Justin Eveleens & Niku Hynynen

Image Analysis and Development of Robson's Vuokatti

KAJAANIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

THESIS
ABSTRACT

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Author(s)
Justin Eveleens & Niku Hynynen

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The objective of this Bachelor's thesis was to perform an image analysis of Robson's restaurant which operates inside Super Park Vuokatti and to give the company marketing based suggestions on how to improve its image among the public to a desired level.

To develop Robson's image the current image needed to be clear and this was done by a mostly quantitative image questionnaire to the customers of Super Park Vuokatti.

The theoretical research covers different important marketing actions which are related to image development and its importance. The theoretical research gave a base for the image analysis and the development suggestions.

As a conclusion the thesis analyses research findings and gives marketing suggestions to Robson's Vuokatti on how to drive the current image to the desired level.

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PREFACE

We would like to thank Anu Kähkönen and Taneli Sutinen for providing us with an interesting thesis topic after our discussion at Super Park Vuokatti.

Additional thanks to Perttu Huusko and Mikko Keränen for guiding us through the thesis process and Peter Stricker for his support through our studies.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

We got our thesis subject after we went straight to the CEO and marketing executive of Super Park Vuokatti and asked if they had any ideas for a thesis they could offer to us. The restaurant Robson's which operates in three different Super Parks in Finland was still in its early stages so they saw a good marketing development task there.

When going deeper into Robson's marketing and what could be improved, the CEO and marketing executive talked about challenges with the image of a restaurant which operates inside an activity park. Activity park restaurants generally have a very bad image among the public in Finland with associated words like over priced, fast food and small portions.

This immediately sounded like a good topic since marketing interests us both and image analysis and development was something fairly new to us.

1.1 Research problem, aim and purpose of thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to give suggestions based on the theoretical part of image development and executed through constructive research method in order to shift the image of Robson's Vuokatti to a desired level. (*"constructive research approach is a research procedure for producing innovative constructions, intended to solve problems faced in the real world and, by that means, to make a contribution to the theory of the discipline in which it is applied."* [Metodix 2015]). This thesis goes through the different factors that have an effect on image, its formation and the different ways to develop the image of Robson's.

In the research the thesis aims to find out what the current image of Robson's is and from there it goes on to adapt the theoretical part to the restaurant and accordingly give suggestions for the development of the image. The research will help Robson's to market the restaurant in a more effective way and hopefully also work as a basis for the marketing plan.

Some targets this thesis aims to achieve:
- Explain how image is formed and how it can be developed

- Find out the current image of Robson's
- Image development suggestions for Robson's Vuokatti

The main research problem is:

- What kind of image does Robson's Vuokatti have among the public?

Thesis research's sub problem is:

- Do people who have and have not used Robson's services have a different image of the restaurant?

The research's main problem is firstly finding out the image of Robson's in a customer's perspective and concluding from the image and theoretical background this thesis gives suggestions to develop the image towards the wanted direction of the commissioning party. When breaking up the research problem into sub problems, we firstly come out on the theoretical sub problems which are:

- How image is formed
- How image can be measured
- How image can be developed

Then we come to the empirical research problems which are based on experiences and they are:

- How does the customer see Robson's
- From where has the image been formed to the customer

Finding out the current image of Robson's Vuokatti is essential to make any suggestions to develop the image. From the image that is formed we can find out what the strengths and weaknesses of Robson's are. By knowing the strengths and weaknesses it is easier to make marketing based suggestions to improve the strengths and try to get rid of the weaknesses.

1.2 Case company

The original restaurant was opened in December 2012 and it is incorporated with the Angry Birds activity park that is located in Vuokatti in the Kainuu region. At first the restaurant had a more fast food like operating system and it was called Sibylla which is the name of a

food product manufacturer. In the summer of 2013 the restaurant was renovated and changed its name and menu in order to get rid of the fast food image and reputation. The name Robson's came from the captain of the local baseball team Jymy, which is situated in Sotkamo. The captain of the baseball team Jymy, Roope Korhonen's nickname is Robson, from there the name of the restaurant originated.

The baseball team's theme can be seen in the restaurant's menu with dishes such as "hat trick chicken sandwich" and "home run French fries". When the restaurant re-opened in the summer of 2013, focus was set on the quality of food and providing a more healthy and tasty products for the customers. The restaurant's premise is legislated to have a maximum of 170 guests at the same time, and Robson's offers birthday parties in a separate room where children can play video games and enjoy their meals together.

The restaurant's theme and operations have been set with a focus on children and families, for example there is free Wi-Fi access for the dining guests and the premises is filled with TV screens that play Angry Birds videos and sports related clips. There are children's seats available and all of the dishes have the possibility to be prepared lactose, gluten and milk free for the ones that have allergies or special diets. The dishes are targeted to families and youngsters, consisting of hamburger meals and salad choices and the average price of a meal is 9,70 € (Angrybirdsvuokatti 2014)

Since January 2015 Robson's has three restaurants in Finland, one in Oulu which was opened in January 2014 and in Vantaa which was opened in January 2015. All of the restaurants are located in Super park premises which are activity parks designed for families and active youngsters.

Robson's Vuokatti has currently three people working on low season and during the high seasons such as winter holidays and Christmas to New Year, there are around seven staff members working at the same time. Juuso Lahtela is the restaurant's manager, and the restaurant is currently open every day of the week, operating all year around with a few exceptions.

The main customer group consists of families and occasionally bigger school groups who are visiting the activity park. The commissioning party gave us the challenge to attract more

local residents to Robson's and make them come to the restaurant not only because of the activity park.

Vuokatti is mostly known as a ski resort town, with most of the activities and services provided very close to the actual slopes. As Robson's main competitors are the ones that are located within a close range of the activity park premises, these are restaurants such as Amarillo, Kippo, Katin Kulta, Koti Pizza and Hesburger.

Vuokatti is known for all year round activity possibilities, because of this there are more high seasons than in other ski resorts around Finland. It is a popular holiday destination for Finnish families who rent a cottage for a week or two or have their own cottage. Since Vuokatti is located close to the Russian border, approximately 120 kilometers from Kostomuksha, the area is filled with Russian tourists around Christmas and New Year's holidays. During the New Year's season Robson's and the activity park hire Russian speaking employees to make the customer service more fluent.

2 MARKETING

This chapter goes through what marketing means in today's business field and how it is communicated. Some specific marketing theories and main marketing styles are discussed such as the marketing communication mix, multichannel distribution system and the integration of a company's marketing messages.

As one of the most important marketing tools in the 21st century, this chapter will go deeper into internet marketing and its significance in image formation and development.
With Robson's being mostly a service based company this chapter discusses the different characteristics of service based products and what issues that creates for marketing.

2.1 What is marketing and marketing communication?

Marketing is the process of producing profitable customer relations and satisfying their needs, it is the core function of a company, and marketing is where results must come from. (Siukosaari 1999, 14) Marketing is often seen only as advertising and promoting your company and products to the potential customers but this is not the actual case. Over the years marketing has changed from a simple definition of selling the company's products into answering consumers' needs, establishing good customer relations and maintaining those relations. (Doyle & Bridgewater 1998, 14) The simple goal of marketing in the words of Peter Drucker is to make selling unnecessary. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 5)

As marketing is a core function of a company, marketing cannot succeed without the communication part. The final result of marketing is to sell a product or a service to the customer, thus making him/her happy. The role of marketing communication is to give the current and potential customers pre-purchase information about the company, its products, their prices and where and how to get them. It is also used to affect the customer's decision making process ("*The thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options.*" [Business dictionary 2015]) into a desirable direction. (Siukosaari 1999, 14) (Suvanto 1995, 130)

Marketing communication means are advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing, and from the certain mix of these means the company creates their promotion mix, also known as marketing communication mix. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 398)

2.2 Marketing communication mix

A marketing communication tool which was originally developed in 1968 consists of the five following means.

Advertising – An advertising object is *"a specific communication task to be accomplished with a specific target audience during a specific period of time"* (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 426) It is a paid nonpersonal promotion of the company's products or services provided by a identifiable sponsor, in this case the company at hand. Advertising includes for example television & radio ads, printed & outdoor ads and internet promotion.

The objective of advertising can be divided into three main categories: informative, persuasive or reminding, depending on what the company needs at the time.

Informative advertising is used to communicate customer value, informing the public of a new product/company, image building or for example correcting false beliefs of the product.

Persuasive advertising seeks to directly sell a certain product by persuading the public to buy it or switch to it from another company's product. It is effective in building brand loyalty and also in convincing customers to spread knowledge of the product to others.

Reminding advertising is used to remind the public of a certain product when sales have been going down, and it is an important tool with seasonal products and with maintaining current customer relations.

Sales promotion – Where advertising is used to increase awareness of a product and to give the consumers a reason to buy it, sales promotion is used to give the consumer a reason to

buy the product immediately, also known as a short term incentive. Sales promotion tools include coupons, sales, free shipping, quantity discounts, employee discounts, pre-order content and giveaways when buying another product. In an average packaged-goods enterprise sales promotion uses 74 % of the combined marketing budget. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 468)

Although sales promotion tools are short-term incentives they have the possibility to build long lasting customer relations, and while the promotion cluttering (the difficulty for the public to remember and recognize specific advertisements because of the huge number of adverts from different channels) increases this has become a promotional objective for many companies such as airliners offering frequent flier miles. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 469)

Public relations – This is all about achieving and maintaining a good and favorable image of the company so the consumers do not have a reason to decline the company's products, not for the quality of the products, but for the negative image of the company. Unlike advertising, public relations is a free or low-cost way to promote a company with a similar outcome.

One major tool of public relations is the use of media and news, for example the PR people working in that company might find a positive news worthy subject about the company and as that story appears in television, internet or a magazine the company gets free positive publicity. This affects the consumers' image of the company and increases its recognizability, this way of promotion is also considered to be more reliable among the public because it does not come straight from the company but from an independent source. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 442) Some good examples of good public relations campaigns are Coca-cola's involvement in sports for youth and Google's good work environment for its employees.

Personal selling – This is the personal contact between a company's staff and the consumer in order to make sales and develop lasting customer relations. Personal selling happens whenever a customer and an employee of a company are in contact and its effects can go unnoticed even though a minor negative or positive act can have long lasting consequences. Personal selling is especially apparent and important with services, big investments and business to business sales.

Personal selling covers a huge amount of interaction scenarios. Schools sell themselves to future students, future students sell themselves to schools, people looking for a job sell themselves to companies they want to work in, and for this reason personal selling is considered as one of the oldest professions in the World. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 452) Good examples of important personal selling scenarios are car salesmen and travel agency employees selling tourism services.

Direct marketing – This is the contact between the company and targeted individual consumers to make the consumer feel "special". It is used to get an immediate response from both parties and to build the customer relationship. Means of direct marketing are for example phone marketing, email, the internet and more. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 398-399)

Direct marketing has certain benefits to both the consumer and the seller. For the seller direct marketing is an effective tool in building long lasting customer relations by offering specially customized products for a specific group of people. It is a fast, efficient and low-cost way to offer customers the products they already have a desire for.

For the buyer direct marketing is a convenient and personal way to find what they are looking for. The buyer can scroll through catalogues and web-sites whenever he or she wants and get suggestions on the products that might be of interest. It is a quick way for the buyer to get information of all the products, compare them and customize them to their liking. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 482)

The five point marketing communication mix is a widely used promotional tool but it has also gotten a lot of criticism. It was originally developed in the late 1960s when there was no internet, phone selling was not nearly on the same level it is today and television advertising was limited to a few channels. (Blythe 2009, 174)

2.3 Characteristics of service based products

Means of marketing communication mix are used for both service based companies and retail companies, but for service based products just the five promotional tools are not enough to achieve the optimal results. (Suvanto 1995, 130)
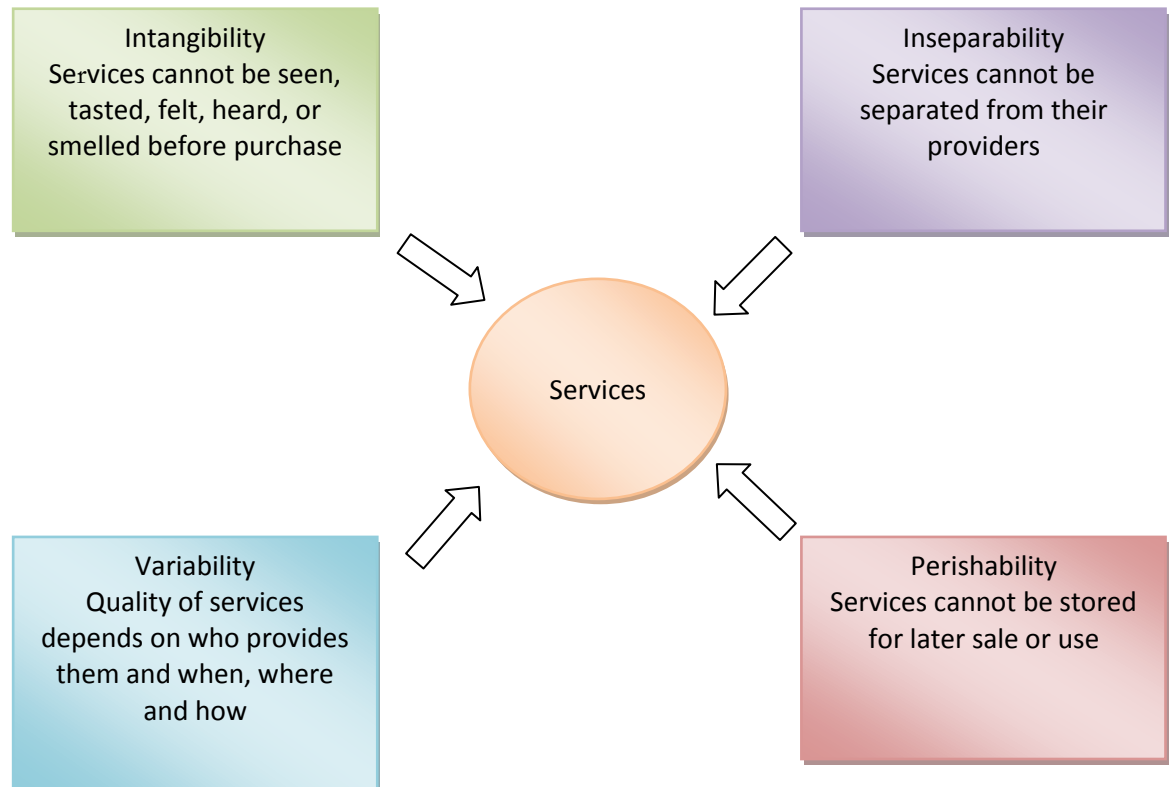
Picture 1. Four service characteristics (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 239)

Sold services are intangible and perishable, meaning they cannot be stored or be "touched" and "handled" in the same way as tangible products. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 239) This also means it is more difficult for the customer to read about the service from the internet since it is more about the experience and needs to be experienced by the customers themselves to be able to get a good opinion about them. For this reason customers are also a huge part of development and marketing of services.

