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1 Introduction

The first section provides the reader with general information about the topic of the thesis. Furthermore, definitions and keywords will be explained and the structure of the thesis and its headings will be presented to facilitate for the reader.

Since ages people have commuted to work, or to other activities, located outside their home municipality. From the very beginning it was an effect of societies being industrialised and job opportunities moved to larger cities where the industries grew. Goods and services were concentrated to the cities, so if people did not move there, they had to commute in order to get what they needed (Magnusson, 2010).

In today's society commuting is referred to when people have to make some kind of journey outside their home municipality to their work place on a regular basis (Eliasson, Westerlund, & Åström, 2007). However, since new trends in goods, services and technology are becoming more evident it is not surprising that news of these new goods or services travel fast. This means that they are not yet available everywhere, which contributes to that people simply go to where they can be found (Magnusson, 2010; Stock, 2011).

Basic decisions for commuting depend on a number of factors, such as increased options (Torége, Sandgren, Olander, & Thulin, 2008). Other statements indicate that reasons for commuting are based on utility maximisation, e.g. the benefit of commuting can be determined by material and immaterial factors. No matter the character of the benefit, it should be higher than what can be found closer to the home location (Eliasson et al., 2007).

This thesis deals with the term *commuting*, but not in the context of travelling to work on a regular basis, but in the context of *commuter shopping* – people who travel to a location further from home to shop on a regular basis.

In relation to the statement mentioned above, which indicates that people commute because it generates increased options, can be related to the term *commuter shopping*. Today, people are more aware of options they have and they also have higher demands and expectations on retailers and manufacturers to provide the product and services they desire (Stock, 2011).

The definition of a shopping location is in this thesis a shopping mall. The authors have been in contact with Kristoffer Krantz at Newsec Asset Management AB, the company that administrates and develops a shopping mall in Jönköping called A6 Center. This cooperation has given an insight on the work devoted by shopping malls to attract customers, local and regional. Moreover, some of the research has been conducted based on the customers of A6 Center.

Today there is a limited amount of research available on the subject of commuter shopping. Since the authors try to define this term, they chose to research the terms: *shopping malls*, *commuting* and *branding* of malls separately and then try to combine them in a shared context in order to answer the stated research questions.

1.1 Important concepts

To provide the reader of this thesis with further understanding of the topic the authors choose to include a section where fundamental terms and concepts are explained.

The thesis deals with different terms and tries to combine them with the term *commuting* and then define the term *commuter shopping*. The main terms and concepts are; *shopping mall*, *catchment area*, *branding*, *brand image*, *commuting*, *commuter shopping*, *commuting shopper* and *customer*.

A shopping mall is when one or more buildings form a complex of stores (Dawson, 1983). A shopping mall has a catchment area from where they aim to attract customers. The definition of a catchment area is the geographical area from where a shopping mall (or other business) attracts visitors and/or customers (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01). Throughout this thesis the shopping mall is the definition of a shopping location or shopping destination.

A brand can be defined as; “A name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these that identifies the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors” (Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong, 2008, p.511). The term *branding* is important to have understanding of in this thesis since it is used by shopping malls in the work to attract customers. In order for people to consider doing their shopping in a shopping mall not closest to their home location the

mall has to offer benefits that closer located malls cannot. Therefore, it is important for shopping malls to continuously work to increase the strength of its brand in order to fit the customers' preferences. The customers' perception of the brand is known as brand image (Kotler et al., 2008).

Commuting is a term often referred to when people travel to work on a regular basis, and the work place is not the closest one to the home location. Generally speaking, when people travel to a location, any location for any reason, on a regular basis it should offer some benefit that cannot be found closer to home (Eliasson et al., 2007).

Commuter shopping is the term the authors of this thesis are investigating. The definition is people who travel to a shopping destination, which is not the closest one to the home location. A person who engages in commuter shopping is a commuting shopper.

The term customer is also used, and refers to a more general description. Any person who uses a shopping mall's services, is not necessary a paying customer since it is possible to enter a shopping mall without paying if the person is just having a look. Or, if a shopping mall has free WI-FI or free parking, the customer uses them but does not pay. Therefore, any person visiting a shopping mall is per definition a customer.

1.2 Thesis outline

- Section 2 discuss the problem statement of the thesis and is followed by the research questions created to help obtain the purpose.
- Section 3 is a statement of the purpose. It was given an own section in order to be highlighted.
- Section 4 describes the theory used to create the survey questions and alternatives.
- Section 5 includes a description of the methodology and method used throughout the thesis. It describes the research design, the research approach, and methods of data collection as well as the sources used to search for it.

- Section 6 is where relevant previous research is presented. It includes earlier studies regarding commuting, shopping, shopping malls and branding. This is for the purpose of putting them all together into the topic of commuter shopping.
- Section 7 presents the obtained empirical findings from the survey conducted.
- Section 8 is the part where the results from the research on previous studies will be interpreted into the joint context of commuter shopping as well as compared to the empirical findings.
- Section 9 is where the conclusions will be presented. This is the conclusions related to the purpose and will give answers to the present research questions.
- Section 10 includes the authors' own speculative thoughts on the findings, as well as suggestions for further research within the field.

2 Problem Discussion

This section is a discussion of the current problem and will make it clear for the reader why this topic deserves to be researched.

Commuting is a well-known term, mostly referring to people's journey to work. People travel to work on a regular basis, because working in another location can offer them better career opportunities, e.g. higher salary and possibility to climb the career ladder, or a broader choice of work opportunities. The term commuting, except to work, is referring to the decision to travel to another location on a regular basis in order to find something that cannot be found closer to home. Whether it is work or shopping, the location should offer a benefit that will reward the commuter to make the journey worth it (Eliasson et al., 2007).

Today, there is an increased awareness of consumer power and there is also an increase in customer options. Customers can choose from where and how they buy goods or services. Therefore, more effort has been put in to understand peoples shopping decisions, on which goods or services to buy (Stock, 2011).

In this thesis, a shopping location will be defined as a shopping mall. Developers of shopping malls constantly face the challenge of being a trademark, but at the same time represent other brands. For shopping malls, it is very important to choose the right tenants (stores/brands), which clearly contribute to the overall impression of the shopping mall.

The developers of shopping malls are also facing the challenge of trying to reach customers not only locally but also from a larger region. According to previous studies made by A6 Center there is a trend of an increasing amount of visitors commuting to the shopping mall from outside Jönköping municipality (Höstenkät A6 Center, 2013). The observation of this trend contributes to the interestingness of the topic.

Today many different shopping malls and the surroundings look very similar. Given this, and that many people nowadays have more than one regional shopping mall within a reasonable driving distance, they should tend to primarily shop in the mall closest to their home location (Burns & Warren, 1995).

On the other hand, increased awareness of the importance of branding and image in the shopping mall industry makes Burns and Warren's statement questionable, since people nowadays consider more than simply driving distance when choosing shopping destination (De Juan, 2004).

If people commute because of increased benefits (Eliasson et al., 2007), such as increased choice of goods or services or simply a different supply, shopping malls must be able to capture this opportunity and provide those benefits. Shopping malls should strive to trigger the economic and/or the social factors that will ultimately drive the customer to make the decision to go there. If the person is a commuting shopper, the benefits compared to another location will have won.

Currently there is a lack of research made on the subject of what the authors have chosen to call commuter shopping. *Commuter shopping* is a term embracing shopping made by customers that for different reasons choose to go to a shopping destination that is not closest to their home location. Customers' eagerness to possess new products, the increased awareness among customers' to use their power and the constant work made by shopping malls to attract and offer benefits to customers in combination with the

term commuting will be the base in this thesis in the work of defining the term commuter shopping.

The authors of this thesis try to define the term of commuter shopping and investigate the reason or reasons why people are engaged in it.

3 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to find evidence for how the term commuter can be translated into the context of shopping. Moreover, the goal is also to identify the reasons for why people are willing to commute to a shopping destination not closest to their home location. The authors will also provide a definition for the term *commuter shopping.*

In order to fulfil the purpose, focus will lie on answering the following research questions:

- How can the term commuter be applied in the context of shopping?
- Which attributes motivate people to engage in commuter shopping?

3.1 Delimitations

The survey conducted in this study is focused on A6 Center's customers, which leads to the results being related to A6 Center and can therefore not be used as a general view of shopping malls. However, the survey is only used to get understanding for the second research question, which is about the attributes. The research on how to understand commuting in the context of shopping is not biased towards A6 Center and its customers.

The researchers are confident that the survey was constructed in the best possible way. The design of the survey, and the number of questions, meant that the survey was as smooth as possible for the respondents. More questions in the survey would perhaps meant that the researchers would have gained more information, but the purpose of the survey was merely to find which attributes the customers of A6 center value, and therefore they chose to have a fewer number of questions.

Moreover, the researchers instead focused on cross-tabbing the results rather than gathering more information.

4 Methodology

In this section the methodology for the thesis is presented. This includes the choice of research approach and a description of the research design. The research design is described by the sampling design process. Furthermore methods of data collection and analysis of data will be presented. Combined, all sections will provide the reader with an overview of the methodology of the thesis where each approach is presented and argued for.

4.1 Research design

The research design is the general plan of how to be able to answer the research questions. This includes specifying the sources from which data will be collected, how one intend to collect and analyse these, as well as identifying possible constraints such as access to data, time and location (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). A description of the research design for this thesis is provided in the following section.

4.1.1 Research approaches

Saunders et al. (2012) states that there are two main research approaches when completing a study, namely the deductive approach and the inductive approach. Which one to use is based upon the extent to which the authors are clear about the theory in the beginning of the research.

The deductive approach occurs when the conclusion is derived logically from a set of premises, like hypothesis. Ketokivi and Mantere (2010) mean that the conclusion is held true when all the premises are true (cited in Saunders et al., 2012). This approach is suitable when researchers can take advantage of much literature on the topic and thereby enables hypothesis testing and construction of frameworks to use. One can describe the deductive approach as it goes from theory to data.

In contrast to this, the inductive approach emphasises a gap in the logic argument between the conclusion and the premises examined. This means that one does not know if the conclusions really are true even if it is supported by the observations. The inductive approach is preferred when the research is conducted within a field that is not

yet much explored. Here, the researchers aim to explore data by starting with the data and from there create a theory (Saunders et al., 2012).

According to Easterby-Smith (2008) it is more common to work with qualitative data when using the inductive approach (cited in Saunders et al., 2012). But since this research primarily aims to create understanding of a phenomenon and not to test hypothesis it first seemed to be more useful than a deductive approach even if a quantitative method would be used. The choice of making qualitative or quantitative research will be discussed in the following section.

However, if neither of these two main approaches is perfectly suitable, there is an option to use an abductive approach, which could be described as a combination of the two approaches mentioned above (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach allows a movement back and forth between data and theory. It explores phenomena in means of data and patterns are identified and then new theories are created as well as existing theories could be modified into the present context. Saunders et al. (2012) state that the abductive approach is suitable when there is much research made within one context, but less research made within the context in which the present research is conducted.

This thesis makes use of existing theories regarding commuting, shopping malls and the branding of them in order to explore and combine these in a new framework. As mentioned previously, Saunders et al. (2012) suggest collecting data from contexts where much literature exist and merge them together and modify them into a new context when that is suitable for the purpose. Therefore, in order to answer research questions an abductive approach seemed to be most appropriate in this case.

4.1.2 Qualitative and quantitative research

A basic way to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research is to divide the data into numeric, for quantitative, and non-numeric, for qualitative, data. Quantitative research is thereby often connected with questionnaires and graphs or statistics, while qualitative is a synonym for in-depth data collection, like interviews (Saunders et al., 2012).

This thesis makes use of a questionnaire (survey), which mainly belongs to quantitative research. However, the data collected is rather based on opinions than on facts, and this could be referred to as qualitative information. Therefore, the survey is a combination of

qualitative and quantitative methods. Moreover, personal conversations with the Center Manager of A6 Center were administrated, which is more of a qualitative character.

One of two main reasons for rejecting a pure qualitative research was the limited amount of time available. Constructing, executing and coding in-depth interviews are very time-consuming and due to the fact that more than one interview could be useful in order to obtain un-biased information, this kind of interviews were not a proper alternative.

However, focus-group interviews were considered with the purpose of collecting information from more than one person at a time, but analysing the results from that kind of conversations would also be unnecessarily time-consuming and maybe hard to interpret. Thereby, the authors concluded that this method would be too costly in relation to possible results gained.

During discussions about how to execute the primary data collection of this thesis the authors ended up with the decision of prioritising the possibility to draw more general conclusions around the topic and research questions. This was the second reason for why qualitative methods were rejected in favour of a survey of quantitative kind.

An approach like this is similar to a mixed method research, where both quantitative and qualitative research is combined (Saunders et al., 2012). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) explain the mixed method research as a type of study where the researcher combines qualitative and quantitative methods, techniques, approaches and concepts in a single study, which is the case in the present one.

Moreover, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) describe a type called sequential mixed method research as an approach involving more than one phase of data collection. In this approach one method is followed by another one in order to expand or elaborate the initial set of findings (cited in Saunders et al., 2012).

With this combination in mind it was possible to execute a survey with the purpose of collecting general perceptions about the subject followed by an interview. The aim with the interview was to receive valuable input through a qualitative method, which could not be obtained by the use of the quantitative method chosen.

Moreover, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) discuss the importance of being able to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods while conducting research and that both of them are useful and important. Depending on the context, developing a suitable mixed research method can provide the study with good insights from both qualitative and quantitative research that fit the current purpose (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This was something that the authors of this thesis could take advantage of since they recognised a need for both approaches which was also in line with the choice of making use of an abductive research approach.

Additionally, mixed method research is a way to provide a better product and end result instead of researchers being restricted towards certain methods to use (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, this thesis makes use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to obtain more appropriate answers to current research questions. It also contributes to the opportunity to use strengths of one approach in order to overcome weaknesses by another.

However, a mixed method approach is described to be more time-consuming than choosing one single approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), but since time was already limited and restricted the authors from conducting very extensive research by any single approach, mixed method research could still be executed in order to obtain reliable answers to the stated research questions.

4.2 The sampling design process

Quantitative research is mainly analysed through numbers and statistics (Malhotra, 2004). When working with this kind of study it is of importance to be familiar with the concepts population, element and sample.

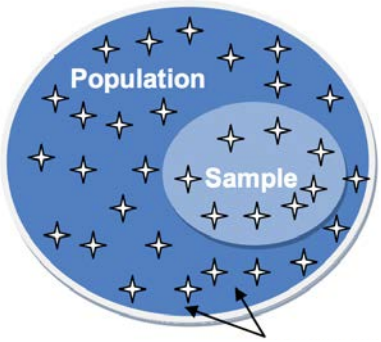

Figure 4.1 Population, sample and individual cases. (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 259).

