Where is my mind?
Brand positioning & the City of Stockholm as perceived by international visitors.

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Abstract

This paper discusses brand positioning as a core concept in customers’ expectations and perceptions by analysing the role of service quality. The limited research in this field is unwarranted considering the importance of the concept. The aim of this paper is to describe the brand positioning of the City of Stockholm as a tourist destination, whilst exploring tourists’ expectations and perceptions about service quality in the city. The data collected is based on the qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted with 30 international informants. The resulting data shows that there is a definitive gap between expectations and perceptions, which means that visitors are not wholly satisfied with the service quality experienced in Stockholm. Suggestions for improvements are offered.

Keywords: Brand positioning, brand identity, brand image, service quality SERVQUAL, tourist expectations, tourist perceptions, customer satisfaction, Stockholm.
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“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”

- Vince Lomabri

1. Introduction

Everyone lives in some kind of place, be it classified as a rural community, a city, a region, or a nation. Moreover, these places are influenced by their own economies, infrastructure, facilities, services, entertainment facilities, costs, and citizenry. What an outsider perceives a place to be, i.e., the things that are conjured in the mind when one thinks of a place, are things that are directly influenced by a place’s inhabitants and its infrastructure or landmarks. For example, when one mentions Paris, the Eiffel Tower springs to mind, and similarly one cannot but picture the Statue of Liberty when thinking of New York. Further, if one mentions Hong Kong, the hustle and bustle of busy streets is evoked, whilst delicious sushi is not far from one’s thoughts when Tokyo is brought up.

However, it is not only the people and things a place has to offer that shape how it is viewed by either its own inhabitants or outsiders. There is a plethora of marketing activities to consider, too, which can turn a place into a destination where tourists might want to visit. As Vengesayi (2003) explains, in order to differentiate themselves, tourism destinations need an enhanced combination of competitiveness and attractiveness factors; competitiveness elements being derived from the supply side (cities, for example) and the attractiveness from the demand side (tourists). The strength and health of a place and its industries is directly affected by its history, resources, leadership, and strategy. As such, according to the CEOs for Cities (2006) report, different places compete not only for consumers, tourists, business, investment, capital, respect and attention, but also for fame. The question is, then, how do places compete for these things?

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, reported recently that there has been a record amount of international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) in the world’s cities and regions, the exact figure increasing by 4% in 2012 to over 1 billion tourists worldwide (UNWTO, 2013). Therefore, places confront challenges as they are faced by a growing number of competing destinations, jockeying for business and vying for valuable tourist dollars. Branding or marketing are ways in which places can set themselves apart from their competitors. However, places need to work on a cohesive message in their campaigns. One of the purposes of place marketing, as Rainisto (2003) suggests, is planning and making use of common resources. For instance, Copenhagen, shares the magnificent Øresundsbron (bridge) with Malmö, in effect, to create a larger Øresund-Region, which gives visitors to either Copenhagen or Malmö a much larger offering

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1 Former Green Bay Packers football coach. Source: Graban, 2011.

2 Destination refers to a geographical area which includes all services and goods that tourists consume during their visit to a place (UNWTO, 2007).
of things to see and do. Additionally, Rainisto (2003) affirms that increased attractiveness and value of a place is brought about by successful place marketing practices.

If one were to look at branding specifically, Anderson and Carpenter (2005) state that a core concept of branding is brand positioning. In terms of branding a city, Kotler (2003) defines brand positioning as a market-oriented, coordinated set of activities that improves the quality of the city, which is then efficiently communicated to target groups. Kotler (2003) further states that positioning is defined as designing one’s offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market; the result being the successful creation of a customer-focused value proposition, i.e., a reason why the target market should buy the product or, in the case of cities, why the target market should visit. Ries and Trout (1986) add to this by affirming the importance of image in brand positioning, or how a product is perceived in the mind of consumers, which is separated from the product itself.

1.1 Background to the problem

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden with approximately 850,000 inhabitants in the city proper, and it is the largest city in Scandinavia. The city is located on the East Coast of Sweden and is built on fourteen islands between the lakes and the sea. Lake Mälaren flows through Stockholm and on to the Baltic Sea (I love Stockholm, 2012). The city has a history spanning over 750 years and houses a variety of different world-class museums and attractions (Visit Stockholm, 2012a). Nevertheless, Sweden has dropped ranking in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index compiled by the World Economic Forum. The report states that in 2009, Sweden was ranked seventh out of 140; in 2011, it’s ranking had climbed to fifth; however, for 2013, Sweden has slipped to ninth rank (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). This is in spite of an increase of international tourist arrivals from some four million in 2009 to almost eleven million in 2011 (ibid.). The reason for this decrease in competitiveness in the face of an increase in international tourist arrivals is not clear. Therefore certain aspects of the travel and tourism industry in Sweden, and in particular the City of Stockholm, are examined more closely in order to be able to better describe the phenomenon at hand and to account for it.

The brand positioning of the City of Stockholm in the minds of international tourists has, logically, a connection to the competitiveness of travel and tourism in the city and wider region. That is the reason why this paper examines the theories brand positioning encompasses. According to CEOs for Cities (2006), the DNA of a place is its brand, i.e. what it is made of and what it subsequently passes from one generation to the other. The brand is an authentic indicator that makes that place different from others.

3 Sweden’s third largest lake (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mälaren, 2013)
Consequently, Kwortnik and Hawkes (2011) state that branders need to have a clear understanding of what consumers want from a particular product or service to be able to build the foundation of a brand based on a promise to consumers about what they can expect to receive. Further, Keller and Lehmann (2006) affirm that, on the one hand, for a city to differentiate itself from competitors it needs to attain the highest possible extent of competitive superiority to distinguish its brand. On the other hand, brand positioning from the city’s perspective has the challenge of building up a brand image with key brand associations in the mindsets of the consumers. Jocz and Quelch (2005) propose that managing brand positioning for a place, in order to create a certain image about said place, is similar in principle to managing a company brand. To surmise, places are like companies; those with a well-built brand find it easier to put their services and products on the market and capture the attention of people and investment. Therefore, it is imperative that those responsible for the branding of the City of Stockholm are knowledgeable about how visitors to the city feel about their sojourn.

1.2 Previous studies

Positioning or repositioning for brands like Stockholm City is usually an activity done in response to a threat rather than a preventive strategy of thinking one step ahead. It is important to think and act proactively instead of reactively. Moreover, as Shanker and Schmitt (2004) state, brands change continually; even well known and established brands change due to competition and companies, and places, or cities cannot be complacent. VanAuken (2010) clarifies who the three main stakeholders in or audiences of the branding of cities are; residents, businesses, and tourists, each with different requirements and wants. For residents, a city means having a high quality of life; to attract businesses, cities must have a high quality of labor force, along with good transport and communication; while tourists are concerned with visiting a city that offers variety, with interesting things to see and do, a pleasing environment, restaurants, and shopping, to name but a few (ibid.). The diverse wants and requirements of the dissimilar city audiences have led VanAuken (ibid.) to question if one brand position can work for a city or whether a separate brand position for each audience is needed. VanAuken (ibid.) concludes that a single overarching brand position can work, but it must be designed to deliver a specific brand messages for each defined audience.

A brand positioning strategy, according to Dillon et al. (2001, p.29) is “an attempt to move brands to a particular location within a perceptual product space” and the success of a place brand is, according to Pham and Muthukrishnan (2002), a function of the central decision of positioning. However, Fuchs (2008, p.2) explains that “despite the importance of the positioning concept (...) there is lack of empirical research examining the role of positioning strategies in consumers’ categorization processes of brands.” Fuchs (2008) research attempts to bring some new conceptual and empirical insights into this under-researched field in marketing. To obtain a better understanding of the positioning concept in places, more
research is needed. Fuchs (2008, p.132) adds that “positioning is an important, rich but also difficult area for future research. Marketers have developed an impressive variety of highly valuable research techniques and models in positioning research (...) [however] on the conceptual and empirical front, research on positioning is scarce and lagging behind.”

Additionally, according to Blankson and Kalafatis (1999), there is scant research on how the effectiveness of a brand’s positioning should be measured, which is unexpected taking into account the massive costs that Mizik and Jacobson (2008) state are associated with building strong brands. Moreover, Blankson and Kalafatis (1999, p.109) indicate that “there has been no single universally accepted definition of the concept of positioning (...) [because] the limits of the concept are often not well defined.” Consequently, the overarching consensus in the previous studies is that what exactly falls under the scope of positioning has not yet been sufficiently answered.

1.3 Problem
From an image point of view, quality of life indexes for Sweden in general, and for the diplomatic clout, internationally, of the government in Stockholm are disproportionately high (OECD, 2013 & Gregor, 2013). One of the problems faced is that Stockholm, as an international tourist destination, is losing its competitiveness, as illustrated by its drop in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). This problem needs to be examined because Stockholm, being the capital city and financial engine of the Kingdom of Sweden, is growing in many ways: in inhabitants (OECD, 2012), as well as in international visitor numbers (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013), and yet still faces a decline in competitiveness.

In short, Stockholmers live a good life at home and the city has an esteemed image in international circles, but this is not translating into stronger figures for the city in relation to competitors. Therefore, a reason for why Stockholm and Sweden’s competitiveness within travel and tourism is waning must be found. The problem seems to be the difference in the perceptions of the City of Stockholm brand, explicitly its brand image and the brand identity that the city wishes to portray. In order to investigate further, this research paper undertakes a study of the phenomenon at hand with a starting point from previous research in brand positioning. As research on the subject of branding of complex entities such as cities is sparse, and the fact that there is an increasing interest in the topic (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009), this is a worthwhile undertaking that hopefully adds to the body of literature on place brand positioning.

1.4 Purpose
This research investigates brand identity strategies’ effects on consumer perceptions of brand positioning. The purpose of this study is to describe the brand positioning of the City of
Stockholm as perceived by international visitors to see whether there are differences and/or gaps between visitors’ expectations and their perceptions. After all, Kotler and Armstrong (2008) postulate that marketing, and by extension branding, is about finding a position that fills your target customers’ needs and aspirations so that the positioning pulls the target customers to you. Therefore, gathering empirical data from international tourists in Stockholm should help garner more salient insights into what Stockholm’s brand positioning is from their perspective. Whether Stockholm’s brand positioning emphasises distinctive characteristics that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public, as Kapferer (2004, p. 99) states that a strong brand positioning should, will be regarded in this study. It is because of the lack of academic researchers exploring this topic that the authors deem this to be a worthy case to research.

1.5 Research questions

- How is the City of Stockholm's brand identity perceived by international tourists?

- How do international tourists’ perceptions of the City of Stockholm’s brand image change once they have visited the city?

1.6 Strategic question

- What could improve the brand positioning of the City of Stockholm?

1.7 Contribution

This research is conducted by studying brand positioning from the point of view of customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality. Notwithstanding the limited previous research in this field when coupled to the tourism industry, a concrete conceptual framework has been proposed and relevant data collected. The brand positioning theory used in place brand positioning combined with the service quality gap model is this paper’s contribution to the body of literature on tourism destinations brand positioning. It has been possible to identify gaps and/or weak points in the service quality delivered in Stockholm City. Consequently, this paper is a point of departure for further investigations.

1.8 Disposition

![Disposition of research paper](image-url)
2. Theoretical framework

Before presenting the theoretical framework that this paper is based upon, a concise rationale for why these concepts are considered is given. Keller (2003a) has argued that place brand positioning begins by building an opinion or perception about a destination before a visitor actually travels; via channels that visitors search for information about the destination’s existing services like its transportation, hospitality and attractions. Parasuraman et al. (1988) add that a place must learn how to differentiate itself to attract tourists by enhancing service quality and gathering brand positioning. The terms tourist and visitors, as well as, place and destination are used interchangeably.

2.1 Segmentation, targeting & positioning model

Lilien and Rangaswamy (2003), along with Ghodeswar (2008) advance that brand positioning is part of the segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) model. Bennett (1995, p.165) defines the segmentation process as “subdividing a market into distinct subsets of customers that behave in the same way or have similar needs.” The target market selected determines, according to Friedmann and Lessing (1987), where one should compete. Further, Wind (1982, p.79) has postulated that the value marketers garner from positioning “is revealed only when the positioning is coupled with an appropriate market segmentation strategy.” Positioning, according to both Kotler (2003) and Myers (1996) involves placing a brand in a way that the target market perceives it as different and superior in relation to competitors. Keller and Lehmann (2006, p.740) state that positioning “sets the direction of marketing activities and programs – what the brand should and should not do with its marketing.” Crawford (1985) and Aaker (1996) add to this that on the consumer’s part, positioning refers to an internal process occurring in the mind of the consumer about how they perceive a brand in their mental map, in relation to competitors.

![Intended, actual and perceived positioning](source: Fuchs (2008, p. 17))

What is depicted in the figure above, is how companies can affect brand positioning through marketing activities. As such, brand marketers’ major objectives must be building the desired perception in the target consumer’s mind. Perceived positioning from the consumer’s
perspective, as described by Fuchs (2008), can thus be seen as the effect of a company’s intentioned brand positioning amplified through advertising that is eventually interpreted by the consumer.

