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1   Introduction

In the following chapter the reader is introduced to the topic of consumer decision-making styles. Firstly, the research problem is presented, providing a comprehensive background of the topic. Secondly, the purpose of this thesis is displayed, followed by the research question which guides this study. Lastly, the perspective and delimitations are presented, followed by the definition of the terminology.

1.1   Research Problem

The phenomenon of globalization has altered the international business environment and the way consumers think and act in the marketplace (Mishra, 2010). Globalization has formed a new environment for consumers by integrating the global dimensions of life in each nation's political, economic and cultural systems (Roberson & Lechner, 1985; Suh & Kwon, 2002). The forces of globalization have effects on consumer behavior and consumption in national cultures (Durvasula & Lysonski 2008; Gupta, 2011). Thereby, the dynamics of modern consumers' buying behavior consists of global homogenization, resulting from globalization, and local ethnocentrism, resulting from national cultures. Consequently, researchers stress the importance of investigating the consequences of globalization and its potential effects on the behaviors and attitudes of consumers (Gupta, 2011).

Identifying underlying decision making styles of consumer has interested researchers in the field of consumer behavior since the 1950's (Mishra, 2010). Decision-making styles are defined as *"mental orientations characterizing consumer's approaches to making choices"* (Sproles & Kendall, 1986, p. 268). These decision-making styles are personality traits of consumers which are of importance as they remain stable over time, making them influential to consumer behavior (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). Several frameworks have been developed aiming to understand consumer behavior and profile decision-making styles of consumers. The most prominent and widely used framework within the field of consumer behavior and consumer decision-making styles is the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall in 1986. The CSI profiles consumers' decision-making styles into eight basic characteristics, called the Eight Factor Model. The CSI serves as a basis for the majority of literature within the field, being the most replicated instrument for measuring consumer decision-making styles (Bauer, 2006; Mishra, 2010). The CSI has been tested and validated in multiple countries in attempts to challenge its generalizability and to gain deeper understanding of cross-cultural consumer decision-making processes. Some researchers claim that the CSI in its original form requires modification when applied to various contexts, as decision-making styles vary across cultures (Mishra, 2010). Previous literature has focused on densely populated, and large countries, such as the United Kingdom (Bakewell & Mitchell 2003, 2004, 2006; Bauer, Sauer and Becker, 2006; Mitchell & Bates, 1998), India (Canabal 2002; Lysonski, Durvasula & Zotos, 1996) and the United States (Leng & Botelho, 2010; Lysonski et al., 1996), neglecting smaller countries such as Sweden. Studying the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context serves as a contribution to previous literature within the field, by extending the framework to additional cultural contexts. Furthermore, recent proliferations of the retail sector in Sweden has resulted in an increased need and interest to address this neglect (Kvist & Larsson, 2014).

The recent proliferations of retail and product selection in Sweden, has resulted in a retail culture where consumers increasingly regard shopping as entertainment (Sundström & Ericsson, 2015). This has been shown especially appealing to young adults belonging to Generation Y, as these individuals are in a transition from adolescence to adulthood (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). During this time of transition, significant behavior patterns, values and attitudes are formed. Furthermore, cohort generations, such as Generation Y, are suggested to hold similar distinguishable social characters which have been shaped by experiences over time (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). This influences the consumption orientations of Generation Y (Mishra, 2010). Generation Y are said to possess specific consumption behaviors as a result of globalization as the cohort was socialized into consumption earlier than other generations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). This makes them a unique market segment with conspicuous consumption patterns, which are affected by socio-cultural, economic and technological changes (Mishra, 2010). Consequently, Generation Y has adopted dissimilar shopping styles in comparison with former generations, leading to an increased need to understand this cohort (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006).

In today's society, Generation Y represents the majority of students. The previous research adopting the CSI have mainly used students in their sample (Canabal, 2002; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008; Hiu, Siu, Wang & Chang, 2001; Lysonski et al., 1996; Mitchell & Bates, 1998; Mishra, 2010; Mokhlis, 2009; Mokhlis & Salleh, 2009; Omar, Mohd Ali, Hussin & Rahim, 2009). Their choice of using students is motivated by them being a relatively homogeneous group showing similarities in education, socio-psychological variables and age, which can minimize methodological random errors in research (Lysonski et al., 1996). In this thesis, the choice of using Swedish students belonging to Generation Y, is motivated by them being a representative sample of various socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, as the Swedish educational system allows equal right for students to enroll, Swedish students represent various demographics characteristics (Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). Thereby, students comprise a highly important market segment for global and local businesses, which increases the importance of researching this segment (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008).

Previous literature concerning consumer decision-making styles has mainly focused on consumers in general, not emphasizing on a specific gender (Canabal 2002; Fan & Xio, 1998; Hiu et al., 2001; Lysonski et al., 1996). This is despite gender-role attitudes and gender identity being prominent elements for understanding decision-making styles and predicting shopping behavior (Fischer & Arnold, 1995). However, modern research has been gender specific, focusing mainly on female consumer behavior, neglecting male consumers (Bakewell & Mitchell 2003). This may be a result of the traditional view of shopping, where females were the main buying agent for households. However, recent demographic, social and cultural developments have blurred the historical gender roles, making males more engaged in shopping. Hence, shopping is argued to be an activity equally performed by men and women. This is validated by Swedish research, which show that men and women in the ages between 18 and 30, spend equally much on fashion wear per month (Konsumentverket, 2012). Therefore, today's men and women are suggested to share an equal interest of shopping for fashion wear in Sweden. However, the vast focus on female consumers in previous research, has resulted in a lack of in-depth studies on male consumers and their decision-making styles (Larsson & Kvist, 2014). Therefore, a need to investigate male consumers in relation to the CSI arises.

The majority of previous literature using CSI has been quantitative, with the sole purpose to verify the CSI. Hence, previous academic literature has neglected to explain the reasoning behind why consumers make certain purchasing decisions (Larsson & Kvist, 2014). Thereby, the studies have merely replicated the methodology by Sproles and Kendall rather than contemporizing the framework. Therefore, one can suggest that there is a need to investigate the

CSI through a qualitative method, to gain a deeper understanding of the applicability of the framework in various contexts. A qualitative method may contribute to an in-depth understanding which captures the reasoning behind the decision-making styles of consumers.

Acquiring an understanding of male consumers, by characterizing male decision-making styles, serves the interest of multiple stakeholders and consumer-interest professionals (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004). For example, it is increasingly important for both global and local businesses to understand consumers in order to categorize them into distinguishable segments and achieve market success (Leng & Bothello, 2010; Mishra, 2010). This understanding enables marketers to develop tailored marketing programs that fit market conditions and consumers' decision-making styles (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). In addition, the research serves as a contribution to multinational corporations in designing appropriate retail strategies by associating specific decision-making styles to certain behavioral and demographic variables (Hiu et al., 2001). Characterizing decision-making styles of male consumers in particular, allows for differentiation at both product and store level, benefiting retailers and marketers operating in these markets (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004). It also assists individual consumers by educating them about their specific consumer styles. This identification can help consumers in financial management as well as in family counselling. The empirical findings and results of this thesis will serve as contribution to previous academic literature of the CSI. As the method of this thesis is qualitative, the results cannot be generalized, however it may open up for further research within the field.

1.2 Purpose

As derived from the research problem, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to existing literature by examining the applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) on Swedish male students, belonging to Generation Y, focusing on fashion wear. Through examining the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context, an understanding of potential influences on decision-making will be obtained. After investigating the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context, possible modifications of the framework will be identified.

1.3 Research Question

What is the applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory in a Swedish context?

The unique contextual factors of the study are; location (*Sweden*), gender *(male),* age factor (*Generation Y*), definition of product (*fashion wear*) and methodology (*qualitative*).

1.4 Perspective and Delimitation

This thesis aims to adapt and advance the CSI to a Swedish context from the perspective of male students belonging to Generation Y on fashion wear. In particular, the thesis is centered around a qualitative exploration on the influential themes of decision-making styles present in this Swedish context. This thesis studies consumer decision-making in both online and offline contexts, but does not aim to make distinctions or separations between the two.

As opposed to previous quantitative literature on the CSI, this thesis does not aim to 1) compare its result with previous quantitative studies 2) generalize its results to the Swedish population as the contextual factors solely include Swedish male students belonging to Generation Y on fashion wear.

1.5   Definitions

Consumer Style Inventory (CSI)

The Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI), developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), is the first methodical approach for measuring consumer decision-making styles, shopping behavior and orientation of consumers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). The CSI measures eight basic mental approaches to consumption; (1) *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness*; (2) *Brand Consciousness*; (3) *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness*; (4) *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness*; (5) *Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness*; (6) *Impulsiveness*; (7) *Confusion from Overchoice* and (8) *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation towards Consumption* (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Decision-Making Styles

A decision-making style is defined as *"A mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices"* (Sproles & Kendall, 1986, p. 268). It is a basic consumer personality trait that reflects the behaviors and attitudes of consumers when choosing among alternatives (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Generation Y

Generation Y is a market segment containing individuals born between 1970 and 2000. The segment is characterized by unique consumption patterns influenced by technological, economic and socio-cultural changes (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003).

Fashion Wear

Fashion wear are items, such as clothing, shoes or accessories, that aligns with the prevailing style or custom (Pearsall & Hanks, 1998).

Wardrobe Essentials

Wardrobe essentials are items that serves as basis or fundament of people's wardrobes. This solid foundation of basic items can be combined in an array of ways (Pearsall & Hanks, 1998).

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1.6 Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1
Introduction &
Research Problem

- The research problem, including relevant background information, is presented, followed by the purpose and the research question. The perspective, delimitations and definitions of relevant terms are adressed.

Chapter 2
Theoretical Framework

- The theoretical framework is presented. The reader is introduced to the CSI framework and to previous litterature within the field.

Chapter 3
Method

- The research perspective and approach are presented, followed by the chosen research strategy and design. The data collection is explained and justified. The use of focus groups is motivated.

Chapter 4
Empirical Findings & Analysis

- The empirical findings from the focus groups are presented, which are integrated with the analysis. This is presented according to the original CSI factors and are followed by newly identified themes.

Chapter 5
Conclusion & Discussion

- The results of the analysis are concluded. The contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

2   Theoretical Framework

The following chapter is divided in four sections where the theoretical framework to this research is presented. In the first section, the concept of consumer decision-making styles is introduced and its correlation to the original Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) by Sproles and Kendall (1986). This offers the reader with a comprehensive background of the CSI. Secondly, external factors such as environmental influences have been investigated in accordance to the applicability of the original CSI in various countries. The third section of the theoretical framework is built upon the applicability of CSI with accordance to gender similarities and differences. The fourth section concludes the theoretical framework.

2.1   Introduction

This study builds upon the CSI by Sproles and Kendall (1986) for two main reasons. Firstly, the CSI has been applied and validated in several countries argued to be the most widely used framework for assessing decision-making styles of consumers. The framework has been used consistently since its introduction in 1986. Decision-making styles of consumers have been profiled in countries such as India (Canabal, 2002; Lysonski et al., 1996; Mishra, 2010), China (Fan & Xio, 1998; Hiu et al., 2001), the United Kingdom (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 2004, 2006; Bauer et al., 2006; Mitchell & Bates, 1998), the United States (Leng & Botelho, 2010; Lysonski et al., 1996), Germany (Bauer et al., 2006; Walsh, Henning-Thura, & Mitchell, 2001), New Zealand (Lysonski et al., 1996), Malaysia (Mokhlis, 2009; Omar et al. , 2009), Iran (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008), Korea (Hafstrom, Chae & Chung, 1992), Greece (Lysonski et al., 1996) and Brazil (Leng & Botelho, 2006). All these studies have conducted quantitative research when applying the CSI and are the most prominent studies within the field. The findings from previous research are presented in Appendix 1.

Secondly, the CSI was the pioneering framework elaborating the consumer characteristics approach within consumer behavior. The CSI was the first approach designed to serve the interest of consumer interest professionals, making it a classic framework within the field of consumer decision-making styles. In addition, it is a widely used tool to segment markets, making it a standard framework for studying decision-making behavior in various contexts (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008).

2.2   Consumer Decision-Making Styles

The process of identifying fundamental characteristics of consumer decision-making styles is a basis for studies regarding consumer behavior. In order to conceptualize consumer decision-making styles, Sproles and Kendall (1986) developed a framework Consumer Style Inventory (CSI). The CSI framework, including the Eight Factor Model, empirically measures these decision-making styles. Earlier consumer-interest literature have presented three various methods which characterize the decision-making styles of consumers, the Psychographic/Lifestyle Approach, the Consumer Typology Approach and the Consumer Characteristic Approach. Firstly, the Psychographic/Lifestyle Approach have defined over 100 consumer behavior characteristics in relation to lifestyle, interest and activities, while the Consumer Typology have attempted to identify general consumer "types". Lastly, the Consumer

Characteristics Approach relate to cognitive and affective consumer orientations (Darden & Aston, 1974; Lastovicka, 1982; Moschis, 1976; Sproles, 1985; Stephenson & Willet, 1969; Stone, 1954; Wells 1974; Westbrook & Black, 1985). Sproles and Kendall's methodology for profiling consumers' decision-making styles is derived from the Consumer Characteristics Approach. The framework was the first to approach professionals within consumer-interests, while previous literature solely served marketing and business needs. The CSI builds upon eight factors, identified through a selection method containing four criteria; (1) The method should contain mental consumer characteristics that directly link to consumer choices, (2) the method should contain independent and complete decision-making characteristics, (3) the method should rate and measure each consumer on all characteristics in order to profile the consumer into different styles, (4) the method should be of importance for consumer-interest professionals (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). The eight factors following these four criteria are:

1. Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness
2. Brand Consciousness
3. Novelty-Fashion Consciousness
4. Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness
5. Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness
6. Impulsiveness
7. Confusion from Overchoice
8. Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption

Each of the eight factors individually constitute mental approaches of orientation to consumer consumption and are the factors which are used most frequent in previous literature. The methodology used in the development of the CSI was based on an exploratory study by Sproles in 1985. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 501 economic students in Arizona, the United States, containing six Likert-scale items in which each characteristic was measured upon. Ultimately 482 usable responses were collected from the representative sample of the demographic, socioeconomic and cultural regions. Under the analysis of the CSI, the eight factors confirmed the previously proposed characteristics (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

The Eight Factor Model	
1. **Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness**	*Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* concerns the degree of systematic and careful search for the best quality in products. Consumer's scoring high in perfectionism are expected to engage in a more conscious shopping and decision-making behavior.
2. **Brand Consciousness**	*Brand Consciousness* concerns an orientation towards purchasing nationally renowned, expensive and best-selling brands. Consumers scoring high in *Brand Consciousness*, also called *"Price Equals Quality"* are likely to consider a high price tag as an indicator of a product of higher quality.
3. **Novelty-Fashion Consciousness**	*Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* concerns variety-seeking consumers who seek new and innovative fashion products. Consumers scoring high in *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* obtain excitement and pleasure from attractive styling and brand variety.
4. **Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness**	*Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* concerns consumers who derive entertainment from shopping.
5. **Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness**	*Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness* concerns consumers who generally appear aware of lower sales prices and seek the best value for their money. Consumers scoring high in *"Price and Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness* tends to be comparison shoppers.
6. **Impulsiveness**	*Impulsiveness* concerns a careless consumer orientation. Consumers scoring high in impulsiveness are not likely to be concerned about "best buy's" or the amount spent when shopping and do not plan their purchases in the same extent as other consumers.
7. **Confusion from Overchoice**	*Confusion from Overchoice* concerns consumers who experience information overload and therefore, have difficulties making decisions.
8. **Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption**	*Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption* concerns consumers who are likely to have formed habits in deciding for their favorite brands and stores.

