



**Bachelor Thesis, 15 credits, for a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: International Business and Marketing.
Spring 2019**

Consumer experience: An exploratory study of why consumers chose to buy groceries online.

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Title

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Abstract

Traditional grocery shopping has been the only option for Swedish consumers to purchase groceries for a long time. However, the relatively new format, online grocery shopping is rapidly growing in popularity. Hence, consumers are presented with a completely new grocery shopping experience which has different advantages and disadvantages.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore which advantages and disadvantages consumers experience with offline, and online grocery shopping to answer the question why consumers chose to buy groceries online.

A conceptual model has been developed based on earlier research on grocery shopping, consumer experience and the four dimensions of the marketing mix; product, place, price and promotion. Qualitative data has been collected from two focus groups and five semi-structured interviews to explore what advantages and disadvantages consumers experience connected to offline and online grocery shopping and to understand why consumers chose to buy groceries online.

All respondents shared most of the experienced advantages of online grocery shopping. The main reasons why consumers chose to purchase groceries online was to save both time and effort. Moreover, consumers experienced that they saved money due to less spontaneous purchases and fewer shopping trips per week.

Online grocery shopping is growing in popularity. Hence, this thesis gives insights relevant to practitioners and academics on why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. The findings of this thesis could help online grocery retailers to respond more efficiently to consumers' needs and preferences.

Keywords

Consumer Experience, Offline Grocery Shopping, Online Grocery Shopping, Channel Choice, The Marketing Mix

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the end of our bachelor studies but at the same time, the beginning of a new chapter. We would like to start by extending a special gratitude to our supervisor Indira Kjellström, for her engagement, support and constructive comments.

Furthermore, we would like to thank Annika Fjelkner for her genuine encouragement and input on language and format. Without these women, we would not have managed to write this thesis. Another gratitude to all the respondents that shared their valuable opinions and made our thesis possible.

Finally, we would like to thank each other for good teamwork, rewarding discussions, great ideas and countless hours of hard work.

Kristianstad, 2019-05-29

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1. Introduction

This chapter will present the background and problematization behind why consumers experience a desire to shop groceries online. The chapter then moves on to our research question, the purpose of this thesis and the limitations.

1.1. Background

The first supermarket was opened in 1930 on Long Island, USA (Ingene & Hee, 2014). The supermarket was a combination of speciality food stores such as butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers and bakers. Hence, the new type of supermarket offered one-stop food shopping experience and a different consumer experience. Due to the new type of store's product breadth, the supermarket had to be physically large compared to regular grocery stores. What was different and unique with the supermarket concept was selecting a location with low rent and enough room for parking; thus, the suburbs became the obvious choice (Ingene & Hee, 2014). During the 1960s, multiple small grocery stores offering personal service and a lesser product range were replaced by supermarkets with numerous aisles providing a broader product range that we are more familiar with today. This represented an important transformation within consumer experience. Now consumers themselves could come and choose what they wanted from the variety of products. The new store formats were also designed to better fit consumers' preferences (Morganosky, 1997; Kim & Jin, 2001; Prasad & Aryasri, 2011).

Sweden followed a similar development within the grocery retail sector as USA, both in-store format and consumer experience. During the 1990s and 2000s, a low-price oriented attitude of grocery shopping emerged on the Swedish grocery market. More stores were located in the outer areas of cities and consumers experienced a competitive market landscape that intensified as a result of international chains entering the Swedish market (Nilsson, Gärling, Marell & Nordvall, 2015). As a result, the frequency of shopping trips made per week by consumers decreased. However, each shopping trip increased in time spent at the supermarket (Nilsson, Gärling, Marell & Nordvall, 2015). Nowadays, like in many other countries in Europe, the grocery retail market in Sweden is dominated by a few large national retailer chains (Asplund & Friberg, 2002; Burt, 2010; Einarsson, 2008;

Hultman & Elg, 2013). Just like in most other developed countries, these chains consist of different store formats. The Swedish grocery retail market consists of a mixture of hypermarkets, large supermarkets, traditional supermarkets, and convenience stores (Burt, 2010; Einarsson, 2008).

About two decades ago, a new type of store format tried to enter the Swedish grocery market. Matomera was an online grocery store that offered people to buy food online instead of in a physical store. However, in 2001, Matomera were forced to close and had to realise that the market was not yet ready to buy food online (Andersson, 2001). Since 2001, the market has matured, and new online grocery retailers have launched their websites. Nonetheless, online grocery shopping is a relatively new grocery shopping format, and it is rapidly growing in popularity (Benn, Webb, Chang & Reidy, 2015). Since the grocery sector did not offer online purchasing until a couple of years ago, it makes the industry less explored than most other retail sectors (Dawes & Nenycz-Thiel, 2014). The largest grocery retailers in Sweden, ICA, Axfood and KF (Coop) have all launched their own online channels to be able to compete against pure online retailers such as mathem.se and mat.se (Svensk Digital Handel, 2018). According to Svensk Digital Handel (2018), sales of food on the Internet consists of approximately 1,6% of the total food trade in Sweden. Hence, the majority of food purchases are still made in traditional store formats such as hypermarkets, supermarkets and convenience stores. However, there is a strong belief among researchers within the industry that online grocery shopping will continue to grow (Svensk Digital Handel, 2018).

The Internet as a new purchasing channel has also added a new type of consumer experience (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000). Consumer experience could be described as the journey consumers make when they purchase a service or a product (Brynjolfsson, Hu-Yu, & Rahman, 2013). Imagine a consumer who decides to order groceries from an online store instead of visiting a traditional, brick-and-mortar grocery store to purchase groceries. Does this novel online shopper experience the environment of the physical grocery store and the online store differently? Does this shopper view and evaluate products, price and promotions differently? Due to large varieties in channel characteristics between the traditional supermarket and the online environment, the

consumer experience could be expected to differ to some extent. For instance, in a physical store, consumers must walk to the correct aisle to find a product. Whereas an online store allows consumers to find products in several ways. Consumers can, for example, enter a search term, navigate through categories of products or browse special offer pages.

Moreover, consumers can easily access a large and varied amount of information on the online platform. Some of the information consumers could find on the Internet is also available in an offline environment, such as lists of ingredients and price. However, information such as which products are often purchased together could only be found on the Internet (Benn, Webb, Chang & Reidy, 2015). Since there are differences between offline and online grocery channel characteristics, consumers experiences could potentially vary, in terms of what consumers value and prioritise (Anesbury, Nenycz-Thiel, Dawes, & Kennedy, 2016)

1.2. Problematization

Previous studies focusing on online store experience have mainly been carried out in other sectors than the grocery sectors. As grocery shopping differs substantially from purchase behaviours in other retail stores, for example how often consumers buy groceries and how consumers gather information about the goods, findings of these studies are not directly transferable to, and provide little insight into what drives online store experience (Melis, Campo, Breugelmans, & Lamey, 2015). Some researchers have previously explored offline and online grocery shopping in context to individual categories of the marketing mix, product, place, price and promotion. Researchers have for example studied the role product touch has when shopping groceries (Liu, Batra, & Wang, 2017; Peck & Childers, 2003; Rasmus & Asger Nielsen, 2005) and the importance of a wide product assortment (Melis, Campo, Breugelmans, & Lamey, 2015). Location and distance of grocery stores have been addressed by Briesch, Chintagunta & Fox (2009). Price promotions and price comparison in the context of offline and online grocery shopping have been explored by Peinkofer, Esper, Smith, and Williams (2015); Rasmus and Asger Nielsen (2005); Heilman, Nakamoto and Rao, (2002). Lastly, the effect of different types of promotions and marketing strategies has been studied by Glanz and Yaroch, (2004); Pechmann and

Stewart (1990); Becerril-Arreola, Leng, and Parlar (2013). However, there is no previous study to the best of knowledge, addressing all four attributes in the marketing mix concerning consumer experience. Moreover, most of the articles mentioned above are quantitative and from a retailer perspective. Hence, there is a lack of studies from a consumer perspective with a qualitative.

The relevance of this research is noted in several ways. Firstly, most prior research with an offline respectively online approach concentrates on non-grocery contexts (Melis et al., 2015). Secondly, earlier studies are mainly conducted from a retailer perspective and measure attributes such as sales and stock market returns (Melis et al., 2015). Thirdly, no earlier research has to our knowledge combined all four attributes of the marketing mix. Thus, our research will provide a more comprehensive picture of why consumers choose to start shopping groceries in an online channel, taking into consideration all four attributes of the marketing mix. Moreover, we will receive a greater understanding of the level of impact each dimension has on consumer experience and gather new insights on what consumers value the most. There is still little consensus on which dimensions that affect the offline and online consumer experience. Hence, further research needs to be conducted to fill this gap of knowledge (Schaupp & Bélanger, 2005).

Why consumers choose to change their purchasing pattern is a central question to answer for firms and policymakers in order to meet consumers expectations. Melis et al. (2015) studied if consumers previous Internet experience could have an impact on why consumers hesitate to shop groceries online. Melis et al. (2015) theorised that the less familiar a consumer is with the online shopping environment, the higher a consumer experience the perceived risk of online shopping. A low previous experience of online shopping will lead these shoppers to rely on their offline store experiences and preferences when choosing an online store for the first time (Melis et al., 2015). Important to mention, however, is that consumers do not make all their grocery purchases on the Internet since the consumers do not see that as a possibility. Due to the inevitable delivery time, the online platform creates an obstacle for the occasional “emergency purchase” (Ramus & Asger Nielsen, 2005). Hence, it is unrealistic to assume that a consumer that starts buying groceries online completely stops to buy groceries offline regardless of

previous Internet experience. Nevertheless, examining why consumers experience a desire to shop groceries online and the advantages and disadvantages the change entails, is to our best knowledge, yet to be explored.

Additionally, online grocery shopping is becoming increasingly popular among consumers. Huyghe, Verstraeten, Geuens, and Van Kerckhove (2017) explain that in a survey from 2012, consumers expressed 44% higher interest in online grocery shopping compared with the 2010 rates. The results suggest great urgency in the pursuit to understand better how consumers experience online grocery shopping and the perceived advantages and disadvantages connected to online grocery shopping (Huyghe, Verstraeten, Geuens, and Van Kerckhove (2017). Moreover, discovering unexplored consumer perceptions about the online and offline shopping environment represents an important theoretical contribution. The behaviour of online consumers cannot be presumed to be identical to the behaviour of offline consumers. Instead, research points to that it is likely that consumers may demonstrate different attitudes towards online shopping than they do to the more familiar activity of offline shopping (Loketkrawee & Bhatiasevi, 2018). Thus, there is a need to understand how consumers shopping experience differs between offline and online shopping. Exploring how consumers experience offline, respectively, online grocery shopping will be a fundamental step towards understanding why consumers are attracted to buying their groceries online instead of offline. It is, therefore, of the essence to investigate why consumers choose to buy groceries online and the advantages and disadvantages consumers experience in the offline and online environment. Also, more interestingly why consumers experience a desire to shop groceries online.

1.3. Research Question

Why do consumers choose to purchase groceries online, and what are the experienced advantages and disadvantages with offline respectively online grocery shopping?

1.4. Research Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore which advantages and disadvantages consumers experience with offline respectively online grocery shopping and more interesting, why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online.

1.5. Limitations

This thesis is provided with a few limitations. Firstly, the collected data was based on five interviews and two focus groups, which is a relatively small sample to ensure that the results are credible. Secondly, most respondents in the interviews and focus groups were in their 20s, and few had children. Hence, other demographic compositions of focus groups or interviews could provide other findings.

1.6. Disposition

Chapter 1 introduces the background and problematization of this thesis to present the relevance of the research question and purpose of the study. *Chapter 2* is the literature review where previous studies related to theoretical concepts explored in this thesis will be presented. In *chapter 3*, the method used in this thesis will be presented from an empirical perspective. *Chapter 4* analyses and concludes the empirical data which has been collected from five semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. Finally, *chapter 5* summarizes the entire thesis, concludes the findings and provide suggestions for further research.

2. Literature review

This chapter is a literature review, and it starts with a section of consumer experience. This section is then followed by previous research in offline and online grocery shopping within the frames of the marketing mix, product, place, price and promotion. Lastly, our conceptual model will be presented.

2.1. Consumer experience

Consumer experience has been defined as something which *"encompasses every aspect of a company's offering—the quality of customer care, of course, but also advertising, packaging, product and service features, ease of use, and reliability"* (Meyer, 2007, p.1). Bäckstöm (2017) define consumer experience as an integrated process of different events that involve pleasurable, relaxing and delightfulness for a consumer. De Keyser, Lemon, Keiningham and Klaus (2015) describe consumer experience as cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial and social elements experienced during the consumers' direct or indirect interaction with an actor on the market. The raw data contained in all direct or indirect interactions then come together as an overall experience (De Keyser et al., 2015). Hence, consumer experience is complex, and it is important for retailers to understand that the consumer experience takes place whether the retailer chooses to influence it or not (Vargo & Lusch, 2008).

Abbot (1955) was one of the earliest scholars to study consumer experience in relation to retailing. He stresses the importance of the experience by stating that *"what people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences"* (Abbot 1955, p. 40). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) further argue that when retailers started to acknowledge consumer experience, the whole atmosphere in grocery stores changed. More than ever before, stores have evolved from the traditional places in which goods are bought and sold into places that communicate and interact with consumers. Consumer experience is therefore explained as playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures and daydreams that are driving the forces of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Companies need to understand what consumers value when grocery shopping to be able to respond to the expectations before, during and after a purchase (Berry, Carbone & Haeckel 2002).