2.2 Brand positioning

Keller (2003b) postulates that understanding the consumer behaviour effects of linking a brand to other entities such as another person, place, thing, or brand is crucial. Further, Keller (ibid.) contends that marketers must be able to understand how various entities should best be combined, from a consumer brand knowledge perspective, to create the optimal positioning in the minds of consumers. Strategic positioning in the minds of the target audience can build a strong identity or personality for the brand, according to Sherrington (2003, p.49), who also adds that the “ability to endow a product, service or corporation with an emotional significance over and above its functional value is a substantial source of value creation.” Ward, et al., (1999) propose that this promise of value must be relevant to the actors a company wants to have as its customers.

Successful brands, in De Chernatony and McDonald’s (1998) opinion, aim to develop high-quality relationships, in which customers feel a sense of commitment and belonging, almost to the point of passion. De Chernatony and McDonald (ibid.) maintain that brand preference is the outcome of an emotional need that customers have. These emotional associations strongly distinguish a brand in customers’ minds in comparison to competitors’ offerings, whereby branding enables a process of transforming functional assets into relationship assets (ibid). Succinctly, Ghodeswar (2008) states that brands that are well positioned occupy particular niches in consumers’ minds; they offer a distinct benefit over other brands.

Gad (2001) explains that there are four dimensions focusing on the associations and relations that consumers create in their minds during brand positioning: functional, describing the perceived benefits of the brand to the consumer; social, reflecting the consumers’ relationships to each other and how they work together; psychological, focusing on where the brand stands in the consumer's and others' perceptions; and ethical or spiritual, managing the brand so as to not hurt others, by positioning the brand clearly in the mind of customers. These dimensions, Gad (2001) affirms, help a brand to maintain its strength.

Well-positioned brands, as articulated by Aaker (2007), have a competitively attractive position supported by strong associations, such as a high rating on a desirable attribute like friendly service. Tangibles and features, such as attractions at a fairground are further examples of something that consumers can build these associations from. Keller (2000) states that intangible factors, such as the actual quality of a service, are tied to brand equity. Intangibles, in Keller’s (ibid.) account include ‘user imagery’ (an archetypical person who
uses the brand); ‘usage imagery’ (the situations in which the brand is used); the personality the brand portrays (sincere, exciting, competent); the feeling that the brand elicits in customers (purposeful, warm); and the type of relationship it seeks to build with its customers (committed, casual, seasonal). Moreover, a brand position, according to Aaker (1996) is part of the brand identity and value proposition that a company actively communicates to the target audience, which demonstrates an advantage over competing brands.

There can be confusion when using the marketing terms brand identity and brand image, which seem to be used synonymously. However, a brand identity according to Nandan (2005), is the significance of the brand and what it suggest to consumers. Brand image, in Nandan’s (2005) opinion is how a brand is perceived in the minds of customers, specifically, how it is distinguished from other brands. Marketers develop brand identity before brand image, and this brand image is an important measurement of the effect the brand identity strategy in place has on consumers’ perceptions (ibid.). Dempsey (2004) adds to this that a brand identity strategy helps to shape the mental image consumers have of a brand through positioning, which is thereafter leveraged by marketers to gain a competitive advantage. The elements of brand positioning are summarised in the following figure.

![Figure 3: Elements of Positioning a Brand.](source)


### 2.3 SERVQUAL

Since there are at times divergences between customers’ expectations and their perception of services delivered, Parasuraman, et al. (1988) coined a model of service quality (SERVQUAL), which measures customers’ evaluations of service quality. The model is based on five principal dimensions that customers use to judge the service quality and provides evidence of the care and attention to detail that is exhibited by the service provider. Zeithaml et al. (1990) (cited in Naik et al., 2010, p. 233) depict the dimensions as follows:
Tangibles are defined by Parasuraman, et al. (1988) as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials employed by the service providers. Reliability is defined as performing a promised service dependably and accurately, in the same manner, and without errors every time (ibid.). Responsiveness is defined as the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service; keeping customers waiting for no apparent reason creates negative perceptions of quality (ibid.). Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as said employees’ ability to convey trust and confidence (ibid.). Moreover, Parasuraman, et al., (ibid.) state that assurance includes, on the part of service providers: Competence in performing the service; politeness and respect for the customer; effective communication with the customer; and the general attitude that the server has the customer’s best interests at heart. Empathy is defined as the provision of providing caring and individualised attention to customers, which includes approachability on the part of the service provider, along with sensitivity and an effort to understand the customers’ needs (ibid.).

Zeithaml, et al. (2009) pinpoint that service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer’s perception of elements of service such as interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality, which are in turn evaluated based on the above specified quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Satisfaction with the service provided, is, according to Zeithaml, et al. (ibid.) the customer’s fulfilment response; the result of a comparison between their needs, expectations and perceptions. Nonetheless, if a service failure does occur, Parasuraman, et al. (1988) state that the ability to recover quickly and with professionalism can create a positive perception of quality. The SERVQUAL model allows one to conduct a gap analysis of received service quality versus the desired service quality by the customer, as depicted below.
2.4 The Gap model

The Gap model presented by Wilson, et al. (2008), builds on the SERVQUAL literature to illustrate what a service recipient expects of a service, and what is actually delivered by the service provider. It can be broken into two parts: The customer gap and the provider (company) gap. The customer gap entails the aforementioned difference between what a customer expects and what they perceive the service delivery to be (Wilson, et al., 2008). The provider gap is summarised by Wilson, et al. (2008, pp.105-112) below:

- Gap 1: Not knowing what customers expect: The difference between customer expectations of service and company understanding of those expectation.
- Gap 2: Not selecting the right service quality designs and standards: difficulty experienced in translating customer expectations into service quality specifications that employees can understand and execute.
- Gap 3: Not delivering to service designs and standards: a performance gap because of a lack of processes and people in place to ensure that service delivery actually matches the designs and standards in place.
- Gap 4: Not matching performance to promises: the difference between service delivery and the service provider’s external communications (promises).

Gap 5, the customer gap or perception gap, is the consequence of the influences wielded from the customer side and the shortfalls (gaps) from the service provider. Zeithaml and Bitner (2009) remind us that gap 5 is the basis for the gap model and they argue that it is possible, with the aid of the five SERVQUAL dimensions, to close the gaps by adjusting service standards to meet customers’ perceptions.
2.5 Motivation in tourism

Myers (2004) has defined motivation as a need or desire that helps one focus one’s behaviour and direct it towards a goal. Crompton (1979, p.413) has proposed that travel motives are “aligned along a continuum as being either primarily socio-psychological or cultural.” Motivation for travel, according to Pizam et al. (1979), is explained by the push and pull model, created to study tourist behaviour. Jang and Cai (2002) have defined the facets of the push and pull model as, push being internal factors that drive someone to travel, while pull is the external factors that determines where, when, and how people travel. The model is easy to understand and it is applicable to diverse destinations and cultures. The socio-psychological reasons why tourists travel described by Crompton (1979) include an escape from the daily life; self examination or valuation; relaxation; for prestige; to enhance kinship relationships; to facilitate social interaction; and cultural inclinations to newness and learning. However, Crompton (ibid.) adds that the motives are not mutually exclusive, i.e. they combine multidimensionally to work with each other.

Cohen (1979) (cited in Huang, nd.) adds that there are four distinct types of tourists; An organised mass tourist, individual mass tourist, explorer, and drifter. The organised mass tourist is highly dependent on an ‘environmental bubble’ created, supplied and maintained by the international tourism industry, features of which include all-inclusive, full package holidays (ibid.). Individual mass tourists use the scheduled flights, centralised booking and transfers of the institutionalised tourism system to arrange as much as possible on their own before leaving, although they may well end up visiting the same sights as mass tourists (ibid.). Explorers aim to stay off the beaten track\(^4\), maybe going through travel guides rather than looking at travel agent brochures. However, it is pointed out that if the going get too tough, explorers will move into the bubble of comfort, i.e. mainstream tourist hotels, etc. (ibid.). Drifters are the type of tourists who seek novelty even in the face of discomfort and danger. Moreover, they try to avoid contact with more traditionally defined tourists\(^5\) (ibid.).

2.6 Conceptual framework

Building from the theories elaborated on earlier in this chapter, this paper conceptualises a model of its own. Consumers have an expectation of a service, and as Zeithaml and Bitner (2006 & 2009) have revealed, what consumers expect and what service providers deliver are not always on par with each other. This has been called the consumer’s service expectation. Further, how consumers perceive a brand’s positioning is affected by real choices made by service providers and subsequently discerned by the consumer. This is what the authors have called the perceived brand positioning. If there is a gap, it is amplified by the elements of,

\(^4\) Somewhere remote from populous or much-traveled regions (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/off+the+beaten+track, 2013).

\(^5\) Organised mass tourists.
what the authors call the place brand positioning. Brand identity together with brand image serves as the basis for brand positioning. Functional aspects, along with social, psychological, and ethical aspects are dimensions upon which expected and perceived services quality gaps can be measured.

![Diagram of Brand Positioning](image)

Figure 6: Expectations versus perceptions in place brand positioning.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research method

As stated previously, the purpose of this paper is to study the brand positioning of the City of Stockholm as perceived by international visitors. According to Bryman & Bell (2005) it is necessary to utilise a qualitative approach when the collection of data is based on stories or words, rather than on a quantitative data set where statistical analysis may be called for. This paper has, thus, selected a qualitative approach since that provides the opportunity to delve into the research questions more deeply. The qualitative method allows one to gather empirical data from informants in semi-structured interviews to garner as rich and detailed answers as possible. Bryman & Bell (2005) further affirm that this form of interview, making use of a semi-structured formulation of questioning, enables informants’ responses to move in different directions, lending freedom to proceedings from which one can tease out anecdotes rather than simple yes or no answers.

This paper undertakes a study of the brand positioning of the City of Stockholm and to get the most relevant interviewees for the study certain limits have been put in place to ascertain informants’ eligibility. Furthermore, environmental factors at the time of interviews are summarised. Speaking to someone on a warm, sunny day may elicit very different responses than from the same person on a cold, wet evening. Those selected as informants have been restricted primarily to international visitors in order to strengthen the study with a focused cohort. With this limitation, international visitors provide anecdotal evidence about recent tourist experiences in the City of Stockholm, laying weight on how these experiences ‘fit’ with expectations, which, in turn, lends this paper the opportunity to suggest strategies to
better the positioning of the city to attract future visitors. As Bryman & Bell (2005) argue, the selected informants can be seen as a convenience sample, that are a form of a non-probability sampling.

3.2 Data collection

This study has collected primary data, which has been viewed through a conceptual framework based on secondary data. The primary data come from interviews undertaken during Spring 2013 with informants in, or recently in, the City of Stockholm. The secondary data consists of branding and service marketing theories and articles retrieved from databases, literature and various Internet sources. To get the most data from informants to achieve the study's purpose, this paper chose a semi-structured interview form with the help of an interview guide (see Appendix). The interview guide has been designed in such a way that the informants are asked leading, research based, indirect questions, which is discussed in further detail in the operationalisation section below. During interviews, to ensure that all points in the interview guide have been touched upon, a checklist has been used. Relevant ad hoc questions probing interviewees for elucidation have also been allowed for the interviews.

Before collecting the data, pilot interviews with several people were held to see if the questions were easily understood; The point being that the research should touch on the informants’ feelings concerning their perceptions and expectations of the services before and during their visits to Stockholm. March to April is low season for tourists in Stockholm, so tourists numbers are lower than during, for example, the summer. The method for choosing informants for this study was, out of necessity, a random selection method, which means there was a randomisation process for the sample selection; No preferential treatment in the selection of the informants. The only criterion was to choose tourists from different cultures and languages, i.e. international tourists.

At first, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, and big restaurants were chosen as locations for finding informants. Some initial interviews were conducted in this way. However, it soon became apparent that it was not easy to get access to people while they were having lunch or relaxing. Therefore, the remainder of interviews were conducted in or around Stockholm’s tourist sites; Museums, Gamla Stan, Skansen, Värtan harbour, and the waiting lounge for the train to Arlanda airport at Central Station. In first contact with informants, an attempt was made to be kind and helpful. After a while, it was explained why we were visiting the tourist places and the informants were politely asked if they would take part in this study. The actual informants were very pleased to partake in the interviews, which were for the most part in their mother tongues, English, Spanish, Italian and French. There were some exceptions though, for example the interviewers are not fluent in all the world’s languages. However, that was not a big issue since these tourists managed English quite well. It was noticed that by using
informants’ mother tongues during the interviews, they would express themselves more flamboyantly, although this could be a trait of Southern Europeans speaking in the way that they do in their cultures. A negative aspect was that the interviews were quite long (up to an hour) but rewarding because we didn’t want to stop them in the best part of the dialogue. Most of the time, the informants were calm and even happy. Since we took the time to introduce ourselves to them carefully and took the time to build up a rapport, the interviewees were happy for us to use a dictaphone and a smartphone to record our conversations. It took also at least three times as long as the interviews themselves to transcribe, translate and summarise the data collected. At first, we started to listen and translate at the same time but we soon realised that this was an inefficient method. Finally, we decided to first transcribe, then translate and summarise the data by making a chart with all the data collected (see in the appendix).