Table 1 The Eight Factor Model   (Sproles & Kendall, 1986)

These eight factors showed to be unique and separate from one another, each measuring perfectly independent decision-making characteristics of consumers. A use of fewer characteristics sacrifices valuable data and submerges parts of the eight consumer styles. The CSI is a practical measurement tool, which serves as an applicable foundation for testing consumer decision-making styles in a standardized way. It provides a unique methodology for assessing consumer behavior and consumer style characteristics. Furthermore, the methodology was the first tool combining styles and characteristics of consumers in decision-making. However, Sproles and Kendall (1986) have acknowledged some limitations of the CSI. There is a limited generality as consumers may display variations in consumer styles depending on the product category, which the CSI does not encompass. Furthermore, the original sample consisted of high school students, which made the findings difficult to generalize to all consumers in the marketplace. However, Sproles and Kendall (1986) argue that students are a valid sample group to investigate, as they are conscious of their consumption experiences and exhibits consumption eagerness. To broaden the generality of the CSI, Sproles and Kendall (1986) encourage future research to administer the framework to more diverse samples, which can further confirm the validity of the CSI.

2.3 Environment and Decision-Making

Since Sproles and Kendall developed the CSI in 1986, there have been few attempts to further verify the framework in the United States. The importance of validating the CSI with additional research has been advocated, in both reference to its validity in other countries as well as in the United States (Lysonski et al., 1996). In 1996, Lysonski et al., sampled college students in the United States, India, New Zealand, and Greece with the purpose of investigating the applicability of the CSI in multiple countries. The study found that the factor *Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness* was not applicable, as it was considered difficult to interpret. This is in contrast with Leng and Botelho's (2010) study, that examined consumers in the United States, Brazil and Japan, which found all the original eight factors applicable. Furthermore, the factors *Brand Consciousness, Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* and *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption*, were found most stable in the majority of studies presented in the theoretical framework of this thesis. Exceptions of this observation are the studies conducted in India, China and Malaysia which may be traced back to their economical status as developing countries (Canabal, 2002; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hiu et al., 2001; Mokhlis, 2009). It has been suggested that the CSI has a higher applicability in developed countries in contrast to developing countries, where the framework has proven to be less reliable (Lysonski et al., 1996). This could be explained by differences in retail infrastructures and culture (Leng & Botelho, 2010; Lysonski et al., 1996). In most developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the opening hours are long, there is a vast selection of different brands, and the disposable income is larger than in developing countries. Consequently, studies indicate that consumers from developed countries consider shopping enjoyable and fun, which is shown by the high score of the factor *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 2004, 2006; Leng & Botelho, 2010; Lysonski et al., 1996). This factor was not found in the two studies conducted in developing countries, India and China (Fan & Xiao, 1998; Lysonski et al., 1996).

As previously mentioned, the infrastructure of the retail business in developing countries is different from the one in developed countries. This leads to variations in the behavior of consumers when purchasing fashion wear. In some developing countries, the store environment restricts the ability for consumers to be mobile and browse for clothing inside stores. This further limits the ability for consumers to examine and compare different brands. In addition, the low level of disposable income in developing countries makes these consumers less prone to spend money solemnly for the pleasure of doing so (Lysonski et al., 1996).

Further variations in behavior among consumers were identified in India by Lysonski et al. (1996), when investigating the applicability of the CSI. During this time, the retail environment in India mainly consisted of small, family owned businesses. India was classified as a developing country and purchases were standardized due to the limited amount of available brands. In the study by Lysonski et al. (1996), the only factors that were identified in the Indian retail industry were; *Brand Consciousness; Novelty-Fashion Consciousness;* and *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption* (Lysonski et al., 1996), which confirmed the careful selection process among Indian consumers. However, a later study conducted in India by Mishra (2010), shows that during the succeeding two decades, the economy of India experienced an exceptionally rapid growth. The fast development resulted in larger markets and more people consuming goods. The selection of brands increased, making the marketing industry follow and assist the Indian consumers in navigating amongst the different brands (Mishra, 2010). In the studies conducted by Canabal (2002) and Mishra (2010), one may conclude that the economic changes in India affected the findings. Five of the eight original factors were found in Canabal's (2002) study and all factors were found in Mishra's (2010) study. In both studies, the factors; *Perfectionism and High Quality Consciousness* and *Confusion from Overchoice* were identified and validated, which confirms the development of the market economy in India. This is as the selection of goods increased, resulting in greater consumer awareness, which lead to confusion (Canabal, 2002; Mishra, 2010).

These findings align with additional research made in Asia, such as the Malaysian studies by Mokhlis and Salleh (2009) and Omar et al. (2009). The common denominator of the Malaysian studies was; *Confusion from Overchoice.* This may be an indication of the growing number of brands in developing countries. The sizeable variety of brands affects the decision-making preferences and increases the confusion of choice for the consumer (Canabal, 2002). This further, verifies findings made in more recent studies conducted in Malaysia, India and China, where *Brand Consciousness* and *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* was shown more prominent (Canabal, 2002; Hiu et al., 2001; Mishra, 2010; Mokhlis, 2009; Omar et al., 2009). This may be explained by women starting to work in a greater extent resulting in changing shopping patterns of consumers. Findings also reveal that women find it important to have a vast selection of brands in order to compare them before any purchasing decision is made (Sinha, Banerjee, & Uniyal, 2002).

Another Asian country, China, has experienced a similar economic development as India. As of the late 1990's, China made the transition from a centrally planned country economy to an emerging market economy experiencing rapid economic growth. The coexistence of the two market types, gave China a unique market environment influenced by government regulations and competitive market forces (Fan & Xiao, 1998). In the context of the occurring market conversion, Fan and Xiao (1998) used the CSI to investigate the applicability of the framework on Chinese students in 1998. The majority of students in the sample received a lower range score for *Brand Consciousness*. This is in contrast to India where consumers have shown to be vastly brand conscious. In addition, the majority of students that were *Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness*, had little interest in recreational shopping and experienced little information or product overload, which is the same indications found for developing countries such as India and Malaysia (Canabal, 2002; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Lysonski et al., 1996; Mokhlis, 2009).

Arising from an increased interest of international corporations targeting Chinese markets and the limitations observed in earlier consumer decision-making styles studies, Hiu et al. (2001) conducted an investigation regarding the decision-making styles of adult consumer in China. The 2001 Chinese market environment, was influenced by a decrease in government intervention in consumer markets. Consequently, there was an increase of domestic competition

and of established policies encouraging foreign enterprise investment. This resulted in Chinese consumers showing greater resemblance to western consumers. Despite economic growth, Chinese consumers did not have an income level which allowed for impulsive purchasing. The study confirmed the applicability of the original CSI in China but suggested that it requires modification when applied to Chinese consumers (Hiu et al., 2001). In consistency with the findings by Lysonski et al.'s (1996) and Hafstrom et al. (1992) in Korea, the factor *Price Consciousness* was not included, indicating that the factor requires redevelopment if applied to different cultures. Hence, one may suggest that the CSI requires adaptation when applied to different contexts. Aligning the result of Hiu et al. (2001) and earlier Chinese research by Fan and Xiao (1998) shows similarities in the factors; *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness, Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness, Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness,* and *Confusion from Overchoice.* This suggests that these factors exhibit stronger reliability and stability than other factors in Asian countries. The variations between the studies by Fan and Xiao (1998) and Hiu et al. (2001), is the inclusion of the *Impulsiveness, Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* and *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* factors. Hiu et al. (2001) explains these variations by the different methodologies used and the potential variations in the purchasing power of the different sample groups. Furthermore, foreign influences from joint ventures with international and Chinese businesses were said to shape the increased level of *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* exhibited in the study (Hiu et al., 2001). With considerations of potential variations in comparability, the results were later contrasted with the American student sample by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and the Korean sample by Hafstrom et al. (1992). Overall, the identified consumer decision-making styles factors were similar for young-adult consumers in the three countries.

However, the results indicated differences between Korean, Chinese and American research in the *Impulsiveness* factor, which was suggested to be due to differences in domestic economic development and national purchasing power. Furthermore, *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* was not found or confirmed in the Chinese sample. Other identified differences were suggested to be due to (1) the American consumers exhibiting advanced familiarity with the market exchange, (2) the presence of counterfeit products in the Chinese market, (3) differences in the national amount of advertisements, (4) different stages of national economic market development between the countries or (5) differences in interpretations of underlying meanings on some sample questions between consumers in different countries. These differences occurred in *Brand Consciousness* and *Confusion from Overchoice.*

Moreover, it is a general consensus among researchers that consumer decision-making styles vary depending on cultures, economies and environments. Lysonski et al., (1996) research shows that developed countries such as the United States, New Zealand, and Japan scored high in *Brand Consciousness*. Leng and Botelho (2010) later supports these findings, and found *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* to be a factor that scored high among the American consumers. It has been suggested that the result can be traced to the United States being a country that is highly individualistic, in contrast to collectivistic. Consumer from individualistic countries tend to be more prone to buy brands that they perceive suitable to their specific personality. Also, brand may carry more meaning for consumers with individualistic backgrounds (Manrai, Lascu, Manrai & Babb, 2001). In addition, American consumers are more self-conscious, seeking larger variety in product selection and are less prone to conformity behavior. This is seen as an indication of the high score in *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* (Leng & Botelho, 2010). It might be argued that the high score in *Brand Consciousness* is the reason why American consumers score high on *Confusion from Overchoice* (Lysonski et al., 1996). Leng and Botelho (2010) oppose these findings, as they found American consumers to score low on *Confusion from Overchoice,* in comparison to consumers in Japan and Brazil, despite the high score in *Brand*

Consciousness. As the study solemnly focused on one product category, cell phones, the results require additional research (Leng & Botelho, 2010).

In conclusion, findings shown in the theoretical framework of this thesis, suggests that the CSI cannot directly be applied in its original form. Hence, the framework has to be modified in order to be applicable to different countries and cultural contexts. The literature reviewed, indicates that *Brand Consciousness* and *Confusion from Overchoice* contingently increases with economic growth, a decrease in government intervention in consumer market and higher disposable income. However, cultural differences continue to affect consumer decision-making styles as each country's environment contains unique characteristics that influence consumer behavior and attitudes when purchasing fashion wear.

2.4   Gender and Decision-Making

As this thesis investigates the applicability of the CSI on Swedish men, it is of relevance to investigate gender differences within the application of CSI. However, the majority of preceding studies have not differentiated the decision-making styles and attitudes between men and women. Solely studies made in the United Kingdom (Bauer et al. 2006; Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 2004, 2006) and a study in Iran (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008), have investigated the applicability of CSI taking possible differences between female and male shopping behavior, into account.

In 2003, Bakewell and Mitchell investigated the applicability of CSI on consumers in the United Kingdom. The research proceeded from three elements. Firstly, several new acknowledgments of Generation Y, an age cohort which is said to differ significantly from other segments, were made in the United Kingdom. Generation Y showed to have greater disposable income, more intense exposure to media and advertisements and greater product and lifestyle diversity than other older cohorts. Generation Y was suggested to be a homogenous segment which has been acculturated into a culture of materialism and consumerism where goods and services represent social standing (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Secondly, the research evolved from reactions to current macro-environmental changes, which influence patterns of consumer behavior. Thirdly, the research grounded on deviations in decision-making styles between men and women, which make gender a fundamental part of understanding shopping behavior and its underlying decision-making values (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 2006; Falk & Campbell, 1997). Therefore, an all-female sample of undergraduate students in the United Kingdom was used to distinguish female decision-making (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). The findings suggested that female Generation Y consumers seeks high quality in goods, due to the sophisticated and intense marketing activities, which is practiced in the United Kingdom. This further leads to British female consumers adopting a shopping style, characterized by *Confusion from Overchoice*.

On the other hand, the Iranian female and male consumers showed correlations between the *Confusion from Overchoice* factor and a somewhat careless behavior. Therefore, the factor was labeled *Confused and Careless from Overchoice*. It appeared that Iranian consumers thought overly many product choices made them pursue careless purchases. In addition, the original factor *Impulsiveness* was labeled *Careless Consumers*, as the men and women did not perceive themselves as impulsive, but rather careless (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). In collectivistic cultures, like Iran, consumers can be urged to suppress their hedonic needs, such as impulsiveness. This might be an explanation to why both the factors in the female and male study needed modification (Kacen & Lee, 2002). This is in contrast with the United Kingdom, which exhibits an individualistic culture. Therefore, *Impulsiveness* is not perceived with the same negative connotations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003, 2006).

Furthermore, Bakewell and Mitchell developed an additional study in 2006, comparing male and female decision-making styles in the United Kingdom, to further test the perceived lack of generalizability that was found in the 2003 and 2004 studies. The research was a contribution to previous literature which either under-represented or ignored male shoppers. A need for researching this progressively important target group in the United Kingdom arose through young males having increased engagement in product categories, which previously have been considered as female products (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). The interest for male shopping behavior also increased as demographic and social changes pressured traditional gender roles, making male consumers more involved in shopping than earlier generations (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004).

This was further validated in Iran in 2008, where shopping had been viewed as a dominantly female responsibility. Therefore, previous research had looked past the shopping behaviors of male consumers. The traditional roles within Iranian families have been well-defined in its expectations regarding the genders. However, the modern Iran has experienced a transition, where educated women are less bound by past gender roles (Price, 2006). In addition, the younger generation are more materialistic and exhibits more positive attitudes towards shopping than their predecessors. Therefore, there are incentives for both men and women to shop (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003).

Due to these cultural transitions, the relevance of measuring the differences between male and female decision-making styles has increased. Consequently, Bakewell and Mitchell (2006) conducted an additional study using a sample of an equal amount of male and female undergraduate students in the United Kingdom. Nine decision making traits showed to be common for both genders while three new male traits were identified. The results from the female sample confirmed all original CSI factors, adding three new factors; (1) *Bargain seeking,* (2) *Im-Perfectionism*, (3) *Store Loyal*. The three new factors arose as a result of intercultural and generational differences between young American and British females. The result from the male sample suggested four new factors; (1) *Time-Energy Conserving*, (2) *Confused Time Restricted*, (3) *Store-Loyal/Low Price Seeking*, (4) *Store Promiscuous* (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006; Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

The confirmation of the factors *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* and *Recreational Shopping Consciousness* suggests that some men consider shopping as a leisure activity, refuting earlier theories of men being ineffective shoppers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004, 2006). The male factor traits *Store Promiscuity* and *Confused Time Restricted* suggests that men are indifferent to and confused by the choice of store to shop in and can therefore make purchases too quickly (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). This is also confirmed by Bakewell and Mitchell (2004) who suggests that men simplify decision-making by relying on brands, to reduce the complexity of shopping.