Two of the most widely used concepts in consumer experience are the hedonic and utilitarian values. Utilitarian and hedonic values provide a deeper understanding of the consumer experience and the intention behind consumers purchases (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Since the expansion of the Internet, utilitarian and hedonic values have been extensively applied by marketing scholars in the context of online shopping, online retailing and e-commerce (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2001; Demangeot & Broderick, 2007; Liu & Forsythe, 2010; Pöyry, Parvinen, & Malmivaara, 2013). Hedonic values explain that the best action is the one that gives the highest amount of perceived pleasure and happiness. The hedonic shopper enjoys a shopping trip and strives to have fun and be entertained during the process (Babin et al., 1994; Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). The utilitarian shopper, on the other hand, believes that the best action is the one that maximizes usefulness (Babin et al., 1994). The utilitarian shopper sees shopping as an instrumental and goal orientated activity that accomplish a functional or practical task (Babin et al.,1994; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). In grocery shopping, researchers often use hedonic and utilitarian values to describe the function of a particular good. Hedonic goods are products that evoke positive emotions, and utilitarian goods are necessities (Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson, 2001).

Understanding consumer experience is increasing in interest among academics and practitioners. To enrich consumer experience, it is essential to create a positive in-store feeling in the physical grocery store as well as in the online grocery store. This is done by taking both emotional and rational dimensions into consideration. Emotional dimensions are for example helpful staff and great service while rational dimensions could be logic placements of goods or an easily navigated webpage (Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen, 2014; Petermanns, Janssens & Van Cleempoel, 2013). The importance of service in an online environment is often lead back to whether a consumer fulfils the purchase or not. When consumers are unable to find information, complete transactions or communicate with the customers' service, consumers tend to have a bad experience. An appreciated service feature of online grocery shopping is home delivery. In a physical store, the consumer must collect all groceries on their own, carry the grocery bags and transport the groceries home. While in an online store, consumers order all the goods on a webpage and then the retailer package the ordered goods and deliver the goods

to the consumers front door. Several service quality researchers argue that consumers often choose to shop online because consumers avoid much of the physical effort connected to offline grocery shopping (Holloway & Beatty, 2003). Thus, it is important for online grocery stores to understand how consumers perceive and evaluate the consumer service online and what consumers find challenging when experiencing online shopping for the first time (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005).

According to Gutman (1982), consumers are seeking to satisfy their own individual purchasing goal, and it is not just products and services that are evaluated by consumers. Huang and Oppewal (2006) study indicate that consumers consider cost factors, convenience factors and enjoyment factors when evaluating between online or offline grocery shopping. Cost factors are both fixed and variable costs, were gasoline, and parking tickets are two costs that will reduce if the consumer buys their groceries online. Convenience factors are according to Aylott and Mitchell (1999) psychological costs that are not present in financial terms, such as, time and stress factors. The enjoyment factor is the pleasure that consumers feel during the shopping experience (Huang & Oppewal, 2006). Alba and Hutchinson (1987) believe that many consumers enjoy the shopping experience more than the purchased product. Moreover, research suggests that consumers who enjoy shopping in physical stores are more enticed by the idea of buying products through the Internet since changing behaviour is seen as less challenging (Konus, Verhoef, & Neslin, 2008).

2.2. Offline grocery shopping – Consumer experience

The following section will focus on consumer experience during traditional offline grocery shopping and the four P's of the marketing mix, product, place/placement, price and promotion.

2.2.1. Product

A common advantage experienced by offline grocery consumers is that it is possible to see and touch the products before the purchase. A study by Liu, Batra and Wang (2017) addressed the role product touch has when shopping for groceries. The research focused on how the ability to touch a product prior to the purchase, affects consumers' willingness

to pay and their purchase intentions (Liu, Batra, & Wang, 2017). It was found that purchase intentions were unaffected by the ability or absence of product touch. However, the perceived risk of buying a good was reduced when the consumer could touch a product (so-called haptic information) prior to purchase (Liu, Batra, & Wang, 2017). Peck and Childers (2003) have developed a conceptual framework to illustrate that the need for haptic information differs significantly across products, consumers, and situations. Texture, hardness, temperature, and weight are an example of attributes that could be gathered from haptic information (Peck & Childers, 2003). Consumers experience a higher need to gather haptic information when buying fresh food such as meat, fruits and vegetables (Rasmus & Asger Nielsen, 2005). Other researchers believe that the hedonic or utilitarian nature of a product has a greater impact on the need for product touch. Hedonic goods are products that evoke positive emotions, and utilitarian goods are necessities. The perceived risk is higher when buying a hedonic good compared to when purchasing a utilitarian good. Thus, consumers experience a greater need touching a product and gather haptic information if the product is hedonic in its nature (Hoch, Bradlow, & Wansink, 1999; Desai & Ratneshwar, 2003; Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow, & Young, 2009). Nevertheless, there seem to be some uncertainties about how product touch and the need for haptic information affect consumers' perceived risk, purchase intentions and willingness to pay.

Besides research on the need for product touch and haptic information, multiple studies have researched the role of product assortment in grocery shopping. The assortment in a grocery store could be defined as the number of different items in a product category (Lombart, Labbé-Pinlon, Filser, Antéblan, & Louis, 2018). Thus, the retailers' assortment is made up of international, national and local products offered by the brands of major companies or by the brands of smaller producers or by private labels (Lombart et al., 2018). According to Briesch, Chintagunta and Fox (2009), consumers value a wide assortment, which increases the traffic to the physical grocery stores. However, too many products to choose from could be overwhelming as well. As long as a consumer's preferred product or brand is available, consumers experience a lower need for a large variety of brands (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000). According to Lombart et al. (2018), the demand for locally produced goods has grown recently. Locally produced goods have

become a natural part of the basic offer of grocery stores, and something consumers expect to find in their local supermarket. Moreover, Verbeke and Roosen (2009) found that a high share of consumers in Europe are willing to pay a higher price for food with a local origin.

2.2.2. Place

According to Svensk Handel (2018), the location of the physical retail store often depends on the size and offerings of the store. Bigger retail stores with a larger variety of products are usually located in the outskirts of a town or city while convenience stores or smaller supermarkets are located close to residential areas (Svensk Handel, 2018). Grocery shopping is a frequent activity. Hagberg and Holmberg (2017) mention that more than 90 per cent of consumers buy food for the household at least once a week, and nearly two-thirds of consumers buy food several times a week. Shorter distances to the grocery store indicate more frequent trips to the store than longer distances. However, it is worth mentioning that several times a week is the most common frequency, regardless of the distance to the store (Hagberg & Holmberg, 2017). Hence, there is no clear understanding of how the size or location of a grocery store affects how many times per week a consumer purchase groceries.

Besides research on store location, in-store location of products is receiving increased attention among retailers and researchers, in the field of “aisle management” (Larson, 2006). Aisle management explains and investigates how the placement of products, for example, at the end of aisles, on shelves, at eye level, or grouping/lack of grouping of foods, or displays could affect consumers’ in-store experience (Bezawada, Balachander, Kannan, & Shankar, 2009). Consumers expect that products frequently bought together will be located in the same aisle in the store. Country-specific food is a great example. Mexican and Asian food items are often placed in the same aisle. If these food items were to be spread out in the store, it would cause confusion and consumers would have a hard time finding the items. Hence, consumers would have a bad store experience (Bezawada, Balachander, Kannan, & Shankar, 2009).

Aisle management is closely linked to product placement. Academic approaches to the topic of product placement in relation to grocery shopping mostly focus on shelf placement and how consumers navigate and find goods in a store (Dhar, Hoch, & Kumar, 2001). Logic placement of products makes it easier for consumers to find the product that they are looking for. For example, placing snacks and chilled drinks close to the checkout increases the shopping experience for consumers that are in a hurry that just wanted something “quick to eat”.

2.2.3. Price

Different price promotion strategies are commonly used among grocery retailers to attract consumers and to influence the price image of the store. Price promotions could be explained as promotions used by retailers to attract consumers into the store and encourage them to purchase certain products during a given period of time (Arce-Urriza, Cebollada, & Fernanda Tarira, 2017). Several studies have addressed whether price promotion and in-store coupons have a positive effect on consumer experience. Heilman, Nakamoto and Rao (2002) studied if price promoted products have an impact on the number of unplanned purchases. The study showed that price promotions increased unplanned purchases of promoted products (Heilman, Nakamoto, & Rao, 2002). Walters and Jamil (2002) focused on the extent to which consumers take advantage of featured advertising by retailers and examines how many items in consumer baskets, in general, were promoted by retailers. Walters and Jamil (2002) found that about 39% of all items purchased on a shopping trip were price promoted and that about 30% of all consumers surveyed were highly sensitive to price promotions. These 30% were purchasing more specials than regular priced items on their shopping trip. However, worth mentioning, is that consumers who are loyal to one specific brand are insensitive to price promotions (Krishnamurthi & Raj, 1991).

Pauwels, Leeflang, Teerling and Huizingh (2011) examined if consumers search for price information online about goods prior to purchasing them in a physical store. They found that presenting price information online improved the consumer experience and increased traffic to the physical store. Furthermore, consumers who lived further away from the physical store used the price comparison web page more frequently than consumers living

close by (Pauwels et al., 2011). Urbany, Dickson and Sawyer (2000) discovered that it is common among consumers to regularly compare prices between different grocery stores, but when making the purchase, consumers tend to do so in their regular store. Another aspect that influences the significance of price comparison is the level of income. A lower income will increase price comparison. People are more likely to change grocery store and hunt for lower prices if they feel that they need to save money (Dickson, Urbany, & Kalapurakal, 1996).

2.2.4. Promotion

In-store promotions such as point-of-purchase (POP) includes nutrition information, signage and posters that play an essential role in affecting consumer experience. POP marketing is marketing material or advertising placed next to the product it is promoting to highlight the offering of the specific product (Glanz & Yaroch, 2004). Consumers vary in their receptivity of promotion, displays, coupons and sales. Hence, much research has been conducted in the area (Bell, Corsten, & Knox, 2011). Displays, advertising, and POP information and the impact promotion has on consumer experience is addressed by Lemon and Nowlis (2002). Lemon and Nowlis (2002) found that the effects of promotions on different products differ by the features of the product particularly when the layout of the promotion leads consumers to directly compare similar products (Lemon & Nowlis, 2002).

Bemmaor and Mouchoux (1991) found that promotional end-of-aisle displays are more effective for less known brands than for well-known brands. The reason for this is that regardless of consumers' individual brand preferences, well-known brands advertise more in general. Consequently, those brands are more accessible in memory. Thus, those brands gain less from added in-store marketing (Nedungadi, 1990). Interesting, however, Pechmann and Stewart (1990) found that people are likelier to give notice to promotion for well-known brands than lesser known brands. Subsequently, attention and evaluation will be higher for well-known brands, but in-store POP marketing will have a stronger impact on less known brands (Chandon P. J., Hutchinson, Bradlow, & Young, 2009). Furthermore, past brand usage has a significant effect on the effect in-store marketing has on consumers. Consumers are unlikely to choose a brand that they have never used before.

Even if in-store marketing, such as signages, displays and posters draws attention to these brands, such brands are likely to have been "permanently" eliminated from consideration. Nevertheless, new products are a possible exception because the absence of past usage does not necessarily indicate rejection (Chandon et al., 2009). Adding to this, Zhang and Wendel (2009) have researched how personalized marketing affect consumers buying behaviour. The study revealed that offline grocery stores presents a more favourable channel for personalized marketing for smaller brands compared to in an online grocery store. However, the study showed that there was little difference between how consumers were affected by more traditional instore marketing targeting larger segments compared to more personalized and individualistic marketing (Zhang & Wendel, 2009). Another type of marketing which mainly has been studied as a complement to online stores is mobile marketing. According to Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker and Naik (2010), mobile marketing is an ideal marketing method to create a relationship between an offline store and consumers since the mobile phone is a constant companion to most consumers. Mobile marketing could potentially provide an easy platform for consumers to compare prices across different offline retailers but also increase consumers loyalty to a specific store or brand (Ström, Vendel, & Bredican, 2014).

2.3. Online grocery shopping – Consumer experience

The following section will focus on theorising online grocery shopping and the text put extra emphasis on the four P's of the marketing mix; product, place/placement, price and promotion.

2.3.1. Product

The ability to touch a product prior to purchase is considered a major advantage when buying groceries in a physical store since this is a way of gathering information about the quality of the product. However, any opportunity to touch a product prior to purchase disappears in an online grocery store. Instead, consumers have access to digital product descriptions and can view the products, sometimes with an extraordinary level of detail (González-Benito, Martos-Partal, & San Martín, 2015). The absence of product touch in an online environment requires that consumers value other indicators of quality and product performance. González-Benito et al. (2015) suggest that brand reputation, in

some cases compensate for the absence of physical contact with products. A well-known brand evokes associations that build trust, reduce perceived risk, and simplifies the buying process (González-Benito et al., 2015). Additionally, product touch does not have the same importance in all shopping situations and for all product categories. In some cases, products are highly standardized, and consumers experience that they have enough previous information about the products. Hence, the consumer feels no need to touch the product prior to purchase and the absence of product touch in an online grocery store is not considered an issue (González-Benito et al., 2015). Peck and Childers (2003) stress that in some cases, the event of product touch does not provide any relevant information. For example, physical examination of various food products does not provide much information beyond product pictures or an ingredient list. The feel and taste of these products are first possible to evaluate after the purchase (Peck & Childers, 2003). Thus, physical interaction with these types of products does not provide any valuable information during the shopping activity (González-Benito et al., 2015)

Product assortment is considered another important aspect of choosing an online retailer. The characteristics of an online platform simplify information gathering about products since consumers can compare products on multiple channels at the same time (Melis et al., 2015). In comparison to, other online traded products such as electronics and clothes, grocery assortments tend to be smaller and prices higher in the online compared to the offline channel (Melis et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Melis et al. (2015) stress that a wide assortment is becoming increasingly important as online grocery consumers are gaining more experience. Hence, more experienced online consumers often chose an online grocery retailer depending on the offered brands size of the assortment. When more favourite brands are available in the online store, consumers are more likely to choose to shop for groceries in an online store (Melis et al., 2015).

2.3.2. Place

In the retailing literature related to the online shopping, Briesch et al. (2009) report that one of the main advantages of online shopping is the ability to purchase goods from any location at any time. This advantage efficiently removes the distance obstacle, making the Internet a practical alternative for purchases that would otherwise involve a long trip.

