

# An analysis of the impact of Brand Image on Consumer Purchase Behavior.

*The case of Lidl, Sweden*

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## Abstract

This research project had a ***purpose*** to discuss the impact of Brand Image on Consumer Purchase Behavior. For retailers brand image are the key factors that help them to engage with customers and influence their buying behaviors. The concept of the brand image draws vital attention from the practitioners as it plays a significant role in marketing activities. In this study concept of brand image and customers purchasing behaviors had been discussed and based on the theory and model of brand image this study has reviewed extant studies about brand image impacts on the customers from the perspective of customer's equity. This research had also pointed out the relationship between brand image and brand equity and the relationship between brand image and consumer purchase behavior. Additionally, the research ***problem*** had been stated while implementing the research finding. This ***research design*** had been utilizing by the inductive approach in order to quantify the findings and discussion. Additionally, the research methodology had been discussed. For collecting secondary & primary data and survey method had been used in this study. Qualitative data analysis and quantitative data collection both techniques had been used.

***Finding*** and discussion were about Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Purchase Behavior in Lidl, Sweden has mentioned were, brand image factors and how it helps the company to influence customers purchasing behavior has been discussing. Besides, the impact of Lidl brand image on their customer's had been analyzed and the different campaigns, promotional and marketing strategy used by Lidl to strengthen their brand image had been discussed in the current research. The ***trend***, which had been found that company, is focusing on innovation their products with Eco-friendly products to maintain sustainability.

From this research it had been concluded that, brand image plays an important role in the Lidl to influence the customers purchasing behavior. It had been found that, the company has focus on strengthen the brand image for which they have adopted social media campaigns, environment friendly products in order to satisfy the customers by providing high quality product to influence their buying behavior. Additionally, the past experience of customers from previous purchase and LIDL products high quality in nature has significantly impact on customers purchasing behavior. Additionally, LIDL responsibility towards environment, their investment in advertisement, strong brand name in Sweden influences the purchasing behavior of customers. According to the future scope, in the survey, more sampling size would be

selected to get a more accurate outcome from the research. Furthermore, an Interview would be taken to get the more effective outcome of the research

**Keywords:** brand image, factors of brand image, customer purchase behavior.

### *Acknowledgement*

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	7
1.1 Background of the Study .....	7
1.2 Background of the Company .....	7
1.3 Rationale of the Study .....	7
1.4 Problem Statement .....	8
1.5 Research Aim & Objectives .....	8
1.5.1 Research Aim .....	8
1.5.2 Research Objectives .....	8
1.6 Research Questions .....	9
1.7 Significance of the Study .....	9
1.8 Structure of the Study .....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	11
2.1 Concept of brand image .....	11
2.2 Importance of brand image .....	11
2.3 Theories & models of brand image .....	11
2.3.1 Aaker brand image value model .....	11
2.3.2 Iceberg brand developing model .....	12
2.4 Concept of consumer purchase behaviour .....	12
2.5 Significance of understanding consumer behaviour .....	13
2.6 Theories & models of consumer purchase behaviour .....	13
2.6.1 Nicosia model .....	13
2.6.2 Howard-Sheth model .....	14
2.7 Factors of brand image that influence consumer purchase behaviour .....	14
2.8 Relationship between brand image and consumer purchase behaviour .....	15
2.9 Impact of brand image on consumer purchase behaviour .....	16
2.10 Conceptual framework .....	17

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology .....	18
3.1 Research philosophy .....	18
3.2 Research approach.....	19
3.3 Research strategy.....	20
3.4 Research method .....	21
3.5 Data collection and analysis.....	21
3.6 Ethical considerations .....	22
3.7 Limitations of the study.....	22
3.8 Timeline of the research.....	22
Chapter 4: Result analysis and Discussion .....	24
4.1 Overview .....	24
4.2 Primary data collection.....	24
4.2.1 Primary data analysis .....	35
4.3 Secondary data collection.....	36
4.3.1 Secondary data analysis .....	41
4.4 Summary .....	42
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	44
5.1 Conclusions .....	44
5.1.2 Practical implications of the research .....	44
5.2 Linking with objectives.....	44
5.3 Recommendation.....	48
5.4 Research limitation.....	48
5.5 Future Scope.....	49
References.....	50

## List of figures

Figure 1: Structure of the research study .....	10
Figure 2: Conceptual framework .....	17
Figure 3: Research onion .....	18
Figure 3: Gantt chart .....	23
Figure 4: Age .....	24
Figure 5: Gender .....	25
Figure 6: Living in Sweden.....	25
Figure 7: Citizen .....	26
Figure 8: International student .....	26
Figure 9: Education level .....	27
Figure 10: Frequency .....	27
Figure 11: Level of attraction .....	28
Figure 12: Merchandise selection .....	28
Figure 13: Packaged goods .....	29
Figure 14: High quality .....	29
Figure 15: Satisfaction level .....	30
Figure 16: Influence .....	30
Figure 17: Physical facility .....	31
Figure 18: Brand name.....	31
Figure 19: Green purchasing behaviour.....	32
Figure 20: Environment friendly .....	32
Figure 21: Lifestyle.....	33
Figure 22: Interest in purchasing .....	33
Figure 23: Reliability .....	34
Figure 24: Brand awareness.....	34
Figure 25: Responsibility to the environment.....	35
Figure 26: Revenue Growth of Lidl.....	37
Figure 27: Market share of Lidl .....	40

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In modern marketing, brand image has become the key driver that is the overall general perceptions of the consumers regarding a particular product. Brand image has a profound impact on the consumer purchase for that reason the prime purpose of the marketing activities is to affect the perceptions, attitudes and behavior of the customers towards a specific brand (Haro, Oktaviana, Trimulia Dewi, Anisa & Suangkupon, 2020). Retail marketers can increase sales, maximize market share and develop their brand equity through establishing strong brand image in the mind of the customers and stimulating consumers' actual purchase behavior (Mbete & Tanamal, 2020). The purchase behavior of customers and their consumption decision basically influences by the brand attributes and features which is determined by the feelings and perceptions about the brand image in deeper sense (Silitonga, 2020). (Usman & Aryani, 2019) believe that instead of changing retail consumers' life style & way of information process brand image remains the dominant influential factor of consumers' purchase behavior in retail industry. However, some researchers think that consumers' purchase behavior is greatly influenced by the cash flows, market value and market share of the brand (Jasmani & Sunarsi, 2020). So the main purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of brand image on the consumers' purchase behavior emphasizing on the LIDL in the retail sector of Sweden.

### **1.2 Background of the Company**

LIDL is the German based multinational discount supermarket chain that was established in 1973. This giant retail firm was formed by Josef Schwarz and its' headquarter is located at Neckarsulm, Germany. LIDL, Sweden is the subsidiary of this giant supermarket chain and this firm operates over 12000 stores around the Europe & US (Salisu & Olsson, 2020). LIDI started its operations in Sweden in 2003 and there are 171 stores of LIDL in Sweden that contains about 23.2% of retail market share. About 315000 employees are working in LIDL and the firm has obtained estimated € 89.869 billion revenues in the year 2020 (Schmid, Dauth, Kotulla & Orban, 2020).

### **1.3 Rationale of the Study**

In this competitive retail industry brand image generally works like a signal that allows consumers to recognize and familiar with the specific product. Brand image allows the consumers to retrieve adequate information from their memory which they have experienced



about the brand associations and perceptions influence their purchase decisions and behavior. In modern marketing brand image is treated like business strategy as it creates customers value and maintains competitive advantage through developing relationship between brand's product and emotional perceptions of the customers (M & Rao, 2018). Brand image as the basic dimension of brand equity affects the consumers' perceived risk assessment and their purchase decision or behavior because of the familiarity of brand. However, brand image consists of two important aspects like brand recognition and recall based on the feelings and perceptions of customers about the brand which have less or more influence on consumers purchase behavior (Shahid, Hussain & Zafar, 2017). So for the author it is very rationale to execute this study in order to understand the actual impact of brand image on the purchase behavior of LIDL's consumers.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Retail customers are very much conscious about the brand name or image of the products before taking their purchase decision. According to the Deloitte, about 71% retail customers in Europe prefer to buy such brand products that have a strong brand image within the industry (Slaton, Testa, Bakhshian & Fiore, 2020). Therefore, the statement of problem of this study lies on the facts that retailers like LIDL are continuously facing challenges because of developing and managing brand image due to tough competition and changes of information process, expectations and lifestyle of customers. Furthermore, for the retailers it becomes very tough to measure the brand image and understand the purchase behavior of customers because of changing nature of retail markets and their customers' purchase behavior (Alić, Činjurević & Agić, 2020).

### **1.5 Research Aim & Objectives**

#### **1.5.1 Research Aim**

The aim of this research study is to evaluate the impact of LIDL's brand image on their consumers' purchase behavior in the retail sector of Sweden.

#### **1.5.2 Research Objectives**

- ❖ To identify and define different factors of brand image which have a great impact on the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden.
- ❖ To evaluate how these factors or dimensions of brand image affect the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers.

- ❖ To analyze the actual impact of brand image on LIDL's consumers purchase behavior in the retail sector of Sweden.
- ❖ To provide some suggestions regarding how brand image of LIDL can be more effective business strategy to influence consumers purchase behavior positively.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

- ❖ What are the factors of brand image which have a great impact on the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden?
- ❖ How these factors or dimensions of brand image affect the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers?
- ❖ What is the actual impact of brand image on LIDL's consumers purchase behavior in the retail sector of Sweden?
- ❖ How brand image of LIDL can be more effective business strategy to influence consumers purchase behavior positively?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Many studies have done regarding the impact of brand image on the consumers purchase behavior or consumers relationship but still there are some important insights which have remained uncover by prior studies. This study is significant in this sense that the author will try to provide complete information about the brand image and its true impact on consumers' purchase behavior (Tajuddin, Hassan, Othman & Razak 2020). Moreover, this study would be significant for the retailers in order to develop sound brand image within the industry by designing and implementing effective policies for influencing consumers' behavior positively. The researchers would also be benefited from this study as it would open a new opportunity to conduct further extensive study in this research area (Jasmani & Sunarsi, 2020).

## 1.8 Structure of the Study



Figure 1: Structure of the research study

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Concept of brand image**

The concept of brand image is defined as the set of impressions, beliefs and ideas that the customers hold or possesses about the particular object, product or services (Andriani & Bunga, 2017). In marketing brand image is the total perceptions regarding the brand products or services in the mind of the customers (Chang, 2020). Brand image can be perceived in different way by different customers so the formulation of brand image is the huge task of any business. According to Kotler (2018), brand image is the aggregate of ideas, views and impressions about the specific brand based on their experience and interactions with that brand or their beliefs regarding what the brand could be.

### **2.2 Importance of brand image**

Brand image has become important for every business as it helps to fulfil the business motives. Brand image is the paramount of brand performance as good image brings good profits (Shabbir, Khan & Khan, 2017). Every business firm strives for building strong brand image due to several benefits such as- i) ensure more sales revenue as new customers are attracted to the brand, ii) make easy to inaugurate new products under the same brand, iii) increase brand awareness and value, iv) boost the confidence of existing customers and make them loyal to the brand and v) develop better business customer relationship (Alic, Agic, & Cinjarevic, 2017). For example- Rolls-Royce is the best premium brand to be exclusive for influential customers because Rolls-Royce ensures its product quality in addition to make product differentiation that leads to increase its gross sales by 27%. Moreover, the brand identity, brand trust and competitive market price make the Rolls-Royce as one of the best premium brands within automobile industry (Kim, Bang & Campbell, 2020).

