used to communicate and companies providing them the possibility to communicate in their own language are able to connect with them in a completely new way as traditional medias offer (Newman, 2009). Interactivity in advertising often means letting some control away from the company and opening the channel for communication, and if used correctly can be a source for product development (Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

These medias offer a communication channel to get their attention and to build a relationship with brands, but according to Newman (2009) the retail environment is also an important aspect to millennials, which they still use regularly and in contrast with Edelman (2010), Newman (2009) has found it to be an important environment for purchase decisions. Carter (2011) also emphasizes the use of other media as well apart from social media platforms and email, as young people use these channels mainly for other purposes than searching for brand information, mainly communicating with friends and family. According to Syrett and Lamminman (2004) the way relationships are formed and sustained has had a major change from earlier generations. Earlier generations were restricted to people in their proximity, needing to meet people somewhere (for example through school, bar, workplace, neighborhood, etc.) to form relationships, but the internet and mobile phones have broaden the scope, as people who have never met each other are forming relationships over the internet (ibid). The millennials have learned the ability to bond over distance and are comfortable doing so (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004), which provide implications for brands and marketers, as the bonds and relationships are not restricted to social bonds amongst friends or

colleagues, but can exist amongst consumers and brands and marketers can exploit the bonds for example through remote focus groups or internet surveys.

Online services are accessible around the clock through the Internet and communicating with people all around the world through games, chatrooms, etc. are demanding the millenials to adjust their own timetables to correspond to their online friends around the world. This has in part had an effect on their daily lives, and in response the millenials are also demanding other than online services to adjust to their 24/7 lifestyle(Syrett & Lamminman, 2004). Another factor contributing change in schedule is globalization, which has led multinational companies starting to require their employees to work anytime, and everywhere (ibid.). According to Syrett and Lamminman (2004) while the millenials do appreciate the balance between work and other life, their concept of working anytime anywhere means also the same for their free time. The shift towards the millenials 24/7 culture can already be seen in many cities (mainly in the entertainment industry) and a the demand is definitely there as for example in London more young people go out every Saturday night than people combined who visit the top ten attractions of London in a week (ibid. p.69). This could provide opportunities for other industries as well, and not only the entertainment industry, exploit the shift towards a more 24/7 oriented culture.

The millenials have been described as very brand savvy and aware (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004), partly due to their immense exposure to advertisements and brands since early childhood. According to Syrett and Lamminman (2004) an average American or Australian child is exposed to 20 000 – 40 000 ads a year. Children from age three are able to recognize brand logos and brand loyalty can be influenced already from age two (ibid.) and the consumption power that children have is vast, with children from 4-12 year olds spending £35 billion in the US in 2001 (ibid. p.64). Even with the heavy exposure to brands, millenials have become very brand conscious, savvy and cynical rather than marionettes of companies, and recognize when they are being manipulated or sold to. This has led to the appreciation of authenticity, which has made

them very demanding for companies and even strong brand loyalty can diminish very rapidly if the brand does not provide to their needs (ibid.).

The millennials in general have grown up to a quite prosperous life, with usually both parents working (often lifelong jobs in the same company) and the generation being the most highly educated from previous generation (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004). They have seen the dot.com era of quick successes, but on the other hand they have witnessed the crash of the same phenomena, which resulted in high unemployment in many countries. The recent economic downturn and recession have also had an effect on the consumption of this generation. Many of them are or have been unemployed or laid off, requiring them to budget more carefully their financials. The long-term effects of the current economic downturn are yet to be seen, but according to Tristan Coopersmith (in Newman 2009, p.18), the generation still enjoys shopping and the decrease in consumption is seen to be temporary. In general this generations seems to be more casual than earlier ones, who got their aspirations from high end suits, cars, etc., but for generation Y the new luxury is more relaxed and casual. (Newman, 2009)

Apart from their own consumption, children and teenagers also have a tremendous influence on family purchase decisions (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004), with according to Carter (2011) 81% of family apparels and 52% of other purchases such as family automobiles.

People belonging to generation Y also pay close attention to environmental issues, and appreciate environmentally responsible brands (Carter, 2011). 75% of consumers pay more attention to companies' messages if there are environmentally responsible and express it in an authentic way, which often include social medias and other channels that easily reach the millennials (ibid.). This has raised an ongoing trend among companies that Syrett and Lamminman (2004) refer to as "cause-branding", as the millennials are keener on buying and recommending to their peers products and services that are related or support some social cause. This has resulted in many companies

coming up with their own programs that donate money to some cause and campaigns related to it to boost sales (such as 1% of some product is donated to a cause), but the cynical nature of the millenials makes the use of cause-branding very demanding, as they spot immediately if it is not authentic or if the program is made to cover something else (such as cigarette companies fighting youth smoking (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004, p.67)) (ibid.).

Technology has become part of the lives of generation Y, not only in the format of new electronic gadgets and as a way of communication, but millenials appreciate the incorporation of technology for example in fashion, through integrated elements such as iPod pockets, sunglasses with Bluetooth connection for music, etc. which are forming a certain fashion statement amongst youth that are very fashion conscious(Carter, 2011, p.3). Fashion has been a important aspect in past generations as well, though it evolves into new trends constantly, but according to Carter (2011) music is one of the elements amongst youth that link all ethnicities, social levels, regions, genders and is an important part of their culture. Technology provides the tools for combining these two, music and fashion, in a new way and provides endless possibilities to integrate other important tools from millenials culture such as phones, PDAs, laptops, etc.

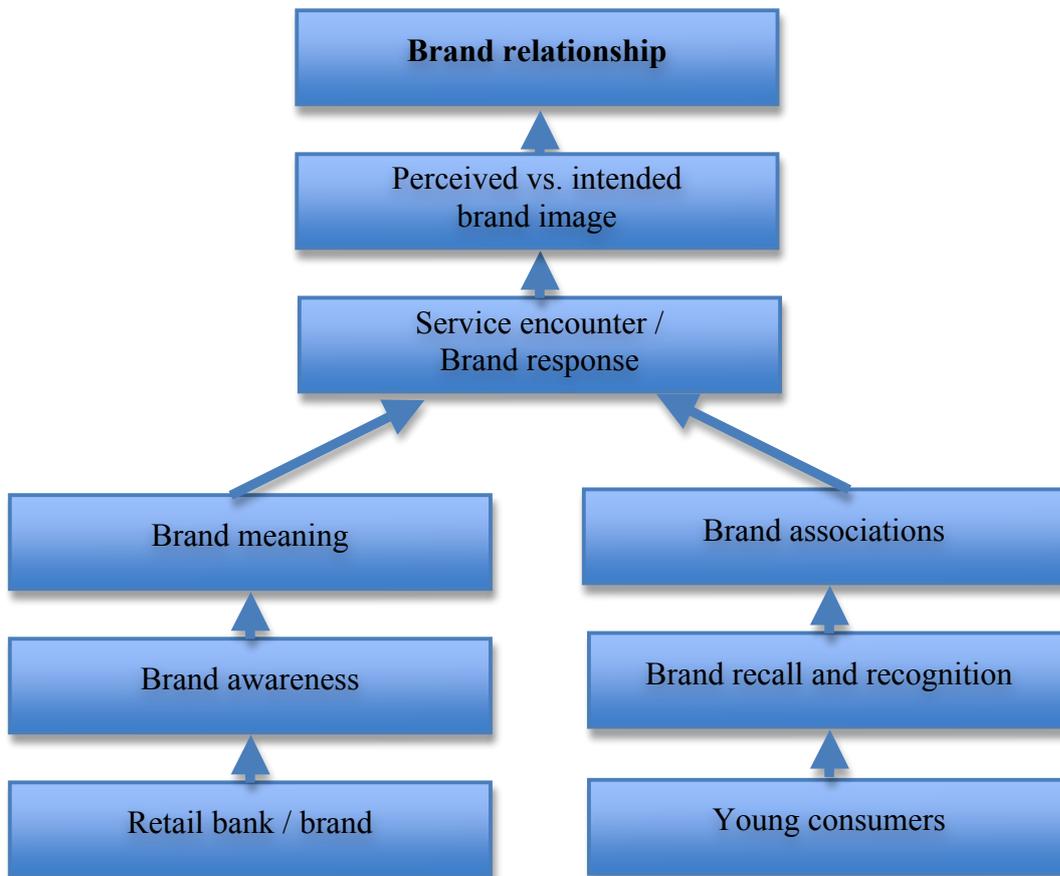
Sports have always been an important part of youth lives, but apart from the traditional sports that are still practiced; the millenials have shown a large interest in action sports (Carter, 2011). According to Carter (2011) action sports in forms of snowboarding, skateboarding, surfing, etc. have become to them more than just a sport, but are representing a lifestyle and actually participating in the sport is not really a requirement to be part of the culture. Action sport brands provide clothing lines for casual streetwear, home decorations and other brands are looking at trends established by the action sports industry (ibid.). Events surrounding action sports (competitions, skateparks, etc.) are becoming social gatherings for young people, and many action sports have gone global and are followed just as any other spectator sport.

According to Carter (2011) youth build emotional connections with products that they use as self-expression and tend to stay loyal to brands, as long as they keep up with the current trends and communicate to millennials in an authentic way and in their own language and media.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

To conclude the literature review, the following theoretical framework is presented (Figure 3). The framework presents a summary of the different components that have emerged in the literature and on which the empirical study of this thesis is based. The aim of this thesis is to study the brand relationship between young consumers and retail banks, more precisely how retail banks present their brand to young consumers, how young consumers perceive their brands, and what effect does branding have on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers. The study will examine the factors influencing the process of building a relationship and brand loyalty.

Figure 4. Theoretical Framework



The framework follows two passages, which will both be studied in order to form a picture of both counterparts of the relationship under study as presented in figure 3. Retail banks build their brand through establishing brand awareness and creating a brand image around their core service that is based on their COO, values, advertising, and marketing, and which are reflected to the consumer in the service encounter and form the intended brand. Similarly, young consumer form their perception of the brand based on brand recall and recognition and brand associations, which are influenced by their values, characteristics, and behavior, and form their basic interpretation of the brand. The service encounter provides them the final determination of their perception of the brand and the brand response is reflected to their perception, which then continues to a relationship of some sort. The collision of the intended brand and the

perception of the brand determine the basis for forming a brand relationship, which is the peak for brand loyalty.

In order to study the effects that branding has on attracting and committing young consumers, the following research questions were presented in the introductory chapter of this study:

1. What effect does branding have on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers?
2. How have Nordea, Sampo Pankki, and OP-Pohjola targeted their brands to young consumers?
3. How do young consumers perceive the retail banking brands operating in Finland and what characteristics do they value in their brand relationship?

The two passages presented in the model in figure 3 aim at researching questions 2 and 3, forming a picture of how young consumers perceive retail banks in Finland, and how do the retail banks present and target their brands to the young consumers. These two research areas complement the third one (research question 1), which looks at the entire model presented in figure 3, with the main importance on the brand relationship factor, determining the impact branding has on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers, in other words building this brand relationship.

In order to answer the research questions proposed, the following conclusions, covering both the young consumers' perspective and the retail bank's perspective, are derived from the literature covered, leading to hypothesis presented, which will be further tested and discussed in the empirical part of this study:

- Generation Y consumers see banks as a commodity or a distant necessity, with all banks providing similar basic products for cash management and deals with them rather through automated channels than personal interaction. Thus:

H1: Generation Y consumers will not see any benefit in changing their bank and usually remain consumers of the same bank as their parents, which they are already a customer of.

- Generation Y consumers use social media for communication, rely heavily on online sources for product information and reviews, and give feedback online.

Thus:

H2: Retail banks are expected to be present online and form customer relationships through online media.

- Generation Y consumers are involved in environmental sustainability and appreciate brands that are environmentally and socially concerned. Thus:

H3: Retail banks should demonstrate they are environmentally and socially involved.

- Because of increased competition, technological advancements, and regulations, cost cutting does not provide retail banks with enough competitive advantage.

Thus:

H4: Retail banks will have shifted their focus to developing and nourishing customer relationships through cross- and up-selling, and building their attractiveness mainly through direct functional values such as price and interest rates in customer benefits.

- Generation Y consumers are very demanding for brands, requiring them to adjust to their timetables, offer flawless service, and keep up with the newest technological advancements. Thus:

H5: Retail banks will have adapted to the lifestyle of generation Y in order to attract and commit them as their customers.

- The correct identification of COO in professional services, such as retail banking, has an effect on the perception of the brand image, influencing the perception of quality, especially among more unfamiliar brands with consumers not having personal experience on. Thus:

H6: Retail banks will have ensured that consumers can identify their COO and will be emphasized if the country has a positive image.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Method

This study will be conducted using partly a quantitative and a qualitative method. The qualitative part of the study is conducted through case studies. Case studies were chosen for the qualitative part, as the target is to explore how different retail banks are targeting young consumers and how they present their brand to them, thus representing one of the two passages described in the theoretical framework. The choice for case study is supported by Yin (2003) who defines the situations where a case study should be used as: *“a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator had little or no control.”* (Yin, 2003, p.9), which supports the second research question of this study: *“How have Nordea, Sampo Bank, and OP-Pohjola targeted their brands to young consumers?”* The case studies also provide the retail bank angle to test the hypotheses, and see how they are dealing with the characteristics identified in the literature. The case studies are looked from the customer perspective, thus relying on secondary data the banks present for the public, in order to form a picture that the banks present to a generation Y consumer. In addition, the case studies provide a basis for discussion and comparison with the empirical results from the quantitative part of the research.

The aim of the quantitative part of the study is to get a larger picture of the generation Y population and how they see the brands of retail banking and how that corresponds to their underlying values and what they expect from a retail bank brand, thus studying the second passage presented in the theoretical framework. Survey was chosen as the research method, as it enables a larger sample size, thus presenting a larger sample, enabling the research to better exemplify the general generation Y consumer of a retail bank (Saunders et al., 2009). According to Saunders et al. (2009) surveys are used in exploratory and descriptive research and offer the possibility for standardizing the data for easier comparison, which is the case in this study, and the quantitative part aims at

answering the third research question: “How do young consumers perceive the retail banking brands operating in Finland and what characteristics do they value in their brand relationship?” The survey also enables the testing of the hypotheses presented in the theoretical framework from the perspective of the generation Y consumers of a retail bank.

Together the case studies and the survey results offer a comprehensive basis for discussion and analysis of the hypotheses formed in the theoretical framework, with the aim of answering the research question “What effect does branding have on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers?” and the possibility for comparison between the traditional way of building strong brands and what features and characteristics does retail banking and generation Y consumers require from a strong, attractive brand.

3.2. Sample Selection and Data Collection

For the qualitative case study part of the research, Nordea, Sampo Bank and OP-Pohjola were chosen due to high penetration of the market comprising 75% market share calculated by both loans and deposits (Salminen, 2012). The three banks also provide an interesting setting as they present differences in their international context, with OP-Pohjola representing the only bank operating solely in Finland, Sampo Pankki being merged with the Danish Danske Bank (operating with the Finnish name in Finland), and Nordea having the most international approach operating on a European level and using its international brand name in all countries. The data for the case studies was collected through secondary sources presented by the companies, as mentioned earlier, in order to form a picture that a consumer would get from looking at the brands.

For the quantitative part of the research conducted through a survey method, using a web-based questionnaire, the sample was gathered online through the social media network Facebook. An event was created on the 3rd of October 2012, and the researcher invited his Facebook friends belonging to the age group. The event was made public

(anyone on Facebook can see and participate), and posted on the researcher news feed, profile and in a group aimed for business students. People were also encouraged to invite their friends who belong to the age group to the event, and people posted the event on their timelines and through participating, their friends could see this activity through their news feed. This encouraged more people to join. The intended sample consists of young people belonging to generation Y and in particular people between 18-30 years of age, with 18 being the first year a person is legally responsible for their own banking decisions.

A social media network is seen to be the most suitable way of contacting the target group as young consumers of generation Y use social media daily, which makes it a comfortable setting for them and easy to respond, and online surveys provide respondents anonymity through a channel they are well familiar with. As mentioned earlier in the literature section, the way millennials form relationships and mainly communicate has shifted to electronic channels, social media, email, text messaging, etc. (Syrett & Lamminman, 2004), which has led to the choice of channel for the survey. Social media networks, compared to other electronic forms of communicating, also provide a wide array of respondents belonging to different age groups, social groups, and are geographically disperse.

3.3. Research Structure

The research is structured to first present the case studies, then present and analyze the survey results, and finally an analysis and comparison between the case studies and the survey conducted will be discussed.

3.3.1. Case studies

The case studies are structured to cover similar themes in all three case companies, though some information might differ due to availability of information and difference in the structure of the companies. The case studies are prepared with a consumers'

perspective, thus relying on information available for the public. Mainly the bank websites, annual reports, advertising, possible social media, and other online sources that would be available for consumers researching and reviewing the companies will be used.