Services are heterogenic, meaning that the service is always delivered a bit differently depending on the provider and where and how the service is provided, and therefore perceived differently by the customers. This means that the service does not have the same consistency as physical products do, but it is also an opportunity since each service can be modified to suit the customer better. (Grönroos 2001, 80-81)

Services are inseparable from their provider and therefore the ownership of the product or service does not change. This also means that the production, distribution and consumption of services are simultaneous processes and cannot be separated. (Grönroos 2001, 81)

2.4 Integrated marketing communications

Integrated marketing communication is the process or concept of a company to unify all their marketing channels to give the same impressions of their products and the company. It is important in preventing giving out a mixed image of the company to different people and reducing ambiguity of the sent messages. (Blythe 2009, 206-207)

Integrated marketing communication is the blended and designed mix of the tools used in marketing communication mix. The goal of using a certain mix of these tools is to give out a "*consistent, clear and compelling company and brand message.*" (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 402)

Carefully blended mix of promotional tools
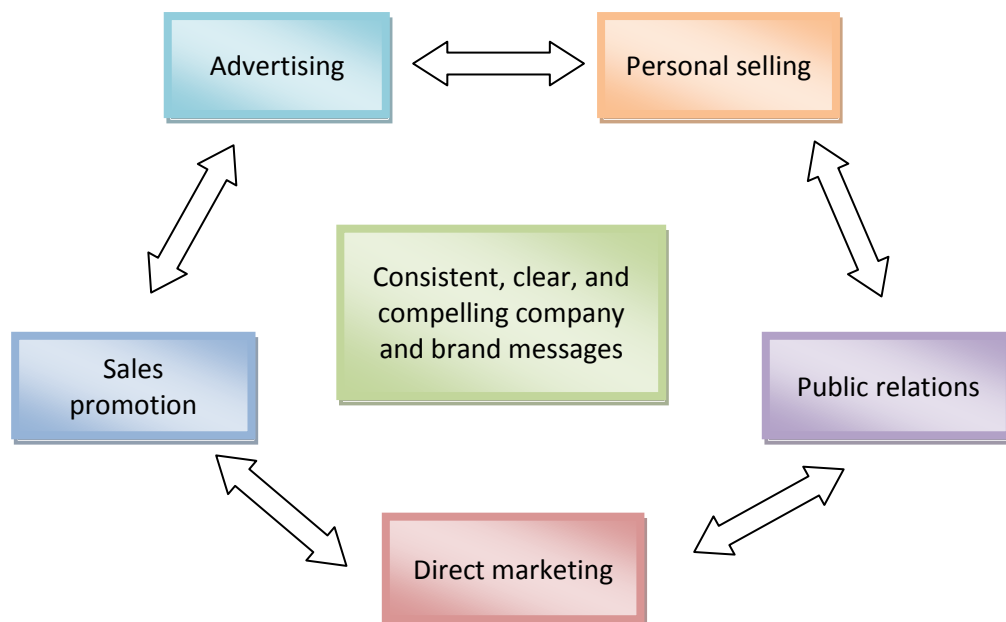
Picture 2. Integrated marketing communications (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 402)

In picture 3. (Blythe 2009, 210) is the ladder of integration where is shown the steps of the integration process. As the levels go up, so does the scale and length of the integration and the highest levels are more relevant to large companies and marketing campaigns which have

been going on for a longer period of time. This chapter will concentrate on the first four levels which are awareness stage, planning integration, integration of content and formal integration since the case company is only starting to plan their marketing campaign.

Picture 3. Ladder of integration (Blythe 2009, 210)

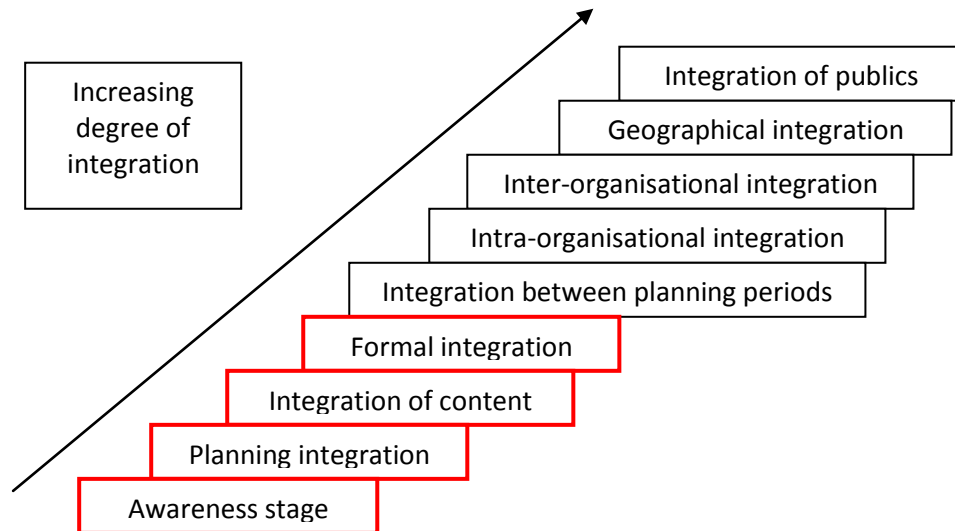Awareness stage is the realization that integration is needed in the marketing. This is the first step of integration and it should happen as soon as more than one marketing channel is being used.

Planning integration is divided into two main categories: Functional integration in which different marketing channels are used to create and deliver a single consistent message and instrumental integration where different messages are used to support one another.

Integration of content is the process of ensuring that there are no contradictions between the different messages the company gives so consumers do not get a mixed view of the company image and brands. A mixed company image decreases the public's trust in a company which is effective in destroying the already built customer relationships.

Formal integration is the first concrete and most important level in integrating a company's communication. It means using the same logo, slogan, jingle, colors, theme and graphic approach in all of the sending company's messages. (Blythe 2009, 208) This allows the customer to recognize the company from its messages even without reading or hearing the full content of the message. This is extremely important for the recognizability of the

company. With formal integration a customer sees for example logo, hears part of a jingle or even sees the font the company uses in its advertisements and automatically associates it with the company at hand and its products.

2.5 Marketing channels and multichannel distribution system

A marketing channel in terms of a service product means the way a company delivers its information of a product to customers or a way the company sells a product to customers. (Rope 2000, 246)

The main goal of choosing a suitable marketing channel or the preference of a channel is to get the most affordable, rational and effective way to deliver information to the target group. As a basis for choosing the right marketing channel the following things need to be found out of the target group:

- Number of potential customers
- Geographical location of customers
- Frequency of purchases
- Who makes the purchase decision or who buys the product/service
- Where similar products/services are usually purchased
  (Rope 2000, 252), (Rope 2005, 92)

There are some important criteria when choosing a marketing channel for a product or service.
- Horizontal factors - including the ability to reach a certain target group at the right place at the right time
- Vertical factors – including the ability to transfer information back and forth within the marketing channel
- Profitability factors – marketing channel's ability to cover a selected target group
- Image factors – product's or service's image can be reached as wanted by the company

- Risk factors – resource risks, personnel risks and minimizing the possible threats since choosing a main marketing channel is usually a long term commitment.
- Monitoring factors – ability to monitor the marketing and the product's success which is vital for its success.
   (Rope 2000, 260-261)

Choosing the most used marketing channel in a certain industry is not always the best option. Competition might be too high, a certain channel could be controlled by one or two major companies or there might be too much promotion clutter to break through within a certain channel. In these cases the marketers need to assess if there are other more suitable options which could be used to bring their products to the public. (Rope 2000, 261-263)

Multichannel distribution system means the use of different channels to deliver information to different segments of a larger target group. It is now used by almost every company in order to contact different segments of their market and thus rapidly broadening their customer base. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 344)

Multichannel system is harder to control than having just one dominant channel since it opens a possibility to conflict of the company image, if integrated marketing communication is not done correctly.

2.6 Importance of the internet in marketing

These days the internet is everywhere, at our work, home, leisure time and we even carry it with us in the form of mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets. Most websites include some sort of advertising from different companies and this is because the internet is a fast, cheap, effective and easily targeted form of advertising. (Janoschka 2004)

The internet has and is changing the marketing field by giving a huge variety of different products and services to customers with the touch of a few buttons. All product and company details, user and expert reviews and prices can be easily found from the internet with little effort. A company webpage is also a good tool to give invitation for tenders, feedback to the company and present the company's key people and their expertise to give a

face to the business. This empowers the customer and puts big and small companies on a more equal level. (Chaffey 2009) (Rope 2000, 332)

As the internet is integrated into our lives, more and more people start spending more money online and this gives all sorts of scam artists a chance to steal money from people spending it online. For this reason the internet is also used to build trust between consumers and companies. Well maintained homepage, social media sites and advertisements reassure the customers that this certain company seems trustworthy enough for them to spend their money on the company's products. The internet could be thought of as another sales person for the company that gives the customers their first impressions of the business, builds trust and customer relations. (Luo 2002, 111 – 118)

2.7 Importance of the internet in image formation

As more and more people use the internet as their main source of information search, the importance of having a well maintained website and a general online presence becomes very important for businesses. Already the lack of a webpage can give the public an image of a company, perhaps the company is incapable of creating their own website or they are too lazy to be bothered with it. This gives the impression that the company is not innovative or modern and they do not have the drive to be the best they can. A poorly maintained website with outdated information signals the lack of interest towards the customer so why would the customer be interested in the company? A phrase that describes the 21st century business field quite accurately is "*if you are not online you do not exist.*" (Rope 2000, 331 – 335)

A well maintained interactive website and social media pages gives an image that the company is modern and involved with the customer thus creating interest towards it. Companies should use the internet to push their desired image to the public so that the image people have of the company is not randomly created. As the internet has rapidly become the number one source of information about different companies, you do not want the customers to leave your website with a wrong or negative image of your company, but instead you want them to adopt the company's own desired image. (Rope 2000, 176-177)

Internet has perhaps the single biggest opportunity and threat capability over any other form of marketing channel and that is very fast information sharing. With the touch of a few buttons one positive or negative company image can turn into hundreds or hundreds of thousands positive or negative images. This is a form of consumer to consumer marketing when people share their experiences on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other forms of social media or they might write blogs about certain services or products. If a company has a good reputation, high quality products and friendly service, this consumer to consumer marketing is very effective and low-cost but if there are major problems within the company this type of marketing turns into a threat instead of an opportunity. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 495)

2.8 Marketing research

According to Kotler (Kotler & Armstrong 2008.), marketing research is the systematic design, collection, analysis and reporting of data relevant to a specific marketing situation facing an organization. With the execution of marketing research there are two ways of measurements used, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is objective and qualitative is subjective.

Quantitative research relies on a large number of respondents and the measurement must be objective and important in a statistical manner. The number of samples that is needed is calculated with the help of statisticians using formulas in order to achieve a result that is acceptably accurate.

Qualitative research on the other hand focuses on what and how a respondent answers and from there analyzing and interpreting the collected data. Where quantitative research refers to the sheer amount of data collected, qualitative research relies on the definitions, meanings, concepts, characteristics, symbols and description of things. Qualitative research gathers information that has more depth to it, not just answering simple questions but going in more deeply on why someone has answered a certain way. This type of research is useful to get a more in depth answers and views about specific communication, often it is also more cost efficient than surveys. When at the stage of analyzing qualitative data there is a

strong interaction between theory and analysis. It seeks to discover links between different factors and changes that might occur over time. (Imperial County Office of Education 2006)

2.8.1 What makes a good image/marketing research?

Making a marketing or image research is very challenging with many factors dependent on each other when executing a questionnaire. When starting the research it is important that the commissioning party and the persons who carry out the research have a general understanding and find common ground when looking at the objectives of the research. All the information that is gathered during the research should be of a relevant matter and with the target to benefit the commissioning party. (Rope 2000, 441.)

The success of the research, in this case image development, is hard to measure in a short period of time. Considering this topic, an image of a company is difficult to change into a desired direction since image belongs to the customer. To measure any marketing strategies' effectiveness, a follow up questionnaire has to be performed in order to measure if the changes that the company has made had any effect on the perceptions of the customers. (Isohookana 2007, 116-117.) When doing a research where there eventually might be a follow up questionnaire, a significant importance to keep in mind is that the word order stays the same with the original questionnaire. This ensures the comparability and enables the analysis and formation of the development (Rope 2000, 443.)

2.8.2 Interpreting and reporting the findings

With the research you must interpret the findings, draw conclusions and finally report them to the commissioning party. What needs to be kept in mind is that the interpretation process should not only be performed by the researchers but also the marketing team which has more knowledge about the situation and knows better what needs to be achieved. For the research to be successful it is necessary to have the data been interpreted by an unbiased party. Managers of the company tend to easily accept research results that they expected or wanted to see and then abandon results that they did not wish for. For the best possible

result the researchers and the company management need to together discuss and ponder the findings and their meaning. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 111.)