### **2.3 Theories & models of brand image**

#### **2.3.1 Aaker brand image value model**

Aaker model of brand image value is renowned as it indicates the dimensions of building strong brand image that ensure brand value to the potential customers. This model consists of five brand building dimensions such as brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived quality and proprietary (Išoraitė, 2018). Brand image means the perception that is associated with these brand building dimensions those create impact on the consumer purchase behavior while purchasing products of similar types. This model is useful

as it increases brand trust and make customers loyal towards the brand which lead to improve brand image (Kim & Chao, 2019). Moreover, this theory of Aaker helps the marketers to create barriers to switch to others and retain potential customers. However, some authors criticized this model as it cannot capture entire blocks of brand building and not useful for empirical study for retail firms understating the mindset of customers (Zhang & Luo, 2019).

### **2.3.2 Iceberg brand developing model**

Iceberg model of brand developing indicates that brand image of the firm can develop through short term dimensions (that are visible) and long-term dimensions (that are invisible). This model indicates that brand image is directly related with the success of brand building initiatives as these initiatives positively influence the consumer purchase behavior (Mitra & Jenamani, 2020). Iceberg model is helpful in order to ensure brand value and brand image as customers always seek to the brand that have strong brand image and brand value. Furthermore, this model ensures high brand appeal, brand value, brand trust and brand loyalty which positively affects the consumer purchase behavior in the competitive market (WANG & SONG, 2019). Therefore, some scholars criticized the Iceberg model as it does not consider public relations regarding to improve brand image that is one of the significant factors of brand building in modern marketing (Suoheimo, Vasques & Ryttilahti, 2020).

*Justification:* Therefore, in this study the brand image value model of Aaker will apply as different dimensions of this model greatly affects the consumer purchase behavior. For example-LIDL may concentrate on using the brand awareness and perceived quality as the most influential dimensions of brand image in order to affect the consumer purchase behavior. Because various brand awareness initiatives (provide in-store incentives, engage customers, leverage social media and cultivate authenticity) in addition to ensure high quality products will help the firm to influence the target customer's purchase behavior positively (Usman & Aryani, 2019).

## **2.4 Concept of consumer purchase behavior**

Consumer purchase behavior is the act of customers regarding to purchase and use products in their decision-making process. In modern marketing, consumer purchase behavior is depicted as the detail study of individual customer, groups of customers or organization s and the processes they choose, consume and dispose of products or services regarding to fulfilling their needs and expectations (Carfora, Cavallo, Caso & Cicia 2019). Consumer purchase behavior is important for marketers as it helps to understand the expectations of

customers. So, consumer purchase behavior is defined as the study of customers that indicates how they behave during purchasing products or services regarding to satisfy their needs and wants (Sirgy, 2019). Consumer purchase behavior is the systematic procedures that consist of problem recognition, information seeking, alternatives evaluations, purchase decision and post purchase behavior of customers (Suelin, 2019). Based on the views of the (M & Rao, 2018) consumer purchase behavior is consisting of six stages such as problem recognition, information search, evaluation alternatives, purchase decision, purchase and post-purchase evaluation. i) *Problem recognition*- it indicates the awareness of need in addition to distinguish the differences between desired state and actual condition- ii) *Information search*- in this stage customers try to search information about their required products from internal memory of external sources (friends, relatives or public sources) (Madhavan, & Kaliyaperumal, 2019). iii) *Evaluation alternatives*- in this position customers evaluates different alternative products which are able to satisfied their desired through establishing criteria iv) *Purchase decision*- in this stage customer choose the best products from alternatives considering quality, package and other features v) *Purchase* and vi) *Post-purchase evaluation*- it is the post consumption state in which the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the customers depend (Qazzafi, 2019).

## **2.5 Significance of understanding consumer behavior**

Understanding customers' behavior is significant for any company in order to find success for its existing products and new products launches. Consumer behavior is changing due to the changing of trends, fashion, technology, disposal income, living style and similar other factors (Jain, Khan & Mishra, 2017). Marketers have to understand about changing factors and develop efforts to be aligned with accordingly. Effective understanding of consumer behavior helps to consumer differentiation, customer retention in addition to design the marketing programs, predicate market trends, innovate new products and improve customer service (Rohm, Hooge, Normann & Karantininis, 2017).

## **2.6 Theories & models of consumer purchase behavior**

### **2.6.1 Nicosia model**

Nicosia model refers how consumer purchase behavior changes during purchasing the products from similar industry by focusing on different brand building factors. In case of new products firm try to communicate with potential customers & understand their predispositions as first or field one task whereas customers' evaluation process that is affected by attributes are referred as field two (Jisana, 2018). On the other hand, consumer purchase process and their

post purchase behavior are treated as the field three and field four tasks respectively. Firms' attribute and communication efforts positively affect consumer perceptions, motivates the target customers that influence their purchase behavior (Prasad & Jha, 2019). Nicosia model is useful as it focuses on marketing communication and social media marketing technique to develop good relationship between potential target customers and business which positively affects consumer purchase behavior. However, some commentators have criticized this model due to a lack of empirically tested and many of the influential factors of consumer behavior are not defined (Orji, 2018).

### **2.6.2 Howard-Sheth model**

Howard-Sheth model refers that different significant input of consumer purchase behavior greatly affects their buying behavior during purchasing a specific brand product. This model consists of three different levels in which the first level includes the problem-solving process and providing products information to target customers (Panwar, Anand, Ali & Singal, 2019). In second level marketers provide products information and understand customers' expectation whereas third level is associated with the response of consumers' purchase behavior as they have obtained greater knowledge about the products. Marketers can obtain benefits from applying this model as it is an interactive model that incorporates various aspects of customers purchase behavior and relates together with different brand building dimensions which positively affects the consumer purchase behavior (Vijayalakshmi & Gurumoorthy, 2018). Furthermore, this model is useful as it shows the relationship between different stimuli inputs and constructs variables which help to understand actual consumer purchase behavior. However, some scholars criticized this model as all the variables are not tested realistically regarding to understand the consumer purchase behavior and failed to explain all purchase behavior of customers in different situation (Aktaş & Şimşek, 2020).

**Justification-** in this study the author will use the Howard-Sheth model because it would help to incorporate various aspects of customers purchase behavior and relates together with different brand building dimensions which positively affects the consumer purchase behavior in addition to understand the actual consumer purchase behavior (Qazzafi, 2019).

## **2.7 Factors of brand image that influence consumer purchase behavior**

Various factors of brand image of different brand building initiatives impact on the consumer purchase behavior or their purchase decision while purchasing products or services. Among these factors perceived product/service quality, perceived price, brand awareness

programs, brand associations, brand loyalty programs, celebrity engagement, CSR activities and public relations are most common (Lei, Xu & Wen, 2020). Perceived quality always creates more value for its potential target customers by ensuring product innovation and differentiation that positively affects the consumer purchase behavior. Perceived product price has a great impact on the consumer purchase behavior as customers are price sensitive and always seek products with reasonable price. With the help of different brand awareness programs customers become aware about the products or services that encourage them to purchase by influencing their behavior (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). Brand association is directly related to the consumer purchase behavior as positive associations influence consumer to repeat purchase of the products by changing their purchase decision. Various brand loyalty programs make customers loyal; towards the brand which changes their behavior regarding to retain potential customers (Chaudhary & Bisai, 2018). Celebrity endorsement and CSR activities also affects the consumers purchase behavior because most of the customers follow their celebrity person regarding to consumer products whereas CSR initiatives make positive impressions in the customer's mind that positively influence their purchase behavior. Public relations greatly affect the consumer purchase behavior because public relations ensure customer satisfaction and make them loyal towards the brand (Zhang, 2018).

## **2.8 Relationship between brand image and consumer purchase behavior**

The relationship between strong brand image and consumer purchase behavior is positive because if the image of the brand become favorable towards potential target customers, then consumer purchase behavior become also favorable towards the brand and its products. According to the Deloitte about 69% customers in retail sector consider the image of the brand before purchasing products or services (Martín, Faraoni, Díaz & Ranfagni, 2018). Customers become loyal towards the brand that is engaged with different brand building initiatives and once they become satisfied toward the particular brand, they motivate their dear & near ones to purchase such brand's products or services. Various common sources of building brand image within the industry are marketing communication, customers' experience and word of mouth play a significant regarding to influence consumer purchase behavior (Amron, 2018). Moreover, social media marketing in along with digital marketing has created a profound impact on the consumer purchase behaviors as with the help of social media customers are becoming aware about the products information (Wang & Tsai, 2018). On the other hand, customer's self-concept impact on their purchase behaviors as it helps to develop a brand image

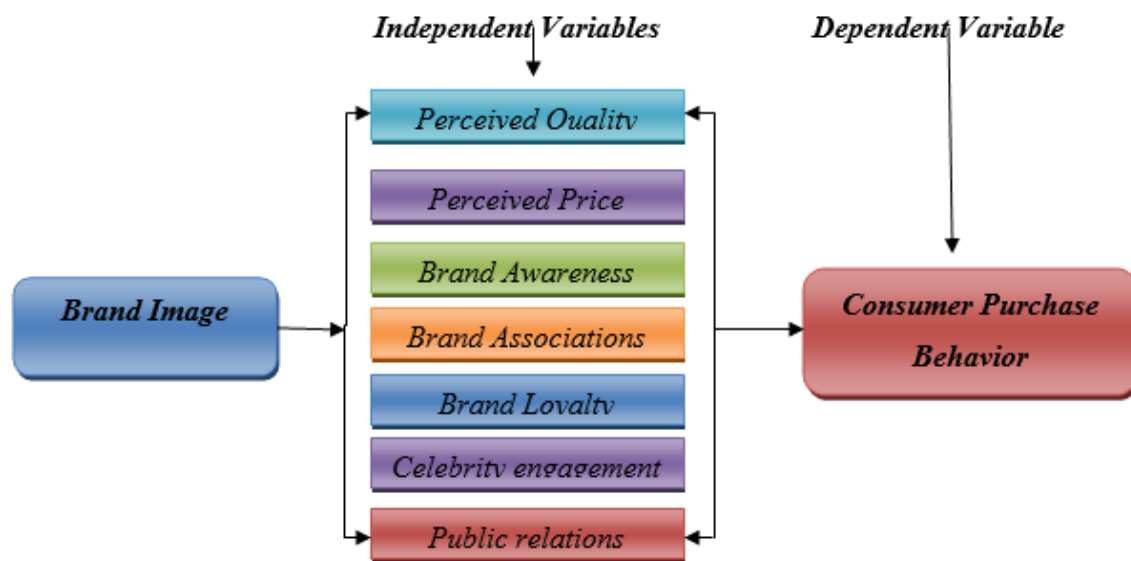


that includes perceptions like appearance, shortcomings, capabilities and characteristics. So, brand image and consumer purchase behaviors are correlated as strong brand image positively affects consumer purchase behaviors whereas poor brand image negatively affects behaviors (Zhang, 2019).

## **2.9 Impact of brand image on consumer purchase behaviors**

Brand image is being treated as an effective marketing technique to marketers as strong brand image certainly influence consumer purchase behaviors. As the perceptions and feelings of customers towards the specific brand's products or services brand image create impact in the behaviors of customers regarding purchase products (Arslan & Zaman, 2019). Consumers purchase behaviors is influenced by different brand building initiatives and promotional activities in addition to marketing mix strategies. According to Mckinsey & Company (2019), about 49% of customers feel prestigious regarding using the products with a top brand name as the car of Rolls-Royce or watch of Rolex brand. So, it indicates that customers recall the brands that have a good image within the industry. Moreover, various dimensions of improving brand image or name within the industry such as brand awareness programs, ensures perceived quality & price, enhance brand value & satisfaction, brand loyalty & celebrity endorsement programs and public relations influence the consumer purchase behaviors (Malik, Ghafoor & Ahmad, 2018). Because all of these brand building initiatives improve customers' knowledge about the brand and encourage them to purchase such a brand's products or services. In this competitive business market, most of the customers select and choose products with a strong brand image due to the proliferation of brands (Riaz, 2019).