3.3 Research design

Bryman & Bell (2005) state that recording of interviews allow researchers to complete a thorough analysis of an interview as it can be played back repeatedly and/or looked back upon. Therefore, in order to fully comprehend what interviewees have said during interviews, digital recording and subsequent transcription of relayed information is undertaken. This allows the study to compare and analyse responses to better find patterns and compile a story that unravels a description of international visitor perceptions of the City of Stockholm’s brand positioning. The interpretation and analysis of the empirical data is focused through the lens that has been created in this paper’s conceptual framework, i.e., by way of appropriate theories, centring the analysis on relevant points, that are gone into below.

3.3.1 Operationalisation of theoretical concepts

To operationalise the conceptional model this study employs, the manner in which the questions that are used in the semi-structured interviews are related to this paper’s conceptual framework is discussed. Keller (2003) has explained that understanding the consumer behaviour effects of linking a brand to other entities such as another person, place, thing, or brand is crucial. One can, thus, declare that positioning starts with the services offered in the tourism sector, such as the means of transportation a visitor makes use of, which travel company is used (eg. Ryan Air), and what prior information about their destination visitors have viewed, that can have helped form the visitor’s idea or opinion about the city before departure. Therefore, the interviewees have been asked how they have travelled to Stockholm and what resources were utilised to explore the city whilst they were still at home.

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\(^6\) the process of defining a concept to make it clearly distinguishable and/or measurable and to understand it in terms of empirical observations. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operationalization, 2013)
The expectations that international visitors have had about the City of Stockholm are explicated by indirectly asking what impression the visitors had of Stockholm prior to their visit. Temporal (2000) has affirmed that a branding focus should be on adding psychological value to services in the form of intangible benefits, such as the emotional associations, beliefs, values, and feelings that people relate to the brand. In the case of Stockholm, these associations and beliefs about the values, etc., that the city holds are the effect of the branding position employed by the city, which has influenced what the visitor expects. One must recall that Keller (2003) suggests that if one is to create an optimal positioning in the mind of consumers, an understanding of how various entities are best combined is needed. For example, the combination of adventure, cheap food, drink and accommodation, a hot climate with beaches and jungles are undeniably what the scores of young Europeans and North Americans expect of their travels to Southeast Asia.

Moving from what the visitor has expected to why they chose to travel to Stockholm, one can couple said choice to a brand preference coming from an emotional need the visitor has. As De Chernatony and McDonald (1998) explain, emotional associations can strongly distinguish a brand in customers’ minds when a comparison is made to competitors’ offerings. Further, by querying if there was an itinerary in place before arrival, salient points about what visitors expected to do, see and experience during their stay are garnered. To be able to learn about visitors’ perceptions of Stockholm’s brand positioning during or after their sojourn, questions are asked regarding how they feel about the city now or what their current impressions are. After all, Sherrington (2003) states that a value proposition must be relevant to the people or businesses a company wants to have as its customers. From the SERVQUAL model it has been shown that service quality is the result of human interaction between the service provider and the customer. Therefore, by asking visitors how they feel at present, after the moment-of-truth when a customer interacts with the service provider (Wilson, et al., 2008, p.89) has passed, important perception data about Stockholm’s brand and its positioning are collected.

Tying this into Keller’s (2000) assertion that a strong brand’s equity is tied to the quality of its service and intangibles, interviewees have been asked how it was to be in the city. Out of this, a form of imagery is gathered from the visitors. Moreover, since satisfaction from service quality is directly influenced by perceptions of service quality (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003), the elements of which are interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality, interviewees have been asked what they would currently say is characteristically Stockholm.

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7 When a customer interacts with the service provider (Wilson, et al., 2008, p.89)
Table 1: Operationalisation of theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Question no. (s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intended or expected positioning</td>
<td>Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning - STP model</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual positioning-brand identity</td>
<td>Brand-Positioning</td>
<td>7,8,9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived positioning-brand image</td>
<td>SERVQUAL model</td>
<td>1,11,12,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer’s expectations and service perceived gap</td>
<td>The Gap model</td>
<td>14,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists behaviour and perceptions</td>
<td>Travel motivation</td>
<td>2,16,17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural personal data</td>
<td>Push and pull model</td>
<td>18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking a look at the longer lasting effects that Stockholm’s branding position has had on informants, the question of what the city makes visitors think about, what images come to mind, works into Aaker’s (1996) notion that a brand position is a value proposition that is actively communicated to the target audience, demonstrating an advantage over competitors. Furthermore, Aaker (ibid.) postulates that a well positioned brand has an attractive position supported by strong associations. Therefore, this study has asked informants if they feel that Stockholm is unique in some way. Moreover, interviewees have also been asked to say what comes to mind first, when Stockholm is said, which may have helped to draw some insights into the quality measure of the city.

In order to glean whether there are gaps between expectations of the city and its subsequent perceived positioning, informants have been asked to give examples of positive and negative experiences from their visit. Further, the interviewees have been asked to elaborate on these positives and negatives because creating the perception of a brand in the customer’s mind and achieving differentiation that stands it apart from competitors is what Aaker (ibid.) suggests is necessary if one intends to meet the consumer’s needs and expectations. The pertinent elements of place brand positioning, such as the benefit of visiting Stockholm, are referred to, albeit indirectly, by queries such as why the tourist chose to have a vacation there rather than somewhere else. Moreover, by asking the frequency with which interviewees travel, to where,
and what may be their favourite city destinations, this study is able to infer how Stockholm stands amongst competitors.

Information regarding the demographics (age, nationality, etc.) of informants has also been gathered, with the aim of knowing more about the interviewees; personalising things, as they are human beings, not mere sources of data. The exact matching of interview questions to the theories from the previous chapter is presented hereunder, whilst the actual data in table form is available in the appendix.

3.4 Research considerations

The credibility of this study’s research findings is matter of confirming that the evidence presented (empirical data) and the conclusions drawn can stand up to close scrutiny. Saunders, et al., (2009) stated that the best one can do is to reduce the possibility of getting the answers to one’s questions wrong. Specifically, Saunders, et al., (2009, p. 156) posit that, to mitigate the risk of getting the wrong answers, “attention has to be paid to two particular emphases on research design: reliability and validity.”

3.4.1 Validity

Fisher (2010, p. 271) writes of validity that it is a matter of not just saying what one means, but rather saying something that is meaningful. This is likened to truth, and whether one’s concepts and the terminology used to analyse the data fairly represents the actual research material. Furthermore, interpretations and conclusions are to be robust and drawn logically, via appropriate research techniques. Added to this, Saunders et al., (2009, p.158) ask researchers to query the generalisability of their results. This external validity can build the robustness of one’s conclusions by exposing said conclusions to follow-up studies. However, this study does not claim that its results or conclusions can be generalised in multiple contexts; it simply explains what is going on in this particular research setting. There may be contexts and populations in which this paper’s findings do no apply, as Fisher (2010, p. 274) suggests of qualitative research’s external validity. To ensure that this paper’s findings provide a meaningful account of perceptions of the brand positioning of Stockholm, detailed descriptions of the research materials (concepts and findings) have been provided, from which readers can make their own judgements. It is up to the reader to evaluate if this paper’s conclusions are leaps of logic on the part of the authors. However, the reliability of the research, and how it has been measured is intended to provide evidence of a logical flow from elements of the theory to the actual results.

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8 Whether the findings may be equally applicable to other research setting.
3.4.2 Reliability
In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability have another significance than in quantitative research. According to Bryman and Bell (2005), it is necessary to define terms and specify methods in use to establish and assess the quality of qualitative research. Saunders et al., (2009) state that reliability refers to the extent to which one’s research design and analysis yield consistent results. Further, it is proposed that there are two fundamental criteria for evaluating qualitative studies, namely, credibility and authenticity (Bryman and Bell, 2005). There are threats, in Saunder’s et al., (2009) opinion, to the reliability of a study, namely participant error, participant bias, as well as observer error and observer bias.

In terms of credibility, a study is reliable if informant validation is done, i.e., confirmation from the informants that their descriptions and the results they communicate are accurate. It is in this manner that participant error or bias has been ameliorated. Further, the timing of interviews has been conducted when informants have been relaxed and not stressed looking for somewhere to eat or getting to the train. Further, participant bias has been controlled to a degree by not conducting the interviews under neutral conditions, neither the pouring rain or unseasonal sunny weather being fair settings for asking how visitors perceive being in Stockholm. Rather, days that were coincidentally slightly overcast with normal temperatures for April set the tone for the outdoor interviews. Further, to avoid participant bias, i.e., maybe saying what they thought the interviewers wanted to hear, it was explicitly mentioned that neither interviewer was Swedish. This has conceivably lessened any inhibitions on the part of the interviewees. Nonetheless, as Saunders et al., (2009) suggests, care is still taken in analysing the data to ensure that that it is telling us what we think it is telling us. Given that qualitative studies generate large amounts of data, the validation technique for reliability is very demanding. Nonetheless, in this study all phases of the research process are account for: Recording and transcribing the interviews has provided reliability as it authenticates the statements made by interviewees, which can be verified by readers if they so should wish (see Appendix). Furthermore, having written documents diminishes the risk of misinterpretation, which Saunders et al., (2009) call the observer error. Using an interview guide document has ensured that the necessary points, which are directly related to the conceptual framework, were mentioned during the interviews; increasing the reliability of the study and demonstrating and confirming that the study has been completed in good faith without observer biases, which has heightened the second credibility criterion: authenticity.

3.4.3 Limitations
It has been difficult to find updated theoretical information concerning place brand positioning. Some researchers have not updated their articles for some time, for example, Aaker’s work is dated in a book from 1996 that explains how to build strong brands from

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9 In the range of 7-13°C.
inception. His latest one (2004) has the aim of leveraging corporate brands, which has little to do with the topic of this research. This can be seen as a limitation on this paper. There is another difficult limitation to overcome. It is a question of where subjectivity and objectivity really draw a line between themselves. Fisher (2010) aptly states that whenever researchers give an account of their research findings, it should be accepted that the account is coloured by the values, assumptions and prejudices of the researchers. However, this is something that is beyond the scope of this paper. More pertinent limitations, that may be within the control of other researchers, are, for example, the size of the sample of informants. This paper has interviewed 30 individuals. More informants would obviously mean more data, and more data can only lead to more insights. However, there is a good spread of demographically different informants in this study’s interviewee cohort; there are old and young informants, as well as employed people, students, married couples and singles.

Another limitation is that to gain insights into what informant expectations are of Stockholm, it would have been appropriate to gather this information prior to visitors’ arrival. However, under the circumstances (10 weeks and the limited budget of this study) the authors have dealt with this impediment as best as possible. Furthermore, conducting this study at different times of the year would have been an advantage, as the City of Stockholm may hold a different position in the mind of visitors as the seasons pass. For example, ice-skating and eating may be on the mind of visitors who come during the winter, whereas summer revellers may have planned to partake of a Kräftskiva. Moreover, being able to observe when informants have their moment of truth encounter with the service providers, would have helped the authors accumulate a richer data set, with facial expressions and utterances between the parties to exemplify what informants have perceived from an observer position. Notwithstanding, that would not be possible in the time frame that this study has at its disposal.

A limitation related to the access to information is that in-depth interviews with the Stockholm Visitors Board, the Swedish Institute, and Visit Sweden should have been undertaken instead of relying on secondary data. These organizations are key players in the tourism market in the city of Stockholm. However, when the Stockholm Visitors Board was contacted, it was advised that it would be better to read their last annual reports and gather information from their web sources since the information is more complete.

3.4.4 Ethical considerations
An ethical aspect of this study is voluntary participation, as well as confidentiality for those who require it. The study has no intention of delving into what could be deemed personal and confidential matters. Informants who have wished to keep their identities anonymous or have

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10 A crayfish party, a traditional summertime eating and drinking celebration in Sweden (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kräftskiva, 2013)
refrained from commenting on certain things, have had their requirements respected. Bryman & Bell (2005) suggest that participation is thus completely voluntarily: informants have a free choice to answer interview questions, and they have had the right to cancel the interview if desired. Before the start of the interviews, a clear and concise explanation of the purpose of the interviews have been gone-over, i.e., that the researchers have hoped to find out about their experiences and feelings concerning their visit to Stockholm. No mention has been made of the service expectation and customer perception model upon which this study is based. Further, in no way does the design of the research subject those interviewed to any embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantage, which is what Saunders et al. (2009, p. 160) comment are general ethical issues that researchers must circumvent.

4. Results

The results chapter summarises interview replies of thirty informants in regard to their expectations, their perceptions, and what place brand positioning they have been exposed to before and during their visit to Stockholm.

4.1 Service expectations

To begin with, the results describe how visitors decided to travel to the city; how they planned their trip; what itinerary it included; what had they heard about the city; and what expectations the visitors had before arrival. Most of the informants looked for information about Stockholm, before departure, by searching for information about the existing services like transportation, hospitality and attractions. Among the informants, the majority arrived by aeroplane, and the others by train, bus, car, boat and/or a combination thereof. Moreover, most of the visitors spoken to were to stay for three or four days; some just for the weekend. It is understandable, since this study was undertaken in April and most people have obligations at work or school.