In contrast, the Iranian study presented a new factor for male shoppers labeled *Non Perfectionistic/ Brand Indifference Consumer*. The factors describe the indifference male consumers feel when purchasing different brands and the lack of effort put into the choice of product. No earlier research has identified this factors, which suggests that the factor is unique for the Iranian male consumers (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). This is in contrast to British male consumers, who find shopping as a complex activity and therefore rely on the brand to simplify their decision-making process (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004).

Furthermore, *Brand Consciousness* appeared similar between male and female consumers in the United Kingdom, indicating that shopping is an activity used by men to demonstrate superiority, economic power and enhancing self-esteem (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2004, 2006).

This finding is further strengthened in the Iranian study as both genders showed tendencies of *Brand Consciousness*. However, for the male Iranian consumers, this means that the men perceived themselves as *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* by buying certain brands (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). This is not necessarily the case for male British consumers as their *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* trait is a consequence of two elements; an increased amount of advertisements targeting men and progressively blurred societal gender-roles in the United Kingdom. However, male consumers are less involved, less interested in fashion and spend less time shopping. This is a mechanism to overcome feelings of being less manly when shopping, as it is perceived as a female activity (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006).

In conclusion, as the factors *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* and *Brand Consciousness* were confirmed to be applicable for both genders. Studies provide indications of both men and women enjoying shopping whilst being aware of brand selection (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004, 2006; Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). Furthermore, the identification of specific male and female traits, confirms the idea of variations between male and female decision-making styles (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006; Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008). In addition, all the four new male factors found in the research by Bakewell and Mitchell in 2006 were also found in the study on male consumer decision-making styles conducted by Bakewell and Mitchell in 2004. This further supports the idea of men and women having different shopping ideologies. These differences may also be explained by cultural, political and religious differences within the examined countries (Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008).

2.5   Concluding Thoughts

The findings of previous literature suggest that the CSI requires some modification when applied to various cultural contexts. This is as various influences are shown to affect the decision-making styles of consumers. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the presented literature by investigating the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context.

Previous quantitative literature has contributed to the understanding on the applicability of the CSI in different countries and cultures. The theoretical framework of this thesis have interpreted these findings, taking gender and environmental influences on decision-making styles into account. This was made in order to identify patterns and themes of previous literature. Therefore, this thesis will examine the applicability of the CSI in a qualitative way, to gain an understanding of potential influences on decision-making. This understanding may further contribute and inspire future research as well as consumer-interest professionals and individual consumers.

There are some acknowledged limitations to the previous literature on the CSI. The use of student samples may limit the generalizability of the findings from previous literature. Furthermore, gender differences may have been overlooked which might limit the generalizability. In addition, levels of product involvement have not been addressed which places limits of the results.

The results of all previous literature on the CSI, mentioned in this thesis, can be found in Appendix 1.

3 Method

In this chapter, the methods used in this thesis are described and defended. Firstly, a section discussing the research perspective and approach is presented, followed by a description of the strategy and design. Secondly, a section containing the data collection is presented together with the sampling method. Lastly, a section explaining the focus groups concludes this chapter.

3.1 Research Perspective and Approach

There are several different scientific philosophies such as realism, interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism which guides the way how knowledge is generated. In this thesis, interpretivism will be used, as this perspective enables different interpretations of reality. Thereby, the research respects and acknowledges the richness and intricacy of the studied behavior. This is in direct contrast to positivism, where participants are used as objects, whose sole purpose is to be measured (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). In addition, the positivism approach has an objective relation to the gathering of data, which is not suitable for this thesis. The interpretivist perspective approaches the subject, people and their institutions. Also, the interpretivist perspective, focuses on underlying meanings that arises within persons, which incorporates real life experiences in this thesis. The aim of this study is to interconnect with the target group, and view reality from the perspective of the participants, to fully grasp their behavior (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The interpretivist perspective enables this thesis to interpret the participants' behavior by integrating human interest into the study. Earlier research within the field of CSI has focused on finding consumer decision-making styles in a quantitative way. The qualitative approach of this thesis allows for surpassing quantitative numbers and provide comprehension for the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context.

In this thesis, there was of significant importance to select a research approach that accounts for specific insights collected in the primary data. Consequently, an abductive approach was chosen. Alternative to hypotheses being deduced from already acclaimed theories and thereafter tested in order to either verify or reject the hypothesis or creating entirely new theories from a collection of primary data, the abductive approach enables discovery of new findings that can be structured in orderly ways (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). An abductive approach allows for the use of an already acclaimed theoretical framework, such as the CSI, which is the starting point of this thesis. In this thesis, the theoretical framework generated an understanding of the applicability of the CSI and assisted in defining consumer decision-making styles in different countries. The notions acquired in the CSI framework worked as a guidance when collecting data and analyzing the empirical findings. This contributes to further insights that may develop the original CSI.

To collect the precise richness of data to understand the decision-making styles in a Swedish context, a qualitative method was adopted. As previous research lack qualitative approaches when assessing consumers' decision-making styles, this thesis aims to study the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context by a qualitative method within set limitations. Qualitative data is based on meanings which are expressed through words. This non-standardized and non-numerical data require classification and categorization. However, qualitative data can be criticized for being too subjective, difficult to replicate, exhibiting lack of transparency and providing problems of generalization (Bryman, 2015). In contrast, quantitative data are based on meanings derived from numbers where the results are collected in a numerical and standardized way. The data is quantified and analyzed through statistics and diagrams (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.2 Research Strategy and Design

A research strategy aims to acquire data needed to answer the research question and to attain the purpose of this thesis. Therefore, the research strategy is lead by the research question and is closely linked to the research approach and research philosophy (Bryman, 2015).

Firstly, data was obtained in order to establish comprehensive knowledge within the area of consumer decision-making styles, which serve as the foundation for the theoretical framework. The purpose of this process was to serve as a guiding framework in the development of the primary research.

The primary data was obtained through qualitative research where the understanding of values, perceptions and personality traits was explored (Denzin & Lincon, 2005). Focus groups was chosen as the qualitative research method. The method is argued to be a useful tool for exploring consumers' experiences and knowledge and aligns with the research question of this thesis (Kitzinger, 1995). Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2005) suggests that connecting social science studies and qualitative research generate a more visualized perspective on the subject of the study.

3.3 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering data from a sample, by which research questions can be answered (Bryman, 2015). A circumstantial description of the literature search and primary data collection in the context of this thesis, is introduced below.

3.3.1 Literature Search

Literature search tends to be the prerequisite of, and foundation to, the collection of primary data (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). A systematic review of literature was conducted in this thesis, with the aim to minimize bias and generate comprehensive data. A systematic review is a scientific, replicable and transparent process which includes extensive literature search of unpublished and published studies (Bryman, 2015). Firstly, the explicit formulation of the research question of this thesis served as guidance for the systematic literature search. This also assisted in the formulation of key search (Table 2). Secondly, studies relevant to the purpose and scope of the theoretical framework, was searched for in peer-reviews journals and other notable sources. Thirdly, the relevance and appropriateness of each study was assessed by examining the abstract of articles. Lastly, the results from the studies were extracted (Appendix 3) (Bryman, 2015).

The principal literary source used in the theoretical framework was Sproles and Kendall (1986). Further articles were found through various online search engines such as Google Scholar, ISI Web of Knowledge and Primo, the own search service of Jönköping University library. Additional articles, used to develop theory, were found in the reference lists of the main articles. All retrieved articles were published in English, by academic journals such as Journal of Consumer Affairs, Journal of Marketing Research and Journal of Retailing. The overall aim of the theoretical framework was to identify and retrieve the most relevant and reliable information regarding the use of the CSI in various contexts. Therefore, the relevance of various academic articles was assessed by the frequency of citations in the literature and solely the most cited and replicated articles were chosen. In total, a selection of fifteen peer-reviewed articles were chosen which covered a time span of 24 years. A summary of findings regarding the factors found in previous literature can be found in Appendix 1.

In the empirical findings and analysis, new academic literature have been integrated to provide this thesis with depth. This academic literature assists in the analysis of the primary data. It was conducted in order to gain an understanding of potential influences on the decision-making styles of the sample. This was also made in order to identify possible modifications of the CSI in a Swedish context. These academic sources were obtained through the same careful selection method as the articles in the theoretical framework.

3.3.2 Primary Data Collection

Primary data is data originated by researchers with a specific purpose of addressing a problem which may be quantitative or qualitative in nature (Malhotra & Birks, 2007; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The primary data of this thesis was collected through four focus groups containing five individuals. Group interviews, such as focus group, is a form of nonstandardized data collection. This selection of interview links to the purpose of the research and guides the research strategy of this thesis. Nonstandardized interviews has an ability to both reveal and understand what, how and why questions. In addition, nonstandardized interviews provided advantages with its significance of establishing personal contract and the length of time required. In contrast, the other form of interviews, standardized interviews, are likely to be the subject of quantitative analyses, which was deemed unsuitable for this thesis (Saunders et al., 2012).

In order to collect the most representative empirical data, while still considering time and cost limitations, all focus groups were conducted in a group room at Jönköping International Business School. The sessions were timed at approximately 60 minutes long, which was deemed suitable for the cognitive demands of the participants and for the appropriateness regarding the topic. All focus groups were audio recorded in order to be analyzed most effectively. In addition, supplementary notes were taken to capture more information such as the non-verbal conversation of the participants. The confidentiality of the focus group was ensured to the participants as they were informed about the audio-recording, and by signing a confidentiality agreement together with the researchers. The roles of the three researchers were explained as two of the researches solely were taking notes while one researcher acted as a moderator.

For the convenience of the Swedish sample group, the focus groups were held in Swedish whilst the data reported in this thesis is in English. Firstly, drinks and snacks were provided to the participants with the aim of creating a relaxed atmosphere. Secondly, the participants were presented with a mind map to stimulate the discussion (Appendix 4-7). The participants were asked to write down what was regarded as important to them when shopping. Thirdly, a discussion was raised based on the notes present on the mind map. The moderator placed emphasis on discovering the underlying reasons behind the notes present on the mind map to stimulate and facilitate for a deeper discussion. Finally, the participants were shown a mind map containing the CSI by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and the factors not expressed earlier, were raised for discussion (Appendix 8).

Search Parameters and Strategy	
Databases and Search Engines	Google Scholar, Primo, Diva, Emerald, ABI/Inform
Search Words	Consumer Decision-Making Styles, CDMS, Consumer Behavior, Decision-Making Styles, Consumer Style Inventory, CSI, Eight Factor Model, Fashion Wear, Generation Y, Students, Swedish Men
Literature Type	Articles, journals, books
Main Publication Period	1986-2016
Main Language of Publication	English

Table 2 Search Parameters and Strategy

3.3.3 Sampling Method

To enable a valid qualitative investigation of the research question, a non-particular sampling technique was used. This enables a purposive sampling process focusing on an in-depth investigation of a homogenous group. In order to meet the set objectives, a homogenous sample was chosen, which is defined as a sample that focuses on one specific sub-group containing members whom possess similar traits (Saunders et al., 2012). Previous research suggests that cohort segments, such as Generation Y, hold similar social characteristics and carry related behavioral patterns, values and attitudes (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). Furthermore, Generation Y consists of people born between 1970 and 2000 and constitutes the majority of students in today's society. Students are argued to be a homogeneous sub-group as they hold similar attributes. The choice of a homogenous sample is further encouraged as it may decrease the possibility for random errors, which motivates the choice of investigating the decision-making styles of young Swedish men that are currently enrolled students (Lysonski et al., 1996).

A convenience sampling technique was used to gather the empirical data due to its speed of implementation without financial efforts. The convenience sampling technique builds upon the selection of any available and willing individual as participant (Kolb, 2008). Students from Jönköping International Business School were invited to participate in the focus groups, specifying that they have to be of Swedish origin, male and between the required age range between 18 and 25. Participants were screened based on the required characteristics to ensure their qualification (Appendix 2). There is one greater limitation to the use of this sampling technique. The sample participants voluntary contributed to the research which can threaten validity. Problems may occur when contrasting groups which have been formed by the choice of the sample participants and not by selection made by the researchers (Saunders et al., 2012). Due to this limitation, the sample is not representative and is unsuited for generalizing to the whole Swedish population. Although the small sample size may inhibit the generalizability of the empirical findings, the technique is argued to be particularly informative when aiming for an information-rich case study that enables theoretical insights to explore the research question (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.3.4   Focus Groups

Focus groups was chosen as the qualitative research method as it is argued to be a useful tool for exploring consumers' experiences and knowledge. The method investigates the reasoning behind the participant's choices and clarifies why they make certain decisions (Kitzinger, 1995). The method does not mean interviewing several people during the same occasion, rather, to investigate the negotiation and formation of opinions within a social group context. In this case, focus groups were the most appropriate choice since it allowed for discussions regarding a specific area, which further allows for a collection of large amount of data in a short period of time (Saunders et al., 2012). It is argued that attitudes, accounts and opinions are socially produced by interactions, not by individual perceptions (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). The interaction quality in the interviews is the key feature of focus group research and is preferably appropriate for exploring the complexity of consumer decision-making styles (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). This is the motivation for why in-depth interviews were not the chosen method for this thesis as these interviews do not capture social interactions. In-depth interviews are suggested to be useful for distinguishing specific individual opinions which is not the aim of this thesis. Furthermore, fashion wear is a straightforward topic by which participants are comfortable talking about in a group which makes focus groups a suitable method. Also, due to time restraints, individual interviews were deemed unsuitable due to its time intensive nature (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

The focus groups were divided into four occasions with five participants for each occasion, which ensured a big enough group to show off different perspectives, but small enough for everyone to view their opinions (Saunders et al., 2012). A flexible schedule of open-ended questions was used during the focus group sessions, to not restrain or influence the participants (Appendix 3) (Kitzinger, 1995). The choice of not presenting the original CSI factors by Sproles and Kendall (1986) in the beginning of the focus groups was motivated by wanting to avoid bias. Presenting the original factors may lead to a non-desirable influence of the participants' behavior. The aim was to facilitate an open discussion regarding shopping of fashion wear, not to speak about specific CSI factors. This was in order to detect potential new themes, and to investigate the applicability of the original CSI. The themes discussed during the sessions were interpreted by the authors and clustered into the original CSI factors or added as new themes. These ranged from *widely discussed themes*, to *generally discussed themes* and *not generally discussed themes*, in regards to what extent the themes were discussed by the participants.

Prior to the focus group sessions, a comprehensive time schedule and plan was constructed in order to effectively manage the focus group sessions (Appendix 3). This included a guide of themes and carefully cross-translated factors from the Eight Factor Model.

