Antecedents of positive word-of-mouth on social media

Authors: Book, Jonathan
Marketing programme
Lindahl, Jesper
Marketing programme
Nergård, Emanuel
Marketing programme

Tutor: Michaela Sandell
Examiner: PhD Pejvak Oghazi
Subject: Relationship marketing
Level and semester: Bachelor thesis, spring semester 2012
Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratefulness towards our supervisor Michaela Sandell due to her consistent availability and helpfulness during this project. We also like to thank PhD Pejvak Oghazi, PhD Vinit Parida and PhD Magnus Hultman for sharing their expertise, which helped this bachelor thesis progress. We would like to thank our co-students Daniel Almgren, Peter Ek and Oliver Göransson as well for their advice and comments during the seminars.

We are proud that we have managed to perform this bachelor thesis since for a long time we had to work from separate locations. Jesper Lindahl from the hospitals in Växjö and Lund and Jonathan Book and Emanuel Nergård from the Linnaeus University. By the use of Skype, e-mail and phone the cooperation did not lack even though Jesper was sick. A major thank is sent to the doctors Aladdin Mohammad of Lunds Universitetssjukhus, and Abbas Burhan of Växjö centrallasarett, for their successful treatment of Jesper Lindahl that ended his complex disease which he unfortunately got during the spring of 2012. Their wholehearted work has been critical for private well being. It also enabled Jesper to consistently be fully involved in the study and all of us to keep a full focus on this bachelor thesis.

Jonathan Book  Jesper Lindahl  Emanuel Nergård
Abstract

Word-of-mouth is positive or negative communication between customers. Word-of-mouth has been recognized as an effective and credible marketing source but still recognized as the least understood marketing strategy. The, for companies actuable, elements of quality, interaction and service recovery are argued to influence satisfaction and word-of-mouth in general while their effect on word-of-mouth on social media is not known.

Facebook is the biggest social media today and it facilitates communication between users. The messages are spread among friends and thus perceived by the receiver as trustworthy since it is not of commercial nature. The reasons why word-of-mouth are spread on social media were investigated through Facebook. By mapping the antecedents of positive word-of-mouth on social media it is also possible to guideline relationship marketing since satisfaction is connected to both relationship marketing and word-of-mouth. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the relationship marketing elements quality, interaction and service recovery for triggering positive word-of-mouth on social media.

272 respondents, who historically had written positive comments about companies on Facebook, answered a questionnaire. The results showed that quality had the highest impact on satisfaction. The relationship marketing element quality was confirmed to have an impact on word-of-mouth on social media. It was also shown that interaction has the highest potential to be a word-of-mouth trigger on social media if the customer perceived that it was performed at a good or better than expected level of the elements tested. The relationship marketing element interaction can therefore be seen as a very important aspect for triggering word-of-mouth on social media. The relationship marketing element service recovery is supported as an important aspect for triggering word-of-mouth on social media as well. The better relationship marketing is performed the more satisfaction will be triggered, which in turn will lead to word-of-mouth on social media.

Keywords of the study: quality, interaction, service recovery, satisfaction, word-of-mouth, social media and relationship marketing.
# Index

1. **Introduction** .............................................................................................................. 8  
   1.1 **Background** ........................................................................................................ 8  
   1.2 **Social Media and Facebook** .............................................................................. 10  
   1.3 **Problem Discussion** .......................................................................................... 11  
   1.4 **Purpose** ............................................................................................................ 14  

2. **Theoretical Framework** ............................................................................................. 15  
   2.1 **Literature Review - Antecedents of Word-of-Mouth** ........................................ 15  
      2.1.1 **Definition of Word-of-Mouth** .................................................................... 15  
      2.1.2 **The Impact of Word-of-Mouth** .................................................................. 15  
      2.1.3 **Quality** ...................................................................................................... 17  
      2.1.4 **Interaction** ................................................................................................. 19  
      2.1.5 **Service Recovery** ....................................................................................... 20  

3. **Conceptualization** .................................................................................................... 23  
   3.1 **Stating Hypotheses** ............................................................................................ 23  
      3.1.1 **Hypothesis 1** .............................................................................................. 23  
      3.1.2 **Hypothesis 2** .............................................................................................. 23  
      3.1.3 **Hypothesis 3** .............................................................................................. 24  
      3.1.4 **Hypothesis 4** .............................................................................................. 24  

4. **Methodology** ........................................................................................................... 26  
   4.1 **Research Approach** ........................................................................................... 26  
      4.1.1 **Inductive versus Deductive** ....................................................................... 26  
      4.1.2 **Quantitative versus Qualitative Research** ................................................. 26  
   4.2 **Research Design** ................................................................................................ 27  
   4.3 **Data Sources** ..................................................................................................... 29  
   4.4 **Research Strategy** .............................................................................................. 30  
   4.5 **Data Collection Method** .................................................................................... 32  
   4.6 **Data Collection Instrument** .............................................................................. 33  
      4.6.1 **Operationalization and Measurement of Variables** .................................... 33  
      4.6.2 **Questionnaire Design** .................................................................................. 34  
      4.6.3 **Pretesting** .................................................................................................... 37
4.7 SAMPLING.................................................................................................................. 37
4.7.1 SAMPLING FRAME................................................................................................. 38
4.7.2 SAMPLE SELECTION ......................................................................................... 39
4.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD ................................................................................. 41
4.8.1 DATA CODING .................................................................................................. 41
4.8.2 DATA ENTRY ....................................................................................................... 41
4.8.3 DATA EXAMINATION AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS........................................ 42
4.8.4 RELIABILITY TEST............................................................................................. 42
4.8.5 CORRELATION ANALYSIS .............................................................................. 43
4.8.6 HYPOTHESIS TESTING ..................................................................................... 44
4.8.7 INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST .................................................................. 46
4.9 QUALITY CRITERIA................................................................................................. 46
4.9.1 CONTENT VALIDITY ............................................................................................ 47
4.9.2 CONSTRUCT VALIDITY ...................................................................................... 47
4.9.3 CRITERION VALIDITY ......................................................................................... 48
4.9.4 RELIABILITY ....................................................................................................... 49
4.10 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ...................................................... 50

5. DATA ANALYSIS ..................................................................................................... 51
5.1 DESCRIPTIVE DATA .............................................................................................. 51
5.1.1 RESPONSE RATE ............................................................................................... 51
5.1.2 DEMOGRAPHY OF SAMPLE ........................................................................... 52
5.1.3 ANTECEDENTS OF WORD-OF-MOUTH SPREADING ON FACEBOOK.............. 54
5.1.4 MERGED VARIABLES MEANS ....................................................................... 55
5.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY .............................................................................. 55
5.2.1 RELIABILITY TEST ............................................................................................ 55
5.2.2 VALIDITY TEST – CORRELATION ANALYSIS .................................................. 56
5.3 HYPOTHESIS TESTING ......................................................................................... 57
5.3.1 HYPOTHESIS 1, 2 AND 3 ................................................................................. 57
5.3.2 HYPOTHESIS 4 .................................................................................................... 58
5.4 FURTHER EXPLANATORY DATA ......................................................................... 59
5.4.1 WORD-OF-MOUTH PRONENESS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS ............................ 59
5.4.2 EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE ................................................................. 60
5.4.3 COMPARING MEANS OF QUALITY ................................................................ 61
5.4.4 Comparing Means of Interaction ........................................................................................................63
5.4.5 Comparing Means of Service Recovery ...............................................................................................65

6. Discussion of Results and Conclusion ..................................................................................................67
6.1 Quality as a Trigger for Word-of-Mouth on Social Media ..................................................................67
6.2 Interaction as a Trigger for Word-of-Mouth on Social Media ..............................................................69
6.3 Service Recovery as a Trigger for Word-of-Mouth on Social Media ....................................................71
6.4 Word-of-Mouth on Social Media Similarities and Differences between Quality, Interaction and Service Recovery ..........................................................................................................................73
6.5 Conclusion ..............................................................................................................................................75

7. Implications, Limitations and Future Research .....................................................................................77
7.1 Academic Implications .........................................................................................................................77
7.2 Managerial Implications .......................................................................................................................78
7.3 Limitations of the Study .........................................................................................................................79
7.4 Future Research .....................................................................................................................................81

Appendix 1. Operationalization Scheme for the Questionnaire ..................................................................94

Appendix 2. The Questionnaire ..................................................................................................................98

Appendix 3. The Questionnaire in Swedish ...............................................................................................103

Appendix 4 Statements Merged to Common Variables .............................................................................108
“Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been termed the world’s most effective, yet least understood marketing strategy”

- Helm, 2000, pp. 158
1. Introduction

This chapter will introduce the reader to the subject of the investigation. First background will be presented to introduce the reader and give an understanding for the subject at hand. Secondly the problems surrounding the subject will be explained. Thirdly the purpose of the investigation will be presented.