The informants, having heard about Stockholm calling itself The Capital of Scandinavia were almost unanimously awaiting an attractive city, both architecturally and physically, filled with interesting sites and culture. Further, the city was expected to be child friendly. Interestingly, one of the informants was pregnant at the time of her stay. The impressions that informants had about the city, if they had anything in mind at all, were a mix of adjectives and nouns. Some of the interviewees mentioned that they thought Stockholm would be a pleasant city. It would be clean, a juxtaposition of modern and old, secure, expensive, green and even compact and cramped due to its high population density. Moreover, open spaces with parks and waterways were anticipated. Being so far north, some interviewees also expected the city to be very cold and dark, with one informant adding Stockholm is known as having a high suicide rate because of this coldness and darkness. Furthermore, being able to feel the history of the city, along with Viking culture, was envisaged by a few interviewees. To be sure, there was also a level of excitement awaited by those interviewed.
In regard to what comes to mind when the informants hear the word *Stockholm*, they named things like the Nobel prize; Royal family; Museums; Archipelago; Red houses and blue skies; Volvo; Abba; as well as shopping and generally a nice place to visit with numerous waterways and bridges. As with what the informants had as an impression before travelling to the city, and with hearing the word Stockholm, some thought of aesthetics such as tall, blonde people and different or unique clothing and shops.

The planning for trips to the city, if any, involved visiting the major tourist sites; *Djurgården*\(^{11}\), *Junibacken*\(^{12}\), *Gamla Stan*\(^{13}\), *Skansen*\(^{14}\), *Stortorget*\(^{15}\), *Operan*\(^{16}\), The Royal Palace, *Globen*\(^{17}\), as well as seeing the waterways and shopping on *Drottninggatan*\(^{18}\). Those who did have an itinerary for their trips, were either quite fixed in what they could see and when, as the itineraries were set by a travel agency in their home country, or limited by the time they had in the city due to Stockholm being one stop of a wider Scandinavian holiday. A number of informants had plans to see Finland, Norway, Denmark and some of the Baltic states after being in Stockholm. However, there were also informants who just wanted to stumble upon interesting places, without any form of itinerary, taking recommendations from locals. Those without a set plan for their stay said that they wished to walk around and see the city’s museums, visit some churches and maybe jump on a bus tour or a commuter ferry. The consensus was that the informants were aware that transportation would be expensive, so many did not buy the *Stockholm card*\(^{19}\). Many were expecting and happy just to walk around the city.

The resources that most of the informants looked at before their journey were both online and off-line based. Online resources (internet pages) included: the Stockholm tourist website, the Viking Line site, Google, online reviews about tourist destinations, as well as blogs and social media (Facebook and Twitter). Off-line resources (traditional media) included: books, such as the Lonely Planet, brochures, recommendations from friends (word-of-mouth) and travel agencies. Some of the visitors did not have a clear idea of what to do and see, in spite of

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\(^{11}\) An island to the west of the city housing museums, parks and the amusement park, *Gröna Lund.*

\(^{12}\) A museum showcasing Astrid Lindgren’s stories and characters, such as *Pippi Långstrump.*

\(^{13}\) The old, historic part of town on its own little island to the south of the city.

\(^{14}\) The zoo and open air museum on Djurgården.

\(^{15}\) A public square in Gamla Stan where the Nobel museum is housed, amongst other attractions.

\(^{16}\) The opera house.

\(^{17}\) Colloquial term for the Ericsson Globe, the national indoor arena.

\(^{18}\) A main shopping street with international high street stores.

\(^{19}\) A discount card for transportation and museums (see [www.visitstockholm.com/en/stockholmcard](http://www.visitstockholm.com/en/stockholmcard)).
looking through numerous resources since they were visiting many countries in Europe. For example, one interviewee said, “We have seen many pictures and sites” yet they thought it better just to “risk it” and taking things as they come once there. Few had no idea at all before the trip, but they were the ones who actively made friends in Stockholm and took advice from the people with whom they were staying. One said, “I didn’t really have any big impressions of Stockholm prior to my visit, mainly because I didn’t know what to expect, other than it would be an interesting experience.”

The reasons for coming to Stockholm, rather than some other city break destination were, for a few of the informants, to visit family or friends. For others it was to see a new place or because the plane ticket and hotels were cheaper than usual. Others again, wanted to go shopping or to see specific events at Globen or see Scandinavian attractions, like Skansen. However, there were informants who were in Stockholm just as a transit between Norway or Denmark or the Baltic countries.

4.2 Perceptions of service rendered.

Service quality is a measure of how the delivered service in Stockholm matched visitors’ expectations. Table 2 summarises some examples of informants’ positive and negative service quality experiences. Table 3 uses the SERVQUAL dimensions to compare informants’s expectations with subsequent perceptions of the service received. Thereafter, table 4 summarises the interviewees expectations prior to visiting Stockholm and how they perceive the city at the time of the interview. Sometimes their expectations were not fulfilled, as the tables below show. A concise description of the aforementioned service expectations, perceptions, and gaps between is gone into afterwards.

One caveat is that in this paper’s use of the Gap model, there is an inclination to point out negative experiences over positive ones. Many of the informants had a whole host of good things to say about their stay in Stockholm, and a great number of these positive perceptions were the same for a number of informants. Therefore, when the positive examples of service quality in Stockholm is presented, a summary of the thirty informants’ responses is relayed. However, the negative service examples are a collection of individual responses. As a clearer divide between expectations and perceptions of service quality is offered with negative examples, and the fact that it allows this paper to base recommendations on these gaps, the instances of negative experiences and perceptions from the informants’ point of view are given more weight.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive examples of service in Stockholm</th>
<th>Negative examples of service in Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The visit to Ostermalmstorget was memorable. A nice cruise on the Baltic, escape to the islands of the archipelago.</td>
<td>You feel it is a closed culture, as people do not look at you, talk to you or even smile at you or pay any attention to you, even just as a curiosity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I forgot my camera in a coffee shop and they kept it until I came back to ask for it. Honest people, you have no problems with the exchange rate. Good Tourist guides.</td>
<td>This city needs to learn how cook better Italian food. It was really disgusting. They eat meat balls with jam, which is quite unusual for us. I don’t think I can name one Swedish food dish. Perhaps the city has lost a distinctly Swedish identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The transport from the airport to the city centre is very efficient. The traffic is well organised. It all seems to work well. The traffic is good no need to wait for a long time. The traffic and the circulation were without problem, in comparison with Brazil.</td>
<td>I wanted to spend more time getting souvenirs before returning to the airport but all the shops were closed and night clubs are not open all night. Very boring at night as there was not a good night club, theatre or modern show in any other language than Swedish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerts are my favourite activities, thus I travel in Scandinavia looking for them as in Globen. Young people have fun and enjoy life. Much variety to choose between things; clothes, food and pubs. We get free entrance to all the museums on the Saturday night.</td>
<td>We are freezing and the weather was, most of the time, too windy and it was raining. I read that this weekend will be sunny but, as you see, it is raining. The weather is unpredictable as today is cold and rainy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was the attendance at a football match and the boisterousness and enjoyment of the crowd obviously having a good time; painted faces, sweaters, hats, noise makers.</td>
<td>You feel some kind of obligation to buy souvenirs by walking in the Old Town. Poor quality and also expensive gadgets for tourists make you lose the feeling of being in an old city. Too many shops selling handicrafts but not one real typically Swedish shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaces are bigger than in the Netherlands, e.g. houses are not attached, big green areas and streets, closer to nature. Most of the public areas are clean and smell nice. The city is not polluted where we are staying. Calm and peaceful place, compared with the chaos of Mexico City.</td>
<td>The train was late and nobody told us why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The night life is too expensive and the drinks cost triple that at home. It was too far too expensive to travel. The problem is too that the concerts are expensive to visit very often. It is really too expensive for our budget.</td>
<td>The night life is too expensive and the drinks cost triple that at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The metro was a bit difficult with a pram (I opted to take the escalator which can be a bit nerve-racking with a pram and lots of people, but the lifts were, for the most part, drenched in the smell of urine. (I suppose this is to be expected in major cities and train/tube stations). Inside the central station the metro has no maps with the different lines, which made it difficult to know which one to take. There were maps in the other stops. Groups of drunken young men wandering the streets in the more touristy parts of town are a little off-putting. The last thing I would expect in Stockholm is a gypsy begging money from me.</td>
<td>Groups of drunken young men wandering the streets in the more touristy parts of town are a little off-putting. The last thing I would expect in Stockholm is a gypsy begging money from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The five key service dimensions</td>
<td>Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Tangibles**                   | -Have up-to-date transportation and equipment.  
-Physical facilities are visually appealing.  
-Infrastructure and materials associated with the service. | -Transportation will work well according the schedule.  
-Underground at central station is effective.  
-Lifts everywhere in undergrounds. | -Train was late without announcement.  
-Lifts were too small for prams.  
-Underground lifts dirty, bad smell.  
-Difficult to have information on platforms. |
| **Reliability**                 | -Show sincere interest in solving tourists’ problems.  
-Performs the service right away.  
-Provides services at the time promised.  
-Maintains “Make sure what you say is what you do.” | -Listening carefully what said the tourists.  
-Changing the tickets at once.  
-On time trains and bus.  
-Promise to have good flight connections. | -Just responding as a machine.  
-Waiting more than one hour.  
-Train was late.  
-It was not possible but they promised to do it. |
| **Responsiveness**              | -Inform tourists when services will be performed.  
-Ofers prompt services to tourists.  
-Have convenient operating hours for visitors.  
-Voluntarily respond to tourists’ requests. | -Telling if transportation is late and reason.  
-Help to get some information.  
-Open hours from 10.00 to 19.00.  
-Where is the street……? | -Never, just talking in Swedish and English.  
-Employees were too busy.  
-Not they closed at 18.00 in some places.  
-Here a map, look yourself. |
| **Assurance**                   | -Able to inspire confidence in tourists.  
-Tourists feel safe in their transactions.  
-Employees are polite at all times.  
-Have the knowledge to answer tourists’ questions. | -Smile and say hello!  
-Changing money.  
-Employee was busy but said hello. Please wait.  
-Speak several languages, and English well. | -Saying hello but not smiling seems angry.  
-The rate was right but charged fees.  
-Nobody talked to you.  
-They don’t speak Portuguese or Spanish. |
| **Empathy**                     | -Always willing to take care of tourists.  
-Employees given personal attention to all visitors.  
-Employees have tourists best interests at heart.  
-Employees understand tourists’ needs. | -Asking what do you need?  
-Goes with you to show you where the SEB bank was.  
-Cares to serve in the best way no matter the price.  
-May I have a pen please? Yes! | -Wait and wait for help you never get it.  
-Just told you go out and ask the police.  
-Give your ordered dish without looking to you too busy.  
-No, I have not. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations before arrival in Stockholm</th>
<th>Perceptions whilst in Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The informants imagined Stockholm as a northern city in the middle of Scandinavia which is already attached to the continent, being the biggest city in Scandinavia.</td>
<td>It is a nice city with not too much stress and clean. But I am not so excited as before to be here especially after I have seen other European countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City with blue skies and old red houses, green parks, an archipelago city on the water, green areas and some kind of a pleasant city with nice places like an “old town”, with culture and history such as a lot of museums, beautiful buildings.</td>
<td>Maybe the weather windy and raining all the day has influenced in our perception. We feel that the blue sky and sunny days belongs to other place not here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenty things to do and many shopping stores, quality shops and a variety of cultural activities and lots of people, beautiful architecture, ‘old buildings’, great museums, restaurants.</td>
<td>I didn’t know quite to what extent and how they were joined to make the city so unique until flying over and then again while on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be as at home in Venice but, secure, very clean, modern, very “Scandinavian “ e.g. tall and blonde people and somewhat impersonal.</td>
<td>I am unsure about it. I felt that the shops were closing too early and about 8pm most tourists activities stop and the city becomes very quiet almost empty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others thought that Stockholm would be cold, dark, full of with snow most of the time and plenty of water and lights</td>
<td>Stockholm is a populated city but it is functioning well services &amp; transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For few informants, the city would be cold in terms of society with a high rate of suicides.</td>
<td>We use to live in Venice. Buy here all the channels are huge compared with home. Even more impressed about the channels and the city we have been walking all around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For some informants from Scandinavia, Stockholm was bigger than Oslo, Copenhagen and Helsinki. e.g. “I don’t know if it is bigger than Oslo. I didn’t really have a big idea about Stockholm before my visit. Maybe it is so close that I was not interested the first time.”</td>
<td>Feel the same well unfortunately there were a lot of beggars in the smaller walking streets where the tourists were walking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For one young man it was interesting to see the differences among the Baltic (ex soviet countries) and the others as Sweden and Denmark.</td>
<td>It is a city that actually grows on you the more you explore and discover all the great things it has to offer. Well, we have stayed only in the touristic area. Not the same it was better than we expected. More confident than the first time. When you know where to go is easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A capital with a lot of museums, beautiful buildings, and lots of people.</td>
<td>It was not as we imagined or expected. It is some kind as cold society. Nobody talks to you. Maybe in summer when is warmer, because now is grey and rainy. In the street people even don’t look to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, an informant stated: “I thought that it would be compact and cramped, with a high population density like most cities and not big green areas between buildings”</td>
<td>After seeing Stockholm I am more impressed than what I had expected about this city, not too much people and crowded. It is a wide and a windy city. Well it was smaller than I had thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cold, secure and damn expensive place</td>
<td>The weather was not nice. We have to walk under the rain all the whole day. It was very expensive all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very busy city with many business activities. Lots tourist on streets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the positive perceptions pointed out by informants were that the city is clean, well organised, with large spaces between buildings. Stockholmers were described as honest people, and the landscape of the city was said to mirror the wonderful landscape of the archipelago. Transportation in the city and buses to and from Arlanda\textsuperscript{20} airport were deemed to work well. Moreover, it was said that there are many places to visit and places to enjoy life and have fun, such as concerts and football games. Further, informants stated that there are nice places to walk around, and that Stockholm is a safe place without much crime. However, negative perceptions of service quality outnumbered the positive ones. As explained in the theoretical chapter, when the expected quality of a service is larger than the perceived quality, it creates a gap. There were seven key issues in the service expectation found during interviews. These stemmed from the informants not expecting certain kinds of behaviour or situations to arise. These negative service experiences have led us to name some key issues within service expectations of: food; Swedish culture; the weather; public spaces; value for money; transportation and social problems.