2.8.3 Getting information and how to make use of it

When gathering information to be used for conducting a research or survey, first thing is to look up if there is any previous knowledge or information that might be of use. The findings of previous information have to be interpreted and analyzed if it is of any use at this point. Different factors such as the time and place where the information has been gathered might have an effect on the liability of the results. The information itself can never be the absolute value. If it is not possible to make use of the information in practice, it might not be even useful for the company. (Selin &Selin 2013, 128-131.)

2.8.4 Reliability and validity of the research

This chapter discusses the reliability and validity of the research that was done to find out Robson's Vuokatti's current image and to develop it into a desired direction. Reliability and validity are important criteria for assessing the quality of the research and to ensure the serialization of the survey. (Veal 2006, 56.)

After completing the survey we had gathered 35 responses for our questionnaire, this number was a bit on the lower side of what was needed for it to be reliable for a larger case study. Since the number of respondents was quite low, our analysis and results could only be applied to people who answered the questionnaire and not the whole public.

Reliability

According to Joppe (Joppe 2000.), reliability of a research depends on its consistency over a certain period of time and that the total population that is involved in the study is represented accurately, with terms and conditions that the results can be reproduced under the similar circumstances. The main idea behind this definition is that the results gathered in

a survey have to be able to be repeated under the same circumstances since consistency makes a big part of a survey's reliability.

When conducting a survey, repeatability is used as a measurement system. What needs to be achieved is similarity in answers when conducting the survey at two different times since stability ensures that the survey is reliable.

Reliability has two different types, inner and outer reliability. Inner reliability can be measured by measuring the statistical unit several times and if the results are the same, then the measurement is reliable. Outer reliability means the contingency of the research, meaning that the measurements can be repeated in other researches and situations. (Heikkilä 2004, 187.)

Validity

For a research to be valid it needs to give answers to the actual research problem and the results have to be truthful. Researchers need to assess if the instrument that is used for the information gathering is the right one for the research and if it answers the questions that need to be answered. (Joppe 2000.)

Validity is measuring how successful the questions are, meaning are they able to give a proper solution to the research problem. Validity can be looked at from two different perspectives, inner and outer validity. Inner validity means do the measurements apply to the terms used in the research's theory. The terms used in the theory need to match the terms in the research to prevent distorted results and as a result make the whole research invalid. With outer validity other researchers should be able to come up with the same conclusion. If the research is successful and truthful it should not matter who does the research since they should all come to the same conclusion. (Heikkilä 2004, 186.)

3 IMAGE, BRAND, REPUTATION AND QUALITY

This chapter discusses what image, brand, reputation and quality are and their meaning and importance to a business. Each of the four chapters are then broken down to smaller subheadings where the thesis goes deeper into their meaning, formation and development.

3.1 Image

This chapter discusses what the term "image" means in the modern marketing field and its importance to every company that wants to be successful and recognizable with the public. The chapter goes deeper in the topic with how an image is formed, and how and if it can be developed and controlled.

For this thesis and Robson's restaurant "image" is especially important since Robson's marketing is in its early stages and this is where image formation and development is most crucial and still controllable.

3.1.1 What is image and its purpose?

The term "image" first came up in the marketing terminology during the 1970 s, after that it quickly became a centered subject in marketing related activities. (Rope 2000, 175.) Image's dictionary definition is the opinion or concept of something that is held by public. Image broadens the view of a company in the customer's mind and it is based on people's personal experiences, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about the subject. In a sense image belongs to the consumer and the public, not the company. (Rope 2005, 53.)

A good and well known image is a huge advantage for any company because an image effects in many ways to customers' perceptions and how they look at the company's communication and actions. Image has three main functions to carry out, firstly an image gives the customer a certain amount of expectations with the company's marketing and advertisements. Image helps the customers to process all the different advertisements and

visuals that are thrown at them. For a company that already has a positive image amongst the public it is easier to carry out their marketing campaigns as the consumers already have a more positive approach towards the company and its image. In this scenario the company does not have to worry about setting a mixed image of them since they already have a known basic image.

Secondly image works as a shield. If the image is positive then small mistakes or sometimes even bigger mistakes can be forgiven if the mistakes are not made repeatedly. If a mistake has been made repeatedly the shield of the image loses its effect because the image has changed in a negative way.

Third and last function of an image is dependent on customers' expectations. When the customers develop expectations and then test the product, the image could change. If their actual experiences with the product are positive the image regains strength and credibility. If the experience is negative the image weakens, and if the image of the company is not clear for the customer the image is formed only through personal experience. (Grönroos 1998, 225-226.)

3.1.2 Image development

"*Humans have three ways to act wisely: firstly by considering - which is the noblest way, secondly by copying – which is the easiest way and finally through experiences – which is the bitterest way. This applies also in image development*" (Rope 2000, 192.)

As already known, developing a company's image is not easy, even when taking the easy way - by copying. When implementing a working concept to another company it has a big chance of not succeeding. Every company has different factors affecting its customer behavior for example location, age of population and personal preferences, and all of these factors have to be kept in mind when looking at the image development process.

Image development process starts from research and proceeds to the creation of the target image. As a process it is systematical and ongoing. (Rope 2001, 231.) First stage of the

process starts by researching the company's own image and comparing it to the competitors' image.

During the second stage the strategy of image development is chosen which is done by assessing the outer image and the outer opportunities and inner resources available.

Third stage is defining the desired image. This process defines the goals that are needed, based on the strategy chosen on the basis of the current image. Chosen goals help direct the business' in house activities, outer communication's planning and implementation.

The procedure of the next stage is to develop the in house services that are provided. The service that is provided must achieve the goals or promises that have been given to the public. If these two factors do not correlate it can be seen as lying to the public which harms the company's image and reputation.

In the next stage comes the implementation of external communication. The desired company image sets the goals for which outer communication is developed and aimed. It has to be kept in mind that the promises made to the public in outer communication should be achieved within the company and its services so the outer and inner actions and promises support each other.

With the final stage comes observing the ongoing strategy. This is all about following the progress towards the desired company image and analyzing the reasons for its success and failure constantly. By observing the progress throughout the entire development period, the different actions that work and do not work can be found out more easily than just analyzing the results at the end of the development period. (Rope 2000, 198.)

If the current image analysis is performed poorly it will be almost impossible to develop it towards the desired image since the starting point is not genuine. It is recommended that the assessment of the image is done by a neutral party so that the outcome is not biased. (Grönroos 1998, 226.) When the external image that is provided by the company does not fit the services provided the image suffers from it. It weakens the credibility of the whole company if something that is promised is not actually provided. Dealing with problems that concern the company image, the development should start from within the company in order to comprehend the issue. If the image is not recognizable with the public the problem

is within the marketing communication side of the company. If the issue is solved within the company but has not been communicated to the public the image is still negative, in which case the focus has to set on external communication. (Grönroos 2000, 389.)

Image development and creation is a slow paced and ongoing process that requires a lot of work and creativity. When the image is communicated to the public more often and in several places/channels the image starts forming and develops. Important to keep in mind is that the image that is brought forward in different places should be consistent and have the same message. If the image is perceived differently depending on the place, region or the marketing channel, the company sends out contradictory messages which make it harder for the public to get a consistent and clear image. (Kotler 1997, 292)

3.1.3 Image's formation and meaning in business

Image development is based on image's formation in people's minds and in this chapter we go through what affects people's image formation process.
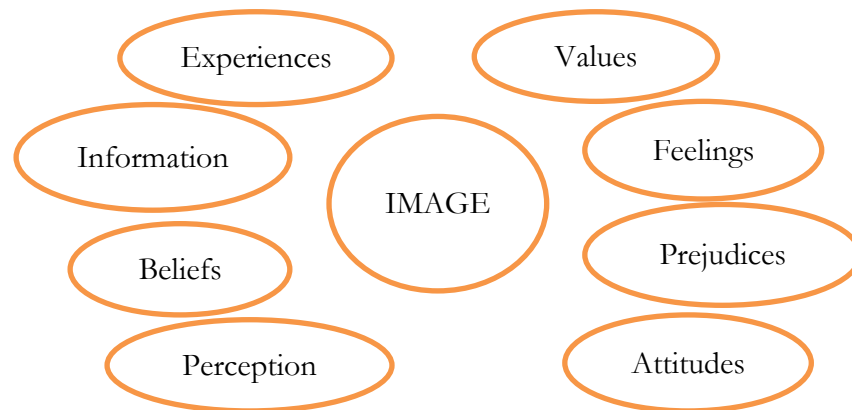
Picture 4: Images psychological influences (Rope 2000, 178.)

The purpose of picture 4. is to shows us the different psychological factors which make up the image in people's minds. On the right side of the picture we can see all the psychological factors which the company cannot influence directly, and on the left side of the picture are the factors which can be affected directly by the company. In this thesis the different factors are taken in to account because they have an important role in the formation of image.

During the study it is important to remember that all humans are individuals and that is why the images can differ immensely with different people.

An image is slowly being materialized from one factor to another. All of the psychological factors are thereby connected to each other in the end forming to whole image.

1. Family and cultural backgrounds give the foundation to the values in which way all of these factors are processed by an individual.

2. Feelings work as a sort of a filter to direct people's interests.

3. Prejudices affect our image formation by relating our earlier buying experiences to the one that is processed. For example if we think about Russian car industry versus German industry, we have different prejudices labeling the products according to their country of origin.

4. Attitudes form according to the different values, feelings and prejudices that people have.

5. Attitudes affect the way people perceive information about the enterprise. For example how willing they are to accept different adverts or information as the way they are given.

6. People's beliefs affect the way how their perceptions are taken in to account. People generally select and process their observations so that they enforce the beliefs they already have.

7. The information sent by the company is interpreted based on how it fits the receiver's image of the company meaning how credible is the information given in that context.

8. Our experiences are interpreted through a filtration by our own subjective perceptions. This is why an identical event or for example a service is perceived differently amongst different people. (Rope 2000, 178-179.)

3.2 Brand

This chapter explains the definition of brand and its importance in growing a business. The chapter goes deeper into the subject and discusses how a brand is formed, how its development can be affected with marketing and the relationship between a brand and the consumer.

In the case of Robson's restaurant, its brand is in its very early stages and has not yet even received wide spread recognition due to lack of marketing and the fact that the restaurant operates only inside three Super Parks currently in Finland.

3.2.1 Branding and brand-identity

Brand, image and reputation are all conceptions or opinions formed by the consumer of the company. Image is mostly seen as a part of the visual aspect of the company and reputation is based more on experiences. To the consumer a brand is a promise of quality and value of the company. In order to keep the value in the brand, the promises made by the company need to be redeemed very often regardless of who communicates the company values to the public, the messages need to be trustworthy. The promises are done by words/communication and finally the promises are kept by actions. (Isohookana 2007, 17) It takes a lot of resources and time to keep the brand up to date and valuable, but in reward the brand earns loyalty and recognition which helps in building a successful business.

In the consumers point of view branding means for them that the product is easily recognizable and identifiable when talking about the product. Brands that are more recognizable and have a high value in the consumers mind are more consistent in their sales. With brand consistency the business can take on more easily the economic ups and downs of the market. (Blythe 2009, 166.)

Brand identity includes all the core visual aspects that are perceived in the consumer's mind, which are for example colors, design and logo type. Brand identity is the way the business wants its consumers to receive the brand, though it is not necessarily how it is perceived. The marketers' job is to deliver the framework to the customer which then creates an image of the brand. Whatever actions the marketers take, it is the customer who decides if these actions form the company's desired brand. If the marketers have succeeded in their job in creating the framework, the brand is created and the brand-identity is achieved. (Grönroos 2000, 378.)

3.2.2 Brand relationship and contact

As soon as the customer is part of the brand development the brand's interpretation changes. Since the entire framework for the brand needs to be set out to the public it cannot be set as easily as the marketers want it to happen. The brand changes with the different messages that the consumer receives from different sources, for instance the employees of the company or different internet forums that discuss the company. The consumer forms a relationship with the brand, which gives meaning to the product, service or other components of the business in the mind of the consumer. (Grönroos 2000, 378.)

How the consumer experiences the brand changes through time and situations in which the consumer is involved in contact with the different features of the brand. During the brand's existence the consumer experiences different brand contacts which are received from different ways of marketing. This includes indirect and direct marketing ranging from television advertisements to contact with the company's employees
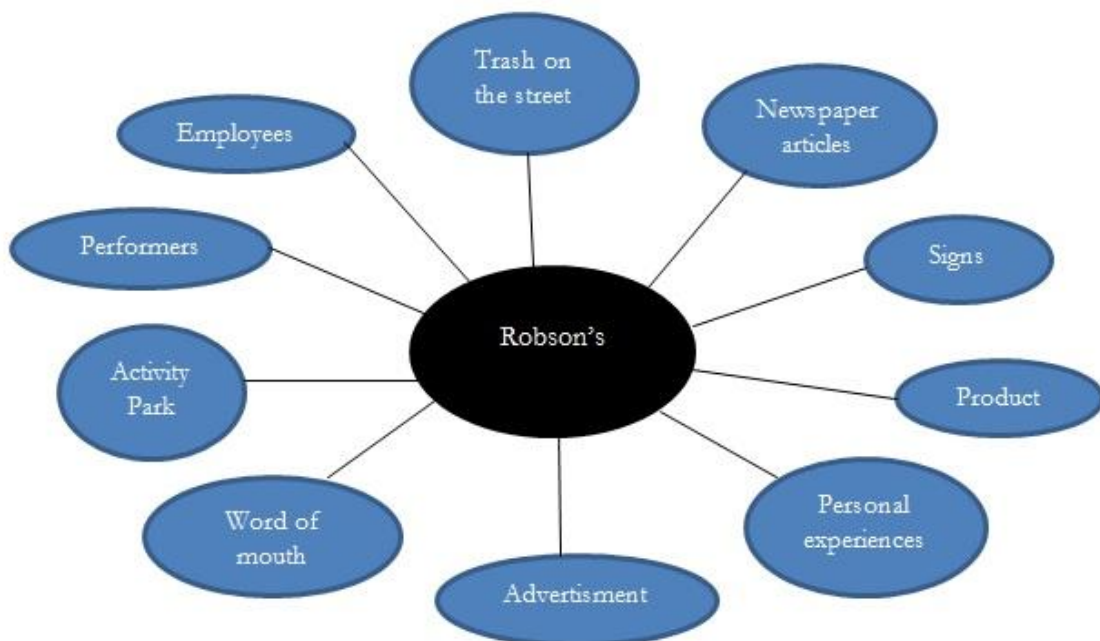
Picture 5. Services based brand contacts sources adapted to Robson's (Schultz & Barnes 1999, 47.)