Saunders et al. (2012) defines the population as "The full set of cases from which a sample is taken" (p. 260). This means the total number of elements, in this case people, with the right characteristics to participate in the research. Each

possible person is equal to an element or case.

For large populations it is impractical, too costly as well as too time-consuming, to investigate all possible elements. Therefore one needs to draw a sample that will represent the population of interest (Saunders et al., 2012).

A sample is a subgroup of the population selected for participation in a certain study. Budget and time limits are constraints favouring the use of a sample. If the whole population is chosen it is called census (Malhotra, 2004).

Malhotra (2004) presents a five-step model which is useful to describe sampling design processes. Therefore, that model is used in this thesis to explain the current sampling design process. The figure below shows the five main components of the model and how the sampling process proceeds sequentially. In the following section each step will be explained in more detail.

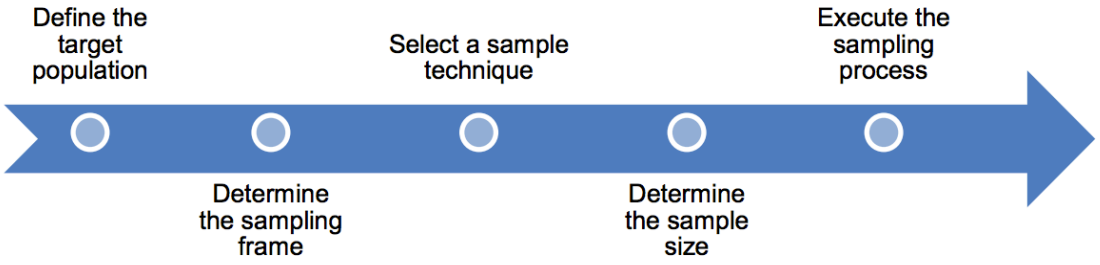

Figure 4.2 The sampling design process. (Malhotra, 2004, p. 316).

4.2.1 Define the target population

To be able to complete a survey through a quantitative approach it is necessary to define the population to focus on. The target population can be defined as "The collection of elements or objects that possess the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made" (Malhotra, 2004, p. 315). This is about which people will be included in the research as sufficient respondents in order to answer research questions.

In this thesis the target population consist of people above 18 years old who go to A6 Center to shop. Both local and commuting customers are included. The choice to use the customers of A6 Center in particular was mainly because of convenience, since it is a shopping destination close to the authors home and study location. However, people

under the age of 18 were excluded based on the following quotes from ESOMAR World research codes & guidelines - Interviewing children and young people (2009).

- "The welfare of the children and young people themselves is the overriding consideration..."
- "The parents or anyone acting as the guardian of any child or young person taking part in a research project must be confident that the latter's safety, rights and interests are being fully safeguarded".
- "The interviewers and other researchers involved in the project must be protected against any misunderstandings or possible allegations of misconduct arising from their dealings with the children or young people taking part in the project".
- "The authorities and the public generally, must be confident that all research carried out with children and young people, is conducted to the highest ethical standards and that there can be no question of any possible abuse of the children and young people involved".

4.2.2 Determine the sampling frame

The purpose of a sampling frame is to ease the possibility to identify the different elements in the target population. A sampling frame could be a map or a provided list with e-mail addresses or telephone numbers (Malhotra, 2004). During this research it was not possible to get access to any form of customer information, since A6 Center does not collect any data of that kind. Therefore no sampling frame could be presented in this case. However, this was not of major importance since it is usual within business research, especially in market surveys, that one does not have any sampling frame (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.2.3 Select a sampling technique

The various sampling techniques available can be divided into two main types, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2012). It is important to decide which of the sampling techniques to use throughout a research process (Malhotra, 2004).

Simple, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling are examples of probability samples. With these techniques the probability for each element in the population to be selected is equal (Saunders et. al., 2012). In other words, the sampling units are selected completely by chance (Malhotra, 2004).

When using non-probability samples it is possible for the researcher to select sample elements by personal judgements (Malhotra, 2004). Quota, purposive, volunteer and convenience sampling are examples of non-probability techniques. By these, the probability of each element being selected is different and unknown. Thereby it is also impossible to make statistical conclusions from the population as a whole. However, it is important to remember that it is still possible to generalise about the population from non-probability samples, but not on statistical grounds (Saunders et al., 2012).

When there is no sampling frame available, it is not possible to do any form of random sampling. The sample must then be selected on another basis (Saunders et al., 2012). The options that remain are all non-probability sampling techniques. Three of them are explained below.

4.2.3.1 Convenience sampling

One form of non-probability sampling is the convenience sampling. The elements in the sample are selected by the interviewer on the basis that the respondent happens to be in the right place at the right time. This is the least costly and least time-consuming of the sampling techniques. A big advantage is that the sampling units are easy to access and easy to measure.

However, there are also limitations with this technique. For example, the study has the potential of being biased since people can choose themselves whether to respond to the survey or not. Thereby, there will only be answers from a certain kind of people willing to respond (Malhotra, 2004).

4.2.3.2 Judgmental sampling

Judgmental sampling is a variant of convenience sampling. Accordingly, the researcher chooses which units to include in the sample, but more consciously than on just a convenient basis. The researcher make choices relying on that the units chosen are appropriate to represent the population (Malthotra, 2004).

In this research, the authors purposely excluded people under the age of 18 years due to legal and ethical issues, as mentioned previously. Except from that, all men and women of all ages and cultures were included and asked to participate. It was of great importance to receive respondents representing all kinds of characteristics within the population.

4.2.3.3 Quota sampling

Quota sampling is an extension of the judgmental sampling technique. It is a two stage approach where the population elements first are divided into control categories, called quotas. The research then includes respondents from quotas proportionally representing the whole population (Malhotra, 2004). For example, if the population consists of 60 per cent women, the sample will also consist of 60 per cent women. The quotas could be with respect to for example gender, age and race (Malhotra, 2004).

Using quota sampling appropriately could be very time consuming and was presumably not even possible due to lack of sampling frame during this thesis. Therefore a judgmental sampling technique has been used. According to Jacobsen (2002), going into a shopping mall asking people to respond to a survey, as in this case, is convenience sampling.

However, that is based on that the researchers use convenience as the only factor of choice and not involve any consciousness. With that in mind, the judgmental technique still was the most adequate method.

4.2.4 Determine the sample size

Malhotra (2004) argues the importance of deciding how many elements of the population that will be included in the study, in other words, the size of the sample. Before conducting the survey in this research it was hard to foresee peoples' willingness to respond. Moreover, this contributed to difficulties in assigning time to spend at A6 Center collecting answers.

A sample between 400 and 600 units is in general sufficient for drawing general conclusions. This is independent of the size of the population (Jacobsen, 2002). With this as a base, a minimum of 400 respondents was the objective for this study. This was reached within a reasonable time frame. The strategy was to ask people to participate in the survey until a minimum of 400 answers was reached.

4.2.5 Execute the sampling process

In order to execute the sampling process a specification of the previous parts of the sampling design process model must be compiled (Malhotra, 2004). This includes a description of the population, sampling frame, sampling technique and sample size. Furthermore, Malhotra (2004) also emphasize the importance of how the researchers will proceed if people chosen to be included in the sample refuse to respond.

In this study the target population was identified as all people above 18 years who go to A6 Center, and is per definition seen as a customer. Both local and commuting customers were of interest and therefore all its customers were included. The sample in this study is every approached customer, no matter if they responded or not to the survey. Instead of deciding a sample size the authors aimed at 400 responses in total. This is due to the difficultness of knowing the customers willingness to respond and therefore hard to decide a desired response rate. Since the authors did not count how many approached customers were unwilling to answer no response rate is available for this survey.

As mentioned previously the demand for participants above the age of 18 occurred because of legal and ethical issues. If people turned out to be unwilling to respond to the survey, the researchers planned to assign enough time at A6 Center in order to reach the 400 responses demanded.

Since Newsec have carried out surveys among A6 Center's customers before using the same method as in this research, with a good result and response rate (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01), the authors were confident that the responses would be collected within a sufficient time frame. Therefore, no other alternative to gather this data seemed necessary.

4.3 Information sources

The kind of literature used in this research is mainly secondary. Saunders et al. (2012) describes secondary literature as academic journals, books and newspapers where primary literature such as reports, theses and company reports are published. The number of secondary literature sources available continuously expands as new resources are developed via the Internet.

Moreover, most research projects will make the greatest use of secondary literature, since it is often peer reviewed and therefore more reliable (Saunders et al., 2012). In order to gain valuable knowledge of the history of commuting and how it could be put in the context of shopping different kinds of literature have been used. The table below explains what search engines and search words have been used.

Table 4.1 Search Parameters

Search Parameters	
Database and search engines	Scopus, Google Scholar, Primo and Jönköping University's library
Search words	Branding, Commuting, Commuter shopping, Consumer behaviour, Pendling, Demand for new products, Mall image, Shopping center, Shopping centre and Shopping mall
Literature types	Academic articles, Literature books and Internet
Publication period	1995-2014 (Exception: 1 book from 1983)
Languages of publication	English, Swedish

To search for information and literature for this thesis, the four databases; Scopus, Google Scholar, Primo and Jönköping University's library has been used.

There is a time span of 19 years in time of publications due to the lack of findings within the relevant topic. One exception is a book regarding shopping malls which was published in 1983. To be able to find enough information to support this thesis the authors needed to use articles, books and information on the Internet from a large period of time. Even if all information provided within the sources is not modern, parts, to different degrees, were relevant for this thesis.

When searching for literature regarding shopping malls the authors found a new edition of Dawson's (1983) book from 2014. Unfortunately it was not possible to access and therefore the original edition was used. However, when reading the abstracts from both editions it seemed that they were very much alike, and the old edition contributed with sufficient information within the field even if it is published during the 1980's.

Since all three authors are of Swedish origin it was possible to search with both English and Swedish words to find relevant information, articles and literature books.

4.4 Methods of data collection

Data collection can be divided into two different kinds of information, primary and secondary data.

“Primary data are originated by a researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the problem at hand” (Malthotra, 2004, p.102). Methods used to gather primary data are for example interviews, observations or surveys (Jacobsen, 2002). This is data gathered with respect to fulfil the current purpose.

Secondary data, on the other hand, is collected previously by someone else for other purposes than for the current study. This could be for example books, articles and websites (Saunders et al., 2012).

To be able to reach conclusions about the problem statement both secondary and primary data are being used in this thesis. It is secondary data in terms of articles and books, and primary data in form of a quantitative survey on location in order to get direct answers from the mall customers. Kristoffer Krantz, who is employed by Newsec as Center Manager at A6 Center, have been used as a contact throughout the research process and has contributed with information about branding and marketing regarding the shopping mall and the approach towards customers.

Furthermore, Krantz also has experience from previous surveys regarding marketing and development and suggested the method of conducting a survey among the visitors at the shopping mall in order to approach both local and commuting customers most efficiently.

The survey was conducted with electronic aid in form of iPads from Newsec, where the online survey tool SurveyMonkey was chosen to collect data. Moreover it was executed on location during the weekends. This choice was made from the fact that the visitors then come from a larger catchment area than during the weekdays (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01). This means that answers were gathered from people from a wider geographical area, which is the objective of this study.

4.5 Data collection

4.5.1 Primary data

The primary data is mainly collected through a survey among A6 Center's local and commuting customers. The survey conducted took a standardized form where all participants responded to the same questions (Malhotra, 2004). A majority of the questions had limited alternatives to choose from, while a couple included an option to give an individual open answer. This opened up for important input which was not in the minds of the authors when constructing the survey questions and their alternative answers.

It is a risk to combine quantitative and qualitative research like this, since it may be difficult to interpret the mix of standardized and individual answers (Malhotra, 2004). The researchers wanted to avoid the risk of being biased if only providing alternatives found relevant by themselves. According to Jacobsen (2002) that is otherwise a risk by standardized surveys. Therefore the researchers opened up for individual answers as well.

The choice of providing an open-answer alternative in the survey is described as follows; the authors wanted to avoid completely standardized answers developed when constructing the questions and alternatives. By only providing fixed alternatives to choose from there was a risk that people's real reasons for going to A6 Center would not be mentioned.

Since the authors created the alternatives based on their pre-knowledge about the shopping mall it could not be excluded that the alternatives would be based on biased thoughts. By giving the respondents the opportunity to create their own reason for visiting the shopping mall the risk of being biased and receiving a limited result could be eliminated.

By the use of an online survey tool on iPads it was easy and convenient for the researchers to fill in approached customers' answers. The result was also easier to compile as well as to compare the gathered data in order to identify relations between different factors. The weakness of this method was the dependence on the cooperation of the customers and that there was no guarantee for an optimal outcome. To prevent this from harming the results of the survey a lot of time was designated at A6 Center to

make sure to gather enough answers to be able to draw relevant conclusions. The primary goal was to reach 400 respondents, as Jacobsen (2002) mentions as a sufficient sample size.

In order to sufficiently collect data to base the research on, the authors chose to make use of primary research using judgmental sampling. It is a variant of convenience sampling which was the best option for making this specific survey. It was not possible to do random sampling, which is statistically more reliable, since a sampling frame then is needed.

In addition to the survey, primary data was also gathered by a conversation with Kristoffer Krantz, Center Manager at A6 Center. The reason for this contact was mainly to receive first hand information about how shopping malls work to attract commuting shoppers from a wide geographical area. This conversation was managed as an open interview with a few questions constructed beforehand, which is a common type of interview (Jacobsen, 2002).

Furthermore, Jacobsen (2002) argues that an open interview is appropriate when researchers are interested in a specific person's opinion in a certain topic, or how that individual interprets specific phenomena. Krantz contributed with much valuable and reliable information within the field of interest in this thesis.

When discussing suitable methods for primary data collection the possibilities with a survey as well as more in-depth interviews and focus groups were considered. However, in order to obtain general information about people's reasons to engage in commuter shopping it was necessary to use a quantitative method where a large number of answers could be collected.

The overall aim with this thesis was never to gather information about perceptions of specific individuals. Therefore, interviews and focus groups could be excluded. Also, it would have been too time-consuming trying to reach and talk to sufficiently many people to draw general conclusions.

The choice of executing the survey face to face at A6 Center was easy to make. It was simply the only reasonable method since there was no e-mail or telephone number list available.

4.5.1.1 Structure of survey

When creating the following questions

1. **Gender –** To be able to distinguish between women and men to see patterns. *Alternatives are female or male*

2. **Age –** In order to see patterns between different age groups.
   Alternative in intervals from 18 years old, since we want participants of legal age, up to the last alternative which will be "65 years or older"

3. **Where are you from? –** Important when distinguishing between local and commuting customers.
   The alternatives will be municipalities within A6 Center's catchment area and one option if the respondent is from outside the catchment area.