The structure of the case studies follow the theoretical framework proposed in section 2.3 by first presenting the retail bank in general and background information, following by description and structure of their brand and the means they have used to create brand awareness. These will be examined on the corporate level and if applicable directly directed to young consumers. The purpose of the background information section is to introduce the retail bank, and go through briefly their history, which will in addition to give information on the bank, contribute to the evaluation of their presentation of their COO, thus supporting the testing of H6: “Retail banks will have ensured that consumers can identify their COO and will be emphasized if the country has a positive image.”

The brand section will focus on how the brand of the retail bank is organized. This will include analysis of their basic values, mission and vision, and different customer schemes will be discussed. The analysis of different customer schemes, programs and benefits contribute to the analysis of H4: “Retail banks will have shifted their focus to developing and nourishing customer relationships through cross- and up-selling, and building their attractiveness mainly through direct functional values such as price and interest rates in customer benefits.” Analysis on how the brand is presented in the companies’ own sources and in what other channels it is present will be discussed. This includes analysis of their websites, their possible presence in online medias and other possible sources of brand awareness, which contribute to the analysis of H2: “Retail banks are expected to be present online and form customer relationships through online media.”

The possible participation in environmental sustainability and supporting social causes will be analyzed, in order to support H3: “Retail banks should demonstrate they are environmentally and socially involved.”

Following the general brand discussion, the brand will be discussed from a young consumers’ perspective. Products and services targeted to young consumers will be introduced including pricing if available. Other benefits or sources of brand relationship will also be discussed if applicable and in general the aim is to identify what the banks provide directly to young consumers, which will contribute to the analysis of H1: “Generation Y consumers will not see any benefit in changing their bank and usually remain consumers of the same bank as their parents, which they are already a customer of.”

The availability of services, opening hours, possible presence online, and availability will be discussed in general, which tests H5: “Retail banks will have adapted to the lifestyle of generation Y in order to attract and commit them as their customers.”

3.3.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed according to the seven steps identified by Peterson (2000, p.14):

- 1. Review the information requirements necessitating a questionnaire**

- 2. Develop and prioritize a list of potential research questions that will satisfy the information requirements**

The goal of the study was established in the introductory chapter of this study, and the aim is to narrow down the gap between researches conducted on young consumers of retail banks and branding of retail banks. The aim of this questionnaire thus being to study the behavior of young consumers and the perception that they have of their current bank relationship and what values do they hold important to retail bank brands.

In addition, the questionnaire is used to test the hypotheses on the target group, formed in the theoretical framework, which were based on the literature covered.

The questions are based on the literature covered, review of earlier questionnaires, other research on the subject (Davis et al., 2009; O'Cass & Grace, 2003; Nath & Bawa, 2011; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2010; Helin, 2011), the researchers own insights, and some questions were directly adapted from earlier research (Helin, 2011; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2010; Aziz & Yasin, 2010).

3. Asses each research question carefully(Peterson, 2000, p.17):

- a. Can potential participants understand the question?
- b. Can potential participants answer the question?
- c. Will potential participants answer the question?

According to Peterson (2000, p.17), a good way to assess research questions is to empirically test them, which was covered by adapting questions from earlier research that had been proven efficient and empirically tested in the actual research conducted. The rest of the questions were developed using the researchers own experience and evaluated through testing the questionnaire on potential respondents (the evaluation phase will be discussed in more detail in step 7).

4. Determine the types of questions to be asked (open-ended vs. closed-ended)

Most the questions used were closed-ended questions, with a few exceptions where a wider array of answers was expected. Also when asking for respondents to list brands to measure brand recall, a closed-ended question would have limited the application of the question. Most closed-ended questions included an open “other” option, in order not to restrict or influence the answer of the respondent to choose an answer if none of the choices were applicable. Different kind of closed-ended questions were used and scales to measure the strength of the answer were used whenever possible to the relevance of

the question in order to gain the full spectrum of the respondents perception on the matter as well as possible.

5. Decide on specific wording of each question to be asked

The questionnaire was first written in English, which was the original language of the study, and the wording assessed first, and a second time after translating it to Finnish. The researcher whose mother tongue is Finnish conducted the translation. Test subjects who answered and evaluated the questionnaire assessed the translation and wording as well.

6. Determine the structure of the questionnaire

The basic structure of the questionnaire followed the theoretical framework presented in section 2.3. The structures of the different sections in the questionnaire were based on the researchers own knowledge, past questionnaires and guidelines presented by Peterson (2000). First the respondents will be introduced through basic demographics, after which the knowledge of retail banking brands will be established through more detailed questions on retail bank brands to establish the level of brand recall and recognition. The next part will be focusing on brand associations, determining to measure the associations currently held to established brands in the industry and the association the respondents value when considering the retail banking industry as whole. The service experience will be covered after this, including questions from earlier questionnaires on consumer behavior of young consumers in Finnish retail banks, with incorporating factors risen from the literature, such as consistency, trust, and privacy, which cover both the service experience offline in a branch office as well as online through the banks own website. Finally the relationship and brand loyalty the respondents have with their banks will be examined. The different sections of the questionnaire will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

7. Evaluate the questionnaire

Some sections were evaluated already on past research from which the questions were adapted. The overall questionnaire was evaluated by the guidelines of Peterson (2000) and tested with a group of 3 young adults belonging to the target group, one of them having a background in retail banking, one in international brand management, and one not having any background knowledge on the topic (except from a consumers point of view). Each question was evaluated individually with the test group participants, in order to determine that the questions were understood correctly. The evaluation resulted in minor modifications of the questionnaire, such as reorganizing of questions, adding some response options to closed-end multiple-choice questions, and adjusting wording in a few questions. One new question on the history of changing banks in the past five years was added.

3.3.2.1. Demographics

Five demographic variables were measured: age, gender, geographic location, housing arrangement, and employment status.

Geographic location was asked to be able to determine the availability of services and the effect it has on the brand perception. Housing arrangement is also important in the context of retail banking, as mortgage is seen as one of the largest, and longest time wise, commitments to a bank, thus mortgage is included in the answer possibilities. It has also been seen in many cases the step when banks are evaluated and compared. Employment status also gives a perception of a consumer's life situation, income level (more exact amount of income was not seen as relevant, thus not having a separate question) and banking service and product requirements, and might have a significant influence on the banking habits, as seen in literature review in form of student loans and savings.

Asking respondents to determine their primary and secondary banks were originally included in the demographics sections, but as the following section measure brand recall, no prior cues was wanted to influence the responses and the questions on primary

and secondary banks were moved into the beginning of “brand associations and values” section.

3.3.2.2. Brand Awareness

As mentioned earlier in the literature, brand recall is determined by the consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand from memory when certain cues are presented (Keller, 2008). Brand recall was measured by asking respondents to name 5 retail banks, by presenting the product category as a cue. This was presented as an open-ended question in order to get the full scope of answers and not giving the respondents any other cues than the product category. The strength of brand recall can also be measured by the order in which respondents name the different brands.

Brand recognition, consumers’ ability to recognize a brand due to earlier exposure (Keller, 2008), is measured by asking respondents to identify retail bank brands by their brand logos. Originally 12 of the largest banks operating in Finland were included, but as only the three largest banks (Sampo Bank, OP-Pohojola and Nordea), which are also in focus in the case studies, thus contributing to the discussion and comparison, have a picture in their logo instead of stating the bank name as their logo, they were only included in the questionnaire. Part of the official logos in some cases also included the name of the bank written, which was removed in order to measure the recognition of respondents as well as possible.

The depth of awareness was measured by asking respondents on a scale from 1-5 to identify how familiar they are with the products and services of five of the largest retail banks operating in Finland, which were presented in random order. Exposure to the brands advertisement were also asked and the media in which the consumer was exposed to the advertisement, in order to determine the channels from which the creation of brand recognition could be best formed and remembered by consumers.

3.3.2.3. Brand Associations and Values

Brand meaning is created by the brand image established in the consumers mind about what the brand is made of and what it is characterized by, concentrating on associations made in the customer's mind (Keller, 2008). Most associations relate to either performance or imagery characteristics as discussed in the literature part of this study. Questions #14-33 aim to identify the characteristics that the target group considers important in retail banks, where performance related characteristics are measuring the functionality of basic retail bank services identified in the literature section, including applications from the changed behavior influenced by technological advancements in the industry and characteristics risen from the research on retail banking brands. The imagery characteristics evaluate more psychological and a social aspect related to retail banks, and incorporates the characteristics and values of generation Y consumers discussed and evaluates if they are applicable in the retail-banking context. Questions #16-20, focus on the importance of internationality of banks to the consumers, and evaluate the COO to which the sample associate different banks and what importance does COO have to them. The main focus of this section is on finding the attitudes towards retail banks, thus exploring what values the sample considers important and what they associate retail banks with. Associations and general evaluation of the brand image of retail banks is also contributed by other sections of the questionnaire, for example in the evaluation of the brand relationship and loyalty.

3.3.2.4. Service Experience and Response

Consumer behavior of young consumer in Finland has been studied in earlier research and statistics are available from different sources as presented in the literature review. The questions on consumer behavior (#34-52) were mainly adapted from earlier studies, and based on research mentioned earlier sourcing from statistics to test the resemblance of the target group and the earlier research. This increases the validity of the study and enables the possibility to better contribute to the earlier research of young consumers.

Questions #34-39 deal with the frequency consumers use different channels to contact the bank, and what matters do they deal with through which channel. The channels used by the target group not only defines their behavior, but gives valuable information on the channels which marketing, brand awareness, and other communication to the target group should be based on. Questions #40-42 evaluates the knowledge the target group has on the most common retail banking products, which are found in all retail banks and thus not specified to any particular service provider, and the channels from which the target group acquire the knowledge/information on the services. Questions #43-46 concentrate on loans and comparing different banks, which are seen as a major turn point (either in changing bank or committing to the existing one), and the familiarity consumers actually have on banking service fees. Comparison of banks when applying for a loan was surprisingly low in the study conducted by FKL (2009) compared to the long-term commitment usually occurring from long-term loans.

Questions #47 and 48 evaluate how comfortable consumers are with visiting the brand office, and questions #49-51 deal with banks contacting customers through different channels. Question #52 evaluates the consumer response to the brand, which is in part evaluated through brand associations (Keller, 2008) measured in the earlier section.

3.3.2.5. Brand Relationship and Brand Loyalty

Questions #53-56 evaluate consumers' willingness to attend events organized by banks, thus engaging in activities not required by the basic consumption, which is seen by Keller(2008) as active engagement with the brand. Earlier research (Helin, 2011) has also researched the willingness of young consumers to attend to informational events organized by banks, and concluded that young consumers hardly attend any events, or do so only due to a reward of some kind. Questions #57-59 evaluate how close relationship the respondents consider and how proud they are about belonging to the bank. Brand loyalty is evaluated through the respondents willingness to change their bank (questions #60 and 61) and question #62 propose different statements to evaluate

the level of attachment through attitudes towards the respondents current bank relationship.

3.4. Data Analysis

The case study data will be analyzed in the discussion and analysis section of the study. The exploratory nature of the study, main analysis forms will be comparison between the different case banks, and with the questionnaire data, from which conclusion and testing of the hypotheses will be drawn. As a basis for discussion the literature presented, together with the theoretical framework and hypotheses will be used as guidelines for the analysis and discussion.

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. All the results were first encoded into the software and frequency analyses were formed for each question. Missing values excluded pair wise instead of replacing with mean as this might distort the results (Pallant, 2001). All percentages are reported using the valid percentages, which are calculated excluding the missing values. Each question was separately evaluated through a between-groups one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the effect of different primary bank and for the effect that age would have on the question. As ANOVA is a method for comparisons of the mean scores, in some cases cross tabulation was used to find out the differences caused by primary bank or age, when frequencies were more accurate at describing the data.

The analysis of the individual questions, including the ANOVA, and cross tabulations are presented with the empirical results, and also discussed to some extent, while due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study, the main discussion and the analysis of the effects of the questionnaire results on the model proposed in the theoretical framework and hypotheses will be discussed in relation with the case study analysis in the discussion and analysis section.

3.5. Reliability and Validity

De Vaus (2002, p.96) defines reliability as: “*The question should be answered in the same way on different occasions if given to the same person (assuming that the person has not changed in the meantime)*”. The questionnaire was constructed with the guidelines presented by Peterson (2000), which increased the reliability through different steps. The wording of the questions was carefully assessed first in English and after the translation in Finnish, and was also evaluated by the test subjects, in order to avoid misconceptions of the questions. Some of the questions used were adapted from other studies, which had been proven efficient, acting partly as a test-retest method as suggested by Pallant (2001) to increase the reliability of a study. Comprehensive test-retest of the entire questionnaire was not possible due to time constraints and the random sample acquired through Facebook.

Some of the underlying themes under study were tested through different scales constructed, and the internal consistency of the scales was measured by using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha, which supported the reliability of the scales.

The case studies used secondary data, provide by the companies under study on their publicly available forums. The same information is also used to assess the companies and for example investors use annual reports and financial data published by the companies for assessments, thus their accuracy and reliability should be very high.

Validity refers to the degree the data actually measures what it is supposed to measure (De Vaus, 2002; Pallant, 2001). The validity of the questionnaire was evaluated with the test subjects with different background knowledge, in order to ensure the questions were understood correctly, thus contributing to the answers that were required. In addition, the hypotheses formed and tested provided underlying themes that the were derived from the literature covered, and being able to test these efficiently and answer the original research questions proposed, improved the validity of the questions to measure

what was intended. Some of the questions were also adapted from previous research that were already validating, thus increasing the entire validity of the study.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1. Case Companies

This section will present the empirical findings of the case companies. The cases are organized to first introduce the case companies with sufficient background information, contributing to their COO, presenting how they have organized their brands (including customer programs, environmental and social aspects, online presence), and what they offer directly to young consumers.

4.1.1. Nordea

4.1.1.1. Background

Nordea, which was formed in 2001, has been created through mergers of over 300 banks since the 1820s onward. In 1970 the number of banks had decreased to 80 and through further mergers the number of banks was only 30 in 1980 and finally four in 1990, which then formed Nordea in 2001 through a merger. The final four included Nordbanken in Sweden, Merita Bank in Finland, Unibank in Denmark, and Christinia Bank og Kreditkasse in Norway. The name Nordea was established through combining Nordic and Idea, which represented their ideology of a creating a Nordic bank operating in all Nordic countries. (Nordea, 2012a)

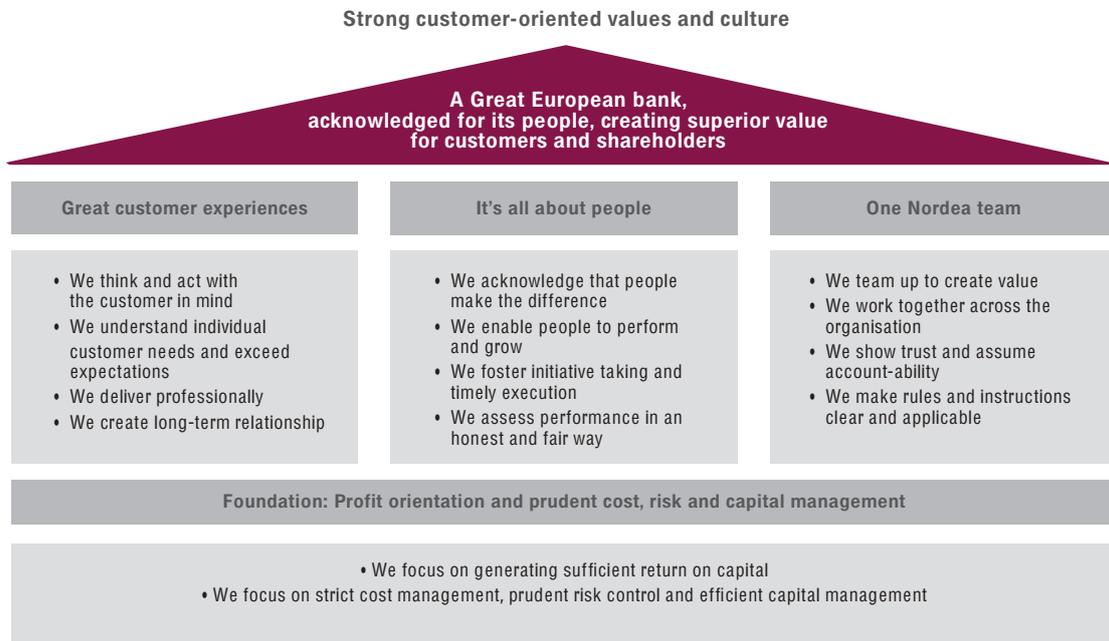
Nordea operates in 9 home markets, which include: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and the New European Markets of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. They have 1400 branch offices located in these markets and approximately 11 million customers, of which 10,5 million active private households and 0,5 million are corporate customers (Nordea, 2012b). Their market capitalization in 2011 was 24€ billion, and total assets equaled to 716€ billion and operating profit 3547€ million. Their largest markets measured with operating income are Sweden and Denmark with approximately 25%, followed by Finland 19%, Norway 14%, and Poland, Russia, and

the Baltic countries comprising 9%. Comparing customer bases (both private and corporate), the largest markets are comprised of Sweden with approximately 4 million, while Finland follows with 3,2 million, and Denmark with only 1,2 million, which is surprising looking at the operational income of the area. In 2011 Nordea employed 33 000 employees (full-time equivalents), which showed a slight decline from the year before. In addition to retail banking, Nordea also is a leading provider of corporate merchant banking, private banking and life and pension products in the Nordic countries. (NordeaAnnualReport2011, 2012).