In picture 5. there are some of the contacts presented that the customer has with the brand. In order to keep the brand relationship on a high standard it is important to take these contact situations into account and focus on all of them to maintain a strong brand. Brand contacts that the consumer experiences vary according to the situation in which they occur. For example if the restaurant measures its waste that is produced every day and informs the consumers about it, it may have a positive effect with some consumers' brand image or have no effect on the consumer what so ever. (Grönroos 2000, 380.)

3.3 Reputation

This chapter goes through the different effects of reputation, how reputation is formed and the link between image and reputation. Even though reputation and image are linked together they should not be mixed up together as reputation is a part of image.

As a reputation forms with experiences, knowledge and rumours of a company, Robson's does not really have a reputation with a lot of consumers since its recognizability is still very low. With increased marketing and media presence, reputation also becomes a major factor in success and for this reason reputation should be discussed before it gets "out of hand".

3.3.1 Reputation as a concept

With reputation people link all the stories that they hear, read and see about the company. A reputation is formed by the company's stakeholders by observing and interpreting the company's plans and actions. (Åberg 2000, 117.) According to Hertzen, reputation is formed through the company's actions from which the stakeholders form a certain image of the company and gain knowledge about it. (Hertzen 2006, 15.)

A company is assessed positively or negatively and as a consequence it gets a good or a bad reputation. Reputation formation has a lot of different factors such as rumours, experiences and also media has a huge effect on reputation. (Pitkänen 2001, 17-18.)
Reputation is formed when a stakeholder has an encounter with the company's product or service but mostly the encounters that are made are customer service related. (Heinonen

2006, 27.) A company's objective is to pursue a reputation and take actions which improve the reputation as that is one of the conditions in which the company thrives to be successful. Receiving a good reputation can be very difficult but it is as important to the company as many other factors. (Aula 2005, 49.)

3.3.2 The significance of reputation

Reputation can make or break a company and in some cases a company can have faith in their success based on just a very positive reputation, though it is not recommended because of a fast changing market. As the company grows the reputation grows with it and for this reason it lives of its reputation. (Aula & Heinonen 2005, 32-33.) The constantly increasing amount of competition is the one of the main reasons why a company should focus on its reputation and its significance. There are other factors that are involved in the importance of reputation, like for example the lack of trust in the company because of some sort of company scandal. (Heinonen 2006, 14.)

When a company has built up its reputation through time with its products and services, the reputation is used as an important back bone to keep the company stable in the worst economic times. Through trust the company has a clear advantage on its competition and in the future it just might be that it is the company's most important capital. (Aula 2000, 175-176.)

When at some point the company is stable enough that it is considering expansion into other market segments, a good reputation will make the transition to another market more fluent. If a company has a good competitive product or service, it has a strong base to start on and to take on the new market. In these situations it is not enough to just rely on reputation, but emphasis has to be set on communication as well and how they differentiate themselves from the competition. (Heinonen 2006, 14-15.)

3.3.3 What makes a good reputation?

Actions and reality are the base of a good reputation, in the long run it is based on a good

product and long-term dedication involving the whole company. (Pitkänen 2001, 18-19.) When customers have their first encounters with the company they evaluate the company either in positive or a negative way. This is why the company has to work towards making the encounter as pleasant as possible for the customers. Keeping in mind that negative experiences are more likely to be shared than positive ones, meaning that negative experiences even though they are only few have more impact than the positive ones when comparing them. (Pitkänen 2001, 22.)

Well trained staff members are essential in building a good reputation. The reputation is damaged if staff members are willing to work only as short term employees or the atmosphere inside the company is negative and therefore damaging the reputation. A company's inner reputation has priority over outer reputation because when the company's inner reputation is well maintained it is much easier to develop the outer reputation and create a positive image to the public. When customers observe the staff and the staff gives a positive impression, it makes it easier for the customers to trust a company's products and services. When a company has achieved a good reputation it has an effect through the reviews that are shared through social media or face to face conversations. (Heinonen 2006, 39-40.)

If a company has had a bad reputation it has to start improving it step by step. During the process the company has to stay patient and in all of its actions it has to stay transparent and loyal to the customers. The process starts by improving the company from within, where the atmosphere is rewarding and motivating. At this point the staff members shine out commitment. (Aula 2002, 106.)

3.3.4 Connection between reputation and image

When talking about image being part of the reputation, what it means is that image is the visual part of reputation as it is what people see from the product to the logo. Reputation connects to image in a way that it is what people are talking and hearing about the company and this has an effect on the image's formation. When using the word image it is mostly referred as being in accurate and visual. (Åberg 2000, 117). When image is looked at the perspective of reputation, it can be interpreted as that the company's outer layer has been

made to look good but that the situation might be different within the company. (Aula 2000, 169-170.) Reputation is harder to change than image because reputation is based on the company's values, (Vuokko 2003, 103.) and for clarification image is built and reputation is earned. (Heinonen 2006, 33.)

3.4 Quality

This chapter discusses the quality a company provides with its products and services, and the importance and effects of that quality.

Quality is something that gets customers to come back to the company and use its products and services again. For Robson's quality is especially important since it cannot yet totally rely on its image and reputation as they are not so well known yet and do not have a strong image to rely on. Robson's needs to know how customers experience their quality at the moment and learn to exceed the expectations their customers have.

3.4.1 What is quality and why is it important?

When looking at service based companies their operating strategy is highly complex. Because of the complexity, when considering quality it can be approached from many different perspectives. When a company has to consider its image strategy it tries to improve the company's quality and operations by factors that might not even be visible straight away to the customer. (Grönroos 2000, 98.)

A company that wants to improve its quality has to know what the shareholders are expecting and exceed their expectations. Performance has to be improved constantly in order to exceed customers' expectations in the future, and it is a good method of improving a company's image as well (Lecklin 2006, 18.)

Quality can be anything that the customer thinks it is but in reality the customers experience quality in a much broader view than just technical factors, therefore it is necessary for the company to know what customers expect as part of good quality. (Grönroos 2000, 99.)

Customer satisfaction is set as a general objective for quality. Even if a customer was be satisfied in general with the company there could be some service based functions that might have a negative affect on the satisfaction of the customer. It is these small service based situations that have a great effect on the company's image. A service that is experienced negatively stays in the customer's mind for a longer period of time and therefore is shared more easily to other friends or family through social media or other means of communication. (Kompula 2002, 44-45.)

3.4.2 Quality that is experienced

Quality can be roughly divided into two different factors. To "how" which is the functional experienced quality and "what" which is the technical quality. Technical quality is what the customer gets when interacting with the company. This could be for example the quality of the equipment, location or technical solutions such as in a fast food restaurant how the kitchen informs the customer that their food is ready or the location and functionality of returning the dishes. Functional quality means how the customer receives the production and consumption process' connection and how the processes function together. Staff's professionalism, company's interaction skills and the customers' own skills have an affect on the functional quality. (Kompula 2002, 42.)

When trying to improve the quality both of these factors have to be improved at the same time in order to achieve the desired outcome.

From picture 6. we can see how good quality is connected with the expected and experienced quality, if they do not identify with each other they have an negative effect on the image all together. (Grönroos 2000, 104.)
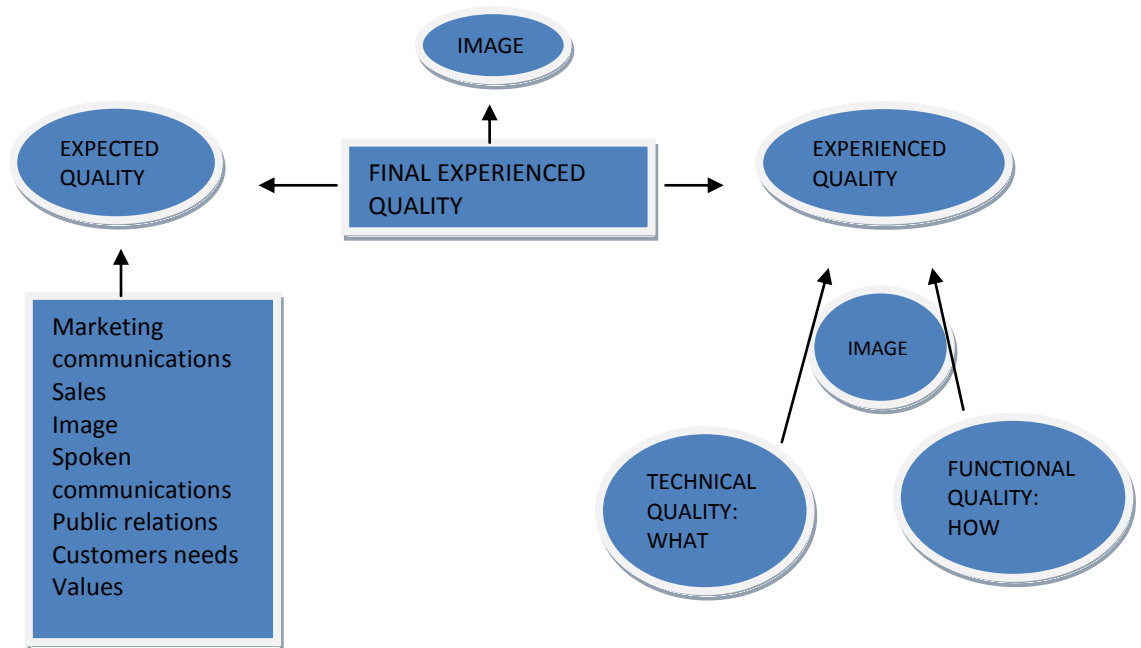
Picture 6. Experienced quality (Grönroos 2000, 104.)

4 RESEARCH FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

In this chapter we discuss how we approached Robson's image analysis research and how the customer questionnaire was implemented.

As said in the introduction chapter we were aiming to answer the following research problems with the questionnaire:

- What kind of image does Robson's Vuokatti have among the public?
- From where has the image been formed to the customer
- Do people who have and have not used Robsons' services have a different image of the restaurant?

4.1 Forming the image analysis questionnaire

We discussed different possibilities for the base of the questionnaire and decided to go with a quantitative research but with a couple open qualitative questions to help us get a better understanding and deeper answers to some more pressing problems with Robson's image. We also added an open question where people could freely give some longer feedback and suggestions in case they had something to say which we could not cover with the quantitative questions.

The questionnaire had to be short enough that people would be willing to answer all the questions and answer them with thought and not just click away to finish it fast. It also had to be comprehensive enough to get a good result for our research problem and research sub-problems. For this reason we had to focus on questions that would give us as much information as possible relevant to what the desired company image for Robson's was and what image they wanted to get rid of.

After we formed some of the most important questions and things we wanted to know with the questionnaire we showed them to a marketing lecturer and a statistics lecturer of Kajaani University of Applied Sciences to get a second opinion.

After the feedback we modified the questionnaire accordingly and it ended up being 13 main questions long (19 when including sub-questions) and of these 13 questions three were open qualitative style questions. Questionnaire testing showed that it would take approximately four to five minutes to complete it which was what we were looking for.

4.2 Research implementation

We wanted to get people's honest opinions and were afraid that if the questionnaire was a personal face-to-face conversation people might be a little too nice to us and the company, which was a very likely threat, considering the Finnish mentality. This might have resulted in distorted answers thus ruining the whole purpose of the research and preventing us from making marketing propositions based on facts. For this reason we decided to use a questionnaire software called Digium Enterprise which we could use to make the form, get the answers we needed and to report the results.

Due to the lack of people's knowledge about Robson's restaurant we needed to implement the questionnaire on-site which was at the Super Park Vuokatti where Robson's restaurant was located. This also gave us the opportunity to get answers from people who had used Robson's services before and from people who had not. This was a crucial factor since we also needed to know if experiencing Robson's services would alter the image the customer hold of the company.

We set up a table of our own next to the entrance to Robson's restaurant with two laptops which people then used to take the questionnaire. The table was set up so that people could get a glimpse inside the restaurant to be able to answer some of the questions better.

We had the questionnaire at Super Park Vuokatti for two days in 21.1.2015 – 22.1.2015 with approximately five hours a day starting at the time the park opened. As an incentive to get people to take the questionnaire we handed out drink-tickets which the people could use to get beverages for free from inside Robson's restaurant. The people who took the questionnaire were mostly incoming and outgoing Super Park's customers.

4.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire's frame was formed by thinking about some of the most pressing issues and hopes that Robson's restaurant had. Some issues were for example if the marketing they had done had reached people outside Kainuu, if Robson's was seen as a restaurant or a fast-food place, how the activity park affects people's desire to dine at Robson's and what other companies people saw competing with Robson's.

The management also had some hopes for the company and a certain desired image for it. They wanted to be considered as a diner instead of just a park restaurant, which in general has an extremely bad image in Finland.

The first two questions in the questionnaire were about the customers and not about the company. We wanted to know if the respondents were living in Kainuu region and what the approximate ages of the respondents were. We thought it was good to know if the people were from the local region so with the following questions we could find out if the respondents' places of residence affected their knowledge about Robson's restaurant.

In the next three questions we went deeper into marketing territory and people's prior experiences about the company. We asked if the respondents had heard of Robson's before their current visit and if they answered positively to that question, we asked where from they had heard about the company. As the options we used the marketing channels Robson's had used earlier such as news papers, social media, roadside signs and so on. The fifth question was one of the questions we used to split the answers when reporting the results. There we asked if people answering the questionnaire had used Robson's services before, and this was important since we wanted to find out if people who had experienced Robson's services had a different image of the company and how their image differs from those who had no previous experience of the services.