4. **Is A6 Center the shopping mall closest to your home location? –** *Yes, No or I don't know*

5. **Why do you visit A6 Center? Choose 1-3 alternatives** - *Alternatives: store range, restaurant/café range, free parking, kids area, close to the highway, on-site events, nice atmosphere, other big stores nearby e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten, convenience, one open ended option if the answer is not listed.*

6. **How did you become familiar with A6 Center?** – To be able to recognise differences between local and commuting customers.
   Alternatives: By their marketing activities, passing by on the highway, have known it for a very long time, other: please specify.

7. **The target groups of A6 Center are families and young adults, when you see commercials for the mall or when you are there visiting, do you recognise this?** *Yes, No or I don't know*

4.5.2 Secondary data

The collection of secondary data for this thesis was mainly for the purpose of getting deeper understanding about the topic of commuting. Burns and Warren (1995) discuss how people's choice of shopping destination is a topic that received increasing attention in the 1990's. However, when collecting data for this study no evidence could be found that this trend has continued. It rather seems to be an unexploited area and therefore it was only possible to collect a limited choice of secondary data regarding this topic. Therefore, the secondary information is more from a general context than focused on commuter shopping.

However, to be able to interpret the term commuting in the context of shopping, this thesis includes some previous thoughts about consumer behaviour among shopping mall visitors as well as the importance of branding in the shopping mall industry.

4.6 Data analysis

To statistically analyse the data from the survey, the methods and tools explained below will be used. Since the survey is a quantitative method this will be a quantitative analysis. The goal is to show how the respondents answered and to see if there is any statistical association between different variables and if there is, how strong it is. The variables chosen will be declared further into the study.

4.6.1 SurveyMonkey

The online survey tool SurveyMonkey was used to conduct and execute the survey as well as to analyze the data gathered. The extended version Select was purchased on the website to be able to collect enough answers, create frequency distributions, cross-tabulations and also to create figures to make the result easy to understand. As a complement, Excel was used to create cross-tabulations, calculate Chi-Square and

Cramer's V mentioned further down, and summarise the statistical results in a correlation matrix.

4.6.2 Frequency distribution

Malhotra (2004) explains frequency distribution as: "…one variable is considered at a time. The objective is to obtain a count of the number of responses associated with different values of the variable" (p. 427). The frequency of the different values is conveyed in percentages and produces a table of frequency counts, percentages and cumulative percentages for all values of the chosen variable (Malhotra, 2004). This method makes it clear of how respondents answer different questions in surveys which is the reason it is used in this thesis.

4.6.3 Cross-tabulation

"Whereas frequency distribution describes one variable at a time, a cross-tabulation describes two or more variables simultaneously. A cross-tabulation is the merging of the frequency distribution of two or more variables in a single table" (Malhotra, 2004, p. 438).

This method helps to understand how one variable is related to one or two other variables. Cross-tabulations provide tables that show the joint distribution of two or more variables with a specific number of categories. The table includes a cell for each combination of the categories of the chosen variables. The number in each cell represents how many respondents gave the specific combination of responses. When computing tables for this method the general rule is to have the dependent variable on the rows and the independent variable in columns (Malhotra, 2004).

Cross-tabulations is common in commercial marketing research because the analysis is simple to conduct, can be easily interpreted and understood, and may provide greater insights into the subject in matter (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002; Feick, 1984; cited in Malhotra, 2004).

The introduction of a third variable in the cross-tabulation often clarifies the association observed between the two original variables. It can either refine the association, confirm the initial association, indicate no association even if an association initially was

observed, or indicate an association even if there was no association initially (Wright, 2002; Sirkin, 1999; cited in Malhotra, 2004).

When cross-tabulating relations between two variables can be found, for example an association between gender and why people decide to go to A6 Center. Relations between three variables can also be detected e.g. when combining gender and why people decide to go to A6 with the home location of the respondents. With this information, conclusions can be drawn of both the local and commuting customers and eventual differences and similarities may be analyzed.

4.6.4 Chi-Square

Chi-Square is used to test a null hypothesis about the statistical significance of the observed association from cross-tabulations. This method helps to decide if a systematic association between two variables exists. It is conducted by computing the expected cell values and then compares them to the actual observed value from the cross-tabulation (Malhotra, 2004). The formula for this is found in Appendix 2.

To be able to reject or accept the null hypothesis, i.e. no significant association between the variables, the Chi-Square value is compared with a critical value in the Chi-Square distribution table. Which critical value to use depends on which degree of freedom (Appendix 2) and alpha is used (Higgins, 2002; Pett, 1997; cited in Malhotra, 2004).

The null hypothesis will only be rejected when the Chi-Square value is larger than the appropriate critical value. Rejection means that there is a significant association between the variables. If chi-square is smaller than the appropriate critical value, then the null hypothesis is accepted since there is no significant association between the two variables (Malhotra, 2004).

4.6.5 Cramer's V

The Cramer's V is a modified version of the Phi Coefficient which is used to measure the strength of an association found with Chi-Square. Cramer's V is used with tables larger than 2x2 (two rows and two columns) where the number of rows and columns differ from each other (e.g. 3x5). Cramer's V is calculated with a formula (Appendix 2) containing the following factors; Chi-Square, total population and the one of rows or columns there is less of. The number calculated with this method ranges from 0 to 1 where 0 is the weakest relation and 1 is the strongest (Malhotra, 2004).

5 Frame of reference

In this section the data from previous research will be presented. It consists of theories and information relevant for this thesis. Furthermore, it is divided into sub-sections named Commuting, Shopping malls, and Branding in order to provide an overview of the collected information. What is included in this section creates understanding of how the term and theory of commuter shopping is assembled.

The research in this section mainly aims to answer research question 1.

5.1 Commuting

Commuting is most often talked about in relation to labour mobility or referring to people travelling to work on a regular basis (Eliasson et al. 2007; Torége et al. 2008). Except from that, it is very hard to find any research made on the subject of commuting. To find some answers to general reasons why people engage in commuting, without relation to work or labour mobility, one must look closer on each single component.

So, without regards to work, the basic foundation in why people commute is utility maximisation. The decision to commute to a certain destination, and not a corresponding destination closer to home, is motivated by a benefit that cannot be found closer to the home location (Eliasson et al., 2007).

Eliasson et al. (2007) describe that the benefit can be in the form of increased number of options, or be characterised by material factors (something physical, e.g. good variety of goods) or immaterial factors (something mental, e.g. a nice atmosphere).

For as long as people have been demanding goods or services they have done what they can to get a hold of them. In the beginning, on a very fundamental level of life, food (e.g. grains, vegetable and meat) has been exchanged for material such as wool (Magnusson, 2010). When the industrialisation of societies began, it contributed to a new era as the agricultural society shifted into an industrial society. The jobs available became centralised to the larger cities where the factories were built. Furthermore, the customer demand shifted to goods and services of a “luxurious” kind and the people who did not follow the migration into the industries had to go the cities in order to get what they wanted (Magnusson, 2010).

Research indicates that people are willing to commute longer distances than before (Torége et al., 2008). Moreover, the amount of commuters has increased in numbers thanks to developed communications but also thanks to an increased tolerance and

acceptance regarding commuting (Torége, Gillingsjö, Lexén & Norberg, 2003). In the context of work, commuting is proven to be very beneficial for the labour market. Labour demand and labour supply can easier be met. There are also individual and universal factors affecting the decision to commute.

A Spanish study made by Maria D. De Juan (2004), which may as well be applicable worldwide, concludes that customers take other factors into consideration when choosing shopping destination except from driving distance. Car parking options, opening hours and possibility to comfortable shopping from store to store are important features (De Juan, 2004). These features can easily be linked to the five dimensions of mall image presented by Chebat, Sirgy and Grzeskowiak (2010) which will be described further later in the thesis.

5.2 Shopping malls

The term shopping mall is frequently used nowadays. However, it is sometimes not correctly used since people tend to use the term rather loosely when talking about a group of shops (Dawson, 1983). According to Urban Land Institute (1977) the definition of a shopping mall is: "A group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site which is planned, developed, owned, and managed as an operating unit related in its location, size, and type of shops to the trade area that the units serves" (cited in Dawson, 1983, p. 1).

The definition stated above helps to distinguish a shopping mall from a shopping district. The difference is that a shopping district is merely a concentration of individual stores on individual sites, which provides some kind of general bundle of shopping activities. The shopping mall, on the other hand, is a distinctive and carefully planned collection of store units (Dawson, 1983).

Moreover, the core in the definition is that shopping malls are in fact a feature in the process of developing the urban landscape, in which both the public and private landowners develop and dedicate land intentionally for shopping mall cites (Dawson, 1983).

Shopping centres exist in a wide range of cities with different politics and cultures over the world. The history of shopping malls is as long as the history of urban property development planning. Shopping malls have been built in all periods of urban major redevelopment or growth since the 19th century. However, at first the shopping malls were simply a terrace of stores rather than the sensibly and thoughtfully managed and highly promoted shopping malls we have today. Most of the growth has occurred since the 1940's due to improvement of management procedures that has made it possible to cope with large scaled investments (Dawson, 1983).

Furthermore, the design of the shopping malls has changed over the years, now there is more planning and thought behind the architectural layout. There is a clear purpose behind the architectural layout: to exploit the opportunity of management methods to turn the shopping mall into a confident and fierce generator of increased customer activity. There was no such thought behind the architectural design in the shopping malls a hundred years ago. To maximise profits from retail sales for the stores in the shopping mall, the tenants, there is much effort put into location, size and type of stores (Dawson, 1983).

In the modern shopping malls of today there is a clear correlation between architecture and function. These artificial shopping locations are built in huge enclosed constructions, where the shopping environment is highly supervised and controlled with help of a competent management (Dawson, 1983).

Shopping malls have long been designed in relation to the trade area where it is located, but increasingly competitive marketing has turned this relationship into a more inter-related state where the shopping mall and trade area are more symbiotic (Dawson, 1983). Also, with changes in the consumer behaviour and pattern, analyses of trade areas are concerned with specific customer segments rather than with a total customer population. Speciality malls are an extreme example of shopping malls that target one specific segment, meaning they only sell one group of good e.g. only women's high fashion goods or only technology-goods (Dawson, 1983).

There are three main types of shopping malls, and Dawson (1983) describes them as follows; the neighbourhood mall, the community mall and the regional mall. The neighbourhood mall is supposed to provide personal service and a widespread range of

convenience goods. The element of personal service is an important element in this type of shopping mall and the assumed catchment area is somewhere around 2’500 to 40’000 people within a six-minute drive. A significant characteristic or merchandising concept, of this type of shopping mall is convenience (Dawson, 1983).

The second type of shopping mall, the community mall, aims to offer customers an even greater depth and variety of assortments compared to the neighbourhood mall. Community malls have a catchment area from 40’000 to 150’000 people and the use of anchor stores is more exploited (Dawson, 1983). An anchor store is usually a big store established to attract and lure customers to go a certain shopping destination. They are strategically placed deep in the shopping mall, so that the customers have to pass many other stores on the way there, which hopefully will lead to more shopping (Konishi & Sandfort, 2003). Many shopping malls that start off as a neighbourhood mall can grow into becoming a community mall (Dawson, 1983).

Finally, the third type, the regional mall, offers wide-ranging shopping goods, general merchandise, apparel, home furnishings and furniture - all in full variety and depth. It targets a catchment area with a population with over 150’000 people. Moreover it is closely located to motorway or freeway intersections (Dawson, 1983).

A shopping mall can be managed to maximise the economic benefit for both the management and the tenants, by a controlled and careful selection of the tenant mix. The development and management process, the industry of shopping malls has come to grow into a multi-million-pound sector in the western economies. Another factor that has contributed to the growth in this sector is the fact that it is a lucrative investment opportunity for land developers and speculators (Dawson, 1983).

The steady advancement and rapid growth in number of shopping malls over the world since the 1950’s, are the main reasons behind the almost evolutionary development of the shopping mall form, and new forms are constantly appearing. Dawson (1983) states that even though the shopping malls are constantly evolving, it is important to keep in mind that the shape of the industry as well as the characteristics and shape of the shopping malls themselves is not a coincidence; it is a result of conscious decisions made in the development process.

Previous studies are in many ways very consistent on how to attract customers. Chebat et al. (2010) specifically states some key activities for malls to engage in when it comes to increase the number of visitors, which is important to continuously work to keep up and develop.

1. Shopping mall promotion in terms of social and entertaining events taking place in the mall (Parsons, 2003; cited in Chebat et al., 2004)
2. Recruit and retain large anchor stores (Pashigian and Gould, 1998; cited in Chebat et al., 2004)
3. Target shoppers with specific demographic, socio-economic, cultural or psychographic characteristics (Laroche et al., 2005; cited in Chebat et al., 2004)

The fact that shopping malls are using promotional activities more frequently in order to differentiate from other actors through image or brand communication is discussed by Le Hew and Fairhurst (2000) (cited in Parsons & Ballantine, 2004; Parsons, 2003). Dennis, Murphy, Marsland, Cockett and Patel (2002), are also identifying an increasingly competitive environment in the shopping mall market and that branding activities will continue to be even more relevant in the future. That is something the shopping malls of today really need to consider in order to stay competitive.

5.3 Branding

To be able to engage in commuter shopping, the customers need to know what attributes are offered in order to find their optimal benefit. The shopping malls use branding to promote their attributes. Therefore, the following section is an important part of the work towards obtaining the aim of this research.

A company's brand is often thought of as the biggest enduring asset of the company (Kotler, et al., 2008). However, it is important to remember that brands go beyond the meaning of just names and symbols. A brand is the key element in building a relation with customers as the brand communicates a message. The customers then perceive this message, e.g. it will trigger emotions and thoughts about the good or service the brand represents – everything the brand means to each individual customer. Therefore the

development and strategies of the brand should be carefully developed (Kotler et al., 2008)

The companies' that successfully manage to capture the customer's preference and loyalty are seen to have a successful brand. This is defined as that the customers have brand awareness (Kotler et al., 2008). Moreover, brands that possess brand preference have a very high degree of brand loyalty, which means that customers chose their product or service over others simply because of the brand. These brands are not chosen only because of good quality or unique benefits, but because they have managed to reach the customer in a personal way, which gives a strong connection (Kotler et al., 2008).

There are differences in how to establish in customer's minds depending on if you are representing a shopping mall including many brands or if your focus is on one brand only (De Juan, 2004), since a shopping mall needs to build its brand by representing different sub-brands offering different products and services. Previous research states that *image* is a term more commonly used than the term *brand* in the context of shopping malls. However, branding is continuously becoming more important within this context (Dennis et al., 2002).