## 2.10 Conceptual framework



**Figure 2: Conceptual framework**

(Source: Developed by author)

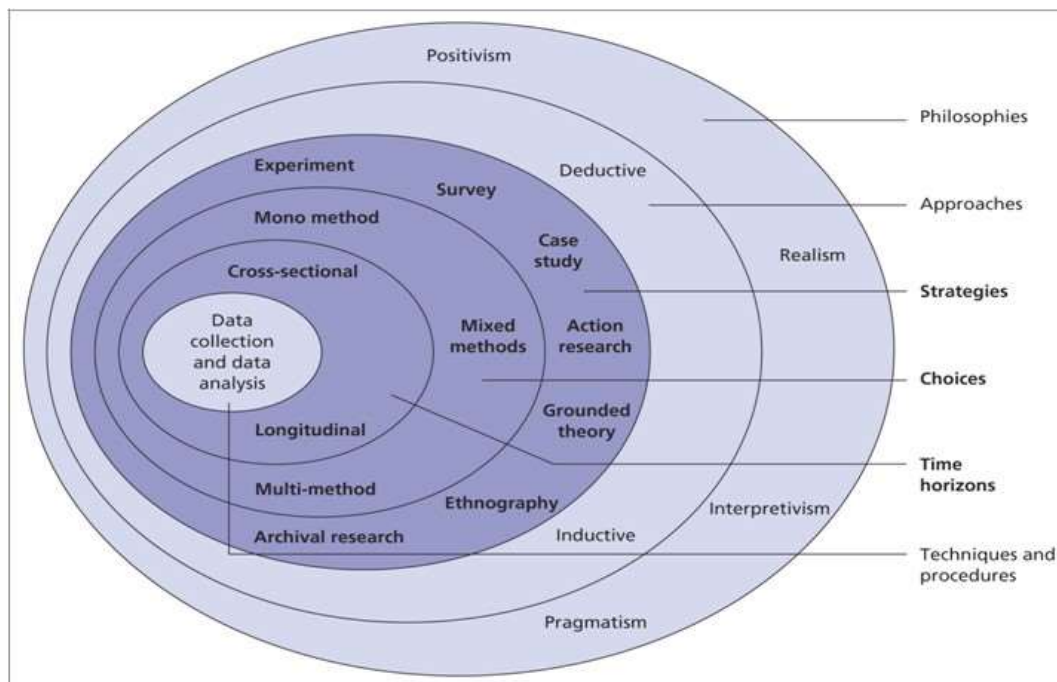
**Discussion:** On the basis of the above conceptual framework, it can be stated that different brand building factors or initiatives affect consumer purchase behaviors. Marketers can easily attract a large number of potential target customers by ensuring the perceived quality & price of products or services, brand awareness programs, brand associations, brand loyalty programs, celebrity engagement and good public relations (Raj and Roy, 2019). Customers always seek quality products or services and they become loyal to the brand that consistently provides quality products. Various brand awareness and loyalty programs make the customers aware of the new brand products which positively affects their purchase behaviors during purchasing similar types of products (Shah, *et al*, 2019). Perceived price plays a significant role in changing the purchase behaviors of customers as they are more price-sensitive and always seek a product with reasonable price. Moreover, different initiatives of brand association and celebrity endorsement programs create positive feelings and impression in the mind of the customers that affect their purchase behaviors. On the other hand, good public relations always develop positive perceptions among the potential customers towards the brand that also influence the consumer purchase behaviors (Amron, 2018).

### Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The research methodology in a particular study refers to the specific techniques and procedures that are utilized for the purpose of identifying, selecting, processing and analyzing the information as relevant to a particular topic (Dźwigoł & Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2018).

When broaching a discussion on the topic of a research methodology, perhaps the most noteworthy approach or element that can be listed here is that of the research onion, which was originally formulated by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016). This research onion is nothing but one of the best ways in which researchers can go about the construction of their research methodology, as it has different layers with distinct functions allocated to each, as depicted in the figure below.

**Figure 3: Research onion**



(Source: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016)

#### 3.1 Research philosophy

The research philosophy is the first layer of the research onion, and demonstrates the belief or worldview regarding a particular phenomenon as concerning the research study (Mayer, 2015), in this case the extent to which brand image can impact the consumer purchase behaviors for Lidl in Sweden. The philosophy also gives details about the manner in which the data shall be collected and processed and revolves around four distinct schools of thought – positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism.

A philosophical perspective is important when it comes to any research since it helps with the explicit demonstration and understanding of the assumptions that are being made by the researchers, and also helps analyze the choices that ultimately lead to the design, purpose and methods as employed in research (Mayer, 2015).

The positivist research philosophy seeks to explain the world and its many observations in an objective manner, and the researcher dissociates themselves entirely from their work to find out the answers to the questions (Ryan, 2018). The realist research philosophy deals with a similar school of thought, as it relies on the idea that the reality of the world is independent of that of the human mind, and the assumptions made must be scientific in nature (Tumele, 2015).

On the other hand, the interpretivist research philosophy deals with the principle that the researcher has a definite role in interpreting the world around, and thus, the observations can be explained through the social underpinnings of the researchers themselves (Ryan, 2018). The pragmatist research philosophy, however, is more concerned with facts, and the choice of this philosophy is determined largely by the research questions while allowing researchers the freedom to choose their methods and techniques for formulating the outcomes (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

In the current research, *positivism research philosophy* has been chosen as positivism as the research has to deal with genuine knowledge and data which is derived from experience of natural phenomena. Due to the involvement of both survey and secondary data, both quantitative and qualitative analysis had been conducted, which is compatible with positivism. Realism would not take into account the subjective analysis from articles, while interpretivism would not make scope for numerical analysis.

### **3.2 Research approach**

The research approach is the second layer of the research onion and it is important since it helps understand the research methods that have been chosen, along with the plan that has been devised to meet the research objectives and find the answers to the formulated questions. There are three main approaches to a research study – deductive, inductive and abductive.

The deductive research approach revolves around the framing of a hypothesis, which is then tested through the help of theories and observations to find out if it can be confirmed or rejected accordingly (Sik, 2015). The researcher in this case conducts a thorough study of the

findings of other scholars and existing observations so that appropriate conclusions can be drawn to test the hypotheses.

The inductive research does not involve a research hypothesis but instead starts with aims and objectives, and these need to be addressed as the research progresses. The observations are recorded and the patterns in the data sets are studied to give rise to theoretical conclusions regarding the same (Sik, 2015). These patterns and irregularities in the data sets are usually helpful with regard to developing theories and evaluating the aims and objectives.

The abductive research approach is often seen as a complement to deductive and inductive analysis since it begins with a set of incomplete observations with the aim to provide an appropriate explanation for the same (Żelechowska, Żyluk & Urbański, 2020).

This particular research shall utilize the deductive approach, since the observations and would be analyzed to draw relevant conclusions regarding Lidl's brand image, and its impact on the consumer purchase decisions. This choice can be said to be appropriate for this research, since a mixed methodology has been pursued, and thus, the data as collected through the observations would be key in helping address the research questions and objectives. Thus, the deductive or abductive approaches would not have been applicable, since they are better pursued in a study where the researcher does not have the need to collect a set of responses from a given population, and has to analyze existing data.

### **3.3 Research strategy**

The research strategy is the third layer of the research onion and is an important point of consideration when designing the research methodology. The strategy helps devise the other aspects of the research and sets forth the choice for the technique that shall be utilized for the research. This particular study shall utilize the strategy of action research, which revolves around the creation of knowledge on the basis of enquiries that are conducted within contexts that are not only practical but also specific (Stringer & Aragón, 2020). The main aim of any action research is to learn through action which ultimately leads to development on a personal or professional level. In this case, knowledge about how brand image impacts the consumer purchase decisions can help Lidl articulate the methods through which the company can improve upon its equity and image so as to improve the consumer response and behaviors.

### **3.4 Research method**

The fourth layer of the research onion revolves around the method that can be used for the purpose of research. Research studies that adhere to a mono-method methodology usually have a qualitative or a quantitative approach. Qualitative studies deal with the use of existing or secondary data for the purpose of substantiating the research aims and objectives. This data is usually obtained through journals, books and scholarly articles. On the other hand, quantitative data is obtained from a sample population first-hand, and this primary data is typically statistical in nature and must be processed through definite methods to draw appropriate conclusions (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). This particular study shall adhere to a qualitative methodology, and thus, make use of existing journals and scholarly books and articles to find out relevant data regarding the topic of research. In addition, it also involves quantitative methodology as here, the data and information also obtained from primary data collection methods such as survey questionnaire. The data has been analyzed with the help of graphs and charts, turning data into information and knowledge, and throwing light on the relationship between the variables.

### **3.5 Data collection and analysis**

The final layer or the core of the research onion takes into consideration the data collection and analysis methods. It comprises of the techniques and procedures that can be used to conduct the research, keeping in mind the philosophy, approach and method of the study. The data collected can be secondary and primary in nature, where primary refers to data collected directly through the subject or point source, while secondary refers to data collection from another research work, where data has already been gathered in the past (Kumar, 2018).

The data has been collected through both primary and secondary methods. Coming to secondary, the data collected shall be sourced from existing journals and books on the relevant topics. The data have been processed using a thematic analysis technique so that appropriate results can be documented. Besides, data responses have also been gathered from the primary data collection, where online survey has been conducted to obtain information from participants. In a bid to process the quantitative data as collected from the survey, adequate statistical methods would be deployed to give way to concrete results. A majority of the questions are based on the Likert scale, and the data as collected has been analyzed using MS Excel. Furthermore, the secondary data as collected has been processed using a thematic approach to analysis. Several themes, such as the brand image and customer purchase behavior

have been used to understand the patterns from the data as obtained. These themes have been then explained in detail for a better interpretation of the information.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

In research, ethics typically indicate the standards and procedures that are to be followed by the researchers during the entire course of the study. It ensures that the positive impacts and effects are maximized, while minimizing the untoward outcomes (Page & Nyeboer, 2017). It further makes sure that the data as presented has not been fabricated or falsified, or misrepresented in any manner.

For this particular study, all the secondary sources as consulted for the purpose of research shall be cited, and due credit would be given to the authors. This would further ensure that the work presented is reliable, and the results are credible. Additionally, the use of the inductive research approach together with the interpretivist philosophy will also ensure that the results as deduced are based on factual evidence rather than on mere assumptions. The use of qualitative methods also would add to the credibility of the study since only reliable and accurate sources shall be consulted to collect the necessary data for the research. Additionally, for primary data collection, all sensitive information of participants has been kept confidentially and survey has been conducted without forcing them and respectfully. The action research strategy will further align the research findings with that of Lidl, thereby allowing for a better understanding of the necessary parameters regarding the organization.

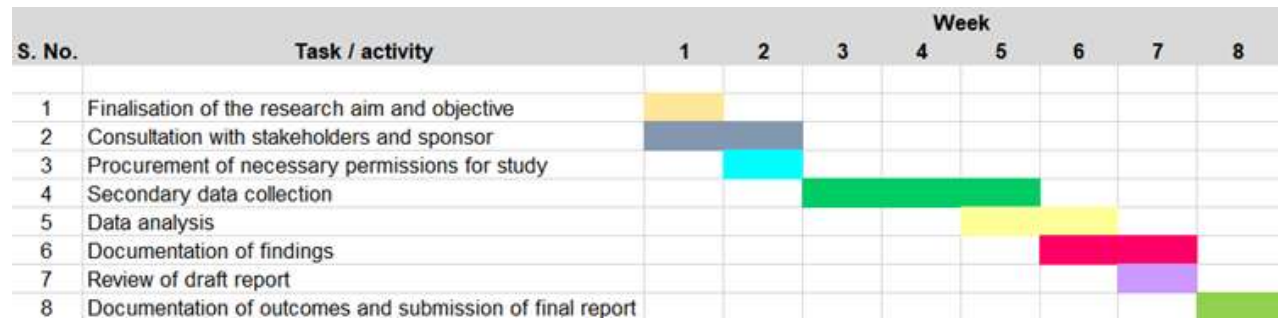
### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

The one limitation of this study that can be stated here, is that the research method is qualitative, which indicates that the outcomes might be a little too generalized. The research has collected data from secondary and primary data collection. However, here only survey has been conducted via online method. The interview method has not been adopted here, which can be seen as a limitation of the study. The use of open-ended questions through an interview could have further supplemented the findings, since a wider population could have been accessed. Thus, the results would be applicable only for Lidl, and not for the entire retail sector as a whole.