4.1.1.2. Brand

Nordea operates in all their markets with the same brand name, and though some adaptations to local markets are made (mainly products and services adjusted to the legal requirements of the financial market), their strategy, vision and values are universal all across markets. For example their website provides one website about Nordea as a company and brand, while the local website only concentrate on the products and services available and local information. Nordea's mission is "making it possible", which they support through their vision of being "a great European bank acknowledged for its people, creating superior value for customers and shareholders" and three values "Great customer experiences", "It's all about people", and "One Nordea Team"(NordeaAnnualReport2011, 2012, p.12). They are presenting a strongly people oriented strategy, which focuses on a customer value, but also includes the employees, though not forgetting their basic foundation of "profit orientation and prudent cost, risk and capital management". The importance of service staff was emphasized in the branding literature discussed on creating strong service brands. Their mission, vision and values are summarized in figure 5.

Figure 5. Summary of Nordea's Brand



Source: (NordeaAnnualReport2011, 2012, p.12)

Nordea has the same customer segmentation in their customer programs in all Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway), which consists of private banking, premium customers, a customer program with gold, preferred and basic levels, and check-in customers. The new markets (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia) mainly follow the same segmentation with some alterations.

Private banking offers complete wealth management solutions for private customers with considerable amount of wealth, companies, foundations and associations. The Premium segment is offered solely for private customers and also directed to wealthier consumer, with an emphasis on savings and investments. Like private banking, premium segment also has a quite high requirement for investable funds (e.g. 100 000€ in Finland), and the advantages offered include those of gold level in customer program, with the addition of investment services and personal plans for wealth building. The customer program consists of three levels, gold, preferred and basic. Gold segment

targets mainly consumers who have focused their family's banking to Nordea. The requirements to qualify for the gold level in the customer program, are calculated taking into consideration the banking volume of the whole family (including children under 18) and include savings and loans. The benefits concentrate mainly on price advantages on daily products and services, such as cards, netbank, etc. and a personal banking advisor. The preferred level gives the customer some discount on selected products and services, while the basic level remains with list pricing and offers the customer with the basic services. Check-in is a program directed for young consumers aged 18-28 and offers benefits targeted for the customer group. The Check-in program will be discussed in further detail in the following section on young consumers. (Nordea, 2012c)

Nordea sponsors different events, but their main focus in sponsoring is supporting children and young people. They are mainly associated with sports, for example Nordea is the main sponsor of the Olympic Committees of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. In each country they also have a specific sport, to which they contribute, mainly enhancing the possibilities for kids and young people to participate in the sport. In Finland they have focused on music, and have formed the Nordea Jean Sibelius Orchestra in cooperation with Allmark, which focuses on developing young musical talents. Apart from kids and young people, Nordea also has their own Nordic golf tournaments, the Nordea Scandinavian Master's and Nordea Tour. (Nordea, 2012c)

Nordea's website is structured to have one main website, nordea.com, which presents all information on a corporate level, including investor relations, press, careers, and facts and figures. The local website for each country present information on products and services offered, and provide online tools such as netbank and investments services (e.g. e-markets). Besides their own website, Nordea is strongly present in different social medias and other Internet services. On the corporate level, they provide media through Flickr.com, Youtube.com, and Slideshare.net. Flickr is a services for sharing photographs and Nordea provides pictures on their management, press contacts and key staff in different countries. Youtube is a service for sharing videos, in which Nordea has

their own channel, which provides videos on different topics, such as Nordic TV ads, consumer tips, career presentations, investment news, and various videos on their different groups. In slideshare they share different documents and presentations including research published, financial and market reports, and local information.

Facebook and Twitter sites have been divided into local sites amongst the four Nordic countries. The use of different channels depends on the country and how popular they are in general. For example in Finland, Twitter has not reached its full potential and Facebook seems to be a much more popular option. Similarly Nordea uses its Twitter channel in Finland mainly for posting news updates, and uses Facebook for more customer oriented approach and discussion. Through Facebook they inform about new products and services, temporary service delays or technical problems, and provide general discussion and help on products and services (though the detailed discussion on particular customers is limited due to privacy, security and identification issues). Facebook also seems to provide public discussions and feedback on services, including both positive and negative arguments. On the Finnish Facebook site, customers have taken the channel into active use and posts can be seen on a regular base, and Nordea seems be present in all discussions and provide quick responses to customer feedback. By doing a search on Facebook, other Nordea groups are found online than the four official pages. Different subsidiaries have their own pages, and even some areas/offices have published their own websites.

Nordea works on different aspects to improve sustainability of their products and services. Their credit policies are based on international standards set by UN Global Compact and the International Finance Corporation's (IFC), and aim at reducing credits, which entail environmental, social and political risk. Through investments, Nordea aims at influencing environmental protection, human rights, labor standards, and business ethics. Their investment principles are set according to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investments (UNPRI), which Nordea signed in 2007. In addition in 2010 Nordea adopted a new strategy, which emphasizes Environmental, Social and

Governance (ESG) analysis and engagement. On their own operations, Nordea has set a target to reduce their CO2 emission by 18 000 tons by 2016 and have built more environmentally friendly offices and taken steps to reduce travelling and enhancing technology in cross-border meetings.

Nordea has different programs to support societies in their different markets. In the Nordic countries, they have provided financial education for 13-18 year old children to enhance their basic economic understanding in cooperation with schools. Nordea is also a member of the Financial Coalition in Sweden to prevent sexual exploitation of children, which targets commercial websites providing child pornography. In Latvia Nordea is supporting people suffering from the high unemployment rates, through Nordea Business School, which offers education for entrepreneurs. Nordea also partakes in saving the Baltic Sea, by providing their expertise on financial issues in the project started by the Baltic Sea Action Summit in 2010. In Finland, Nordea cooperates with the Women's Bank, which is an organization to support women's sustainable entrepreneurship and livelihood in developing countries. (Nordea, 2012d)

4.1.1.3. Young Consumers

As mentioned earlier Nordea offers a Check-in program that targets young consumers aged 18-28 (Nordic countries). The main benefits include getting the basic daily banking services (cards, netbank, etc.) free of charge, plus some additional advantages that differ by country (for example additional advantages on government supported housing loan and savings in Finland and Norway). In Finland Check-in customers get a debit card and netbank access codes free of charge, and they are able to apply for a credit card with a 1000€ credit limit if they have over 90 study credits in a Finnish higher education institute, university, or polytechnic. The credit card they receive free of charge for the first year and with a 25% reduction on the normal yearly fee afterwards. Check-in customers also receive benefits from other credits, for example a lower margin and no arrangement fees on student loans, FlexiCredit with a lower

margin and housing loans without arrangement fees. The housing loans offered for young consumers also include the ASP- loan (Check-in customers get it also without arrangement fees), which is a government supported loan aimed at young consumers buying their first home. For rent apartments, Check-in customer can open a rental security deposit account free of charge. Investment and savings product benefits include a PerkAccount with higher interest rate, basic portfolio service in netbank free of charge for 6 months, and subscriptions to Nordea funds free of charge through a saving agreement. Other benefits include exchange of travel cash free without service fee, and a 15% discount on a YoungLiving insurance package. Nordea customer service also has separate Check-in advisor for the service of young consumers.

On Facebook Nordea provides Facebook applications (apps) for Danish and Norwegian customers. Unfortunately they are not accessible, as they seem to be restricted only for a certain group, probably the check-in customers of the country. In Finland, Facebook search finds groups for check-in customers in Mid-Finland and Åland. The groups organize different events for young consumers from the area, and have competitions for various prizes and discounts to local services. In addition a Google search provided discounts for Nordea check-in customer for different courses at Valmennuskeskus.fi, which provides courses and coaching for different educational purposes. Surprisingly these perks are not advertised in any of Nordea's official channels. Nordea has also organized in the past events in cooperation with Music Television (MTV), with commercials and a video competition for best savings video (viewable at Nordea's Youtube channel).

4.1.2. Sampo Bank

4.1.2.1. Background

Sampo Bank dates back to 1887, when it started deposit operations as a government owned bank operating through post offices under the name of Postal Savings Bank. The name was changed to Postipankki in 1970 and in 1988, the bank become a government

owned limited company and started to operate as a full service bank. Through a merger with another government owned company, Finnish Export Credit, Leonia Group was formed in 1997, which later in 2000 merged with Sampo Insurance Company and formed Sampo Bank in 2001. The same year the Sampo Bank name was introduced, Mandatum Bank joined the group, which brought asset management services for private customers to the group and changed the focus of the group to a investment focused bank. In the beginning of the millennium, Sampo Bank started its international operations through acquisitions in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. In 2007, the Danish Danske Bank A/S acquired Sampo Bank and all of its subsidiaries, though Sampo Bank continued local operations under the their own name as a subsidiary of Danske Bank A/S. (SampoBank, 2012a)

Danske Bank Group operates in 15 countries on a European level, though in many of its markets it operates under the Danske Bank brand, it also operates in some markets through a local subsidiary, such as Northern Bank and National Irish Bank in Ireland, Fokus Bank in Norway and Sampo Bank in Finland. Danske group has approximately five million customers combined in their markets, and employs 21 000 fulltime employees. In Finland Sampo Bank has approximately 1,2 million customers (private and corporate), operates through 101 branches and employs 2000 fulltime employees. (DanskeBank, 2012a)

4.1.2.2. Brand

As mentioned earlier Danske Bank operates in many markets through a local brand, they have set a new strategy in 2012, which includes combining all the local subsidiaries under the Danske Bank name and brand by the end of the year. The new strategy divides the company's operations in three business units in all of its markets: Personal Banking, Business Banking, and Corporates & Institutions. (DanskeBank, 2012b). Their basic brand strategy has been consolidated across their geographical spread, with a common mission: "to be the best local financial partner" and vision:

“One platform – exceptional brands”. Though they are in the progress of formulating new mission and vision statements, as part of their new strategy. Their current mission of being a local financial partner, fits their current approach of more independent subsidiaries operating under a local name, but contradicts slightly with their new strategy of a universal brand name and operations. Their mission and vision statements are supported by five core values: expertise, integrity, value creation, commitment, and accessibility, which are applied locally. (SampoBank, 2012b)

Sampo Bank does not have different customer levels, except for private banking, which is offered for more wealthy customers, but have organized their products and services in different packages that are available for all everyone. The only exception forming the youth package, which is only available for customers aged between 18 and 28. In addition to the youth package they offer economy, basic and extended packages, which are priced accordingly. From every package a customer can get discount from the amount of savings and investments they have, 1€ for 10 000€ and 2,90€ for 50 000€, thus preferring customers with savings and investments, which is inline with their past positioning as a investment-focused bank. Surprisingly none of the packages include any investment services (except for the possibility of fund subscriptions through the netbank), except for the extended package includes a 25% discount on fund subscriptions. (SampoBank, 2012b)

Sampo Bank partakes in different actions to create sustainability to their business, in accordance to Danske Bank Group’s values and principles. Sampo Bank complies with the Danske Bank Group’s policies for socially responsible investments, which monitor that investments are not directed to companies that violate international standards. The monitoring is outsourced to Ethix SRI Advisors, which constantly screens Danske Group’s portfolios and bases their criteria in international standards, such as the UN Global Compact and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. In addition Sampo provides its customer the possibility to invest in mutual funds that contribute to sustainable development. (SampoBank, 2012b)

Danske Group set a target in 2007 to become CO2 neutral, which was accomplished in 2009, through reduced emissions and involvement in various climate projects, such as investments in renewable energy. Environmental factors are also taken into account in office planning and everyday operations, through possible energy savings, recycling, and general reduction of wastes. Sampo has also been in cooperation with different schools to support their environmental awareness, through donating an environmental documentary to every middle school in Finland and been supporting financially different student environment projects in various schools. (SampoBank, 2012b)

Since 2003 Sampo Bank has targeted its social support to schools and in addition to the environmental aspects they also support Finnish school financially in different sectors, and in 2010 their focus was on support special education needs in schools. Sampo Bank aim to improve youth's financial literacy and have formed a non-commercial website (www.controlyourmoney.fi), which provides material for schools to use in financial education. The material is targeted to children aged 10-15. (SampoBank, 2012b)

In social medias, Sampo Bank is present only on Facebook. Their Facebook page offers customers with announcements on their services, mainly concentrating on updates on their technical services, such as netbank and mobile services, with occasional competitions. Sampo informs that they are available for questions on weekdays from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., and it seems like customers have taken the page into active use, though mainly giving feedback on their netbank and mobile services. This could be due to the limitations of banking matters that can be discussed publicly, or which customers want to share publicly. The publicity of posts is clearly stated in the "about" section of the page, which also informs the rules of use of the Facebook discussion and oddly mention that post could reveal ones customer relation to Sampo Bank and is written in a format that could be interpreted as being a unwanted action.

Danske Bank on the other hand is present on other social medias, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube and Flickr. All of the medias seem to be directed to their domestic

market, Danish customers, providing them with discussion and announcement features similar to Sampo Bank's Finnish Facebook page. Flickr presents pictures and basic information of the Group's key persons, products and head office.

4.1.2.3. Young Consumers

As mentioned earlier, Sampo Bank offers a youth package for young customers aged 18-28, which is free of charge. The package entails basic daily services that are included in all of the banks packages, including an account, netbank access, account statements, ATM usage, and payments with cards and through the netbank. In addition customers can choose from either a debit card, or a credit card if they have a regular salary or over 90 study credits. An account credit is also offered with only interest costs for the used amount. Additional benefits include the exchange of travel cash without a service fee, a personalized card with a picture, and a service of having only one PIN code for all of your cards. Sampo Bank also offers student loans, and government supported ASP housing loans, but does not provide any advantages to young consumers on these. (SampoBank, 2012c)

4.1.3. OP-Pohjola

4.1.3.1. Background

OP-Pohjola Group group is made from approximately 200 independent member cooperative banks OP-Pohjola Group Central Cooperative, which is owned by the member cooperative banks. The independent member cooperative banks are owned by owner-members, of which approximately 90% are private households, and who elect their bank's administrative staff. One can join as an owner-member, by paying a cooperative contribution, thus having the right to vote and participate in the bank's administration and decision-making. OP-Pohjola Group operates in three business segments: banking, non-life insurance and life insurance.

OP-Pohjola group dates back to 1903, when the Central Lending Fund of the Cooperative Societies Limited Company (OKO) was formed. The purpose of OKO was to operate as a link between the State and local cooperative credit societies. The operation became more organized in 1928, when the Central Association of Cooperative Funds was formed, which accelerated the growth of OKO, which became comparable to other bank groups through credits needed in the post war reconstruction. During the 1950s corporate customers came into the picture, which further accelerated growth and with the new banking legislations in 1970s, led to the reformation of cooperative credit societies into cooperative banks (OP) and gave them comparable right to merchant banks. In 1989 OKO Bank became listed in the Helsinki stock exchange and during the 1990s OKO Bank grew into a full-service bank with a comparable market share and in 2005 became the largest shareholder of Pohjola Group, which brought a stronger hold to non-life insurances into the group and in 2007 formed the OP-Pohjola Group. (OP-Pohjola, 2012a)

4.1.3.2. Brand

OP-Pohjola Group operates mainly in Finland through their cooperative banks, though they do have some international operations, which are mainly provided to support international corporations and are handled by Pohjola Bank Plc, which is one of the main subsidiaries of OP-Pohjola Group. Pohjola Bank is also a member of Unico Banking Group, which is an association of European cooperative Banks. Most of OP-Pohjoja Group's international affairs are handled through cooperation and partnerships with foreign banks, while they remain physically in Finland, which they also emphasize as one of their competitive advantages in the market. Their Finnish roots are also reflected in their mission statement: "We are the leading and most successful financial service group in Finland", and vision: "We promote the sustainable prosperity, wellbeing and security of our owner-members, customers and operating region through our local presence". They stress their local approach and cooperation with owner-members and customers, which they also include in their core values: people-first approach, responsibility and prospering together. Often their customers are also their

owner-members, which creates loyalty and is in line with their customer promise: “We provide best package of solutions and loyalty benefits”. (OP-Pohjola, 2012b)

In addition to influence in the bank’s decision making, OP-Pohjola Group has a bonus system for their owner-members. It prefers customer who have concentrated their banking and insurance services to the group, and require that you have loans, savings, income, or insurance bills worth 5000€ per month in order to gain bonus points. The larger your monthly volume, the more bonus points you gain, and these bonus points can be used to pay service fees on banking and insurance services, thus giving the owner-members discount on the services they use. In addition to banking and insurance services, OP-Pohjola provides its customers with extensive range of advantage on different services in cooperation with other companies, such as magazines, spas, traveling, etc. (OP-Pohjola, 2012c)

The OP-Pohjola Group has strong ties to their market, Finland, and also supports the society through sponsoring different events and association mainly concentrating on cultural events, while the local cooperative banks support locally mainly sports. Currently the group is involved with Nuori Suomi – Young Finland Association, which concentrates on improving the well being and joy of children and youth, mainly through sports activities; Helsinki Music Center, Savonlinna Opera Festival, Helsinki Festival, and Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival. (OP-Pohjola, 2012b)

One of the core values of OP-Pohjola Group is responsibility, which they enhance in the form of corporate social responsibility (CSR), with a goal of being a pioneer in CSR in the Finnish financial sector. The group signed the UN Global Compact in 2011 and have committed to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment in 2009. In investments they perform responsibility analysis internally in accordance to the UN Principles, in order to assess the sustainability of investments. In addition their asset management and fund management subsidiaries are involved in the international investor community's Carbon and Water Disclosure projects. The products and services

offered also take a responsibility approach in their development as user-friendly and customer orientation, with local support for all customer groups through their local presence. The responsibility in financing is taken into consideration with both private and corporate customers. While corporate financing focuses on ethical guidelines and principles in business operations, taking into account social and environmental responsibility, through analyzing the environmental impacts of projects financed, and complying with the principles of the UN Global Compact. For private customers, the responsibility of the bank in financing mainly shows through an analysis of the customer's ability to pay back the loan, which offers mutual benefit as not offering too large financing for customers. (OP-Pohjola, 2012b)

In addition to investments and financing taking into account environmental effects, the group tries to minimize their own environmental effects by reducing their CO2 emissions. This is partly done through improving products and services, and moving to a preference of electronic channels in order to reduce paper waste. Awareness of environmental effects and CO2 emissions amongst employees aims at reducing office waste, and amongst customer to support the change.