When discussing brands, the term brand equity often is mentioned. Brand equity is typically associated with a strong brand and is defined as the positive differential effect it has on the customers' response towards the brand. Brands with high brand loyalty, proven good quality, strong name awareness, and strong and positive brand associations or other assets such as trademarks or patents have a higher degree of brand equity.

A way to measure brand equity is to look closer on the extent to which the customers are willing to pay more for the product or service, which the brand represents, compares to other similar products or services (Kotler et al., 2008). With this in mind, Kotler et al., (2008) argues that a brand that possesses brand equity is a very important asset.

Once a brand has been established it is time for the challenging work of the marketing team, they need to position their brand in a way that it will further target the customers' minds. There are four different levels that can be used in positioning. On the first level, and also the lowest one, the marketing team often position their brand on product attributes, e.g. *high quality* or *nice atmosphere*. The attributes level is the least desired

because competitors easily can copy attributes. Moreover, customers are more interested in the benefits of the attributes rather than the features of the attributes (Kotler et al., 2008).

As mentioned, the positioning of a brand will be more successful if the name of the brand is associated with some kind of benefit, and this is exactly what the focus in the second level of positioning is. It is important to translate the benefits into emotional or functional attributes, and to focus on them respectively (Kotler et al., 2008).

Regarding the branding of a shopping mall, one that manages positioning itself in the minds of target customers as positive in terms of accessibility, atmosphere, price and promotion, and store range, is one that most likely can contribute to a favorable attitude toward the mall, and thereby also increasing positive word-of-mouth communication about the mall (Chebat et al., 2010).

When it comes to retailers, the majority of their revenue and profit comes from selling products and brands that many of their competitors offer as well (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). This is in many ways alike to the situation of shopping malls, which are also often very similar to each other these days (Burns & Warren, 1995). Therefore, building an own brand to distinguish from other shopping malls is both a challenging problem as well as of great potential to stay competitive (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004).

The brands that want to gain an even stronger position must go beyond the attributes and the benefits. They must strive to build their position on strong values and beliefs, e.g. the brand can communicate that it is environmentally friendly. They are devoting their customers on an emotional level. Finally, the last level should reach out to the customers' personalities. If this is done successfully, a certain brand communicating a certain message will attract the customers whose desired self-perception matches the brand (Kotler et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Kotler et al. (2008) argue that a brand definitely is a highly complex thing to deal with. It is important to develop a profound set of relations and values associated with the brand. In the positioning process it is vital that the marketing team successfully manages to determine the brand's mission as well as vision that will stand for what the brand aims to do and be. The core values and the personality of the brand is what will endure during its lifetime and are defined as the true brand essence.

Ailawadi and Keller (2004) introduce a model (see Figure 5.1) in order to explain store image dimensions which can likewise be transferred and applied in the context of shopping malls (Chebat et al. 2010). Chebat et al. (2010) says that much previous research on mall image is actually predicated on research concerning store image. By using five different dimensions this model helps to bring forward the important parts when building a shopping mall brand.

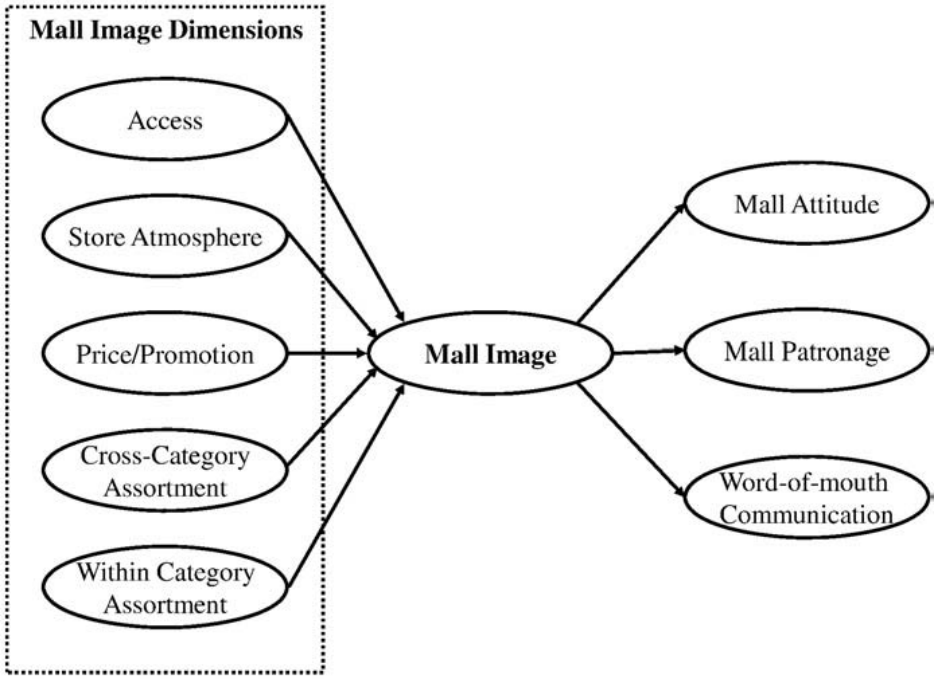

Figure 5.1 Five mall image dimensions.
(Chebat et al., 2010)

- **Access –** In the context of shopping malls access refers to the location at which the mall is positioned. Malls located in accessible locations are likely to be perceived as more favourable by the customers. (Chebat et al., 2010)

- **Atmosphere –** Refers to the overall aesthetics and atmosphere of the mall. The mall's environment such as colours, music and the perception of crowdedness creates the customer's perception of the mall as a whole. (Chebat et al., 2010)

- **Price/Promotion –** Malls perceived to include stores with adequate prices are likely to be perceived as favourable, as well as those that engage in promotions that offer good deals in its stores. (Chebat et al., 2010)

- **Cross-category assortment** – As people look for ease and convenience when shopping a variety of store assortment is preferable when choosing which shopping mall to go to. This dimension refers to a wide store range with different stores offering different product categories. (Chebat et al., 2010)

- **Within-category assortment –** Refers to how a shopping mall offers more than one store within the same category of products. For example when someone is looking for a pair of shoes, a shopping mall supplying more than one shoe store is more favourable since it is then more likely to find the right pair of shoes. (Chebat et al., 2010)

This model helps when trying to identify the important factors when using branding and positioning in order to create competitive advantage for shopping malls.

Customer perceptions of these dimensions of shopping mall image can help mall developers build up strong and unique brand associations in the minds of shoppers (Chebat et al., 2010). Studies also show that shopping malls that are perceived to have good brand images have a tendency to have larger catchment areas and sales. This indicates that brand management could be profitable in the future in terms of visitor numbers, sales and rental income (Dennis et al., 2002).

5.3.1 Affecting factors

Something that contributes to changes in consumer behaviour and people's shopping habits is the fact that technology is constantly evolving and information about new products travels fast. Whether customers' are willing to spend time and money, or even to commute, in order to get hold of a good or service is determined by economic and/or social factors. Examples of economic factors that might affect the customers' demand to get hold of a certain product or service are product price, income, availability of the product or service, brand, quality etc. Examples of social factors are e.g. if the customer

has seen another person with the product, if a friend talk about it and its quality or customer reviews (Cojocaru, Thille, Thommes, Nelson & Greenhalg, 2013).

The economic factors mentioned above can as well be linked to Ailawadi and Keller's (2004) five store image dimensions that also stress the importance of price, availability and the overall perception of the brand.

Firms constantly aim to launch new products and to introduce them in the market. If it will be a success depends on a number of factors, and a successful launch is not always certain. Sometimes the product is completely new, but sometimes it is a new kind of improved, or modified, version of a product already present in the market (Cojocaru et al. 2013).

In previous studies of innovation, it has been confirmed that the understanding of customer needs and wants are key determinants of a product's success factor. However, it is stated that one should remember that the success is very much dependent on demand; if there is no demand for the new, or improved, product it will not have a strong position in the market. According to Schumpeter (1934) and Freeman (1982) innovation in terms of technology and goods is when something is technically novel, and at the same time has been either launched in the market as a new product or a new version of an existing product (cited in Coombs, Green, Walsh & Richards, 2001).

Entrepreneurs and firms most often find out if their product/idea is successful after it has been launched, and there is no way to know for certain what customers want until they either reject or embrace it (Coombs et. al., 2001). When interpreting these statements about innovations and technology in the market place, one can see that the customers are the ones who control the market and they have the power to decide which products will survive in the market place. Laperche, Sommers, and Uzunidis (2010) confirm this; they state that modern technology of today is complex and has increased the different competences the firms, entrepreneurs and marketing teams must master to be able to deal with new or improved products.

Overall, it is a company's ability to communicate its branding that determines success in terms of customers and brand image. Therefore, branding is an important factor to consider when trying to compile the term *commuter shopping.* This is the reason for giving branding literature a greater note of attention in this study.

6 Empirical Findings

This section of the thesis will present the compiled results from the survey. Moreover, four parts are going to be presented to get a more comprehensive view of the results. In order to make it convenient for the reader, figures showing the results are attached.

The research in this section mainly aims to answer research question 2.

6.1 Frequency distribution

6.1.1 Structure

The empirical findings from the survey will be divided into three parts where related questions from the survey will be highlighted in a shared section. The first part will emphasise the demographics of the respondents. This is followed by the part that presents the geographics of the survey, and the third part will deal with the attributes people value in a shopping mall. The final part deals with the branding and perception of the mall, in case A6 Center. The tool used for analysing the data was SurveyMonkey, which provided, in addition to the survey outline, a statistical compiling tool for the data. This made it possible to analyse and cross-tab the relevant answers.

6.1.2 Demographics of the research

Questions 1 and 2

The empirical data was collected through a survey among A6 Center's customers. In the end a total of 402 respondents were collected. The two first questions they were asked to answer were of controlling character as was regarding age and gender.

The authors wanted to reach at least 400 respondents and had allocated time that would be sufficient in order to obtain this goal. The time frame was based on the previous research from Newsec, which was conducted in a very similar way where the researchers even had the outfit. This helped to give a serious and reliable impression, and was a contributing factor to the success of the number of respondents.

To give a clear overview of the demographics of the respondents to the reader, this following information was chosen to be included. Of the 402 respondents 57.71 per cent (232 persons) represented women and 42.29 per cent (170 persons) were men.

Furthermore, people in the ages:

- 18-25 represent 17.91 per cent (72 persons)
- 26-35 represent 17.91 per cent (72 persons)
- 36-45 represent 20.40 per cent (82 persons)
- 46-55 represent 19.65 per cent (79 persons)
- 56-64 represent 11.94 per cent (48 persons)
- 65 or above represent 12.19 per cent (49 persons)

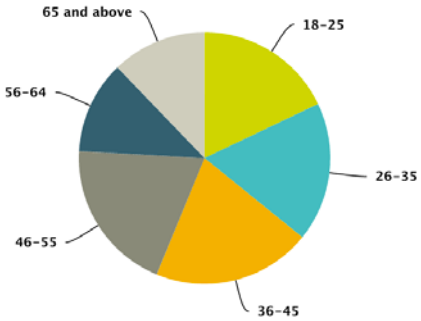

Figure 6.1 Age distribution.

There is a slight difference in the number of men and women who responded to the survey, in favour of women. In the age distribution there is a rather even spread between the respondents in the ages (and age groups) 18 to 55, with the group 46-55 being the biggest one representing 19.65 per cent. Originally, there was no plans on laying focus on the differences between gender and ages, however if significant differences was identified the analysis could take this into consideration and maybe broaden the comparison. Unless this occurs, the presentation of the gender and age distribution has the purpose of providing an overview of the demographic of the participants of the survey.

6.1.3 Geographics

Questions 3 and 4

The participants of the survey were asked where they came from (which municipality) and if A6 Center was the closest shopping location for them to go to. Much of the analysis will have its main focus on this section, because it is of great interest to the authors if there is any difference in why the local and commuting customers chose a specific shopping location (in this case A6 Center).

The municipality where most people came from was Jönköping; representing 49.00 per cent (197 persons), followed by; Nässjö; representing 6.47 per cent (26 persons), Värnamo; representing 4.23 per cent (17 persons), Vetlanda; representing 3.23 per cent (13 persons) and Eksjö; representing 2.99 per cent (12 persons). As shown in the table below, the second largest category is *Other (please specify)*. This category represents people who came from outside the catchment area of A6 Center.

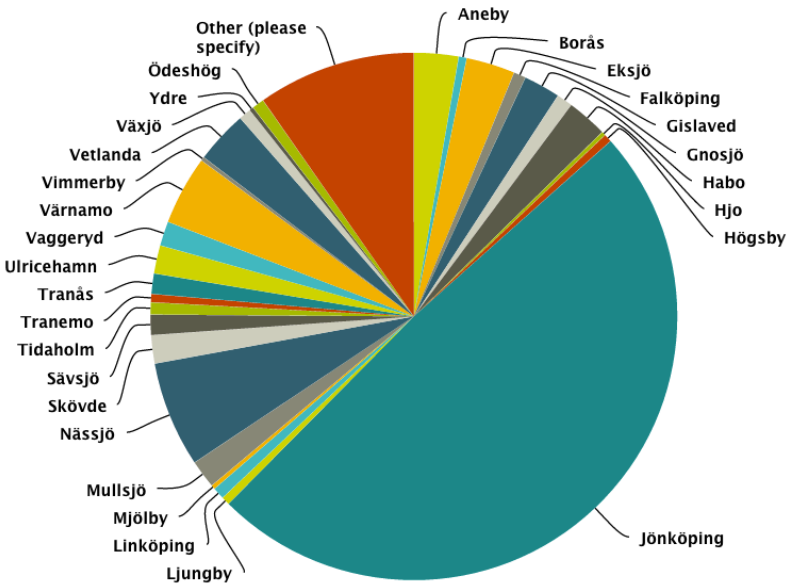

Figure 6.2 Municipalities.

Of all the people who answered, 76.81 per cent (308 persons) stated that A6 Center was the closest shopping location to go to, and 22.94 per cent (92 persons) stated that A6 Center was not the closest shopping location. 2 respondents did not answer to this question.

6.1.4 Attributes customers do value

Question 5

When asking question five "Why do you visit A6 Center?" the researchers wanted to find out which attributes of a shopping location (shopping mall) customers value the most. There were a number of alternatives to choose from as well as a possibility to give an open answer if the options did not cover all attributes. The respondents were asked to fill in one or two alternatives. The respondents who visited A6 Center on a non-regular basis filled in the option *Just an occasional visit* and for many it was the first and maybe also the last time they visited A6.

The most popular attributes were:

- *Store range*; representing 62.94 per cent (253 persons)
- *Convenience*; representing 44.03 per cent (177 persons)
- *Other big stores nearby; e.g. IKEA and Elgiganten*; representing 30.30 per cent (121 persons)
- *Free parking*; representing 24.13 per cent (97 persons)
- *Nice atmosphere*; representing 13.68 per cent (55 persons).