1.1 Background

Grönroos (1994 pp. 6) writes that the concept of marketing is “the notion that the firm is best off by designing and directing its activities according to the needs and desires of customers in chosen target markets”. Neil Borden presented the concept of the marketing mix in the 1950s, which included twelve variables (product, price, branding, distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, displaying, servicing, physical handling, fact finding and analysis), which were considered to affect marketing (Harker & Egan, 2006). Later Jerome McCarthy transformed Borden’s list into a simplified marketing mix known as the 4 P’s of marketing (price, place, product and promotion) which became a foundation of marketing (Harker & Egan, 2006). The 4 P’s is criticised since the list can impossibly include all relevant elements of marketing. The approach does not include any interactive elements, i.e. it is product oriented and not customer oriented (Grönroos, 1994; Constantinides, 2006; Goi 2009). Therefore the existing knowledge about the 4 P’s should not be falsified but it should not be a guideline for the future of marketing neither. The future of marketing is to build relations with customers (Gummesson, 1999; Möller, 2006; Dominici, 2009).

Relationship marketing is about attracting, developing and retaining customer relations (Grönroos 1994; Berry, 2002; Harker & Egan, 2006; Ndubisi, 2007). Relationship marketing concerns customers’ perceptions of a service experience and is determined by the efforts from both the service provider and the customer itself. Giving and keeping promises to customers is a common way of explaining relationship marketing (Gummesson, 1999). Harker & Egan (2006) write that the core of relationship marketing is the interpersonal interaction between buyer and seller. The overall aim of relationship marketing is to have long-term customers and the importance of that is obvious since it is cheaper to retain customers compared to acquire new ones (Grönroos, 1994; Yu & Dean, 2001; Harker & Egan, 2006). Although for companies to be able to retain customers, relationship marketing requires information. Information that
gives the company knowledge of the customer's demands and wishes can be used to get more satisfied customers (Payne & Pennie, 2005).

Customer satisfaction is considered as one of the fundamentals of relationship marketing (Grönroos, 1994; Gummesson, 1999; Berry, 2002; Agariya & Singh, 2011). Which strategy a company chooses to implement is not essential, what is essential is an excellently performed meeting of customer needs to gain high customer satisfaction (Berry, 2002). Even though the importance of customer satisfaction is known for a successful relationship marketing the failure rate when implementing relationship marketing is quite high, 55-75 percent, while only about 30 percent results in dramatic improvement in retention and profitability (Agariya & Singh, 2011). The implementation of relationship marketing has not been as successful as the theory suggests and Harker & Egan (2006) offer the explanation that practitioners appear to have borrowed the term relationship marketing without adopting the underlying values. There is a need for more empirical knowledge about how to implement successful relationship marketing (Palmer, Lindgreen & Vanhamme, 2006).

It is shown that higher level of customer satisfaction leads to a higher customer loyalty (Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos, 1994; Hallowell, 1996; Anderson, Rust & Fornell, 1997). Customer satisfaction is unarguably a key for companies to build customer relationships (Grönroos, 1994; Berry, 2002) while uttered positive word-of-mouth is a strong confirmation of satisfaction (Spreng, Harrel & Mackoy, 1995; Söderlund, 1998; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Godes & Mayzlin 2004; Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst, 2005; Dellarocas & Naraya 2006; Meiners, Schwartling, Seeberger, 2010; Buttle, 2011). Therefore positive word-of-mouth can be seen as a source where information about what makes customers satisfied can be found. It can be seen as a source that contains possibilities to strengthen the relationship with customers. If companies know what leads to satisfaction it might also lead to new word-of-mouth.

To know what triggers positive word-of-mouth is important since today customers have taken control over companies in the sense that they spread marketing messages through word-of-mouth that strongly influence the perception of the company. A modern marketing mix cannot ignore word-of-mouth (Meiner, Schwartling & Seeberger, 2010). Knowledge about reasons why customers share word-of-mouth is actually more important than ever since Internet
offers a forum where an unlimited amount of people can be reached (Swanson & Kelly, 2001). Internet has a great impact on both the reach of word-of-mouth and the measurability of it (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Dellarocas & Naraya, 2006). This emphasizes the importance of studying which the company actuable triggers of online word-of-mouth are since it may make it possible for companies to increase positive word-of-mouth as well as generate a better understanding of how to perform successful relationship marketing.

1.2 Social Media and Facebook

Word-of-mouth online is an increasingly influential phenomenon among consumers and has a decisive effect on customers purchase decisions (Meiners et al, 2010). Web 2.0 contains for example blogs, forums, communities and social media, which give potential customers the opportunity to gain information from other users but also actively participate in the spreading of opinions (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011). Especially social media has grown rapidly in recent years (Hoadley, Xu, Lee & Rosson, 2009; Krasnova, Spiekermann, Koroleva & Hildebrand, 2010).

Social media refers to online platforms that facilitate socialization between the users (Keenan & Shiri, 2009; Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011; Chen et al, 2011) who continuously modifies and update the platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). People mainly participate in social media in order to maintain relationships and self-presentation (Hoadley et al, 2009), which is done through individual profiles (Krasnova et al, 2010). Information is shared on social media due to its offered convenience, enjoyment and its ability to build relationships (Krasnova et al, 2010).

The most popular social media platform is Facebook (Ang, 2011), which was founded in 2004 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Facebook encourages social connection among friends and offers its users to take the “real world’s” connections to the Internet (Keenan & Shiri, 2009). Facebook facilitates interactions between the users and the messages are most often not perceived as commercial (Ang, 2011) and thus are the word-of-mouth on Facebook very influential (Svensson, 2011). Facebook offers social presence and an instant possibility to connect and communicate (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011). Cravings for this information from other Facebook friends make it an effective forum for online word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth’s
beneficial aspect of trustworthiness is present on Facebook since the sender is known compared to many other online forums were the sender is anonymous (Svensson, 2011).

Facebook is a big part of the everyday life of many people and what is experienced in real life is shared there (Ang 2011). As shown above, what people earlier talked about with a few people, has now also moved to the Internet in general and to Facebook particularly. The difference in reach is huge since the average Facebook user has 130 friends (Ang, 2011), which will be reached whenever a comment about a company is uttered. This investigation will therefore find antecedents of favorable word-of-mouth on social media with Facebook as forum of investigation.

1.3 Problem discussion

Word-of-mouth has been recognized as the least understood marketing strategy but the most effective (Helm, 2000). There has been many studies about the subject but since word-of-mouth is mainly done between people in their everyday life, the earlier techniques made it hard to investigate to the same extent as is possible today (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004; Kozinetz, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010) and thereby it has also been hard to fully understand its antecedents. Attempts to investigate word-of-mouth behavior have mainly been made in a marketing world untouched by Internet (Kozinets et al, 2010). The possibilities to measure word-of-mouth has as mentioned historically been low but Internet has a great impact on both the reach of word-of-mouth and enhances the possibility to measure it (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Dellarocas & Naraya, 2006).

Most of the earlier online word-of-mouth literature is about what motivates consumers to spread online word-of-mouth and not about what companies can do to affect it. Motivational aspects such as self enhancement (e.g. Sundaram, Mitra & Webster, 1998; e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004), concern for others (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004; Solomon, Bamossy, G, Askegaard, S, Hogg, M, K., 2010; Cheung & Lee, 2012) and sense of belonging (e.g. Cheung & Lee, 2012) are examples of motives that have been investigated but are hard for companies to affect. Those motives for spreading word-of-mouth are excluded in this study due to the lack of possibility for companies to affect them. That means this study has another viewpoint than earlier online word-of-mouth studies.
Earlier studies are not written with a purpose to find antecedents of word-of-mouth that are operable for managers and are not specifically written with online word-of-mouth on social media in mind (e.g. Cheung & Lee, 2012). Cheung & Lee (2012) emphasizes that future research should investigate why people spread word-of-mouth on social media. Research has shown the impact of word-of-mouth on Facebook (e.g. Svensson, 2011). However, there is a research gap concerning antecedents of word-of-mouth on social media. This investigation will examine the, for companies, operable antecedents for word-of-mouth on social media.

Satisfaction is one of the most important aspect of relationship marketing (Grönroos, 1994; Gummesson, 1999; Berry, 2002; Agariya & Singh, 2011) as well as the main trigger of positive word-of-mouth (Spreng et al, 1995; Söderlund 1998; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Dellarocas & Naraya, 2006; Meiners et al. 2010; Buttle, 2011) which shows that positive word-of-mouth is a sign of successful relationship marketing. So if it is possible to map the antecedents of positive word-of-mouth it is also possible to guideline relationship marketing. The importance of knowing antecedents of word-of-mouth is widely understood since it is for example shown that positive word-of-mouth is a credible marketing source (Helm, 2000; Harrison-Walker 2001; Gremler, Gwinner & Brown, 2001; Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007; Meiners et al, 2010) that affects attitudes (Buttle, 2011), affects purchase decision (File, Cermak & Prince, 1994; Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011; Solomon et al, 2010), attracts new customers (Maxham III, 2001), decreases the costs for a company to attract new customers (Anderson et al, 1997; Kau & Loh, 2006; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2006) and makes it easier to retain and satisfy new customers (Kau & Loh, 2006; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2006). Even though the effects are known it is not known which antecedent that are mostly linked to word-of-mouth behavior (Helm 2000; Buttle, 2011).