The local approach of the group is also part of their social responsibility, as they try to support the growth and prosperity of the national economy. Their broad branch office structure and smaller local cooperative banks offer services nation wide and always with a local approach, emphasizing the support of services and opportunities for local customers, organizations, companies, and communities. Local events to support the financial literacy of young people and senior citizens are also organized by cooperative banks. (OP-Pohjola, 2012b)

The group's availability is not only constrained to being locally present through their branch office network, but they also provide customers with online services. In addition to netbank, they provide a chat feature on their website, which is available on weekdays between 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. They are also present on Facebook, providing basic discussion

forums and are present their for discussions and questions from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Their Facebook site offers announcement, addition information on services, news, and publications in addition to their discussion, questions and feedback forums.

4.1.3.3. Young Consumers

OP-Pohjola offers a wide array of benefits for young customers who aged 18-26. They provide an informative page on their website, which discusses all the benefits offered, and information on different situations that young consumers could use banking services. The page is divide into nine sections including money, home, family, studying, working, traveling, getting a car, surprising problems, and information for 15-17 year olds. Each section gives information on how the bank could be of service in these situations and helps in finding the necessary information and options.

The basic daily services are offered free of charge for young consumers, including account, netbank, and a debit card or a credit card with a lowered service fee. They also offer young consumers free of charge a service for planning and organizing your financial by automatically sorting your expenses and income into different categories, making it easier to follow what you use your money for. It creates reports for a certain time period, and can follow different goals set by the user, for example to a certain saving goal for a larger purchase and in general helps you to plan your daily budgeting.

For housing options, OP-Pohjola offers the government supported ASP-loan, but does not have additional benefits for young consumers, except in the form of bonuses gained, which also applies for regular housing loans. If moving on rent, the account for rent security deposit is offered free of charge. Other credit benefits for young consumers include a 200€ or a 400€ credit linked to an account, which does not have a service fee and the interest rate is determined by the market rate without any margin, if a saving agreement is made to the equivalent credit amount. (OP-Pohjola, 2012c)

Insurances are also offered with a special easy-package for young consumers aged 15-25, which includes home, accident, travel, liability, legal protection insurances. All of the services in use, including the services young consumers get free of charge, earn bonus points, which can be used for service fees on banking and insurance services as discussed earlier. (OP-Pohjola, 2012c)

4.2. Questionnaire

This section will present the empirical results of the questionnaire. The results were analyzed using SPSS, and the main discussion and analysis of the results will be discussed in chapter 5.

4.2.1. Demographics

The ages of the sample ranged from 22-30, with the largest number of respondents being aged between 25-28 (72.2%), with the largest age group being 27 year olds (n=36; 27.1%). Due to the small number of respondents in some age groups, the sample was divided and grouped by age into three categories, 22-24 (n=18), 25-27 (n=72), and 28-30 (n=43) year olds, in order to analyze the effects of age on different factors. The gender of the sample was divided rather equally, and consisted of only slightly more females (61.7%) than males (38.3%).

Majority lived in Helsinki (69.9%), and the largest areas following consisted of the metropolitan area of Finland, Espoo (15.8%) and Vantaa (9%). Only three of the respondents lived abroad. This offered all the respondents, excluding the ones living abroad, good coverage of branch offices and services.

In housing arrangements, renting was the most common form (48,9%), followed by owning a home and having a mortgage (30.1%). Owning a home increased slightly with age compared to renting, but did not present a statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). Most of the respondents worked fulltime, 54.9%, while 27.1% studied and worked, 13.5% were fulltime students, and 3% were unemployed.

The primary bank of the respondents were divided between the major banks listed in the questionnaire, with only two respondents being customers at another bank, Ålandsbanken and POP-bank, which was formerly part of the OP-Pohjola Group. The three largest bank groups were represented accordingly, with 60.2% of the sample being customers of Nordea, 17.3% of OP-Pohjola, and 14.3% of Sampo Bank.

Table 2. Primary Bank

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Nordea	80	60.2	60.2	60.2
Sampo Bank	19	14.3	14.3	74.4
OP-Pohjola	23	17.3	17.3	91.7
Handelsbanken	4	3.0	3.0	94.7
Aktia	1	0.8	0.8	95.5
Säästöpankki	2	1.5	1.5	97.0
Tapiola pankki	2	1.5	1.5	98.5
Other	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

The question on secondary banks was answered by all but one respondent (n=132), of which 37.9% had concentrated their banking to their primary bank and some respondents having more than one secondary bank. S-Pankki was a popular secondary bank with 17.4%, though none of the respondents had it as their primary bank, which is partly explained by it belonging to the same group as one of the largest retail stores in Finland that have a bonus system where the gathered bonuses are automatically transferred to the account of S-Pankki, thus necessitating an account with the bank. The distribution of the rest of the primary and secondary banks of the sample is summarized in the following tables 2 and 3.

Due to the small frequency in primary bank for Handelsbanken, Aktia, Tapiola, and

säästöpankki, they are grouped together into the “other” category for the further analysis of other variables, thus the groups for analysis consisting of Nordea, Sampo Bank, OP-Pohjola, and others.

Table 3. Secondary Bank

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
I have concentrated all my banking to my primary bank	50	32.1%	37.9%
Nordea	31	19.9%	23.5%
Sampo Bank	17	10.9%	12.9%
OP-Pohjola	12	7.7%	9.1%
Handelsbanken	1	0.6%	0.8%
Aktia	8	5.1%	6.1%
Tapiola pankki	6	3.8%	4.5%
S-pankki	23	14.7%	17.4%
Other	8	5.1%	6.1%
Total	156	100.0%	118.2%

When asked if you have changed your bank in the last five years, most of the respondents (72%) had not changed, 26.5% had changed once, 0.8% had changed twice, and similarly 0.8% had changed three times. Primary bank had a significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on changing the bank in the last five years. From the customers who had changed their bank group, 37.8% were currently customers of Nordea, 21.6% were customers of Sampo Bank, 21.6% of OP-Pohjola, and 18.9% of other bank group. Age did not have a statistically significant effect on changing of banks.

4.2.2. Brand Awareness

Brand recall was measured by asking respondents to list five retail banks operating in Finland. The order of the banks listed is also used to measure the strength of recall of the different brands, and all the respondents could list two banks, while three was listed by all but one respondent, fourth bank was left empty by four respondents, and the fifth

was left empty by 19 respondents. The top three most common responses for each category will be summarized. Nordea was answered first in 60.2% of the cases, OP-Pohjola 18%, and Sampo Bank 12%. Second was mentioned OP-Pohjola in 27.8% of the cases, Nordea 27.1%, and Sampo Bank 26.3%, and third was answered OP-Pohjola in 31.1% of the cases, Sampo Bank 28.8%, and Aktia 10.6%. Fourth was named Aktia in 23.3% of the cases, Handelsbanken in 19.4%, and Sampo Bank in 18.6%. Fifth was mentioned Handelsbanken by 24.6% of the respondents, Aktia by 22.8%, and S-Pankki by 10.5%.

The three largest bank groups (Nordea, OP-Pohjola and Sampo Bank) were mentioned in the top three in majority of the cases, while the smaller banks increased in number in the latter responses, showing high brand recall. Surprisingly the respondents whose primary banks were one of the three largest bank groups, mentioned their own bank first in 87.5% of the cases for Nordea, 81.3% for Sampo Bank and 79.2% for OP-Pohjola. Customers of smaller banks, such as Handelsbanken and Tapiola Bank mentioned their own bank first in 100% of the cases.

Presenting the logos of OP-Pohjola, Nordea, and Sampo Bank, and asking respondents to identify the brands measured brand recognition. OP-Pohjola's logo was recognized by all but one respondent who left the question blank, Nordea was recognized also by all but one respondent, who had recognized it wrongly to represent the logo of Sampo Bank. Sampo Bank's logo was the only one receiving only 78.9% recognition, while 15% did not recognize the logo at all and 6.1% identified it belonging to another brand, with Handelsbanken getting the most (3%) of the wrong identifications.

Asking respondents to identify on a scale from 1 to 7, how well do they know the products and services of Handelsbanken, Sampo Bank, OP-Pohjola, Nordea and Aktia, further assessed the depth of recognition. The result showed similar patterns as the earlier questions as seen in table 4, with the three largest bank groups having the highest means, while Nordea showed significantly higher total mean for knowledge of their

products and services. This was significantly affected by the primary bank of the respondents, which was expected, though Nordea's products and service were well recognized by customers of different banks as well. The highest mean for their primary bank was for OP-Pohjola (M=6.26, SD=0.810). Age did not show to have any significant effect.

Table 4. Knowledge of Products and Services

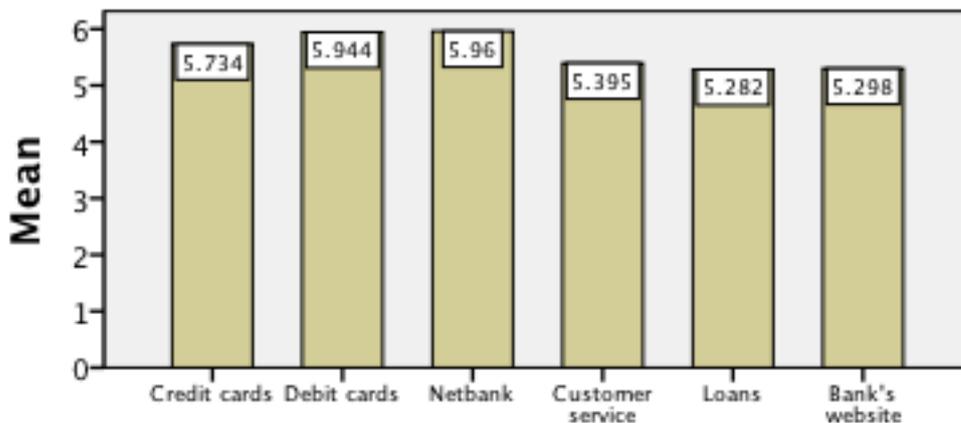
		Report				
Primary bank		Handelsbanken	Sampo Bank	OP-Pohjola	Nordea	Aktia
Nordea	Mean	1.78	3.15	3.08	5.91	2.24
	N	80	80	79	80	80
	SD	.993	1.623	1.678	1.021	1.452
Sampo Bank	Mean	1.89	5.53	3.00	4.11	1.79
	N	19	19	19	19	19
	SD	1.197	1.219	1.333	1.729	.918
OP-Pohjola	Mean	2.00	3.52	6.26	4.61	2.27
	N	23	23	23	23	22
	SD	1.279	1.780	.810	1.616	1.609
Other	Mean	3.36	2.09	2.00	3.55	2.55
	N	11	11	11	11	11
	SD	2.767	1.221	1.549	1.968	1.864
Total	Mean	1.96	3.47	3.53	5.23	2.20
	N	133	133	132	133	132
	SD	1.351	1.803	1.971	1.590	1.450

Advertisements of banks was measured and 94% of the sample had seen or heard advertisements of banks, with the largest sources of advertisements included TV (29%), Internet (24,7%), magazines and newspapers (22,3%), and outdoor marketing (17,4%). TV was the main source for all age groups, while Internet was the second most popular source for 22-24 and 25-27 year olds, 28-30 year olds listed magazine/newspaper as their secondary choice. Radio was the least popular media for all age groups (5.1%).

4.2.3. Brand Associations and Values

The performance related characteristics were measured by the functionality of basic banking products and services, including credit cards, debit cards, netbank, customer service, loans and bank's website. The respondents were asked to evaluate them on a scale from 1-7 in their own bank. The functionality in all categories was listed as rather high, with the means being over 5 in every category as presented in figure 6.

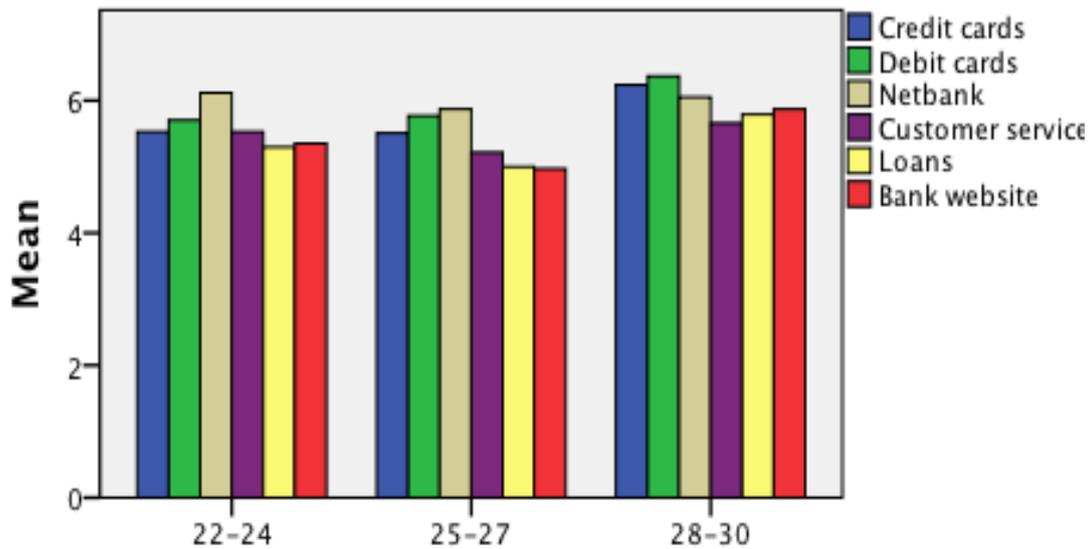
Figure 6. Functionality of Products and Services



An ANNOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of primary bank on level of functionality of products and services of the banks. Each variable was tested separately and for debit cards and loans no statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) differences were found. On the other variables statistically significant difference was found ($p < 0.05$) and the effect of primary bank showed a medium effect ($0.14 > \eta^2 > 0.06$) on netbank $\eta^2 = 0.10$, credit card $\eta^2 = 0.07$, customer service $\eta^2 = 0.10$, banks' website $\eta^2 = 0.08$. Post-hoc comparison using the Turkey HSD test indicated the mean scores for Sampo Bank (netbank: $M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.792$, customer service $M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.524$), OP-Pohjola (netbank: $M = 6.14$, $SD = 1.037$, customer service $M = 5.96$, $SD = 0.928$), and Nordea (netbank: $M = 5.95$, $SD = 0.932$, customer service $M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.273$), was significantly different for the functionality of netbank and customer service. The other banks did not differ significantly. The distribution amongst age groups is presented in figure 7, which shows the older age group, 28-30, evaluating the functioning of all products the highest,

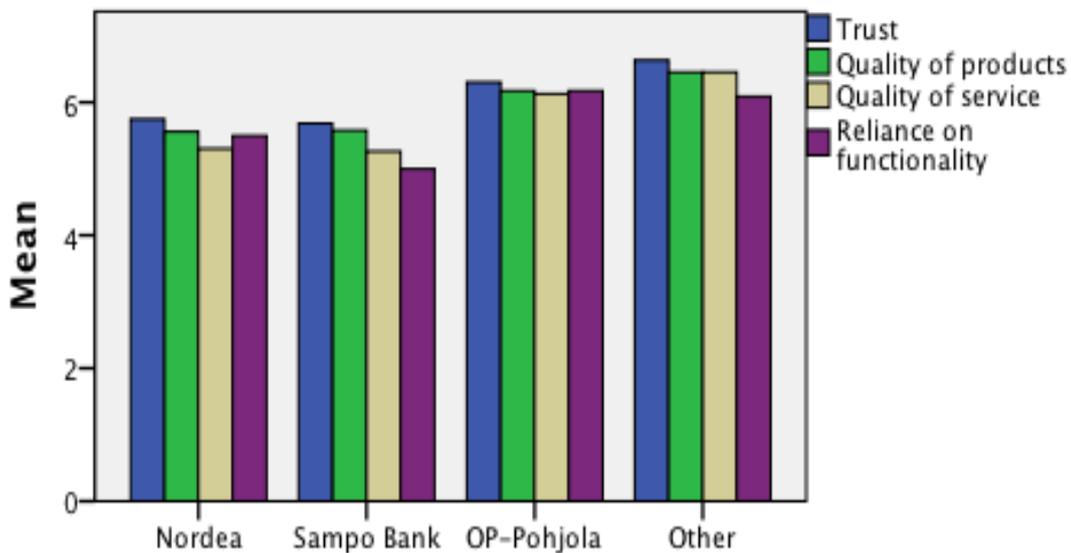
except for netbank, which has the highest mean amongst the youngest age group. In all cases though, the functionality of products and services offered is very high.