Moreover, it was found that people from urban and rural areas experience two main advantages of shopping for groceries online. Firstly, some consumers shop online because they need a particular product but cannot access it to an affordable price where they live. Secondly, some consumers are not concerned with the price of the wanted product, but, they shop online since the physical distance creates an obstacle for the product they want (Sunil, 2015). Furthermore, the easy accessibility of online grocery shopping saves the consumer time and effort since the consumer get the groceries delivered to the front door (Akaah et al., 1995). Hence, the online environment offers superior convenience compared to physical stores (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008).

Bellman, Lohse, and Johnson (1999) argue that a typical online shopper is someone who values efficiency; hence, a user-friendly webpage is a must. A well-designed website that is easy to navigate will, therefore, provide a better consumer experience. Researchers have investigated how the attributes of a website influence how consumer feel about using the website. Some examples of negative consumer satisfaction are poor site design and low convenience (Szymanski & Hise, 2000). Additionally, Anesbury et al. (2016) mean that saveable shopping lists have a positive effect on efficiency in online grocery shopping. If companies succeed with providing a well-designed website, consumers save time, and that will become a competitive advantage.

2.3.3. Price

Miller (1998) found that one of the most important factors experienced by consumers in grocery shopping is to save money. Online grocery consumers, therefore, prioritize low prices and/or coupons when choosing what retailer to buy groceries from. The Swedish organization Svensk Digital Handel (2018) mean that online grocery shopping, in general, is more expensive compared to offline shopping. Interesting, however, is that online grocery shoppers tend to be less price sensitive than offline grocery shoppers (Chu et al., 2008). The reasons behind consumers being less price sensitive online is for example that consumers experience that in exchange of a higher price, they save time and are provided with the service of saved shopping lists in the online retailer data server. In other words, the value creation of saved time and shopping lists are evaluated higher than the price

(Chu et al., 2008). Besides timesaving, avoiding physical stores and less impulsive purchases are two of the main arguments to shop groceries online (Svensk Handel, 2018).

Still, many online grocery consumers consider price promotion as the most attractive promotion an online retailer could offer (Peinkofer et al., 2015). Since online retailing lead to relatively low search costs, price promotion is considered more efficient in an online grocery store compared to an offline grocery store. Numerous consumers experience shipping costs as a negative aspect of online shopping. Therefore, online retailers use different promotions to overcome that obstacle. Firstly, free shipping and secondly, contingent free shipping which describes how consumers get rewarded with free shipping after the order has reached a set amount of money (Becerril-Arreola, Leng, & Parlar, 2013). On the other hand, Arce-Urriza et al. (2017) found that online grocery retailers are less sensitive to price promotions compared to offline grocery consumers. It is argued that online grocery consumers place a higher value on saved time and thereby on the convenience of online grocery shopping. Thus, the fact that online grocery consumers are less concerned with price promotions correlates with the online consumer being less price sensitive in general.

Ramus and Asger Nielsen (2005) used the theory of planned behaviour, proposed by Ajzen (1991), to explore beliefs held by consumers about Internet shopping with an emphasis on Internet grocery shopping. It was a widespread belief among consumers that the online platform made it easier for price comparison (Rasmus & Asger Nielsen, 2005). The online environment enables consumers to search for price information at multiple retailers at the same time; thus, simplifies price comparison. Gaining price information across numerous online grocery retailers increase consumers awareness. Hence, strengthens the consumer's sense of having made the best possible choice of the cheapest retailer or product (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Moorthy, Ratchford & Talukdar, 1997) Even if the experience of consumer price comparison online provides great information, the gathering of this information is not costless as it requires the expenditure of consumer resources such as time (Marmorstein, Grewal, & Fishe, 1992).

2.3.4. Promotion

In online grocery retailing, consumers can get more customized promotions based on their own former purchase history data (Zhang & Wedel, 2009). This type of customized promotions is growing gradually in all retail channels and are developed to make the consumer experience more personal and fulfilling time on the online platform. Zhang and Wedel (2009) are examining online coupons with an emphasis on the effects of customization. They found that customized promotion has a greater impact in an online grocery store compared to in an offline grocery store. Nonetheless, the result was only notable in some product categories (Zhang & Wedel, 2009).

The central theory of most studies focusing on price discounts argue that the discounts mainly have an impact on consumers who only are concerned with the economic value of the money saved (Crespo-Almendros & Del Barrio-García, 2016). However, research and business practices demonstrate that it is not always the case. Crespo-Almendros and Del Barrio-García (2016) found that consumers with low Internet experience value different types of promotions more than consumers with high Internet experience. Additionally, Chandon et al. (2009) argue that consumers will place greater importance to online promotions if the product is utilitarian in its nature. Consequently, online grocery shoppers will experience a higher benefit from promotions when the promoted food item directly is linked to pleasure.

As the Internet has grown, so have the usage of smartphones and more importantly shopping through smartphones; hence, the interest of mobile marketing has increased rapidly. Since mobile devices are constant companions to consumers, they work as an optimal communication channel between the consumer and the retailer. Hence, making the mobile device an ideal supplementary marketing channel for online and offline grocery stores (Shankar et al., 2010). Consumers experienced benefits from mobile marketing was that the promotions could be customized based on time, location and personal profile. For example, consumers previous clickstream data and consumer purchase history could increase more customized marketing. Thus, the perceived value and convenience of mobile marketing increased (Ström, Vendel, & Bredican, 2014).

2.4. Conceptual model

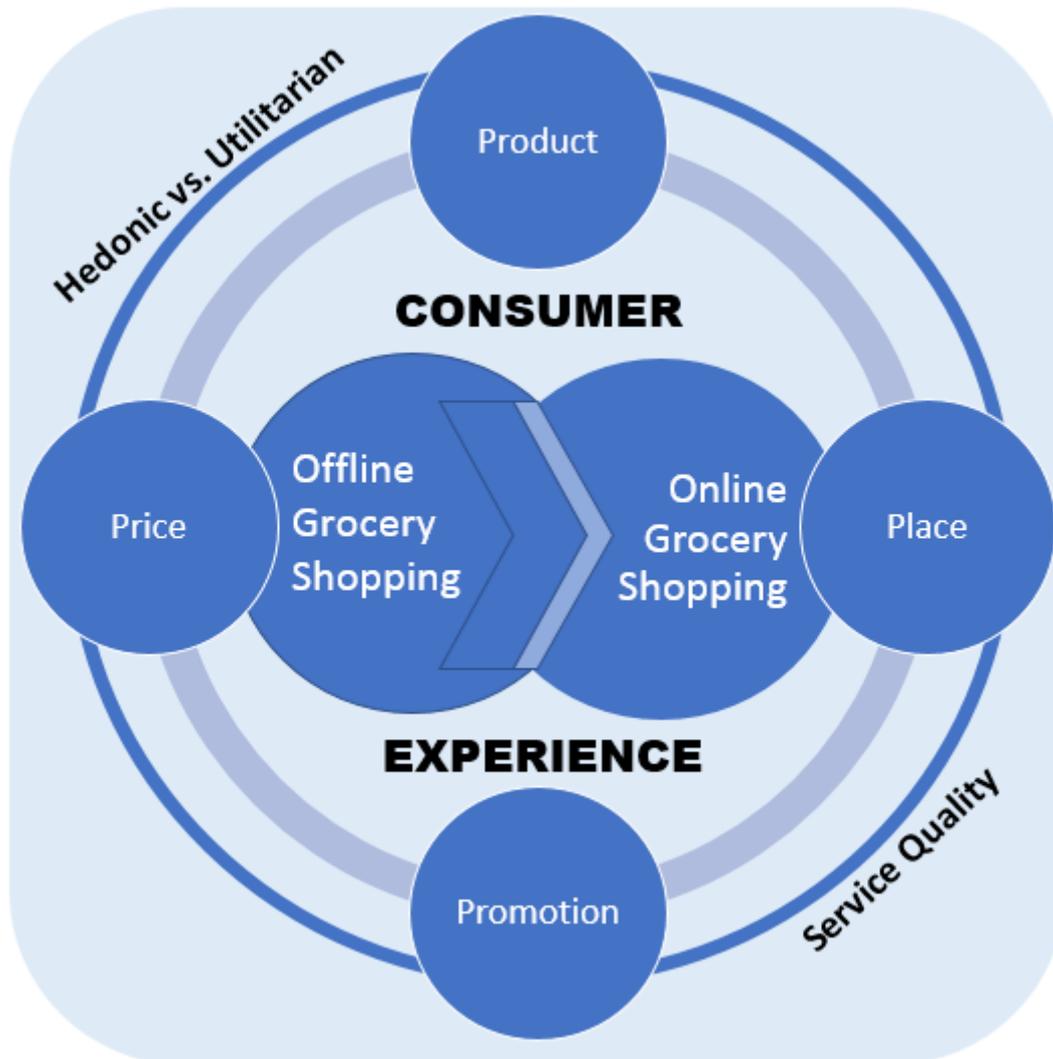


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Figure 1 is a visualisation of the relationship between the different theoretical concepts in our thesis, namely consumer experience, offline and online grocery shopping and the marketing mix, price, product, place and promotion. The most central part of our thesis is to investigate why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. Furthermore, what advantages and disadvantages consumers experience by choosing offline respectively online grocery retailing. Understanding what consumers value and find challenging with offline and online grocery shopping will help to answer our research question. When evaluating consumer experience in this thesis, greatest focus has been put on the three dimensions hedonic values, utilitarian values and the level of service quality.

Consequently, these three dimensions has been highlighted in the conceptual model encapsulating all four P's of the marketing mix to stress the significance of those dimensions in this thesis. Hedonic and utilitarian values focus on if consumers experience grocery shopping being a chore or an enjoyable event. Thus, when evaluating the dimensions and subdimensions tied to each category of the marketing mix, considerations has been taken to if the dimensions increase consumers grocery shopping experience in an enjoyable or useful way. Furthermore, emphasis has been put to if the dimensions are increasing or decreasing the service quality of offline and/or online grocery shopping. For example, has the physical distance of a grocery store improved or lowered the experience service quality among consumers.

Offline and online grocery shopping is placed in the middle of the figure surrounded by consumer experience and the highlighted dimensions of utilitarian values, hedonic values and service quality to emphasise that those concepts are the most central parts of our thesis. Offline and online grocery shopping are placed close to each other with an arrow facing towards online grocery shopping to visualise that we are interested in researching why consumers chose to buy groceries online. Consumers that decide to buy groceries online has opted out a shopping trip to an offline store, which is another reason for the arrow facing towards online grocery shopping. However, we do not argue that all grocery shopping trips to physical stores end just because a consumer chose to buy groceries online occasionally.

The marketing mix, product, place, price and promotion are four categories explored in this thesis with an emphasis on consumer experience in grocery shopping. Hence, the four P's of the marketing mix surround our central part to demonstrate that they are indirectly affected by the four P's. Starting from the marketing mix, different dimensions are presented in *Table 1* below. The dimensions present the contents of each P explored in this dissertation. Again, consumer experience is the main focus of this explorative study. Hence the consumer experience encapsulates the whole figure, including the marketing mix. To conclude, *Figure 1* and *Table 1* visualise the base of our literature review, the collection of our empirical data and our analysis.

Table 1. Conceptual Table.

	Offline dimensions	Subdimensions	Online dimensions	Subdimensions
Product	Ability to touch products	Evaluate quality, Haptic information	Inability to touch products	Not possible to evaluate quality,
	Assortment	Locally produced products	Assortment	Simpler gather information, Ease to compare products
Place	Store location	Physical distance,	Store location	Shop from any location,
	In-store environment	Aisle management	Website environment	Ease of use Website.
Price	Price promotions	Unplanned purchases	Price promotions	Less price sensitivity
	Price comparison	Price information	Price comparison	Ease of information search
Promotion	Point-of-purchase	The effect of POP	Customized promotion	Purchase history
	In-store marketing	Consumers attention	Mobile marketing	Optimal communication strategy

Product, place, price and promotion plays an important role of answering the research question of this thesis. The four categories of the marketing mix present dimensions and subdimensions which explains various advantages and disadvantages experienced by consumers connected to offline and online grocery shopping. The dimensions and subdimensions presented under each category represent important advantages and disadvantages tied to each category. Sometimes, the same dimension and subdimension can represent an advantage in offline grocery shopping however, and disadvantage in online grocery shopping or the other way around. Product touch and assortment are dimensions tied to product. The reason why product touch and assortment are presented both underneath offline and online dimensions are since both dimensions represent

different advantages and disadvantages of both offline and online grocery shopping. For example, the ability to touch products in a physical store prior to purchase is considered a major advantage and at the same time the inability to touch product prior to purchase in an online grocery store is a disadvantage. Consequently, product touch represents both an advantage and disadvantage and have impact on both offline and online grocery shopping. The same goes for assortment, some studies showed that consumers preferred the assortment in offline grocery store while other studies showed the opposite. Hence, there is an interest in understanding how consumers evaluate the assortment. Both in offline and online grocery shopping.

In other cases, the dimensions and subdimensions presented underneath offline and online grocery shopping are different from each other (*see Table 1*). This is highly notable under the category of promotion. The reason for this is that some promotion methods in a physical store differ from promotion methods used in an online store and therefore harder to compare to each other. However, this does not mean that all promotion methods used in offline grocery shopping completely differs from the methods used in online grocery shopping. The different dimensions and subdimensions in these cases are used to highlight that there is a difference between offline and online grocery shopping but that the dimensions fill the same function. An example of a promotion method used in an offline store that is not as common in an online context is point of purchase. Posters and signages are used to highlight a certain product and are targeting a broader segment of consumers. This type of promotion is preferred by some consumers and therefore considered an advantage by some while other consumers experience that they are unaffected by point of purchase marketing. Customized marketing is used more extensively in online contexts since it is easier to gather information and target individual consumers in an online environment. However, this does not mean that customized promotion does not occur in an offline grocery context. Customized marketing is preferred by some consumers however disliked by others. Point of purchase and customized marketing fills the same function by highlighting goods and increase sales of the promoted good and can therefore be used as comparable dimensions.