4   Empirical Findings and Analysis

In this chapter, the empirical findings from the conducted focus groups are presented alongside the analysis using theoretical data. The integration of the empirical findings and the analysis was made in order to simplify for the reader. The empirical data is divided in different factors according to the CSI by Sproles and Kendall (1986) and the analysis of each factor follows. In addition, three additional themes, which arose during the focus groups, are presented. These can be found in the last sections of this chapter.

Examples of Abbreviations	
Focus Group	FG
Participants	P
Focus Group 1 Participant 1	FG1P1

Table 3 Examples of Abbreviations

4.1   Consumer Style Inventory

4.1.1   Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness

1. **Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness**	*Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* concerns the degree of systematic and careful search for the best quality in products. Consumer's scoring high in perfectionism are expected to engage in a more conscious shopping and decision-making behavior.

4.1.1.1   Empirical Findings

Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness, was a generally discussed theme, as the participants displayed perfectionism in their shopping but showed little high-quality consciousness with low interest in getting high-quality fashion wear. Most participants expressed perfectionistic characteristics in their shopping behavior, showing special concerns regarding their fashion wear selection. When presented with the mind map, most participants wrote that the fit of fashion wear was important as they are highly motivated to select the best products. However, few participants expressed that high-quality fashion wear was important, thereby showing low interest in making extra efforts to select high-quality products when shopping.

Systematic and careful searches were made in order to find fashion wear when shopping and most participants engaged in a conscious shopping and decision-making behavior. A perfect fit of fashion wear was explained to be especially vital when shopping for wardrobe essentials. Hence, loyalty was expressed towards brands, as the participants felt comfortable and secure when being familiar to the fit of the brand's fashion wear. Also, the complexity of finding the

perfect fit was expressed by FG3P5, *"My biggest focus lay on finding the perfect fit, it leads me to compromise the price when I buy clothes"* and FG3P4, *"I don't buy clothes if the fit is bad"*. These perfectionistic characteristics were consistent throughout most of the focus group participants, with only FG2P3 claiming to shop quickly and compromise his standards when being pressured by store staff. However, most participants expressed that the importance of a perfect fit was compromised during sales, as the feeling of getting a bargain was of higher value.

This discussion was shown to be consistent in the focus groups, linking to the three factors *Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness, Brand Consciousness* and *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption*, as concerns over budget limitations were shown as well as needs for wanting the best value for money. Also, most participants exhibited brand loyalty as they stuck to specific brands which they were certain had a perfect fit.

4.1.1.2   Analysis

National Culture Influences

National culture has a significant impact on the values and attitudes of individuals (Hofstede, 1984), thus, culture influences consumer decision-making styles (Leo, Bennett & Härtel, 2005). As the participants did not engage in systematic and careful searches for products of the best quality the factor *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* was a generally discussed theme. High-quality conscious decision-making indicates the perception of a hierarchy of different quality levels (Leo et al., 2005). Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension, power distance, concerns the levels of inequality in wealth, prestige and power present in a society. Thus, cultures with high power distance are more likely to engage in high-quality conscious decision-making behavior as it relates to equality versus hierarchy (Leo et al., 2005). Sweden scores low on power distance, which may explain why the participants generally discussed the theme *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness*.

Environmental Influences

Fashion wear has a strong market presence in Sweden with several fashion bloggers and fashion brands. These have been internationally renowned, prompting the establishment of the term "the Swedish fashion wonder" (Falk, 2013; Otnes & Zayer, 2012). Shopping has transcended from being regarded as a superficial activity, to becoming an activity requiring creativity and skills which is central to the creation of self-identity (Otnes & McGrath, 2001). One can suggest that the participants' interest in fashion wear and finding a perfect fit, derives from the general fashion interest apparent in Sweden, where there is a suggested prestige in being knowledgeable about fashion and how to dress right (Castillo Velasquez & Hedegran, 2013). These current norms in Sweden, may be impactful on the participants' expressed interest in finding the perfect fit of fashion wear.

Gender Influences

In addition, Sweden has recently experienced a feminization of masculinity, inviting men to take part in consumption of fashion wear, which is an area that previously was predominantly reserved for female consumers (Otnes & Zayer, 2012). This new hegemonic masculinity, together with influences from Swedish social and mass media, have created a large societal acceptance for metrosexual men, who pay greater attention to personal appearance (Otnes & Zayer, 2012). In specific, this acceptance is shown to be widespread among Generation Y and might explain the participants' awareness and interest in fit of fashion wear. This also

contributes to less focus on socially constructed gender identities, which may lead to men becoming effeminised (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006).

The participants in this thesis did not connect dimensions of perfectionism with high-quality in fashion wear. The empirical findings show that the participants find perfectionism in fashion wear regardless of the level of quality. Thereby, the participants exhibited perfectionistic characteristics without displaying the correlated high-quality consciousness characteristics. Therefore, one may suggest that the factor *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* requires a redefinition when applied to a Swedish context, where *Perfectionism* is separated from *High-Quality Consciousness.*

4.1.2 Brand Consciousness

2. **Brand Consciousness**	*Brand Consciousness* concerns an orientation towards purchasing nationally renowned, expensive and best-selling brands. Consumers scoring high in *Brand Consciousness*, also called *"Price Equals Quality"* are likely to consider a high price tag as an indicator of a product of higher quality.

4.1.2.1 Empirical Findings

Brand Consciousness was not a generally discussed theme. However, a consistent pattern was shown in the focus groups regarding *Brand Consciousness*, as most participants said to be conscious about sports wear brands but showed no *Brand Consciousness* when shopping everyday fashion wear. None of the participants expressed that well-known and best-selling brands are chosen over other brands when purchasing everyday fashion items.

The participants showed little or no interest in brands displaying its logo or, in any other way, visibly exposes its brand name on clothing. These fashion wear items were often avoided, due to fear of being judged and not fitting in. The participants explained this as a typical behavior of Swedes being a population who strive for equal human value and exhibit conforming behavior, labelled as "Swedishness". As said by FG4P2, "*Growing up in Sweden and being Swedish reflects my choice of fashion wear. I want to fit in and be accepted by the clothes I wear*". The participants expressed that they strive for acceptance and claimed to achieve this by wearing similar clothes as their friends and colleagues. It was deemed important to feel secure and comfortable by dressing similar to others and within one's personal comfort zone. This also affected the participants low interest' in second hand clothing, as the general view was that second hand clothing was protruding. However, as FG1P4 showed disgust against materialism and consumption culture, he advocated second hand consumption. Most participants claimed that brands were more important in early teen years. This was as peer pressure of wearing specific popular brands, in order to be accepted, was considered as stressful.

However, shopping well-renowned brands was important to the participants when purchasing sportswear, as the most popular products were considered to be the best. FG3P4 considered the most advertised sportswear brands to be the coolest brands which he preferred when making a purchase decision when shopping. Moreover, a feeling of "I know what I get" and a perspective of saving time when choosing the same sportswear brands, were consistent among the participants. FG3P2 expressed that having an image was important when wearing sportswear,

but considered *Brand Consciousness* as troublesome and time-consuming when shopping for everyday items.

FG1P4 displayed a strong need to associate with the brands he chooses to wear, showing a strong need for the fashion wear to reflect him and his self-identity, *"My clothes reflects me as a person"*. Self-identify was discussed in all the focus groups and will be further explained in the newly identified theme, *Self-Identity Consciousness*.

4.1.2.2   Analysis

National Culture Influences

The empirical findings regarding *Brand Consciousness* may be related to the Law of Jante. The Law of Jante is an unwritten social law and sociological norm which negatively proclaims individual efforts and condescends individual success. This mentality is strongly present in Sweden and the Nordic countries and aims to preserve social stability, uniformity and harmony by placing emphasis on the collective (Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). The Law of Jante may connect to the term "Swedishness" mentioned by the participants, when discussing fear of being judged and not fitting in. As proclaimed by the Law of Jante, engaging in boasting and seeking acceptance is regarded as socially unacceptable (Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). In addition, the Law of Jante may explain why the participants' stated to adapt their fashion wear to their friends as the participants claimed to be afraid of deviating from their comfort zone. Furthermore, the Law of Jante mentality may also construe the participants' disinterest in fashion wear with highly visible logos and symbols, as the Law of Jante discourages conscious exposure of items that display higher class and social hierarchy (Veblen, 2007). In conclusion, proclaiming a higher class, might make Swedes uncomfortable, as it may mean contravening the Law of Jante.

Social Influences

The empirical findings suggest that rather than letting brands be the foundation in self-identity construction, the participants use fashion wear as signifiers for their personal and social identity. Brands may be avoided due to the participants' fear of the brands not being accepted by social and peer groups. Thereby, the empirical findings may be impacted by the participants due to social norms present among students at Jönköping International Business School. It can be interpreted as the participants use fashion wear as means to fit in and to avoid confrontation by wearing socially acceptable and neutral clothes. Social identity theorists describe this as a process of possessing individual differentiation while demonstrating group identification. Thereby, individuals are said to attempt to balance the need for belonging with the need for being different without breaching social identity principles (Hornsey & Jetten, 2004).

Cultural Dimension Influences

Despite Sweden being an individualistic country, individualistic people also strive to find a belonging in a collective group. Thus, brands play a great role for individuals to fit in (Hultén, 2008). Consumers shopping the same brands can experience feelings of affinity and belonging resulting in satisfaction of being associated with a certain brand (Lindgren & Lindgren, 2014). This partly contradicts the empirical findings in this thesis, as the factor *Brand Consciousness* was not a generally discussed theme during the focus groups. However, the participants placed emphasis on brands when shopping sportswear. This may be explained by the participants increased desire to belong to a community when practicing sports to a greater extent, than in everyday life. Brand communities are based on structural relationships between admirers of

brands which can be exhibited by shared rituals, consciousness and traditions (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Thereby, one may suggest that the participants' desire to belong is greater when active in sports communities or practicing sports.

4.1.3 Novelty-Fashion Consciousness

3. Novelty-Fashion Consciousness	*Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* concerns variety-seeking consumers who seek new and innovative fashion products. Consumers scoring high in *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* obtain excitement and pleasure from attractive styling and brand variety.

4.1.3.1 Empirical Findings

Novelty-Fashion Consciousness was a widely discussed theme. The participants were aware of their purchasing decisions and were conscious of how to dress. There was an overall consensus concerning the importance of having wardrobe essentials, that occasionally can be combined with additional "high fashion" items. Creating this stable base of essential items enabled the participants to feel comfortable and secure in their fashion conscious approach. As expressed by FG4P3, *"Having a stable base of wardrobe essentials makes me secure enough to buy fun and inspiring new fashion"*. The comfort of having wardrobe essentials was important for the participants when purchasing new fashion wear items as most participants expressed a need to place a new item into a context and outfit.

The effort to select the right wardrobe essentials was consistently raised throughout the focus groups. The most significant features of wardrobe essentials were fit and quality. These were deemed to be more important than wearing trendy fast-fashion wear. FG4P1 claimed that, *"It is important to feel that the item can be used for a long time"* which was further highlighted by FG1P3, *"I need my clothes to be immortal"*. However, shopping wardrobe essentials, with both a practical and good fit, was perceived as a stressful and time-consuming activity. For example, the participants did not enjoy the process of buying a new pair of black jeans, as jeans were seen as essential to one's wardrobe.

4.1.3.2 Analysis

Social Influences

Today's culture of purchasing fashion wear is characterized by a strong social and identity-building function where consumption serves as a tool to create and communicate an identity (Castillo Velasquez & Hedengran, 2013). These identity-creating influences are claimed to make consumers regard shopping as entertainment, which creates emotions of pleasure and excitement when searching for fashionable items (Pakdeejiraku & Agosil, 2013). This further strengthens the empirical findings as the participants revealed an interest for attractive styling.

Fashion wear is classified as a high involvement product category, as it may contain social values, high cost products and ego support, which require more attentiveness when processing (Bubphapant & Thammasaro, 2012). These social values may explain the participants' strong fashion awareness and the need for particular wardrobe essentials, as the high level of product involvement relates to product importance (Pakdeejiraku & Agosil, 2013).

The strong fashion awareness identified in the focus groups may also be a result of the participants' age cohort. Generation Y members were born into a retail culture where the activity of purchasing fashion entails extensive decision-making, due to the rapid increase of brands and the broad variety of items available on the market. Due to this retail development, increased fashion awareness has been identified among members in Generation Y (Pakdeejiraku & Agosil, 2013). Furthermore, Bakewell et al., (2006), claims that high fashion conscious behavior amongst men is a result from societal changes which has affected the stereotypical gender role of men. This may explain the participants' interest for attractive styling and innovative fashion.

National Culture Influences

The participants found it stressful and time-consuming when searching for wardrobe essentials, as it was critical to find items with perfect fit and quality. In addition, the participants tend to remain loyal to specific products they perceive have the perfect fit, as it reduces the stress. This behavior is further associated with the new theme, *Time-Energy Conserving,* in this thesis. The importance for the participants to find particular wardrobe essentials is further supported by Pakdeejirakul and Agosi (2013) who suggests that Swedish Generation Y consumers, find it necessary to assess the utility of a product in the purchasing process. This aligns with the empirical findings of this thesis regarding the importance of purchasing "immortal" wardrobe essentials, meaning classical fashion wear. This utility aspect of the product was identified as the participants' needed to visualize and place additional "high fashion" items into contexts before purchase.

Cultural Dimension Influences

The participants expressed different opinions regarding what items they found important to one's wardrobe essentials. The individual differences may be explained by Hofstede (1983) who position Sweden as a highly individualistic country where behavioral patterns are formed by own self-interest. The opinion of the individual is vital, and therefore it is solely the individual Swede that will decide what fashion wear item that is important to purchase. This individualistic orientation is further characterized by the aptitude to purchase new and diverse products and brands (Hofstede, 2001). This is further elaborated upon in *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* in this thesis.

4.1.4 Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness

4. **Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness**	*Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* concerns consumers who derive entertainment from shopping.

4.1.4.1 Empirical Findings

Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness was a widely discussed theme as most participants considered shopping entertaining. Spontaneous shopping, with no clear purchase motive, was seen as more enjoyable than planned shopping with a clear purchase motive. This was due to that the participants felt pressured by the need of finding a specific item and to make a purchase. Most participants enjoyed browsing in stores with friends without intentions to purchase. FG4P2 stated, *"Browsing downtown is a way for me and my friends to hang out"*. In contrast, FG2P4 did not enjoy recreational browsing as the participant claimed, *"I only shop*

clothes if I have to and when my mother tells me". The activity was seen as time consuming and stressful.

Despite possessing contrasting views of shopping as a recreational activity, all of the participants appreciated professional store staff with the ability to assist the shopping. However, most participants regarded the behavior of store staff to be highly influential on whether they felt comfortable and secure when shopping. In addition, feeling stressed and pressured to purchase, could be enforced by the store staff. As expressed by FG1P5, *"The store staff must be able to assess how much service I would like, otherwise I will leave the store".* Furthermore, the store environment was highly important, as the participants felt insecure when the environment felt disorganized. Some participants showed concerns regarding unclear division of men's and women's wear in stores. FG2P2 stated, *"It's all about the comfort zone, I need a recognizable structure, I want to know where the men's section is, so I don't look at girly clothes unintentionally".* FG3P1 stated, *"I want to feel completely relaxed when I shop, if I do not see a structured store or feel uncomfortable, I will leave the store directly".*

As all participants valued professional store staff, additional factors as *Habitual and Brand-Loyalty toward Consumption* were found as the participants tended to return to stores and brands, they consider provided this.