- Food: Swedish food seems to not be admired, and neither was the Italian food; especially in the Old Town.
- Swedish culture: The biggest problem among Mediterranean and Latino-American informants was the Swedish culture. They felt insulted when people did not even look at them, did not smile or had eye contact with them. They felt very sad, and one informant said that “The high rate of suicides here doesn’t surprise me with that kind of inhumanity and lack of empathy.”
- Weather: The weather in Stockholm is totally unstable and impossible to predict one week in advance. Of course, in April, Sweden is still cold rainy and windy. Actually, the wind is a negative side of the archipelago.
- Public places: Places are closed too early for most informants. There is nothing to do after 19.00 p.m. when the museums and stores are closed.
- Value for money: The Swedish souvenir shops are expensive and the souvenirs of poor quality. In general, the city, for some of our informants, was too expensive. That includes not only food but all the other services as well.
- Transportation: The underground at the central station has no information at all inside the train platforms for the tourist. The lifts are dirty and smell so bad that they are impossible to breathe in. It seems that public transport is encouraged instead of driving cars in the city centre. Trains are often late.
- Social problems: The phenomena of drunken young men wandering around and people begging for money are social problems which are dangerous if not stopped at once.

\textsuperscript{20} Stockholm’s main international airport (see: http://www.swedavia.com/arlanda, 2013).
4.3 Place brand positioning

Figure 7: The City of Stockholm’s slogan.
Source: Flyadvisor (2013).

4.3.1. Stockholm City
The best way to see the downtown of Stockholm, according to Visit Stockholm (2012b) is by walking. The city’s air is fresh, most of the sights are within walking distance, and this makes it possible to easily visit Stockholm's most important attractions: City Hall, Gamla Stan, the Royal Palace, the Great Cathedral and Djurgården (ibid.). Visit Stockholm (2012a) further states that Gamla Stan is Stockholm's oldest attraction and one of the most well preserved medieval cities in the world. It has narrow streets that are filled with antique shops, art galleries and cozy cafes, as well as the Royal Castle and the Cathedral. The National Museum is on route to the island of Djurgården, where visitors can find one of the world's oldest open air museums, Skansen, as well as Junibacken, the world famous Vasa museum and the Nordic museum showing Swedish culture and traditions from the Viking era until present (ibid.). Moreover, during the summer, trips can be taken on numerous ferries and cruises to visit the archipelago of 30,000 islands of off Stockholm.

Stockholm City’s marketing and the brand positioning is undertaken by the Stockholm visitors board, a governmental authority (Visit Stockholm, 2012a). Its goal is to position the City of Stockholm’s brand as a most desired tourist destination. The mission the board has is to deliver an unforgettable experience to tourists by way of meeting and exceeding visitors’ demands on services in the city (ibid.). On the supply side in this supply and demand equation, Stockholm visitors board’s mission is to create sustainable economic value for the city by increasing the number of international tourists, the length of their sojourns, and their spending through positioning Stockholm as a competitive tourist destination (ibid.). To improve the professional standard of services and maximise their effectiveness, the visitors board is charged with leading and developing cooperation amongst stakeholders in the tourism industry. The main task of Stockholm visitors board is to attain sustainable growth focusing on attracting international events, congresses, business meetings, exhibitions and visitors to the city, and developing the tourism industry, in general (ibid.). It seems as though the city’s goal is to attract tourists and to be the central meeting place and cultural centre of
Scandinavia, which would explain the city’s choice of slogan, Stockholm: The Capital of Scandinavia.

The table below highlights the factors Stockholm City wants to focus on with its brand name.

Table 5: Brand identity constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Rational benefit</th>
<th>Unique emotional benefits</th>
<th>Personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm: the capital of Scandinavia.</td>
<td>An important transit area between the Baltic countries and the continent and the Economic centre of Scandinavia.</td>
<td>Pleasant, clean and safe city with fresh air, beautiful nature and honest and kind people.</td>
<td>Scandinavia's central meeting place and the main cultural city in the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The four dimensions below (functional, social, psychological and ethical), as mentioned in chapter 2, help to create and maintain a strong brand positioning by focusing on the associations and relations that visitors create in their minds before, during, and after the service delivery.

Table 6: Brand identity features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension:</th>
<th>Functional</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Ethical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Gad (2001) & Stockholm Visitors Board (2012).

There has been discussion around the city’s brand slogan, Stockholm: The Capital of Scandinavia, especially from neighbouring countries who think that the slogan is insulting (SVD, 2012). Moreover, some of the city’s residents feel that the old slogan Stockholm: Beauty on water; fits better due to Stockholm’s location by the sea (ibid.).

The Stockholm business region, an association, believes that the Stockholm is not only the capital, but also a significant and substantial economic region, and it is important that the recipient of this message should remember that. In regard to the current brand slogan, Monica Ewert, a manager at Stockholm business region is quoted as saying, “It’s about a brand positioning and not a slogan. It has never been the intention to insult anyone” (SVD, 2012). Further, it is pointed out that Stockholm has a very close relationship with Copenhagen, when
it comes to branding issues. When Stockholm uses the Scandinavia moniker, it also lifts its neighbours (ibid.). Stockholm wants to be positioned as an attractive destination for both tourists and investors. *Stockholm: The Capital of Scandinavia* is a brand identity that caters both to tourists and investors by positioning Stockholm as a strong international destination known worldwide (ibid.).

Behind the Stockholm brand, is a British brand communications strategist, Julian Stubbs. He was responsible for brand positioning in 2005, when Stockholm began to develop its brand. He says that he repeatedly heard angry comments from the neighbours, Copenhagen and Oslo, and then explains: “Now we all know that Scandinavia is not a country - so *Stockholm, The Capital of Scandinavia* is a hypothetical situation. However, Stockholm is the most important place for business and tourism in Scandinavia” (Stubbs, 2012). This is a strong and clear positioning statement. Stubbs (2012) adds that a function of a good positioning strategy is to strengthen one area that you can claim as your own. “To do that you have to make a clear statement, and then you might step on the toes of a few competitors and make them unhappy” (ibid.). Copenhagen and Oslo are competitors, but the cities are very close and important partners in Scandinavia. By working together, they can all help to grow and advance the region as a whole (ibid.).

5. Analysis

The analysis of the data collected helps identify latent issues of visitors’ expected and perceived quality of service whilst in Stockholm City. In other words, we describe how the city is positioned as a brand. To build a strong identity for the brand, it is necessary to have strategic positioning in the minds of the target audience. The tagline used for branding the city of Stockholm before 2005 was, *Stockholm: beauty on water*, which described the real identity of this coastal city. Changing the slogan to *Stockholm: The Capital of Scandinavia*, made the city lose a brand identity that visitors perceived as congruent with its geographic endowments. Moreover, the current slogan irks the other Scandinavian countries. The brand identity is the meaning that Stockholm as a destination wants to give to the brand. However, it seems as though tourists are not the ones who the marketers had in mind when repositioning the city as ‘The Capital of Scandinavia.’ It does not tally with visitors’ perceptions. There is now confusion about the brand positioning of this city in the minds of the international visitors. It must be remembered that a brand position is part of the brand identity in form of value proposition that has to be keenly communicated to the target audience and has to show some uniqueness or advantage over competing brands. Due to the semantics of the current slogan, one informant asked if Scandinavia was a federal state like Switzerland with its cantons. Most informants did not notice the slogan until they arrived in the city. One has to wonder then, if this slogan is used by marketers when promoting Stockholm as a destination in other countries? Further, one of the informants from Europe knew that Stockholm used to be called
something like ‘beauty on water.’ He said that this slogan really reflected the image that you built in your mind thinking about the main feature of the city. In other words, it was how the city of Stockholm distinguished itself from other cities.

It looks as though the aim of changing the city’s brand slogan was to reposition the city as an attractive destination for both tourists and investors; by having a brand identity that supplied both tourists and investors. Strategic positioning like this can build a strong identity for brands, but what has happened seems to be the exact opposite: A number of tourists do not feel that this positioning is a reflection of what Stockholm should be identified with.

Therefore, one can posit that Stockholm seems to be more interested in attracting businesses to invest in its IT and Telecommunications industries, rather than itself investing in tourism and developing that industry. It has been forgotten that tourism is supposed to be a stimulating and rewarding experience for visitors, and the growth of international tourism as an industry seems to have been overlooked. Thus, the current positioning suggests to business people that they will be in the middle of the Scandinavia region, but says little to tourists. Tourism is not only a service, but is also an industry without chimneys. Destinations like Stockholm should focus more on the physical features they are blessed with and psychological reasons for why people travel.

When asked how often they travel, most of the informants answered at least once a year. Their favourite destinations and how they compare with Stockholm brought mention of several big cities such as Berlin, Los Angeles, and smaller ones like Prague, Dresden, and Oslo. None of the informants mentioned Stockholm as a favourite destination. It was only really the informants who have family or friends in the city who were inclined to visit again. The reasoning, it seems, stems from what one informant answered: that there is really nothing unique to Stockholm. ‘Once you have seen the museums and visit [sic] the other different places, there is nothing else to visit more than one time’ was another response. Positioning is supposed to engage the target market to perceive the brand as superior and unique in relation to competitors. Unfortunately, this is not happening as seen through the experiences of some of the visitors interviewed in the City of Stockholm.

An informant exclaimed that it was amazing that the city of Stockholm did not take advantage of the unique natural resources that it has, like the water areas where the city could build huge floating parks in the middle of the islands inside the City of Stockholm with indoor places that could be open in all seasons. Brand identity is supposed to shape the mental image of the city by positioning the brand as having uniqueness: all the ‘wonderful water areas’, as one of the informants said, is a unique feature that is not being utilised any longer. Instead, we have an instance of a visitor imagining Stockholm how he would like to see it. Thus, we can say that,
in this instance, the city’s brand positioning is, once again, lacking in expectation and perception fit.

Psychological values in services, that people relate to a brand, are important. According to how the informants felt about their trips, most have remarked that they were excited about the trip; a few were ‘ready to start exploring!’ Some were more neutral, saying it was interesting to visit the city. One of the informants shared that it was exciting to see a map of all the streets where you can walk virtually. However, this brand image led her to expect something that was quite different from what was discovered when arriving in Stockholm. Therefore, a deeper look at the gaps between expectations and perceptions is gone into below.

5.1 Gaps in expectations and perceptions

As has already been stated, the SERVQUAL instrument was created to measure the quality of customer services. Brand image is the expectation or idea that a customer has in his or her mind about a brand and its service. To be sure, there are gaps between tourists’ expectations and perceptions of how Stockholm delivers tourist services and how its brand is positioned. The brand image that Stockholm has created is attempting to portray the city as the prominent destination in Scandinavia. However, the thoughts that international tourists have about Stockholm, how they feel at present, after the moment of truth has passed, exemplifies how the perception about Stockholm’s brand is positioning compared with competitors. The five key service dimensions of the Gap model, coupled with the empirical data, allows for the following findings:

Concerning the tangibles dimension, a gap that has been found concerns the infrastructure in the city. The size of the old lifts at the metro stations, which is especially the case at T-Centralen, make it almost impossible to enter with a pram, which does not fit with peoples’ expectations of the city being child-friendly. Moreover, there is an acute lack of public restrooms, which has led to the lifts becoming dirty and stinking of urine. One would think that a city that can blend both modern and old could make space for more public conveniences. Maps and information about the different metro lines are another tangible that visitors deem lacking in clarity. Further, the ticket machines for the trains are difficult for foreign visitors to understand how they work. What is more, a majority of the informants complained about the opening and closing of tourist sites, as well as shopping and dining establishments, which leave many without anything to do during the evenings.

On the reliability dimension, the ability to perform the promised service regularly and accurately, informants had issues with the weather and problems with not being notified

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21 The main train and metro station.
properly about delays with train traffic. There is a gap, then, due to the waiting time for services being too long, like when buying a train ticket at central station. Moreover, waiting more than an hour for a late train is not what visitors were expecting from the city which they thought would have a well organised and timely transportation system all round. Also, part of being well organised would be being able to clearly explain to tourists or travellers what is happening when things take a turn for the unexpected.