Next question was related to the quality of Robson's services, products and the restaurant as a facility. We asked on a numeric scale how the people saw Robson's cleanliness, food, staff and the price to quality ratio. These are some of the main points that the customer experience and notice when eating at a restaurant and we wanted to know how people feel Robson's succeeds in those areas or how they believe it succeeds.

Next question was about the effect the activity park has on Robson's atmosphere. This was on a numeric scale and once again it was important for us to find out if people thought the activity park's noise and presence had a negative effect on the dining experience since this was our first assumption. It was also important for us to find out if people who had already used Robson's services had a different opinion on the matter than those who had not visited Robson's yet.

Then we went to the image part of Robson's restaurant as a company and had the questionnaire's first open question. Here we asked which three other companies people saw as Robson's main competitors. We asked this to see what type of restaurants, diners and fast-food places people associated or compared Robson's to.

Next question was also related to company image on the basis of our hypothesis and Robson's desired company image. We asked on a numeric scale if people saw Robson's more as a fast food place or a diner. This was an important question since Robson's wants to move from the fast-food image to being considered as a diner.

Then we had our second open question related to company image where we asked people to describe Robson's in four separate words. In this question we decided not to give the people any options on how they saw Robson's to get honest responses and see if their four words correlate with the adjectives that Robson's management wants the people to feel about the restaurant.

Our eleventh questions was similar to the previous one but here we gave people the adjectives that Robson's wants to be and used the LIKERT-scale (a method of giving a quantitative value to a qualitative data in order to make it usable for statistical analysis) so we could see how people felt about the accuracy of those claims. This was an important question to use because it gave us an idea how far the current company image was from the desired company image.

As the closing question we asked people to speak freely about the company and what they would change about it and what opinions they had about Robson's in general.

5 REPORTING AND ANALYZING THE RESULTS

In this chapter we go through the findings we got with the image questionnaire at Robson's Vuokatti. The results are first reported and then analysed.

5.1 Place of residence
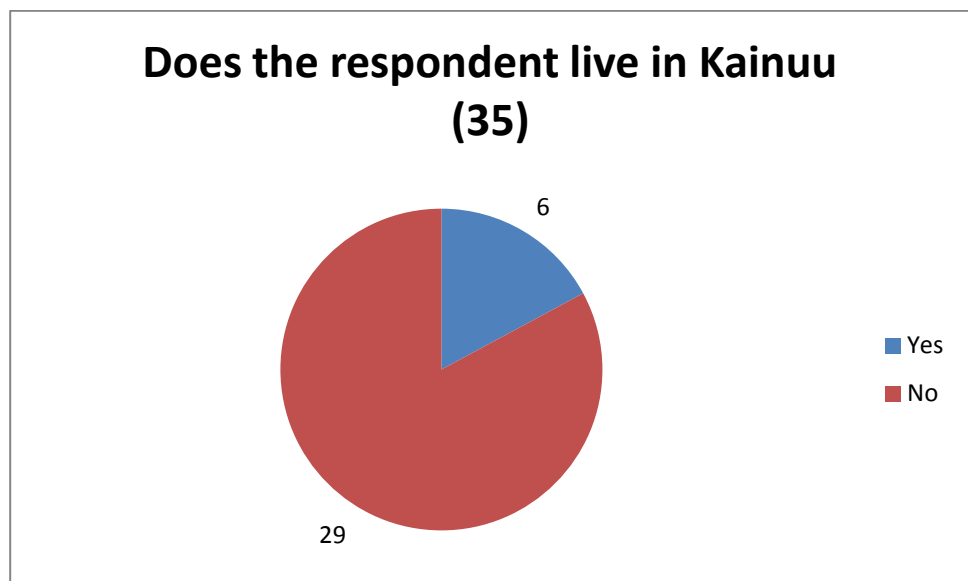
Of our 35 respondents 29 lived outside Kainuu region and six people lived in Kainuu.

This result was pretty surprising and disappointing since we wanted to compare the marketing reach of Robson's between the people who live outside Kainuu to those who live in Kainuu. This result can be explained with Vuokatti being a popular tourist destination which pulls tourists from multiple different regions even from further away.

5.2 Respondents' ages
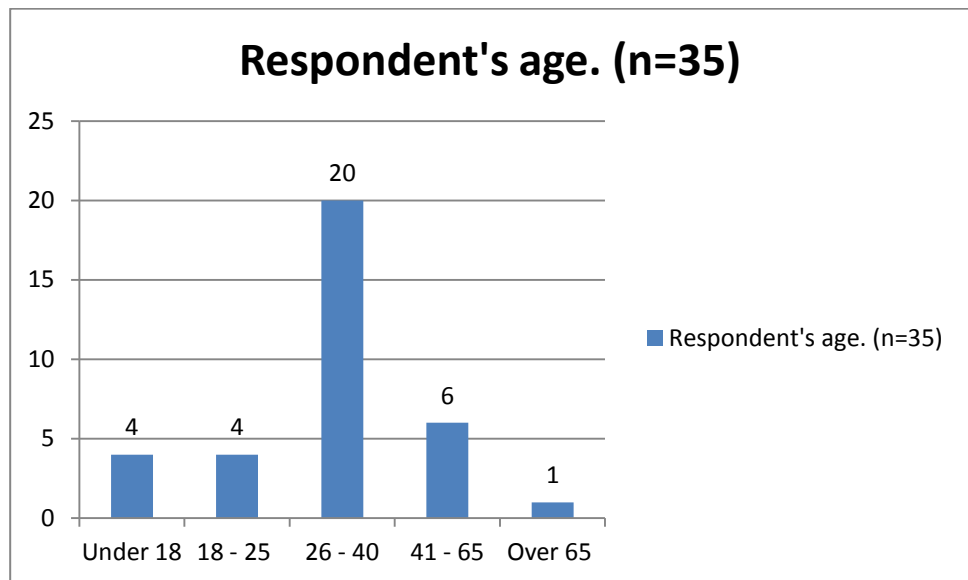
The vast majority of our respondents were between the ages 26 to 40. Four respondents were under 18 and four between 18 and 25. Six respondents were between 41 and 65 and one respondent was a pensioner over the age of 65.

20 respondents were between 26 and 40 because Super Park Vuokatti's customers were mostly young families with small children. Of those families we asked the parents to participate in the questionnaire since although children affect the decision making progress, they are not the ones who make the final purchase decision and the questionnaire would have been too difficult for them to answer.

5.3 Respondents' knowledge of Robson's restaurant before current visit

Have the respondents heard of Robson's before current visit. (n=35)
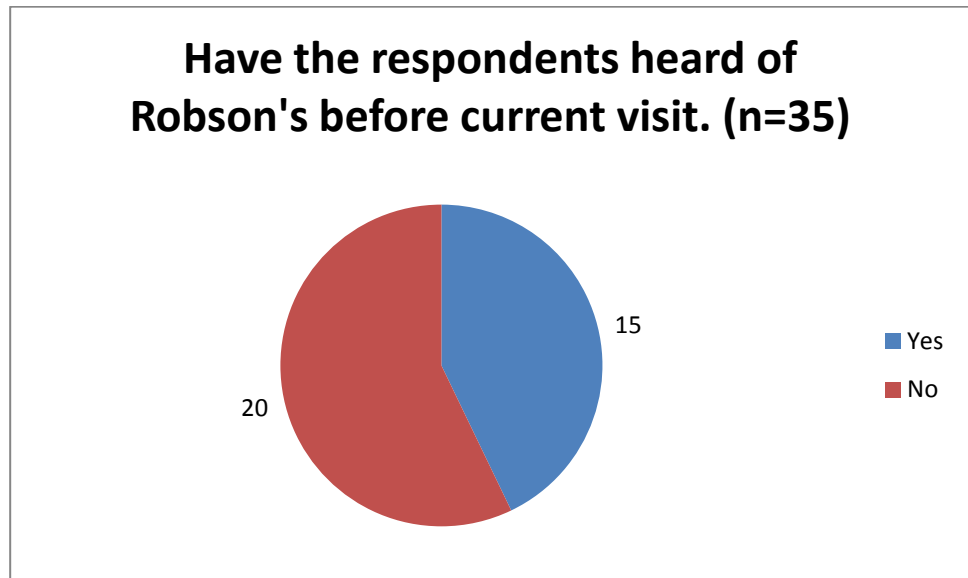
Of our 35 respondents 15 had heard about Robson's before and 20 had not.

5.3.1 From where they heard of Robson's

From where have the respondents heard about Robson's (multiple choices per respondent)
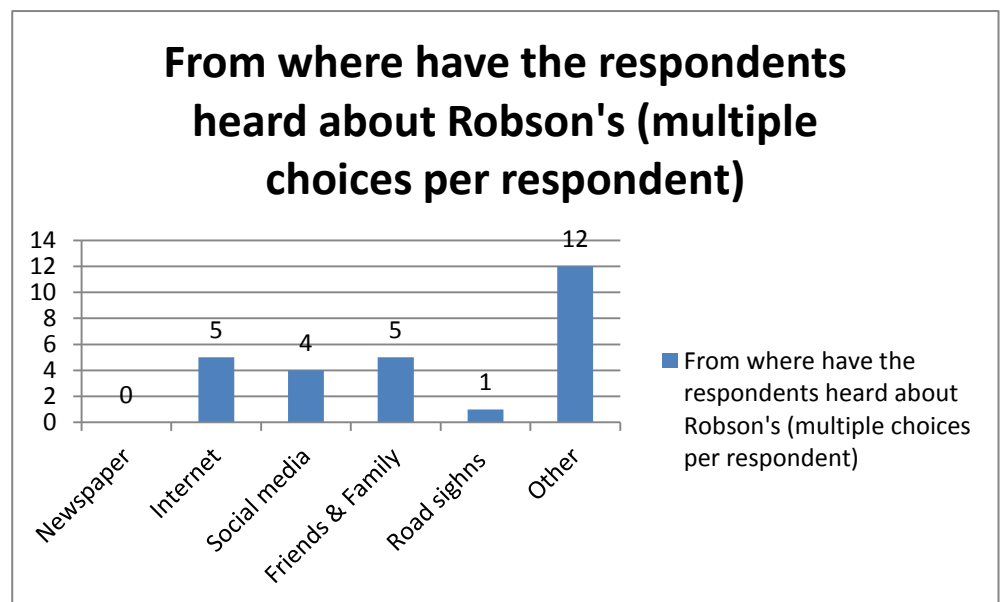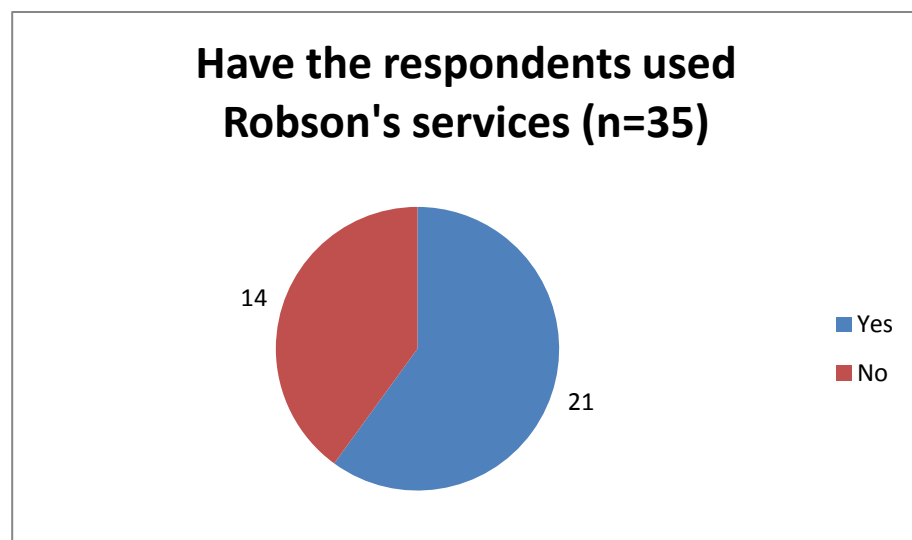
Five respondents had heard of Robson's from the internet, five from friends and family and four from social media. Also one person knew Robson's from roadside signs and ten from their earlier visits.

Robson's Vuokatti does not currently have its own website so the people who had heard of it from the internet most likely found it from Super Park's website where Robson's is present. Robson's does however have its own social media sites on Facebook and Instagram. Robson's Vuokatti currently (25.2.2015) has 233 likes on Facebook and 79 followers on Instagram.

Robson's also does some marketing with extreme sport events held in Super Park Vuokatti and they sponsor Sotkamo's Jymy Finnish baseball team and have a logo on their team's shirts. This however does not show in our results since a huge majority of our respondents were from outside Kainuu.

5.4 Have the respondents used Robson's services

Of our 35 respondents 21 had used Robson's services earlier and 14 had not. In our earlier question only 15 respondents had heard of Robson's before their current visit. This contradiction can be explained with people using Robson's services in Vuokatti on the same day as our questionnaire but they went to Robson's before answering the questionnaire.

The result was quite surprising since we expected most people to have been in Super Park Vuokatti but not in Robson's.

5.5 Respondents' opinions on Robson's cleanliness, food, staff and price to quality ratio

The answers for these questions were already given and they varied from 1. very bad, 2. bad, 3. average, 4. good and 5. very good.

We also tested the correlation between these questions to if the respondents had used Robson's services earlier to see if experiencing the restaurant's services affected their opinion.