3. Methodology

The third chapter presents the research methods used in this study exploring why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. The chapter includes research philosophy, research approach, the choice of theory and methodology. Moreover, the critique of sources, research design and time horizon used in this thesis will be addressed. Lastly, the chapter will present our empirical method. A multimethod qualitative approach has been conducted using both primary collected data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The empirical method ends with a discussion about trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.1. Research philosophy

A research philosophy explains how humans make sense of the world and how people view and make assumptions of reality (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Addressing research philosophy in your thesis involves being aware and formulating our beliefs and assumptions about the gathered primary and secondary data in our dissertation. According to Bryman, Bell and Harley (2019), there are three different research philosophies, namely positivism, interpretivism and realism. Positivism holds that the best way to gather data is through observing a phenomenon or to measure it using surveys or other measurement tools since the reality exist objectively and externally (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). In contrast to positivism, interpretivism holds that “*reality is constituted by human action and meaning-making, rather than existing objectively and externally*” (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019, p 31). Hence, an interpretivist mean that reality is subjective and understands that people view the world differently. Realists believe that there is a reality that is independent of how humans experience reality. In other words, human’s perception of reality could differ from what realist’s mean is the actual reality (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019).

The research philosophy used in this thesis is interpretivism since the aim of this paper is to understand human experience and behaviour. According to Bryman, Bell and Harley (2019), interpretivism is concerned with why a social action is happening. The answers of how our respondents experience the offline and online grocery shopping environment

will be used as guidance towards why consumers buy groceries online. However, we are aware that not all consumers share the same experience. Thus, interpretivism will be the most appropriate research philosophy for our research question.

3.2. Research approach

There are three different types of research approaches, namely induction, deduction and abduction. The deductive approach develops and test theories or hypothesis from existing literature. In contrast to the deductive research approach, the inductive approach develops theory from collected data. In recent years the abductive approach has become more popular within business research. Abduction often starts with a conundrum or a wonder and then seeks to explain it (Bryman, Bell & Harley, 2019). A conundrum may arise when researchers encounter a phenomenon that existing literature and theories cannot explain. Abduction seeks to make this conundrum less confusing by switching back and forth between existing literature and collected data (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019).

By answering our research question, why consumers experience a desire to shop for groceries online, we hope to add new information to existing literature. Our thesis will be built on a combination of existing literature and new insights from semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Existing literature will be used to develop a conceptual framework, and the collected data may lead to new insights and modifications of the conceptual framework. Hence, an abductive approach will be applied.

3.3. Role of theory

Several theories of consumer experience and the different dimensions of the marketing mix will be presented in this thesis. Since this thesis has an explorative and abductive approach, we will analyse and draw conclusions based on multiple theories and definitions of both consumer experience and the marketing mix. Consumer experience has been addressed both by academics as well as by practitioners in several contexts for a long time. However, the concept of online grocery shopping is relatively unexplored (Melis et al., 2015). The majority of the sources used in this thesis are peer-reviewed articles retrieved from Google Scholar and Summon. The authors behind the cited articles

are experts within their fields. Thus, this increases the reliability and trustworthiness of the articles. Also, one tool that is used to increase the credibility is the ABS-rating list, that rank different articles from scientific journals. Most authors in the articles are cited by other researches, which also increase the trustworthiness. If possible, we always refer to the primary data source and secondary data sources to increase the credibility of our thesis. Some academic books were used as a complement to the scientific articles to structure our paper and method.

3.4. Research design

There are two different research methodologies researchers can choose between, namely, quantitative or qualitative research methodology. Researchers with a quantitative research methodology try to measure and/or count a social phenomenon and the relationship between certain events (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). It is common that researchers develop one or several hypotheses based on existing theory and then tests the reliabilities of the one or multiple hypotheses. In other words, a quantitative researcher often has a deductive research approach (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019).

This dissertation will be based on a qualitative research method. Qualitative research rather uses words than numbers when analysing collecting data. Qualitative researchers are more interested in finding out how individuals experience a social phenomenon and why humans act in a certain way (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). Patano and Priporas (2016) mention in their study that it is of importance to use a qualitative approach when you want answers beyond the numeric standardised answer. Our thesis aims to understand why consumer experience a desire to shop groceries online. Hence, we are interested in exploring a social phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups are conducted to give new insights into our research question. Knights (1997) argue that it is of importance to use more than one research method. The reason is that a study with more than one research method will become more reliant (Knights, 1997). Thus, we have conducted both semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Because of the limited time horizon of 14 weeks, this thesis will be a cross-sectional study. Often, cross-sectional studies are related to surveys, but according to Saunders et al. (2009), interviews are also accepted during a short period of time. Bryman, Bell & Harley (2019) mean that it is

common to use semi-structured interviews in a qualitative cross-sectional research. Cross-sectional studies investigate a specific phenomenon in a set time period. Our thesis investigates how people feel at a particular time, which argues for this type of study.

Moreover, this dissertation will use an exploratory research design. An exploratory study aims to figure out “what is happening”. Therefore, it is common to ask open questions to see a social phenomenon in a new way (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The exploratory research design is useful if the purpose of a study is to clarify a problem that exists, and the researcher is unsure of the precise nature of the problem investigated (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Two advantages of using explorative design are the flexibility and adaptability to change. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that descriptive research is “*to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations*” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.140). Since our thesis is qualitative, the exploratory design will be the most appropriate for us to use because our aim is to view a phenomenon in a new way (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

3.5. Data collection

There are two types of data, primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to when researchers collect data from first-hand sources such as interviews and focus groups. Secondary data explains how researchers collect data from studies conducted by other people such as newspapers and commercials (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Our paper mainly consists of primary data from semi-structured interviews, focus groups and earlier research and theories. To protect the respondent’s integrity, fictitious names have been used when discussing the collected data. The fictitious names have been presented in *Table 2* Participants Focus Groups and in *Table 3* Participants Interviews.

3.5.1. Focus groups

A focus group is a form of group interview in which several respondents are discussing one or a few specific topics (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Focus groups have shown to be useful when exploring how humans experience and think about a particular topic. Researchers that conducts focus groups often aim to see the world through the

respondents' eyes and are not only concerned with what the respondents think but also why they have this perception (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). A challenging aspect of being a focus group leader is to get all participants to discuss freely around the chosen topic. Therefore, focus groups could be considered challenging and complex, which make the method hard to use (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Saunders et al. (2009) talk about how it is efficient to have one researcher leading the discussion of the focus group and another other researcher observing the discussion in the background taking notes. This type of setting will make it easier for the researchers to collect information for the analyse stage (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

Moreover, it is important that the participants have something in common with the researcher's study. The participants will most likely be homogenous as a group, but, it is important for researchers to get heterogenous answers from the homogenous group (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). Additionally, participants are learning from each other in a focus group interview. Due to that, people can switch their opinions during the interview because they get affected by others. The collected data from the two focus groups helped us to get a general understanding of what consumers value and consider when deciding to purchase groceries online. Most importantly, the respondents were able to speak freely about the advantages and disadvantages they experienced with offline respectively online grocery shopping. The characteristics of the focus groups allowed the respondents to build on each other's thoughts and provided us with new insights on consumer experience in grocery shopping.

3.6.1.1 Selection of participants focus groups

To get a desired representation of the target group, it is important that the researchers consider homogenous and heterogeneous aspects. For example, experience and opinions are two factors that researchers need to evaluate when choosing group participants (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). People are more likely to engage in a discussion when people understand the subject (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). Hence, we only approached respondents with previous experience in online grocery shopping. Moreover, since Rasmus and Asger Nielsen (2005) mean that it is unrealistic to think that consumers who buy groceries online completely stop to buy groceries online, we assumed that all

respondents had experience from both offline and online grocery shopping. The purpose of this paper is to answer our research question, why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. Therefore, one criterion was that the focus group participants had previous experience in online grocery shopping. The second criterion was the participants had purchased groceries online within the past year. Hence, a purposive criterion sampling approach was used (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Purposeful sampling explains how respondents are chosen in a strategic way to make sure the respondents are relevant to the research question. Criterion sampling ensure that the respondents meets one or more criterions (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Since almost everyone purchases groceries at least once or several times a week, we could find participants via our network. Friends, relatives, family friends and colleagues were first contacted via a phone call, text message or e-mail to make sure that the respondents fulfilled the two criterions and to set a date for the focus groups. The disadvantages of using purposive sampling is that the researchers cannot generalize the findings to a population (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Another negative aspect of participants in the focus groups already knowing each other is that it could stop them from freely discussing the topic. Moreover, it could lead to participants speaking to each other in instead of focusing the topic (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). We ended up with two focus groups, with four respondents in one group and five in the other. The respondents were living in different cities, were of mixed genders and had different household situations which can be seen in *Table 2 Participants Focus Groups*. Thus, all respondents had their grocery shopping experience in common, but their life situations differed somewhat. This created a good mix of homogeneity and heterogeneity within the focus groups.

Table 2. Participants Focus Groups

Focus group	Gender	Fictitious Name	Age Group	Origin	Family status
1	Woman	Amanda	20–24	Lund	Single
1	Woman	Diana	20–24	Lund	Single
1	Woman	Emma	25–34	Stockholm	Relationship
1	Woman	Hannah	25–34	Stockholm	Single
2	Man	Brad	20–24	Uddevalla	Relationship
2	Man	Chris	20–24	Kungälv	Relationship

2	Man	Liam	20–24	Sölvesborg	Single
2	Woman	Jenny	25–34	Örebro	Single
2	Woman	Nora	25–34	Kristianstad	Single

3.6.1.2 Focus Group guide

Two focus groups were conducted to collect individual opinions from a group conversation. Both focus groups were using the same focus group guide, seen in *Appendix 1*. Our first focus group took place 6th of May in Lund and our second took place 7th of May in Kristianstad. Both sessions were approximately 90 minutes long, and all participants were offered coffee and something sweet in order to release tension and ease the start of the discussion. At the beginning of the session, all participants introduced themselves and were asked to talk about how many times they had purchased groceries online. This introduction questions were used as tension relievers, which also helped the discussion in a later state.

During the discussion, we had two different exercises where each exercise was divided into two parts. In each activity, we used post-it notes where each participant got three post-it notes, and during a few minutes the participants wrote down three advantages or disadvantages (depending on the exercise) with both offline and online grocery shopping. After a few minutes, the focus group leader gathered the notes and put them up on a wall so all the participants could see the notes. The participants were then asked to discuss the experienced advantages and disadvantages freely while we took notes of the discussion. In the second part of each activity, the participants were asked to collectively rank the advantages (exercise one) or disadvantages (exercise two) from the highest to the lowest. This gave us information about what consumers in general value the most and find most challenging with offline respectively online grocery shopping. As moderators of the focus group, we stayed in the background, trying not to interfere with the focus group participants. One of us took the role as a focus group leader, and the other one observed and took notes which helped us in the analyse part of the thesis. Moreover, both focus groups were recorded to reduce the risk of missing out on any important information during the discussions. Since we performed two focus groups, we had the chance to try both moderator roles.

3.5.2. Interviews

Focus groups are great if the goal of a study is to understand how the participants feel and think about a certain research topic in general (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). But since the role of the moderators in a focus group is passive, it is likely that the discussions in a focus group become too general. Bryman, Bell and Harley (2019) mean that interviews enable the researcher or researchers to maintain the focus on a specific topic. We, therefore, argue that conducting semi-structured interviews is a great complement to our focus groups. By conducting five interviews, we gained a more in-depth understanding of how attributes such as age and household situation affected the experience of offline and online grocery shopping. Moreover, semi-structured interviews enable the interviewer to ask to follow up questions to clarify or extend a respondent's answer (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). This opens for more profound and personal reflections, which gave great value to our analyse and result. Besides the introduction questions, all questions were of open format. When asking open questions, the respondents can answer on their terms and allow unusual responses (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Additionally, open questions do not influence the respondent to answer in a specific way and are useful for exploring new topics (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Hence, semi-structured interviews with open questions are appropriate in our aim to explore why consumers chose to purchase groceries online.

There are some advantages, and disadvantages researchers must consider when conducting semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. One advantage is that a lot of information can be collected during a short period of time (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). Moreover, interviews are great when the aim of the study is to understand respondents' values, thoughts and experiences of a particular research field (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). Since the aim of our research is to understand consumer experience in grocery shopping, interviews work as a great complement to our focus groups. A disadvantage with interviews is the interview effect meaning that the interviewer influences the respondent's answers (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). By conducting focus groups as well as interviews we reduced this type of error since our participation in the focus group discussion was minimal. According to Ahrne and Svensson (2015), one more

disadvantage with interviews is the difficulty to interpret the collected data. To overcome this difficulty, we transcribed the interviews and identified themes which we compared with the other interviews as well with the focus groups.

3.6.2.1 Selection of participants interviews

According to Ahrne and Svensson (2015), the research question is crucial for the selection of participants in an interview. To be able to answer our research question of why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online, it was important that our respondents had previous experience in online grocery shopping. Like in the focus groups, a purposive criterion sampling method was used with the same two criteria as in the focus groups to select respondents for the semi-structured interviews. Friends, relatives, family friends and colleagues were first contacted via a phone call, text message or e-mail to make sure that the respondents fulfilled the two criteria and to set a date for the focus groups. As discussed earlier, there are a few downsides connected to interviewing people you know. Respondents could feel prevented from freely discussing the topic and there is a risk that the discussion will move on to subjects outside the desired topic (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). An advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they can give great breadth and coverage of a topic (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). To embrace this advantage, participants with various genders, ages, household statuses and hometowns were interviewed, which can be seen in *table 3*.