The responsiveness dimension entails prompt service and a willingness to help customers. Four of the informants had real problems getting any kind of service even when they explicitly ask for help. Tying this into the previous example of train delays, the lack of information was not appreciated, maybe more so than the delay itself. If a service failure does occur, the ability to recover quickly and with professionalism can create very positive perception of quality, but this has not been the case for some of the respondents.

The assurance dimension includes, on the part of service providers not only the competence to perform a service, but also politeness and respect for the visitors, showing an aptitude to gain the trust and confidence of visitors. On occasion, this shows itself as a gap in visitors’ expectations of Stockholm’s services. Nine of the informants were upset because nobody smiled at them or could look them in the eye on the street. However, in regard to how safe the interviewees felt whilst in the city, they say that the city lived up to its strong image of being honest and calm. The catch is that some informants did not feel welcome.

The remaining dimension, empathy, entails providing considerate and individualised attention to customers. Empathy in Stockholm’s service sector directed at visitor is a human quality presupposing an understanding of visitor as well as the service providers really having an interest in them. The good way to show empathy is to give individualised attention to each tourist and help them no matter the time or circumstance. What the informants feel is that empathy is based on cultural patterns, and it was already in the mind of a few that Scandinavians maybe were not prone to showing emotion in the way that southern Europeans do. Hence, cultural differences can create gaps along this dimension depending upon where visitors come from.

6. Conclusions
The aim of this study was to understand how Stockholm is positioned as a brand, a tourist destination, in the minds of international visitors. It was intended to analyse and compare tourists’ expectations and perceptions before and during their visit to Stockholm. For the study, a good data set was collected, from which both relevant and useful information was garnered. Interviews gave rich information that may well be helpful for Stockholm City and its tourist organisations. The study dealt with the brand positioning of the city, which is part of
the marketing process and can, therefore, be used as a point of departure further research in place or destination and/or city marketing.

Our first research question was *How is the City of Stockholm's brand identity perceived by international tourists?*

Our research has shown that Stockholm’s former brand identity, a city surrounded by water was more relevant than the current one. This present brand identity does not create a strong brand image for the city. It has had the opposite effect, in some respects. The general consensus is that the city of Stockholm is pleasant with interesting things to see and do. Apart from being attractive in terms of modern and old architecture, the city’s identity is described as being clean yet cold. However, the city is most definitely characterised as being surrounded by water. One can thus say that Stockholm’s perceived brand identity has a lot to do with its Viking heritage and seaboard.

The second question asked was *How do international tourists’ perceptions of the City of Stockholm’s brand image change once they have visited the city?*

The informants’ perceptions of Stockholm and its brand image are diverse. Some of them were very happy with the city and said things like: “(Its) an industrial and practical city without frills or unnecessary decoration.” / “Thinking about the connection of the various islands and visible water, constantly reminded me of the seafaring nature of the Swedes.” / “You have the feeling that you are in the middle of the ocean by crossing bridges as in a big city floating in a river” / “We imagined this city by the time when the Vikings were alive and were living in the Baltic” / “You inhale Nordic culture.” These kinds of statements lead us to believe that the change in perception of visitors after they have been to the city, if any, is for the better. These informants were either pleased that the city lived up to its image, or they were delighted that it was more than they were expecting. However, other informants, in contrast to these positive perceptions about the city, related a change in perception for the worse by saying things like: “We were thinking that we will be as in Venice; advertising used to call Stockholm as the Venice of north, but it has [sic] nothing like this. It is a square, cold city where most of the buildings are cubes.” / “People are not happy, nobody smile to you.” / “Not so crowded city, but cold and does not communicative a warm social atmosphere.” / “The Old town has lost its medieval charm. It was not as we had imagined. Instead there are too much [sic] fake handicraft shops, no nice old shops.” As can be seen, the informants have very different perceptions about the brand image of Stockholm. To perceive the brand image of this city in a positive way, the informants could be comparing the service experiences received in Stockholm with lesser impressions other cities have had on them. Comparing the

22 Gamla Stan.
uniqueness of different city brands and the perceptions of said brand positioning is a subjective feeling; Hence, the disparate points of view that the informants had about Stockholm’s brand positioning.

The strategic questioned posed is What could improve the brand positioning of the City of Stockholm?

The main conclusion is that the most important facet of service quality, in regard to Stockholm, is effective communication with the visitors and having an attitude that has visitors’ best interests at heart. Taking into account all the SERVQUAL dimensions, the most important is approachability on the part of the service provider, along with empathy and sensitivity to understand the visitors’ needs, which, in reality, is what the city of Stockholm is lacking. Stockholm faces increased competition to attract tourists, residents and business to the city. For this reason, Stockholm must be able to market and develop a brand positioning that creates a unique personality as a strategy of differentiation. The interviewees suggest that the city needs to emphasise its unique relationship with water. Not many cities have such physical qualities. It is understandable that Stockholm wants to build its brand positioning around being an economic centre; It wants to attract investors to the city. However, it is best not to neglected attracting tourists. After all, being the capital of Scandinavia should entail being the central meeting place for leisure, relaxation and culture, not just business.

Finally, visitor expectations and the reality they live once in Stockholm can never have a perfect fit. Gaps will show. However, by setting standards high, excellence can become the hallmark of Stockholm’s tourism industry; a benchmark which other cities in Sweden can measure their service offerings by. The goal of this study, to describe the brand identity and brand image manifested in a brand positioning of the City of Stockholm from international visitors’ perspectives was achieved. By applying an unusual conceptual framework linking the place brand positioning theory with the service quality model to find the gaps between the tourists’ expectations and perceptions, this study has demonstrated that the tourism industry is important for the City of Stockholm, too.

Further studies may wish to investigate the competitiveness of the City of Stockholm with different segments, for example domestic visitors, or delve into the possible effects of developing tourism services in Stockholm with different types of tourism like ecotourism.
References


Gregor, A. (2013). Sweden will continue to punch above its weight, *The Local* (online publication), retrieved on 12-03 2012, at: [http://www.thelocal.se/46288/20130220/#.UZ0l2ZVXfog](http://www.thelocal.se/46288/20130220/).


Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Q1. How did you travel to Stockholm?
Q2. Did you travel with your family?
Q3. Why did you choose to travel to Stockholm?
Q4. What impression did you have about Stockholm before your first visit?
Q5. Did you have an itinerary for your trip? What did it include? What had you heard about these places?
Q6. What resources did you look at before your journey and how did they make you feel about the trip?
Q7. What was your first impression of Stockholm?
Q8. Do you feel the same now when you have seen Stockholm?
Q9. How was it being in the city?
Q10. Currently, what would you say is characteristically Stockholm?
Q11. What does the city make you think about, (what images)?
Q12. Is Stockholm unique in any way? Please, elaborate even if it is not.
Q13. When I say Stockholm, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Why?
Q15. Can you elaborate more on an example of a positive experience/negative experience?
Q16. Why did you come to Stockholm and not choose another city destination?
Q17. How frequently do you travel, and what are your favourite destinations? How does Stockholm compare?

Demographic questions

Q18. Gender
What is your sex?
- Male
- Female

Q19. Age
In what year were you born? ____ (if it possible)

Q20. Where were you born?

Q21. Where do you currently reside? How long have you been living there?

Q22. What is your current marital status?

Q23. What is your primary language?

Q24. Education
What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark
the previous grade or highest degree received.
o No schooling completed

Q.25. Employment Status Are you currently...?
o Employed for wages
o Self-employed
o A student
o Retired
o Unable to work

How to improve visits to Stockholm

Q.26. In terms of tourism, what is missing from Stockholm?
Q.27. What could build Stockholm’s reputation as a tourist destination?

Appendix 2: Results summary

Data collected by number of questions

Sample n= 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. How did you travel to Stockholm?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By airplane</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By train</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By bus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By car</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By boat</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined bus, car train or airplane</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2. Do you travel alone, with your family or friends?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip organized in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3. Why did you choose to travel to Stockholm?

- Visit family. (4)
- Visit friends. (2)
- To visit Vasa museum.
- Good place to see & HQ of Sweden- the “capital city” of Scandinavia. (3)
- I must explore the capital of Sweden’s famous attractions as Djurgården. It is an attractive city.
- It was to see the city and it was also to see a concert at Globen. (2)
- We are travelling to all Scandinavian interesting places. (4)
- To visit Europe and the see other cultures and architecture. (2)
- Because I didn’t know anyone in Scandinavia.
- We wanted to travel further than Denmark.
- We wanted to see the countries around the Baltic sea.
- To do something during the weekend as the flight was cheap. (2)
- See the museums since the boat had promotional prices to hotels.
- To go to Junibacken in Stockholm with our children.
- To shop. (2)
- We had extra miles, but it was not enough to travel far away.
- Exchange studies.

Q4. What impression did you have about Stockholm before your first visit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pleasant city with quality shops and a variety of cultural activities. Clean, modern, tall people.</th>
<th>That it would be cold, very clean, very 'Scandinavian' i.e. tall and blonde, and somewhat impersonal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A cold, secure and damn expensive place.</td>
<td>A Scandinavian city with blue sky and old red houses and the archipelago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The capital with a lot of museums, beautiful buildings, and lots of people.</td>
<td>A big city, with plenty things to do and many shopping stores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City on the water, capital of Sweden- the biggest city in Scandinavia. It would be interesting to visit it. That it was a city in the middle of Scandinavia.</td>
<td>Big place with an old city and many shopping centers and water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather in Stockholm was going to be cold and dark. A country full of snow, water (as at home in Venice) and cold weather most of the time. A cold city with high rate of suicides.</td>
<td>Pleasant city with quality shops and a variety of cultural activities. Beautiful architecture, 'old buildings', great museums, restaurants and shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was going to be bigger than Copenhagen. I didn’t really have the big impressions of Stockholm prior to my visit, mainly because I didn’t know what to expect, other than it would be an interesting experience.</td>
<td>That it was a city with culture and history. Not much information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t know if it was bigger than Oslo. I didn’t really have a big idea about Stockholm before my visit. Maybe it is so close that I was not interested the first time.</td>
<td>I just knew I will visit the remains of Viking culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That it will be interesting to see the differences among the Baltic (ex soviet countries) and the others as Sweden and Denmark.</td>
<td>We have seen many pictures and sites. We took the promotion and the risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement – never been there before.</td>
<td>I thought that it would be compact and cramped, with high population density like most cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures show how big area is between buildings and parks and water. It was plenty with water, green areas and some kind of nice place.</td>
<td>That it would be cold, very clean, very 'Scandinavian' i.e. tall and blonde, and somewhat impersonal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5. Did you have an itinerary? What did it include? What had you heard about these places?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Itinerary &amp; planned trip. Once we are in Scandinavia to travel as much as possible. But not a fixed schedule.</th>
<th>The only plan was really just to walk around in the streets, see the concert, different sights, being a plain tourist, without any bigger goal. I wanted to see the Opera, Stortorget, Gamla Stan and the waterfront by the station. Other than that I just wanted to see if Stockholm would impress me - which it did.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No itinerary, really. Visiting other parts of Europe, too.</td>
<td>Yes. We planned to stay one month and see and travel around countries like Finland, Norway, Denmark, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djurgården would a very interesting island, though. We came just to Stockholm for few days. We are staying only a day. Just to go to Junibacken and do some shopping. No we just arrive for two days for a concert and do shopping. We came without plan or itinerary. We are here only four days to visit Stockholm. I just come three days. We just came for the weekend. It is a big place to have fun. We came just for the weekend to walk and see the city and museums. We wanted to visit the city and relax. We heard that Stockholm was a pretty city. We heard that there are not poor people and the nature is gorgeous. I heard about Gamla Stan. That it was a pedestrian friendly place. We wanted to see the Swedish landscape as well the Baltic sea with all these islands close to Stockholm. I heard these were the places to go visit first as to visit Gamla Stan (full of old buildings and winding side streets), visit the palace and some museums, and visit Djurgården area. And shopping on Drottninggatan. I put myself at the mercy of my hosts who were very knowledgeable and just as eager to explore or try new places/events. I just knew roughly what people do in Stockholm for example visit a churches, museum, take bus tour. As we were going to Sweden we thought we should also see Finland, Norway and Denmark while in Sweden we compiled an itinerary to cover these countries by train and boat.</td>
<td>Only thing scheduled was taking the ferry to Estonia for a quick trip but when I travel to a city I kind of just like to ramble and take it slow. Stop at places that you just stumble upon take recommendations from locals. The first trip was really just to see the city, being a 24 hours tourist, without no big deal to do. I wanted to see the Opera the Skansen and the palace and Stortorget, Gamla Stan and the waterfront by the city hall. We have done by ourselves by internet. We don’t like to travel with a group. Didn’t have any plans. After reaching here though, heard about some places and went there.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. What resources did you look at before your journey and How did they make you feel about the trip?