5.5.1 Robson's cleanliness
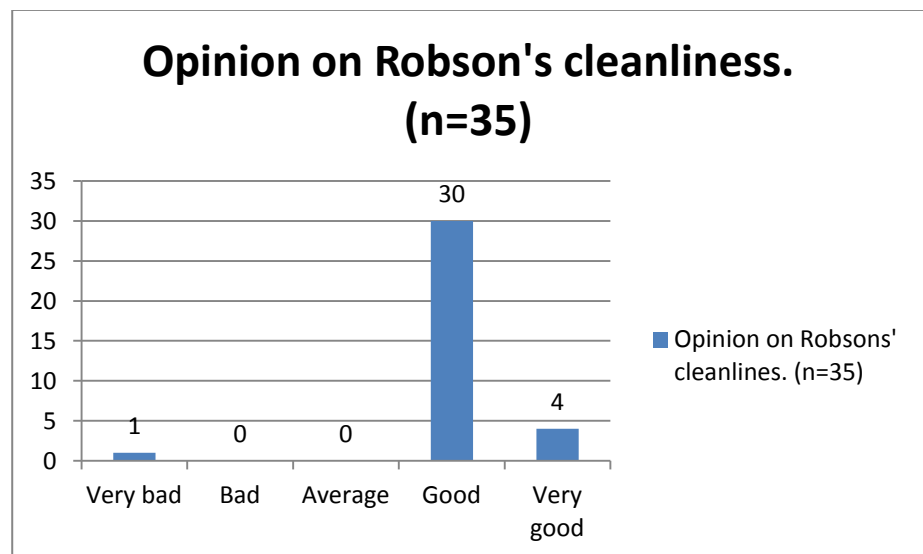
The mean for this question was 4,03 and a median of "good". This means the majority of respondents thought the cleanliness of Robson's was good. One person thought the cleanliness was very bad and four thought it was very good.

5.5.2 Robson's food
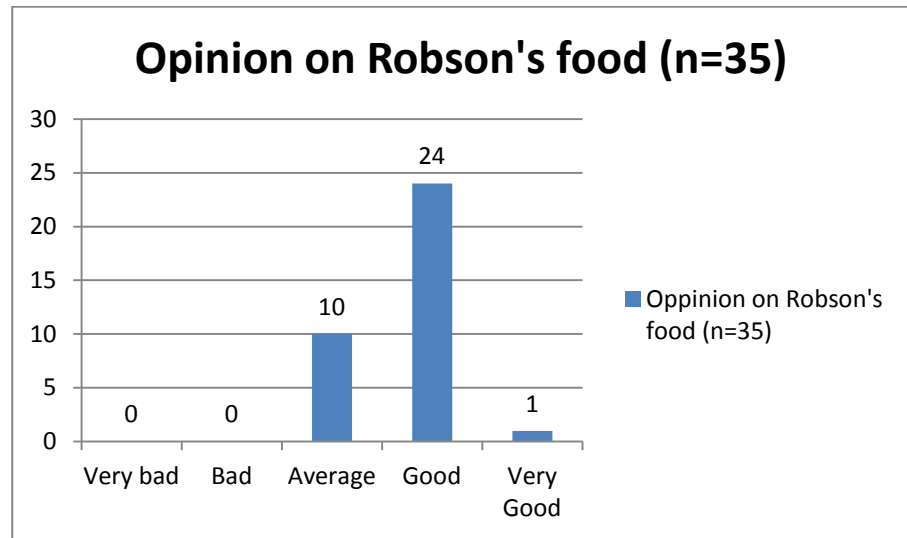
When asking about Robson's food we got a mean of 3.74 and a median of "good". The mean was a little bit below "good" but still closer to it than "average".

On paper this result seems quite good for Robson's food but we wonder if the "Finnish mentality" has an effect on the result. Finnish people have a tendency to be a little bit too positive when asked about their experiences with the products and services they use. For example at a restaurant when asked if the customer enjoyed their food they might say "yes" but then complain about it to their friends and family. This might mean that the grade "very good" is actually "good", the grade "good" is "average" and so on.

Another factor is that the questionnaire was held next to Robson's restaurant and we were doing this work for Robson's. For this reason we tried to distance ourselves from the situation and not look over the respondents' shoulders while they were doing the questionnaire.

5.5.3 Robson's staff
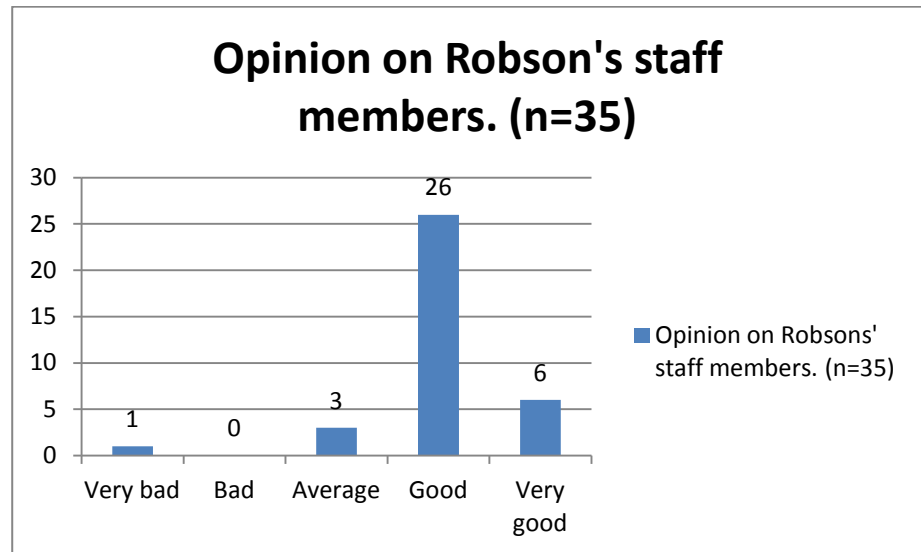
Of Robson's staff the opinions were very positive with 26 respondents said their opinion of the staff is good and a few said average and very good. The mean was 4.09 and median was "good". This question is mostly based on the assumed image even for those that have used Robson's services since the customer contacts in Robson's are minimal. This is due to the fact that there are really no waiters in Robson's since the customers go and pick their food from the counter next to the kitchen when the food is ready. The only customer contacts in Robson's happen over a counter with the employee who takes the orders.

5.5.4 Robson's price to quality ratio

Opinion on Robson's price to quality ratio. (n=35)
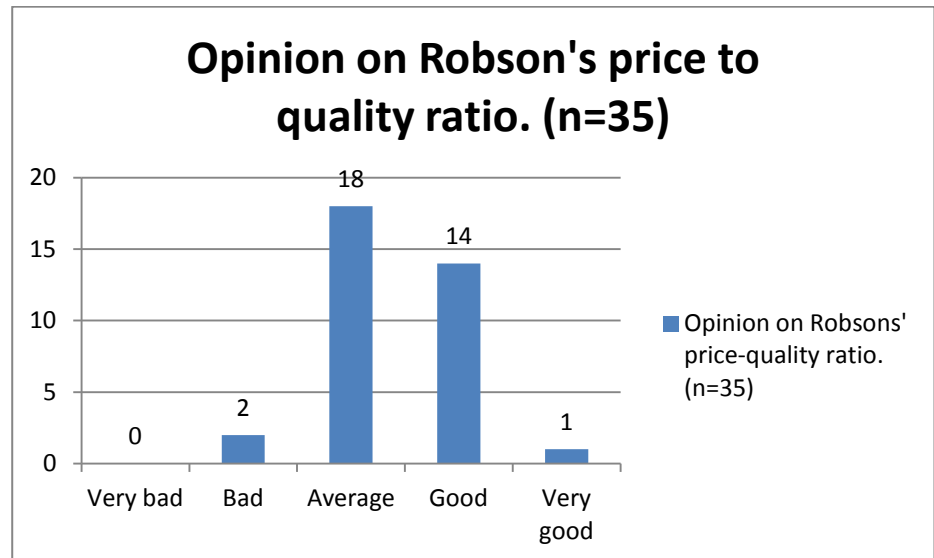
As for Robson's price to quality ratio the results are not too promising since the majority with 18 votes said the ratio is average. 14 said the ratio is good, two said bad and one said it was very good. The mean for this question was 3.40 with a median of "average". Considering that the food was rated very positively it tells a lot about what people thought about the pricing of Robson's. These results are also supported by the open qualitative questions we had where people could freely give feedback and suggestions to Robson's. In those answers a lot of respondents said the pricing is too expensive and it should be cheaper for families with young children.

The poor score of Robson's price to quality ratio could also be explained with people having a fast-food restaurant image of Robson's and expecting similar prices as in for example Hesburger and McDonald's.

5.6 Activity park's effect on Robson's restaurant's atmosphere.
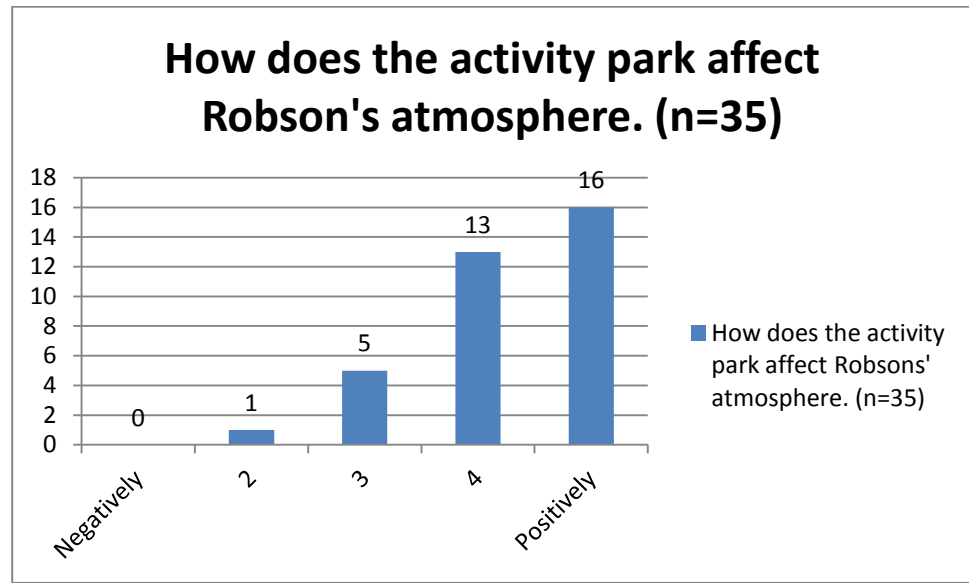
We asked on a scale of 1. (negatively) to 5. (positively) what kind of effect the activity park next to Robson's has on the restaurant's atmosphere and the responses were very positive. The results' mean was 4.26 with a median of 4.00. The mode however was 5.00 meaning that majority of the respondents thought the park has a positive effect on Robson's atmosphere.

When we split the responders of this question to the people who have used Robson's services and to those who have not we see a difference. The contingency coefficient between those to groups was 0,452 meaning there is a quite noticeable correlation with how people answered and if they had used Robson's services.

When split into numbers we see that the people who had used Robson's services gave the activity park's effect on Robson's a mean of 4,01 where as the people who had not used the services gave it a mean of 4,50. This means that with our sample group the atmosphere seemed to drop a little after the people visited Robson's. This could be due to the activity park's noise bothering the dining experience. Despite this the results from both groups were very positive so it is not a concern for Robson's.

5.7 Robson's main competitors

Respondents opinions on what are Robson's main competitors. (n=50) (three answers per respondent)

- Hesburger: 18
- Amarillo: 8
- Mcdonalds: 7
- Subway: 2
- Rosso: 2
- Katinkulta: 2
- ABC: 2
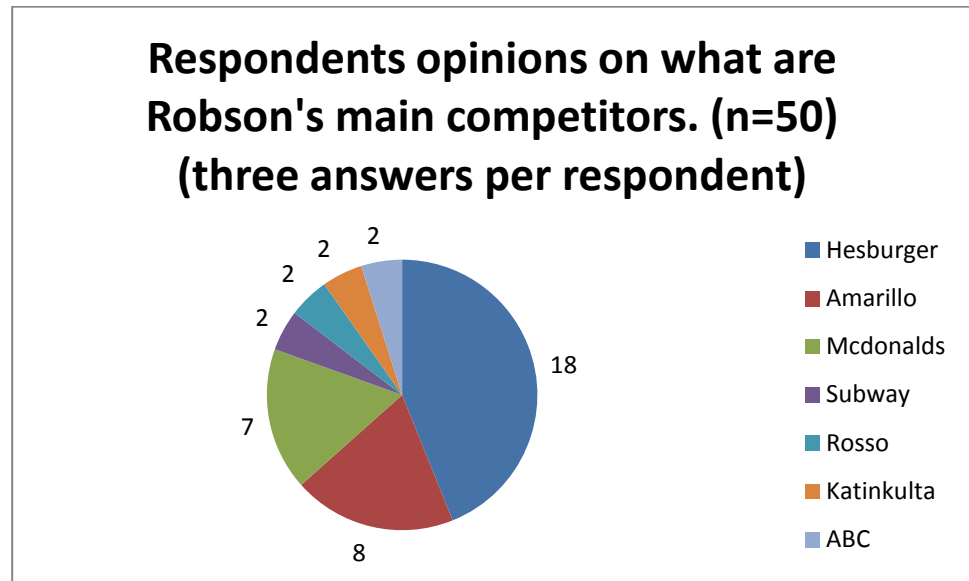
We asked the respondents to list their top three main competitors for Robson's and a few companies stood out. A huge majority with 18 votes was Hesburger followed by Amarillo with eight votes and McDonalds with seven votes. Hesburger and Amarillo are located in Vuokatti just like Robson's so these two were among the expected results. The fact that Hesburger easily won Amarillo shows that the respondents saw Robson's more as a fast-food restaurant rather than a diner.

This result supports the average price to quality ratio that Robson's got in an earlier question if people compare its prices with Hesburger.

Some of the other answers included for example ABC, Katinkulta, Rosso and other family restaurants and Subway of which all got the same amount of votes.