4.1.4.2 Analysis

Social Influences

In the past, stores have solely been considered as locations for business and economic interactions. However, today's stores are seen as places where social and cultural interactions occur (Castillo Velasquez & Hedengran, 2013). As a consequence, today's marketplace is impactful on the everyday life of consumers, being a place where individuals spend the most time away from home, school and workplace (Bäckström, 2006). The new social interactions created in the marketplace are influential to the shopping experience and the buying behavior and attitudes of consumers (Castillo Velasquez & Hedengran, 2013). Due to these increased social interactions, consumers tend to experience enjoyment from shopping, which aligns with the favorable attitudes towards shopping among the participants (Bäckström, 2006).

Cultural Dimension Influences

The favorable attitude among the participants regarding shopping may be explained by Sweden being an individualistic country. Hofstede (2001) claims that hedonism relates to individualistic cultures. This is as individualistic people are more likely to value their time spent on various activities and to adjust the activities to their lifestyle. As a consequence, these individuals' are active information seekers who enjoy shopping as a recreational and social activity (Castillo Velasquez & Hedengran, 2013).

Retail Environment Influences

Recreational and hedonistic purchasing behavior correlates with entertainment, as the participants regarded shopping more enjoyable when the activity included social interactions. One may suggest that the participants seek the experiences of shopping rather than the purchase in itself. Therefore, store environment is suggested to be vital for the Generation Y consumers as they value surrounding factors that enhances their experience (Castillo Velasquez & Hedengran, 2013). The importance of these surrounding factors was identified in the empirical findings of this thesis as the participants valued professional store staff and structured

store atmospheres with clear gender divisions. Findings by Turley and Chebat (2002) identified the importance of gender divided departments as male consumers feel insecure and uncomfortable when uncertain of where the men's wear section started and ended. This partly contradict the findings regarding metrosexuality and Swedish men being effeminized, identified in *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness*, as the participant not seemed to be comfortable to shop in women's wear departments.

Most participants enjoyed browsing the retail environment while socializing with friends. This aligns with Bäckström's (2006) claim of profiling recreational shoppers as individuals who engages in socializing, communicating with friends and searching for information about new products and stores. However, the participants did not perceive shopping enjoyable when feeling pressured to find specific fashion wear items. This behavior may be explained by Castillo Velasquez and Hedengran (2013) who claim that leisure shopping consists of dichotomies as happiness and disappointment, spontaneity and control and rationality and hedonism. The probability for these contradicting emotions to occur simultaneously is high, as consumers may spend considerable amounts of time shopping. Bäckström (2006) further supports these dichotomies as the recreational shopper may be both emotionally-driven as well as task-oriented. This suggests recreational and hedonistic shopping to be a multifaceted activity. This indicates that *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness* may include stressful elements when actively searching for specific products. This is as potential failures of finding specific products may evoke feelings of stress and frustration.

4.1.5   Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness

5. **Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness**	*Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness* concerns consumers who generally appear aware of lower sales prices and seek the best value for their money. Consumers scoring high in "*Price and Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness* tends to be comparison shoppers.

4.1.5.1   Empirical Findings

Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness was a widely discussed theme. It was evident that price had a significant effect on whether or not an item was considered for purchase. Due to the fact that the participants are students, limited funds restricts their spending. FG2P4 stated, *"I am a student, I cannot buy everything I want"*. For some of the participants, price was a reliable indication of high quality. The perception was that better quality items lasts longer and are thereby valuable investments. It was deemed important to purchase items where one gets "value for money". FG3P3 expressed, *"If an item fits me well, or if the quality is good, I can easily consider spending more money on such an item"*. This indicates that the idea of fashion wear items being "too expensive" is dependent on value received from money spent. In addition, the participants were willing to spend more money on purchases regarded as investments. FG2P1 stated, *"If I am purchasing an expensive item that I will have for many years, I am willing to spend more money to ensure that I really get the best quality and fit"*.

In contrast, some participants found that cheap prices were prominent when purchasing fashion wear, as they seldom found items worth spending great amount of money on. For those participants, it was more important to make a bargain, or to purchase sales items. This stemmed from feelings of wanting to buy quality items for cheap prices. As FG1P2 stated, *"Due to the fact*

that I have a low income, I find it important to find bargains, where I can dress nice but for a lower price". However, all participants found that sales made the decision-making process shorter, regarding it as a once in a lifetime opportunity to purchase certain items. This indicates that when opportunities to make bargains arise, preferences such as fit and quality became less important.

4.1.5.2   Analysis

National Culture Influences

Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness was a widely discussed theme as all of the participants indicated that price was an important variable when shopping for fashion wear. The participants valued fashion wear, where fit and quality mirrored price. One could suggest that this attitude stems from the Law of Jante, where boasting with expensive brands for the sole purpose of them being expensive, is regarded as socially unacceptable. Life and one's actions should be within reason, or as "lagom" which explains the concept of "not too much not too little" by the Swedes (Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). This may explain the participants rectifying more expensive purchases with the notion of the item being an investment in both quality and durability. However, there are social expectations that inclines that one should take good care of oneself by dressing impeccable (Castillo Velasquez & Hedegran, 2013). This is another form of acceptance, where the fit and trendiness of fashion wear is prioritized instead of boasting with expensive brands (Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). As mentioned earlier, through shopping clothing regarded as socially acceptable, fashion wear serves mean for individuals to fit in. Swedes are balancing between dressing individually while identifying with the group (Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). Leng and Bothelo (2010) suggest that individualistic cultures, such as Sweden, place less emphasis on status attributed to specific brands and consequently show little sensitivity toward maintaining prestige and power. One may therefore suggest, that the practice of extensively spending money, is seen as reckless and extravagant, which is two characteristics that may be less valued in Sweden.

Economical Influences

Some of the participants found that cheap prices and bargains made them more positive towards shopping fashion wear. This reasoning may stem from the participants being students with limited budgets at their disposal. However, as all Swedish students are entitled to student loans, and thereby do not need to lend money from parents, students may independently decide how their money should be allocated ("Om CSN - CSN", 2016). This may be a reason to why the participants valued receiving "value for money", as the money and responsibility are their alone to administrate (Waldenström, 2015). However, it was shown that a reckless behavior may emerge when the participants recognized possibilities to make bargains. During such occasions, some participants experienced that the decision-making process was shortened, and the likelihood of making impulsive purchases increased. Rook and Hoch (1985) suggest that internal emotional replies, such as urge, pleasure, and excitement, can result in impulsive buying behaviors. This is further explained in the following factor, *Impulsiveness.*

4.1.6   Impulsiveness

6. Impulsiveness	*Impulsiveness* concerns a careless consumer orientation. Consumers scoring high in impulsiveness are not likely to be concerned about "best buy's" or the amount spent when shopping and do not plan their purchases in the same extent as other consumers.

4.1.6.1 Empirical Findings

Impulsiveness was a general theme discussed in the focus groups. Most participants were not impulsive when purchasing fashion wear, other than on sales, due to limited student budgets. FG4P5 claims, *"I am more likely to purchase when it is sales"*. A pressure to buy the item "now or never" made some participants more impulsive when being provided with opportunities to pay less than the original price. As expressed by FG4P3, *"I plan my shopping so I can purchase on sale"* and strengthened by FG1P2, *"I love the feeling of making a bargain"*. However, when browsing in stores for pleasure, also identified as a *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness*, impulsive purchases occurred among some participants. Also, seeing a complete outfit made some participants willing to purchase additional products as they visualize a combination of fashion items. FG4P2 stated, *"If I want to buy a pair of jeans and the sales staff then shows me a cool sweater to go with it, it happens that I purchase an additional item on impulse as I know it looks good with the pair of jeans I intend to buy"*.

However, most participants showed indications of being reluctant to impulse shopping, if potentially having to return purchased items. This was expressed by PG4P1, *"If I buy something, I do not want to return it. Returning clothes wastes my time"*. Furthermore, low priced fast fashion was perceived as limited for men which restricted the impulsive incentive to shop. FG2P3 claimed, *"I rarely shop on impulse as men's fashion is so expensive",* and FG3P1 stated, *"There are more cheap clothes for women, so I believe women buy more on impulse than men"*.

4.1.6.2 Analysis

Environmental Influences

The participants gained satisfaction when purchasing products at a lower price than the original price or if they perceived it as a "now or never" purchase. Findings by Castillo Velasquez and Hedengran (2013) further strengthen this bargain-seeking behavior as they found men to enjoy the competitiveness of shopping for bargains. In addition, the participants were prone to postpone purchases if anticipating that the product will be available for a cheaper price, in the near future. This behavior may further be related to the factor *Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness*.

The empirical findings suggest that fashion wear items sold at original price, were generally purchased on impulse if the participants received a holistic view of a complete outfit. As related to the empirical findings in *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness,* the Swedish male consumer belonging to Generation Y, finds it important to place items into visual contexts before purchasing. Nordfält (2011) argues that men often view items based on own memories and thereby require support to understand what they see. Therefore, the ability for men to compare and find connections between fashion wear items may be neglected if not put in a clear context. Mattila and Wirtz (2008) claims that exciting and stimulating stores increases the possibility of making unplanned purchases, as high arousal environments reduces self-regulation and the ability for consumers to think through their actions. This highlights the importance of carefully

planned and stimulating store environments for men, which also was identified in *Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness.*

Some participants did not enjoy returning fashion wear and regarded it as an obstacle to impulse shopping. This behavior has been confirmed by Forsman, Kulcsar and Söderberg (2009) who claim that services such as "purchase on approval" and the possibility to purchase fashion wear not having tried on, were not attractive options for Swedish male consumers, as it was seen as time-consuming.

Cultural Dimension Influences

Impulsive buying behavior is claimed to be stronger among people from individualistic cultures than from collectivistic cultures (Kacen & Lee, 2002; Leng & Botelho, 2010). People from individualistic cultures, such as Sweden, tend to focus on the positive consequences of purchase actions, as own feelings and goals strongly influence the decision-making behavior (Leng & Botelho, 2010). This contradicts the findings as some of the participants claimed to be reluctant towards impulse shopping. However, this may be due to the limited funds of the participants.

4.1.7   Confusion from Overchoice

7. **Confusion from Overchoice**	*Confusion from Overchoice* concerns consumers who experience information overload and therefore, have difficulties making decisions.

4.1.7.1   Empirical Findings

Confusion from Overchoice was a widely discussed theme. The confusion was mainly identified in the large amount of fashion wear items presented when shopping, rather than a large amount of brands. This can be traced to the unwillingness and discomfort among the participants to make several decisions. FG1P4 explained, *"If I walk into a store that has an unorganized selection of clothes I would feel overwhelmed and walk out"*. Some participants explained that one does not know where to begin, making the shopping overwhelming. Simplicity was a recurring word, despite all participants wanted a range of options to choose between, they did not want an overwhelming amount. As expressed by FG3P2, *"I just want my shopping to be made easy and simple"*.

Some of the participants found that the number of stores available affected their shopping. If there was a vast amount of stores to choose from, the participants expressed difficulties knowing where to begin. This lead to feelings of being overwhelmed. However, the participants who identified themselves as fashion conscious, considered the selection of stores in medium sized cities unable to offer them trendy fashion wear. FG3P3 found, *"I rather shop in Stockholm, because then I have a larger selection of stores to choose from that could better meet my needs"* which aligned with FG4P4, *"Larger cities have wider selections of fashion wear"*. This indicates that some participants consider vast amounts of stores and items as positive, as it increases their possibility to shop. However, others who claimed to be less fashion conscious regarded a vast amount of stores and items as overwhelming and therefore avoided shopping. As said by FG2P4, *"I cannot shop in larger cities with many stores, I don't know where to start"* and FG3P1, *"I don't care much about fashion, therefore I don't need the wide selection of stores"*.

4.1.7.2   Analysis

Retail Environment Influences

Confusion from Overchoice was a widely discussed theme. It has been suggested that the rapidly proliferation of fashion wear items and the growing product imitation strategies have contributed to this confusion. One can thereby assume that the findings are partially linked to a vastly growing fashion wear market, and the development of sophisticated technology to support this rapid fashion production (Leng & Botelho, 2010). In addition, the establishment of shopping malls, with extensive product and brand selection, has changed the Swedish retail landscape (Bäckström, 2006). Thus the probability of experiencing an information overload that can cause confusion is supported.

Cultural Dimension Influences

Most participants found extensive amounts of decisions to be burdensome, preferring restricted selections to simplify the decision-making process. This may be explained by the highly individualistic Swedish culture (Hofstede, 2001). A Swede looks after one's own interest and the interest of one's immediate family. This interest is enabled due to the welfare economy of Sweden, as it allows society to offer great amounts of financial freedom to the Swedish population (Hofstede, 1983). Moreover, it has been suggested that collectivistic countries have reduced levels of confusion, as those individuals rely upon the advice offered by friends and family. Such cultures exhibit less *Confusion from Overchoice* as decision-making are affected by a "We" rather than "I" mentality. In addition, the search for information in collectivistic cultures is made through social networks to a higher extent than in individualistic countries. In Sweden, decisions are made through information collection from multiple sources, and the decisions are often based on one's own opinions. One can thereby not rely upon group norms, which consequently leads to more pressure upon the individual to make own decisions without support. Consequently, this can lead to an overload of information and result in confusion (Nayeem & Casidy, 2015).

4.1.8   Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption

8. **Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption**	*Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption* concerns consumers who are likely to have formed habits in deciding for their favorite brands and stores.

4.1.8.1   Empirical Findings

Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption was a widely discussed theme as most participants preferred to recurrently purchase fashion wear from the same brands. FG1P4 stated, *"I buy the same brand if I have found something that I know fits me well"* and FG3P2 stated *"I always return to buy shirt and jeans models that I know fit me good"*. Most participants claimed to alternate between three to five brands.

Knowledge previously generated from satisfactory shopping experiences, increased the likelihood for the participants to return to the same brands. The importance of a good fit was again highlighted, which indicated on *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* influences, as the fit was the main reason why the participants tended to return to the same

brands. As said by FG1P1, *"I am loyal to brands with good fit"* and FG1P4 stated, *"The fit is my main focus"*. Alternating between a small selection of favorable brands, where size and model is suitable, simplified the participants' shopping process. This small selection of brands enabled the participants to de-obfuscate the search for lower prices in different physical stores or online. Furthermore, the participants expressed feelings of comfort and security when recurrently shopping fashion wear from their favorite brands. FG1P3 expressed, *"I am loyal to my brands and I am willing to pay more for them as I know what I get"*. This was further emphasized by FG2P5 who stated, *"Returning to the same brands helps me save time and reduce stress. It is also possible to rely on a brand for quality since I have used it before"*, and FG4P1 claimed, *"If I have used the product before, I know it is reliable"*. FG2P3 stated, *"I also find it convenient to return to the same stores, as I know what to expect"*.