Figure 7. Distribution of Knowledge on products and Services Between Age Groups



Imagery related characteristics were measured by respondents evaluating trust, quality of products, and quality of service, reliance on functionality and privacy of their bank. Age did not have a statistically significant ($p > .05$) effect on any of the characteristics. Between different primary banks of the respondents, statistically significant differences were shown in an ANOVA test in all characteristics except privacy. As seen in figure 8, “other” group of banks, which are usually smaller in size, evaluated all the characteristics the highest. Customers of OP-Pohola evaluated all of the features quite evenly, while for example Sampo Bank’s customers showed a significant dip on the reliance on functionality. Nordea on the other hand showed quality of service being its weak point amongst its customers, while other factors were ranked quite evenly.

Figure 8. Imagery Characteristics



The importance of internationality of the bank was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7, with the mean of 4.42, SD=1.738. No statistically significant differences were found on the effect of primary bank or age to the internationality, though from primary banks, Nordea's customers ranked internationality the highest with a mean of 4.66 and the lowest was of customer's from Sampo Bank of 3.84.

The country of origin of the three largest bank groups, Nordea, OP-Pohjola and Sampo Bank were measured by asking separately on each bank if the respondents considered it to be a Finnish bank, Swedish bank, Danish bank, Norwegian bank, Nordic bank, European bank, or an International bank. An open-ended option was also included. Nordea was considered by 54.9% as a Nordic bank, 28.6% a Swedish bank, 9% as a Finnish bank and 3.8% as a European bank. OP-Pohjola was considered as a Finnish bank by 93.2%, and a Nordic bank by 3%. Sampo Bank was considered to be a Danish Bank by 42.6%, Finnish bank by 31%, Nordic bank by 17,8%, European by 3.9%, and International bank by 2.3%. The importance of origin was given moderate importance, with a mean of 3.87 (SD=1.578), on a scale from 1 to 7, with no statistical difference amongst primary bank or age.

The effect of banks representing different social groups were evaluated in question #21, statements a-d, by presenting the sample with statements on social groups and having them evaluate if they agree with the statements on a scale of 1 to 7. The scale has good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient being 0.746 ($p > 0.7$). The scale having only four items further strengthens the consistency as Pallant (2001) states that on scales with less than ten items, even lower Cronbach's alpha values can be considered consistent. As presented in table 5, the sample agreed to some extent with banks presenting different social groups ($M=3.8, SD=1.562$) and considered them selves to belong to the social groups represented by the bank ($M=4.08, SD=1.493$). On the other hand they did not consider other people to classify them to a social group due to the bank they are a customer of, nor did they judge other people by their banks. No statistically significant effect by primary bank or age was found.

Table 5. Effect of Social Groups

		Different banks represent different social groups	I belong to the social group represented by my bank	Other people classify me to a certain social group because of the bank of which I am a customer of	I judge other people by the bank they belong to
N	Valid	133	133	133	133
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.80	4.08	2.41	1.80
Std. Deviation		1.561	1.493	1.467	1.278

Most of the respondents were very comfortable telling others, which bank they were customers of ($M=6.01, SD=1.346$), yet they appreciated their privacy in their bank relationship ($M=5.47, SD=1.569$).

The respondents required innovative new service and technological advancements from banks ($M=4.78, SD=1.578$), and in most cases stated that their banks do constantly improve their services ($M=4.60, SD=1.247$). Banks were also considered to try to sell

their products and services quite keenly (M=4.78, SD=1.578). ANOVA test on primary bank and age showed statistically significant effect of primary bank on the statement of banks constantly improving their services, and had a medium effect ($\eta^2=0.33$), with Nordea as a primary bank (M=4.35, SD=1.193), OP-Pohjola (M=5.27, SD=1.032), Sampo Bank (M=4.83, SD=1.465), and other banks (M=4.64, SD=1.206).

In bank selection, the sample evaluated financial solidity as the highest factor (M=5.78, SD=1.174), and interest rate and margin almost as highly (M=5.69, SD=1.388). The lowest scored were evaluated on parents being customers of the same bank (M=3.53, SD=1.905) and recommendation from friends (M=3.84, SD=1.643). Location was evaluated moderately important (M=4.08, SD=1.812), background/history of the bank (M=4.69, SD=1.409), image of the bank (M=5.17, SD=1.355), and price (M=5.38, SD=1.449). The results were not significantly influenced by age or primary bank and the scale had moderate internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.536, which is acceptable when the number of factors is less than 10 (8 in this case).

The bank relationship itself on the other hand was more influenced by recommendations from parents (M=4.51, SD=1.730), friends (M=3.80, SD=1.725), and other people (M=3.39, SD=1.527). Advertisements of the bank did not have significant influence on the relationship (M=2.76, SD=1.558), nor did social media (M=2.23, SD=1.347). None of the results were significantly affected by primary bank or age ($p>0.05$).

The use of credit for buying daily items was divided amongst the extremes, with 32.3% never buying daily items on credit and 20.3% buying only when they have to, and 11.3% used credit daily, and 17.3% weekly. Primary bank did not have significant effect on the use of credit on daily items, but age did effect it ($p=0.009$, $\eta^2=.07$) where 25-27 years olds had the highest mean (M=4.53, SD=1.815), and 22-24 (M=4.39, SD=1.754), and 28-30 (M=3.44, SD=1.906). The open-ended option of "other" presented 3% of the sample, and reasons were mainly on special occasions, such as traveling, or online.

Reviewing of products and services online before purchase was popular amongst the sample ($M=4.82$, $SD=1.440$), which was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7, and the Internet was also the most popular media for giving feedback (36.4%), though a large group of the sample did not give feedback at all (39.4%). 14.4% also gave feedback directly to a company representative, and 4.5% used a feedback form at the place of purchase. The frequency of giving feedback was quite occasional, as 36.8% of the respondents gave feedback few times a year, and 35.3% more rarely. Primary bank or age did not show significant effect on reviewing or giving feedback on products and services.

The opening hours of banks showed the sample would like the banks to be open later (46.6%), while almost a similar group (40.6%) was satisfied with the current opening hours. Only .08% of the respondents suggested banks to open earlier, while 8.3% would wish they would open earlier and close later. The open-ended option (3.8%) provided response of consumers mainly using online services, so the opening hours of the branch office was irrelevant. Neither primary bank nor age had effect on the results.

Environmental issues were considered very important ($M=5.22$, $SD=1.437$) on a scale from 1 to 7, but 78.9% did not know if their bank partakes in some environmental or social cause. 18.2% knew their bank takes part in some cause and 2.3% knew that their bank does not. The importance of a bank partaking in environmental and social causes were also considered quite important ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.670$), but did not have an effect on the selection of bank amongst the sample ($M=1.68$, $SD=1.093$). No effects of primary bank or age on ANOVA analysis were found on environmental issues.

Question #33 evaluated positive characteristics of the primary bank of respondents by presenting six statements of a positive service experience, which the respondents evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7. The internal consistency of the scale was very high

(Cronbach's $\alpha=0.906$). Most of the respondents also highly agreed with the statements for their primary bank and the results are summarized in table 6.

Table 6. Characteristics of the Primary Bank

Statement	Mean	SD
Quality of service is good in my bank	5.59	1.088
I trust my bank	5.86	.975
My bank gives me a feeling of security	5.19	1.327
The quality of service in my bank is consistent	5.21	1.354
The service staff is knowledgeable	5.23	1.348
The bank website is informative	5.28	1.269

The results of the statements showed significant difference ($p<0.05$) by primary bank in most cases, except for bank's website and feeling of security. The effect is shown in table 7 below.

Table 7. Effect of Primary Bank on the Positive Characteristics

Primary Bank	Quality of service is good in my bank	I trust my bank	The quality of service in my bank is consistent	The service staff is knowledgeable
Mean	5.41	5.71	5.05	5.01
Nordea N	80	80	80	80
SD	1.052	1.021	1.349	1.317
Mean	5.42	5.68	4.89	5.00
Sampo Bank N	19	19	19	19
SD	1.261	.946	1.449	1.700
Mean	6.04	6.26	5.65	5.83
OP-Pohjola N	23	23	23	23
SD	.878	.752	1.335	1.029
Mean	6.18	6.45	6.00	6.00
Other N	11	11	11	11
SD	1.079	.688	.775	.894

	Mean	5.59	5.86	5.21	5.23
	N	133	133	133	133
Total	SD	1.088	.975	1.354	1.348
	p	0.018	0.14	0.038	0.012
	Eta ²	0.075	0.079	0.063	0.081

4.2.4. Service Experience and Response

The frequency of visiting the branch office was quite rare, with 3.8% visiting monthly, 42.9% few times a year and 53.4% more rarely. Netbank on the other hand was used very frequently with 9.1% using daily, 82.6% using weekly, 7.6% using once a month, and 0.08% using more often than daily. Mobile bank services received quite variable frequency of usage among the sample, 39.8% never use mobile bank services, 3.8% use daily, 18.8% use weekly, 13.5% use once a month, 12% few times a year, 10.5% even more rarely, and 1.5% more often. None of the results were significantly affected by primary bank or age.

The main reasons for visiting the branch office loan matters are summarized in table 8.

Table 8. Main Reason for Visitng a Branch Office

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cash deposit/withdrawal	18	13.5	13.5	13.5
Loan matters	50	37.6	37.6	51.1
Savings	14	10.5	10.5	61.7
Currency exchange	7	5.3	5.3	66.9
Opening an account	7	5.3	5.3	72.2
Cards	24	18.0	18.0	90.2
Other	13	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total	133	100.0	100.0	

Other reasons included investments, general visit due to long time of not visiting the branch office, handling grandparent's banking, account and card matters that could not be dealt with online, and Tapiola bank does not have a branch office and operates solely online.

Banks were contacted mostly a few times a year (58.3%) or more rarely (30.1%). Only 2.3% contacted their bank weekly, and 6.8% once a month. The main channel (respondents could choose more than one) for contacting was Internet (66.9%), phone (39.8%), or visiting the branch office (17.3%). None of the respondents used social media channels.

Table 9. Familiarity with Bank Products

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Loans	133	0	4.65	1.478
Savings	133	0	4.29	1.510
Investments	132	1	3.69	1.804
Pricing	132	1	4.00	1.606
Netbank	133	0	6.14	1.016
Credit cards	132	1	5.40	1.408
Debit cards	133	0	5.69	1.232
Interest rates	133	0	4.36	1.680
Customer programs	133	0	4.11	1.764
Benefits targeted at young consumers	132	1	4.37	1.826
ASP-account and loan	133	0	4.04	2.119
Mastercard SecureCode ja Verified by Visa service	133	0	4.65	1.855

The familiarity with main products provided by most banks was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7. The internal consistency of the scale was reliable (Cronbach's alpha=0.891). All the products were well familiar with the sample as shown in table 9.

In a ANOVA analysis the primary bank should significance ($p < 0.05$) for customer programs, the effect size showed medium effect ($\eta^2 = 0.097$), with the lowest scores when primary bank was Sampo Bank ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.84$) and the highest OP-Pohjola ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.608$). Customers of banks included in other group evaluated their familiarity with customer programs quite low, but showed quite high SD ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.954$), and for Nordea ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.649$).

Banks provide adequate information on their products and services ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.211$), and the main sources of information included bank's website (94.7%), customer service (33.8%), branch office (19.5%), parents (12.8%), friends (12%), internet forums (6%), and social media (2.3%). Between the different age groups, for 22-24 year olds, parents was the main source, for 25-27 year olds, the main source was friends, and for 28-30 year olds the main source was bank's website. The respondents could choose more than one option.

74.2% of the respondents had applied for a loan ($n = 132$), and 43.8% had not compared any other banks than their primary bank, while 8.5% has asked from one other bank for and offer, 10.8% had asked from two other banks, and 13.8% had asked from more than two banks.

Service fees were evaluated by asking respondents if they are familiar with their current service fees and if they are satisfied with their bank's service fees. 38.6% were not familiar with their current service fees, while the 61.4% were familiar. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the service fees ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.572$), which are surprisingly high considering almost half of the sample was not familiar with their current fees. The respondents who were not familiar with their current service fees, were in general satisfied with the bank's service fees, evaluating it only slightly lower ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.196$) than respondents familiar with the fees ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.683$). Age or primary bank did not show significant effect on service fees ($p > 0.05$).

The sample is quite neutral in their comfort level of visiting branch office (M=3.69, SD=1.652), though the range is quite spread including only 5.3% who are very comfortable. When asked what is the main reasons for not feeling comfortable, 8.7% mentioned their lack of knowledge on banking products, 3.3% the formal image of the bank, 3.3% the lack of knowledge of the staff, 3.3% the lack of helpfulness of the staff, and 81.5% chose the other open-ended option, of which the mean reason was long waiting times (28.6%), the inconvenient opening hours (10.5%), finds taking care of most issues online to be more convenient (6.8%), or does not have time (3.8%). The level of comfort of visiting branch office showed significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between customer groups with different primary banks ($p = 0.019$), with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.74$). The results are shown in table 10.

Table 10. Comfortn level of Visiting the Branch Office

How comfortable are you visiting the branch office?

Primary bank	Mean	N	SD	% of Total N	% of Total Sum
Nordea	3.36	80	1.452	60.2%	54.8%
Sampo Bank	3.79	19	1.960	14.3%	14.7%
OP-Pohjola	4.35	23	1.722	17.3%	20.4%
Other	4.55	11	1.809	8.3%	10.2%
Total	3.69	133	1.652	100.0%	100.0%

Most of the respondents (75.8%) would not like their bank to contact them when asked directly with only options of yes and now. The next questions asked if they would like their bank to contact them, on what matters would they prefer contact on ($n = 106$), and only 27.8% of the total sample ($n = 133$) marked that they would not want the bank to contact them. Preferred matters for contact included discounts 29.2%, new products and services 16%, product recommendation 12.3%, and 7.5% chose other (open-ended), which included only in urgent matters, and changes in interest rates affecting loans. The preferred channels of contact were netbank (46.9%), email (34.6%), and phone (16.9%). Age or primary bank did not have a significant difference on willingness nor channel of contact.

Four statements were presented to the sample to measure their brand response, and how they feel about their bank. The scale had high internal consistency ($\alpha=0.886$). The lowest mean ($M=4.75$, $SD=1.311$) was on how advertising and marketing are reflected in actual service. All the results are summarized in table 11, and in all statements significant difference between primary banks was present ($p<0.05$), with medium effect size ($0.06<\eta^2<0.14$).

Table 11. Summary of Brand Response

Statement	n	Mean	SD	p (between groups)	Eta ²
My bank delivers what they promise	133	5.56	1.150	0.027	0.068
Advertising and marketing of the bank are reflected in their actual service	133	4.75	1.311	0.017	0.075
I get a feeling of satisfaction after dealing with my bank (online/branch office)	133	5.45	1.125	0.004	0.098
I have a positive feeling after an encounter with my bank	133	5.31	1.182	0.007	0.089

The result by primary bank group is summarized in table 12, with the “other” bank group and OP-Pohjola showing the highest means for almost all the statements, and Sampo Bank having the lowest.