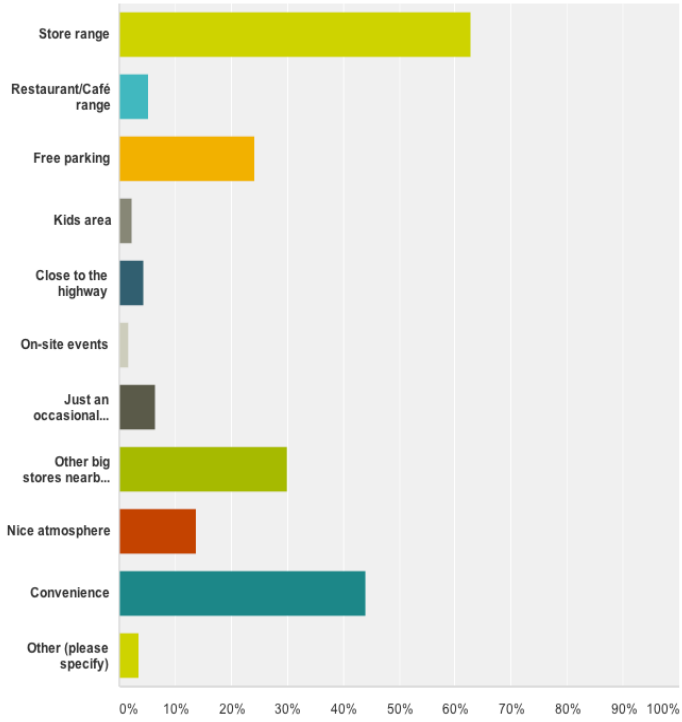

Figure 6.3 Attribute distribution.

6.1.5 Perception of A6 Center

Questions 6 and 7

In question six the respondents were asked how they are familiar with A6 Center. One of the alternatives stood out, namely *Have known it for a long time* where 93.03 per cent (374 persons) of all who answered the question stated that they are familiar with A6 Center because they have known it for a long time. Many of them could not think of a certain occasion when they first heard about it, it was like it had always been there.

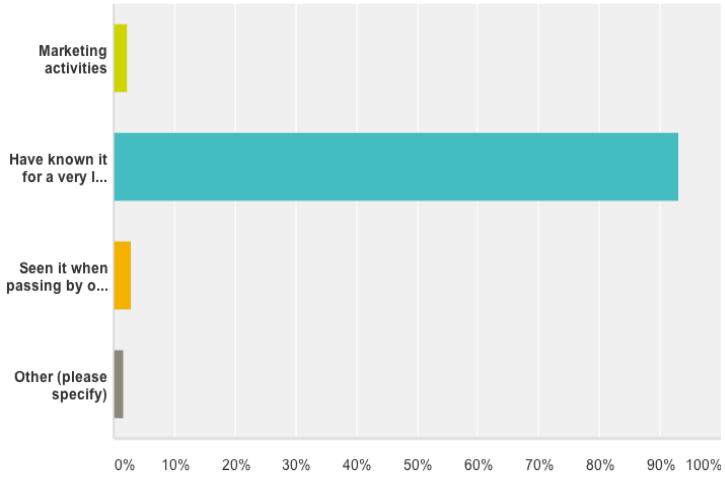

Figure 6.4 How do you know about A6 Center?

In question seven the researchers wanted to find out if A6 Center's marketing and positioning strategies were successful. The respondents were told that A6's primary target groups are families and young adults and were then asked if they thought it showed or was noticed whilst being at A6.

The question could be answered by filling in one of three alternatives; *Yes*, *No* or *I don't know*, and the people who answered *I don't know* also often stated that they had never given it any thought and did not realise a shopping mall could have a target group. Of the ones who answered, *Yes* represent 53.48 per cent (215 persons), *No* represent 36.57 per cent (147 persons) and the ones who answered *I don't know* represent 9.95 per cent (40 persons).

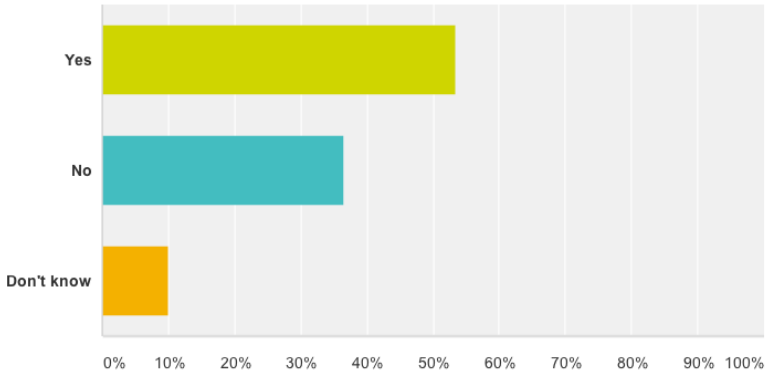

Figure 6.5 Do you notice A6 Center's target groups?

6.2 A6 Center

The following section about A6 Center is included among the empirical findings since it includes information collected during this research process. The information gathered contributes to better understanding of how shopping mall management works with branding in practice. Moreover, general information about A6 Center was necessary to collect in order to find out which attributes it offers with the purpose of constructing the survey appropriately.

A6 Center is a shopping mall outside the city centre of Jönköping, closely to the highway E4. It was founded in 1987 in the area and facilities that was an artillery regiment until 1985. The shopping mall contains 71 stores and 5 cafés and restaurants and had 4 726 000 visitors in 2012 (Marknadsplan A6 Center, 2014).

There are several actors working together in order to run a shopping mall. In the case with A6 Center the facilities are owned by Alecta Pensionsförsäkringar Ömsesidigt, which is a Swedish asset management company (K. Krantz, personal communication 14-04-01). In addition to that, A6 Center is administrated and developed by Newsec Asset Management AB, which is included in a large corporation in the real estate industry administrating over 1000 properties in Northern Europe (Newsec, 2014).

In general, the developers of shopping malls are continuously facing the challenge of trying to reach customers not only locally but also from a larger region. According to previous studies (höstenkäter) made by A6 Center there is a trend of an increasing amount of visitors commuting to the shopping mall from outside Jönköping municipality, and this contributes to assumptions about this specific shopping destination as a successful and continuously improving one.

A6 Center wants to be perceived as an easily accessible shopping destination for both inhabitants of Jönköping as well as commuting shoppers from a larger region. Moreover, the shopping mall is striving for offering a wide range of stores and it is mainly targeting families and young adults (Marknadsplan A6 Center, 2014).

The assortment of stores in A6 Center is carefully selected and many customer surveys are conducted before decisions are finalised regarding the store recruitment. Customers are asked what they are missing and what they think would make A6 Center an even better shopping mall (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01). The use of

anchor stores (e.g. Clas Ohlson and Stadium) is also carefully considered, something that is discussed being important by researchers, for example Burns and Warren (1995).

A6 Center's main target groups are families and young adults (Marknadsplan A6 Center, 2014). A6 Center can afford to be broad and not niche themselves due to the lack of geographic competition. In large cities with several malls they would be forced to stand out in the crowd, but in Jönköping with a great distance to the competitors they can be broad and appeal to a large group of customers (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01).

In the focus to attract, and to keep customers longer in the mall, A6 Center provides a playground-area, deliberately placed near a coffee shop and toilets (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01). Thereby it offers amusement for the children as well as giving both them and their parents a pause from the shopping environment.

Moreover, in the same area there is also a room dedicated to mothers who wish to feed their children in a calm and more private atmosphere. There are also comfortable chairs and sofas strategically placed throughout the facilities in order to increase the possibility to get people to stay longer in the mall. The customers are provided with free Wi-Fi all over the building, and signs about this are to be found inside the shopping mall (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01).

Many outdoor events suitable for the target groups, such as the winners of Swedish Idol singing, are taking place each year. A6 Center also has many events inside the store like competitions for adults and children as well as theme days with specific focus. This is linked to their marketing concept "highway to…" where they have suitable events. For example before the school starts in the fall they have "Highway to School" and then they arrange events and perhaps store discounts related to the start of the new semester.

7 Analysis

Here, the results from the research will be combined and compared in the context of commuting.

The authors of this thesis wanted to find out if, by combining shopping and commuting, there is in fact something that can be defined as commuter shopping. Furthermore, they wanted to take the research one step further by investigating the attributes that the commuter shoppers wanted to attain when commuting to a shopping destination not closest to their home location. The shopping location is defined by a shopping mall; A6 Center was used as an example. A survey was conducted to find out what the attributes were the most important, and what the customers value in their choice of shopping mall.

7.1 Survey

It all started when the authors found evidence that commuting could be made for different reasons. One important determinant in commuting is that people wish to receive some kind of benefit. When looking back in time, the origin of commuting can be traced back to when people were forced to travel a certain distance in order to get hold of the goods or services they needed or desired, e.g. some clothes that were produced in the industries and only were available in the larger cities (Magnusson, 2010).

Today, the fundamental reason for engaging in commuting is still the same. Benefits are motivating people to travel to further locations in order to fulfil demands. The researchers wanted to find out if commuting could be put in the context of shopping, and an important part of this was also to find out what attributes customers value to the degree that makes it worth to engage in commuter shopping. This is the motive behind the survey.

When the survey was designed the authors had in mind Ailawadi and Keller's (2004) model *The Five Store Image Dimensions* that is applied on shopping malls, by Chebat et al. (2010). The model describes dimensions important in order to establish great mall image, and the authors included four of these five dimensions in the survey. It was evident that the respondents in this research agreed upon the importance of accessibility, atmosphere and cross category assortment (included in store range) and within category

assortment (also included in store range). This can be observed in figure 7.1 and 7.2 below.

When looking on the most popular attributes in total (all the respondents), there was a clear winner – *Store range*, representing 62.94 per cent (253 persons). Other popular attributes were: *Convenience*; representing 44.03 per cent (177 persons), *Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA and Elgiganten*; representing 30.30 per cent (121 persons), *Free parking*; representing 24.13 per cent (97 persons) and *Nice atmosphere*; representing 13.68 per cent (55 persons).

Regarding store range it also became clear that it was of importance to include an open-answer alternative for the question of which attributes people value. When compiling the result the open alternative included many occasional visits which later were put together in a common alternative when calculating statistics. What was even more interesting was the fact that more than a handful people refused the alternative *store range* and instead answered *Systembolaget* as an open answer. This was recognised by the researchers as the only store in A6 Center's store range that was mentioned as a single reason to visit the mall.

However, when assembling the result those answers were transferred into *store range* since it is included in the range of offerings. Despite the transfer of answers it is still worth mentioning that a single store could be of great impact when people are choosing their shopping destination. Therefore, it is of value to emphasise the great importance of shopping mall management's choice of which stores to incorporate.

For the question "Is A6 Center the shopping mall closest to your home location?" the respondents were divided into two groups, the ones who answered *Yes* and the ones who answered *No*. When cross-tabbing and looking more closely into the differences in preferred attributes between customers who have A6 Center as the closest shopping mall and customers who do not, one can see that the results differ.

The ones who have A6 Center as the closest shopping mall value S*tore range* with 68.39 per cent (212 persons). The second most popular attribute is C*onvenience*, representing 50.65 per cent (157 persons).

Overall, the results are rather similar to the answers observed when looking at the total number of respondents (both the ones who have, and the ones who does not have, A6 Center as their closest shopping mall). The reasons for this may be that out of the total 402 who answered the survey, 310 represent the ones who answered *Yes*.

However, it is not of great importance if the answers of the two groups match the combined result. Moreover, the ones who answered *Yes* also valued to have other big stores nearby and free parking.

The ones who answered *No* to the question, i.e. the ones who does not have A6 Center as the closest shopping mall, also valued *store range* the most with 45.05 per cent (41 persons). However, the second most attractive attributes scored rather similar and those were *Other big stores nearby*, *Nice atmosphere* and C*onvenience*.

The differences in preference in attributes between the ones who answered Y*es* and *No* to the question if A6 Center is the closest shopping mall are easily observed in figure 9 and 10 below. By looking at them, you can see a comparison in attributes between the yes-answers and the no-answers. With this information we can state that customers going to a shopping mall value a good range of stores and then, depending if it is the closest mall to their home location, people tend to value differently.

In general, within a shopping mall it is the stores that are offering the benefits, or attributes, to the customers, and it is therefore important that the shopping mall tenants are aligned with the shopping mall's brand. However, it is the shopping mall management who decides which attributes they want to offer. Thereby, they can choose stores to incorporate in order to fulfil their own demand of offerings as well as the demand of the customers.

As mentioned above, by looking on the results from the survey, one can see that there are attributes that are more appreciated than others. E.g. there are differences in what local customers appreciate compared to non-local. One can see from the figures that there are differences in which attributes that are valued depending on if people are local or commuting customers. In order to confirm this observation and making the research more reliable statistical calculation was used.

The statistical evidence shows that there is a correlation between whether if people are local or commuting customers and which attributes they value the most. *Store range* is the most popular in both groups, but then their preferred attributes differ. The differences can be interpreted as evidence that, for example, free parking is not an attribute worth commuting for. Moreover, commuting customers value the benefits from the shopping mall being located close to the highway.

There are other ways to interpret the result. For example, if we only look on the attribute *Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA and Elgiganten*, which is quite highly preferred among commuting customers, then the conclusion can be made that this benefit cannot be attained on a shopping destination (mall) closer to their home location.

Moreover, you can see that local customers value free parking to a great extent while the commuting customers do not, i.e. free parking is not worth commuting for or it can be found in a shopping location closer to home. One can assume that there are other attributes that are of greater importance than a free parking area. In this case for example, customer's from other municipalities than Jönköping drive the distance it takes in order to obtain the benefits from the wide store range, while they probably would have executing their shopping at home if the store range would have been similar.

However, people living in Jönköping value the free parking along with the store range and there is no evidence for that all of the customers still would have chosen A6 Center as their shopping destination if Jönköping City would have provided free parking as well.

The main reason for asking A6 Center's customers about how they became familiar with the mall was to investigate the customers' perception of the company's presence. It was interesting to recognise that over 90% of the respondents answered that they have known about the shopping mall for a very long time and were not affected that much about its marketing efforts in order to attract customers. Both local and non-local customers stated that they could not remember when they first heard about the shopping mall. This could be interpreted as A6 Center being top of mind among many people within its catchment area.

However, even if marketing activities not seem very important when attracting new customers in the case of A6 Center, the majority of the respondents in this research state that they do recognise the company's marketing efforts towards targeting families and young adults. This indicates that word-of-mouth, i.e. hearing about a brand from other sources than ordinary marketing, is of more importance than planned marketing activities when trying to attract customers within the catchment area, while the customers' recognition of the target groups highlights the importance of communicating its brand.