Earlier research has, as mentioned above, shown a positive relation between satisfaction and word-of-mouth. However, even though it has not been concluded which antecedent of satisfaction/word-of-mouth that is most connected to word-of-mouth, some correlations have been shown. Satisfaction is considered as a result of company performances above the customers expected level (Grönroos, 1978; Parasuraman, 1985; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2006; Buttle, 2011) while satisfaction triggers word-of-mouth. Earlier research have suggested that no failures service/high service quality (Helm, 2000; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Mägi & Julander, 1996) and product quality (Smart, Madrigal & Seawright, 1996; Tsiotsou, 2005) are
strongly connected to satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth while others mean that a fixed mistake, i.e. service recovery, can actually be an opportunity to make a customer even more satisfied and thereby even more prone to spread positive-word-of-mouth (Spreng et al 1995; Maxham III, 2001; Buttle, 2011). Earlier research has also suggested that uttered word-of-mouth is correlated with social support and employee behavior i.e. interaction (Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Gremler, Bitner & Evans, 1994; Chandon, Leo & Phillipe, 1996; Gremler et al, 2001; Buttle, 2011). The three, above mentioned, for companies actuable antecedents of word-of-mouth on social media are important for relationship marketing due to their impact on satisfaction. The perceived level of quality is affected depending on what kind of products or what kind of service the companies offers (Wallin, Andreassen & Lindestad, 1988; Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994). The perceived level of interaction is depending on how employees treat customers (Gremler et al, 1994; Chandon et al, 1996). The perceived level of service recovery is affected by how the companies’ choses to indemnify mistakes that customers have experienced (Ok, Back & Shanklin, 2007). Therefore the companies can affect these three antecedents of word-of-mouth by affecting the performance levels. Quality, interaction and service recovery are all interesting word-of-mouth triggers from a managerial perspective since they are all actuable antecedents of word-of-mouth for companies. That quality, interaction and service recovery are actuable to gain satisfaction and word-of-mouth is demonstrated but how those factors affect word-of-mouth on social media is not shown.

Facebook is the biggest social media and the average user has 130 friends (Ang, 2011; Svensson, 2011), which means the reach of what is written on Facebook is comprehensive. Since it is written instead of spoken it makes it possible to find the word-of-mouth spreaders and ask them questions. The importance of positive word-of-mouth on Internet is acknowledged (Swanson & Kelly, 2001; Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004; Dellarocas & Naraya, 2006; Kozinetz et al. 2010; Meiners, 2010) but it is not theoretically established how to trigger it on Facebook. The antecedents that have earlier been shown to influence word-of-mouth have not been investigated on the arena of Facebook. Therefore, to know whether earlier research findings are applicable on the biggest social media platform and more concretely state the most important antecedents of word-of-mouth should be of great interest for managers as well as researchers.

Through the discussion above it is obvious that, firstly, the research field is not researched
enough, secondly, antecedents of word-of-mouth on social media is of high interest and thirdly by gaining deeper understanding about word-of-mouth antecedents on social media companies can benefit through using a reliable marketing source which increase satisfaction, commitment, recruitment of new customers and cost reduce.

Interaction, service recovery and quality delivery are, as above described, established as antecedents to satisfaction, which in turn is established as antecedent for word-of-mouth in general. However, it remains to investigate if these elements of relationship marketing trigger word-of-mouth particularly on social media.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the relationship marketing elements quality, interaction and service recovery for triggering positive word-of-mouth on social media.
2. Theoretical framework

This chapter describes present science concerning word-of-mouth and its influential ability. Further science regarding quality, interaction and service recovery are presented since they are argued as, for companies, actuable antecedents of word-of-mouth.

2.1 Literature review - Antecedents of Word-of-mouth

2.1.1 Definition of word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth is communication from customer to customer (Solomon et al, 2010; Gremler, Brown & Gwinner, 2001; Swanson & Kelly, 2001; de Matos & Rossi, 2008) Swanson & Kelly (2001) write that word-of-mouth is expressed by someone who is not a marketing source. Meiners et al (2010) are on the same track when writing that word-of-mouth is positive or negative non-commercial inter-personal communications about companies. Buttle (2011, pp. 243) also emphasize that word-of-mouth is of non-commercial nature and further writes what distinguishes word-of-mouth from advertising; “Perhaps all that distinguishes WOM is that it is uttered by sources who are assumed by receivers to be independent of corporate influence”.

In this study the authors have, after considering earlier definitions, defined word-of-mouth as; positive or negative communication spread from customer to customer which are considered by the receiver to be without corporate influence or special awards for doing so.

2.1.2 The Impact of word-of-mouth

Harrison-Walker (2001) describes word-of-mouth as the ultimate success factor because of its trustworthiness. Word-of-mouth is of non-commercial nature and customers interpret it with low scepticism since non-commercial communication between friends and acquaintances clearly are perceived as more credible than messages sent out from a company (Gremler et al, 2001; Meiners et al, 2010). Word-of-mouth’s ability can be justified with an amount of reasons, for example it helps customers to reach buying decisions, it helps customers to avoid uncertainties but its main advantage is its credibility (Helm, 2000; Harrison-Walker, 2001).

Word-of-mouth can be up to nine times more effective to turn attitudes to positive compared to advertising (Day, 1971; Buttle, 2011). Word-of-mouth’s impact on people is further
emphasized by showing that 57 percent of people that visited a new web-site did so based on personal recommendations, which was higher than any other form of influence (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). The impact of word-of-mouth is further reinforced by Solomon et al (2010) when they claim that 80 percent of all buying decisions are influenced by personal recommendations. Word-of-mouth facilitates customers’ opportunity to gain highly powerful knowledge, which may have a decisive impact on customers’ decision making (Chen, Fay & Wang, 2011). Studies have shown that word-of-mouth is also beneficial for brand switch i.e. it assists firms in gaining new customers (Maxham III, 2001).

Increased positive word-of-mouth is an opportunity to reduce advertising costs but also to gain customers that are easier to satisfy and retain. A customer gained through word-of-mouth has a positive image from the start, which makes the customer easier to retain in a relation (Kau & Loh, 2006; Wangheim & Bayón, 2006).

From a company's point of view there is also a negative aspect with word-of-mouth. Companies that cannot satisfy their customer will jeopardize their image since unsatisfied customer might express negative opinions that harm the brand (Helm, 2000). The importance of avoiding negative word-of-mouth spreading is emphasized by Yu & Dean (2001) since it triggers customers to change behaviour, for example it may lead to customers switching to another provider. Customers have power to either contribute to promote or damage offerings. It is shown that dissatisfied customers are likely to tell twice as many people about their negative experience than satisfied customers about their positive experience (Harrison-Walker, 2001; Maxham III, 2001, Buttle, 2011). Research has shown that 90 percent of customers who are dissatisfied with the service they receive will not buy again or come back. But the worst part is that the unhappy customer will tell at least 9 other people and 13 percent of the unhappy customers will spread negative word-of-mouth to more than 20 people. How many times the story will be retold are not reported (Buttle, 2011).

Word-of-mouth is said to be created at a certain level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Very dissatisfied or very satisfied customers are more likely to engage in word-of-mouth (Spreng et al, 1995; Söderlund 1998; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Meiners et al. 2010; Buttle, 2011). That customers feel satisfaction with a company’s products, services, retailers and sales people are all important post purchase responses that are associated with customer loyalty, retention and
also positive word-of-mouth. A high level of satisfaction for the customers lead to both increased level of commitment and positive word-of-mouth intentions (Brown et al, 2005). Ranawera & Prabhu (2003) put word-of-mouth’s importance in perspective when arguing that retention is a behavioural aspect that is justified both by positive and negative determinants. For example a customer can return to a specific company due to complex switching barriers. In comparison positive word-of-mouth spreading is determined by the customers’ true opinions toward the company. Hence, word-of-mouth behaviour is a strong confirmation of satisfaction (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003).

2.1.3 Quality

It has been concluded that intentions to utter word-of-mouth is influenced by customer’s perceptions of value and quality. The higher those perceptions are the stronger the intention to spread word-of-mouth will be (Buttle, 2011). Service quality and customer satisfaction are widely recognized as the main influences on customer’s purchase intentions in service environments (where a company’s services are performed for example in a retail store) (Woodside, Frey & Daly, 1989; Bitner, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Taylor & Baker, 1994; Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Quality is an indistinct construct since the perception of quality is different for different consumers. There are different definitions for quality presented by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985). One is “zero defects – doing it right the first time” and another is “conformance to requirement” (Parasuraman et al, 1985, pp. 41, 42). There is a difference between quality for a product and service quality though. A definition of service quality is presented by Parasuraman (1985, pp. 42); “Service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis”. To understand service quality three elements must be understood which are intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability. Most services are intangible and since services are performances rather than products, precise specification about the product rarely can be seen. Services with high labor content have especially hard to be homogenous and differ therefore from producer to producer. It is also hard to separate the product from the consumption, which leads to that it is not the product itself that is important, but the performance and service of the staff (Parasuraman et al, 1985). How the customer perceives the service quality is depending on what expectations the customer had on the
service (Grönroos, 1978; Parasuraman et al, 1985). There is though a dominant role of product quality when it comes to the determination of customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Product quality’s importance for word-of-mouth is verified through its connection to customer satisfaction (Tsiotsou, 2005) and it is also crucial for a company to survive in a competitive market (Smart, Madrigal & Seawright, 1996). The perceptions of the product quality in comparison to the previously held expectations decide whether the customer feels satisfied or not (Wangenheim & Bayón, 2006). The actual experience of the company, from a customer’s point of view, is the difference between expected service quality and the experienced service quality (Parasuraman et al, 1985).