Table 12. The Effect of Primary Bank on Brand Response

		Primary bank differences in brand response			
Primary bank		My bank delivers what they promise	Advertising and marketing of the bank are reflected in their actual service	I get a feeling of satisfaction after dealing with my bank (online/branch office)	I have a positive feeling after an encounter with my bank
Nordea	Mean	5.39	4.56	5.35	5.15
	N	80	80	80	80
	SD	1.175	1.221	1.045	1.104
Sampo Bank	Mean	5.42	4.47	4.95	4.95
	N	19	19	19	19
	SD	1.170	1.504	1.353	1.353
OP-Pohjola	Mean	5.96	5.43	5.83	5.78
	N	23	23	23	23
	SD	.928	1.308	1.072	1.085
Other	Mean	6.27	5.18	6.27	6.09
	N	11	11	11	11
	SD	1.009	1.168	.786	1.136
Total	Mean	5.56	4.75	5.45	5.31
	N	133	133	133	133
	SD	1.150	1.311	1.125	1.182

4.2.5. Brand Relationship and Brand Loyalty

Only 7.6% (n=132) had attended any events organized by the bank, and the interest in attending a social event (M=2.92, SD=1.864), additional information on bank services or products (M=2.91, SD=1.763), or general financial information (M=3.29, SD=2.021) organized by the bank seemed quite low. The events that were attended most included complementary food or drinks, or other recreational activity, and only two respondents had attended an informative event on savings and house financing options. The reason for attending differed between information and fun. The youngest age group (22-24) showed the highest interest on social events (M=3.78, SD=1.7) and additional information on bank services or products (M=3.39, SD=2.227), compared to the oldest age group (28-20) with social events (M=2.51, SD=1.667) and information on bank products or services (M=2.79, SD=1.567). Though neither age nor primary bank had statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) on attending or the type of event interested in.

Bank representing the same values as the respondent was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 7, with the mean=4.39 and standard deviation=1.148, with no significant difference affected by primary bank or age. The sample was quite proud to tell others which bank there are a customer of (M=4.34, SD=1.396), but only about half (52.3%) had recommended their bank to others. There was no statistically significant difference between age group or primary bank, but the customers of the other bank group having recommended their bank the most often (72.7%) and rated to be the most proud of to tell others which bank they were customers of (M=4.82, SD=1.168).

The sample did not search for better offers from other banks (M=2.87, SD=1.603) and the most influence on the willingness to change their current bank was malfunctioning products (M=5.56, SD=1.389) and least influence was demonstrated on parents changing their bank (M=2.53, SD=1.704). The scale had Cronbach's alpha=0.661, which proves decent internal consistency with 8 items on the scale. The results on different items are summarized in table 13.

Table 13. Factors Influencing the Willingness to Change Bank

Factor	n	M	SD
Lower service fees of another bank	133	4.86	1.709
Loan margin	133	5.61	1.517
Recommendation from others	133	3.48	1.598
Your parents would change their bank	133	2.53	1.704
A single bad service experience	133	3.47	1.608
Malfunctioning products	133	5.56	1.389
Raised service fees	133	4.77	1.54

The difference in primary banks had statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) only on the statement “a single bad service experience” ($p = 0.013$). The effect size was rather significant ($\eta^2 = 0.079$) with OP-Pohojola ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.609$) and other group ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.136$) showing the most significant differences, and Sampo Bank ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.707$), showing the largest variance, and Nordea ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.558$) ranking in the middle.

Five statements were presented to the respondents to measure their commitment level with their current bank. The internal consistency was originally lower ($\alpha = 0.551$) but as the statement “all banks offer the same services, so it does not matter which bank I am a customer of” was negatively worded it was reversed, improving the consistency ($\alpha = 0.602$). The sample considered themselves loyal to their banks ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.469$), and thought their banks offer the exceptional service ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.416$), yet they were very hesitant on paying larger service fees because of the quality of service ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.275$) and considered all banks offering similar services, so it does not really matter which bank they are a customer of ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.664$). The results are summarized in table 14.

Table 14. Commitment level with Primary Bank

Statement	n	M	SD
I look forward to dealing with my bank	133	3.05	1.463
I consider myself loyal to my bank	132	4.87	1.469
All banks offer the same services so it does not matter which bank I am a customer of	133	3.84	1.664
My bank offers me exceptional service	131	4.89	1.416
I would pay more for my services in my current bank because of the quality of services	133	2.43	1.275

The statement of “my bank offers me exceptional service” was the only one showing statistically significant difference among primary banks ($p=0.010$), with $\eta^2=0.086$. Having a bank in the other group agreed highest ($M=5.64$, $SD=1.433$) with exceptional service, and Nordea as primary bank the lowest ($M=4.63$, $SD=1.322$). OP-Pohjola ($M=5.57$, $SD=1.237$) customers rated service almost as exceptional as other banks and Sampo Bank customers ($M=4.72$, $SD=1.674$) slightly lower.

Considering to be loyal to their bank showed a difference between age groups ($p=0.45$, $\eta^2=0.047$), with the youngest group, 22-24, ranked their loyalty lowest ($M=4.11$, $SD=1.530$), then 28-30 ($M=4.86$, $SD=1.705$), and the highest was 25-27 ($M=5.07$, $SD=1.248$), though all groups agreed with the statement.

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The results of the questionnaire in general showed very low differences between bank groups, and in most cases the answers were consistent between respondents, regardless of age. Most of the respondents had concentrated their banking in one bank group, though secondary banks also were present, partly explained by cooperation and benefits earned from other industries resulting in opening an account at a certain group, as discussed in the empirical part. Brand awareness of different banks evaluated, was also on a high level, with knowledge on products and services of other banks as well, and the main source for advertisements that reach the target audience was through TV and Internet, though the influence of advertisement was considered to be low.

Majority of the respondents had not changed their bank in the last five years, and stated malfunctioning products and loan margins as the top reasons for changing a bank and listed lower service fees of another bank as more important reason than the raised service fees of their own bank, though they did not actively look for offers from other banks. A large portion of the respondents also agreed that different banks offer the same services, thus not really mattering which bank they are a customer of, though the variance was quite high with the mean showing quite neutral, not really disagreeing or agreeing. These show the lack of interest the consumers have on their banking, and as long as there are no problems (e.g. malfunctioning products), or major changes, there is no need, will or benefit in changing their bank, which supports H1: “Generation Y consumers will not see any benefit in changing their bank and usually remain consumers of the same bank as their parents, which they are already a customer of.” H1 is also supported by parents being the main influence in the respondents current bank relationship, while on the other hand if their parents would change bank, the influence on willingness to change also was very low, thus further strengthening the lack of benefits for changing.

The basic products were considerably well known by the sample, and the functionality rated high. The highest knowledge was on basic products, netbank and cards, while for example investments were not that familiar. Looking at the case studies on what the three banks offer directly for the young customers, the products and services seem to be very similar. The basic daily products are offered free of charge, which the best knowledge of the sample refers to them having and using. Only small differences, such as OP-Pohjola offering an automatic budgeting service in their netbank, which could explain the slightly higher functionality on OP-Pohojola's netbank. The very similar offerings for young consumers also support H1, with none of them offering really any additional benefits to young consumers compared to one another.

The results show that netbank is the main channel for taking care of banking matters, with very rare visits to the branch office, and netbank or email are the main channels for contacting the bank, and bank should use these channels as well for contact, and main information source is online, the bank's website. This also supports the underlying conclusion of H1 derived from the literature discussed: Generation Y consumers see banks as a commodity or a distant necessity, with all banks providing similar basic products for cash management and deals with them rather through automated channels than personal interaction.

The high usage of netbank and bank websites also supports H2: "Retail banks are expected to be present online and form customer relationships through online media." On the other hand, all of the three banks studied, were also present on Facebook, and some on other social media networks such as Twitter, but almost none of the respondents used social media channels for contacting the bank, or as source of product information. The forming of relationships online is thus not very well supported, as the netbank is mainly used for self service assignments, websites for finding product information independently and not used as a relationship building tool. The secondary source for contacting the bank was listed as customer service, which reflects to the personal contact point being mainly on telephone, rather than online. OP-Pohjola also

offered a chat function on their website, which on the other hand could be considered more of a relationship building tool as there is a personal contact between the bank and the customer. None of the respondents mentioned the chat function for contacting or dealing with the bank in the open-ended other options. The use of online sources were also supported by most of the sample getting product information and reviews online and the internet being the main source for feedback, though the amount of feedback given in general was quite low.

All the banks researched, showed to be concerned about the environment and supporting social causes. The three banks were all concerned by their CO2 emissions, which they had a target goal to reduce to, and took environmental and social issues into consideration in financing and responsible investment programs, with all of them acting according to the UN Global Compact. They also supported local societies, all of them targeting supporting the youth in some manner, most involved in financial literature and sports. These support H3: “Retail banks should demonstrate they are environmentally and socially involved.” The questionnaire results also showed the respondents to give importance to environmental issues, but most of them did not know if their bank is involved in any causes, contributing to their lack of interest supporting H1. They also considered it to be important that retail banks support environmental and social issues, but did not consider it to affect their bank choice almost at all.

Nordea and OP-Pohjola have customers programs, with Nordea having different levels, giving additional benefits and OP-Pohjola having bonus system, which increases the benefits according to amount of products and services in use. The different levels of Nordea’s customer levels have requirements consisting of banking volume attributed. Sampo Bank on the other hand does not offer any customer program with requirements, but offers customers with different service packages. These are available for all customers, regardless of banking volume, but for a certain amount of investable wealth or savings, discount on the monthly fee of the service package are given. The programs of Nordea and OP-Pohjola aim at developing the current customer relationships, and by

increasing their banking volumes with the current service provider they also gain additional benefits, thus encouraging customers to concentrate all their banking at the bank, and to grow their current service selection. This supports H4: “Retail banks will have shifted their focus to developing and nourishing customer relationships through cross- and up-selling, and building their attractiveness mainly through direct functional values such as price and interest rates in customer benefits.” Sampo Bank also contributes to some extent with their additional discounts for investable wealth or savings at the bank, but does not really provide any additional benefits, or encourage customers to develop the relationship with additional services or products. All three banks use the direct functional benefits such as price or margin, as source of benefits. On the other hand, when targeting young consumers, OP-Pohjola is the only bank, which offers their bonus system for young customers as well. Nordea on the other hand has young customers as a level in their customer program and in that sense also nourishes the relationship, as young customers can achieve the higher levels also. Though when looking at service prices (which are the main benefit of different levels), a young customer should reach the highest level in order to receive similar price benefits they get in the Check-in level, targeted at young consumers.

The sample stated that they are quite familiar with the customer programs and benefits targeted to young consumers, though almost half of the respondents were not aware of their current service fees. This could be due to consumers mainly using the basic services, which are offered free of charge, thus not having to care about the fees. On the other hand, the respondents who were not aware of their current fees were also less satisfied with them, compared to the other half who was aware. The sample also agreed that banks try to sell their products and services to them quite keenly, supporting H4, and though banks were not in general wished to contact the consumer, discounts, information about new products and services, and product and service recommendations, were considered to be the top reasons the bank should contact them. This contact was preferred to happen through electronic channels as mentioned earlier, with the exception of some respondents complying with telephone contact.

The sample required new innovative services and keeping up with technological advancements, which they mainly agreed on their banks were providing them. A single bad service experience was not either considered to be a very important in changing the bank and in general the sample considered the service offered to be consistent, and high quality, and considered the staff to be knowledgeable. This partly supports H5: “Retail banks will have adapted to the lifestyle of generation Y in order to attract and commit them as their customers.” Approximately half of the sample was satisfied with the current opening hours of the banks, while the other half would have preferred banks to be open later. The opening hours were one of the main reason for not feeling comfortable visiting a branch office, with the main reason being cues and waiting times. Most of the respondents dealt with banking issues online through the netbank, which is available 24/7, and visited the branch office only when they had to, thus the opening hours would not seem to be such of a large issue on their occasional visits. The case studies also showed banks to be present in different online social media networks, though they had certain hours when questions were answered and discussed, which usually corresponded with normal business hours just as the branch offices. This supports H5, as they are adapting to some extent to the young consumers lifestyle, by adapting new online media as sources of communication, though at the moment the services are rather new and have not yet been taken into full use by the target group. Mobile bank services are also another example of technological advancements, which was provided by all banks discussed. As mentioned the young consumers do require new technological advancements, but for example mobile banking was hardly used by the sample.

Nordea mentions nine markets as their home markets, operating with the same brand name in all of the. Their brand name is derived from Nordic and idea, which refers to their origin as a Nordic bank. Through their vision “a great European bank acknowledged for its people, creating superior value for customers and shareholders”, they refer to being a European bank, with no notion of their Nordic approach reflected

in their brand name. The headquarters of the company are situated in Sweden, though this is not brought up in any context.

Sampo Bank has a long history as a Finnish bank, and only in 2007 was acquired by the Danish Danske Bank. Though some parts of Sampo Bank have been modified to reflect the Danske brand, they still operate under the Sampo Bank brand name, and have a mission of being “the best local financial partner”. Belonging to the Danske Group is made clear to the customers, thus making a clear identification of COO being Denmark, though the strong local presence, as a local bank, has remained strong.

OP-Pohjola has Finnish roots, and operates only in the Finnish market. Their local presence is also emphasized in their mission and vision statements, making it very clear and one of their competitive advantage. The group is formed of smaller cooperative banks operating in all parts of Finland, which provide a local presence and origin and together with the owner-members consisting mainly of customers, make their origins very clear.

OP-Pohjola and Sampo Bank identify clearly their origins, which supports H6: “Retail banks will have ensured that consumers can identify their COO and will be emphasized if the country has a positive image.” Nordea on the other hand does not clearly state their COO, but refers to it being a European Bank, with Nordic roots, thus tying it to an area and not a specific country. This does support H6 to some extent, as they do identify their origins, and as Europe is becoming a more unified monetary area, with the integration of the Single European Payment Area (SEPA) program, it is more and more unified as a region with a certain financial and monetary status.

The questionnaire showed Nordea being identified mainly as a Nordic bank, though almost 30% considered it to be a Swedish bank. Less than 4% identified Nordea as they referred in their vision as a European bank. OP-Pohjola was identified correctly by almost all respondents (92.3%) to be a Finnish bank, though 3% considered it as a

Nordic bank as well. Sampo Bank, which is going through their integration phase with Danske Bank, received the most varied responses with approximately 40% considering it to be of Danish origin, ~30% as Finnish, and ~20% as Nordic. European and international banks were also mentioned as origins for Sampo Bank. This can be partly explained by the confusion caused by the acquisition by Danske Bank, which operates also on the Nordic and European level, with international operations. The importance of origin to the customers was not valued very high, though it did have some importance. Internationality on the other hand was considered slightly more important, showing consumers to appreciate international brands. Surprisingly customers of Sampo Bank rated internationality of lowest importance to them, which might have an effect through their final integration with Danske Bank, which makes it amongst Nordea, one of the most international banks operating in Finland.

Overall H6 is supported, as all of the banks studied do identify their origins, though Nordea does not state their origin specifically, which showed some confusion in customers as well. Sampo Bank was identified, but due to their integration process, different options were received. OP-Pohojola further strengthens the support for H6, with their emphasis on the positive country image of Finland and being a truly local financial partner.

Though only small difference could be found between different bank groups, the sample agreed on different banks representing different social groups. They also agreed on belonging to the social group represented by their banks and sharing similar values with their bank. The sample clearly has established linkages between banks and different social groups, yet they did not classify or judge others by their bank. The bank one belonged to is also very openly and proudly told to others, and in many cases people had recommended their banks. Though in bank selection, recommendations from friends were listed as one of the least important ones, thus not having much influence on the bank decision itself. Even the location of the bank was considered more important than recommendations. Surprisingly financial solidity of the bank was considered the

most important reason in bank selection, which probably is influenced by the results of the recent financial crisis, which bankrupted many well know brands in the retail banking industry.

In general the sample had a very positive image of the retail banks, associating them with trust, high quality, security, professionalism, consistency, delivers what is promised, and exceptional service. They also got a feeling of satisfaction after dealing with their bank and a positive feeling, which reflect the high level of service and the present in the values of all the banks studied through the case studies. Important and appreciated to the sample in their bank relationships were mainly financial solidity, interest rates and margins, service fees, which reflect the direct functional values discussed earlier that support H4. Though not having much influence on bank selection or changing, parents and friends were named the most important influences in their current bank relationship.

The positive image of the bank is also reflected to the relationship the sample have with their banks. They consider themselves loyal to the banks, but on the other hand not very excited about the relationship, as almost none of the respondents had attended any events organized by banks due to lack of interest, and did not look forward to dealing with their bank. Service was also rated exceptional in their primary bank, but almost none of the respondents would be willing to pay anything extra for this exceptional service. This loyalty could be the result of lack of interest towards the bank, and the similarity of the bank offerings from competitors, thus not giving the consumers any benefit of changing. As long as everything works, and they can use automated channels to deal with their bank, they stay loyal in the sense of not changing their primary bank.