Table 3. Participants Interviews

Interview	Gender	Fictitious Name	Age Group	Origin	Family status
1	Woman	Kelly	45–54	Orust	Relationship
2	Man	Gary	25–34	Gothenburg	Relationship
3	Man	Isaac	25–34	Malmö	Relationship
4	Woman	Felicia	25–34	Gothenburg	Single
5	Woman	Mona	25–34	Gothenburg	Relationship/children

3.6.2.2 Interview guide

To develop a deeper understanding of how consumers, experience offline and online grocery shopping, we conducted five semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed us to ask questions about certain topics we needed more information about and were a great complement to our focus groups. All five interviews were conducted with the same interview guide, seen in *Appendix 2*. The first interview was conducted in Malmö 9th of May, three interviews took place on the 10th of May in Gothenburg, and the last respondent was interviewed on the 11th of May in Stenungsund. All interviews were conducted between 26-37 minutes. Moreover, all interviews were semi-structured because of the flexibility to ask follow-up questions (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015). One of us took the role as interviewer and asked the questions while the other one took notes and observed and asked essential follow-up questions. All questions asked focused on consumer experience in context to the four P's of the marketing mix, price, product, place and promotion. We started the interviews by asking a few introduction questions. The importance of the introduction part is to get to know the respondent and create a relaxed environment. In the second part of the interview, the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing groceries offline and online were discussed. This gave us valuable information in order to understand why consumers experience a desire to shop groceries online.

3.5.3. Transcriptions

All five interviews and the two focus groups were transcribed and coded into different dimensions and subdimensions to make it easier to compare and analyse the data (Denscombe, 2016). Ahrne and Svensson (2018) mean that it is important in the transcription process that the interviewer and moderators analyse the answers in order to eliminate risks of interpretation errors and to make sure that the answers are correctly transcribed. The language used in the interviews and focus groups was Swedish since Swedish is the native language of the respondents and to reduce communication problems. After collecting the data, all interviews and focus groups were transcribed firstly into Swedish and after that translated into English. This was done to make sure that important answers cited were translated as correctly as possible (Ahrne & Svensson,

2015). Additionally, all interviews and both focus groups were recorded to make sure that all important information was registered.

3.5.4. Data analysis

When collecting qualitative data via interviews and focus groups, it often results in a large and complex data set of unstructured language in the form of notes and transcripts (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). In order to make sense of all this data, the data must be coded and analysed. One of the most common ways to code and analyse qualitative data is to make a thematic analyse. Identifying repetitions, similarities, differences and visual descriptions in the text are some examples of how you can find themes in the raw data (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). All examples above were used in the data coding of this thesis in order to identify dimensions and subdimensions of advantages and disadvantages of online and offline grocery shopping. Repetitions were recognised by topics that recurred multiple times, one example was that all respondents mentioned that home delivery and the ability to shop from any location were major advantages connected to online grocery shopping. Differences was for example found when discussing the size of assortment in offline and online grocery stores. One of the respondents experienced that the vegan assortment was wider in an offline grocery and therefore experienced that the assortment in general tended to be better in offline grocery stores. However, most of the respondents experienced that the grocery assortment was wider in an online grocery store which shows differences in consumers experiences. Moreover, by asking participants in the focus groups to discuss advantages and disadvantages with offline respectively online grocery shopping directly lead consumers to discuss differences between the purchasing options. Another method to find themes within the collected data was to recognize visual descriptions during the focus groups and interviews. Especially during the interviews, respondents often used events from the reality to explain how they experienced a certain situation. For example, one respondent mentioned that the ability to touch an avocado in a physical store was an advantage since you could feel if the avocado was ripe or not and then decide if you wanted to buy the avocado or not.

In order to get a good overview of the collected data, all interviews and both focus groups were transcribed. The focus group guide and the interview guide followed the same type

of structure starting with similar introduction questions followed by exercises (in the focus groups) or open questions (in the interviews). The exercises and questions were focusing on consumer experience in grocery shopping and were divided into the four categories of the marketing mix, product, place, price and promotion as can be seen in *Appendix 1* and *Appendix 2*. All transcripts and notes from the focus groups and interviews were first read individually by both interviewers to make sure that the interviews did not influence each other when selecting interesting data. The findings were then discussed together to make sure the interviewers had similar perception of the most important findings. After reading the transcripts, the data was listed and coded into each category of the marketing mix, product, place, price and promotion in an excel file. Under each category, the data was then coded into the different dimensions and subdimensions which can be seen in *Table 1*. Important citations were gathered in a separate excel document and these citations were used to highlight the subdimensions that were found when analysing the data. Moreover, notes were taken on how many times each subdimension was repeated and this was then used as a measurement on how important or insignificant a certain advantage or disadvantage was. Additionally, a new dimension and subdimensions were found when analysing the data which are discussed further under *4.3 New Dimensions*. The dimensions were also tied to if they increase utilitarian values, hedonic values or the level of service quality. In order to create an understandable and clear structure of the findings and analysis in chapter four, the same conceptual model and conceptual table that was presented in chapter two were used. Each category of the marketing mix and the new dimension were discussed individually in order to identify which dimensions and subdimensions that had the most impact of consumers desire to purchase groceries offline or online. Another advantage of discussing the dimensions separately were that it was easier to see if the dimensions and subdimensions correlated or differentiated with existing theory.

3.6. Trustworthiness

According to Bryman et al. (2019), there are four different criteria to reach trustworthiness in a qualitative study. The four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. *Credibility* refers to if the study is made by good practice. Credibility describes how confident a person taking part in the study can be in

the truth of the research study's findings (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Data from two focus groups and five interviews have been collected to answer our research question of why consumers chose to purchase groceries online. All respondents had some previous experience of both offline and online grocery shopping. In general, the respondents had very similar experiences, which indicates that our findings reflect the reality. *Transferability* refers to how the findings of a qualitative study could be applicable in other contexts. For example, another context could be if the study can be tested in similar situations and/or populations (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). Since the characteristics of grocery shopping differ somewhat from other retailing sectors, it would be hard to replicate the same study in another sector and expect to get similar results (Melis et al., 2015). However, the same study could be made in another country which has a similar grocery retail structure as in Sweden. *Dependability* explains to what extent a study could be replicated by other researchers and to which degree the findings would be consistent (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). In other words, if another researcher wanted to copy the previous study, there should be enough information from the earlier study so that the new study would obtain similar findings. This thesis aims to get a general understanding of why consumers chose to buy groceries online. Provided that the grocery retailing sector does not undergo any major changes, this study could be replicated by other researchers. Lastly, *confirmability* refers to the level of neutrality in the researcher's findings (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). This means that the findings, which are based on the collected data from respondents, should not be affected by the researcher's personal values and beliefs. This involves making sure that the interpretation of the collected data is not biased (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). As moderators in the focus groups and interviews, we have tried to be as passive as possible not to interfere with any of the respondent's answers or thoughts. During the transcription and analysis of the collected data, we aimed to objective not to bias any answers.

3.7. Ethical considerations

For ethical reasons, all names in the interviews and focus groups are not presented. Therefore, all real names were replaced with fictional names in order to differentiate the respondents from each other. To reduce misunderstandings between our respondents and us, a consent form (*see Appendix 3*) were signed by each respondent. Through this consent

form, our respondents were given information on the full extent of their participation. To release any pressure from signing the consent form, each participant was approached individually to make this form non-problematic, in accordance with Bryman et al. (2019).

4. Empirical findings and analysis

The following chapter will present the analysis of the collected empirical data. This exploratory study investigates why consumers experience a desire to shop groceries online and what advantages and disadvantages consumer experience when they chose either offline or online grocery shopping. All findings from the collected data are coded into dimensions and subdimensions presented in tables at the end of each category. Each subdimension is ranked according to how many focus groups and/or interviews that discussed the subject. The respondents in the semi-structured interviews count as one unit each, while the respondents in the focus groups collectively count as one unit each.

4.1. Consumer experience

In a previous study on consumer experience, it is mentioned that consumers do not only buy a product, but they also buy an experience (Abbot, 1955). Therefore, it is relevant to explore why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. Consumers experience is complex; hence, it is of importance that grocery stores understand what factors consumers value when evaluating the choice of grocery store.

Babin et al. (1994) mention that there are two types of grocery consumers, one type that has hedonic values and one that has utilitarian values. The hedonic consumer enjoys the shopping trip and strives to have fun while the utilitarian consumer sees grocery shopping as a chore and values efficiency (Babin et al., 1994). As seen in *Table 4* summary of findings consumer experience, the respondents experience that they have difficult to enjoy the offline shopping trip. The stressful environment in the offline store is mentioned as the major reason. Long lines, high noises from children and too many shoppers at the same time are some of the reasons mentioned by the respondents. As seen in *Table 4*, one of the respondents said that *“I actually enjoy purchasing groceries, but sometimes it is impossible to buy groceries and enjoy the shopping trip because of the stressful environment in the store”*. Hence, a stressful environment is mentioned as a negative aspect of offline grocery shopping by most of the respondents and a reason why they choose online grocery shopping instead. Kelly adds that grocery shopping with young children in an offline store is always stressful and challenging. Another respondent adds

“Since I started to shop groceries online, I actually enjoy it again, mostly because I can avoid the stress”. Aylott and Mitchell (1998) argue that grocery shopping is often the most stressful shopping experience consumers frequently go through. They point out that carrying heavy bags, wait in lines and a loud environment are three factors that affect the experience negative for consumers.

In addition to the stressful store environment, service quality was discussed by the respondents. According to Spence et al. (2014), helpful staff is important in order to create a good consumer experience in grocery stores. However, there seem to be divided opinions on what good service is among the respondents. Isaac expresses *“I prefer to get my service face-to-face, and I also like that I get help directly in a physical store”*. On the other hand, as seen in *Table 4*, Brad did not see any problem with the lack of physical staff in the online environment and said, *“I am surprised that it was so easy to get access to great customer support, I got answers to my questions right away”*. Parasuraman et al. (2005) believe that easy access to service is more important in an online environment when consumers are new to the experience, and when consumers need help to solve a problem. Nevertheless, both focus groups and Kelly mentioned that the offline store environment was preferred if you wanted to speak with higher authority, such as the store manager. The respondents in the focus groups and Kelly believed that in an offline grocery store, consumers opinions were valued higher compared to in an online grocery store. Vargo and Lusch (2008) argue for an increasing dialogue with consumers, which will lead to an overall better experience. Consequently, all respondents seem to have different opinions on the type of service they prefer, and most of them did not experience any great differences between offline and online service. Hence, service quality does not seem to have a significant impact on whether consumers chose to shop groceries offline or online.

Table 4. Summary of Findings Consumer Experience

Category	Dimension	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Offline	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Online
Consumer Experience	Hedonic vs. utilitarian	Store environment: (4/7) Illustrative example (-) <i>“I actually enjoy purchasing groceries but sometimes it is impossible to buy groceries and enjoy the shopping trip because of the stressful environment in the store”</i>	Store environment: (6/7) Illustrative example (+) <i>“Since I started to shop groceries online, I actually enjoy it again, mostly because I can avoid the stress”.</i>
		Utilitarian approach: (1/7) Illustrative example (-) <i>“I have never liked to shop groceries so I just try to make my purchases as fast as I can so I can avoid it”</i>	
		Service Quality	In-store service: (1/7) Illustrative example (+) <i>“I prefer to get my service face-to-face, and I also like that I get help directly in a physical store”</i>
		Influence store: (2/7) Illustrative example (+) <i>“It is nice to have the possibility to talk to the store manager to improve the store”</i>	Customer support: (1/7) Illustrative example (-) <i>“I’m a bit concerned when I’m forced to use the customer support, in general, I have no great experience from online support”</i>
			Influence store: (1/7) Illustrative example (-) <i>“I don’t know if my opinions count when I tell the support, it is harder for me to reach decision-makers”</i>

4.2. Offline and Online

This section will cover both offline and online attributes that have been brought up in chapter two and include the findings of the interviews and focus groups. This data will be analyzed and discussed in relation to the marketing mix, namely product, place, price and promotion.

4.2.1. Product

Previous research means that the ability or inability of product touch have a large impact on whether the consumer chooses to buy groceries in an offline or online store. Some previous studies mean that the ability to touch a product prior to purchase increase consumers' willingness to pay and reduce the perceived risk of a purchase (Liu et al., 2017). According to Rasmus and Asger Nielsen (2005), consumers experience a greater need to touch a product prior to purchase when they buy fresh food such as vegetables, fruits and meat. All respondents except Liam experience that it is nice to be able to touch the products prior to purchase to gather information about ripeness and texture. However, the respondents see it more of a bonus than a must. As seen in *Table 5*, Mona expresses *"What I miss the most when buying food online is the smell of freshly baked bread"*, but then Mona continues with explaining that she has replaced the absence with baking more bread at home. Some respondents seem to have had a negative preconception about that the quality of groceries bought online would be worse compared to groceries bought offline. Nevertheless, all of them changed their mind when they started to buy groceries online. Nora addressed the preconception like this, *"When I started buying groceries online, I was a bit concerned that the quality of the fresh products such as vegetables and meat would be of poorer quality than if I chose them myself"* (*Table 5*). *But I was presently surprised, the quality level is really good as if the staff thinks 'I would like to eat this' when they pack the food"*. González-Benito et al. (2015) stress that consumers experience a lower need for product touch if the product is highly standardized, and when touching a product provides little new information. This is confirmed by most of the respondents who argue that they often tend to buy the same products and brands in an online grocery store as they do in an offline grocery store. Hence, the respondent did not experience an increased risk when purchasing groceries online compared to offline.

Briesch, Chintagunta and Fox (2009) argue that consumers value a wide assortment. Melis et al. (2015) mean that the assortment in online grocery stores often is smaller compared to the assortment in offline stores. In contrast to Melis et al. (2015), all the respondents argue that online grocery stores offer a wider assortment compared to their local stores and that is a major reason why they choose to purchase groceries online. Another benefit with online stores experienced by the respondents was that if a wanted

good was sold out, it was easy to order the product from another online retailer. Hannah said, “*You get really annoyed when a product is sold out in a physical store because you do not drive to another store, if it is online you just change retailer easy*” (Table 5).