### **3.8 Timeline of the research**

The research timeline serves as the means of understanding the different phases and tasks associated with a research study. Often represented as Gantt charts, the timeline is an

effective way of demonstrating the total time period that would require conducting the project. In this case, a total of 3 months or 12 weeks shall be utilized to complete the study, as demonstrated below



**Figure 3: Gantt chart**

(Source: Author, 2021)



## Chapter 4: Result analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Overview

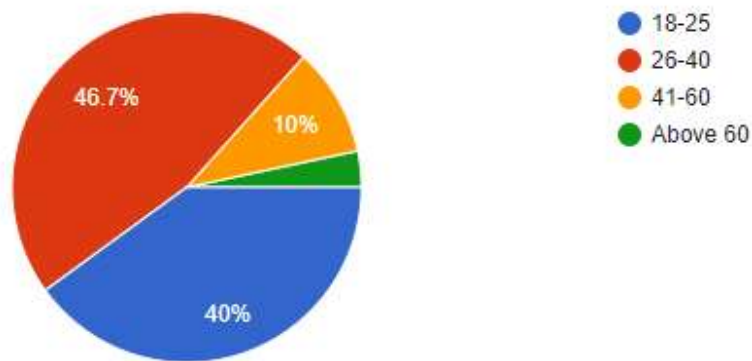
In this chapter, data from primary and secondary sources has been gathered as a form of evidence and all the information has been properly aligned with the topic, aim and objectives of the research work. With proper analysis, data interpretation has been produced for a better understanding of the collected data. As the aim of the research is to identify the impact of brand image on the customer purchase behaviors, the research questions in primary data is designed in this way. The survey will help the researcher understand about the customer's viewpoint of Lidl. The secondary data will help in supporting the gathered primary data and give in-depth knowledge of brand image and customer purchase behaviors of Lidl.

### 4.2 Primary data collection

#### 1. How old are you?

1. How old are you?

30 responses



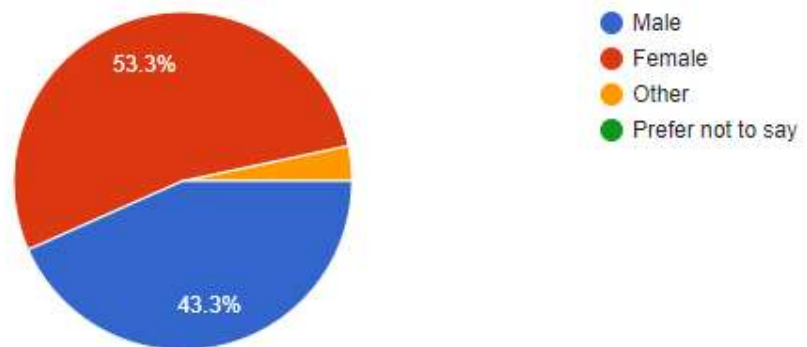
**Figure 4: Age**

From the survey, it can be seen that the maximum number of participants are from 26-40 years old and the percentage is 46.7%. However, the second-highest number of participants is from 18-25 years old and that is only 40% of them.

#### 2. What is your gender?

2. What is your gender?

30 responses

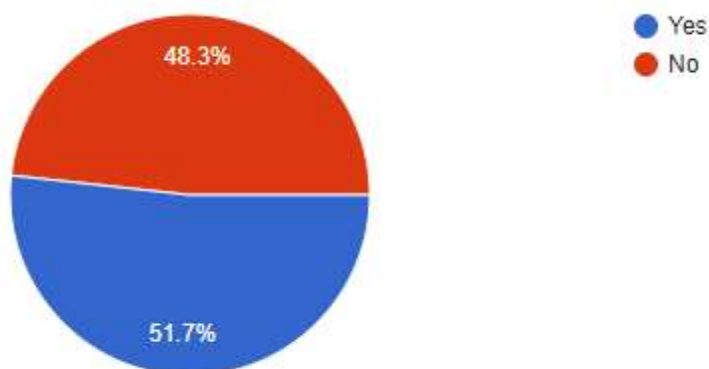


**Figure 5: Gender**

53.3% of the participants are female and 43.3% of them are male. The rest is from other genders.

**RQ1. What are the factors of brand image which have a great impact on the purchase behaviors of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden?**

3. Do you live in Sweden?

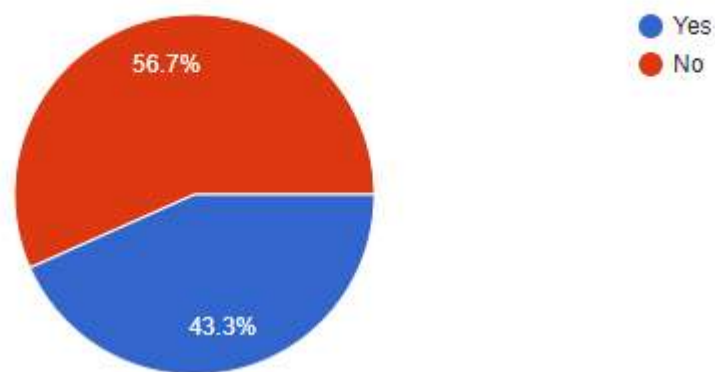


**Figure 6: Living in Sweden**

51.7% of the participants are from Sweden and the rest of them do not live in the country.

4. Are you a citizen of Sweden?

30 responses

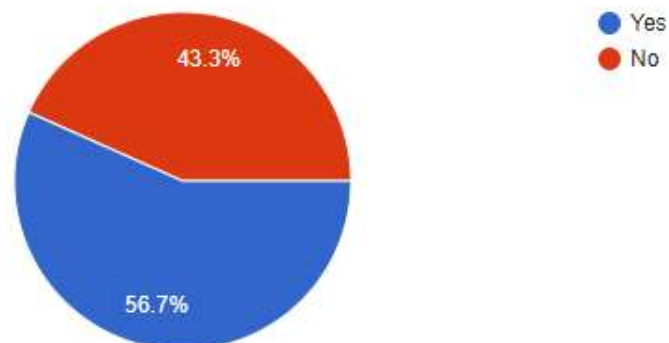
**Figure 7: Citizen**

The participants have responded that 56.7% of them are not the citizen of Sweden and 43.3% are the resident of that country.

5. Are you an international student?

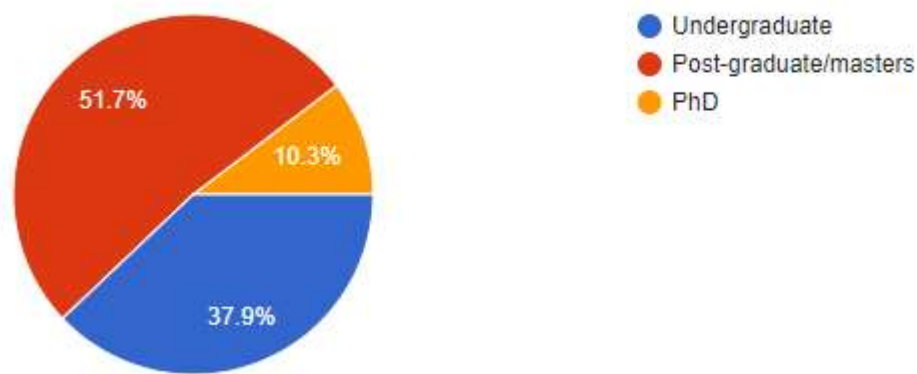
5. Are you an international student?

30 responses

**Figure 8: International student**

56.7% of the participants are international students who are currently residing in Sweden and the rest of them are not international students.

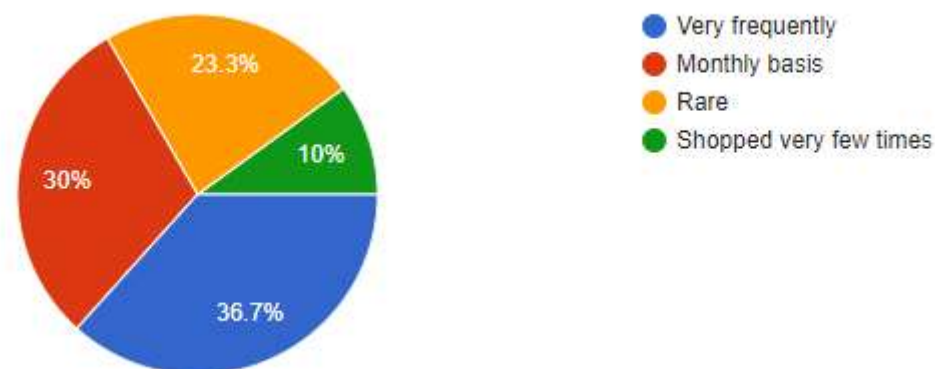
6. What level of education are you studying?



**Figure 9: Education level**

Most of the participants are 51.7% of them are post-undergraduate students. On the other hand, 37.9% are undergraduate students. Only, 10.3% of them are Ph.D. students.

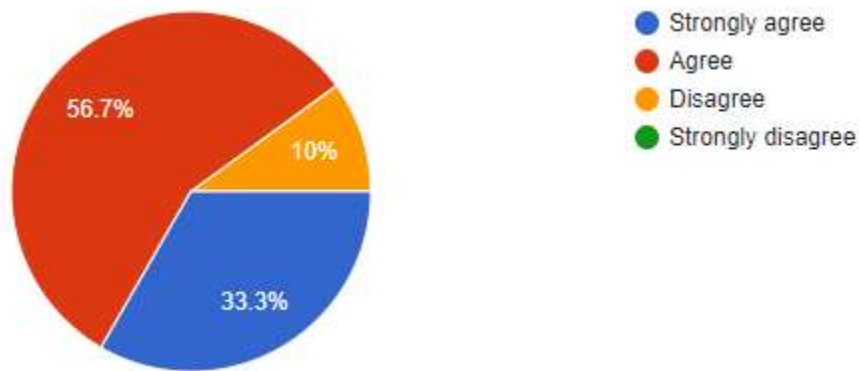
7. How frequently do you shop from LIDL?



**Figure 10: Frequency**

From the survey, it can be seen that 36.7% of the participants shop from Lidl regularly whereas, only 10% of them have shopped a very few times from this brand.

8. Is the advertising of LIDL up to the level to attract you?

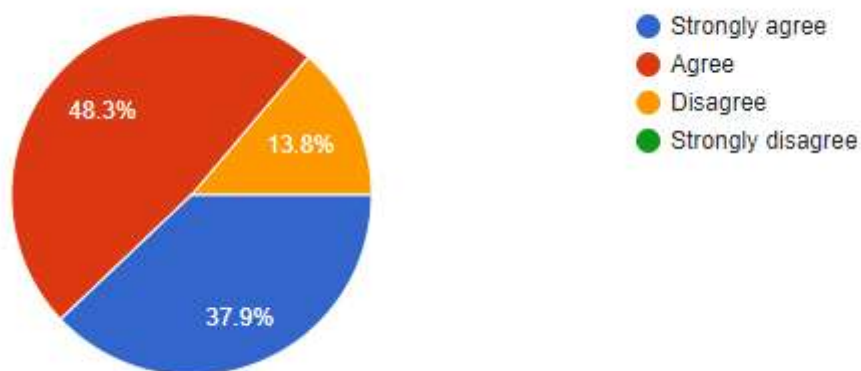


**Figure 11: Level of attraction**

56.7% of the participants think that the advertising way of Lidl is up to the mark and prominently attracting them. However, only 10% of them have disagreed with this condition.