In general the different banks do not really offer anything different to young consumers, though the free of charge basic products are attractive for young consumers, they do not offer anything else. Nordea is the only one who offers their own customer level for young consumers, and could have the most potential for building it more attractive and

appealing for young consumers by investing in branding it as something different, but has not really taken advantage of it. In all the other banks, young consumers are just on the list on the service fees marked as free services. The current level of offerings to young consumers, do not really take advantage of branding and do not represent a strong service brand as Berry (2000) defined it to represent a promise of future satisfaction. Keller (2008) also mentions for positive brand equity to require strong, favorable and unique associations, which for the generation Y consumers of retail banks, only the favorable factor seem to be fulfilled. The positive image that young consumers have on retail banks operating in Finland is a good starting point and could be built into more if they would offer something unique. This could change the brand loyalty from being based on the lack of benefits from changing into the benefits of not changing the bank, thus creating a stronger brand relationship.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes this thesis by presenting the main findings and theoretical contributions, discussing the managerial implication and finally discussing limitations of this research and suggestions for further research.

6.1. Main Findings

The aim of this study is to contribute to the research on young consumer in the retail banking industry providing a branding perspective through researching how branding is used and could be used and its possibilities for attracting and committing young consumers. The current research showed a large gap between the study and importance of branding and the study and importance on young consumers of retail banks in Finland. The Finnish retail banking industry has gone through quite massive changes in the past few decades, thus being a relatively new and evolving industry. International banks have become major players in the industry through mergers and acquisitions during the past decade, which has further modified the industry and changed a traditional industry with a long history as a national, local industry.

In order to the narrow the gap and combine the branding with the research on young consumer of the Finnish retail banking industry the following main research questions were proposed:

1. What effect does branding have on retail banks to attract and commit young consumers?
2. How have Nordea, Sampo Bank, and OP-Pohjola targeted their brands to young consumers?
3. How do young consumers perceive the retail banking brands operating in Finland and what characteristics do they value in their brand relationship?

The theoretical part of this study researched the retail banking industry in Finland, in order to form a general basis for the study setting. The main focus was on the study on

branding and on generation Y consumers. From the research on past literature, a theoretical framework was formed, which combined the retail banks and young consumers in the same model, leading to brand relationship. Hypothesis were formed from conclusions made from the study of previous literature, which contributed to the identification of more specific characteristics involved in the framework and were tested in the empirical part, which in addition to testing the hypothesis, studied the different components of the framework in order gain more specific insights from the retail banks operating in the industry, which was conducted through case studies, and insights from the generation Y consumers of the retail banks, conducted through a survey.

The main findings from the case studies showed three bank groups studied to have very similar offerings targeted to young consumers, which were based on functional values, mainly of having the basic services free of charge. In addition OP-Pohjola offered additional discounts through their bonus system, which increased with additional services. Nordea showed most potential in using their brand to target young consumers. They had their Check-in program for young consumers, though it was not really taken advantage of, as the program included the same free of charge basic services as other banks. Sampo Bank did not really offer anything else either than free of charge the basic services.

The young consumers perceived the banks as very similar, offering the basic functional advantages for young consumers. Though they showed loyalty, trust and shared some values with the banks and felt like they belong to a social group that the bank represents, yet they did not show any kind of enthusiasm for the bank, and did not want to be involved with the bank anymore than necessary, with even the very rare occasional branch office visits being frustrating. Their loyalty to their bank was mainly based on the lack of sufficient benefits from other banks, which would be worth the effort for changing. Financial solidity of the bank was important, internationality was appreciated, but the main differences were based on the pricing in service fees and loan margins, mainly contributed by them making the only difference between the different

banks and mainly concentrating for the future, when the free of charge services targeted at young consumers would not be available anymore.

In general branding is not at the moment used efficiently in attracting and committing young consumers in the retail banking industry in Finland. The favorable and loyal attitude and associations the consumers hold for the banks, would allow the banks to create a much stronger brand relationship, but at the moment the loyalty is mainly based on the lack of benefits offered by other banks. Probably if a consumer would receive some offer from another bank that he/she would consider worth visiting a branch office for, the loyalty with their current bank would come to an end. By creating some values, associations and benefits that would engage the young consumers and get them more actively involved with the brand would result in strong and loyal brand relationships, and make the retail bank brands more attractive to young consumers.

6.2. Managerial Implications

As discussed in the main findings, the main problem with the attractiveness of retail bank brands is that they do not offer anything different. Young consumers see retail banks as a distant necessity for paying bills, which is done directly through the netbank. The main issue for practical implications would be getting the young consumers interested and actively involved with the brand. Every bank already offers similar price benefits, and the basic services offered similar, thus not offering any possibilities for differentiation.

One way of involving young customer who use their netbanks, could be improving the interactivity of websites and netbank. The study showed low knowledge on for example investments, which could be improved by incorporating an interactive game on investments as already offered by some services online. The game would be based on the actual stock exchange, but without involving real money. This would give the customers a preview of the bank's online investment tools, advice on investments

would be given, thus improving their knowledge on investing, and at the same time promoting the different investment forms offered by the bank. The involvement could be encouraged by offering a good enough price, for example presenting the investment game as a competition and either the winner or everyone who has reached a certain level, would get some initial capital for their investment in real money that they could use to continue to develop their investments with the bank.

The questionnaire showed young consumers not having the will to attend any events by the bank. The few, who had attended, did so due to some price or food or some offering they got for their attendance. The consumers showed frustration with even having to go to the branch office, thus the technological advancements they wait from the retail banks could also be used for offering some events online in the form on virtual conferences. All of the respondents used netbank and the bank website for information, thus having internet access and computers, so some sort of general information, new product launches, etc. could be held virtually.

Additional prizes and benefits could also be used as additional benefits for young consumer in other situations as well. For example all the banks analyzed also offer services for corporations, with which they could cooperate, offering them some benefits in return for them offering some benefits for their young consumers. This could include also international offers, thus combining the youth of different markets of the bank, and bringing forward the internationality of the bank, which was appreciated by the consumers in the research.

Also offering some services and benefits exclusively for the young consumers, would communicate a message that they are important and special to the bank, and they get benefit from being a customer of this bank. The current basic products offered free of charge are the same products anyone could get.

6.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

There are some limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results, and using this study in other research.

The respondents of the questionnaire were mainly located in the metropolitan area of Finland, thus this may have some influence on their behavior and values thus should be kept in mind when targeting consumers in other areas of Finland. In addition the study focuses only on consumers and retail banks operating in Finland, which should be taken into consideration, if the data is used in other regions, which may differ in legislation on youth and financial decision, thus having an influence on the behavior.

The cases included in the current research consist of only three banks. Though the number of banks operating in Finland is 311 (2011), 211 of these are cooperative banks, which are part of the OP-Pohjola group, which was included in the case study. The three banks together accounts for over 75% market share in the Finnish market and are the three largest groups, thus the contribution of an additional case was not considered relevant. Furthermore the three banks offered relatively similar market shares, thus a smaller bank would have distorted the comparison.

The researcher belongs to the generation Y age group, which might lead to some assumptions, and should be kept in mind when interpreting the results, though through testing and evaluating of the survey used, these factors are minimized and the personal knowledge is seen more as beneficial than limiting to the study.

Relating to the first limitation of the study being limited only to Finland and the sample to the metropolitan area, offers possibilities for further research. The study of using branding to target young consumers of retail banks should be studied in other countries, and also focusing on different regions in Finland. Due the differences in legislations, the generalization of the studies to a broad geographic area might be difficult, but comparison to some extent would be beneficial. Also the study of different smaller

banks in Finland could result in beneficial information, though it may be applicable mainly locally.

Financial solidity was also highlighted as very important to the young consumers under study, which could be explained by the recent financial crises. The study on the effects of the financial crisis on the attitudes of the young consumers should be studied in more detail. In addition the effects of acquisitions could provide beneficial data, on how the attitudes of the consumers are affected by a bank being acquired by a foreign bank, as is the case with Sampo Bank, which is currently going through the incorporation phase.

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8. APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Demographics

1. Age?
2. Gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. Where do you live?
 - a. City: _____
4. Which best describes your living arrangement?
 - a. I own my home
 - b. I own my home and have a mortgage
 - c. I pay rent
 - d. I live with my parents
 - e. Someone else pays for my housing
 - f. Other: _____
5. Employment status?
 - a. Student
 - b. Unemployed
 - c. Employed fulltime
 - d. Study and work
 - e. Other: _____

Brand recall and recognition

6. Please name five retail banks operating in Finland?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

e. _____

7. Do you recognize the following logos/brands?



a.



b.

c. 

8. How well do you know the products and services of the following brands? (rate 1-7, 1= not at all and 7=very well)

- a. Handelsbanken
- b. SampoPankki
- c. Osuuspankki
- d. Nordea
- e. Aktia Pankki

9. Do you remember seeing/hearing advertisements of banks?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. From which media did you see/hear the advertisements of banks?

- a. Internet
- b. TV
- c. Magazine / Newspaper
- d. Outdoor marketing
- e. Radio
- f. I have not seen/heard advertisements of banks
- g. Other: _____

Brand associations and values

11. Please select your primary bank?

- a. Nordea
- b. Sampo Pankki
- c. OP-Pohjola
- d. Handelsbanken
- e. Aktia
- f. Säästöpankki
- g. Tapiola pankki
- h. S-pankki
- i. Other: _____

12. Please select your secondary banks?

- a. I have concentrated all my banking to my main bank
- b. Nordea
- c. Sampo Pankki
- d. OP-Pohjola
- e. Handelsbanken
- f. Aktia
- g. Säästöpankki
- h. Tapiola pankki
- i. S-pankki
- j. Other: _____

13. Have you changed your bank during the last five years?

- a. Once
- b. Twice
- c. Three times
- d. More often
- e. No

14. How satisfied are you with the functionality of the following products or services offered by your bank? (rate 1-7, 1=not satisfied at all and 7=very satisfied)

- a. Credit cards

- b. Debit cards
 - c. Netbank
 - d. Customer service
 - e. Loans
 - f. Bank's website
15. How would you rate the following in your own bank? (rate 1-7, 1=very low and 7=very high)
- a. Trust
 - b. Quality of products
 - c. Quality of service
 - d. Reliance on functionality
 - e. Privacy
16. How important is the internationality of your bank? (rate 1-7, 1=not important at all and 7=very important)
17. Do you consider Sampo pankki to be a
- a. Finnish bank
 - b. Swedish bank
 - c. Danish bank
 - d. Norwegian bank
 - e. Nordic bank
 - f. European bank
 - g. International bank
 - h. Other: _____
18. Do you consider Nordea to be a
- a. Finnish bank
 - b. Swedish bank
 - c. Danish bank
 - d. Norwegian bank
 - e. Nordic bank
 - f. European bank

- g. International bank
 - h. Other: _____
19. Do you consider Osuuspankki to be a
- a. Finnish bank
 - b. Swedish bank
 - c. Danish bank
 - d. Norwegian bank
 - e. Nordic bank
 - f. European bank
 - g. International bank
 - h. Other: _____
20. How important do you consider the banks origin to be? (rate 1-7, 1=not important at all and 7=very important)
21. Do you agree with the following statements: (rate 1-7, 1=do not agree at all and 7=fully agree)
- a. Different banks represent different social groups
 - b. I belong to the social group represented by my bank
 - c. Other people classify me to a certain social group because of the bank of which I am a customer of
 - d. I judge other people by the bank they belong to
 - e. I am comfortable telling other people which bank I am a customer of
 - f. I value privacy in my bank relationship
 - g. I require innovative new services/technological advancements from my bank
 - h. My bank constantly improves their services
 - i. Banks try to sell their products and services to me
22. Rate the following on the importance they have to you when choosing your bank? (rate 1-7, 1=not important at all and 7=very important)
- a. Price
 - b. Interest rate and margin

- c. Image of the bank
 - d. Location
 - e. Financial solidity
 - f. My parents are customers in the same bank
 - g. Recommendations from friends
 - h. Background/history of the bank
23. To what level do you consider yourself to be influenced by the following issues in your bank relationship: (rate 1-7, 1=does not influence me at all and 7=very much influence)
- a. Advertisements of the bank
 - b. Recommendations of my friends
 - c. Recommendations of my parents
 - d. Recommendations of other people
 - e. Social media
24. Do you buy daily items on credit?
- a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Once a month
 - d. Few times a year
 - e. Only when I have to
 - f. No
 - g. Other: _____
25. How often do you review products and services online before purchase? (Rate 1-7, 1=never and 7=always)
26. Do you give feedback on products and services?
- a. Yes, usually through the internet
 - b. Yes, directly to a company representative
 - c. Yes, through a feedback form at the place of purchase
 - d. No
 - e. Other: _____

27. How often do you give feedback on products or services?
- a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Once a month
 - d. Few times a year
 - e. More often
 - f. More rarely
 - g. Never
28. I am satisfied with the opening hours of banks?
- a. Yes
 - b. No, they should be open later
 - c. No, they should open earlier
 - d. No, they should open earlier and be open later
 - e. Other: _____
29. How important are environmental issues to you? (Rate 1-7, 1=not important at all and 7=very important)
30. Does your bank partake in some environmental or social cause?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Do not know
31. How important do you consider it to be that a bank partakes in some environmental or social cause? (Rate 1-7, 1=not important at all and 7=very important)
32. How much influence do you consider the involvement of a bank in environmental or social causes has had on your choice of bank? (Rate 1-7, 1=no influence at all and 7=very much influence)
33. Rate the following statements for your main bank from 1-7, 1=disagree and 7=agree
- a. Quality of service is good in my bank
 - b. I trust my bank

- c. My bank gives me a feeling of security
- d. The quality of service in my bank is consistent
- e. The service staff is knowledgeable
- f. The bank website is informative

Service experience and response

34. How often do you visit a branch office?

- a. Weekly
- b. Monthly
- c. Few times a year
- d. Once a year
- e. More often
- f. More rarely

35. Main reason for visiting the branch office?

- a. Cash deposit/withdrawal
- b. Loan matters
- c. Savings
- d. Currency exchange
- e. Opening an account
- f. Cards
- g. Other: _____

36. How often do you use netbank?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Once a month
- d. Few times a year
- e. More rarely
- f. More often
- g. Never

37. How often do you use mobile banking services?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Once a month
- d. Few times a year
- e. More rarely
- f. More often
- g. Never

38. How often do you contact your bank?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Once a month
- d. Few times a year
- e. More rarely
- f. More often

39. Main channel for contacting?

- a. Internet
- b. Phone
- c. Visiting a branch office
- d. Social media
- e. Other: _____

40. How familiar are you with following bank products (rate 1-7, 1=not familiar at all and 7=very familiar):

- a. Loans
- b. Savings
- c. Investments
- d. Pricing
- e. Netbank
- f. Credit cards
- g. Debit cards
- h. Interest rates

- i. Customer programs
 - j. ASP-account
 - k. Mastercard SecureCode and Verified by Visa
41. How well does your bank provide you with information on their products and services? (rate 1-7, 1=not at all and 7=plenty of information)
42. What are the main sources you use to get information on bank products and services?
- a. Bank's website
 - b. Customer service
 - c. Branch office
 - d. Friends
 - e. Parents
 - f. Social media
 - g. Internet forums
 - h. Other: _____
43. Have you applied for a loan?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
44. If so did you compare different banks?
- a. Yes, I asked for an offer from one other bank in addition to my primary bank
 - b. Yes, I asked for an offer from two other banks in addition to my primary bank
 - c. Yes, I asked for an offer from more than two banks in addition to my primary bank
 - d. No
 - e. I have not applied for a loan
 - f. Other: _____
45. Are you familiar with the fees on the services that you currently use?
- a. Yes

- b. No
46. How satisfied are you with the service fees of your bank? (rate 1-7, 1=not satisfied at all and 7=very satisfied)
47. How comfortable are you visiting the branch office? (rate 1-7, 1=not comfortable at all and 7=very comfortable)
48. If not comfortable, what are the main reasons? (you can choose many)
- a. Formal image of the bank
 - b. I do not have much knowledge on banking products
 - c. The staff is not knowledgeable
 - d. The staff is not helpful
 - e. Other: _____
49. Would you like your bank to contact you more often?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
50. If yes, on what matters would you prefer them to contact you?
- a. Product recommendations
 - b. Discounts
 - c. New products or services
 - d. I would not like the bank to contact me
 - e. Other: _____
51. Through what channel would you prefer your bank to contact you?
- a. Phone
 - b. Email
 - c. Netbank
 - d. Social media
 - e. Other: _____
52. Rate the following statements for your main bank from 1-7, 1=disagree and 7=agree
- a. My bank delivers what they promise

- b. Advertising and marketing of the bank are reflected in their actual service
- c. I get a feeling of satisfaction after dealing with my bank (online/branch office)
- d. I have a positive feeling after an encounter with my bank

Relationship and brand loyalty

53. Have you attended any events organized by your bank?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
54. If yes, what was the nature of the event?
- a. _____
 - b. I have not attended
55. What was the main reason you attended?
- a. Curiosity
 - b. Information
 - c. Reward offered for attendance
 - d. Fun
 - e. I have not attended
 - f. Other: _____
56. How interested would you be to attend an event organized by your bank(rate 1-7, 1=not interested at all and 7=very interested)?
- a. Social event
 - b. Additional information on bank services or products
 - c. General financial information
57. Do you consider your bank to represent the same values you believe in (rate 1-7, 1=not at all and 7=very much)
58. Have you recommended your bank to other people?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

59. How proud are you to tell other people which bank are you a customer of (rate 1-7, 1=not proud at all and 7=very proud)?
60. How often do you look for better offers from other banks (rate 1-7, 1=not at all and 7=all the time)
61. What influence would the following factors have on your willingness to change your current bank? (rate 1-7, 1=no influence and 7=very much influence)
- a. Lower service fees of another bank
 - b. Loan margin
 - c. Recommendation from others
 - d. Your parents would change their bank
 - e. A single bad service experience
 - f. Malfunctioning products
 - g. Raised service fees
62. Rate the following statements from 1-7, 1=disagree and 7=agree
- a. I look forward to dealing with my bank
 - b. I consider myself loyal to my bank
 - c. All banks offer the same services so it does not matter which bank I am a customer of
 - d. My bank offers me exceptional service
 - e. I would pay more for my services in my current bank because of the quality of services.

9. APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH

Demografia

1. Ikä?
2. Sukupuoli?
 - a. Mies
 - b. Nainen
3. Asuinkaupunkisi?
 - a. _____
4. Mikä seuraavista kuvaa parhaiten asumistilannettasi?
 - a. Asun omassa omistusasunnossani
 - b. Asun omistusasunnossa johon minulla on asuntolainaa
 - c. Asun vuokralla
 - d. Asun vanhempieni luona
 - e. Joku muu maksaa asumiseni
 - f. Muu: _____
5. Työllisyystilanteesi?
 - a. Opiskelija
 - b. Työtön
 - c. Työssäkäyvä
 - d. Opiskelen ja käyn töissä
 - e. Muu: _____

Brändin tunnistaminen ja muistaminen

6. Luettele viisi Suomessa toimivaa vähittäispankkia?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

e. _____

7. Tunnistatko seuraavat brändit/logot?



a.



b.

c.



8. Miten hyvin tunnet seuraavien pankkien tuotteet ja palvelut? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= en ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin hyvin)

- a. Handelsbanken
- b. Sampo Pankki
- c. Osuuspankki
- d. Nordea
- e. Aktia Pankki

9. Muistatko nähneesi/kuulleesi pankkien mainoksia?

- a. Kyllä
- b. Ei

10. Missä seuraavissa medioissa muistat nähneesi/kuulleesi pankin mainoksia?

- a. Internet
- b. TV
- c. Lehti
- d. **Ulkomainonta**
- e. Radio
- f. **En ole nähnyt/kuullut pankin mainontaa**
- g. Muu: _____

Brändin miellelyhtymät ja arvot

11. Pääasiallinen pankkisi?

- a. Nordea
- b. Sampo Pankki
- c. OP-Pohjola
- d. Handelsbanken
- e. Aktia
- f. Säästöpankki
- g. Tapiola pankki
- h. S-pankki
- i. Muu: _____

12. Toissijaiset pankkisi?

- a. Olen keskittänyt kaiken asioinnin pääasialliseen pankkiini
- b. Nordea
- c. Sampo Pankki
- d. OP-Pohjola
- e. Handelsbanken
- f. Aktia
- g. Säästöpankki
- h. Tapiola pankki
- i. S-pankki
- j. Muu: _____

13. Oletko vaihtanut pankkia viimeisen 5 vuoden aikana?

- a. Kerran
- b. Kaksi kertaa
- c. Kolme kertaa
- d. Useammin
- e. En

14. Miten tyytyväinen olet seuraavien tuotteiden ja palveluiden toimivuuteen omassa pankissasi? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= en ollenkaan tyytyväinen ja 7=erittäin tyytyväinen)

- a. Luottokortit

- b. Pankkikortit
- c. Verkkopankki
- d. Asiakaspalvelu
- e. Lainat
- f. Pankin verkkosivut

15. Miten määrittäisit seuraavat asiat omassa pankissasi? (arvostelee asteikolla 1-7, 1= erittäin huono ja 7=erittäin hyvä)

- a. Luotettavuus
- b. Tuotteiden laatu
- c. Palvelun laatu
- d. Toimivuus
- e. Yksityisyys

16. Miten tärkeänä pidät pankin kansainvälisyyttä? (arvostelee asteikolla 1-7, 1= en ollenkaan tärkeänä ja 7=erittäin tärkeänä)

17. Onko mielestäsi Sampo Pankki

- a. Suomalainen pankki
- b. Ruotsalainen pankki
- c. Tanskalainen pankki
- d. Norjalainen pankki
- e. Pohjoismainen pankki
- f. Eurooppalainen pankki
- g. Kansainvälinen pankki
- h. Muu: _____

18. Onko mielestäsi Nordea

- a. Suomalainen pankki
- b. Ruotsalainen pankki
- c. Tanskalainen pankki
- d. Norjalainen pankki
- e. Pohjoismainen pankki
- f. Eurooppalainen pankki

- g. Kansainvälinen pankki
 - h. Muu: _____
19. Onko mielestäsi Osuuspankki
- a. Suomalainen pankki
 - b. Ruotsalainen pankki
 - c. Tanskalainen pankki
 - d. Norjalainen pankki
 - e. Pohjoismainen pankki
 - f. Eurooppalainen pankki
 - g. Kansainvälinen pankki
 - h. Muu: _____
20. Miten tärkeänä pidät pankin alkuperää? (Arvostele 1-7, 1=en ollenkaan tärkeänä ja 7=erittäin tärkeänä)
21. Oletko samaa mieltä seuraavien väittämien kanssa: (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=täysin erimieltä ja 7=täysin samaa mieltä)
- a. Eri pankit edustava eri sosiaaliryhmiä
 - b. Kuulun itse pankkini edustamaan sosiaaliryhmään
 - c. Muut ihmiset luokittelevat minut tiettyyn sosiaaliryhmään pankkisuhteeni takia
 - d. Arvostelen ihmisiä heidän pankkinsa perusteella
 - e. Kerron avoimesti muille ihmisille minkä pankin asiakas olen
 - f. Arvostan yksityisyyttä pankkisuhteessani
 - g. Vaadin pankiltani innovatiivisia uusia palveluja ja teknisiä uudistuksia
 - h. Pankkini jatkuvasti parantaa ja kehittää palvelujaan
 - i. Pankit yrittävät myydä tuotteitaan ja palveluitaan minulle
22. Miten tärkeinä pidät seuraavia asioita pankinvalintaan vaikuttavina tekijöinä? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= en ollenkaan tärkeänä ja 7=erittäin tärkeänä)
- a. Palveluhinnasto
 - b. Korke ja marginaali
 - c. Pankin imago

- d. Sijainti
 - e. Vakavaraisuus
 - f. Vanhempani ovat pankin asiakkaita
 - g. Ystävien/tuttujen suositus
 - h. Pankin tausta/historia
23. Miten paljon seuraavat asiat mielestäsi vaikuttavat pankkikäyttämiseesi?
(arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= ei ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin paljon)
- a. Pankin mainokset
 - b. Ystävien suositukset
 - c. Vanhempien suositukset
 - d. Muiden suositukset
 - e. Sosiaalinen media (esim. Facebook, Twitter, jne.)
24. Ostatko päivittäistuotteita luotolle?
- a. Päivittäin
 - b. Viikoittain
 - c. Kerran kuussa
 - d. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - e. Vain jos on pakko
 - f. En
 - g. Muu: _____
25. Kuinka usein arvioit tuotteita ja palveluita Internetin kautta ennen ostamista?
(arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= en koskaan ja 7=aina)
26. Annatko palautettu tuotteista ja palveluista?
- a. Kyllä, yleensä Internetin välityksellä
 - b. Kyllä, suoraan yrityksen henkilökunnalle
 - c. Kyllä, käyttäen ostopaikan palautelomaketta
 - d. En
 - e. Muu: _____
27. Kuinka usein annat palautettu tuotteista ja palveluista?
- a. Päivittäin

- b. Viikoittain
 - c. Kerran kuussa
 - d. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - e. Useammin
 - f. Harvemmin
 - g. En koskaan
28. Oletko tyytyväinen pankkien aukioloaikoihin?
- a. Kyllä
 - b. En, pankkien tulisi olla auki myöhempään
 - c. En, pankkien tulisi aueta aikaisemmin
 - d. En, pankkien tulisi aueta aikaisemmin ja olla auki myöhempään
 - e. Muu: _____
29. Kuinka tärkeinä pidät ympäristöasioita? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= en ollenkaan tärkeinä ja 7=erittäin tärkeinä)
30. Osallistuuko pankkisi johonkin ympäristön tai sosiaalisen asian tukemiseen?
- a. Kyllä
 - b. Ei
 - c. En tiedä
31. Kuinka tärkeää on mielestäsi, että pankki osallistuu johonkin ympäristön tai sosiaalisen asian tukemiseen? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=ei ollenkaan tärkeää ja 7=erittäin tärkeää)
32. Kuinka paljon pankin osallistuminen ympäristö tai sosiaalisten asioiden tukemiseen on vaikuttanut pankin valintaasi? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=ei ollenkaan ja 7=todella paljon)
33. Arvostele seuraavat väitteet koskien pankkiasi: (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=täysin erimieltä ja 7=täysin samaa mieltä)
- a. Pankkini palvelu on laadukasta
 - b. Luotan pankkiini
 - c. Saan pankistani turvallisuuden tunnetta
 - d. Pankkini palvelun laatu on yhdenmukaista

- e. Pankin henkilökunta on asiantuntevaa
- f. Pankin verkkosivut ovat informatiiviset

Palvelukokemus ja reaktio

34. Kuinka usein käyt pankin konttorissa?
- a. Viikoittain
 - b. Kuukausittain
 - c. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - d. Useammin
 - e. Harvemmin
35. Mikä on pääsyysi asioidessasi konttorissa?
- a. Käteisen nosto/talletus
 - b. Laina-asiat
 - c. Säästäminen
 - d. Valuutanvaihto
 - e. Tilinavaaminen
 - f. Korttiasiat
 - g. Muu: _____
36. Kuinka usein käytät verkkopankkia?
- a. Päivittäin
 - b. Viikoittain
 - c. Kerran kuussa
 - d. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - e. Useammin
 - f. Harvemmin
 - g. En koskaan
37. Kuinka usein käytät mobiilipankkipalveluja?
- a. Päivittäin
 - b. Viikoittain
 - c. Kerran kuussa

- d. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - e. Useammin
 - f. Harvemmin
 - g. En koskaan
38. Kuinka usein olet yhteydessä pankkiisi?
- a. Päivittäin
 - b. Viikoittain
 - c. Kerran kuussa
 - d. Muutaman kerran vuodessa
 - e. Useammin
 - f. Harvemmin
39. Mikä on pääasiallinen yhteydenoton kanava jota käytät?
- a. Internet
 - b. Puhelin
 - c. Konttorissa käynti
 - d. Sosiaalinen media
 - e. Muu: _____
40. Kuinka hyvin tunnet seuraavat pankkituotteet? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=en ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin hyvin)
- a. Lainat
 - b. Säästämisen tuotteet
 - c. Sijoitustuotteet
 - d. Hinnoittelu
 - e. Verkkopankki
 - f. Luottokortit
 - g. Pankkikortit
 - h. Korot
 - i. Kanta-asiakasohjelma
 - j. Nuorille suunnatut edut
 - k. ASP-tili ja laina

- l. Mastercard SecureCode ja Verified by Visa palvelut
41. Kuinka hyvin mielestäsi saat tietoa pankistasi tietoa tuotteista ja palveluista?
(arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=en ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin hyvin tietoa)
42. Mitkä ovat pääasialliset kanavasi tiedonhakuun pankin tuotteista ja palveluista?
- a. Pankin verkkosivut
 - b. Pankin asiakaspalvelu
 - c. Konttori
 - d. Ystävät
 - e. Vanhemmat
 - f. Sosiaalinen media
 - g. Internetin keskustelupalstat
 - h. Muu: _____
43. Oletko hakenut lainaa?
- a. Kyllä
 - b. En
44. Jos olet hakenut lainaa, vertailitko eri pankkeja?
- a. Kyllä, kysyin lainatarjousta yhdestä pankista oman pankkini lisäksi
 - b. Kyllä, kysyin lainatarjousta kahdesta pankista oman pankkini lisäksi
 - c. Kyllä, kysyin lainatarjousta useammasta kuin kahdesta pankista oman pankkini lisäksi
 - d. En
 - e. En ole hakenut lainaa
 - f. Muu: _____
45. Tiedätkö paljonko maksat palvelumaksuja nykyisistä palveluistasi?
- a. Kyllä
 - b. En
46. Oletko tyytyväinen pankkisi palvelumaksuihin? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=en ollenkaan tyytyväinen ja 7=erittäin tyytyväinen)
47. Kuinka mielelläsi asioit konttorissa? (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=en ollenkaan mielelläni ja 7=erittäin mielelläni)

48. Jos et mielelläsi asioi konttorissa, mikä siihen vaikuttaa eniten?
- Pankin virallinen imago
 - En tiedä paljoa pankkiasioista
 - Pankin henkilökunta ei ole asiantuntevaa
 - Pankin henkilökunta ei ole avuliasta
 - Muu: _____
49. Haluaisitko, että pankkisi olisi useammin yhteydessä sinuun?
- Kyllä
 - En
50. Jos haluaisit, missä asioissa toivoisit heidän yhteydenottoa?
- Tuotesuosituksissa
 - Alennusten/tarjousten merkeissä
 - Uusista tuotteista ja palveluista
 - En haluaisi pankin ottavana minuun yhteyttä missään asioissa
 - Muu: _____
51. Mitä kanavaa käyttäen toivoisit pankin ottavan sinuun yhteyttä?
- Puhelin
 - Sähköposti
 - Verkkopankki
 - Sosiaalinen media
 - Muu: _____
52. Arvostele seuraavat väitteet koskien pankkiasi: (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= täysin erimieltä ja 7=täysin samaa mieltä)
- Pankkini toimittaa mitä lupaa
 - Pankin mainokset ja markkinointi näkyvät myös pankin palvelussa
 - Olen tyytyväinen pankissa asioinnin jälkeen
(verkkopankki/konttori/puhelin)
 - Minulle on positiivinen tunne asioituani pankkini kanssa

Brändiuskollisuus

53. Oletko osallistunut pankkisi järjestämään tapahtumaan?
- Kyllä
 - En
54. Jos olet, mikä oli tapahtuman luonne?
- _____
 - En ole osallistunut
55. Mikä oli pääsyy osallistumiseen?
- Uteliaisuus
 - Informaatio
 - Palkinto osallistumisesta
 - Hauskuus
 - En ole osallistunut
 - Muu: _____
56. Miten kiinnostunut olisit osallistumaan seuraaviin pankin järjestämään tapahtumiin? (Arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= En ollenkaan kiinnostunut ja 7=erittäin kiinnostunut)
- Sosiaalinen tapahtuma
 - Infotilaisuus pankin tuotteista tai palveluista
 - Infotilaisuus yleisesti rahoitusmarkkinoihin liittyen
57. Edustaako pankkisi mielestäsi samoja arvoja joita itse pidät tärkeinä? (Arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= Ei ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin paljon)
58. Oletko suositellut pankkiasi muille?
- Kyllä
 - En
59. Kuinka ylpeä olet kertoessasi muille minkä pankin asiakas olet? (Arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= En ollenkaan ylpeä ja 7=erittäin ylpeä)
60. Kuinka usein tarkkailet muiden pankkien tarjouksia? (Arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= En ollenkaan ja 7=erittäin usein)

61. Mikä vaikutus seuraavilla asioilla olisi halukkuuteesi vaihtaa pankkia?

(Arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1= Ei ollenkaan vaikutusta ja 7=erittäin paljonvaikutusta)

- a. Toisen pankin edullisemmat palvelumaksut
- b. Lainan marginaali
- c. Muiden suositukset
- d. Vanhempasi vaihtaisivat pankkia
- e. Yksi huono palvelukokemus
- f. Tuotteiden toimimattomuus
- g. Oma pankkisi korottaisi palvelumaksuja

62. Arvostele seuraavat väitteet koskien pankkiasi: (arvostele asteikolla 1-7, 1=täysin erimieltä ja 7=täysin samaa mieltä)

- a. Odotan innolla pääseväni asioimaan pankkini kanssa
- b. Pidän itseäni uskollisena asiakkaan
- c. Kaikki pankit tarjoavat vastaavat tuotteet ja palvelut, joten sillä ei ole väliä minkä pankin asiakas olen
- d. Saan omasta pankistani erinomaista palvelua
- e. Olisin valmis maksamaan enemmänkin nykyisistä palveluistani niiden korkean laadun vuoksi