There are different levels of expectations and how those are met has a direct impact on word-of-mouth behavior. This can be called the zone of tolerance which is “can be”, “will be”, “must be” and “should be” levels of expectations. Expectations are bounded by adequate and desired levels. This is the zone of tolerance for consumers (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993; Johnston, 1995; Yap & Sweeney, 2007; Buttle, 2011). It is plausible to infer that positive word-of-mouth is associated with performance above predicted level while negative word-of-mouth is associated with performances below desired level (Buttle, 2011).

A good way to measure service quality is to find out the difference between the customer’s expectations of the service with the actual service performance (Grönroos, 1978; Parasuraman et al, 1985). When a company delivers high-perceived customer value the outcome can become favorable customer behavioral intentions (Crosby et al, 1990; Dorsch, Swanson & Kelley, 1998; Wong & Sohal, 2002; Roberts, Varki & Brodie, 2003; Gounaris, Tzempelikos & Chatzipanagiotou, 2007; Buttle, 2011).

Because service often is intangible and most of the attributes of a service is experienced during the consumption of the service it is difficult to know about the quality of the service beforehand. Own experience or word-of-mouth affect the evaluation of a service (Parasuraman et al, 1985). Positive word-of-mouth can be a consequence of a company’s minimization of failures. Thus, a customer who does not suffer from mistakes is willing to spread word-of-mouth (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Helm, 2000). Minimizations of failure lead to satisfaction and trust that generate positive comments about companies. Thus, feelings grounded in trust to a provider are of importance and can be gained through high quality
Another viewpoint of the importance of having low error rate and reach at least expected level of satisfaction is offered by Buttle (2011 pp. 248) when he writes that "...customers have two options when faced with unmet expectations: voice their dissatisfaction or exit the relationship".

The quality of the interaction between employees and customers are of great importance, hence companies should have employees with social abilities that interact with the customer (Crosby et al, 1990).

**2.1.4 Interaction**

Expectations of service quality and the experiences that follows is said to have an impact on satisfaction and it is hard to separate the product from the consumption which means the performance of the staff is very important (Parasuraman et al, 1985). The interaction between employees serves as a vital determinant for the level of customers perceived level of satisfaction. If the service encounter, i.e. the interaction between the customer and the employee, are not performed in an appropriate manner it will result in dissatisfied customers (Gremler et al, 1994; Chandon et al, 1996).

A well performed service encounter can give a company a competitive advantage which is likely to generate retention and positive word-of-mouth spreading (Chandon et al, 1996). It is shown that customers who perceive that they are offered social support in the service encounter are more prone to recommend the service (Gremler et al, 2001; Buttle, 2011) and cultivation of bonds between employees and customers clearly influence word-of-mouth behaviour (Gremler et al, 2001). Trust between the employees and the customers are also of importance and therefore it is important to hire employees with great social skills. The more trust that exists between customer and employee the higher the likelihood of uttered word-of-mouth will be (Crosby et al, 1990; Gremler et al, 2001). Trust is however affected by three interpersonal relationship dimensions which are a personal connection between employees and customers, care displayed by employees, and employee familiarity with customers (Gremler et al, 2001).

Managers should focus on having employees that interact with customers since it is a prerequisite for enhancing the opportunity to achieve satisfied customers. To achieve bonds between the customer and the employee companies should focus on having a smooth service
design and thereby give the employees more time to focus on customers (Gremler et al, 2001). Payne & Pennie (2005) write that companies should be aware of all strategic processes that interact with customers. All interactions should contribute with value for the customer. Gremler et al (2001) write that interpersonal relationships between employees and customers can be so friendly and personal that the outcome is successful word-of-mouth that allows the company to reduce their other advertising activities.

Focus should mainly be directed to the customer by encourage the customer to build internal bonds with the employees. This can be done by communicating that customers will take part of benefits if they know the employees (Gremler et al, 2001). These bonds are described as social support, which increases customers’ sense of control by reducing their uncertainties, improves customers’ self-esteem or enhances the customers’ social connection to others (Buttle, 2011). It is important that the customer perceives the employees as listening, engaged and competent persons. Actually these characteristics are even more important in the encounter than effectiveness. Hence, competence, dedication and the ability to listen to customers are important attributes when the customer evaluates the company (Chandon et al, 1996). There is a greater propensity that customers utter positive word-of-mouth if the service provider is able to strengthen the tie by providing social support (Buttle, 2011).

### 2.1.5 Service recovery

Interaction is said to have an impact on the evaluation of the experience in comparison to previously held expectations but regardless of how much effort companies put on having a proper service delivery, service failures will to some extent occur (Maxham III, 2001). Service recovery is actions that are performed on customers that have suffered from a failure from the company. Service recovery aims to heal service defects and indemnify the customer with satisfaction by compensating for the mistake (Ok et al, 2007). If a customer suffers from a mistake made by the service provider a well-performed service recovery significantly can positively influence the customers’ behavioral intentions. Thus, service recovery is of importance since it can produce satisfied retention customers that can contribute with positive word-of-mouth (Spreng et al, 1995; Maxham III, 2001). Customer who has experienced a failure by a firm but later is satisfactorily compensated by a service recovery has a propensity to spread positive word-of-mouth. The importance of service recovery is further emphasized when considering that unfair responses to a service failure makes
customers prone to spread negative word-of-mouth. (Maxham III, 2001). Service recovery’s ability to create word-of-mouth makes it import for companies to put financial efforts in implementing a service recovery strategy and see the investment as an advertising activity since it can generate word-of-mouth (Spreng et al, 1995). Effective service recovery programs that satisfy customers, triggers positive word-of-mouth and diminish negative word-of-mouth can become a clear competitive advantage for companies (Maxham III, 2001). Buttle (2011) stresses the importance further by describing that it has been estimated that it is generally more cost effective for companies to invest twice of a sale’s profit margin to recover a dissatisfied customer while Maxham III (2001) writes that it costs up to five times more to recruit new customers compared to keeping existing customers happy.

The quantity of post purchase word-of-mouth can be affected by management efforts (Buttle, 2011). A potential outcome of positive word-of-mouth is even more likely to be achieved if the service recovery is implemented quickly (Andreassen 1998; Swanson & Kelley, 2001, Hocutt, Bowers & Donavan, 2006). There are measured evidence that complaint management, service recovery programs and unconditional service guarantees have an impact on post purchase word-of-mouth, which management can influence the direction and frequency of (Buttle, 2011). Service recovery efforts can enhance consumers’ perception of satisfaction significantly as well as purchase intent and positive word-of-mouth compared to their post-failure ratings. This shows that effective service recovery leads to higher levels of customer retention and loyalty. Purchase intentions and satisfaction are increased quite equally no matter of moderate or high levels of service recovery. Positive word-of-mouth however is increased significantly if service recovery is increased from moderate levels to high (Maxham III, 2001).

The success of a service recovery implementation is determined by if the employees interact with courtesy and empathy. To ignore these characteristics and instead just give the customer a tangible item may not increase the customer’s satisfaction but instead increase the company’s cost (Hocutt, Bowers & Donavan, 2006). Poor service recovery efforts are common and the result is that ratings of the firm will actually be lower after the service recovery effort than immediately after the failure (Maxham III, 2001).

If a service recovery is performed in an appropriate manner it can potentially result in an even more satisfied customer compared to if the mistake would have been avoided in the first place.
Customer satisfaction can be perceived as higher due to a successful service recovery compared to if the mistake never would have occurred in the first place. This kind of scenario is called the service recovery paradox (Spreng et al, 1995; Ok et al, 2007; Buttle, 2011). There exist other views about the service recovery paradox though.

It is argued that the service recovery paradox is only true in certain circumstances. It is most likely to occur if the customer experience a failure but does not blame the company to a large extent and the company although implements a service recovery. In addition, the paradox is more likely to occur if the customer has not suffered from any failures in the past from the specific provider. This view suggests that a small one time experienced failure for the customer actually offers the firm an opportunity to create customer satisfaction (Magnini, Ford, Markowski & Honeycut, 2007).

It is shown that a successfully implemented service recovery has an impact on trust, word-of-mouth and loyalty (Kau & Loh, 2006). The service recovery paradox is however criticized since it is argued that customers that initially does not suffer from a service failure feels more trust and are more willing to spread word-of-mouth (Kau & Loh, 2006). Satisfaction has a much stronger connection to retention than trust but the effect on word-of-mouth is only marginally weaker. Even if a service recovery has the potential to satisfy the customer it might not be enough to restore the lost trust from a service failure. Even if an unsatisfied customer is treated by a service recovery the trust to the company might be harmed. A customer can accept an apology as a result of a mistake from the service provider and the consequences will be that the customer is satisfied but the customer’s trust in the company is reduced (Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003). Thus, it is said that successful service recovery alone will not reach the level of satisfaction that would be achieved if the failure had been avoided in the first place. Maxham III’s (2001) study indicated support in favor of Kau & Loh’s (2006) point of view since the study could not support existence of the service recovery paradox. Result suggests that some services are likely to not fully regain initial levels of satisfaction, purchase intention, and positive word-of-mouth, even if the service recovery was well performed.
3. Conceptualization

The literature review has treated three, for companies, actuable antecedents of word-of-mouth that are widely accepted in the scientific community. In this chapter four hypotheses was stated concerning quality’s, interaction’s and service recovery’s influence on word-of-mouth on social media. The terms quality, interaction and service recovery will be defined based on the literature review to make it clear what the hypotheses specifically measure.