**RQ2. How these factors or dimensions of brand image affect the purchase behaviors of LIDL's customers?**

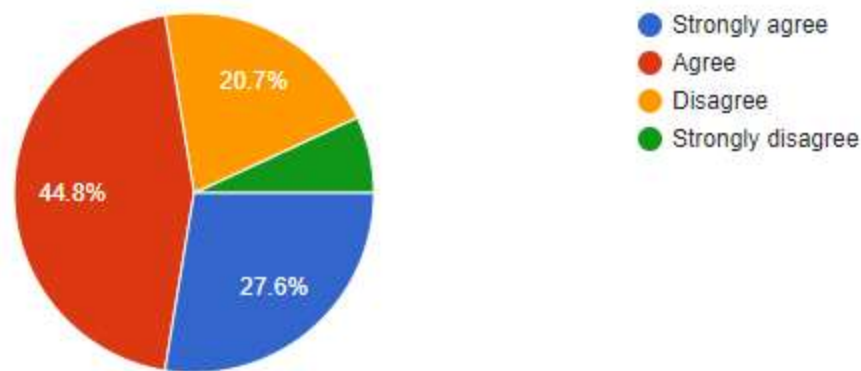
9. Do you agree with the fact that LIDL has a strong merchandise product selection?



**Figure 12: Merchandise selection**

48.3% of the participants agree and 37.9% of them have strongly agreed that the product selection of merchandise is appropriate for Lidl.

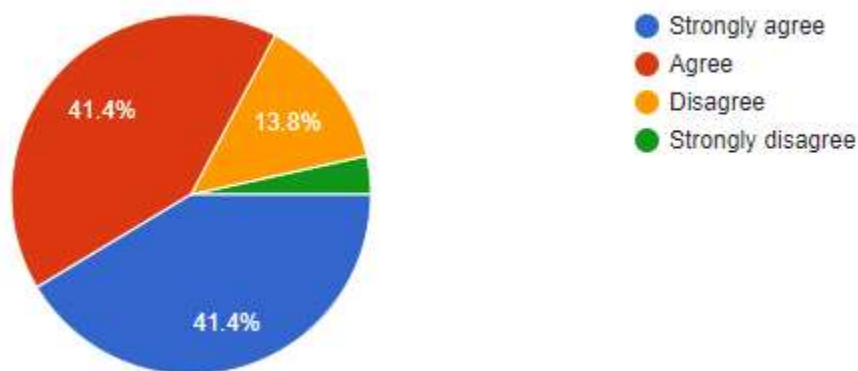
10. Do you support the packaged goods industry nature of LIDL?



**Figure 13: Packaged goods**

Most of the participants such as 44.8% (agree) and 27.6% (strongly agree) have voted that the packaging idea of Lidl is compatible with the industry nature.

11. Do you purchase the products of LIDL due to its high-quality nature?



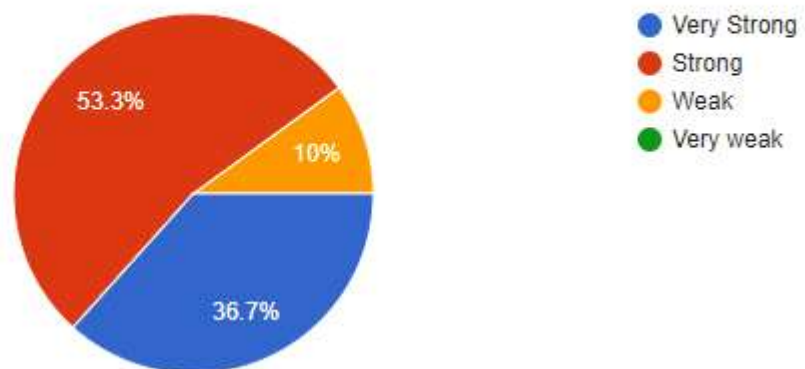
**Figure 14: High quality**

Though a large number of participants think that the products of Lidl are high quality in nature, 13.8% of them have disagreed with this condition.

12. Do you stick to LIDL for your satisfaction in the past-experience?

12. Do you stick to LIDL for your satisfaction in past-experience?

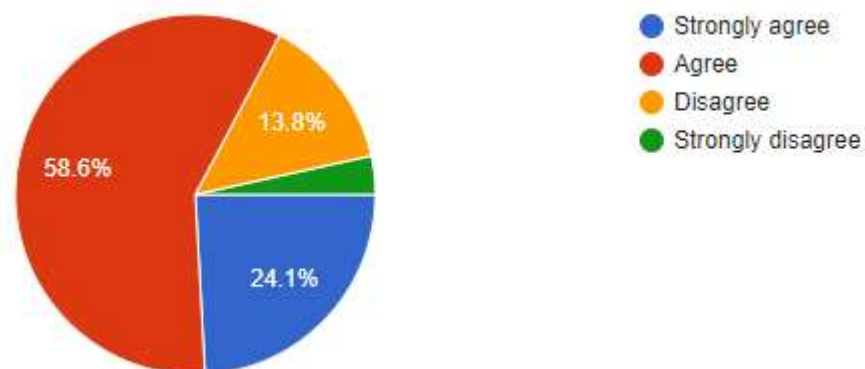
30 responses



**Figure 15: Satisfaction level**

53.3% of the participants have agreed that they have stuck to the brand for their high satisfaction from past purchase experience. However, 10% of them have not that good experience from previous shopping.

13. Does the brand name "LIDL" make a strong influence on you while purchasing the products?



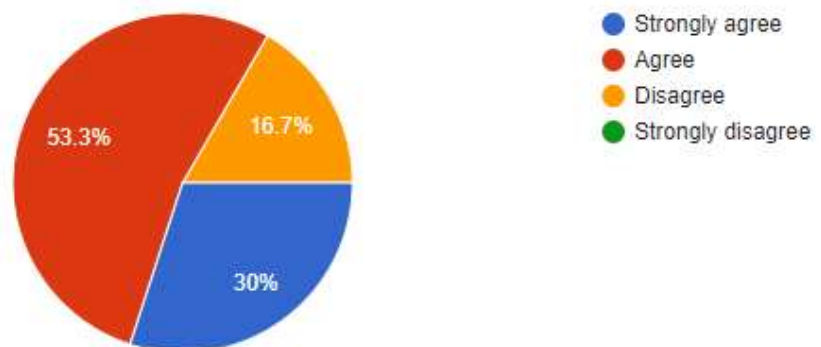
**Figure 16: Influence**

According to 58.6% of the participants, there is a strong influence of brand name while purchasing the products from Lidl. However, 13.8% have disagreed with this.

14. Does the physical facility of LIDL become convenient at the time of purchase?

14. Does the physical facility of LIDL become convenient at the time of purchase?

30 responses



**Figure 17: Physical facility**

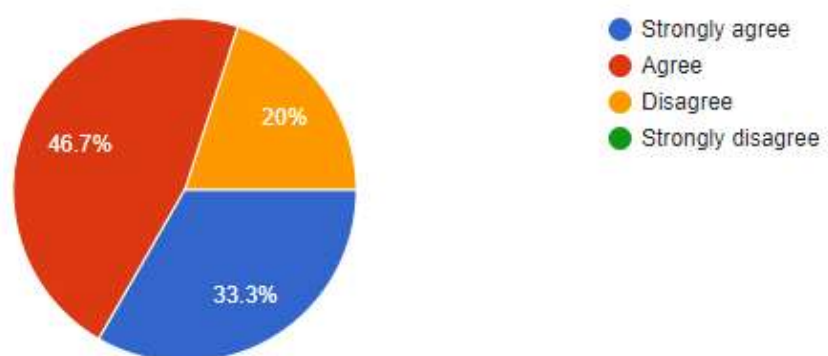
53.3% of the participants have responded that the physical facility at the stores is convenient at the time of purchasing products from the brand. However, a large number of participants (16.7%) have disagreed with this thought.

**RQ3. What is the actual impact of brand image on LIDL's consumers purchase behaviors in the retail sector of Sweden?**

15. Do you prefer the "brand name" LIDL in each of your product purchases?

15, Do you prefer the "brand name" LIDL in each of your product purchase?

30 responses

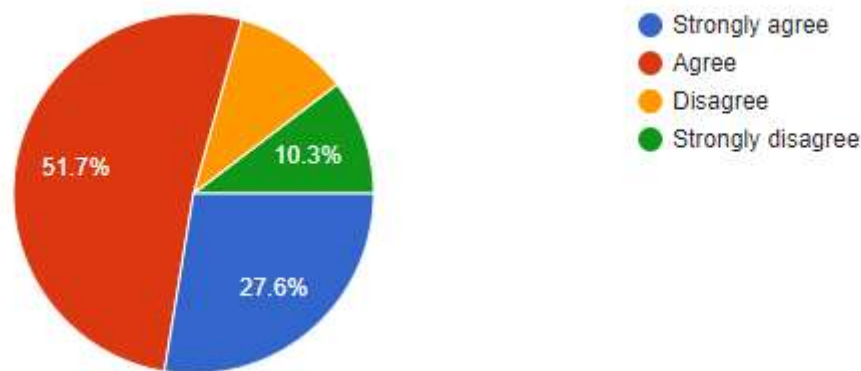


**Figure 18: Brand name**

46.7% of the participants have agreed that they would prefer to have the brand name Lidl in each of the products they purchase from the brand.

16. Is your green purchasing behavior supported by LIDL?





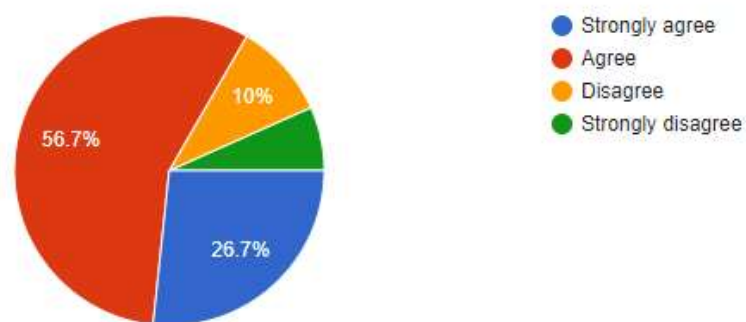
**Figure 19: Green purchasing behavior**

51.7% of the participants think that Lidl supports the green purchase behavior of the consumers. However, 10.3% of them have strongly disagreed with that.

17. Has LIDL been selling environment-friendly products according to the current need of the customers?

17. Has LIDL been selling environment friendly products according to the current need of the customers?

30 responses

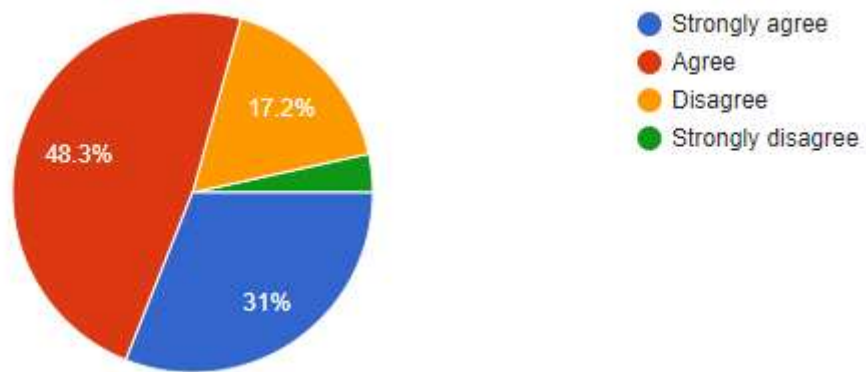


**Figure 20: Environment friendly**

56.7% of the participants have agreed with the fact that Lidl is selling environment-friendly products to satisfy customer's demand.