Furthermore, previous studies stress that consumers value a great variety with locally produced products together with a high wide of international assortment. The importance of locally produced products has increased in the last few years, according to Lombart et al. (2018). There are mixed opinions among the respondents addressing this topic. Approximately half of the respondents believe that the breadth of a local or international assortment differs between different retailer. Thus, it is not directly tied to if it is an offline or online grocery store, but highly individual among retailers. However, Diana experienced that the vegan assortment was larger in her local store.

Table 5. Summary of Findings Product

Category	Dimensions	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Offline	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Online
Product	Product Touch	<p>Product touch to evaluate quality: (6/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) “<i>It is nice to be able to touch the product to evaluate for example if an avocado is ripe or not</i>”.</p> <p>Product touch to reduce the perceived risk: (4/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) “<i>I know people that are picky about fresh products, for them I understand the importance of touch products before purchases</i>”.</p> <p>Hedonic vs. utilitarian: (5/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) “<i>I guess it is more important to me to handpick freshly baked bread for the Saturday breakfast than a package of rice. The rice is the same independent if it is bought online or offline while the bread could vary more</i>”.</p>	<p>Inability of product touch and smell: (3/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(-) “<i>What I miss the most when buying food online is the smell of freshly baked bread</i>”.</p> <p>Higher quality products: (4/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) “<i>When I started buying groceries online, I was a bit concerned that the quality of the fresh products such as vegetables and meat would be of poorer quality than if I chose them myself. But I was presently surprised, the quality level is really good as if the staff thinks “I would like to eat this” when they pack the food</i>”.</p> <p>Purchase on routine: (1/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) “<i>I often choose to purchase the same products that I am used too, mostly because of that I know exactly what I get, and I know I like it</i>”.</p>

Assortment	<p>Wider assortment: (1/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>“I am a vegan, and I experience that the assortment of vegan products are better in my local store”</i></p> <p>Sold out products: (2/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(-) <i>“You get really annoyed when a product is sold out in a physical store because you do not drive to another store, if it is online you just change retailer easy”.</i></p> <p>Local assortment: (3/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>“I only buy Swedish meat; in my local store they also have meat from a local butcher. It is important to support our local farmers ”.</i></p> <p>International assortment: (4/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(-) <i>“Some large stores have a really good assortment of international foods, but I often get disappointed of the assortment when I visit smaller grocery stores and you don’t always have the time to visit a larger store”.</i></p>	<p>Wider assortment: (6/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>“I experience that the online store offers a larger variation of goods and different brands”</i></p> <p>Compare products across retailers: (5/7) Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>“I enjoy when you get suggestions on different products online, it’s always fun to find new products and brands and you can always compare to what other online grocery retailers offer”.</i></p>
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4.2.2. Place

The one feature that probably differs the most between offline and online grocery shopping is the store location. According to Svensk Handel (2018), larger offline grocery stores are often located in the outskirts of city centres while the city centre mostly has smaller stores. This was also noted in the interviews by the respondents living in the larger cities of Sweden. They often found it challenging to buy larger amounts of food firstly because of the distance and secondly since it is hard to transport the food home. This resulted in more purchases per week, which respondents experienced cost them both time and money. Hagberg and Holmberg (2017) confirm the respondents by stating that shorter distance to the local grocery store increases the frequency that consumers buy groceries. The researchers also add that purchase food several times a week is the most common alternative compared to only once a week regardless of the distance to the grocery store.

Furthermore, Svensk Digital Handel (2018) means that the average time for an offline grocery shopping is approximately 83,8 minutes compare to the online grocery shopping that is around 41,9 minutes. Nevertheless, all respondents in the interviews and focus groups agree that they buy a larger amount of food, but fewer times a week by purchasing food online. Hence, the respondents experience that they save both time and money by purchasing groceries online

An additional advantage experienced by all respondents as a result of purchasing groceries online instead of offline was the possibility to purchase groceries from any location. Briesch et al. (2009) confirm the statement by saying that consumers only need access to the Internet and a computer or a smartphone to purchase groceries online. As seen in *Table 6*, Chris mentions that *"It is nice to purchase groceries during the lunch break or on my way home from work. It saves me a lot of time and stress"*. According to Akaah et al. (1995), online grocery shopping increase in value to consumers through saving time, money and effort. All the respondents feel that home delivery is one of the biggest reasons why it is convenient to shop online. Amanda expresses that *"It is so nice not having to carry grocery bags across the city. Even though it takes some planning before the purchase, I order food for a whole week at the time"* (*Table 6*). Nonetheless, Diana and Emma mention that there is a minor downside to homedelivery since you must make sure someone is home when they deliver the groceries. Another disadvantage of online grocery shopping is the inability to make "emergency purchases". Kelly mentions that *"Although I do my best to plan for a whole week's food consumption, I always seem to forget something or run out of milk, for example"*. Online grocery retailers seem to be aware of these downsides and are working to meet consumers demands by offering more flexible delivery options. Some online grocery stores make home deliveries during the same day or at least the day after, and they are trying to minimize "waiting hours" for consumers (Mathem.se, 2019; Mat.se, 2019). Also, as mentioned above, consumers find it difficult only to purchase food online. Rasmus and Asger Nielsen (2005) mean that online shopping as it works right now could never replace the traditional store. Mostly because of the inevitable emergency purchases that people are forced to do (Rasmus & Asger Nielsen, 2005).

Yet again, most of the respondents argue that one key reason for choosing online grocery shopping instead of offline grocery shopping is the reduced stress levels. The respondents experience that it can be very stressful walking around in a crowded physical grocery store trying to locate the goods on your shopping list. Moreover, most respondents were used to the product placement in their local stores and could navigate by ease. However, they found it annoying having to walk around and take detours in the physical stores when they only needed a few items or if they shopped in an unfamiliar grocery store. Bezawada et al. (2009) maintain that an illogical placement of food items in a grocery store potentially could lead to a negative consumer experience. Hence, consumers who have a hard time locating the wanted food items get annoyed and have a bad experience. According to both focus groups, one of the key reasons why they chose to purchase groceries online was to avoid these types of negative experiences. Bellman et al. (1999) also stress the importance of a well-designed website. Their study showed that a typical online shopper is someone who values efficiency. Respondents from the focus groups and interviews agreed on that it was a bit hard to navigate on the online grocery stores webpages the first few times. But, due to well-designed websites, you quickly learned how to navigate. Thus, the online environment saved you a lot of time. Liam, Mona and Nora also mentioned that they appreciated the savable shopping lists in the online environment. As seen in *Table 6*, Nora said, *"Saved shopping list saves me a lot of time"*. Anesbury et al. (2016) mean that savable shopping lists have a positive effect on online grocery shopping since consumers have a more efficient shopping experience.

Table 6. Summary of Findings Place

Category	Dimensions	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Offline	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Online
Place	Store location	<p>Distance: (4/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(-) <i>"it's not far to the local store but it is quite small. There is a larger store quite a bit away, so I must drive there or take the bus. However, it is expensive, I have heard it is one of the most expensive stores in Sweden"</i>.</p> <p>Shopping frequency: (5/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>"In a physical store, I shop for</i></p>	<p>Shop from any location: (7/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>"It is nice to purchase groceries during the lunch break or on my way home from work. It saves me a lot of time and stress"</i>.</p> <p>Home delivery: (7/7)</p> <p>Illustrative example</p> <p>(+) <i>"It is so nice to avoid carry grocery bags across the city. Even though it takes</i></p>

	<i>groceries about 2-3 times a week. Since I have young children that are often with me in the store, it is hard both timewise and to carry food for a whole week”</i>	<i>some planning before the purchase, I receive food for a whole week”.</i>
		Home delivery: (2/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) “Sometimes it can be annoying that I have to make sure I am home when they deliver the food”.</i>
Website/in-store environment	Inability to find products: (1/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) “I am used to my local store so the only time it’s hard to find products is when I shop at a new store or shopping for goods that I’m not use to”.</i>	Saved shopping list: (3/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) “Saved shopping list saves me a lot of time”.</i>
	Stressful environment: (6/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) “When its Friday afternoon and there is a lot of people in the store and it could be really stressful and wait for a long time in the lines, however when my children is tired and hungry you do not feel you have time to spend in the store”.</i>	User-friendly website: (5/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) “It was a bit hard to navigate through the webpage but then you have the search item and all food items are placed into categories so it’s quite easy to find what you need”.</i>
	Easy to navigate in-store: (1/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) it is easy to locate in my regular store but sometimes it gets annoying when you are forced to take a detour when you just need one or two products”.</i>	Efficiency: (6/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) “Online grocery shopping saves time for you every time you purchase, mostly because of the categorization and I can purchase everywhere”.</i>

4.2.3. Price

Miller (1998) believes that saving money it one of the most important factors when grocery shopping. Hence, consumers value low prices and price promotions when deciding if they buy groceries offline or online (Miller, 1998). According to Svensk Digital Handel (2018), the third highest argument to why consumers to avoid online grocery shopping is that online grocery shopping is more expensive compared to the traditional grocery stores. The respondents in the interviews and focus groups had divided opinions about if the price levels were higher or lower in the online grocery stores. However, all respondents agreed on that they saved money by purchasing groceries online since they planned their purchases better and made less spontaneous purchases. Svensk

Handel (2018) states that less impulsive purchases are one main argument to why consumers chose to purchase groceries online.

Felicia expressed, *"The first thing I always do when I buy food online is to go to the 'weekly offers' page. Everything that is on a discount that week is gathered at the same place, which makes it so easy"* (Table 7). Peinkofer et al. (2015) say that price promotions are considered one of the most attractive offers an online grocery retailer can make, which is confirmed by the statement of Felicia. About half of the respondents' experience that it is easier to compare and find price promotions in an online grocery store compared to in an offline grocery store. The respondents experience that it is hard to get an overview of all the price promotions in a physical store, and it is, therefore, easy to miss out on discounted offers. To solve this issue, Mona explains that she often visits the physical stores' webpages before visiting the physical store since it was easier to overview all price promotions online before visiting the actual store. Pauwels et al. (2011) argue that presenting price information online increased the traffic to the physical store. Even though the statement above made by Mona cannot confirm this theory, the report shows that presenting price information online is valuable for offline grocery consumers. Nevertheless, the online grocery shopping format was by far considered more suitable for price comparison among the respondents. As seen in Table 7, Gary said, *"It is easier for me to compare prices online across different brands which give me an opportunity to make the most affordable purchase"*. This statement also relates to the ability to save money while grocery shopping. Jenny expressed, *"When I'm looking for something special, I often compare prices between online retailers before choosing what store to buy from"* (Table 7). Hence, the respondents prefer online grocery shopping not only because the online format makes it easier to compare brands within the online store but also between different retailers. Rasmus and Asger Nielsen (2005) argues that the online environment enables consumers to search for price information at multiple retailers at the same time, thus simplifies price comparison.

Previous studies have found that delivery costs are a downside to online grocery shopping. Consequently, several online grocery retailers have introduced free shipping if the order made by consumers reach a set amount of money (Becerril-Arreola et al., 2013).

Most of the respondents did not experience delivery costs as a disadvantage of online grocery shopping since they bought large amounts of groceries each time. However, they mentioned that delivery costs were annoying those few times when you did not reach the limit to receive free delivery. In those cases, the respondents often chose to buy groceries in a physical store instead.

Table 7. Summary of Findings Price

Category	Dimensions	Subdimension and illustrative examples Offline	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Online
Price	Price comparison	Hard to get an overview of prices: (3/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) "Since it is hard to get an overview on all weekly discounts and coupons in a physical store you sometimes miss out on reduced prices on some products".</i>	Price awareness: (6/7) Illustrate example <i>(+) "It is easier for me to compare prices online across different brands which give me an opportunity to make the most affordable purchase".</i>
		Compare price between retailers: (1/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) "Sometimes when I plan for a weekly purchase, I start by googling prices on different offline retailers' websites to see which physical store that have the best offers this week".</i>	Compare price between retailers: (4/7) Illustrate example <i>(+) "When I'm looking for something special, I often compare prices between online retailers before choosing what store to buy from".</i>
	Price promotion	Increased spontaneous purchases: (5/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) "It is easy to get affected by offers such as pay for two get three. I think I often fall for that type of promotion even though I did not plan to buy that promoted product".</i>	Delivery costs: (5/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) "I wouldn't say that delivery costs affect me at all since I buy large quantities at the same time. I always get free deliveries".</i>
		Hard to take advantage of all price promotions: (3/7) Illustrative example <i>(-) "When you buy food in a physical store you often know what you are going to buy and only visit the aisles where the food items on your shopping list is placed. I am sure I miss out on a</i>	Easy to find price promoted products: (6/7) Illustrative example <i>(+) "The first thing I always do when I buy food online is to go to the 'weekly offers' page. Everything that is on discount that week is gathered at the same place which makes it so easy".</i>

lot of good offers since I don't get a complete overview of the store".

Save money: (7/7)

Illustrative example

(+) *"I feel that I save money when shopping online because I plan my purchase better".*

4.2.4. Promotion

According to Bell et al. (2011), consumers vary in their receptivity of different types of promotions. Our collected data also give scattered answers regarding consumers experiences of promotions. About half of the respondents' experience that they get more affected by promotions in a physical grocery store while the other half believes that online store promotions affect them more. Chandon et al. (2009) mean that past brand usage has a big impact on the effect in-store marketing has on consumers. Diana, that is vegan says, *"Since I am a vegan, I'm concerned with which products I buy. I find it easier to buy vegan food offline since offline stores highlight vegan food better. Somehow vegan promotion catches my eye easier in a physical store"* (Table 8). Consequently, Diana experience that POP marketing, such as nutrition information is easier to compare in offline stores compared to online grocery stores. Lemon and Nowlis (2002) imply that the effect of POP marketing differs from the features of the product. Especially when the layout of the promotion leads consumers to directly compare similar products (Lemon & Nowlis, 2002). In this case, Diana is concerned to compare nutrition information between different products to make sure it is vegan and prefers to do so in a physical store. Chris and Brad mention that they enjoy the in-store experience of when different brands do live demonstrations in physical stores. Chris and Brad liked that you could taste the food before you purchased it, especially if it was a new product or a brand. They felt that live demonstrations often lead to more spontaneous purchases. On the contrary, previous studies on the effect of in-store promotions mean that consumers are unlikely to choose a brand that they have never used before (Chandon et al., 2009). However, Chris and Brad did not experience that live demonstrations was vital in their choice of buying groceries offline or online, and it was more a bonus which made the shopping experience more enjoyable.