3.1 Stating hypotheses

The hypotheses below were done to see whether quality, interaction and service recovery leads to a satisfaction that triggers word-of-mouth on social media. Therefore hypotheses 1-3 were stated to see quality’s, interaction’s and service recovery’s impact on satisfaction. The fourth hypothesis was stated to see whether the satisfaction gained from the first three hypotheses leads to positive word-of-mouth on social media. All hypotheses are stated in a positive manner since the study concerns only positive word-of-mouth on social media.

3.1.1 Hypothesis 1

Quality is argued to have a connection to customer satisfaction and thereby to word-of-mouth. A customer’s perception of a company’s quality is the difference between perceived quality and the expected quality. In this study the element quality consisted of: no service failure, service quality and product quality.

The first hypothesis of this study was stated to find out if quality is an important antecedent for satisfaction, that in turn leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

H1+: A good quality of a company’s products and services has a positive influence on satisfaction.

3.1.2 Hypothesis 2

The literature review suggested that a well-performed service encounter could generate satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth spreading. It is shown that customers who perceive that they are offered social support in the service encounter are more prone to recommend the service. In this study the element interaction consisted of: social support, care displayed
by employees, competence of employees, engagement displayed by employees.

The second hypothesis of this study was stated to find out if interaction is an important antecedent for satisfaction, that in turn leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

**H²+:** A good interaction between employee and customer has a positive influence on satisfaction.

**3.1.3 Hypothesis 3**

If a customer suffers from a mistake made by the service provider a performed service recovery is argued to influence the customers’ level of satisfaction. Thus, service recovery is of importance since it can produce satisfied retention customers that can contribute with positive word-of-mouth. In this study the element service recovery consisted of: mistake handling, indemnification and offered guarantees.

The third hypothesis of this investigation was stated to find out if a well performed service recovery is an important antecedent for satisfaction, that in turn leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

**H³+:** A well-performed service recovery has a positive influence on satisfaction.

**3.1.4 Hypothesis 4**

Satisfaction is argued to trigger positive word-of-mouth. The fourth and last hypothesis is stated to find out if satisfaction gained from good quality, good interaction and well-performed service recovery influence positive word-of-mouth on social media.

**H⁴+:** Satisfaction influence positive word-of-mouth on social media.
Figure 3.1 Conceptual model
4. Methodology

In the previously chapter hypotheses were stated. This chapter will describe and justify the choices made of how the hypotheses are investigated and how the research is performed. The choices of research approach, research design, data sources, research strategy, data collection method, data collection instrument, sampling, data analysis method and quality criteria are presented in this chapter.

4.1 Research approach

4.1.1 Inductive versus Deductive

Deduction refers to build upon previously accepted statements and predictions that are deduced from existing theories (Popper, 2002). Different hypotheses are created with help of theories and these hypotheses will then be subjected to an empirical investigation. The result of the investigation will then be analyzed which in turn can support or not support the hypothesis. After this step the theory can be revised. The opposite way is inductive methodology. In inductive methodology the observations are made first and after analyzing the observations it leads to theory. The theory is the result of the research effort (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

In this paper the authors created hypotheses based on existing word-of-mouth theories. Out of the created hypotheses new theories was applied on positive word-of-mouth on social media. Since the starting point of this study was existing theory this paper used a deductive approach.

4.1.2 Quantitative versus Qualitative research

In a quantitative research the researcher systematically gathers empirical quantifiable data (ne.se, 2012). The results of a quantitative research are assumed to be measureable and presented with help of statistics. Quantitative research should have a greater number of respondents but fewer questions to each respondent compared to qualitative research. The information gained per respondent is therefore higher for qualitative research, which means that a quantitative research does not have the same depth (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Since a larger sample size is used when performing a quantitative research the result can be generalized to the population of the investigation, which is also called external validity.
A quantitative research is considered as more formalized than qualitative research, for example the result of a fixed survey cannot be affected by the mood of the interviewer in contrary to an in-depth interview. A quantitative research is easier to replicate than a qualitative research since it is more standardized and formal (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

A qualitative research makes it easier for the researcher to understand the underlying reasons and motives behind a problem. The conclusions that can be drawn are based on attitudes and beliefs but cannot be quantified as in a quantitative research. This makes it harder to draw a generalized conclusion with a qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

To get a result that is widely considered to be of managerial interest, it is important that the findings can be generalized. To be able to draw generalizations of a population a sample size that is representative for the population of the investigation is needed. Quantitative research is mainly used on existing theories, i.e. it is mainly a deductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Hence, the choice of a deductive approach goes hand in hand with the choice of a quantitative approach since the approaches are mutually justified.

Since the aim of this study was to get a result that could be generalized for a population a quantitative research was chosen for this paper.

### 4.2 Research design

The research design aims to form a structure of how the research will be performed. There are three different research designs; exploratory-, causal-, and descriptive research design (Burns & Bush, 2003).

Exploratory research design is often used in early stages of an investigation where information is found to clarify a research problem. This design is usually used when the researcher has a lack of information about the problem. Exploratory research is flexible and performed unstructured to clarify problems and define terms. Secondary data analysis, case analysis and focus groups are examples of methods for gaining exploratory data (Burns & Bush, 2003).
Casual research design determines casual relationships, i.e. it investigates for example what causes changes in market shares or increased sales. Experiments are often used to achieve information about casual relationships. There are threats when generalizing the conclusions from an experiment, e.g. the artificiality of the experimental environment needs to be correct and the sample must be representative (Burns & Bush, 2003; Aaker, Kumar, Day & Leone, 2011). The casual research design requires a high control of the independent variables and is therefore time-consuming and can be expensive to perform (Aaker et al, 2011).

A descriptive research design can be used to answer questions of who, what, where, when and how. However, conclusive answers to “why-questions” cannot be fulfilled with this research design. Descriptive data is commonly gained through a survey. Descriptive information is often required for decision making to be able to implement effective marketing strategies (Burns & Bush, 2003).

Cross-sectional and longitudinal designs are two ways of performing causal- or descriptive research. Cross-sectional designed studies investigate a sample at one point in time compared to longitudinal designed studies that are measuring the same sample multiple times over a period. Longitudinal designed studies are useful when it comes to investigate changes. Cross-sectional investigations are performed to investigate a population through using a survey on a representative sample (Burns & Bush, 2003). There are two types of cross-sectional design; single cross-sectional design gains data from one sample at one occasion, compared to a multiple cross-sectional design that gains data from multiple samples (Konstantinov & Press, 2000).

Since word-of-mouth are already abundantly treated and defined in the existing science an exploratory research design was not required for this investigation and was therefore excluded. The casual research design requires much control over the independent variables that were tested. Since it is time-consuming and costly to gain a high control over independent variables the authors had to refrain from the casual research design. A descriptive research design enables quantified results and examination of questions like who, what, where, when and how to be answered. Since this investigation wants a generalized result and where questions of the kind described need to be answered, a descriptive research design was chosen. A descriptive single-cross sectional design was used since the investigation had no
intention to investigate changes over a period of time and was only performed at one social media platform. A multiple cross-sectional design was excluded since only one sample was investigated.

![Figure 4.1 Research design](image)

In figure 4.1 the blue boxes represent this studies research design choices.

### 4.3 Data sources

There are two different types of data, primary and secondary. Secondary data is information that has been collected prior to an investigation, in another context for another purpose. There are two types of secondary data, external and internal. External data is for example information about a company from an outside point of view like newspapers, Internet sites, blogs, forums, governments, television and radio. Internal secondary data comes from inside a company like annual reports, videos made by the company, customer information and cost information (Christensen, Engdahl, Grääs & Haglund, 2001).

Primary data is gathered specifically for the purpose of an investigation. There are different
primary data collection types like surveys, in-depth interviews, experiment, observations and case studies (Christensen et al, 2001).

Primary data's advantages compared to secondary data are that the data is tailor-made for a specific purpose and that the information is up to date. Disadvantages are that it can be expensive to gather primary data and it is more time consuming. Secondary data’s disadvantages are that there could be aspects of a study that cannot be answered since similar previous studies have not been conducted and other reasons leading to a lack of availability. Advantages with secondary data are though that it is more cost efficient and time efficient than the gathering of primary data (Christensen et al, 2001).

Secondary data cannot be used for this study because of the lack of availability since a similar study has not been performed before. This investigation used primary data since tailor-made, specific and up to date information was needed for the investigation.

4.4 Research strategy

There are five different types of research strategies; case study, history, archival study, experiment and survey (Yin, 2009).