The discussion of the factor *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption* further resulted in *Store-Loyal* themes emerging among the participants. This is further explained below in the newly identified theme, *Store-Loyal*.

4.1.8.2   Analysis

Cultural Dimension Influences

Warrington and Shim (2000) argues that countries characterized by collectivistic cultures engages in brand-loyal behaviors in a greater extend than individualistic cultures with less power distances, such as Sweden. Consumers in collectivistic cultures tend to purchase well-renowned brands, as it is more socially accepted to purchase brands that are perceived as popular (Hofstede, 2001). This contradicts the findings as the participants exhibited brand-loyal behaviors towards a wide range of brands, while being from an individualistic culture. The empirical findings suggest that brand-loyal consumption patterns did not relate to best-selling brands, but instead towards brands which offer the best fit for individuals. Thereby, the brand-loyal behavior was based on perceived brand image and previous purchasing experiences. The importance of feeling secure and comfortable with the brand also influenced the loyal behavior of the participants. This behavior is further strengthened by Warrington and Shim (2000) who claims that high-involvement consumers, are more likely to establish store and brand-loyal consumption patterns when feeling secure and comfortable.

Retail Environment Influences

In addition, Castillo Velasquez and Hedengran (2013) confirms the relationship between brand-loyalty and prior positive consumer experiences, as rational decision-making is not needed when making a purchase based on previous experiences. These positive experiences are claimed to create emotions of satisfaction which influences consumers' post purchase evaluations and attitudes toward brands (Nam, Ekinci & Whyatt, 2011). Satisfied consumers are argued to be less price sensitive, less influential of competitors and develop deeper behavioral and attitudinal loyalty towards brands (Dimitriades, 2006). This may explain the participant's brand-loyal behaviors, as repetitively purchasing of items from the same brand, lead to saving time and energy. This behavior is further explained in the newly identified theme *Time-and Energy Conserving*.

Store environment was an additional factor which contributed to positive consumer experiences and brand-loyalty. This is strengthened by Holmén and Lundgren (2008), who claims that store environments are influential to the overall shopping experience for Swedish male consumers. This also determines the acceptance or avoidance towards the store. The participants did not make specific distinctions between being brand-loyal and store-loyal as they tended to return to

the same stores habitually. This behavior is further elaborated upon in the newly identified theme *Store-Loyal* in this thesis.

4.2   New Identified Themes

Three additional themes have been identified in this thesis. These themes arose during the focus groups and emerged from the opinions of the participants. Two of these themes have been identified by previous research on the applicability of the CSI in various cultural contexts. One theme, Self-Identity Consciousness, is shown to be unique to the Swedish context of this thesis.

4.2.1   Time-Energy Conserving

4.2.1.1   Empirical Findings

During the focus groups a new theme arose concerning the time and energy spent on shopping. As this was a widely discussed theme, one may suggest that the factor *Time-Energy Conserving* to be included in the CSI when adopted to the Swedish context. This factor was identified and confirmed in the United Kingdom by Mitchell and Bates (1998), Bakewell and Mitchell (2003, 2004, 2006) and further strengthened by Hanzaee and Aghasibeig (2008) in Iran. The widely discussed theme arose when discussing *"Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption"*.

The habits of most participants were rooted in the need of restricting the time spent on the decision-making process when shopping. As expressed by FG2P5, *"For me it is all about convenience, since I do not want to spend too much of my time shopping"*. The participants returned to stores where they have had previous pleasant experiences. Consequently, one knew what to expect and the likelihood of finding appealing fashion wear increased. Furthermore, participants found that buying the same brands, as they had found suitable in fit and reliable in quality, saved them time and energy. FG2P2 found, *"I usually purchase Ralph Lauren shirts as I know my fit. It saves me the time and energy otherwise spent on trying and searching for a good shirt"*. Most participants further developed the idea of being unwilling to spend unnecessary time on shopping. As stated by FG1P3, *"I want to be efficient when I shop"*. Therefore, seeking the convenience of scanning and searching amongst fashion wear items was of importance. All of the participants agreed that long lines to fitting rooms strongly discouraged shopping, and made the participants abandon items they previously found interesting in both fit and price. In addition, a vast amount of options or unstructured merchandise was perceived as energy consuming and made the participants hesitant to engage in browsing. As stated by FG4P1, *"Having to search for fashion wear in messy stores wastes my time"*. FG1P5 found that purchasing online was the most convenient way of shopping, as one could choose between a wide range of brands from home. FG1P5 expressed, *"Shopping online gives me so much freedom and I don't have to go through the hassle of shopping in physical stores"*. Others found that online shopping was time consuming. FG2P1 expressed it as, *"I find it stressful to possibly having to return items that I bought online"*. FG2P4 stated, *"I don't want to through the process of ordering fashion wear online. It takes me too much time to find the right items"* and FG2P2 claimed, *"If I shop online and dislike the clothes, I don't even have the energy to return it"*.

4.2.1.1   Analysis

Retail Environment Influences

Time-Energy Conserving factor was a widely discussed theme. The participants that exhibited *Confusion from Overchoice* behavior were to a greater extent *Time-Energy Conserving*, than participants who considered shopping as a recreational endeavor. However, all of the participants exhibited certain extents of *Time-Energy Conserving* decision-making behavior. This was as the participants regarded purchases, which consumed considerable amounts of time and energy, not worth pursuing. One may suggest that the participants were discouraged to shop when faced by numerous factors such as: long lines to the fitting room, intrusion by store staff, searching and not finding the right products or sizes or experiencing confusion from overchoice. Therefore, the empirical findings support earlier research that indicate that men are more reluctant towards shopping experiences perceived to waste time and energy (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004, 2006). This connects to the theme *Store-Loyal,* where empirical findings suggest that men are loyal to a store rather than a brand. Borges, Babin and Spielmann (2013) suggests that men prefer retail environments that are practical and functional, rather than hedonistic, in which emotional aspects are appealed to. The empirical findings indicate that functional retail environments saves time and energy for the participants. Furthermore, when fashion wear are placed in contexts, the participants are offered a holistic view of complete outfits which shortens the decision-making process, making the shopping experience more convenient (Nordfält, 2011).

Gender Influences

It has been suggested that men and women perceive time differently as time consciousness can be derived from differences in socialization. Researchers suggests that men are more accurate in regards to estimation of time intervals, whereas women show tendencies to underestimate time (Rammsayer & Lustnauer, 1989). This may explain why the participants react negatively to situations where they encounter longer periods of wait. In addition, researchers suggest men to be more driven by needs than women. Thereby, men are primarily motivated by the purchase of the product whilst women are more experience-orientated when shopping. This might be derived from men and women activating different parts of their brains when solving tasks. Consequently, women can identify and control emotions to a greater extent than men, as men are more focused on tasks and thereby are more concerned of time (Falk & Campbell, 1997). One may therefore suggest that the participants do shop for leisure, but experience larger annoyance by elements that delay the shopping.

4.2.2   Store-Loyal

4.2.2.1   Empirical Findings

The participants showed tendencies of returning to the same stores when purchasing fashion wear. This loyal behavior has previously been identified and confirmed in studies in India by Canabal (2002) and in the United Kingdom by Mitchell and Bates (1998) and Bakewell and Mitchell (2006) as *Store-Loyal.*

Store-Loyal entails being loyal to a store itself, rather than the products sold in the store (Mitchell & Bates, 1998). Thereby, *Store-Loyal* can be distinguished from *Brand Consciousness* and *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption*. Some of the participants stated that the service offered in stores was a vital factor when considering to purchase fashion wear. As expressed by FG3P4, *"I have my favorite stores, the store staff always recognize me"* and FG1P1, *"I am loyal to stores which represents things I value"* and FG4P2, *"I return to stores I*

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feel secure and comfortable in". There was an overall consent regarding the feeling of uneasiness when the store staff was too intrusive and made the participants feel watched or not left in private. This was an overwhelming emotion that evoked negative feelings towards stores, which lead to the participants avoiding these stores. It was vital for all of the participants that the atmosphere and social environment of the store, fostered calm and non-stressful surroundings. FG3P2 explains, *"If the staff cannot understand me sufficiently and is too keen on selling me things, it makes me uncomfortable and I will leave the store right away"*. FG3P2 adds, *"I really appreciate service that feels genuine and where I can decide for myself if I want help or advice, otherwise I will easily feel insecure and pressured"*. Consequently, comfort, trust and professional service were deemed important which made the participants loyal to stores. In addition, some participants found it easier to return to a store where they knew what to expect. This reduced their insecurities.

Furthermore, the layout of the store was seen as significant as the accessibility of fashion wear items was important. Big and open spaces, with few rather than several items, was preferred by all participants as it enabled for simple browsing. In addition, concerns regarding the layout of the fitting rooms, such as bad lighting and crowded rooms, affected the decision-making. FG4P1 explains, *"If I feel ugly or pale when trying things, I hardly ever buy anything. In some fitting rooms you really feel comfortable and you clearly see if the clothes look good on you"*. Some of the participants explained that if the process of trying on the item was arduous, the store was avoided in the future. This was in terms of how the process made one feel or in terms of the time and energy it consumed.

4.2.2.1   Analysis

National Culture Influences

One of the most prominent factors that made the participants feel uneasy, was if the store staff was considered as intrusive, which evoked feelings of disrespect of privacy. This is supported by Underhill (2010) who claim men to dislike asking for assistance while browsing in stores as they prefer retaining information on their own. In addition, Swedes have been described as introvert, which is defined as having a less need to communicate and lesser reliance upon others' evaluation (Daun, 1987). This may be due to that communicating with unknown people might connect to anxiety and is thereby a negative feeling that individuals seek to avoid. The comfort of communicating grows if there are recurring encounters with the store staff, which occurs when consumers return to the same stores (Daun, 1987). This supports the findings, as the participants often returned to stores where they trusted the staff and felt comfortable.

Social Influences

It has been suggested that men seek convenience when shopping, and factors that would interfere or cause delay, make men abandon the store (Bateson, 1985). This may be related to *Time-Energy Conserving*, where the participants seek to limit the time spent on shopping. One may suggest that men are loyal to stores where they feel comfortable and accustomed, which consequently saves them time and energy. Moreover, the strive for familiarity and comfort might stem from the need of being in control of one's appearance, rather than being perceived as exposed and vulnerable in new situations. Researchers suggest that the perceived control by the consumer, may have considerable effects on people's decision-making (Bateson, 1985). Men in particular, have shown to be characterized by the desire to be in control and be seen as being in control. Consequently, situations that may jeopardize men's feeling of control, affects their decision-making (Conway, 2004). In contrast, the participants valued assistance in high involvement purchases. The participants showed tendencies to return to stores where they

relied on the store staff to be professional and competent. However, the participants claimed that it was important for them to be in control and that the service was delivered on the participants' own terms.

4.2.3　　　　Self-Identity Consciousness

4.2.3.1　　Empirical Findings

During the focus groups a new theme arose concerning how fashion wear personified the participants and their self-identities. This widely discussed theme showed to be important to the participants when shopping fashion wear. The participants expressed a conscious behavior of reflecting their self-identity by their fashion wear. Therefore, *Self-Identify Consciousness* is suggested to be included in the CSI when adopted to the Swedish context.

Self-Identify Consciousness has not been identified or confirmed in previous CSI research mentioned in this thesis. A distinct consciousness was present among the participants regarding what image they wished to transmit by their fashion wear. Most participants knew specifically what their fashion wear conveyed and how they wanted to be perceived by their fashion wear. As said by FG1P4, *"I want to be a person who shops sustainable clothing, I like to identify with that"* and by FG4P5, *"My clothes are an extension of myself"*. Most participants frequently mentioned the importance of the fashion wear's image, as well as feeling cool when wearing fashion items. FG1P3 said, *"My clothes make me feel confident"*. However, contradicting facts arose during the discussion regarding self-identity. This was as the participants who claimed that their fashion wear represented their personal identity, also claimed that they strived to fit in and seeking social acceptance. As expressed by FG4P5, *"My clothes make me feel like I fit in"*.

FG4P4 expressed that his clothes were a reflection of himself and he strived to look cool. This was strengthened by FG1P1 who described his clothes as his uniform and by FG1P3 who expressed that his selection of clothes highly impacts his performance in school and at work. In addition, FG4P4 said, *"My clothes represent my personal brand, expression and image"*. FG4P3 further strengthened this by explaining that his clothes was his legitimacy and his way of expression. As said by FG4P3, *"My clothes show that I belong here"* which suggests a strive for social acceptance. PG4P5 stated, *"Now, I want to dress right, but it doesn't have to be the "right" brands"* and as expressed by FG1P1, *"A brand does not represent me, but my clothes do"*. These statements mirror the participants' disinterest in brands, and stronger interest in fashion wear which reflects their individual ipseity. The overall theme among the participant were that fashion wear, not the brands, reflected their identity, personal expression and image. Therefore, the participants suggestively display *Self-Identity Consciousness* rather than *Brand Consciousness*.

Most participants retrieved shopping inspiration from American TV-series, men's magazines, advertising and movies. In addition, a large amount of the participants claimed to actively engage in searching for inspiration, using social medias such as Pinterest, Instagram and blogs. As said by FG1P4, *"I dress like the person I would like to become"* claiming to integrate his everyday clothes with his spare time activities, seeking lifestyle brands. Moreover, most participants claimed to be inspired by friends, acquaintances and unacquainted people in school or in the streets. The inspiration was important as it places fashion wear in a context and an outfit, rather than solely seeing one independent garment. Placing fashion wear in a context, was claimed to de-obfuscate the shopping experience as it simplified decision-making, a behavior aligned with *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness*. Some participants also agreed that they strived to be as their source of inspiration and therefore, shopped for similar clothes as they have previously seen. However, these participants also claimed that it was important to not have

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identical clothes as their friends. FG1P5 expressed, "*I use my friends as inspiration, but I don't strive to look identical to them*".

4.2.3.1   Analysis

Environmental Influences

Postmodernist developments and the high level of involvement when shopping fashion wear, are likely to have affected the empirical finding of the new theme *Self-Identity Consciousness*. This may be explained by Generation Y being raised in the postmodern society which has impacted their norms and values (Forsman et al., 2009; Lundberg & Gullstrand, 2006). As conceptualized in postmodern consumer culture, self-identity is a symbolic process which is actively created and managed through consumption. All voluntary consumption carries symbolic meanings, either unconsciously, subconsciously or consciously, making it a process of symbolic self-completion (Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 2013). Researcher have found deeper relationships between materialistic cultures and societies, where consumption of products give meaning to individual's lives. Furthermore, symbolic consumption can establish and communicate fundamental cultural values such as tradition, authenticity and family and vital cultural categories such as gender, age and social status (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2015).