The other half of the respondents experienced that different promotions affected them more in an online environment. Both easy access to coupons and more relevant promotions were reasons for preferring promotions in an online grocery context. All respondents but Isaac mentioned that they often got relevant suggestions on products they normally bought when they purchased groceries online. Zhang and Wendel (2009) mean that personalized marketing is used both in offline and online grocery stores. However, as most respondents argued, Zhang and Wendel's (2009) study showed that personalized marketing seems to be more efficient in an online context. On the contrary Isaac said "*I do not experience any difference in more or less personalized marketing since I started buying groceries online*" which contradicts previous research. Svensk Digital Handel (2018) means that the largest grocery retailers are aware of the importance to collect data and produce relevant promotion to consumers based on the data, both in offline and online stores. Furthermore, the increased mobile usage will give opportunities for retailers to create more customized promotions in the future (Ström, Vendel & Bredican, 2014). Ström et al. (2014) explain that experienced benefits from mobile marketing are that promotions can be based on time, location and personal profile. For example, consumers previous clickstream data and consumer purchase history could increase more customized marketing. Additionally, mobile marketing is an ideal gateway to create a relationship between the consumer and the offline or online grocery store. Thus, the perceived value and convenience of mobile marketing increases (Ström, Vendel, & Bredican, 2014). Hence, the theorized benefits of mobile marketing are confirmed by the respondents. Other benefits of mobile marketing mentioned by the respondents were convenience factors. Most respondents felt that you got a better overview of all promotions and offers on the mobile. As seen in Table 8, Hannah said, "*It is nice to get promotions and coupons to my mobile phone since I always have my phone with me, so I don't miss out on good offers*". Most respondents agreed on that it was convenient to access to coupons and offers directly on the mobile phone. You did not have to remember any physical coupons when you were going to purchase groceries online. Jenny added, "*I don't have to remember any physical coupons, or so, I have everything gathered at the same place on my phone*" (Table 8). Shankar et al. (2010) study confirm the respondents experience since it mentions that it is becoming more common to shop groceries through your smart

phone. Hence, they argue that it is convenient to market through smartphones as well (Shankar et al., 2010).

Overall, promotion does not seem to have a significant impact on why consumers experience a desire to purchase food online. About half of the respondents preferred offline promotion, while the other half preferred online promotion. Most of our respondents tried online grocery shopping because they got it recommended from a friend or a family member, not because of promotion.

Table 8. Summary of Findings Promotion

Category	Dimensions	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Offline	Subdimensions and illustrative examples Online
Promotion	Point-of-purchase	<p>Compare products: (1/7) Illustrative examples (+) <i>“Since I am a vegan, I’m concerned with which product I buy. I find it easier to buy vegan food offline since offline stores highlight vegan food. Somehow vegan promotion catches my eye easier in a physical store”.</i></p> <p>Visual inspiration: (2/7) Illustrative example (+) <i>“I enjoy trying new products, physical demonstrations of new products add value to me”.</i></p>	
	In-store marketing	<p>Purchase on routine: (4/7) Illustrative example (-) <i>“When I buy things, I normally eat I don’t think I get that effected of promotions since I have my favorite brands and always go for them.</i></p> <p>Spontaneous purchases: (6/7) Illustrative examples (+) <i>“Maybe if it is a completely new product, promotion could affect me to purchase and try that product. Such as a new flavour of marabou”.</i></p>	
	Customized promotion		<p>Personalized promotion unchanged: (2/7) Illustrative examples</p>

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(+/-) *“I do not experience any difference in more or less personalized marketing since I started buying groceries online”.*

Personal suggestions: (6/7)

Illustrative examples

(+) *“I guess I sometimes get suggestions on food I normally buy which can be good”.*

**Convenient with mobile
marketing: (5/7)**

Illustrative examples

(+) *“It is nice to get promotions and coupons to my mobile phone since I always have my phone with me, so I don’t miss out on good offers”.*

Easy to access: (3/7)

Illustrative examples

(+) *“I don’t have to remember any physical coupons or so, I have everything gathered at the same place on my phone”.*

4.3. New Dimensions

During one of the focus groups and two interviews, one unexpected dimension was mentioned by the respondents. Several respondents experienced that grocery shopping online was more environmentally friendly compared to offline grocery shopping.

4.3.1. Environmental aspects

There was a general assumption among the respondents in the second focus group that online grocery shopping was more environmentally friendly compared to offline grocery shopping. The first reason is that instead of each consumer driving a car to the offline grocery store, one truck delivers groceries to multiple consumers. Hence, carbon dioxide emissions are reduced as a result of fewer people driving to the store. Moreover, it was a common belief that food waste was reduced as a result of purchasing groceries online. The respondents experienced that they planned their purchase better when buying food online and made less spontaneous purchases. Thus, less food went to waste. This presumed positive effects online grocery shopping has on the environment increased

respondents' willingness to purchase groceries online instead of offline. However, present research shows that food waste increase in online grocery shopping compared to offline grocery shopping (Ilyuk, 2018). Ilyuk (2018) argue that since consumers put less effort and time into online grocery shopping, consumers experience physical ownership to the bought goods. In a physical store, consumers put more effort into hand picking and packaging the purchased food items compared to in an online store where much of the effort related to grocery shopping is transferred to another party, namely the store employees. As a result, consumers waste more food (Ilyuk, 2018). Additionally, Mårtensson and Östholm Munkberg (2019) argue that online grocery shopping increases carbon emissions. Even if consumers buy larger amounts of food once a week through online grocery stores, they still drive cars to supplement such products that they forgot (Mårtensson & Östholm Munkberg, 2019).

4.4. Conclusion of the analysis

Considering the collected data, some dimensions have more impact than others on why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. The respondents in the two focus groups were asked to rank the experienced advantages of online grocery shopping collectively. The exercise showed that the top three advantages that increased consumer experience the most in both focus groups were firstly, home delivery. Secondly, that you can purchase food from anywhere and lastly, that online grocery shopping is timesaving since you do not have to wait in any lines and since it is easy to find the products online. The analyze also showed that some dimensions and more interestingly the whole category of promotions had little to no impact on why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. Hence, the conceptual model and table need to be revised.

In the first part of the analysis, consumer experience, in general, was discussed. The interviews and focus groups showed that the respondents enjoy online grocery shopping more compared to offline grocery shopping. Compared to offline grocery shopping that often evoked more utilitarian values due to a stressful and noisy instore experience with crowded stores and long lines. Online grocery shopping could be turned into a more enjoyable and hedonic experience where the household was gathered together in the sofa at home and picked out the next weeks groceries together. Thus, some respondents argued

that they prefer online grocery shopping compared to offline grocery shopping. Interestingly, the respondents had an indifferent attitude to whether offline or online customer service was preferred. Some respondents argued that being able to converse with employees face to face could have a positive impact on the shopping experience. However, most respondents also argued that they were positively surprised of the service level in online store although you could not physically interact with the employees. Nevertheless, no one of the respondents felt that the level of service had any significant impact on whether they chose to purchase groceries offline or online. Also, the different type of service that is giving by online and offline shopping were difficult for the respondents to value which make this hard to evaluate how it affect the overall consumer experience. Hence, the dimension of service quality will be removed from the conceptual model

Product touch and assortment was discussed under the product category. It was commonly believed among the respondents that the inability to touch products in an online environment deterred many consumers from purchasing groceries online. The respondents mentioned that they had a preconceived perception that ability to touch products prior to purchasing them increased the feeling of picking the best possible products. In an offline grocery store, you could feel the texture and decide for example if a fruit was ripe or not. However, the respondents experienced that as soon as you had made your first online grocery purchase, the inability to touch products ceased to be a problem. All respondents argued that the groceries they received from online stores held a high standard. Thus, product touch has an impact on why consumers chose to purchase groceries online since the inability to touch products in an online environment creates and deters consumes from trying online grocery shopping. On the contrary, a larger assortment was one of the major dimensions that attracted customers to buy food online. This was especially notable among respondents that lived in one of Sweden's three largest cities. These respondents lived close to a local offline store, but the assortment in the grocery stores were small which created a negative shopping experience. The local stores were often more expensive and due to a lesser assortment, respondents argued that they sometimes could not find all the goods they needed to buy. Therefore, online grocery

shopping presented a much larger and varied assortment, hence a more positive shopping experience, for these respondents.

The category place with dimensions such as store location and in-store/website environment probably include the major experienced benefits connected to why consumers purchase groceries online. Home delivery, time- and effort saving, and the less stressful environment was some of the positive experienced benefits from online grocery shopping mentioned in the interviews and focus groups. In an offline grocery store you firstly have to drive/bike or walk to the desired store and then you have to spend more time walking around in the store to collect your items and then lastly stand in an line at the checkout and transport the groceries back home. One advantage experienced with offline grocery shopping however was that you received your goods at the same time as you bought them. In contrast, consumers must wait at least a few hours before they receive their groceries when placing an order online. On the other hand, some respondents experienced that an advantage with online grocery shopping was that it is more environmentally friendly compared to offline grocery shopping, even if research shows the opposite. Some respondents argue that they chose online grocery shopping because it is better for the environment since fewer people drive cars to the grocery store hence a reduction of car emissions. Consequently, the dimension 'impact on environment' has been added to the revised conceptual table even if it contradicts current research.

Dimensions connected to the dimension price such as price promotions and price comparison was other factors that increased consumers' willingness to purchase groceries online. Advantages explored in the analysis are that the online environment makes it easier to compare prices both within the same online store and between other online grocery retailers. Respondents mentioned that you could visit multiple retailers at the same time when you purchased groceries online. To compare prices and offers in offline store you either had to visit several stores, but that is time consuming. Or you could compare offers at offline stores webpages. The issue that caused however was that there was no guarantee that the products on price promotions was in stock in the offline stores. To easy compare prices between online grocery stores was considered an advantage for the respondents and increased the consumer experience. Additionally, the interviews and

focus groups revealed that consumers experience that they save money by purchasing groceries online. Both because they make less spontaneous purchases but also since it is easier to get an overview of price promoted products in an online store.

Surprisingly, the promotion category does not seem to have a significant impact on why consumers chose to purchase groceries online and if the consumer experience gets affected differently between online or offline grocery shopping. The respondents have divided opinions on whether they prefer offline or online promotion. For example, the respondents did not experience any great difference between personalized marketing performed by offline stores compared to online stores. Additionally, the respondents had a hard time expressing whether they preferred in-store marketing such as signages and posters compared to online marketing such as mobile marketing. Furthermore, no one of the respondents felt that different type of promotions had any effect on whether they preferred to purchase groceries offline or online. The only positive thing the respondents mentioned was that it was convenient to get promotions in your mobile phone since you always had the phone with you. On the other hand, mobile marketing can be used both by offline and online grocery stores even though it might be utilized more by online stores. Hence, the effect promotion had on consumer experience connected to if respondents preferred offline or online marketing was hard to measure. As a result, all dimensions connected to promotion such as POP, in-store marketing, customized promotion and mobile marketing will be removed from the conceptual model and table together with the whole category of promotion. The findings in the interviews and focus groups only showed that promotion increased the consumer experience and had an impact on consumers during the actual shopping trip. However, no indicators are showing that different types of promotion increase consumers' willingness to purchase groceries online instead of in a physical store.

To conclude, some categories and dimensions of the marketing mix have a greater impact on why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online than others. Hence, the conceptual model has been modified accordingly, which has been visualized in a revised conceptual model and table presented below in *Figure 2* and *Table 9*.



Figure 2. Revised Conceptual Model

Table 9. Revised Conceptual Table

Dimensions	Offline dimensions	Subdimensions	Online dimensions	Subdimensions
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Consumer Experience	Hedonic vs. Utilitarian	A noisy and stressful environment creates utilitarian values.	Hedonic vs. Utilitarian	Purchasing food from any location creates hedonic values.
	Service Quality	The face-to-face interaction with employees improves the shopping experience.	Service Quality	Consumers experience that online support is more convenient than first thought.
Product	Ability to touch products	Increase the feeling of picking the best possible product available.	Inability to touch products.	Could potentially miss touching and smelling fresh products before purchase.
	Assortment	A larger assortment of locally produced goods available.	Assortment	Wider assortment and goods are always in-stock online.
Place	Store location	Time consuming to visit the store due to distance and shopping frequency. Takes longer time in-store.	Store location	Convenient to be able to purchase groceries from anywhere and get them home delivered. Less time-consuming to purchase groceries online.
	In-store environment	Harder to locate wanted goods in an offline store if it is not your everyday store.	Website environment	Easy to navigate and search for products. Moreover, saveable shopping lists simplifies online grocery shopping.
			Impact on environment	Less people drive cars when grocery shopping online. More planned purchases, hence, less food goes to waste.
Price	Price promotions	It is hard to get an overview on good price	Price promotions	Easier to get an overview of all price promotions.

		promotion thus it is easy to miss out on good offers.		Delivery costs are a downside.
	Price comparison	It is hard to compare prices across different stores because of the lack of good overall picture.	Price comparison	Easier to compare products online, because of the better overall picture and ability to compare different retailers offers at the same time.
Promotion	Point of purchase	Enables consumers to easy compare products. Inspires visually.	Customized promotion	Consumers got relevant suggestions however, had difficulties to know if the customized promotion is different online compared to offline.
	In store marketing	Live demonstrations of food assortment increase hedonic values and spontaneous purchases.	Mobile marketing	Convenient with mobile marketing since the mobile phone is a constant companion.