**RQ4. How brand image of LIDL can be more effective business strategy to influence consumers purchase behavior positively?**

18. Do the products of LIDL ensure an outstanding lifestyle for its customers?



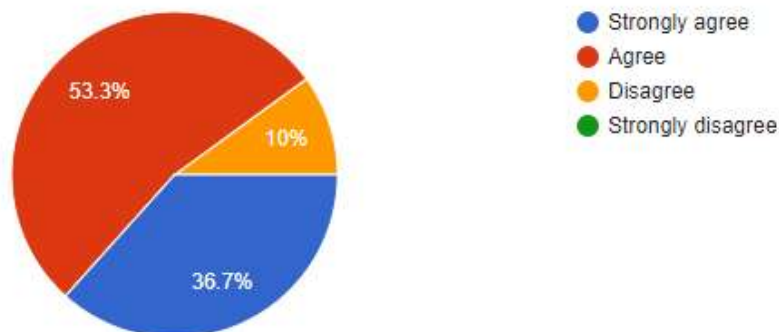
**Figure 21: Lifestyle**

48.3% that means the majority of the participants have voted that the products of Lidl ensure the high quality of lifestyle of the consumers whereas 17.2% have disagreed with the fact.

19. Have the products of LIDL reflected your interest in purchasing?

19. Have the products of LIDL reflected your interest of purchasing?

30 responses



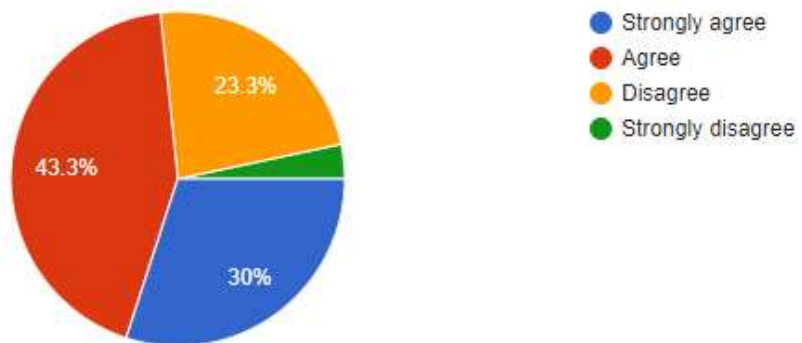
**Figure 22: Interest in purchasing**

53.3% that means the maximum number of participants have voted that the products of Lidl have been reflecting their interest in purchasing.

20. Is the product of LIDL reliable for the young generation?

20. Is the product of LIDL reliable for young generation?

30 responses



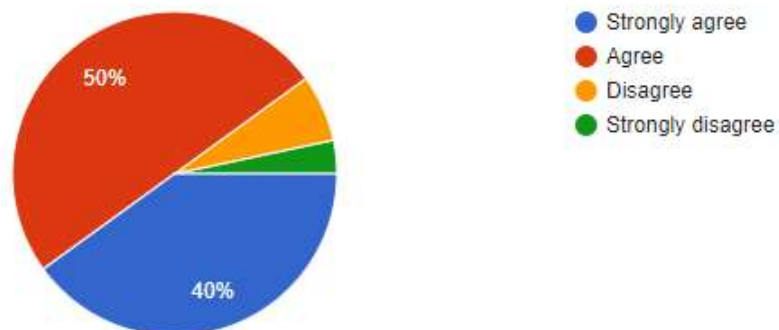
**Figure 23: Reliability**

43.3% of the participants think that the products are reliable for the younger generation.

21. Are you always aware of the brand name of LIDL at the time of purchasing products?

21. Are you always aware about the brand name of LIDL at the time of purchasing products?

30 responses



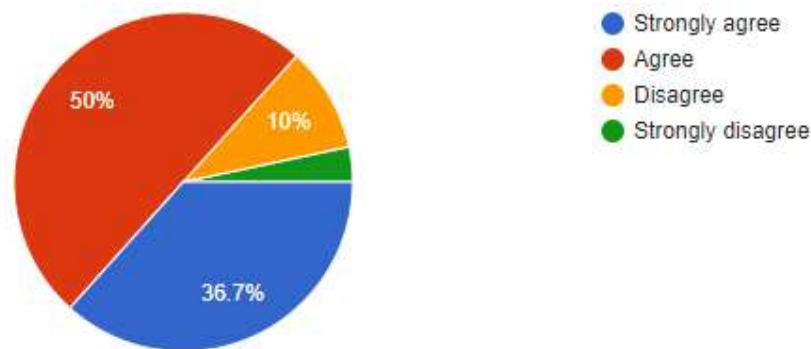
**Figure 24: Brand awareness**

50% of the participants have said that they are aware of the brand at the time of purchasing.

22. Is LIDL showing its responsibility to the environment with the products?

## 22. Is LIDL showing its responsibility to the environment with the products?

30 responses



**Figure 25: Responsibility to the environment**

50% of the participants think that Lidl has been showing its responsibility to the environment with the products.

### 4.2.1 Primary data analysis

From the survey, it has been seen that people who are residents and even non-residents of Sweden purchase products from Lidl. The customers have found the merchandise products of the brand are aligned with the demand them, regulating customer purchase behavior. As university students purchase regularly from Lidl, they think that the products are reliable for the students. Lidl has provided itself as a customer-oriented brand as it has focused on their packaging and green purchase demand of the customers. Nowadays, consumers are trying to use environmentally friendly products and stick to the brand which takes care of this responsibility. This forms the base of building stronger brand image. Lidl has tried its best to provide for the customers. Also, with the high quality of the products, it has created brand awareness. Hence, customers now prefer to have the brand name "Lidl" in each product that they have been purchasing from the brand. Even from the survey, it has been also seen that Lidl has been performing advertising quite well to attract customers and generate brand awareness.

The brand has been able to satisfy the customers at the experience of shopping, include the convenience of shopping at the physical stores. It keeps the customers coming back to the brand repeatedly and increases the brand value and brand awareness. As the company prefers to sell items which are in demand, it can regulate the customer purchase behavior to some extent. As many students have participated in this survey, it has been seen that they found the

product reliable. The consumer's green purchase behavior is also regulated with the brand awareness of Lidl. As the products of Lidl have ensured an outstanding life-style of the customers, the brand awareness is increased in this way also. Hence, from the collected data of the survey, it can be seen that in Sweden, Lidl can easily regulate the customer's purchase behavior and brand awareness. Moreover, the brand name of LIDL at the time of purchasing products influences the customers as a significant number of the participants have said that they are aware of the brand at the time of purchasing. Additionally, LIDL responsibility towards the environment with the products also influences customers purchasing behavior because now a day's customers are looking for environmentally sustainable products.

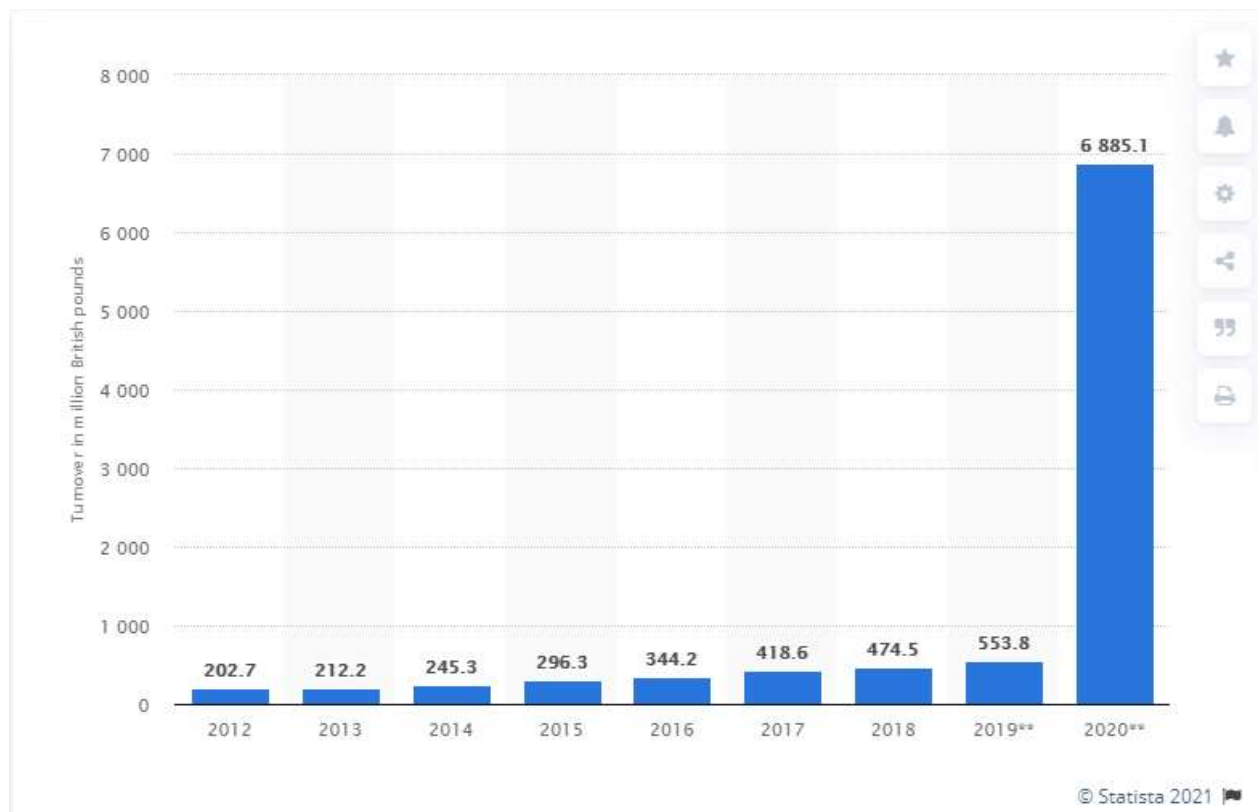
### 4.3 Secondary data collection

#### *Theme 1: The brand image of Lidl as a famous brand*

Brand image is defined as the perception of the customers about a brand (Schaffer, 2020). In the present time, organizations are giving high focus on the establishment of their brand image. The primary reason behind this is that an organization with the high brand image can gain an effective customer base. As a result of that, the company can witness a sharp rise in its profit margin. Due to the gaining of an excellent brand image, a company can raise its status in society (Miller & Peterson, 2020). It is considered an absolute parameter of its success. It has been found that customers often stick to the products and services of the companies having a high brand image. As a result of that, ***big companies give a profound focus on the creation of the brand image*** (Meister & Willyerd, 2021).