7.2 Statistics

7.2.1 Geographics – Attributes (Chi-Square)

Table 7.1 below shows both expected and observed values which through calculations resulted in a Chi-Square of 90.005. Alpha at 0.05 and the degree of freedom at 10 were used. According to the Chi-Square distribution table the critical value is 3.94 at these values.

Table 7.1 Cross-tab Geographics – Attributes

	Geographical location		
	Jönköping	All others	Row total
Why do you visit A6 Center?			
Store range Observed	130	123	253
Store range Expected	124,28	128,72	253
Restaurant/Café range Observed	5	16	21
Restaurant/Café range Expected	10,32	10,68	21
Free parking Observed	75	22	97
Free parking Expected	47,65	49,35	97
Kids area Observed	5	4	9
Kids area Expected	4,42	4,58	9
Close to the highway Observed	3	15	18
Close to the highway Expected	8,84	9,16	18
On-site events Observed	1	6	7
On-site events Expected	3,44	3,56	7
Just an occasional visit Observed	0	26	26
Just an occasional visit Expected	12,77	13,23	26
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Observed	49	72	121
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Expected	59,44	61,56	121
Nice atmosphere Observed	18	37	55
Nice atmosphere Expected	27,02	27,98	55
Convenience Observed	102	75	177
Convenience Expected	86,95	90,05	177
Other (please specify) Observed	4	10	14
Other (please specify) Expected	6,88	7,12	14
Column total Observed	392	406	798
Column total Expected	392,00	406,00	798

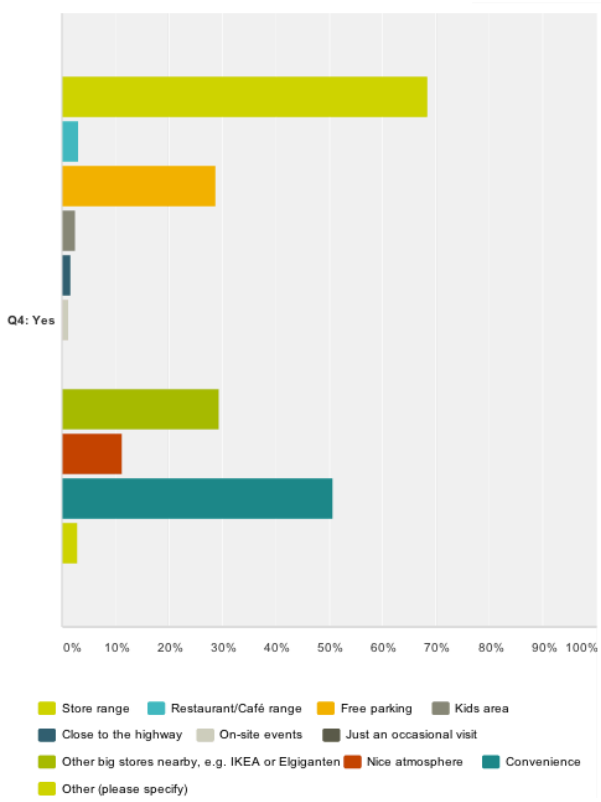

Figure 7.1 Attribute distribution (YES).

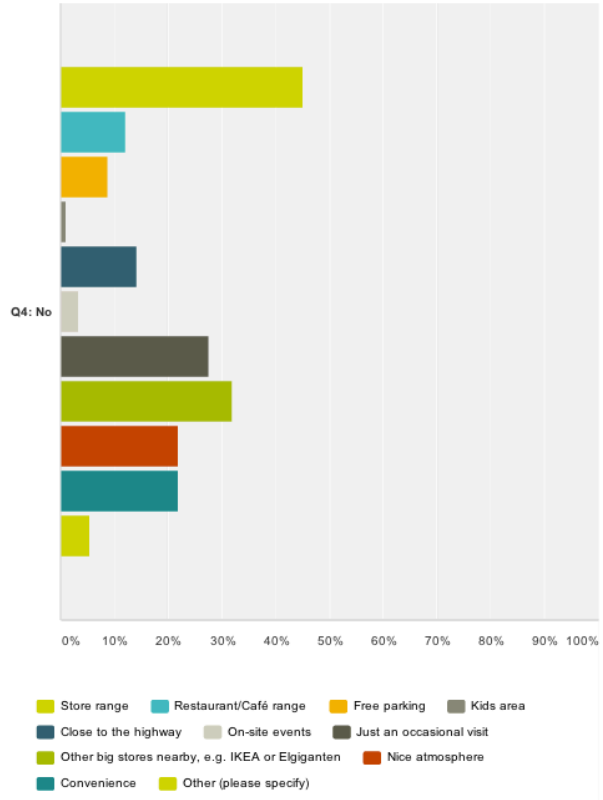

Figure 7.2 Attribute distribution (NO).

When comparing Chi-Square and critical value it becomes clear that Chi-Square is the largest value of these and therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion of this is that there is a significant association between the attributes highly appreciated and the home location (i.e. if you are a local or commuting customer). This means that there is an association between whether a customer comes from Jönköping or not, and which attributes at A6 Center they prefer.

When evaluating commuter shopping the authors wanted to highlight the fact that it all comes down to the benefits received. In the case of the relation between valued attributes and whether a customer lives close to or far from a certain shopping location, is highly relevant. In order to identify the attributes which may motivate a shopper to engage in commuter shopping one must distinguish them from local customers.

With this in mind, the preferences in attributes may change. Since the preferred attributes are related to whether people are local or commuting customers, it would mean that if a commuting customer would instead go o the shopping mall closest to their home location they would be a local customer and the attributes that are the most important would change. For example, the local customers in Jönköping value free parking more than the commuting customers, but if customers from Jönköping would go to another shopping location further away they would value other attributes.

The same applies for commuting customers; if they would go to the shopping location closest to home they would also value the attributes differently. It might be the case that the local customers, who valued free parking more than commuting customers, would have chosen another shopping destination if free parking would have been available elsewhere.

7.2.2 Geographics – Attributes (Cramer's V)

Since a statistical significance between geographics and attributes exist, a Cramer's V test was administrated to calculate the strength of the association. Cramer's V was calculated to 0.34 which on a scale from 0 to 1 is a moderate strength.

Table 7.2 Chi-Square & Cramer's V Geographics – Attributes

Chi-Square of table	90,00458126			
Critical value at alpha 0,05 and 10df	3,94			
df= (r-1)*(c-1)	10			
alpha 0,05 most commonly used				
Null hypothesis: no significant difference between observed and expected value				
Chi-Square > Critical value = reject null hypothesis				
-> Statistical relation between chosen variables				
An association between why local customers visit A6 and why regional/national customers visit A6.				
Cramer's V	0,34			

In order to increase the reliability of the results, the authors decided to analyse the results statistically. In the case of geographics, the statistical result confirmed what was already observed, i.e. that there is a relationship between if people commute or not to a shopping location and which attributes they value. On this attribute, there is a clear difference between the local and commuting customers (28.71% yes vs. 8.79% no).

Since the authors put much focus on the attributes in this thesis, they wanted to confirm the results further. That the results showed that the strength is in fact of moderate strength was more reassuring than it would have been without the Chi-Square calculation.

7.2.3 Gender – Attributes (Chi-Square)

In table 7.3 a Chi-Square of 9.91 is calculated. At alpha 0.05 and degree of freedom 10, the critical value is 3.94. When comparing these two values one can see that 9.91>3.94, which means that Chi-Square is the largest value. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant association between the factors' gender and attributes preferred.

Table 7.3 Cross-tab Gender – Attributes

	Gender		
	Female	Male	Row total
Why do you visit A6 Center?			
Store range Observed	149	104	253
Store range Expected	146,79	106,21	253
Restaurant/Café range Observed	9	12	21
Restaurant/Café range Expected	12,18	8,82	21
Free parking Observed	61	36	97
Free parking Expected	56,28	40,72	97
Kids area Observed	4	5	9
Kids area Expected	5,22	3,78	9
Close to the highway Observed	8	10	18
Close to the highway Expected	10,44	7,56	18
On-site events Observed	3	4	7
On-site events Expected	4,06	2,94	7
Just an occasional visit Observed	13	13	26
Just an occasional visit Expected	15,09	10,91	26
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Observed	78	43	121
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Expected	70,20	50,80	121
Nice atmosphere Observed	31	24	55
Nice atmosphere Expected	31,91	23,09	55
Convenience Observed	101	76	177
Convenience Expected	102,70	74,30	177
Other (please specify) Observed	6	8	14
Other (please specify) Expected	8,12	5,88	14
Column total Observed	463	335	798
Column total Expected	463,00	335,00	798

With the result from the survey at their disposal, the authors wanted to take the opportunity to analyse if the attributes could in fact be related to other than if people are local or commuting. The first factor, other than geographics, chosen to cross-tab was gender. As mentioned above the statistical calculation shows that there is in fact a relation between customers' gender and which attributes they value.

However, this is not easy to see when just looking on the figures that show the results. By looking on the tables alone it seems that there is no difference in preferred attributes among men and women. This shows the importance to evaluate results statistically as well as theoretically.

Moreover, the authors recognised the fact that there were more female respondents than male, which has also been the case in previous studies made among A6 Center's customers (Höstenkät, 2013). This could be explained by the assumption that women are more likely to respond to these kinds of face-to-face surveys as well as the fact that women are shopping more frequently on a regular basis. This in confirmed by South

and Spitze (1994) who state that shopping could be categorised as a female typed activity (cited in Dholakia, 1999).

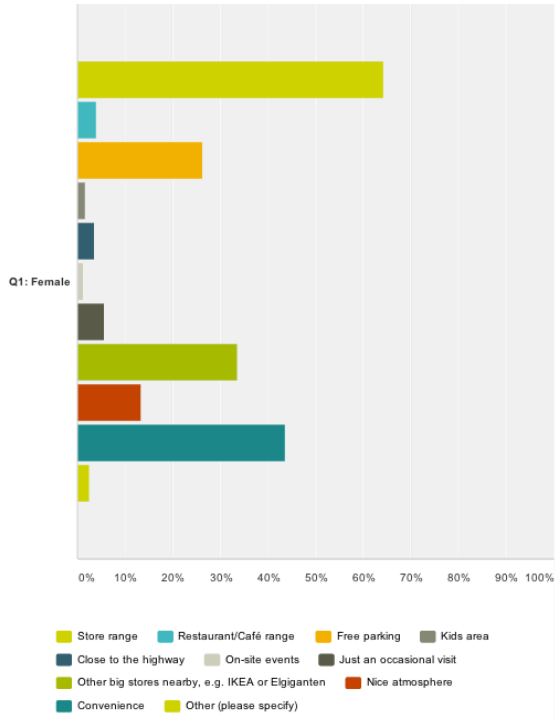

Figure 7.3 Gender & Attributes (FEMALE).

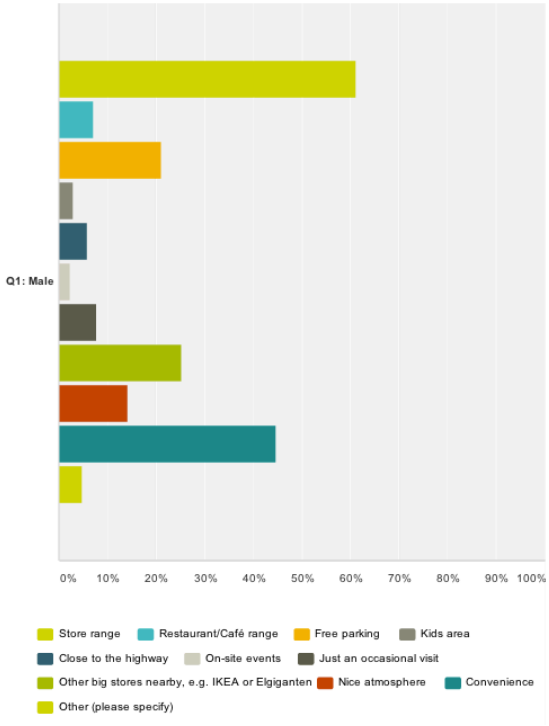

Figure 7.4 Gender & Attribute (MALE).

7.2.4 Gender – Attributes (Cramer's V)

Due to the statistical significance between the variables *gender* and *attributes* a Cramer's V test was conducted to investigate the strength of the association. Cramer's V was calculated to 0.11 which on a scale of 0 to 1 is a low strength of association.

Table 7.4 Chi-Square & Cramer's V Gender – Attributes

Chi-Square of table	9,907247318		
Critical value at alpha 0,05 and 10df	3,94		
df= (r-1)*(c-1)	10		
alpha 0,05 most commonly used			
Null hypothesis: no significant difference between observed and expected value			
Chi-Square > Critical value = reject null hypothesis			
-> Statistical relation between chosen variables			
An association between why female customers visit A6 and why male customers visit A6.			
Cramer's V	0,11		

The low strength of association is aligned with the observation the authors made by just looking and making a comparison of figure 7.3 and figure 7.4. With this low Cramer's V value it is not hard to understand why the authors first drew the conclusion that there was no association at all.

7.2.5 Age – Attributes (Chi-Square)

This table, 7.5 provides a Chi-Square of 23.83, which is lower than that critical value of 34.764, which is found at alpha 0.05 and degree of freedom 50. Since Chi-Square is the smaller value, the null hypothesis was accepted which means that there is no significant association between these two variables.

When thinking about the target group of A6 Center, the authors found it could be interesting to see if age mattered in which attributes that were preferred. Age could be important when trying to attract customers through branding activities, especially when having a specific target group. Since there is no relation between age and attributes preferred one can assume that the branding activities of shopping malls, in this case A6 Center, are suitable to attract of all ages. For example, no specific age group was distinguished in the valued attributes.