| Internet to see the weather. Good transport & food, I got all the facilities. I’m highly satisfied. Internet and Google. It was exciting to see a map of all the streets where you can walk virtually. Lonely Planet Guide. Made me very excited and ready to start exploring! Stockholm web sites. Online reviews such as those on Trip advisor that are authentic reviews have high credibility. Advice from friends, books and brochures. Internet, Vikingline site. Stockholm’s tourist website was my main resource I looked specifically for wool and craft stores in the city. My travel agency in México. Our travel company which we use to travel always in Brazil. The travel agency gave us many information and sites to see what to choose. A map of Stockholm and a travel’s book of Sweden and Google, I was pretty much looking forward to visiting it. I looked at Study in Sweden se and some other websites. Saw that Sweden has a lot of international students and that language is not a big problem which was a huge relief for me as this is the 1st time I am going outside India. | None really. I knew I was going to walk around the streets. The only thing I had was a map I got from the train station. Internet. We expected that we will have exciting weekend different to those at home. We depend on son-in-law’s guidance (who is Swedish). We relied mostly on talking with our family after we got to Sweden also grew up with several Swedes and Finns and were interested in seeing what they were talking about these were good people and friends and so we felt comfortable about visiting their homelands. The first time internet to learn what to see. Then second and third time I just was going to walk with my friends around the streets with a map until the concert should start. None, just friends in the country and the lady we stayed with. Internet as facebook and blogs. Friends’ advice. We feel confident and interested. We were searching by internet and we found nice pictures and we had good comments from our friends. Internet and facebook to see what people use to say about Stockholm. People had positive and negative Friends from facebook. Internet and twitter. Internet, brochures and friends’ experiences |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7. What was your first impression of Stockholm?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Busy city with a good transport system making sightseeing accessible. Weather was nice. It was bigger than Copenhagen. It seemed like a clean city and green city. A well organized city with a well working transportation. Plenty of forest from the plane and a big city encircled by water. Mixture of old and new. Easy to get around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy city with many business activities as the capital of Sweden. Very clean and lively. Lots tourist on streets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A huge city with plenty of islands. Plenty of islands and big buildings compared with Helsinki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy city with a good transport system making sightseeing accessible. City with plenty of water and forest seen from the airplane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful city, especially the view by the water as the sun reflects off the colorful buildings in soft red hues in the distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An enormous city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A medium size city from the plane in between forest and water. It is a wow! It’s really stunning, beautiful, charming and modern at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before to travel we get the idea that Scandinavia was blue sky and sunny days even if it was cold, and that’s how it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great, calm but empty city. We arrive late 9 00 p.m. Fresh air, plenty of water and cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew that the area was made up of many islands. Was surprised about all of the water and the interconnection or the city to numerous islands. I had not been aware of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was empty when we arrived to the airport. No people just the people from our flight. It was as ghost town. We arrived 20.00 p.m. no so late, no one was on the street all the way, from the airport to the city downtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the boat, a really big and broad place. A small city with many islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good transportation system we didn’t have traffic problems at all in Stockholm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It seemed like a clean city with green areas and water spots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean, modern, quiet city, with tall, young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The city is not so big and no too much people. But people who deal with you are friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas card, warm people and yummy chocolates.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q8. How do you feel now when you have seen Stockholm? Explain.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel the same, well. Unfortunately, there were a lot of beggars in the smaller walking streets where the tourists would frequent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More or less but is nicer in reality than in the internet. But too expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We use to live in Venice. In comparison, here all the channels are huge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes it is a city easy to get around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am unsure about it. I felt that the shops were closing too early and about 8pm most activities stop and the city becomes very quiet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Stockholm is a populated city, but it is functioning well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We enjoy this big city with plenty of space to walk around. Even if the bad weather has breaking to be more outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weather was not nice. We have to walk under the rain all the whole day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a city that actually grows on you the more you explore and discover all the great things it has to offer. Well, we have stayed only in the touristic area. Not the same it was better than we expected. More confident than the first time. When you know where to go is easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now we don’t see too much trees but water. The city is really built in an archipelago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ya! Now that I am more accustomed to the cold and since the weather is getting better, there are lots of places to see and the transportation system is excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t know quite to what expect and how the islands were joined to make the city so unique until flying over and then again while on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After seeing Stockholm I am more impressed than what I had preconceived about this city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was not as we imagined or expected. It is some kind as cold society. Nobody talks to you. Maybe in summer when is warmer, because now is grey and rainy. In the street people even don’t look to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy and fast to reach the city. Almost all the attractions are at the same district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even more impressed about the waterways and the city we have been walking all around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel even better that I thought. Water, yes, but not too much green in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a wide and a windy city. Well, it was smaller than I had thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A pretty town- well organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a nice city, with not too much stress and clean. I am not excited as much as before especially after I have seen other European countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe the weather windy and raining all the day has influenced how we feel. We feel that the blue sky and sunny day belongs to other place not here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10. Currently, what would you say is characteristically Stockholm?

| Gamla Stan. The old city and the Globen building. Beautiful tourist place. The Palace and the small houses and narrow streets in Gamla Stan. The islands, bridges and well preserved buildings. Nice small streets in the old city. Many islands connected by bridges. Access to a range of activities, Djurgården and Gamla Stan. Safe and lots to see, like museum, streets, restaurants, etc. The square old buildings. Most of the things are expensive. Souvenirs and food especially. The City hall building or North Museum. Calm and peaceful place. The Opera House. The old houses museum Skansen. The architecture with nice roofs and houses on the small hills in front of the water. Maybe some nice landscapes seen from different buildings. The old town has buildings more or less circular and the new city most of the new buildings are square as the parliament. Fika, Old towns, lakes and skiing. Not sure, that’s a difficult question. | It’s history, it is very picturesque along the waterfront and old-town areas. Think I covered this in the preceding question!!!!...”an interconnection of numerous small villages/towns, with individual character” Plenty of water and the buildings are not so tall. It is a horizontal city. Plenty of malls to do shopping and places to have fun. Huge shopping centers, big green areas and big buildings and plenty of water all around. Not so crowded city. Cold and not communicative social atmosphere. People have money and are shopping and eating in restaurants. City with on many islands. Old and new buildings. A city where all works without problems, well structured. It’s a mixture of charming and modern. It has both places that you want to just be relaxed and places that you want to feel like being in a big city. Red houses and nice roofs with tiles and copper. |

Q11. What does the city make you think about, (what images)?

<p>| Not so crowded city. Cold and not communicative social atmosphere. A well planned city. Serenity, beautiful gardens in summer as pictures show. Old and New together, still have/maintain historical places. The feeling that you are in the middle of the ocean by crossing bridges. A city with a planned organization. A big city floating in a river, Viking, H&amp;M. People have money and are shopping and eating in restaurants. People are not happy no body smile to you. A small city with not too much people that make a pleasure to walk between the people without being pushed, even in the underground. An industrial and practical city. Without frills or not unnecessary decorations. I’m not certain why as intellectually I know Stockholm is the major commercial center in Scandinavia and one would expect it to be diverse. But, it was just a bit of a shock in person. Think about the connection of the various islands and visible water constantly reminded me of the seafaring nature of the Swedes. A small full of activity town. Water, great old buildings, bustle but no hustle (busy but not crowded --as compared to other capital cities like London or Seoul) A happy city! both nights that we spent there were great. | We were thinking that we will be as in Venice; advertising use to call Stockholm as the Venice of North, but it has nothing like this. It is a square city. Most of the buildings are as cubes. The only nice building was the Opera house. Even the Castle is like stones cubes. A city that has pride in its past with contemporary design. Good place to see. Sustainable Scandinavian design. The Viking culture. The water gives you some kind of peace to your soul even if it is a busy city. A city that has pride in its past with contemporary design. The old city was not as we had imagined It has lost its charm there are too much fake handicraft shops. An open city surrounded by water. That this city force to people to work not to enjoy life. I see people stressed and sad. Nobody smile. We imagined this city by the time when the Vikings were alive and were living in the Baltic. You inhale Nordic culture. It has two feelings. The center city makes you feel 2013 and the old towns take you away completely with its quiet, peace and vintage shops Peaceful city by the waterside. Interesting rooftops, gardening plots by the river, blue sky and boats. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q12 Is Stockholm unique in any way? Please, elaborate even if it is not</th>
<th>Stress free. Stockholm is unique in the sense that more services such as money changers can be found but operating hours end early. Nice parks and walking and street restaurant. Blanket on the seat of restaurant which was very impressed and I have never seen such things before. It is a square city with exception of the old city. No we have not seen some especial thing. It is safety we walk all around without problem. As in all cities with channels you ride boats. No one boat was to say oh! Wonderful! Maybe because is not yet season. Not especially. It had most of the elements of a modern city. Nothing especial in my opinion. I don’t know maybe the Castle is unique. It is the geographical location. Just its position in the middle of Scandinavian. Nothing unique. it has lost the opportunity to enhance the old city by giving the feeling to be at the Middle age. Well, the streets are wide, water all around. They say that is almost not pollution but your shoes are dirty after a day walking. I think what I enjoyed most about the city is that it doesn’t feel like a city. I would describe it country cosmopolitan. I am not suggesting that the people in any way were country bumpkins but the city had a relaxed, quiet atmosphere unlike other cities I have travelled to. I liked that you could be outside along the water and parks and not hear the jarring sounds of city life. Easy transportation. The SL card is a really good for people who like exploring. The cafes are really good. Its only the price that is discouraging.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q13 When I say Stockholm, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Why?</td>
<td>A pleasant place to visit. Globen. You can say, that it is unfortunate in some aspects because Stockholm has a lot more to offer, but Globen is a big part of Stockholm in the international perspective, and due to all the bigger concerts performed there, it’s a destination to most of northern Europe. The Nobel price. The royal family. Especially after the Princess’ marriage some years ago. The outdoor museum with the red houses. Window to Sweden. Museum of the North (Nordiska museum) Shopping but expensive. Different kind of cloths in Shopping centers. Because in Finland we have different taste. A pleasant place to visit. Channels and bridges. Many bridges but not beautiful as those in other European cities. Nobel Prize and ABBA, Volvo. The well known Volvo Scania, The Nobel Prize, &amp; The Swedish economic model. Its archipelago. The city which has lots of river and the city hall because I saw many advertisements and the internet use them to represent Stockholm. H&amp;M, I don’t really know why but maybe because its HQ is in Sweden and it’s H&amp;M is Swedish. The lakes and the walks through the forest. They are serene places. Red houses and blue sky. Maybe is because the publicity we have seen before to travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of getting around. Link between city life and rural idyll</td>
<td>Short operating hours &amp; Lack of vibrancy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean, easy navigation Efficient Transport System.</td>
<td>Food prices at restaurant are higher than Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yet all tips are included and do not need to calculate the amount of tips- (+) Big areas a lot of space.</td>
<td>Shops are closed early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) good transport; wide choice of good food; present and past coexist side by side.</td>
<td>Too many beggars who doesn’t know how to play their instruments, but I’m sure that’s common to bigger cities, Copenhagen included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Pollution free, Polite people. (+) Not too much pollution</td>
<td>Food is too expensive and not good quality. (-)but it’s very expensive. (-) Food is expensive and with a different taste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Clean streets, great cafés, and pleasant people. (+) Cool place</td>
<td>Expensive place. Too expensive, (-) too expensive for us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) people do not steal. (+) No traffic chaos (+) Well organized.</td>
<td>- unpredictatable weather (-) We are freezing all the time. (-) You never know about the weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) it is a safety city, people don’t cheat with you, it is quite clean, the traffic and the transportation works good.</td>
<td>The invasion of Chinese souvenirs all along the old city and the streets until the central station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) When things work is well organized. (+) safety place and calm all work quite good.</td>
<td>Even if Sweden is cheaper than Norway when you compare prices of food in the market. But the services are more expensive as restaurants and Pubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Because it’s so beautiful and charming, so it’s a good choice for travelling or living (+) Because it’s so beautiful and charming, so it’s a good choice for travelling or living</td>
<td>The only real negative experience was the lack of Swedish food available. Hard to find.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Easy transportation, great places to visit, cafes, secure</td>
<td>The old city are just the buildings has not the charm being an ancient city because the shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Most people do speak English so as a tourist it’s quite easy (non-stressful) to get around. That being said, from the onset Swedish people don’t seem the friendliest, kind of standoffish, but once in conversation they are quite nice and personable. Maybe this is a Scandinavian thing?</td>
<td>People are not talkative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Globen is the best of Stockholm in the international viewpoint good transport; wide choice of good food; present and past coexist</td>
<td>People is not friendly with the foreigners. (-) No body pay attention to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Many varieties to choose between things. Good for concerts and young people.</td>
<td>Very boring at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Good promotion (+) Clean and calm (+) clean and good transportation.</td>
<td>It is an expensive city. It is difficult to navigate. Quite a lot of itinerants in the more tourist area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Beautiful city aesthetically. Great transportation links. There is a lot to see.</td>
<td>wise there was a bit of road construction going on, especially on entry to the city it was confusing and slow, once in &quot;town&quot; this was Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) It was the cleanliness of the city and the friendly people also the old city, the palaces and the museums were of interest</td>
<td>Price quality was not correlate like at home. All was too expensive for the bad quality we got..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q15 Can you elaborate more on an example of a positive /negative experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Experience</th>
<th>Negative Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(+) The visit to Ostermalmstorget was memorable.</td>
<td>(-) Otherwise it will too far/too expensive to travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Good tourist guide, Punctuality in Bus &amp; Train.</td>
<td>(-) People do not look to you even just as a curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) A nice cruise on the Baltic</td>
<td>(-) Swede people don’t care about the tourist. Nobody talk to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) I forgot my camera in a coffee shop and they keep it until I came back to ask for it.</td>
<td>(-) No body pay attention to you and night clubs are not open all the whole night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Closer to nature. Escape to the islands of the archipelago.</td>
<td>(+) this city need to learn how cook better Italian food. It was really disgusting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) The transport from the airport to the city centre is very efficient.</td>
<td>(+) They eat meat balls with jam. Quite unusual for us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Spaces are bigger than in the Netherlands. E.g. houses are not stuck with each other, big green areas and streets.</td>
<td>(+) I wanted to spend more time getting souvenirs before returning to the airport but all the shops were closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) The traffic is good if doesn’t happen some big problem.</td>
<td>(-) Honest people, you have not problems with the exchange rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) The city is not polluted as where we stay</td>
<td>(+) Calm and peaceful place, compared with the chaotic Mexico D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Young people have fun and enjoy life.</td>
<td>(+) The traffic is good no need to wait long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) The concerts are my favorite activities thus I travel in Scandinavian looking for them as in Globen.</td>
<td>(+) Many varieties to choose between things. As cloths, food and Pubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The visit to Ostermalmstorget was memorable</td>
<td>(+) the traffic and the circulation was without problem. Maybe in comparison with Brazil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) We get free entrance to all the museums the Saturday night.</td>
<td>(+) It was the attendance at a football match and the boisterousness and enjoyment of the crowd obviously having a good time painted faces, sweaters, hats, noise makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Most of the public area are clean and smell good.</td>
<td>(+) Honest people, you have not problems with the exchange rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) The metro was a bit difficult with a pram (I opted to take the escalator which can be a bit nerve-racking with a pram and lots of people, but the lifts were, for the most part, drenched in the smell of urine. (I suppose this is to be expected in major cities and train/tube stations). Inside the central station the underground (metro) has not maps with the different lines. To difficult to know which one to take. However there is in the other stops</td>
<td>(+) Inside the central station the underground (metro) has not maps with the different lines. To difficult to know which one to take. However there is in the other stops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) Too much cheap business for tourists you lose the feeling being in an old city.</td>
<td>(-) Too much cheap business for tourists you lose the feeling being in an old city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) The problem it is that too is expensive the concerts to come more often.</td>
<td>(-) The problem it is that too is expensive the concerts to come more often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) I don’t think I can name one Swedish food dish. Perhaps the city has lost a distinctly Swedish identity.</td>
<td>(-) I don’t think I can name one Swedish food dish. Perhaps the city has lost a distinctly Swedish identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Too much shops selling handicrafts but not one real typical a Swedish shop.</td>
<td>(+) Too much shops selling handicrafts but not one real typical a Swedish shop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) You feel that is a close culture no people want to talk to you even didn’t look at you or smile.</td>
<td>(+) You feel that is a close culture no people want to talk to you even didn’t look at you or smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Very boring at night not a good night club theater or modern show in other language than Swedish.</td>
<td>(+) Very boring at night not a good night club theater or modern show in other language than Swedish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Groups of drunken young men wandering the streets in the more tourist parts of town are a little off-putting. The last thing I would expect in Stockholm is a gypsy begging money from me.</td>
<td>(+) Groups of drunken young men wandering the streets in the more tourist parts of town are a little off-putting. The last thing I would expect in Stockholm is a gypsy begging money from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) It would be trying to catch a taxi on a crowded evening but as is in every city I believe.</td>
<td>(+) It would be trying to catch a taxi on a crowded evening but as is in every city I believe.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ohrid, Macedonia.