***Lidl has been a famous retailing brand in Sweden and it has been operating since 1973.*** With grocery items, food and non-food products, it has made a strong brand image throughout the country. The low price of food and grocery items and 50% discount on consistent grocery shopping from the shop mainly sustain the brand image of the company (LIDL, 2021). Moreover, different customer engagement activities of Lidl such as providing protective gear to the customers and employees as well, a food donation box for customers have helped the brand to make a strong brand image. Even it has started different activities and campaigns in social media to attract customers, such as “#Lidlsurprises” and many more (Ascensor Digital Agency, 2021). This brand has been trying to present that low cost does not imply low quality and the campaigns are supporting it. Even it has been actively present in the social media platforms for making a continuous connection with the customers. This advertising method has helped Lidl to make a strong brand image. With the growing brand

image, Lidl has been able to make a high amount of revenue of 6885.1 million GBP in 2020 (The Grocer, 2021). The success of the brand image has been reflecting in the number. Not only the quality of the products but also the distribution channel, suppliers also help to retain the existing brand image. In Sweden, the growth rate of retail trade is over 2.7% and it is assumed that one-third of the trade is coming from the expenditure of normal household in the country. Hence, the brand image of Lidl has been affected by the trading rate also (Hasan *et al.*, 2021). *This part has helped in identifying the brand of Lidl in Sweden.*



**Figure 26: Revenue Growth of Lidl**

(Source: Statista, 2021)

### ***Theme 2: Brand image and customer purchase behavior in Lidl***

It is evident that customers prefer quality over quantity in the case of buying any goods from the market (John and Torelli, 2017). In this regard, they use to opt for using products of the organizations, which have stronger brand images within the industry. As a result, large companies have substantial market shares within the industry (John and Torelli, 2017). Apart from that, it can be said that it also creates a positive impact on the customer revenue growth of the companies. It has been found that companies having a diverse range of products have a high requirement of having an excellent brand image. As a result, it creates a huge influence

on the purchasing behavior of the customers (Fuentes, 2017). It is highly prevalent in the case of Lidl. The fundamental reason behind this is that Lidl has a vast range of products such as fruits, bakery goods, household products, baby health care, pet foods, and many others.

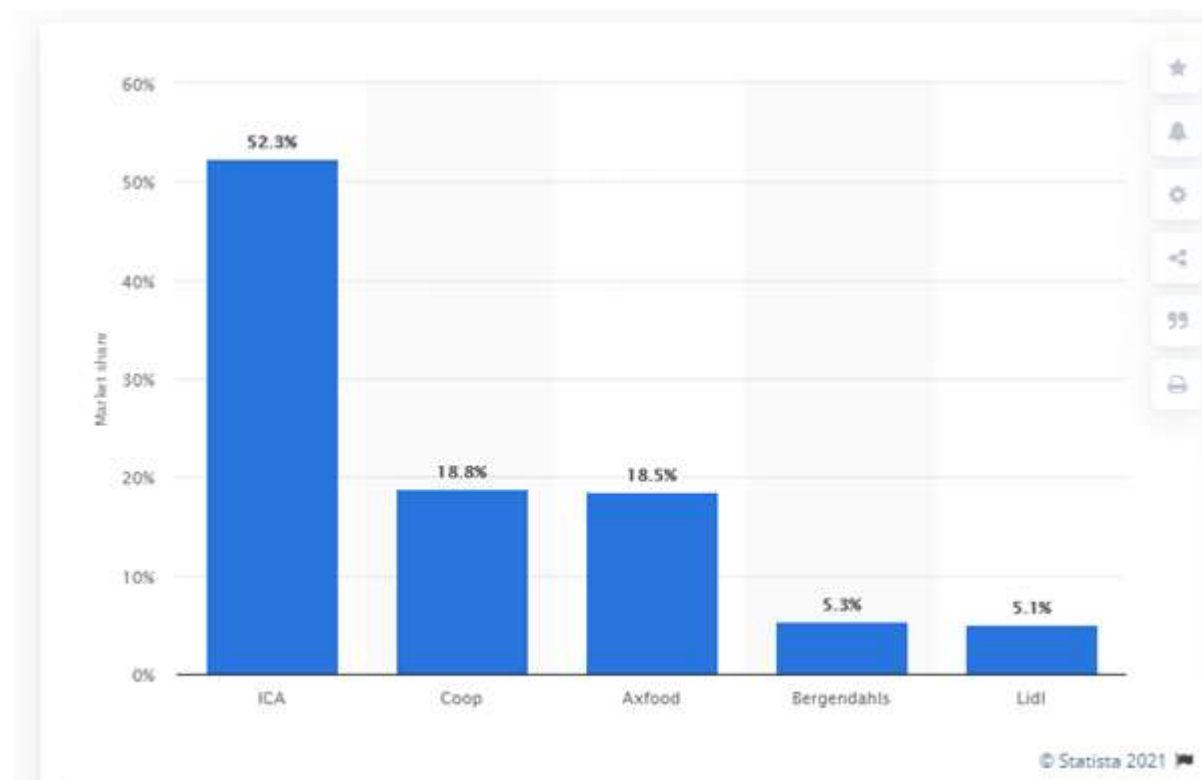
The sales number of Lidl has also been affected by this concept. ***From the background, it can be seen that*** as the performance ratio of Lidl is high, they trust the brand. Even the coffee pods sales of Lidl have been increased by 29.5% as the brand has launched its label of coffee pods. The strong brand image has given confidence to Lidl to launch its label. As per the head of the department of own label buying in Lidl, Verena has confessed that customer purchase behavior and rapidly changing customer's trend have pushed Lidl to launch its products (Retailgazette.co.uk, 2021). Being the largest food retailer in Sweden, Lidl has concentrated on making physical stores more attractive and stronger than the online portal. As per the recent customer purchase behavior in Sweden, people prefer to buy food and grocery items from physical stores. Hence, it has invested 1.3 billion GBP in them in the next two years. As per the requirement of the brand, it has increased its workforce by 8% as with a strong brand image, it has been able to make a strong brand image (Schmid *et al.*, 2018). Lidl plus loyalty card has launched in September 2020 as per the customer purchase behavior from the brand. It has also helped in strengthening the brand image. During COVID 19 pandemic situation, it has observed the trend in summer of SWEDEN and with appropriate products, it has regulated the customer purchase behavior. The strong brand image of Lidl has led to winning several rewards over some popular retailing brands such as ICA, COOP or Axfood. According to this section, ***the information of customer purchase behavior of Lidl in terms of its brand image has been identified.***

### ***Theme 3: Different factors of the brand image of Lidl, Sweden***

***From the background of the study, there are key factors, which drive the brand image of Lidl.*** Sneakers are also one of the most famous products of Lidl and in November 2020, it has cut down the sales price and now one pair of sneakers costs around 12.99 GBP (Tsene & Briana, 2019). The fashionable yet low-cost sneakers have helped Lidl to make the brand image even stronger. As per the purchasing manager of Lidl, it has been a strategy to strengthen the brand image of Lidl on their ready to wear collection. 75,000 pairs of Lidl have gone under sale and this factor has a major impact on the brand image (Ledsom, 2021). Even for customers, Lidl has come up with some more exciting offers at the time of Christmas 2020. It has offered a lucrative amount of discount of 10 pounds on the purchase of every 40-pound purchase. It

has targeted the customer purchase behavior during the time of festival as people tend to buy more products at that time. The marketing department of Lidl has come up with this idea to maximize the sales number (Farrell, 2021).

The factors includes that even the shoppers and customer executives are also put as representative of Lidl who promotes the brand with some tagline like “Food from Lidl tastes more than its costs” (Maxime Delacour, 2021). This type of approach has generated a stronger brand image for the company in Sweden. Even for a new merchandising policy, Lidl has been influencing local people in Sweden and German to open a shop inside their home and the company initially in free of cost will supply all the products. The in-house collaboration of Lidl has made the brand image stronger and it has also been considered as a CSR activity. CSR activity is also known for making the brand image stronger as the brand contributes to the society and in people for the well-being and long-term betterment (Shaikh, Karjaluo & Häkkinen, 2018). As a step for acknowledging the long-term customers of Lidl, it has given a fresh food box to six of its valuable customers. That was free of cost and that contained a three-course meal. Even they have also gifted them with baseball caps, store signs, key chain, clothes and a Spotify album with attractive music and in-store sound. This initiative has helped the brand to grow by 8% over a single year and it has also been reflected on the revenue number of the brand (Contagious, 2021).





**Figure 27: Market share of Lidl**

(Source: Statista, 2021)

In order to become more sustainable in the market and make the brand image stronger, Lidl has heavily focused on sustainable packaging. It has targeted to cut down the plastic waste by 40% till 2025. It helps to draw the mass attention of the customers who prefer a sustainable and eco-friendly way of living (Farrell, 2021).

In order to establish a strong brand image, an organization needs to consider various sectors. In this regard, the prospect of promotion has a high significance (Waluya, Iqbal and Indradewa, 2019). The promotional strategies of Lidl are considered as one of the most vital factors of its brand image. It has been beneficial for the company to attract an ample number of customers. In Sweden, the company runs TV campaigns. In the present time, organizations are becoming more inclined towards the launching of app, as it is one of the effective means of promotion (Blazquez, Boardman & Xu, 2019). In the case of Lidl, it has been found that the company has an app for iPhone and Android users.

The Press Release section in the website of Lidl is used for sharing key developments with the customers. As a result of that, the company has been successful in the case of reaching an ample number of customers in Sweden. It has been known that the management of Lidl uses sales promotion. The organization provides Weekly Offers. Within the offers, consumers can save up to 25% on various selected items. Therefore, it can be said that the company has been successful in the case of establishing its brand image while relying on its promotional strategies. *These policies are the different factors which impacts the brand image of Lidl.*

***Theme 4: Actual impact of brand image on the consumer purchase behavior of Lidl***

*According to the research background*, the primary reason behind the deep emphasis on the establishment of the brand image for an organization is that it creates a positive impact on the purchase behavior of the organization (Bilgin, 2018). As a result, customers get satisfied with the brand (Shabbir, Khan & Khan, 2017).

88.2% of the total population in Sweden live in an urban area and they can have proper access to the products of Lidl. As Lidl has more concentrated on food and grocery items, 51.4% of the household who are living alone in the country, prefer to purchase products from this

brand. Even Sweden has a diverse range of professions in the country from clerk to technician to craftsman to skilled worker, they prefer their daily livelihood item on a very affordable range (Nordeatrade, 2021). Even with the growing demand of the brand, LIDL has observed 10-13% of product distribution volume has tripled over the last year. As the consumers' interest in organic food has increased in recent time, Lidl has held 50% of the organic market in Sweden (Nicolosi *et al.*, 2019). 25% of the market share of Lidl is coming from the private label which it has started in 2016 in Sweden (Apps.fas.usda.gov, 2021).

***From the background, it can be seen that*** as per the customers' demand in Sweden Lidl has planned a green area store concept in that country, wherein parking section there will be charging portal for the electric car, cycle pumping station and display about public transport. This idea has been generated for improving the customer purchase experience from the physical stores. This idea has also been implemented where Lidl stores have been operating with solar cells. Even in the eco-zone of the store, the customers and employees must not speak and should communicate via sign language (BRE Group, 2021). Though Lidl has only a 5.1% market share in the country, with proper brand image, the number is growing as many customers have started to get associated with the brand. As a brand Lidl has also opted for customer-oriented expansion of the business. The customer purchase behavior has also helped this company to collaborate with some charity organization, food redistribution agencies and environment activist organizations (Kadic-Magljalic, Boso & Micevski, 2018). ***The overview of customer purchase behavior has been identified with aligned data and this objective is fulfilled.***

#### **4.3.1 Secondary data analysis**

From the secondary data analysis, it can be seen that the brand image of Lidl is largely impacted by the customer's purchase behavior. It has been seen that the brand image of an organization is highly responsible for the gaining of a decent customer base. Apart from that, it also plays a significant role in increasing the profit margin of an organization. The brand image of Lidl has been responsible for acquiring a strong customer base in Sweden. The brand has been trying to perform according to the need and preference of the customer. From the secondary data collection, it has also been seen that several factors affect the brand image such as marketing activities, CSR performance, merchandise process, product manufacturing and designing the pricing policy. Lidl has been famous for making a low budget high-quality product. As customers of Sweden mostly want to purchase a pocket-friendly product, which is unique and effective also, the brand has designed the food and non-food items as per this

demand. It can be said that the brand image of an organization exerts a positive impact on its customer purchase behavior.