Table 7.5 Cross-tab Age - Attributes

	Age						
	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56-64 years	65 and older	Row total
Why do you visit A6 Center?							
Store range Observed	42	50	59	45	27	30	253
Store range Expected	45,34	47,24	51,99	50,09	28,85	29,48	253
Restaurant/Café range Observed	9	2	3	2	2	3	21
Restaurant/Café range Expected	3,76	3,92	4,32	4,16	2,39	2,45	21
Free parking Observed	18	17	10	20	19	13	97
Free parking Expected	17,38	18,11	19,93	19,21	11,06	11,30	97
Kids area Observed	0	4	4	0	1	0	9
Kids area Expected	1,61	1,68	1,85	1,78	1,03	1,05	9
Close to the highway Observed	4	5	3	6	0	0	18
Close to the highway Expected	3,23	3,36	3,70	3,56	2,05	2,10	18
On-site events Observed	0	1	2	4	0	0	7
On-site events Expected	1,25	1,31	1,44	1,39	0,80	0,82	7
Just an occasional visit Observed	1	3	3	8	6	5	26
Just an occasional visit Expected	4,66	4,85	5,34	5,15	2,96	3,03	26
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Observed	23	22	33	21	11	11	121
Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten Expected	21,68	22,59	24,87	23,96	13,80	14,10	121
Nice atmosphere Observed	14	8	4	8	7	14	55
Nice atmosphere Expected	9,86	10,27	11,30	10,89	6,27	6,41	55
Convenience Observed	28	33	42	39	18	17	177
Convenience Expected	31,72	33,05	36,38	35,05	20,18	20,63	177
Other (please specify) Observed	4	4	1	5	0	0	14
Other (please specify) Expected	2,51	2,61	2,88	2,77	1,60	1,63	14
Column total Observed	143	149	164	158	91	93	798
Column total Expected	143,00	149,00	164,00	158,00	91,00	93,00	798

Table 7.6 Chi-Square Age – Attributes

Chi-Square of table	23,83126188	
Critical value at alpha 0,05 and 50df	34,764	
df= (r-1)*(c-1)	50	
alpha 0,05 most commonly used		
Null hypothesis: no significant difference between observed and expected value		
Chi-Square < Critical value = accept null hypothesis		
-> No statistical relation between chosen variables		
No association between customers age and why they visit A6.		

Since the null hypothesis was accepted and no relationship was found, no Cramer's V was calculated i.e. one cannot calculate the strength of an association that does not exist.

7.3 Commuter shopping

Shopping malls communicate their attributes by branding activities. Due to the increasingly competitive environment in the shopping mall market the branding activities must be under constant development (Dennis et al., 2002). Depending on how the shopping mall wants to be perceived it can use different approaches. Laroche, Teng, Michon and Chebat (2005) suggest that shopping malls should target shoppers with specific demographic, socio-economic, cultural or psychographic characteristics (cited in Chebat et al., 2010).

During this research it has become more evident that the perception of malls, and branding activities, actually does contribute to customers' willingness to engage in commuter shopping. If driving distance would be the only determinant of where to go shopping people would simply go to the closest shopping location. More than one aspect is weighed in the decision, which encourages people to commute (De Juan, 2004). Moreover, the results from her study are aligned with the results found in this thesis i.e. that attributes that contributes to benefits is important when choosing shopping destination.

7.3.1 Attributes

The common denominator for all kind of commuting is the utility maximisation motive. In other words, by commuting one need to gain benefits that cannot be obtained closer

to home (Eliasson et al. 2007). People define benefits differently, and benefits come in different shapes. E.g. if a customer values a certain attribute, and that attribute is gained she/he will have received a benefit. This research shows that which attributes are highly appreciated vary, not only between all customers, but also depending on if the customers are local or non-local, i.e. commuting.

When companies are representing a brand and want to reach out to customers they must, in order to become or stay competitive, firstly be aware of the benefits the customers demand and desire. Secondly they must be able to communicate their brand and message to potential customers (Kotler et al., 2008).

Benefits in the modern society of today are not necessary linked to needs, as they were in the early stages of the industrialisation. Needs have been translated into desires, and the benefits are more towards a luxurious character (Magnusson, 2010). In other words, people can consume goods that do not have a specific purpose more than just pure desire. They are not fundamental for living, such as nourishment. Companies who successfully recognise these desires have great potential of attracting customers, both local and commuting.

The companies, in this case shopping malls, create people's awareness so they know where benefits could be found. Like Eliasson et al. (2007) describe; the benefit could be various e.g. in the form of increased number of options, material factors such as good variety of goods or immaterial factors such as a nice atmosphere. In order for people to recognise this, companies are in the need of successful branding. When people receive information about where benefits are to be found they are willing to travel as far as it takes to fulfil the desire to satisfy the current demand - i.e. they engage in commuter shopping.

During this research, shopping malls were used to define the shopping location, and the authors found good evidence for why it was a good decision. Shopping malls exemplifies very clearly that there is potential for increased benefit. A shopping mall has better potential to attract commuter shoppers than single stores or brands, since they have limited possibilities to improve the benefit they offer and also the number of attributes available. If a person, when shopping, is looking for a wide assortment they are more likely to find it in a shopping mall. The definition of a shopping mall is that it

offers a wider range of assortment and they can all be found under the same roof (Dawson, 1983).

When analysing the results, it clearly showed that store range was something all customers highly valued when choosing their shopping destinations. Even when looking on the local and the commuting customers separately store range was the most popular attribute. Ailawadi and Keller (2004) stated in their *Five store image dimensions* that assortment (defined as store range in the thesis) is important to offer.

The authors can conclude that store range is the most important attribute to offer, when trying to attract customers. Moreover, when looking on the shopping mall that in this thesis represent the shopping destination (A6 Center) one can assume that if A6 Center did not offer a wide store range both local and currently commuting customers would have commuted elsewhere where better store range could be found. This means that the current local customers would engage in commuter shopping.

There are several strategies for shopping malls to engage in cooperation with the right stores; mostly it is the mall itself that chooses from a pool of interested parties (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01). A strategically chosen mix of tenants may be the factor that contributes to a customer's willingness to go there.

Moreover, it is important for the shopping mall to do as much as it possibly can to contribute to a good overall impression of the mall. In general, the shopping mall developers have no substantial control of the stores' images. The stores decide themselves over e.g. service standards and personnel policies. On the other hand, what the shopping mall can do in this case is to create a feeling of belonging and fellowship among the stores to make them willing to contribute to a nice and appealing atmosphere in the mall (K. Krantz, personal communication, 2014-04-01).

The authors chose to include *Other big stores nearby* as an alternative attribute, but this merely shows that customers may base the decision to go to a certain shopping destination on the fact that an additional benefit are to be found. These attributes are not a result from the job of the shopping mall's management team since other stores nearby does not have to do anything with the mall's brand itself.

Moreover, this alternative was included in the case with A6 Center because the authors supposed that many respondents would give that answer and if there had not been such an alternative many answers would have fallen under the category O*ther*. This would have made the responses harder to interpret as well as more time consuming to compile. Further interpretation of this result can be that *Other big stores nearby* correspond to an additional benefit. Thereby one can assume that this additional benefit could also come from something else, e.g. visiting friends or family, or another benefit close to the shopping location.

As mentioned earlier, local customers value free parking to a greater extent than commuting customers. In the case with A6 Center and the inhabitants of Jönköping municipality it might be the case that local customers would have chosen to go to Jönköping City instead of A6 Center if a free parking would have been available there as well. The result can be interpreted as that the free parking attribute is only relevant if the closest shopping alternative does not offer a free parking.

7.3.1.1 Interpretation of remaining attributes

The other attributes the respondents of the survey value, have not been deeply analysed since they did not show to be significantly more popular. Some differences can be observed between the answers of local and commuting customers, but the authors do not think they are sufficient or relevant enough to analyse further since no conclusions can be drawn from them. They merely show that the attributes are valued by a small population of the sample, and that the other attributes are more important to customers.

Some of the alternatives are a little bit more based on the attributes of A6 Center, e.g. *Kids area, Close to the highway* and O*n-site events.* The reason for this is that the survey was conducted on A6 Center's premises and the customers of A6 were the respondents. Not to include the attributes of A6 Center would be biased and also create a potential risk that the respondents would have given the answer *Other*. Many different variations of that alternative would end up with results that would have been harder and more time-consuming to analyse.

It is worth mentioning that the alternative O*n-site events* got the least number of responses, only 1.74 per cent (7 persons) out of 402. This was unexpected, since A6 Center finds it important to hold such events in order to attract customers.

However, during the days the researchers spent at A6 Center executing the survey no such event was performed. If it would have been an event during one of the days one can assume that alternative to receive more responses. Unfortunately, that is something this research will not be able to discuss further and draw any conclusions about. At the same time it is very difficult to examine whether on-site events would provide more benefit than store range and other attributes even if the events were highly appreciated.

The alternative *Just an occasional visit* got a rather high respond rate among the non-local customers and among those many were just passing through Jönköping by the highway. This alternative was also included to avoid the risk of many answers falling under the category *Other*. It is not possible to analyse this result as an attribute that A6 Center offer, or any other shopping mall for that matter, but it was still a reason for why people might visit A6 and therefore it was included but not further analysed.

7.4 Conclusion of analysis

By analysing the attributes, which are included as alternatives in the survey, the authors can confirm that there are in fact attributes that are more valued than others. It is important to keep in mind that the survey and its results are based on A6 Center and its customers, but the important information to maintain from this is that there are differences in the preferences between local and non-local customers.

The most popular attribute, S*tore range,* is of a general character and the general conclusion can be made that it is the most valued among customers, both local and commuting ones.

8 Conclusion

In this section the conclusions of the study will be stated. The conclusions will be made with the purpose of answering the research questions.

8.1 Research question 1

How can the term commuter be applied in the context of shopping?

Previous studies on commuting has been focused on the aspect of work where people go beyond municipality borders, either to find a job opportunity or greater salary that is not possible to find back home. This research has proven in many ways that people are willing to travel in order to obtain benefits. In the context of shopping, where the authors had a closer look on shopping malls, commuting is also about finding benefits.

There are different aspects that influence the decision to travel to a certain shopping location. The attributes, which is examined by the second research question below, but also the work of shopping mall management to communicate the attributes and benefits they offer. It is also the task for the management to carefully choose which attributes they wish to be able to offer.

As the authors have found, the basic reason behind commuting applies in all contexts – to receive a benefit. In the context of shopping customers' travel in order to find attributes that help to fulfil demands and thereby obtain benefits.

8.2 Research question 2

Which attributes motivate people to engage in commuter shopping?

In order to answer this question a survey was conducted as a tool of measurement. By analysing the result one can clearly see that the most appreciated attribute among commuting shoppers is store range. This indicates that a wide assortment of goods and services is the attribute that contributes to the highest benefit and thereby increase people's willingness to commute. Since local customers value this attribute as highest as well, one can assume that if A6 Center could not offer the demanded store range, these customers would also engage in commuter shopping.

The second most valued attribute was *Other big stores nearby*, which in a general perspective is interpreted as "an additional benefit found close to the shopping location". Other aspects that showed to be valued were C*onvenience*, *Close to the*

highway and *Nice atmosphere*. *Convenience* and *Close to the highway* are both indicating on high accessibility of the shopping destination.

8.3 Definition

The authors want to contribute with a definition of commuter shopping that will be considered to be the academic contribution of this thesis. *Commuter shopping is when one or more people go to a shopping location, not closest to their home location, in order to obtain benefits which are satisfied by the attributes offered.*

9 Discussion

The discussion section presents the authors' own speculative thoughts on the findings, as well as suggestions for further research within the field of commuter shopping.

When the authors decided to investigate and research the term commuter shopping they soon realised that there was lack of research within the subject. Therefore, they made the decision to investigate the terms *shopping* and c*ommuting* separately along with the term *branding*, in order to find out which attributes that makes a person engage in commuter shopping. In order to be able to communicate a message, and to be *top of mind* i.e. create awareness, to customers a shopping mall (in this case) must use branding.

The current research is based on academic findings where different subjects are researched and then generalised in order to be combined. The results observed are very pleasing, the researchers feel confident that they have been able to combine the results in a way that proves that there is something, a term or subject, which can be identified as, and called, *commuter shopping*.

The authors are aware that the results have certain constraints, e.g. they did only conduct a survey about the attributes based on the customers of A6 Center. However, the resources available made it very hard to make any extensive research based on other shopping malls' customers.

If not looking on the attributes, the term commuting can in fact be applied in the context of shopping as well as in other contexts. Preferred attributes are hard to draw general

conclusions about, since it is biased towards A6 Center, but the structure of research can be applied on other shopping malls, and even combined if analysing several shopping malls. It would be interesting to see if the attributes would be valued in the same way when researching target groups of other shopping malls. That would also contribute to deeper interpretation of the term *commuter shopping.*

Moreover, the results about the attributes are restricted since the researchers of this thesis could have had different questions in the survey which would have helped to draw more general conclusions about which attributes are valued the highest. Now the answers are limited by being based on A6 Center, and its brand. The results could also have been of a more general character if the authors had included other shopping malls in the survey.

When discussing the term, and the characteristics of it, it is easy to be hung up on the attributes of shopping destinations and the benefits they provide. Another way to think about it is that the benefits can be gained without being involved with the attributes. If customers want to make just a trip, for example, and the trip itself is the benefit, then none of the attributes offered by the shopping location matters. However, the shopping destination must be *top of mind* in order for people to go there, and it can only become that by a strong brand and by communicating the attributes it offers.

The authors could not find evidence of how the commuter shoppers are affected of social or economical factors which are mentioned earlier in the thesis, but it merely show the complexity of the decision process and the multiple factors that play a role. The shopping malls, which offer attributes, should aim to trigger both kinds of factors, social and economical, in order to capture as many customers' interest as possible.

The demand triggered by social factors could be satisfied by offering a range of modern products which are getting a lot of media attention. Moreover, products that are triggered by the economical factors should entail a good range in price so that every customer can find something they can afford.

De Juan's (2004) statement that customers consider more than just driving distance when deciding where to go shopping, is aligned with what the authors have found. It was proven in a way in the survey, since no respondent stated that they went to A6 Center because it was close to home.

The conclusion was reached with help from the research conducted, based on both primary and secondary sources. No other conclusion could have been reached without the previous research made on commuting and shopping, since that was the fundamental base in the findings. The researchers feel confident that this was the best way to find evidence for the term and along the way they acquired good understanding for the fields of research. In the definition of commuter shopping, it was deliberately chosen not to include the attributes preferred or valued, since they are believed to be a little bit too biased towards A6 Center, as mentioned before.

9.1 Suggestions for further research

The authors found that customers are willing to commute in order to get hold of benefits and satisfy their demands, and they are not concerned or bothered by travelling a bit longer. This thesis have not investigated exactly how long the distance for commuter shopping can be, or if there is some kind of limit that people are not willing to pass. For example, are people willing to go from Malmö (south part of Sweden) to Kiruna (north part of Sweden) in order to shop? One would think they are not, but that limit is not known. The researchers believe it would be interesting to know, and this is suggested for further research.

To answer the question if people consider more than just driving distance when deciding shopping destination was not the purpose of this thesis. However, it is related to the topic, but to be able to make a definitive conclusion about this the authors would recommend that the one who is interested in this should conduct a new survey especially constructed to find the answer to that specific question.