Case studies investigate an individual unit, for example a group or event. This type of research focuses on contemporary events and has the ability to answer questions like how and why (Yin, 2009). Since this study does not have an aim of investigating an individual unit a case study is not suitable and therefore excluded.

History as a strategy treats analysis of historical documents i.e. secondary data. It does not focus on contemporary events and it answers questions like how and why (Yin, 2009). Since this study does not investigate an old event and will use primary data, history as a research strategy was not used.

Archival studies aims to investigate documents and archives i.e. secondary data, in a form of observational manner. It answers questions like who, what, where, how many, how much and it does both focus on contemporary and old events (Yin, 2009). Archival analysis was excluded as a research strategy since it does not generate primary data that are tailored for this study.
Experiments investigate if one or several changes of variables result in different effectual outcomes. Thus, this makes it possible for the researcher to falsify, verify or establish hypotheses. It has its focus on contemporary events and it can answer questions of who and why (Yin, 2009). Experiment is an unusual methodology strategy for business research since it is problematic to manage a preferred level of control when treating behavioural aspects in organisations, i.e. it is hard to interfere in interesting independent aspects that potentially effect dependent variables (Bryman & Bell, 2010; Aaker et al, 2011). Hence, this kind of strategy does not offer this investigation any help since the authors cannot manipulate independent variables that would generate knowledge about antecedents for word-of-mouth on social media due to both time and resource constraints.

Survey as a research strategy is used to investigate a sample of a population to make statistical conclusions about it. It has the ability to answer questions like who, what, where, how many, how much and it focuses on contemporary events (Yin, 2009). By using a survey, data that can be quantified are gained and hence it makes it possible to see correlation patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2010). It is advantageous to use a survey since it gains quantitative information from a credible source, i.e. directly from therespondents, and it gives a broad and comprehensive cover that support its generalizability (Denscombe, 2009). The authors chose to pursue a survey since it was the most suitable strategy for this investigation. The aim of the study was to make inferences about a population. Since a survey generates primary data that can be statistically analysed and results that can be generalized for a population it was suitable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research strategy</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control over behavioral events</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.2 Research strategy (inspired by: Yin, 2009, pp. 8)*

31
4.5 Data collection method

A data collection method needs to be chosen since there are many ways to collect data for an investigation. There are several methods for both quantitative- and qualitative data collection (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Since this investigation used a quantitative approach all qualitative data collection methods were excluded. Quantitative data can be collected through experiments, structured observations and surveys (Burns & Bush, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2010).

When data is collected with help of an experiment a group of people are exposed for a certain condition and the reaction from the people become the data of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2010). The researcher manipulates an independent variable to see how the dependent variable is affected. To be able to know that it is the intended variables that are measured the researcher must have control over other variables that also may affect the dependent variable (Burns & Bush, 2003). Experimental design can be divided into two groups; statistical design and classical design. The main difference between the two designs are that the classical design only tests one independent variable at the time, for example; does an increase in a retail store’s quality of their products and service affect customers satisfaction of the retail store? A statistical design tests two or more independent variables at the same time. (Aaker et al, 2011) Since this study was not performed experimental, and did not have the time or possibility to control variables, experiment as a quantitative data collection method would not be suitable and was therefore excluded.

Structured observations are a quantitative data collection method (Bryman & Bell, 2010). It refers to when researchers study a phenomenon in its natural environment (Christensen et al, 2001). An advantage with structured observations is that it gains data through direct behaviour, i.e. no respondent can answer questions untruthfully (Bryman & Bell, 2010) and a disadvantage is its lack of getting an understanding for underlying reasons of the data observed (Christensen et al, 2001). Structured observations have faced criticism concerning its reliability, validity and ability to be generalized. This criticism has occurred due to for example if the researcher is studying an environment with an irrelevant or incorrect perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Structured observations were excluded for this investigation based on the critics and its incapability to get reasons for the respondents’ actions. For example it would be impossible to know whether the respondent used irony or sarcasm when writing something on Facebook.
There are two ways of conducting surveys; interviews or questionnaire. Structured interviews are a tool for collecting quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2010), which is pursued out of a predetermined question schedule (Carlsson, 1990; Bryman & Bell, 2010). Questionnaires are also a data collection model for gaining quantitative data. A clear difference compared to structured interviews is that a questionnaire does not require any present interviewer. There are several advantages with a questionnaire compared to structured interviews, for example the administrations of a questionnaire are quicker, questionnaire do not have any interview affect, i.e. the interviewer affects the answers, the formulations of the questions are exactly consistent and a questionnaire can be performed when the respondent has the opportunity (Bryman & Bell, 2010). It is also easy to reach respondents that are geographically widespread (Christensen et al, 2001). Hence, these advantageous are this investigation’s justification for the choice of performing a questionnaire as data collection method.

4.6 Data collection instrument

4.6.1 Operationalization and measurement of variables

When conducting a questionnaire it is of importance that the respondents understand what the researchers ask. Theoretical concepts may be hard for respondents to understand and therefore those concepts need to be broken down into understandable questions. To make them more understandable to the respondent operationalization can be used as a method since it makes abstract concepts measurable and translates certain terms in a study (Ginsberg, 1984; Bryman & Bell, 2010). Operationalization can be seen as the process of taking research to the real world (Shields & Tajalli, 2006). To be able to test hypotheses statistically it is required to operationalize terms in order to ask specific and understandable questions that can be numerically answered (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). An operationalization assumes a deductive approach to how a research should be conducted (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

When using earlier research as a foundation for questions the framework may benefit of becoming more conceptually sound. The statements of this study’s questionnaire were created with inspiration of the scientific articles that were used in the investigation’s literature review. An operationalization scheme was used to show how the concepts were operationalized into understandable questions, i.e. measurable variables (for detailed information about the
operationalization scheme see appendix 1).

When conducting a survey there should be several questions regarding one variable to make sure that the question itself do not interfere the result. If more questions are used the risk of a result that is not relevant is decreased (Hair; Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003). This study’s questionnaire used several statements about each variable to make sure that the result was valid.

4.6.2 Questionnaire design

There are two main constructs of a questionnaire, closed and open questions. The differences between the two constructs are that closed questions are structured, which means that the respondent answers out of predetermined options while open questions are unstructured which means that the respondent freely answers with own words (Bryman & Bell, 2010; Christensen, 2001). Advantages with closed questions are that questions can be coded, thus it can be numerically analysed and compared in a computer. This enhances opportunities to compare differences and relationships between variables statistically (Denscombe, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2010). Since this study had an aim of statistically establish antecedents of word-of-mouth on social media, closed questions were used.

Before the respondent answers a questionnaire it is important that it is explained what it is about (Patel & Davidson, 2011). The questionnaire was therefore distributed with a pretext explaining what the respondent could expect.

There are some points to have in mind when formulating questions/statements of a questionnaire. The questions/statements shall not be too long. The questions/statements shall not be leading. There shall not be two questions/statements in one (Denscombe, 2009; Patel & Davidsson, 2011). All those aspects where under consideration when forming the questionnaire. The authors of the study also tried to make the questions/statements easy to understand and the layout easy to follow since it has been said that questions of a survey should not be complicated and compressed (Christensen et al, 2001; Bryman & Bell, 2010).

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was about gaining knowledge about respondents. The first question concerned whether the respondent had spread word-of-mouth on social media. If the answer was no the respondent could not fill in the questionnaire.
If the answer was yes the respondent could proceed to the questions of part 1, which concerned questions explaining demography of the respondent, why the respondent had spread word-of-mouth on social media and the respondents’ expectations and experience before and after the incident that led to word-of-mouth on social media. Most of the questions in part 1 were nominal questions. A nominal question is used to categorize respondents into different classes for example gender (Christensen, 2001). As mentioned, the questionnaire was designed with a question about the reason of spreading word-of-mouth on social media where the options quality, interaction, service recovery or something else was available. For this question the respondent had the possibility to answer more than one alternative. This opportunity was made due to the authors’ realizing that the reason for spreading word-of-mouth on social media could be due to more than one element. According to Descombe (2009) it is important to have alternatives that cover all the respondent’s possible answers, if there are to many options available, the researcher should use something else as options besides the investigated alternatives for the study. The question regarding reasons for spreading word-of-mouth on social media is important since it shows which factor is mostly spread about today. The option something else is needed since otherwise the respondents would be forced to answer something that is not necessarily completely true. If a respondent answered something else an open question was available for the respondent to write the reason behind writing a positive comment about a retailer on social media.

For the questions regarding previously held expectations and experience a Likert scale was used. A likert scale let the respondents’ consider and answer to which level they agree or disagree to the statements of a survey (Albaum, 1997; Bryman & Bell, 2010). In a numerically response format of the Likert scale the respondents answers questions using a scale from e.g. 1-5, where 1 is “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree” (Bryman & Bell, 2010). The scale for the questions regarding previously held expectations and experience was 1-5. The reason for having this kind of question was to see how expectations and experience could affect the hypotheses stated in chapter 3. It is therefore an explanatory question.