While relying on this, an organization establishes a decent market share within the industry. The diverse product range of Lidl has been responsible for its strong brand image. When the different factors of brand image are concerned, it has been seen that the performance of the suppliers, distributors and other stakeholders can regulate the brand performance. As per the trading market in the country, these factors are decided based upon the retailing business. The population, lifestyle, occupation also control the customer purchase behavior of a particular brand and when it comes to Lidl, it is a budding brand in Sweden, it has been trying to make a strong brand image besides COOP, ICA, Axfood and several other brands in the country. It has trying to retain long-term customers by making them the brand ambassador. This is also a sustainable way of strengthening the brand image. In order to regulate consumer purchase behavior, it has launched the facility of membership card. As Lidl has to establish the brand image permanently in the country, one of its ways is to acquire the existing customers and invite the new customers with lucrative discounts and offers.

Even for maximizing the sales amount, it has opted for giving discounts on products and even in festival time, with proper products and offers it has been attracting customers. The company has also concentrated on making eco-friendly stores in Sweden as the country has been concerned about the environment. The noise-free zone in the stores or electric charging points has created another dimension in the brand image. The promotional means of Lidl has been one of its crucial factors behind an established brand image. It has been found that the company runs various TV campaigns in Sweden to reach an ample number of customers. Additionally, the press release of the company is also a part of its promotion. It has been found that there is a high need of offering quality products and services for ensuring an excellent brand image. It also accounts for brand loyalty for a company. Hence, it has been advantageous for Lidl.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter, the data collection has shown that Lidl has done a decent performance in maintaining its brand image and regulating consumer purchase behavior. All the activities of engaging customers to maximizing sales amount are somehow related to making a strong brand image. It has also been seen that consumers also get attracted when they see such a strong brand image.



## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the above discussion of *impact of brand image on consumer purchase behavior*, it can be concluded that brand image is playing an important part in the consumer's behavior. It is an important aspect of the organization's image and its reputation. In this report, it has been found that to make customers satisfied the organization need to improve its brand image.

#### 5.1.2 Practical implications of the research

The result or outcome of this research can help the companies to enhance their brand image for achieving high customer's satisfaction. The implication of the studies is for other organization is that there is influx of available and on the current market, therefore customers are making their buying decision based on the brand image instead of products. This study is helpful because from it, other companies will recognize the importance of enhancing brand image and influence consumer purchasing behavior. It has been found that keeping products available and attractive packaging will enhance the brand image of Lidl. Therefore, these factors need to be considered to enhance brand image and influence consumer purchase behavior.

### 5.2 Linking with objectives

***Objective 1: To identify and define different factors of brand image which have a great impact on the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden***

From the survey, it can be concluded that the different factors of the brand image have a great impact on the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers, because of their *packaging ideas and their collection of merchandise products*, affecting the brand impression. It can be said that this factor has enhanced LIDL brand image. Therefore, it has been regulating customer purchase behavior. It has been found from the survey that around 48.3% of people agreed that LIDL has a strong merchandise product selection and 44.8% people liked their packaging ideas which are compatible with the industry nature. This is why these factors have influenced the purchase behavior of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden. Additionally, it has been found that products of LIDL have high-quality nature which is agreed by a large number of customers.

Therefore, it can be said its *supplying high-quality products* have a great impact on customers purchasing behaviors. Apart from that, it has been found that 53.3% of customers are satisfied with LIDL products from their experience and claimed it has high quality, hence it is one of the vital; factors that influencing purchasing behaviors of customers. As LIDL has a strong brand name in Sweden hence, 58.6% of people agree with the fact that due to a strong brand name LIDL has a high impact on customers. Additionally, it has been found from the primary data collection that *green purchasing behaviors supported by LIDL*, environment-friendly products according to the current need of the customers supported by LIDL, LIDL focus on ensuring customers lifestyle with their products and LIDL responsibility towards environmental products influences the customers purchasing behaviors as the survey has shown that large amounts of people agree with these factors has enhances the brand image of LIDL.

It has been found that LIDL's is giving high focus on the establishment of its brand. Alic, Agic & Cinjarevic, (2017) have stated every business firms strives for building a strong brand image to ensure more sales revenue as new customers are attracted to the brand, to make it easy to inaugurate new products under the same brand and to increase brand awareness and their value, therefore it has been found that Lidl has provided protective gear to the customers with a *food donation box* for their potential buyers that has helped the brand of the company to make a strong brand image. By which it can be said that Lidl's providing protective gear to their customers is the factors that have a great impact on the customers purchasing behaviors as this factor works for the company in increasing *engagement of customers*. Additionally, it has been also found that the company has started different campaigns on social media to gain the attention of the customers. Išoraitė, (2018), said that It can be also a vital factor for the company as according to the Aaker brand image value model, brand building factors are brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived quality and proprietary. There it has been found that the factors of brand image which have a great impact on the purchase behaviors of LIDL's customers in the retail industry of Sweden are the campaigns uses by them *social media marketing strategy* to spread brand awareness, and their focus on the quality of products.

***Objective 2: To evaluate how these factors or dimensions of the brand image affect the purchase behaviors of LIDL's customers***

According to Howard-Sheth model refers that different significant input of consumer purchase behaviors greatly affects their buying behaviors during purchasing a specific brand product. Also, Perceived quality always creates more value for its potential target customers

by ensuring product *innovation and differentiation* that positively affects the consumer purchase behaviors. Therefore, it can be said that the quality of the product of the LIDL brands has helped them to attract the customer's attention towards them and influence their purchasing behaviors as it has been found from the survey that 48.3% of participants have voted that the products of Lidl ensure the high quality of lifestyle of the consumers. Hence, the high quality of the products, creates brand awareness as a result, customers prefer to have the brand name "Lidl" in each product that they have been purchasing from the brand. Additionally, it has been found that LIDL selling environment-friendly products to satisfy customer's demand.

According to the concept of customers purchasing behaviors, it is important for marketers as it helps to understand the expectations of customers; here LIDL is mitigating the demand of customers to satisfy them. Therefore, it can be said that the factors of providing environmentally friendly products to the customer according to their demand helped LIDL to influence the purchasing behaviors of customers. Furthermore, it has been found from the survey that, customers are satisfied from the *experience of shopping* and even the physical stores are also convenient for shopping. It keeps the customers coming back to the brand repeatedly and increases the brand value and brand awareness. As the company prefers to sell items that are in demand, it impacts positively on customers and influences their buying behaviors. Moreover, the brand name of LIDL at the time of purchasing products influences the customers as 50% of the participants have said that they are aware of the brand at the time of purchasing. Additionally, LIDL responsibility towards the environment with the products also influence customers purchasing behaviors because now a day's customers are looking for environmentally sustainable products, hence their CSR activities also have a great impact on customers purchasing behaviors.

According to Carfora, *et al*, (2019), Consumer purchase behaviors is the act of customers about to purchase and use products in their decision-making process. In the case of LIDL's it has been found that Lidl has a vast range of products such as fruits, bakery goods, household products, baby health care, pet foods, and many other products, that affects the purchase behaviors of customers as they meet with the demand and expectations of the customers from them, along with that, it has been found that the campaigns, advertisement marketing has helped the company to attract their customers. Additionally, LIDL's concentrated on making physical stores more attractive and stronger, and it has been seen that customers like to purchase food items from the physical stores; hence it can be said that their marketing strategy of increasing brand image has affected the customers effectively purchasing

behaviors. It has been also seen that Lidl plus loyalty card has been launched in September 2020 as per the customer purchase behaviors from the brand which has affected customers purchasing behaviors by strengthening the brand image of the organization. It has been also found that the promotional strategies of Lidl run by integrated promotional campaigns throughout the year that has also influence the purchasing behaviors of customers.

***Objective 3: To analyze the actual impact of brand image on LIDL's consumer's purchase behaviors in the retail sector of Sweden***

*According to* Arslan & Zaman, (2019), the brand image has a significant impact on the customers purchasing behaviors as it is influenced by different brand-building initiatives and promotional activities in addition to *marketing mix strategies* of the organization, therefore, Lidl provides effective and high-quality products with a high brand image which have a great impact on the customers purchasing behaviors. From the primary data collection, it has been found that the actual impact of brand image on LIDL's consumer's purchase behaviors in the retail sector of Sweden is that, brand image has helped the organization to increase loyalty among customers. It has been found that a large 53.3% of respondents agreed that Lidl are high quality in nature, and they have stuck to the brand for their high satisfaction from past purchase experience. It indicates that the strong brand image of LIDL has created *loyalty* and due to high-quality products, the organization has able to achieve a huge customer base. Additionally, to enhance brand image LIDL invest in the advertisement, as a result, it has helped them to seek the attention of customers and influence their brand image. Additionally, it has been found from the survey that 53.3% of customers agreed that the physical facility at the stores is convenient at the time of purchasing products from the brand and 46.7% of the customers have agreed that they would prefer to have the brand name Lidl in each of the products they purchase from the brand. Therefore, it indicates that Lidl has a brand image that has impacts on customer purchasing behaviors by improving their perception of quality and benefits.

Additionally, the brand image of LIDL has reduced perceived risk and softens the consumer tendency to evaluate only the basis of quality. Therefore, it can be said that the above-mentioned factors have an actual impact and improve the customers buying intention. Additionally, it has been seen that brand-building initiatives improve customers' knowledge about the brand and encourage them to purchase such brand's products or services therefore, Lidl has made their brand image initiative to meet the expectation of customers as per the buyer's interest they has held 50% of the organic market in Sweden which is significantly



acquiring the attention of customers as they have been able to fulfil their demand the purchasing behaviors of customers from Lidl is positive. Additionally, it has been seen that Lidl has taken initiative to provide *Eco-friendly products* to their customers as climate change is a concern for everyone, hence it would also provide a positive impact on the customers purchasing behaviors.

***Objective 4: To provide some suggestions regarding how the brand image of LIDL can be a more effective business strategy to influence consumers purchase behaviors positively***

The suggestions regarding increasing the brand image of Lidl ineffective way to influence the customers purchasing behaviors have been discussed below.

### **5.3 Recommendation**

To recommend a strategy to LIDL to strengthen their brand image, it can be suggested that LIDL should need to keep a collection of products that can be relevant for every generation of customers. Additionally, to increase their brand value, company should hire the right employees and communicating their organization's vision and mission as well as expectations regarding the customer's experience especially in terms of focusing on environmentally friendly products (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). It has been seen that LIDL has less focus on online portal which is affecting their brand image. Therefore, LIDL should focus on strengthening their websites. It can make their digital application more users friendly to influence the customers purchasing behaviors via the digital medium (Melović *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, they should promote the notion that they manufacture pioneering products by which LIDL can able to cultivate the customer's perception of expertise.

### **5.4 Research limitation**

In this research, both primary data collection and secondary data collection has been used. However, due to the Covid-19 situation, data could not be able to collect effectively. However, the only survey has been conducted of sample size 30. Additionally, to complete this research time was too short which is why time management issued while conducting the research. In addition, in the secondary data collection, the strategies used by LIDL to enhance their brand image have not covered effectively. Apart from that, the actual impact of LIDL has also less information.

## 5.5 Future Scope

In future, in the survey, more sampling size would be select to get a more accurate outcome from the research. Furthermore, an Interview would be taken to get the more effective outcome of the research and Time would be scheduled ineffective way to complete the research before the deadline. Besides, in future research, strategies used by LIDL to enhance their brand image would be effective done by gathering relevant data and information. Also, LIDL competition such as Willy and ICA affecting the brand image of company would be discussed. Along with, role of management in the brand image of the company in digital society would be discussed.

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