National Culture Influences

Shopping for fashion wear is an important part of the Swedish postmodern society, in which consumption serve as a tool for individuals to create own self-identities and reach self-actualization (Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2008). Also, appearance is suggested to play a central role in Swedish culture, where style acts as a substitute for identities and where image is more important than personality. Fashion wear consumption has become a tool used in the creation and communication of self-identities as it displays what a person is, and what the person is not. In addition, consumption of fashion wear has transcended from being a functional activity to being a symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic activity related to individuals' self-identity (Castillo Velasquez & Hedegran, 2013). This aligns with the empirical findings of this thesis, as the participants claimed to use fashion wear as tool for personal expression. It also corresponds to the participants viewing fashion wear as an extension of themselves that represents their self-identity.

Social Influences

As previously mentioned in *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness,* fashion wear is a high involvement product for individuals, as it exhibits high symbolic and emotional meaning, high social visibility and high personal relevance. High involvement products helps consumers' express self-identities or personalities, which further strengthens the connection between self-identity and fashion wear among the participants. The symbolic meaning of high involvement products assists in the construction of self-identities, and is built in two directions; social-symbolism and self-symbolism. This means that specific products both convey important meanings to others (social) and represent special meanings to individuals (self) (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2015). This aligns with the empirical findings of this thesis, as the participants claim to use both fashion wear as a representation of themselves and as a tool for social acceptance. In addition, one may suggest that the use of traditional and social media serve as important factors for the self- and social symbolism of the participants.

Cultural Dimension Influences

Individualistic national cultures are more frequently apparent in wealthy countries, such as Sweden. Societies of individualistic countries are characterized by being loosely integrated, with nationals being motivated by self-actualization and self-respect (Hofstede, 1983). Individualism has become a lifestyle where products, such as fashion wear, strengthens the existence of individuals (Hultén, 2008). One may therefore suggest that fashion wear is one method for the participants to reach self-actualization and achieve self-respect. However, in individualistic countries, individuals strive for belonging. This is a defense mechanism which is constructed to avoid exclusion from the collectivism of society (Goffman, 1959; Kristoffersson & Ottosson, 2013). This aligns with the empirical findings where the participants described fashion wear as a tool for reaching social acceptance. This is supported by Kleine, Kleine and Allen (1995) who state that symbolic consumption portrays the essence of people's individuality. However, it also assists in categorizing people in society by reflecting desirable connections with others. This may also reflect the participants' fear of deviating from the crowd and being judged by not wearing the right fashion wear.

5   Conclusion and Discussion

In this chapter, the results of the analysis is summarized. Firstly, the conclusion of the research question is presented. Secondly, the discussion section shows contributions of the conducted research for researchers and practitioners. Furthermore, limitations of the conducted research and opportunities for future research are addressed. Lastly, the strengths and weaknesses of this thesis are discussed.

5.1   Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to contribute to existing literature by investigating the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context. The unique contextual factors of the study were; location (*Sweden*), gender *(male),* age factor (*Generation Y*), definition of product (*fashion wear*) and methodology (*qualitative*). By investigating the applicability of the CSI, the aim was to obtain an understanding of potential influences on decision-making in this context. In order to attain this purpose, a systematic literature review was conducted to identify potential national, gender and environmental impacts influencing the applicability of the CSI. Collection of primary data was conducted in the form of focus groups, as the aim was to obtain a deep understanding of decision-making styles in a Swedish context. This was as previous studies mainly conducted quantitative data research and neglected to provide deeper comprehension of the applicability of the CSI. Consequently, a need to address this neglect arose.

Furthermore, the focus groups enabled this thesis to detect recurring themes that aligns with the factors presented in the original CSI. Through this investigation, all the original factors were indicated to be present in the Swedish context. However, these were shown present to various extents; *widely discussed themes*, *generally discussed themes* and *not generally discussed themes*. In addition, three new themes were distinguished in the empirical findings (Table 4). As a result, the CSI needs modification when placed in this Swedish context. This result serves as foundation for future research on the applicability of the CSI.

The empirical findings and analysis support previous research stating that environment and gender impacts decision-making styles of consumers. In the Swedish context, the most widely discussed themes were the factors *Recreational*, *Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness*, *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness, Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness, Confusion from Overchoice* and *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption*. The factors *Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness* and *Impulsiveness* were generally discussed themes while *Brand Consciousness* was not generally discussed by the participants, showing lesser support in the Swedish context.

Consumers belonging to Generation Y are in the midst of a changing retail environment allowing for greater access to products and brands, than prior generations. Consequently, Generation Y consumers are more prone to be *Recreational*, *Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness*, *Novelty-Fashion Consciousness* and *Confusion from Overchoice,* which is supported in the empirical findings. In addition, changing gender roles in Sweden have allowed men to pursue shopping differently, and deviate from any norms identifying shopping solely as a female pastime. Furthermore, Sweden is characterized as an individualistic country where individualism has become a lifestyle and products strengthen the existence of individuals and their self-identities. This was a recurring theme in the empirical findings, and was found as one reason to why participants showed *Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption*

behavior. Another theme identified, was the importance of shopping fashion wear with a good fit, which would mirror the participants' identity and personal style. As a result, the new factor *Self-Identity Consciousness* was derived. This was as the participants claimed to use fashion wear as a tool for personal expression. The factor shown to be unique for this study and has not been identified in previous literature. The empirical findings confirmed the notion that appearance has a central role in the Swedish culture, where style acts as a substitute for identities and where image is more important than personality. Two other new themes which arose in the empirical findings were *Time-Energy Conserving* and *Store-Loyal*. As the participants sought to minimize time and effort spent when shopping, the store environment including its staff, was deemed important and impactful. This resulted in *Time-Energy Conserving* and *Store-Loyal* arising as themes.

This research serves as contribution to existing literature on decision-making styles by having investigated the applicability of the CSI in a Swedish context. The CSI requires modification when applied to this Swedish context. This supports previous academic literature suggesting that the CSI needs modification when placed in various cultural contexts. Contextual influences, such as national culture, social, cultural dimensions, retail environment, economic, societal and the development of the country are influential on the decision-making styles of male Swedish student belonging to Generation Y on fashion wear.

Key Contributions	
Widely Discussed Themes	41
Novelty-Fashion Consciousness	Widely Discussed Theme
Recreational, Hedonistic Shopping Consciousness	Widely Discussed Theme
Price and "Value for Money" Shopping Consciousness	Widely Discussed Theme
Confusion from Overchoice	Widely Discussed Theme
Habitual, Brand-Loyal Orientation toward Consumption	Widely Discussed Theme
Generally Discussed Themes	
Perfectionism and High-Quality Consciousness	Generally Discussed Theme
Impulsiveness	Generally Discussed Theme
Not Generally Discussed Themes	
Brand Consciousness	Not Generally Discussed Theme
New Identified Themes	
Time-Energy Conserving	New Identified Theme
Store-Loyal	New Identified Theme
Self-Identity Consciousness	New Identified Theme

Table 4 Table of Key Contributions

5.2   Discussion

5.2.1   Contributions

This thesis is a contribution to the academic body of consumer behavior by having investigated the applicability of the decision-making styles framework CSI in a Swedish context. By the use of unique contextual factors, location (*Sweden*), gender *(male),* age factor (*Generation Y*), definition of product (*fashion wear*) and methodology (*qualitative*), this thesis provides value to practitioners, individuals consumers, consumer-interest professionals and marketers of fashion companies in Sweden.

Non-Academic Contributions: The main implication for individual consumers is that the CSI may be used in education regarding consumer styles. Identifying themes in the

consumption patterns of individuals, may assist consumers in their management of personal finances as well as in family counselling.

Academic Contributions: The qualitative approach of this thesis, can serve as a foundation for further quantitative studies regarding the applicability of the CSI in Sweden. This is the main implication for researchers and consumer-interest professionals. A quantitative method has the possibility to further test and validate the empirical findings of this thesis. Especially, the three new themes identified in this thesis, *Time-Energy Conserving, Store-Loyal* and *Self-Identity Consciousness,* should be tested. In addition, the empirical findings contribute to previous academic literature, as it acknowledges the need to adapt the CSI when placed in various contexts.

Managerial Contributions: This thesis may serve as an instrument for businesses, managers and marketers, to gain a deeper understanding of Swedish male students belonging to Generation Y, on fashion wear. Furthermore, this understanding may be extended and applied to other contexts. It may be extended to other environmental contexts which have been influenced by similar global influences as Sweden. Suggestively, it can be expanded to men belonging to Generation Y in other Northern contexts, such as Norway, Finland or Denmark. Finally, it may be extended to additional product categories and industries other than fashion wear.

5.2.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Several limitations have been acknowledged in previous literature and in this thesis. Firstly, the use of student samples places limitations on the generalizability of the results, as it does not represent the entire population (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004; Canabal, 2002; Fan & Xiao, 1998; Hanzaee & Aghasibeig, 2008; Hiu et al., 2001; Lysonski et al., 1996; Mishra, 2010; Mitchell & Bates, 1998; Mokhlis, 2009; Mokhlis & Salleh, 2009; Omar et al., 2009). For example, the degree of education which students possess, may affect the outcome and the generalizability of the result. Also, the relatively low age of students can limit the generalizability of the results, as their young age is not representative of all age groups of a country's population (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004). Segments that are non-students, might reveal decision-making styles that are different from those of students. Future studies are encouraged to investigate the applicability of the CSI on multiple age groups, to achieve a further understanding of the framework.

Secondly, as many studies have used samples, predominantly containing women, gender differences may have been overlooked which further limits the generalizability of the results. As this study, solely places focused on men, these limitations remain. Future studies are encouraged to investigate the CSI by including both genders to increase the generalizability of the result.

Thirdly, few studies have taken different levels of product involvement into account, which may have implications for the decision-making styles of consumers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Hence, the focus on fashion wear in this thesis, limits the applicability of the CSI on all product categories. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to examine different product categories with various levels of involvement, when applying the CSI.

Fourthly, the phenomenon of globalization is continuously influencing the international business environment of today and the consumer behavior of individuals (Mishra, 2010). Thereby, external forces such as technological influences have impacted the dynamic marketplace, and the need to further investigate these changes is therefore advocated (Gupta, 2011). Influences from new technology, such as social media were identified to affect the

decision-making styles in the empirical findings of this thesis. These modern influences are suggested to be investigated in future research as it might generate interesting implications for the decision-making styles of consumers.

Fifthly, the research approach of this thesis was qualitative in nature and focus groups were held with relatively small sample of 20 participants. Consequently, the empirical findings cannot be generalized to a greater population nor the Generations Y age cohort as a whole. Thus, the empirical findings are unique to the participants of this thesis and are not to be generalized. Considering the data adequacy, the sample was restricted to Generation Y students between the age of 18 to 25. Therefore, this thesis is limited by sample diversity as not the entire Generation Y, born between 1970 to 2000, was tested. Also, possible social desirability bias among the focus group participants may have affected the results of this thesis when speaking about fashion wear.

In addition, as the researchers were integral parts of the data collection, the interpretivist research perspective underlying this thesis, serves potential limitations to the results. Cultural or personal bias of the researchers may have been influential to the data collection and interpretation. However, quotes made by the participants were used in order to increase the objectivity of the empirical findings. Still, as the quotes originally were made in Swedish, and later translated by the researchers, misinterpretations may have occurred.

Lastly, it is strongly encouraged to further investigate the three newly identified themes in this thesis. The additional themes; *Time-Energy Conserving, Store-Loyal* and *Self-Identity Consciousness* contributes to future research by acknowledging the need for adapting the CSI when put in various contexts. Furthermore, a quantitative approach is suggested to further strengthen the validity and reliability of the newly identified themes in the Swedish context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Previous Findings on Consumer Decision-Making Styles

A summary of previous findings is available under the following link:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1munM2ZTStjIbxVIiGetJeB5LEyAuCMocVo3N4fS6eUs/edit?usp=sharing

The sheet provides explanations of how to interpret the summary.

Appendix 2: Overview of Focus Group Participants

Focus Group 1	Age	Civil Status	Place of Birth	Employment
FG1P1	25	In a relationship	Sölvesborg	Employed
FG1P2	23	In a relationship	Västerås	Unemployed
FG1P3	25	Single	Göteborg	Sole proprietor
FG1P4	25	Single	Göteborg	Unemployed
FG1P5	22	Single	Jönköping	Employed

Focus Group 2	Age	Civil Status	Place of Birth	Employment
FG2P1	23	In a relationship	Ulricehamn	Unemployed
FG2P2	23	In a relationship	Göteborg	Unemployed
FG2P3	25	In a relationship	Norrköping	Employed
FG2P4	22	Single	Stockholm	Unemployed
FG2P5	23	Single	Partille	Employed

Focus Group 3	Age	Civil Status	Place of Birth	Employment
FG3P1	20	Single	Mora	Unemployed
FG3P2	25	Single	Stockholm	Unemployed
FG3P3	23	In a relationship	Stockholm	Employed
FG3P4	22	Single	Lund	Unemployed
FG3P5	20	In a relationship	Umeå	Unemployed

Focus Group 4	Age	Civil Status	Place of Birth	Employment
FG4P1	21	Single	Kalmar	Unemployed
FG4P2	18	Single	Uppsala	Unemployed
FG4P3	19	In a relationship	Uddevalla	Employed
FG4P4	20	Single	Stockholm	Unemployed
FG4P5	21	In a relationship	Uppsala	Employed

Appendix 3: Script of Focus Groups

1. Introduction of moderators and note takers

2. Thank participants for participation and offer refreshments and snacks

3. Ask for permission to record the discussion and sign confidentiality agreement

4. Present main topic of the studied field

"Vår kandidat uppsats handlar om att undersöka manligt köpbeteende vid köp av mode och det är därför ni är här. Målgruppen är svenska studerande män i åldrarna 18-25."

5. Ask participants to introduce themselves, create name tags and answer four basic questions to make participants comfortable

"Kan alla börja med att presentera sig själva, sin relations status, ålder, jobb vid sidan av studierna och födelseort."

6. Present the scenario

"Tänk dig att du är och shoppar..."