My favorite destinations are Istanbul, Turkey, Utila, Honduras and domestic. Flying to Europe for a short holiday is cost prohibitive. A couple times a year. Now that I live in the states I mostly travel of the time sun, mountain and bath.

At least once a year. We love calm places for all the family most live (albeit a bit cold).

I would definitely visit again. I think it would be a nice place to live (albeit a bit cold).

The daily menu is quite good), great museums and lovely scenery.

Stockholm is a perfect mixture of old architecture and modern life (i.e. shopping place, brands) that makes Stockholm beautiful. Also I went to Stockholm for Salsa dancing which has more people and better dancing instructors.

I consider myself travelling quite a lot. My favorite destinations are Prague, Dresden (Germany) and Oslo. Prague and Dresden are more unique and the architecture is more beautiful and even more charming, Dresden is also cheaper. Oslo is quite similar to Stockholm so I like both of them the same.

Not as often as I would like now that we have small children, but hopefully more often in the future. Stockholm is great to travel with families.

Not so often, for most of our friends was the first time in Stockholm.

Every year four or five times. Always in organized trips. To visit parents.

I want to visit Stockholm to see the limited duration of travel.

Children wanted to go to play at Junibacken and we wanted to shopping.

Q.16 Why did you come to Stockholm and not choose another city destination?

To visit family. See the family. To meet our new Swede family, To visit my family.

I was freezing and I always write the boat was cheap and some friends knew that it will be free entrance all around on Saturday night.

We were visiting in Sweden and Stockholm was a must see!!!...also, were taken to a Football match by our daughter and husband.

Children wanted to go to play at Junibacken and we wanted to shopping.

Q.17 How frequently do you travel, and what are your favorite destinations? How does Stockholm compare?

2-3 times a year Turkey, Iberian peninsula, City breaks. Sweden compares favorably

3-4 times a year Turkey, Iberian peninsula, France to skiing

Twice a year big holidays in summer and in Christmas. We travel far away as Asia, Latin America or Africa. But we do short trips during the long weekends.

Two to three times a year. Spain, Turkey, Thailand. Stockholm ranks high for a city break.

More or less 4 times a year. Places with sea and sand.

As often as financial freedom, and to see the grandchildren and daughter and son-in-law grows in family. Other country side.

Like Vasteras, Baltic ocean and little boat ride, etc

Twice a year to warm places with mountains.

I consider myself travelling quite a lot. My favorite destinations are Prague, Dresden (Germany) and Oslo. Prague and Dresden are more unique and the architecture is more beautiful and even more charming, Dresden is also cheaper. Oslo is quite similar to Stockholm so I like both of them the same.

Not as often as I would like now that we have small children, but hopefully more often in the future. Stockholm is great to travel with families.

No idea it is not so regulated. We travel when we can. I don’t travel much. First time outside India.

Not so often, for most of our friends was the first time in Stockholm.

Not so frequently maybe once every three years.

Not very often. My favorite places are Berlin and Los Angeles. In comparison to either of them it’s hard to compare Stockholm, but it’s hard to compare any big city to each other, because other than being big, have high density and big buildings; they are unique in their own ways.

Every two years. We use to travel more in central Europe or US

Every other year to South America, Asia and Europe.

I travel twice a year. I live along the equator most of my life. Last I was in Curuna, Amsterdam. As a tourist, seldom want to rest due to the limited duration of travel.

Once a year Historical places. Not so often.

I don’t travel much on holidays. Because I work also in the tourism branch. I have not too much free time.

More or less every other year abroad. As we have nice places in Mexico. We like to travel inside Mexico most of the time.

Every year four or five times. Always in organized trips. To visit all the places.

Not really a frequent traveler, have no favorites destination as yet Stockholm was great.

Every year we choose a new city to visit.

This was the first time with the whole family.

Two or three times per year. South East Asia/Oceania and mainland Europe are favorites.

Stockholm is definitely one of my top favorites.
### Demographic questions

#### Q18. What is your gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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#### Q19. How old are you?

<table>
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<th>Age Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
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<td>55-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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#### Q20. Where were you born?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Asia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>9</td>
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#### Q21. Where do you currently reside? How long have you been living there?

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<td>America</td>
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#### Q22. What is your current marital status?

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<tr>
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<td>Cohabiting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engaged</td>
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#### Q23. What is your primary language?

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Estonian</td>
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<td>Finnish</td>
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<td>French</td>
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<td>Lettish</td>
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<td>Malayalam</td>
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<td>Moroccan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
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<td>Portuguese</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss-German</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
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<td>Thai</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
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</table>

#### Q24. What is the highest degree you have completed?

- Student: 4
- Bachelor degree: 16
- Master degree: 5
- PhD degree: 3
- High school: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental leave</td>
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How to improve visits to Stockholm

Q.26. In terms of tourism, what is missing from Stockholm?

Lack of promotion in UK.
With so plenty of water it could be nice fountains all over the islands in the water area. With artificial lighting.
A small mermaid statue at the waterfront! In all seriousness though, more attractions like typical shows to learn the Swedish folklore.
To have more public banks where to sit and public WC. There is only one close to central station.
Night shows, other activities and entertainments for tourist as a casino.
To realize that it has become a lot more cosmopolitan in the last years.
More night activities. There is not some typical Swedish show.
All those shops for tourist in the Old city should be relocated in a special market. Where will be sold all the real handicrafts done by the Swedes not just made in China e.g. moose or key holders. VIP places to the tourist to see shows and theater at least in English. To improve its offer among activities for all the ages.
I suppose advertising, also, special trips with discounted hotels airfares, personal tours and attentive care.
It is missing to import shows which are all round Europe but never arrive to Sweden. Not only for young people e.g. the Cirque du Soleil.
To preserve the old city from the bad & modern taste and to recreate its original atmosphere. As they do in Malta.
Not sure, perhaps more Swedish culture to set it apart from other ‘capital cities’ --as in ‘what makes it special Special Air Fare Promotion. Entertainment to Retired or artistic events
Every weekend a cheap train-hotel package for all people.
A place close to station where you can sleep by hours only. For example if the concert finish at 01.00 a.m. A place to sleep five hours until the bus will live to Oslo.
To have at least four times per year this free entrance to public places
More direct advertising about the place worldwide by internet
Change the atmosphere of the Old city by having people dress up as the time when it was built and even the typical shops e.g. showing how to do and selling sweets and breads
Nice weather and try to be less expensive for tourists
To have contact with local people.
Stockholm must to be open to foreigners and not live only by themselves. It is missing the spirit of collaboration to work together
With plenty space in the water that Stockholm has. But nobody has thought to do a modern floating city with transparent floors and walls which could be the landmark or identity of Stockholm
More information on cultural events by Stockholm’s webpage and all the social medias at internet.
Lack of direct promotion in all EU countries
Stockholm has everything to offer. Target those who sell the holidays. At no time have I gone in to an agency to book a city break, or week away, and had the travel agent suggest Stockholm over the Algarve, or the Mediterranean, or Vegas. It may be born of an idea of north = cold or north = dog sleds. Perhaps concentrating more on the summer pursuits and ridding itself of the impression of being cold and dark?
I am trying to think about what is missing but I can’t, there is everything in Stockholm, sightseeing, cinemas, Salsa dance club, ferry tour, bus tour, foods, church and museums
Q.27. What could build Stockholm’s reputation as a tourist destination?

I would say: Each happy tourist will recommend and talk only GOOD things about Stockholm.

I suppose advertising, also, special trips with discounted hotels airfares, personal tours and attentive care.

It is missing an indoors huge pools complex in front of the City Hall to be a unique characteristic for Stockholm.

To improve its offer among activities for all the ages.

To have promotions year around to young people and jobless persons

More directed focus on unique places like Gamla Stan and Storatorg towards people who have never visited Stockholm – I had never heard anything about either, before my friend suggested we’d go there while in Stockholm and I was not disappointed.

A new ABBA museum which include other popular Swedish singers.

Try to be cheaper for tourists and especially Friendlier, outgoing atmosphere.

It needs to be enhancing their museums as the Nordic Museum it could be the landmark building of this city if people from government will start to promote it worldwide as the Viking culture that is showed,

It will be necessary to have a building as a landmark for Stockholm’s identity.

Try to show that it is the heart of Scandinavian. Stockholm must to use its huge water area to do many activities. The to create a friendlier outgoing atmosphere

To have every year a SCANDINAVIAN MEETING with concerts made for and by Scandinavian and Baltic young people.

To do advertise for the city that is modern but keeps its traditions.

Stockholm needs new attractions to do to a cultural destination & enhance Swedish food as well.

Need to do more publicity worldwide. Most of people know just because is the Nobel prize here.

More information on cultural events by Stockholm’s webpage and all the social medias at internet.

More services connected to the concerts as a restaurant open 24 hours a day.

Stockholm needs to have a landmark to be identified. E.g. a unique building.

A bigger attraction park than there which is closed now, with all indoors sports as skiing and swimming together in the middle of the archipelago. Open all the year around.

Attractive deals like Stockholm Card which includes transportation and entrance to museums and other places to visit.

Stockholm needs to be known worldwide. The best service. A happy tourist will recommend to the friends and with the social media will be widespread as a gossip. This system is faster and cheaper.

Try to sell charters with good promotions and bring people during all the year.

It is not too much in Skiing places in Sweden and it could be done all the winter.

Need to be promoted all the other winter sports even out of Europe.

Maybe try to promote more about activities that you can do in Stockholm and not in other places, both in summer and winter. And promote something to make people feel like they have to do that in Stockholm.

For example, to see Viking’s history as a musical. To have several nice new boats as restaurants to take you around the city while you eat or just drink a coffee with your friends.

All the people who has to do with Stockholm city services must to work together to improve the reputation of this city.