5.8 As what sort of a restaurant the respondents saw Robson's

As what sort of a restaurant does the respondent see Robson's (n=35)

18	
16	
14	
12	
10	
8	
6	
4	
2	
0	

Fast food restaurant   Luxury

Bars: 11, 17, 5, 2, 0

Legend: As what sort of a restaurant does the respondent see Robson's (n=35)
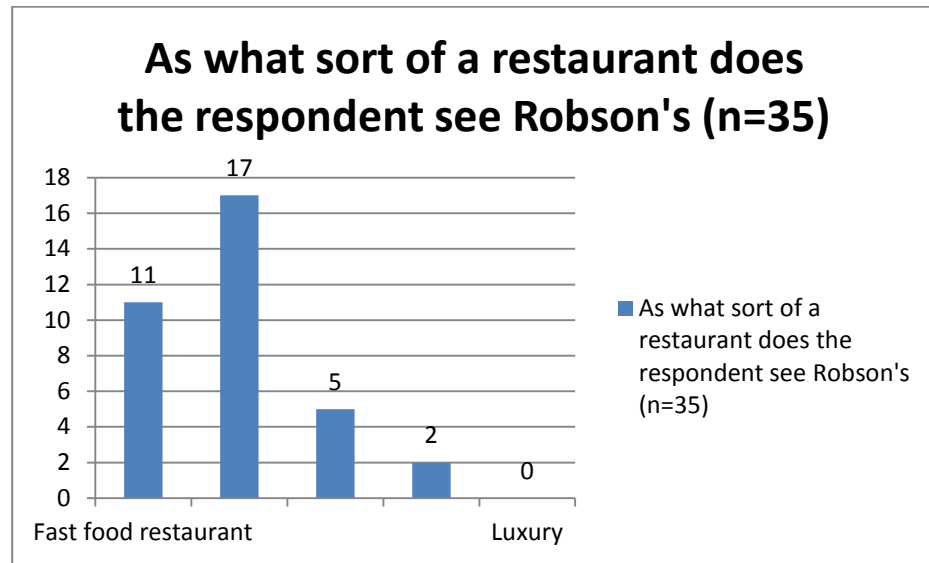
In this question we asked the respondents on a scale of 1. (fast-food restaurant) to 5. (luxury restaurant) as what kind of Restaurant they viewed Robson's. The mean for this question was 1,94 with a median of 2.00. Only two people saw Robson's to be closer to a luxury restaurant than a fast-food place and five people thought it was between those two options. So a huge majority thought that Robson's is clearly closer to a fast-food place.

Even though Robson's is not hoping to be a luxury restaurant we hoped more people would have voted somewhere between luxury and fast-food. This result supports and is supported by some of the earlier questions about price to quality ratio and Robson's main competitors.

There was also no clear distinction between the group that had used the services before and those who had not (contingency coefficient 0,292). This means that experiencing Robson's services had not changed the respondents' minds of Robson's being more of a fast-food place. This proves to be a major concern for Robson's image and marketing and it requires looking into.

5.9 Respondents' opinions on Robson's being family friendly, modern, local and a diner

The answers for these questions were given with the LIKERT-scale which allowed us to see if the respondents agreed or disagreed with some of the things Robson's claims and desired to be.

5.9.1 Robson's is family friendly
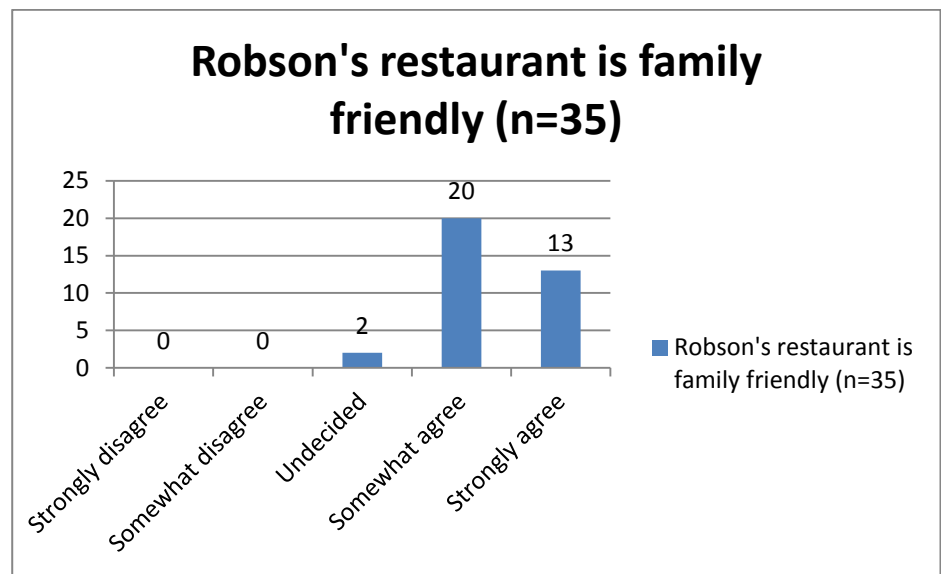
None of the respondents disagreed with this claim and a majority with 20 responses somewhat agreed with it. This result was to be expected since Robson's is located in the same facility as an activity park and the restaurant has multiple big screens showing Angry Birds and sport related videos suitable for young children.

5.9.2 Robson's is modern
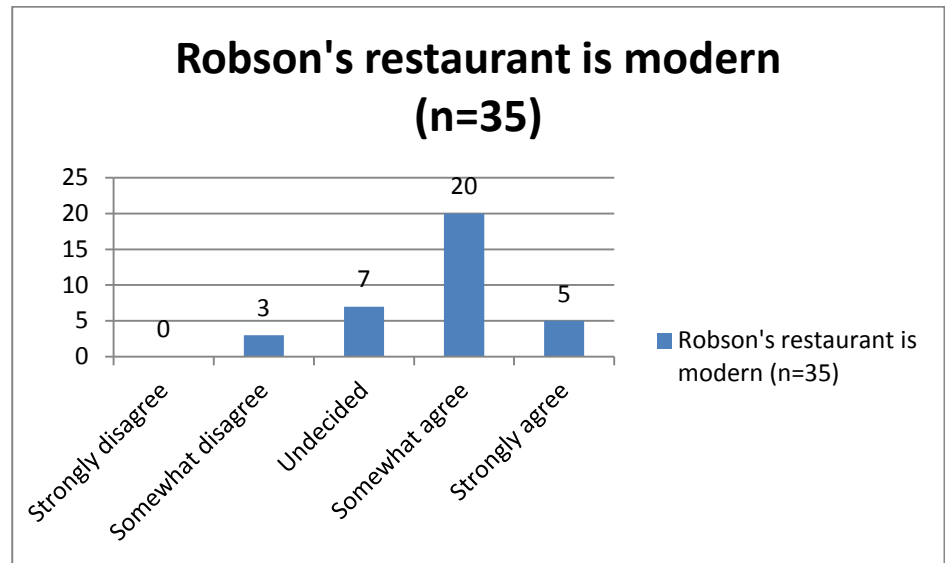
The vast majority of respondents (20 votes) somewhat agreed with the claim that Robson's is modern. Three people somewhat disagreed, seven were undecided and five agreed. Robson's could be considered modern with its big screens showing various videos, its way of food delivery, sockets for most of the seating places and a free wireless internet connection.

When the respondents were split into the two groups of people who had used Robson's services and those who had not there was a correlation on if they thought the restaurant was modern. The contingency coefficient was 0.419 and when inspecting the numbers none of the people who had been to Robson's disagreed with the claim and four people fully agreed. Of those who had not been to Robson's three people somewhat disagreed and only one fully agreed.

5.9.3 Robson's is local

Robson's restaurant is local (n=35)
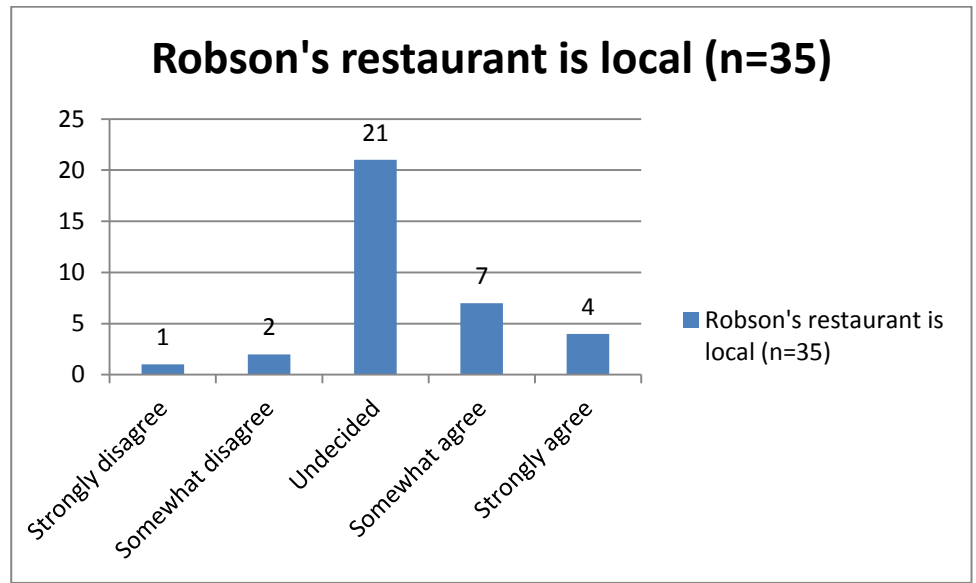
For this claim the responses were mostly undecided. A few people agreed and a few disagreed but the big number of undecided votes can be explained with the place of residence of the respondents. Majority of the respondents were from outside Kainuu which makes it difficult for them to assess if Robson's is local or not. People living in Kainuu might have had a better understanding of the restaurant and the origin of Robson's resulting in an opinion to one way or the other.

Robson's has restaurants in Oulu and Vantaa as well but the brand and first Robson's came from Vuokatti so it could have been expected that the respondents had agreed with the claim of locality.

5.9.4 Robson's is a diner
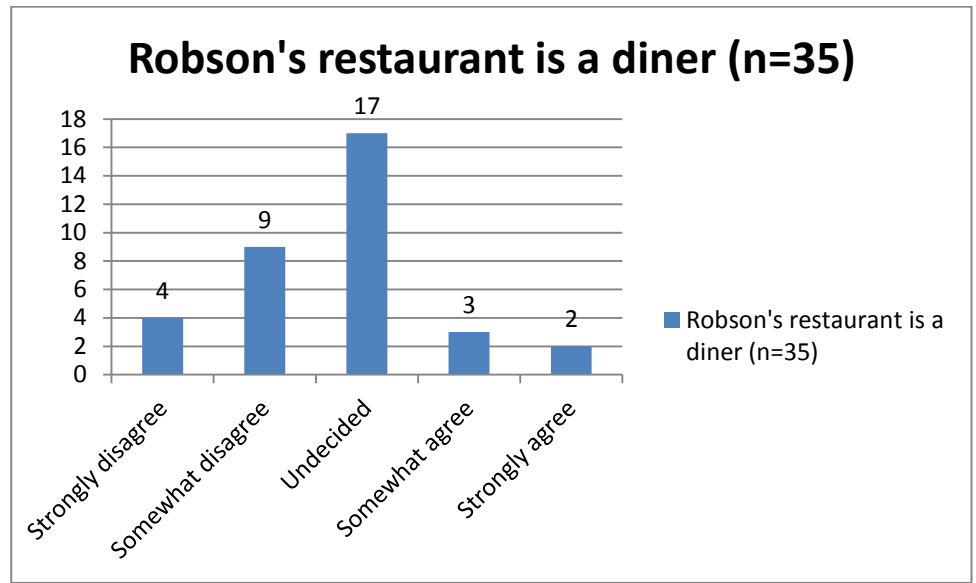
When we claimed in the questionnaire that Robson's is a diner majority of the respondents were undecided. This was to be expected since the respondents were mostly from outside Kainuu and probably had never had lunch in Robson's or did not even know if they serve lunch. The next biggest group with nine respondents somewhat disagreed with the claim and third biggest group disagreed with the claim. So only three people somewhat agreed and two people agreed.

This shows that Robson's really was not considered a diner amongst our sample group. This is a bad thing for Robson's since they want to be considered a diner but the result was also very predictable. At the moment Robson's does not have a consistent lunch schedule and it is often organised only when they expect enough people to show up during lunch time. It is impossible to expect people to come to lunch in your restaurant when they cannot be sure that the restaurant is serving lunch that day. It would not even make sense to change the image towards being accepted as a diner before some organisational things have been changed inside the company. This would only results in a mixed company image resulting in the lack of trust and reputation.

5.10 Respondents' description of Robson's with four words

Respondents descriptions of Robson's (four answers per repondent)

Legend
Tidy
Modern
Friendly
Fastfood
Comfortable
Dreary
Family friendly
Youthful
Expensive
Good food
Fun
Calorie - rich
Quality
Open
Unhealthy
Easy
Fast
Light