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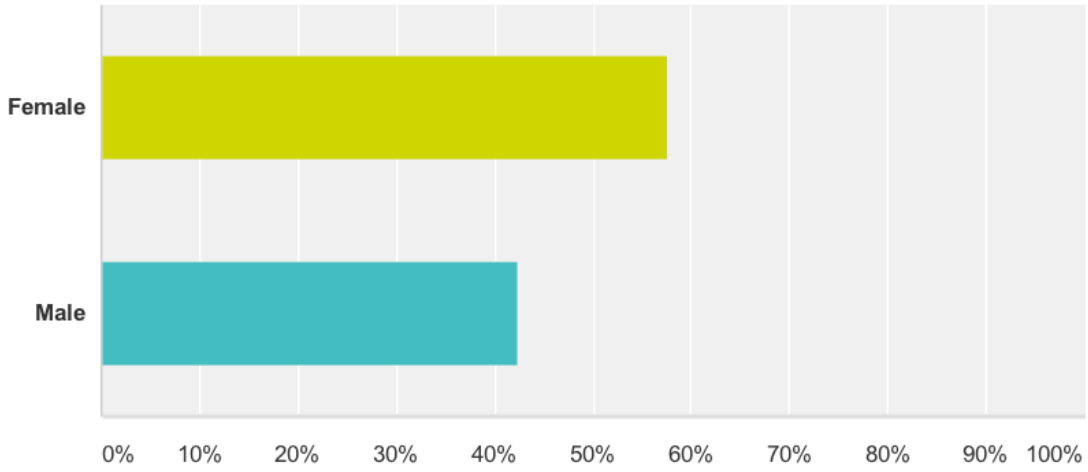
Appendix I

Survey outline and result figures

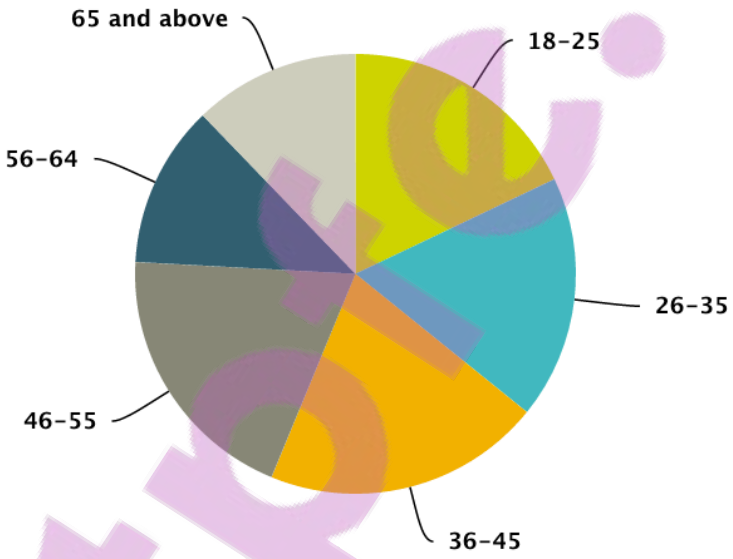
1. Gender?

- Female
- Male



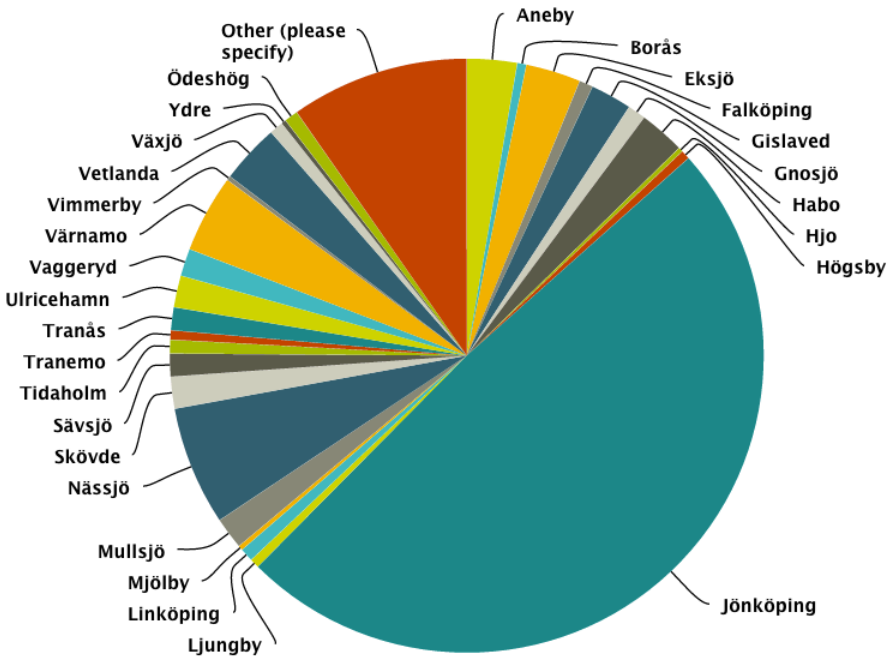
2. Age?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-64
- 65 and above



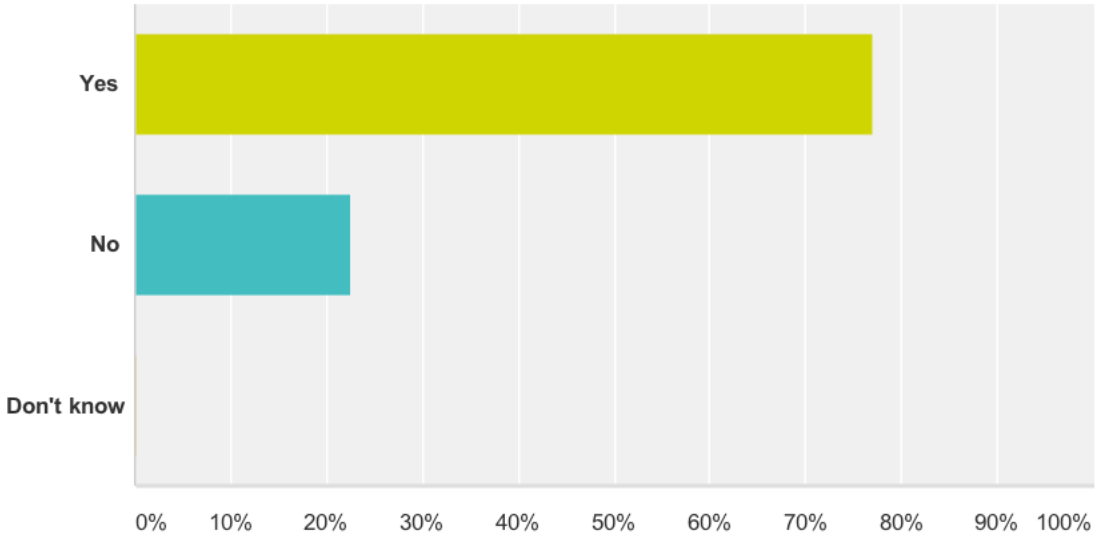
3. Where are you from?

- Other
- Aneby
- Alvesta
- Borås
- Boxholm
- Eksjö
- Falköping
- Gislaved
- Gnosjö
- Habo
- Hjo
- Hultsfred
- Högsby
- Jönköping
- Ljungby
- Linköping
- Mjölby
- Mullsjö
- Nässjö
- Skövde
- Sävsjö
- Tidaholm
- Tranemo
- Tranås
- Ulricehamn
- Vaggeryd
- Värnamo
- Vimmerby
- Vetlanda
- Växjö
- Ydre
- Ödeshög
- Other (please specify)



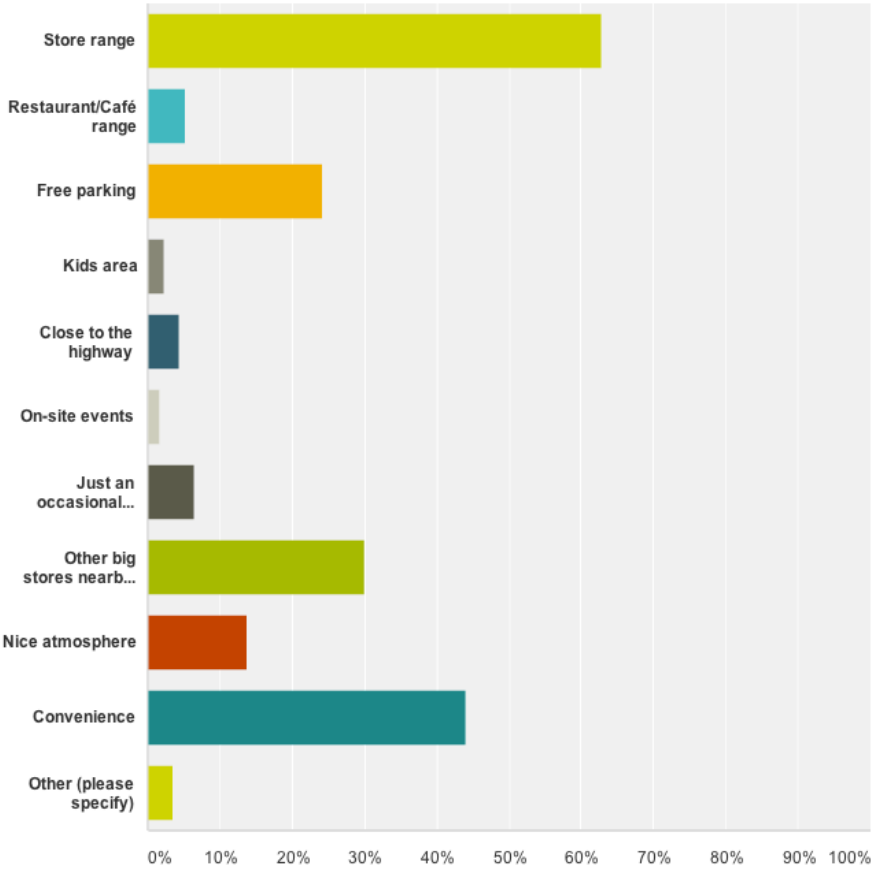
4. Is A6 Center the shopping mall closest to your home location?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know



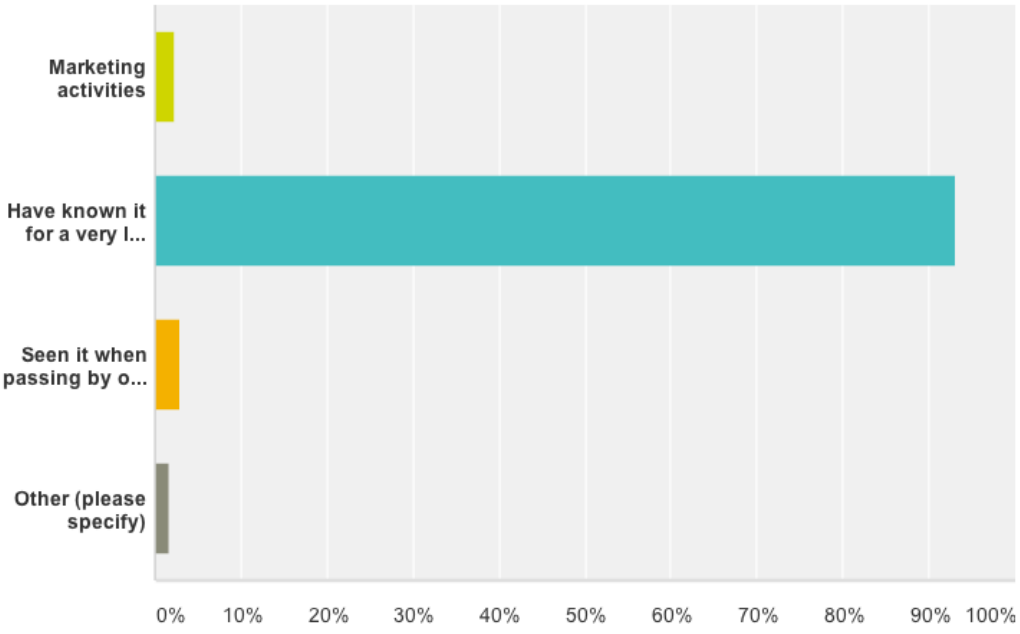
5. Why do you visit A6 Center?
Choose 1-3 alternatives

- [ ] Store range
- [ ] Restaurant/Café range
- [ ] Free parking
- [ ] Kids area
- [ ] Close to the highway
- [ ] On-site events
- [ ] Just an occasional visit
- [ ] Other big stores nearby, e.g. IKEA or Elgiganten
- [ ] Nice atmosphere
- [ ] Convenience
- [ ] Other (please specify)



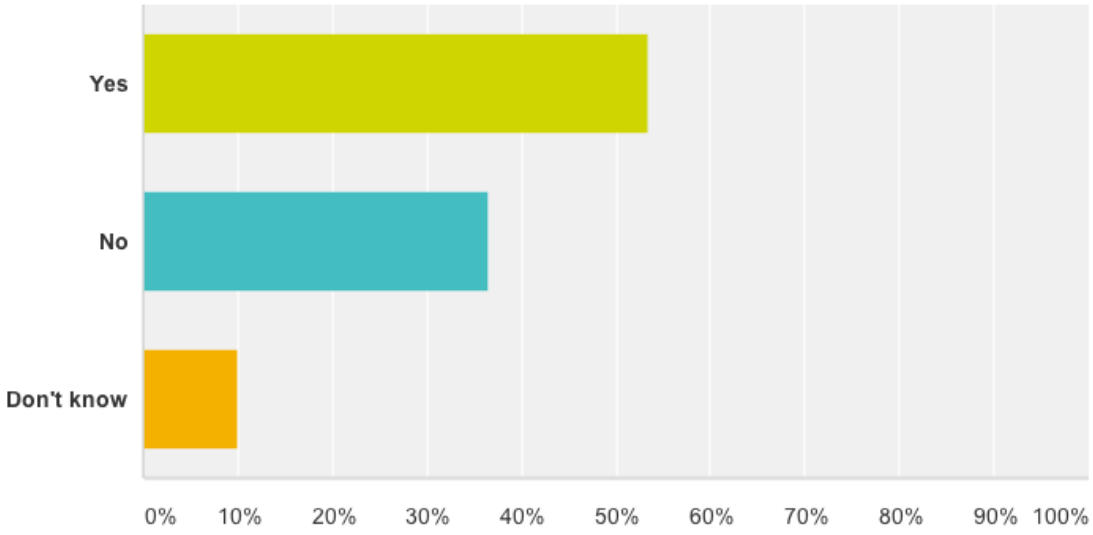
6. How did you become familiar with A6 Center?

- ○ Marketing activities
- ○ Have known it for a very long time
- ○ Seen it when passing by on the highway
- ○ Other (please specify)



7. The target groups of A6 Center are families and young adults, when you see commercials or when you are there visiting, do you recognize this?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know



Appendix 2

Equations

$$Chi\text{-}Square = X^2 = \sum_{all\ cells} \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$Expected\ value = f_e = \frac{n_r n_c}{n}$$

$$Degree\ of\ Freedom = (r-1) \times (c-1)$$

$$Cramer's\ V = V = \sqrt{\frac{X^2/n}{\min\ (r-1),(c-1)}}$$