5. Conclusion

The last chapter in this thesis, chapter five, presents the conclusion of our research. This chapter consists of a summary of this explorative study, a conclusion, and practical implications. Lastly, chapter five ends with suggestions for further research and critiques to our thesis.

5.1. Summary of thesis

To our best knowledge, there is a limited amount of previous research on why consumer experience a desire to purchase grocery online and what advantages and disadvantages consumers consider while making this choice. Exploring this knowledge gap will, therefore, provide valuable information to online grocery retailers and contribute to the existing literature in the subject. A literature review was conducted to get an overview of current research within consumer experience in the context of offline and online grocery shopping. Special emphasis was put on the different categories in the marketing mix, product, place price and promotion. These categories were the main focus areas that were explored throughout the thesis. Additionally, a conceptual model was developed to visualize the relationships between the main theoretical concepts in this thesis. A qualitative method with focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to collect data for the analysis. The focus group guide (*see appendix 1*) and interview guide (*see appendix 2*) were based on the concepts of the marketing mix in the context of consumer experience within grocery shopping. In the analysis, the four categories product, place, price and promotion were coded into dimensions and subdimensions in order to interpret the collected data. The findings showed that the dimensions vary in their level of impact on why consumer chose to purchase groceries online. Hence, the conceptual model was modified. The category promotion and the dimensions connected to promotion was removed together with one other dimension. However, one completely new and unexpected dimension was found.

5.2. Conclusion of thesis

The purpose of the thesis was to explore why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. To be able to answer this question, the advantages and disadvantages experienced in offline respectively online grocery shopping were explored. The relevance of this research could be noted in several ways. Firstly, most prior research with an offline respectively offline approach concentrates on non-grocery contexts. Additionally, Melis et al. (2015) stress that to understand why consumers choose to change their purchasing pattern is a central question to answer for firms and policymakers in order to meet consumers expectations. Hence the findings of this thesis provide a valuable addition to current literature in the research area. Secondly, earlier studies in this research area have mainly been conducted from a retailer perspective and measure attributes such as sales and stock market returns (Melis et al., 2015). This qualitative study present findings based on collected data from interviews and focus groups conducted from a consumer perspective. Thirdly, no previous study has to our knowledge combined all four attributes of the marketing mix. Thus, our research provides a more comprehensive picture of why consumers choose to start shopping for groceries online. Schaupp and Bélanger (2005) mean that there is still little consensus on which attributes that affect the offline and online consumers experience. By exploring all four categories of the marketing mix new insights on the level of impact each dimension has on consumer experience and what consumers value the most was explored.

Findings from the interviews and focus groups were both expected and unexpected. Additionally, different dimensions and subdimensions were identified. All respondents shared most of the experienced advantages of online grocery shopping. The main reasons why consumers chose to purchase groceries online was saved time and effort. As can be seen in *Table 6*, all respondents mentioned that home delivery and the ability to purchase groceries from any location were major advantages of online grocery shopping. These findings are in line with previous studies made by Akaah et al. (1995) and Briesch et al. (2009) which indicates that home delivery and the ability to purchase groceries from any location efficiently removes the distance obstacle for many consumers. For consumers living in more rural areas or consumers that want to spend time on other things than traveling back and forth to a offline grocery store, the two dimentions mentioned above

are highly valued (Akaah et al., 1995; Briesch et al., 2009). Moreover, respondents experienced that they saved money and time due to less spontaneous purchases and that they made fewer shopping trips per week (Table 7). Svensk Handel (2018) has come to the same conclusions in their analysis of online grocery consumers preconceived perceptions about online grocery shopping. Interestingly however, Chu et al. (2008) found that prices in online grocery stores tend to be higher compared to in offline grocery stores. Chu et al. (2008) also found that online grocery shoppers are in general less price sensitive compared to offline grocery shoppers. Hence it is interesting that most respondents experienced that they saved money by purchasing groceries online. On the other hand, Chu et al.'s (2008) findings about online grocery shoppers being less price sensitive could provide an explanation. An additional explanation could be that the respondents experience that they make less spontaneous purchases compared to in an offline grocery store and therefore save money that way. In other words, the value creation of saved time is evaluated higher than the price (Chu et al., 2008).

Surprisingly, the analysis showed that no dimensions tied to promotion had any significant impact on why consumers chose to purchase groceries online. On the contrary, the respondents' opinions on whether they prefer online, or offline promotions were divided. As mentioned in the analysis, the respondents did not feel that there was any difference between the personalized marketing in offline compared to online grocery stores. On the contrary, Zhang and Wendel (2009) found that customized promotion has a greater impact in an online grocery store compared to in an offline grocery store. Nevertheless, the result was only notable in some product categories (Zhang & Wedel, 2009). The overall perception of promotions experienced by the respondents were that promotions could increase hedonic values by for example giving away free samples of a product in an offline store. Nonetheless, these types of promotions were more considered a joyful experience than something that would sway the respondents to shop at a specific store.

In a study carried out by Shankar et al. (2010) it is suggested that mobile marketing is an ideal marketing method to create a relationship between an offline or an online store and consumers since the mobile phone is a constant companion to most consumers. Mobile

marketing could potentially provide an easy platform for consumers to compare prices across different offline retailers but also increase consumers loyalty to a specific store or brand (Ström, Vendel, & Bredican, 2014). However, as mentioned in the analysis, different types of promotions were not deal breakers for the respondents when deciding if to purchase groceries offline or online. Hence, the promotion category was removed from the revised model.

One unexpected finding during our data analysis was that respondents believed that online grocery shopping was more environmentally friendly compared to offline grocery shopping. This belief increased respondents' willingness to purchase groceries online instead of offline. However, current research indicates that online grocery shopping is worse for the environment compared to offline grocery shopping (Ilyuk, 2018). Even though consumers believe that purchasing groceries online is more environmentally friendly due to that less people drive cars to the offline stores, research shows the opposite. In fact, consumers still make weekly emergency purchases even if most of the grocery shopping is done online. Thus, consumers both get food delivered by large trucks at home while also driving to the offline grocery store to make emergency purchases (Ilyuk, 2018). As environmental issues are a topic that is rapidly increasing in interest, not only by academicians but also among consumers and retailers, further research within this research area would have been interesting. To summarize, some categories and dimensions of the marketing mix have a greater impact on why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online than others. Although physical grocery stores will always fill a market function that online stores cannot replace, online grocery stores will continue to grow as they learn to understand what consumers value (Ramus & Asger Nielsen, 2005; Svensk Digital Handel, 2018).

5.3. Practical implications

The aim of this paper is to provide a more comprehensive understanding to why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. Previous studies examining advantages and disadvantages connected to offline and online grocery shopping has focused on specific areas of the marketing mix hence not giving an overall understanding. This thesis has studied all four dimensions of the marketing mix and discovered several

new sub dimensions which explains why consumers choose to purchase groceries either offline or online. The new insights in the research field have been visualized in a conceptual model and listed in a table.

In practice, this thesis could be used as a guideline for retailers and academics interested in understanding which advantages and disadvantages grocery consumers experience with offline respectively online grocery shopping. Furthermore, this thesis could provide insights into why consumers experience a desire to purchase groceries online. However, the grocery market is currently experiencing a transformation, thus, it should be taken into account that some dimensions and sub dimensions may not be up to date in a few years.

5.4. Critical review and future research

Although the thesis provided insight on how consumers experience several dimensions of product, place, price and promotion, multiple other dimensions could have been explored to understand consumers decision-making process. Furthermore, the collected data was based on five interviews and two focus groups, which are a relatively small sample to ensure that the results are accurate. For future research within the same research area, larger data collections would be preferable to strengthen the findings. Adding to this, most respondents in the interviews and focus groups were in their 20s, and few had children. It would be interesting for future research to collect data from other age groups with different household situations to capture the opinions of other demographics.

According to the findings of this thesis, consumers have a perception of online grocery shopping being more environmentally friendly compared to offline grocery shopping. The reasons being that fewer people drive to the store which lower emissions and consumers make less spontaneous purchases online, hence less food is going to waste. On the other hand, current research shows the opposite. Ilyuk (2018) implies that online grocery shopping increase food waste and Mårtensson et al. (2019) argues that carbon dioxide emissions increase with online grocery shopping since consumers purchase food online while also taking the car to a physical grocery store to make “emergency purchases”. Consequently, more research on online grocery shopping in the context of

environmental issues needs to be done to clarify the mixed perceptions. Moreover, the inability to touch products prior to purchasing them in an online environment deters many consumers from trying online grocery shopping (Liu et al., 2017). Research on what could compensate for the absence of product touch in an online grocery shopping context is one suggestion for further research.

6. References

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Appendix 1 – Focus group guide

Topic agenda

1. Welcome (5 min)

All participants are welcomed, and we will offer them coffee and something sweet “swedish fika” and mingle to set the right relaxed mood.

2. Introduction (15 min)

We will introduce our topic and ourselves. We will also explain the aim of the focus group and the format, for example the roles of the moderators and participants and the focus group process. In our case, we will explain that we will have two different exercises where we will use post-it notes. After these two exercises we want to sum up with a third exercise where the participants rank the advantages/disadvantages. Moreover, we will ask everyone to sign a consent form saying that it is okay for us to use the gathered data in our paper.

We will also go through that we wish for everyone’s views and opinions, that they speak one at a time, that it’s an open and relaxed debate, and ask if it is okay that we record everything. The participants will be anonymous, and we will record it just so we can transcript it and use the opinions in the correct way. The participants will be re-coded into different letters to increase the anonymity.

If there will be persons unknown to each other in the focus group, we will have a personal introduction of the participants asking the participants to present themselves with name, age and household status.

We will finish the introduction to let the participants know that they are free to go if they feel uncomfortable. Moreover, if there are any further questions from the participants, we will answer them as well.

3. Discussion and activity topics (40 min)

Opening questions:

- How did you get introduced to online grocery shopping?
- Do you use online grocery shopping frequently?

Activity:

- (i) The advantages of buying your groceries online respectively offline (20 min).
- (ii) Rank the different advantages from most to least advantageously (online and offline separately) together as a group. (10 minutes)
- (iii) The disadvantages of buying your groceries online respectively offline (20 min).
- (iiii) Rank the different disadvantages from the highest to lowest disadvantage (online and offline separately) together as a group. (10 minutes)

Sum up question: (If the question does not get answered in the advantage/disadvantage stage).

- What are your thoughts on service differences between online and offline stores?
- How do you experience price levels in online grocery stores compared to offline stores?
- How do you feel that shopping groceries online compared to visiting a physical store (location) have affected your shopping experience?
- How would describe that the ability or inability to touch products have affected your choice of offline and online grocery shopping? (Follow up: What about assortment?).
- What are your opinions on promotion in offline respectively online grocery stores?

Activity information:

In activity (i) and (iii) we will use post-it notes where each participant gets three post-it notes for each topic. For example, three post-it notes for offline advantages and three post-it notes for online advantages. During a few minutes the participants write down three advantages or disadvantages (depending on the exercise). After a few minutes, the moderator will gather the notes and put them on a board so all the participants can see them. The participants are then asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages freely. In exercise (ii) and (iiii), the participants will use the same post-it notes and rank them. As moderators we will take notes on both the shared and/or individually experienced events.

4. Summing up (5 min)

We will thank the participants for coming and ask if it would be okay to get back to them if we have any further questions.

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Introduction

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself? (Age, household situation etc.)
2. How did you get introduced to online grocery shopping?
3. Could you describe your last shopping trip to an (1) offline store and (2) online store?

Consumer experience (Service, Hedonic vs. Utilitarian)

4. What are your thoughts on service differences between online and offline stores?
5. How would you describe your mood in an offline respectively online grocery store?
6. Would you say that you plan before an online grocery purchase compared to an offline grocery purchase? Please develop.
7. Would you describe grocery shopping as a chore or an enjoyable experience?
 - Does your experience vary between offline and online grocery shopping?

Product (Product touch, Assortment)

8. How would describe that the ability or inability to touch products have affected your choice of offline and online grocery shopping?
9. Do you experience any difference in the assortment between online and offline grocery shopping?
 - If yes, how do you notice this?

Place (Store location, In-store/Website environment)

10. How would you describe that distance have affected you in your choice of offline respectively online grocery store?
11. How many times a week do you buy groceries?
 - Have you noticed any change since you started buying groceries online?

12. How would you describe that the in-store vs. website environment have affected you in your choice of offline respectively online grocery shopping?

➤ (Other shoppers, navigation, finding products etc.)

Price (Price comparison, Price promotion)

13. How do you experience price levels in offline grocery stores compared to online grocery stores?

14. What are your thoughts on price promotions in offline respectively online grocery stores?

➤ (Are there more and better offerings, do you use more or less discounts)

Promotion (Point-of-purchase, in-store marketing, customized promotion, mobile marketing)

15. What impact would you say lists of ingredients, displays and other types of promotions have on you in an offline respectively online grocery store?

16. What are your thoughts on customized promotion in offline respectively online grocery shopping?

17. Since you have started purchasing groceries online, how do you experience promotion through other electronic devices such as mobile phones?

Concluding question

18. Could you recommend online grocery shopping to a friend? Why?

Appendix 3 – Consent form

Integritetskontrakt

Ditt deltagande i denna fokusgrupp kommer att behandlas anonymt. Det kommer inte presenteras några personuppgifter, utan det som kommer att användas är man/kvinna, hushållsstatus samt vilken åldersgrupp ni är inom 20-24/25-34/35-44/45-54 år.

Denna fokusgrupp kommer att spelas in via ljud för att säkerställa att vi återspeglar er åsikt på bästa sätt och ger en rättvisande bild för vår kandidatuppsats.

Genom detta avtal intygar jag att jag godkänner att mina åsikter kommer få bli publicerade via anonymitet i denna kandidatuppsats.

Datum/ort: _____

Underskrift: _____

Namnförtydligande: _____

Datum/ort: _____

Underskrift: _____

Kontraktansvarig: _____