Pie chart values: 11, 7, 6, 6, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2
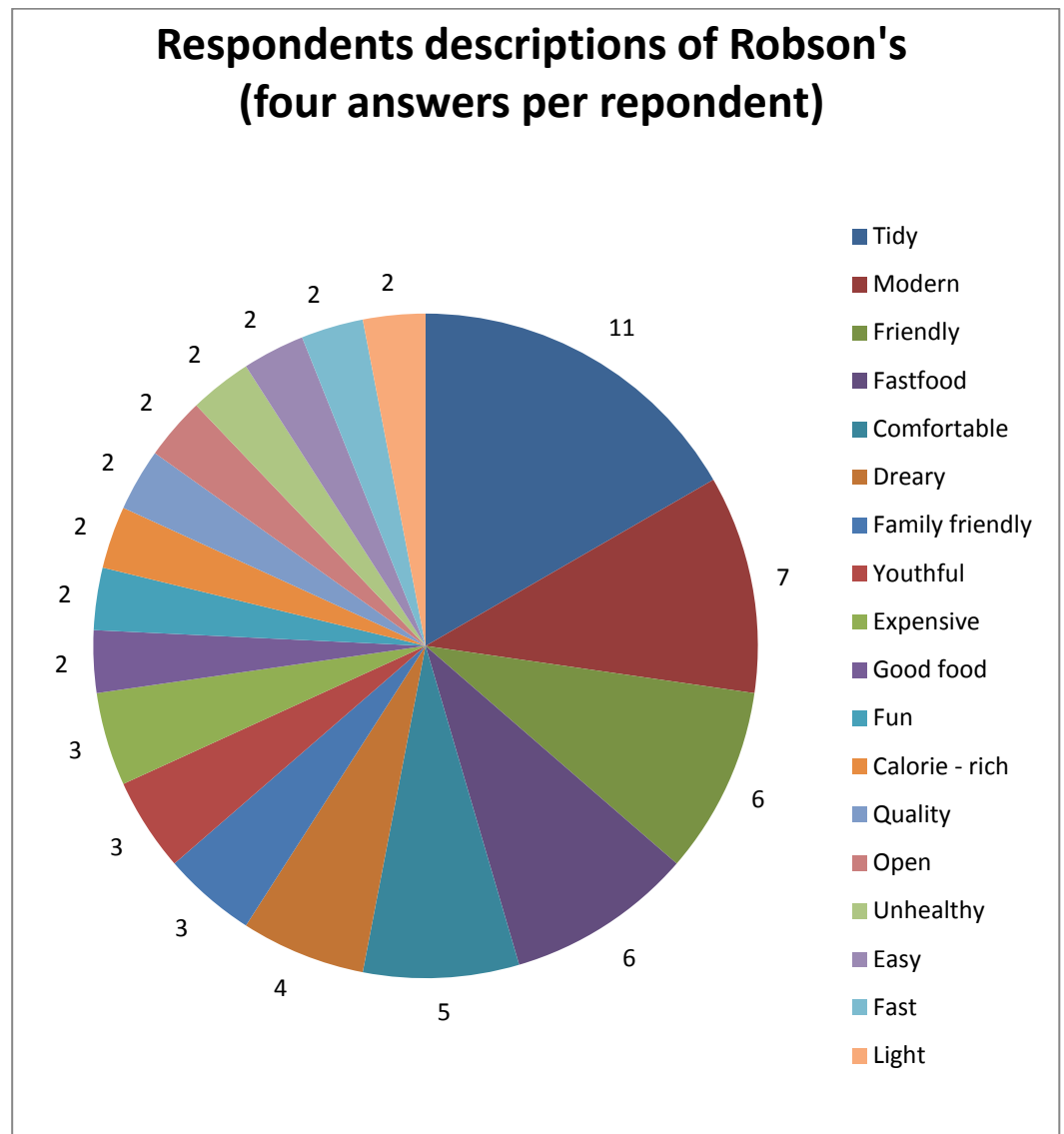
In order for us to find out the identity of Robson's, we asked the responders how they would describe Robson's restaurant in four adjectives.

As seen from the chart, cleanliness, modern, fast-food and friendly are the most common adjectives that came up. From these adjectives can be said in general that Robson's sends out a positive image towards most of the customers. In the adjectives the fast food theme came up many times which we had expected, respondents also criticized Robson's ambience, pricing and that it feels a little bit empty from inside. The responders also felt that the menu is balanced a bit too much on the unhealthy side and that it has an industrial feel to it.

5.11 Respondents' opinions on changes that should be made to Robson's (open ended questions)

The most common changes or improvements that the respondents would like to see are healthier menu and a wider range of choices in the menu. Robson's has currently seven different dishes on the menu and they are all placed on a display above the counter.

Secondly the respondents wanted the meals to be cheaper. Everything could be always cheaper, that is a very common comment and feedback that Robson's receives daily. From this could be said that the people expect more for their money when looking at the menu. They are easily comparing the products to any fast food chains menu because it is a more burger oriented menu at the moment.

If the respondents think that they are not getting the product and service for the money that they spend, then an improvement would be to make the customer aware of the quality of the food, for example explaining on the menu that the meat that is used in our hamburgers are made of 100% pure beef. This technique makes the customer aware of what they are buying and could make them more accepting to the prices that they are paying.

Some of the other comments and opinions were more focused on the general appearance of the restaurant. Respondents thought that it could be more family friendly with more colors and to get rid of the industrial feel of the restaurant.

6 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter we give suggestions on how to develop Robson's image to the desired level of the commissioning party. The suggestions are based on theoretical research, the results we got from the image survey performed at Robson's Vuokatti and our own opinions and views of the restaurant.

6.1 Marketing

A lot of the feedback we got from the respondents of our questionnaire said the meals are too expensive. Since the food was rated very positively this suggests that customers at first glance expect the restaurant to be a fast-food place and except the prices accordingly. The restaurant should communicate good quality to the consumer so they are aware of where the price comes from.

This can be done by multiple ways such as informing the customer where the food ingredients come from, freshness of the ingredients or perhaps giving a face to the quality by introducing the restaurant manager's experience in the industry. When buying a meal from Robson's you currently only get a soda with your food and this is very similar to most fast-food restaurants. To communicate quality Robson's should offer different drinks to choose from with your food such as sugar free drinks and milk.

Robson's Vuokatti currently has a pretty narrow menu and from the customer feedback we noticed that people wanted a more diverse menu with different types of dishes. For example Robson's Vuokatti only offers one type of salad and three types of burgers of which one is a kids' meal. A very short menu does not communicate quality or more importantly effort to thrive from the restaurant.

The menu should be expanded with more products with healthier options which would go well with the activity park's sporty image and also the ongoing trend of eating healthily.

Since Robson's was established in Vuokatti it should use locality as a marketing gimmick. It could for example connect its meals with local providers and businesses. This builds a trust with the consumers when they can see and recognize local companies and names associated with Robson's.

6.2 Robson's brand

Currently Robson's has three restaurants all of which operate in different regions of Finland. There are major differences between the restaurants in terms of menu and appearance. Robson's Oulu and Vantaa have a clear lunch schedule with a menu and overall more information about them than Robson's Vuokatti. For this reason Robson's Vuokatti is not consistent with the Robson's brand. According to Kotler (Kotler 1997) an image starts forming when it is communicated in different places and channels and it is important to keep in mind that the image should be consistent and have the same message. If the image is perceived differently depending on the place, region or the marketing channel the company send out contra dictionary making it harder for the public to get a clear image of the company.

At the moment Super Park Vuokatti and Super Park Oulu have their own separate web sites where as Super Park Vantaa does not. All of the parks can be found by going through www.superpark.fi from where you can choose which park you wish to look at. When you go through this site all the Robson's pages looks similar with the same colour theme and logo but when you use Vuokatti's and Oulu's own pages, Oulu shows a different type of Robson's logo and Vuokatti's does not show a logo at all.

For consistency and unification either each park should have their own separate website or none of them should. The www.superpark.fi page should perhaps be the only way to access these parks' pages since it also shows every town where a Super Park is located which increases recognisability and knowledge about the brand.

Robson's Oulu and Vantaa have a clear lunch schedule with the menu given out well beforehand but Robson's Vuokatti page does not inform about their lunch schedule. They however have a button on their website which says "Week's lunch menu" and pressing this

gives a message that lunch menus have not been published yet. Robson's Vuokatti serves lunch on the weekends and some times during the week and these schedules and menus should be published on the website each week as soon as they are known.

6.3 Internet coverage

Robson's Vuokatti does not have its own web page yet and as Timo Rope said "*if you are not online you do not exist*" (Rope 2000, 331). The first things Robson's Vuokatti should do is design its own web page or a web page with all three of Finland's Robson's restaurants and design a page where you can choose which Robson's to look at.

Currently Robson's is linked to Super Park's web page so in order to find Robson's online you need to go through Super Park's page. This adds additional steps for the consumer to find Robson's and as a company you want to be found with the least amount of effort possible.

From the web page you need to easily be able to find the restaurant's menu, opening hours, key staff members, partner companies, contact details and even the restaurant's origins. The page should also immediately show the restaurant's theme, appearance, logo and have the possibility to give feedback to the restaurant in order in involve the customer in the company's development.

6.4 Restaurant functionality and appearance

One of the main wishes from the commissioning party was that Robson's would be considered as a diner instead of only an activity park restaurant. The main thing to change about the restaurant's services to be accepted as a diner is to add a consistent lunch schedule. It should be clear for the consumer when Robson's serves lunch and what is on the menu that day.

The lunch setting should also be made to look a bit more inviting since at the moment it looks too industrial. The comments we received described the restaurant to be gloomy and

the cashier side did not fit the overall image of the restaurant. The dining room was described as colorful and family friendly but the cashier side and the view to the kitchen are bleak and were said to be inconsistent with the dining room. These two sides should be unified in appearance since they are part of the same restaurant and both affect the customer experience.

6.5 Things to ponder

A wish from the commissioning party was to attract more locals to the park and restaurant and as seen from the demographic of our survey respondents the majority of customers are from outside Kainuu region. Ways to give locals an incentive to visit the park and restaurant more often they could offer locals reasonable discounts to season passes or develop some kind of regular visitors programme with for example discounts or benefits with other local companies. This is a good way to involve the customer more in the company and increase their brand loyalty.

Although this kind of sales promotion is considered a short term incentive to get the customer to buy the product immediately it has the possibility to build long lasting customer relationships. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 469)

One of the park's customers described the appearance of Robson's to be similar to the fast food chain Hesburger with its color scheme and the food displays above the cashier counter. This gave the customer the immediate image of a fast food restaurant instead of a diner which Robson's thrives to be.

Robson's meals are all named in English which gives out a modern vibe but it is hard for many people to pronounce or remember. This might even deter some people from dining at the restaurant. This feedback came from one of the customers during our survey and has also been noticed by an employee at Robson's.

As one of the authors of this thesis is an employee of Robson's Vuokatti he has noticed that many customers have requests for more choices of coffee. A suggestion is to invest in a coffee machine that has multiple options for coffee such as espresso, cappuccino and others.

This would please a certain amount of customers who have other preferences for their coffee.

7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we shortly go through what was the goal of the image research, what were the actual results and was the research successful. We then go through how the results were used to form proper suggestions to develop Robson's Vuokatti's image. We also discuss and speculate what the future holds for Robson's Vuokatti.

The goal of the image research was to find out the public's image of Robson's restaurant and see if the results support the hypothesis we and the commissioning party had of the image.

The results were very supportive of our hypothesis but the small sample size of the respondents made the results perhaps a bit questionable and we could not assume that the results of our respondents could be applied to the public as a whole. In the end the image questionnaire proved to be very good and gave us the needed information to come to a conclusion of the current image.

With the survey we found that the current image of Robson's Vuokatti is unclear to the public and without a clear theme or purpose. People thought Robson's food was good but still saw it as an overpriced fast food restaurant. They also thought that Robson's did not offer enough variety with their meals and there were not enough healthy options on the menu.

To the people it was unclear if Robson's is a local based company or not since they were quite indecisive to the question if Robson's was local or not. Also overall they pried about Robson's not fitting in the activity park theme as such and being too separated from the activity park in its outer appearance.

In advantage of Robson's, good and encouraging feedback was given on its cleanliness, modern appearance, family friendliness and friendliness of the staff members.

Robson's does have some promising opportunities as a restaurant such as its link to the more well known Super Park brand and that it is something new. These opportunities need to be utilized in its marketing and emphasize the positive aspects to get people intrigued about Robson's.

Especially for Robson's Vuokatti it needs to increase its recognisability. At the moment Robson's seems to be a bit forgettable as people come to the activity park but often just skip going to Robson's even though it is in the same facility. Robson's outer appearance just does not peak people's curiosity and we feel it needs to make its theme and logo way more apparent. Robson's needs integrated marketing and going more multichannel with it. Robson's strongest selling point is the linkage with Super Park and Robson's needs to take advantage of it more.

However we feel that before the marketing buff Robson's Vuokatti needs to change some things from within such as expand the menu with more variety and developing a more consistent lunch schedule.

Whatever Robson's Vuokatti decides to do it always needs to take into consideration the brand of Robson's since there are three of them in Finland and they need to have a similar unified brand image to avoid a mixed company image. Here integration is key and all of Robson's restaurants need to work together to build customer relationships. When all of the Robson's restaurants give a coherent message about the brand it creates a strong link which is then rewarded by trust in the company and of course increased recognisability.

It will not be easy but with the proper marketing actions and the restaurant's functionality improvements Robson's Vuokatti will be able to achieve the commissioning party's desired company image. However as Selin & Selin (Selin & Selin 2013) said "*It all comes down to the customer*".

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LIST OF APPENDICES

- Robson's image questionnaire

Appendix 1. Robson's image questionnaire – Questions and answering options

- Is your place of residence in Kainuu?

    o Yes

    o No

- Your age is

    o Under 18

    o 18 – 25

    o 26 – 40

    o 41 – 65

    o Over 65

- Have you heard of Robson's restaurant before current visit?

    o Yes

    o No

- From where you have heard of Robson's? (multiple answers possible)

    o Friends and family

    o Newspaper

    o Internet

    o Social media

    o Roadside signs

    o Somewhere else, where _____

- Have you used Robson's services?

  - Yes

  - No

- What is your opinion on Robson's cleanliness?

  - Very good

  - Good

  - Average

  - Bad

  - Very bad

- What is your opinion on Robson's food?

  - Very good

  - Good

  - Average

  - Bad

  - Very bad

- What is your opinion on Robson's staff?

  - Very good

  - Good

  - Average

  - Bad

  - Very bad

- What is your opinion on Robson's price to quality ratio?

  o Very good

  o Good

  o Average

  o Bad

  o Very bad

- The activity park affects Robson's atmosphere

  o 5. Positively

  o 4.

  o 3.

  o 2.

  o 1. Negatively

- Name in your opinion Robson's three main competitors

  o _____

  o _____

  o _____

- As what sort of a restaurant you see Robson's as?

  o Luxury restaurant

  o

  o

  o

- o Fast-food restaurant

The following claims match Robson's restaurant:

- Robson's restaurant is family friendly

    - o Agree

    - o Somewhat agree

    - o Undecided

    - o Somewhat disagree

    - o Disagree

- Robson's restaurant is modern

    - o Agree

    - o Somewhat agree

    - o Undecided

    - o Somewhat disagree

    - o Disagree

- Robson's restaurant is local

    - o Agree

    - o Somewhat agree

    - o Undecided

    - o Somewhat disagree

    - o Disagree

- Robson's restaurant is a diner

- o Agree

- o Somewhat agree

- o Undecided

- o Somewhat disagree

- o Disagree

- Describe Robson's restaurant in four words

    - o _____

    - o _____

    - o _____

    - o _____

- Development suggestions / opinions

    - o _____