The second part of the questionnaire concerned questions regarding quality, interaction, service recovery, satisfaction and word-of-mouth behaviour. The statements of part 2 were stated with a Likert scale from 1-7, where 1 meant; do not agree at all and 7 agree completely. The aim of those questions was to later on be able to see correlations between quality,
interaction and service recovery to satisfaction. The aim was also to see satisfactions correlation to word-of-mouth. The quantitative data that is gained through a questionnaire using a Likert scale promotes and facilitates the possibilities to compare differences and relations between the variables (Christensen et al, 2001). In the second part of the questionnaire statements of how prone the respondents would be to spread word-of-mouth on social media at current-, good- and better than expected levels was also presented. For those statements the respondents could only answer out of their subjective thought of what is a good or better than expected level since the authors’ had no aim of determine how a certain performance affect word-of-mouth behaviour. The statements regarding proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook at different levels of performance from the retailer was made to be able to further explain the hypotheses stated in chapter 3.

Bryman & Bell (2011) write that there are both positive and negatives aspects of using negatively phrased questions in a questionnaire. When positive statements are mixed with negatively twisted once the respondents can become more focused and the result of the question can show that the respondent was focused. The negative aspect of having negatively phrased statements is that it might be missed by the respondent who perceives it as a positive statement. The authors considered the different views of having negatively phrased statements and thought the positive aspects with negative phrased questions was more convincing. Therefore two statements had negative phrasing. This was done to see if these answers were in line with the other answers of similar questions, which were not negatively phrased. If the question were similarly answered this was interpreted as an indicator of that the respondents had been focused.

**Distribution of the survey**

Since the respondents of the questionnaire were Swedish the questionnaire was translated into Swedish (see appendix 3).

A questionnaire can be distributed online, by visiting the respondents or through postal service. When using the postal service or visiting the respondents it is time or/and cost demanding. In contrary, an online administered questionnaire possesses the features of being cost-effective and fast (Christensen et al, 2001). The advantages when performing a survey online are beside fastness also the simplicity (Christensen et al, 2001; Burns & Bush, 2003;
Duffy, Smith, Terhanian & Bremer, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2010). The questionnaire of this investigation was performed online due to time advantages, cost advantages, the accessibility of the respondents and the simplicity.

The questionnaire can be found in appendix 2.

**4.6.3 Pretesting**

It is important to pre-test a survey in advance, regardless which technique of data gathering that are used (Christensen et al, 2001). It is especially important to pre-test a questionnaire because the respondents have no interviewer present that can explain potential ambiguities when the questionnaire is answered (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It is enough to pre-test the questionnaire on 5-10 respondents (Christensen et al, 2001).

Feedback on the questionnaire’s design was gained from a seminar where business student from Linnaeus University and a supervisor participated. The questionnaire was also piloted on ten persons that were part of the population. These pre-tests were afterwards excluded from the sample. The pilot-test showed that the questionnaire was understandable for respondents and therefore no changes had to be made.

**4.7 Sampling**

There are two kinds of surveys, a census survey and a sample survey. In a census survey all of the population has to be studied (a population is all the entities of the group that are investigated in a research) while a sample survey is when a sample is chosen out of the whole population (Christensen et al, 2001; Aaker et al, 2011).

A census survey will give a more accurate result compared to studying a sample since the whole population is studied. A disadvantage is that a census survey is more costly and more time consuming than a sample survey (Christensen et al, 2001). The population of this research was too extensive for a census survey and due to time- and resource constraints the authors of this paper chose to have a sample survey.
4.7.1 Sampling frame

A representative sampling frame is needed to constitute a sample from which conclusion about a population can be drawn. The sample frame shows the characteristics that a respondent need to fulfill to be part of the sample under investigation (Carlsson, 1990; Field, 2009; Aaker et al, 2011; Patel & Davidsson, 2011).

The authors believe that there are many sectors that would benefit from knowledge about word-of-mouth on social media, although a limitation of company fields is beneficial for clear findings. The authors believe that the three elements of relationship marketing that is investigated are represented in a retail store. Therefore the respondents of the survey were asked to have retail stores in mind when conducting the questionnaire. The social media Facebook were chosen as forum of investigation since it is the largest social media today. In order to support the validity of the study, only persons who had spread word-of-mouth on social media about retail stores was included in the sample. Respondents who had spread word-of-mouth could answer the questions about word-of-mouth from experience instead of from a hypothetical point of view. It was ensured that the sample of the investigation had spread positive word-of-mouth on Facebook about a retail store since:

- The questionnaire was distributed with information about the requirement of having spread positive word-of-mouth on Facebook.
- The first question of the questionnaire existed to confirm that the respondent already had spread positive word-of-mouth about a retail store on Facebook.

The respondents of the sample were collected from four different distribution channels. The first channel that the questionnaire was distributed through was a public Facebook event, which was open for everyone on Facebook. 814 persons were invited to the group all of those Facebook friends of the authors. Whenever someone answered the questionnaire all of that persons friends who were online on Facebook at the time could see that the questionnaire was answered, which made it possible for the questionnaire to spread randomly on Facebook. This means that through this channel the questionnaire was spread randomly although only answered by persons fulfilling the requirements for answering the survey.

The second channel the questionnaire was distributed through was company Facebook pages. It was distributed through Weekday’s, H&M’s, IKEA’s, Jula’s Clas Ohlson’s, Intersport’s, Intersport’s,
Stadium’s, DinSko’s, Scorett’s and Biltema’s Facebook pages. This means that all persons who visited those retailers’ Facebook pages had the possibility to see the questionnaire. It was impossible to know how many persons that were reached through this channel.

The third channel the questionnaire was distributed through was personal messages on Facebook. The authors’ send personal messages to persons who randomly had been noticed as word-of-mouth spreaders on company’s Facebook pages. The persons were previously unknown for the authors. This channel reached 184 persons.

The fourth channel of questionnaire distribution was e-mail. As students of Linnaeus University the authors had access to an e-mail account where all students of the University can be reached, which was used, although later than the three above-mentioned channels.

### 4.7.2 Sample selection

There are two ways of selecting a sample; one is a probability sample and the other is a non-probability sample. In a probability sample every respondent is chosen randomly which is not the case in a non-probability sample where the probability for a respondent to be chosen can be predicted (Christensen et al, 2001). In theory all researches can use a probabilistic sample and if it is possible all researches should use it. In reality though, it can be difficult to be able to choose respondents randomly out of the population (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Within the sampling frame the questionnaire had the possibility to spread randomly. The first channel (see the distribution channels in chapter 4.7.1) was an open Facebook group that consisted of mainly friends of the authors who in turn spread it to other friends and the fourth channel consisted of students of Linnaeus University. Through the second channel the questionnaire was distributed completely randomly since the authors had no possibility to know who answered it. Through the third channel only respondents that had had spread word-of-mouth on social media was contacted. Those persons were randomly selected since the authors had no knowledge of who they were but instead contacted them based on word-of-mouth behavior on Facebook. Through all channels persons within the sampling frame could be randomly reached however channel four cannot be considered as a completely random channel since it consisted of students. However all other channels that were used in this study were probabilistic which makes it possible to say that within the sampling frame individuals were mainly chosen randomly.
A biased sample occurs when only a restricted part of the population has the possibility to answer a survey, which means that the sample risks to be skewed and not representable for the population (Aaker et al, 2011). By using several channels of distribution the risk of a biased sample were decreased.

In Sweden 45 percent of the population has Facebook (joinsimon.se, 2011) and there are 9,415,570 citizens in Sweden (scb.se, 2011) hence there are around 4.2 million Facebook users in Sweden. Thus, 4.2 million people have the prerequisites to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about retailers. Note that it is most likely to believe that not everyone is spreading word-of-mouth on Facebook. How many out of those 4.2 million users that have spread word-of-mouth on social media about retailers is impossible to know but it is likely that it is well below 4.2 million. Hence, 4.2 million is the absolute maximum of this investigation’s population. The sample size will be calculated out of this number since all other numbers can only be seen as speculation. The number can ensure that the population is covered. Malhotra (2011) describes a formula, which calculates the adequate number i.e. where more respondents is not necessary to reach for being able to make inferences about a population. This formula was used to calculate the sample size this study should aim to have. The formula and calculation is presented below.

![Figure 4:3 Formula for calculating adequate sample size. (Inspired by: Malhotra, 2011)](image)

\[
n = \frac{2500 \times N \times Z^2}{(25(N-1)) + (2500 \times Z^2)}
\]

\(n\) = Sample size  
\(N\) = Population size  
\(Z\) = Number of standard errors. In this study the standard error is 1.96 because of the 95 percent confidence level that is the minimal requirement in social science (Malhotra, 2011)

\[\frac{2500 \times 4.200.000 \times 1.96^2}{(25(4.200.000-1)) + (2500 \times 1.96^2)} = A \text{ sample size of 384 respondents}\]

![Figure 4:4 Formula of adequate sample size](image)
The formula shows that this study should aim to have 384 respondents as that is the sample size were an inference about the population does not necessarily benefit even if more responses would be collected. However Wilson Van Voorhis & Morgan (2007) write that a reasonable sample size to be able to make an inference about a population when using hypotheses testing is 50 responses, in social science. Therefore this study had an aim of reaching 384 respondents but would still be able to make an inference about the population if only 50 respondents were reached.