"Föreställ er att ni ska köpa mode, hur går ni till väga, vad prioriterar ni, hur tänker ni? Vad är viktigt för er? Ni kan skriva flera saker"

7. Introduce the mind map and the colored pens, to the participants including their associations related to the sentence:

"Det här är viktigt för mig"

8. Raise discussion regarding notes written on the mind map (with open-ended questions)

"Här står det pris, hur influerar pris ert köpbeteende? "

Allmänna följdfrågor (Follow-up questions)
- *Kan du utveckla?*
- *Varför tror du det kommer sig?*
- *Tror du det är en faktor som underlättar?*
- *Är det någon som kan tillägga något till vad han precis sa?*
- *Finns det några andra åsikter?*
- *"Påverkas du av XX?" (stress?)*
- *Varför tänker du så?*

Shoppingprocessen (The shopping process)
- *Varför shoppar du? Ex: nytta/nöje*
- *När shoppar du? Ex: vid rea?*
- *Hur ofta shoppar du?*
- *Var shoppar du? Ex: varuhus, köpcenter, utomlands, stan*
- *Hur reflekterar du kring dina köp?*

Är shopping en del av en annan aktivitet? (Is the shopping a part of another activity?)
- *Vilken prisklass hamnar du i? Ex: låg, medel, hög*
- *Inspiration eller källa till inspiration? Ex: blogg?*
- *Var och när inspireras du? Ex: skyltdockor, blogg, andra män, tv, marknadsföring, actors role models, Hollywood. Ex: före under köp*

- *Spelar produkten någon roll? Ex: spelar det roll med sportkläder, finkläder, andra kläder*
- *Viktiga attribut på kläder? Ex: passform, färg, kvalitet, funktion, modernitet*
- *Handlar du saker utöver det som man bestämd sedan innan?. Ex: oplanerade köp*
- *"Varför ska shopping gå fort?"*

Köpbesultet (The decision)
- *Produktattribut Ex: märke*
- *Budget*
- *Kvalitét*
- *När väljer du att köpa eller slår till? Ex: väntar, funderar, går tillbaka och testar fler gånger? Köpa och lämna tillbaka? Ex: spontanköp*
- *När väljer du att inte köpa och slår till?*
- *Avgörande faktorer vid köp?*
- *Ja eller nej-sägare*
- *Underlätta beslutsfattandet genom att köpa märke?*
- *Tidsaspekt? Ex: planerar shopping eller sker på impuls?*

Miljö (Environment)
- *Tillänglighet av butiker?*
- *Provrum och betydelse av dessa*
- *Produktutbud i butik? Ex: "Är det viktigt hur många varumärken butiken har?"*
- *Indirekt varumärkeslojal för att samma butiker väljs*
- *Handla av vana? Ex: när CSN kommer? Gå till samma butik? Köpa samma märken av vana?*

Motiv (Motives)
- *Handlar vid behov? Ex: kläder för ett ändamål? Hur vet du när du behöver handla?*
- *Handlar eller fönstershopping för nöjes skull?*
- *Handlar av intresse?*
- *Handlar på ett visst sätt i Jönköping jämfört med hemstad?*
- *Shopping som upplevelse eller som ett måste?*
- *Handla vid rea?*
- *Mål med shopping? Spotant eller planerat?*
- *Hur finansierar du din shopping?*

Känslor (State of Mind)
- *Engagemang vid köp?*
- *Nöjdhet av känsla, butik, märket*

Påverkan (Social Reasons)
- *Påverkan av familj? Ex:partner eller butikspersonal*
- *Påverkan av social media*
- *Påverkan av butiksmiljö? Ex: butikspersonal och dess kunskap, service, professionellt, bemötande*
- *Påverkan av gender roles*
- *Grupptryck*
- *Coolhet*
- *Metrosexuell*
- *Vem shoppar du med? Påverkas du av dessa? Ex: varför shoppar du i själv? Med tjejer eller killar? Betydelse av detta?*

Jaget (Ipseity)
- *Kläder som reflektion av mig själv*
- *Kläder som representerar mig*

9. Ask for additional information

10. Present mind map containing the CSI by Sproles and Kendall (1986)

11. Raise discussion regarding the CSI (with open-ended questions)

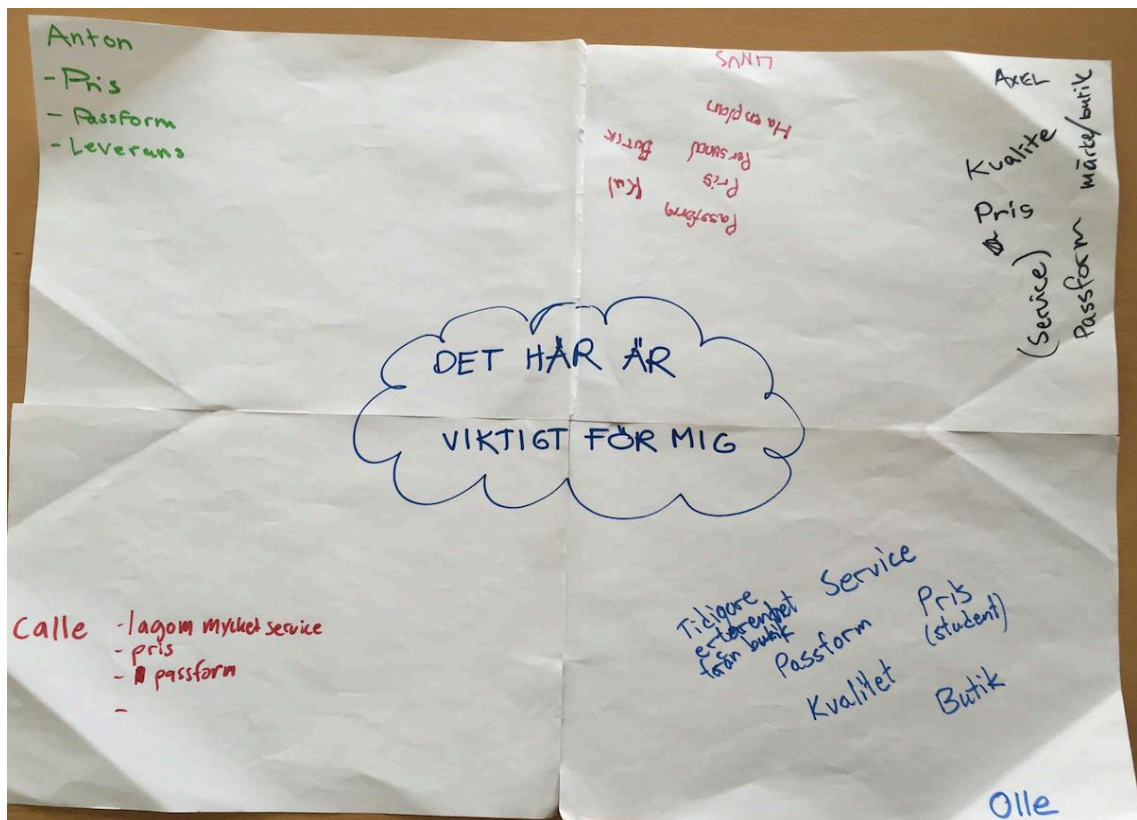12. Thank the participants for coming

13. Close focus groups

Appendix 4: Mind Map from Focus Group 1
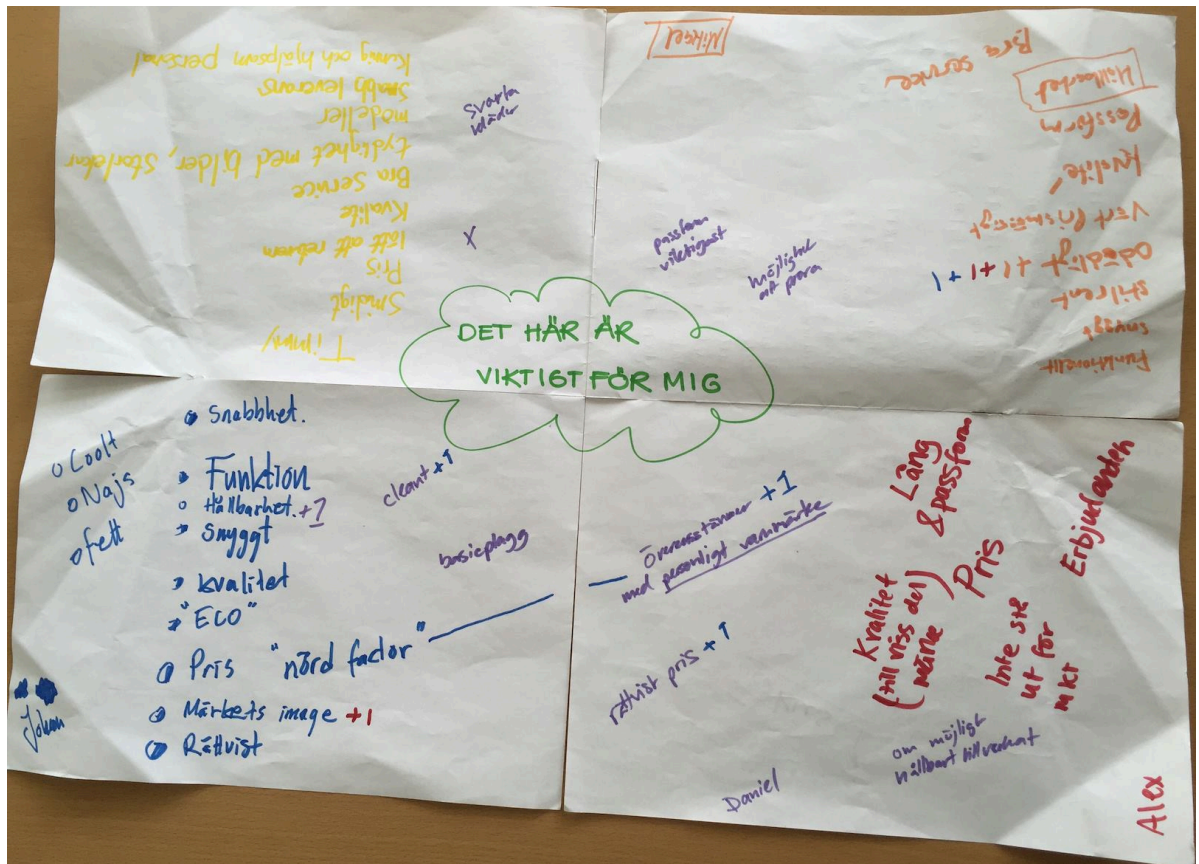
Appendix 5: Mind Map from Focus Group 2
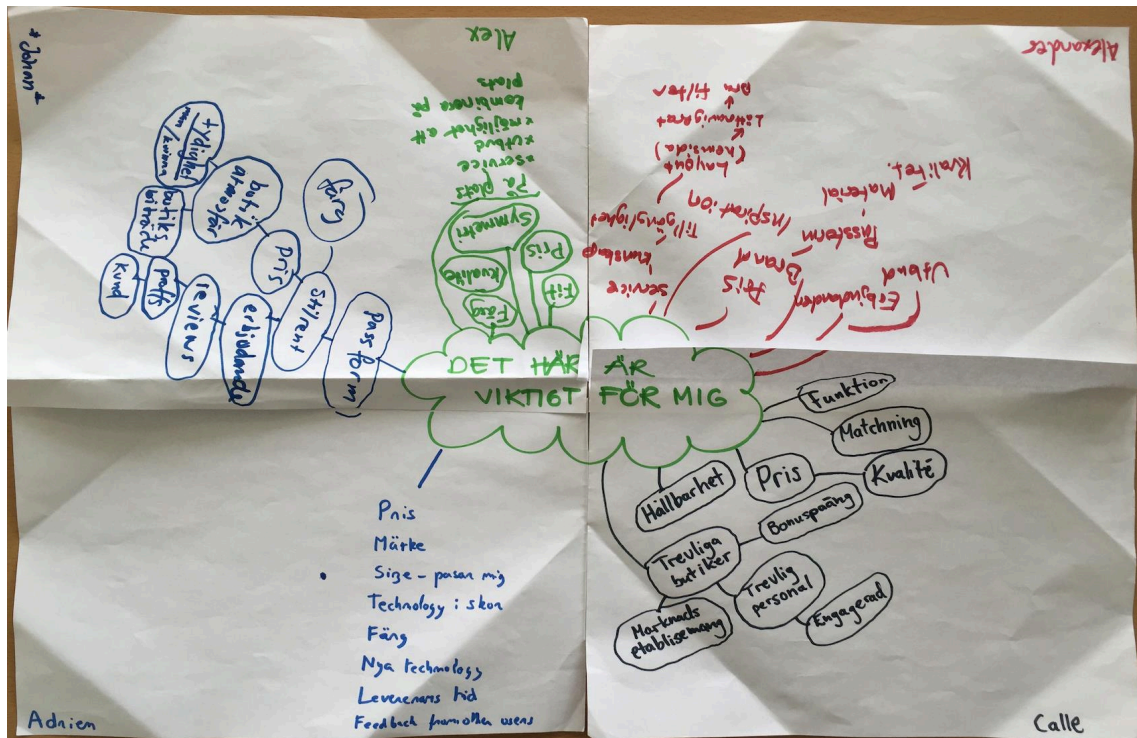
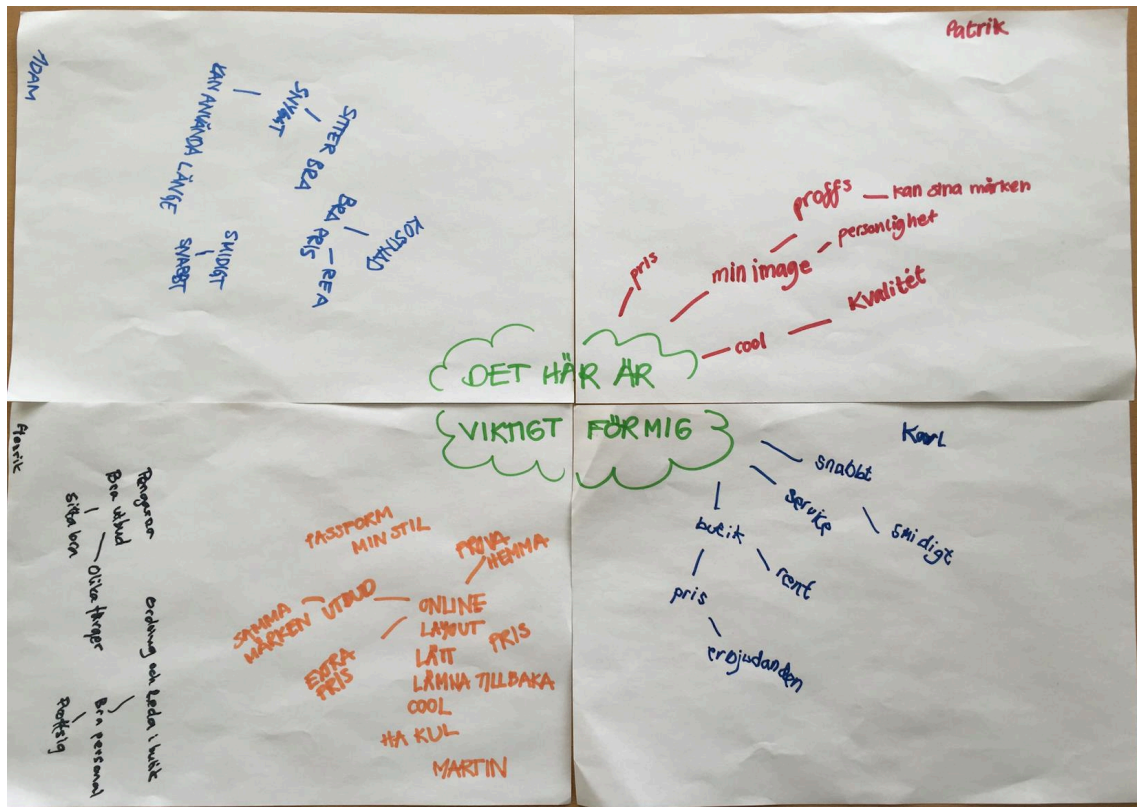Appendix 6: Mind Map from Focus Group 3

Appendix 7: Mind Map from Focus Group 4

Appendix 8: Mind Map of the Eight Factor Model