4.8 Data analysis method

When the data was gathered from the questionnaire it was analyzed in SPSS. In this paper seven steps were used for the data analysis, which were; data coding, data entry, data examination & descriptive statistics, reliability test, correlation analysis, hypothesis testing and independent sample t-test.

4.8.1 Data coding

To be able to measure and compare variables statistically it is important to code the answers with numbers (Carlsson, 1990; Christensen et al, 2001). The first step after collecting the questionnaires was to code the data. To be able to make a quantitative study most of the questions of the survey were coded with numbers. This was done so mean, mode and median of the different questions could be calculated. The question regarding what respondents had spread word-of-mouth on social media about was transformed to 4 different variables. If the respondent had written about quality it was coded as 1 and if the respondent had not it was coded as 0. The same procedure was done for interaction, service recovery and something else. Male was coded as 0 and female as 1. The two questions regarding Facebook habits was coded; 1 = less than once a week, 2 = 1-3 times a week, 3 = 4-6 times a week, 4 = Every day.

4.8.2 Data entry

When the data was coded it was time for data entry. All of the data that was gathered from the questionnaire was entered into SPSS. At three occasions respondents had missed to fill in an answer. When there are any missing data the mode of the question shall be calculated and put in (Heinzen & Nolan, 2008). With this in mind the mode was filled in the missing answers.
4.8.3 Data examination and descriptive statistics

The third step was data examination and descriptive statistics. This step was done to make the data easier to understand and analyze. In this step the mean, mode or the median of the different questions was calculated depending on what type of question. The mean is sensitive to extreme values (Bryman & Bell, 2010) so for the variable age no mean was calculated but instead the distribution was examined.

Distribution, median and mean can for example be shown in tables, charts, graphs or pie charts. When working with nominal and ordinal variables pie- and bar charts are the most suitable (Bryman & Bell, 2005). To show data about the demographics of the investigation’s population pie charts were used. A pie chart shows how a population is divided and was used when the populations’ using habits concerning Facebook were explained.

A histogram was used when the respondents’ age was presented because it gives a clear picture of how ages are divided among the respondents.

All statements about the variable quality were merged together to get one mean of all statements about that subject instead of several. The same was done for the variables interaction, service recovery, satisfaction and word-of-mouth on Facebook. The mean of the merged variables was calculated to present the differences between the variables’ mean.

In order to discover how the typical results of the population vary from the mean the standard deviation is calculated (Christensen et al, 2001; Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). Large deviations affect the result more than small deviations, which mean that small deviations are closer to the mean of the sample. The standard deviation was calculated for this investigation to know how representable the calculated means were.

4.8.4 Reliability test

Reliability testing is used to test if statements about one variable investigate the same area (Bryman & Bell, 2010). For example; if the survey examines customer’s satisfaction there will be several operationalized questions that touch the subject. To see if there was any correspondence between the statements of the same subject a reliability test was performed.

Cronbach’s alpha is a statistical tool used to determine the internal reliability. The alpha varies between 0, i.e. no reliability, and 1, i.e. perfect reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Cronbach’s
alpha should be over 0.7 to be considered as reliable (Cortina, 1993; Emerson & Grimm, 1996; Bowman & Ambrosini, 1997). Therefore in this study a variable was determined as reliable when the test showed a Cronbach Alpha over 0.7. When Cronbach’s alpha does not reach the desired level it is possible to remove an item and thereby get a higher alpha, which shows reliability. If the alpha increases significantly by deleting an item the deleted item does not measure the same variable as the other items. Deleting items to gain a better Cronbach’s Alpha is called scale purification (Jahmane, Van Hoorebeke & Louart, 2011). Variables, consisting of different statements’ means, that were supported as reliable was further used in the investigation.

4.8.5 Correlation analysis

The fifth step was correlation analysis. In this step the correlation between the different variables was tested to find out if the variables have a significant linear relation. The scale goes from -1 to 1 and the relations are defined as follows: -1 to -0.5: A strong negative correlation between variables. If variable A is increased variable B is decreased much. -0.5 to 0: A weak negative correlation between variables. If variable A is increased variable B is decreased little. 0: No correlation. 0 to 0.5: A weak positive correlation between variables. If variable A is increased variable B is increased little. 0.5 to 1: A strong positive correlation between variables. If variable A is increased variable B is increased much (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008).

A p-value shows the critical value where results are supported. The p-value should be under 0.05. Which level of significance that is needed to believe the result is valid is however up to the researcher to decide. A commonly used p-value for social science is 0.05, which means a significance level of 95 percent. 95 percent is stated as a compromise of where the researcher should believe or not believe that the result gained is valid (Christensen et al, 2001; Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). Therefore the level of significance in this investigation was 95 percent as well. The correlations between the variables were presented in a table along with the p-value. The p-value showed if the correlations are trustworthy or not.

When the correlation coefficient is calculated between two variables it is considered as a descriptive statistic since it only describes the strength and direction of association between two variables. To determine that the relations significantly differs from zero a hypothesis
testing needs to be done (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008).

4.8.6 Hypothesis testing

The sixth step of analysing the data was hypothesis testing. “Hypothesis testing is the process of drawing conclusions about whether a particular relation between variables is supported by the evidence” according to Nolan and Heinzen (2008, pp. 17). In this step the hypotheses stated in chapter 3 were tested through a multiple regression model and a linear regression model, in the computer program, SPSS. Nolan & Heinzen (2008) write that a multiple regression model is used when two or more independent variables are tested at the same time to see if and how the independent variables affect the dependent variable. Therefore the variables quality, interaction and service recovery’s affect on satisfaction were tested through a multiple regression model. A linear regression model is a bivariate model, which means that it tests how one independent variable affect a dependent variable (Christensen et al, 2001). A linear regression model was used to test how satisfaction affects word-of-mouth on social media.

The adjusted $R^2$ for a multiple regression model and/or a linear regression model is used to determine how much of the variance in a dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables (Christensen et al, 2001; Nolan & Heinzen, 2008).

Hypothesis testing is considered as a one-tailed test. A one-tailed test shows either an increase or decrease of a dependent variable caused by an independent variable. It does not show both (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). This study used a one-tailed hypothesis test.

The beta value was considered in the hypothesis testing. Beta defines how much an independent variable will change a dependent variable (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). An example is if the beta of the independent variable is 0.5 and goes up with 1 the dependent variable goes up with 0.5. By using a linear regression model it is possible to calculate the independent variable’s impact on a dependent variable. The model is $Y = \beta(X)$. The same can be done for a multiple regression model by using the formula $Y = \beta(X) + \beta(X')$ etcetera (Christensen et al, 2001). It is possible to show a single independent variable’s affect on a dependent variable even in a multiple regression model. If all variables but one is equal to zero only one independent variable’s affect on the dependent variable is shown (Christensen et al, 2001).
Those formulas were used in this study to show the linear relation between the tested variables.

When a correlation was found between two variables it was important to investigate how certain the correlation was. There is a risk that the correlation is just representable by the research’s sample and not the whole population (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). As mentioned in chapter 4.8.5 to see if the correlation is trustworthy the p-value should be under 0.05. The significance level determines how sure one can be that the test is correct when variables are tested between each other and if the result can be generalized for the whole population and not just representable for the investigated sample (Christensen et al, 2001). Therefore only correlation with p-value under 0.05 was supported in this study.

*Figure 4.5 Hypothesis model (Inspired by: Aaker et al, 2011)*
4.8.7 Independent sample t-test
An independent sample t-test was performed to see differences in means between groups. The test can show whether group A has a difference in mean compared to Group B. The test determines the likelihood of different means of two groups. If the independent sample t-test shows a p-value below the commonly accepted 0.05 a difference in means between groups is supported since it is highly unlikely that the difference has happened by chance in only this sample. An independent sample t-test is usually performed as a two-tailed test (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). Therefore this study used a two-tailed test.

In this study independent sample t-test was used to see whether there were differences between those who had spread word-of-mouth about a variable and those who had not. This approach was used since it could generate data that can further support and explain the hypotheses stated in chapter 3. The test between those who had spread word-of-mouth about quality on social media and those who had not were made to firstly see differences in perceived levels of quality and satisfaction. A difference where those who had spread word-of-mouth about quality had experienced a better quality and satisfaction than those who had not would support the hypothesis. Secondly the independent sample t-test was used to look at differences in proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media about quality at good, better than expected and current level. Thirdly the test was used to see differences in expectations and experiences between those who had spread word-of-mouth about quality and those who had not. The same procedure was made for the variables interaction and service recovery.

4.9 Quality Criteria
Validity refers to if a measure of a construct actually measures what it is intended to measure. There are different ways to determine the validity of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Content validity, construct validity and criterion validity are usually used as determinants (McGartland Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee & Rauch, 2003).

Reliability treats whether a study uses reliable variables and if it can be performed more times and still reach the same conclusion (Bryman & Bell, 2010).
Validity and reliability need to be present in order to achieve an investigation with a high level of quality (Aaker et al, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2010).

**4.9.1 Content validity**

If all the aspects that are considered to be measured actually are being measured there is content validity (Wang, Tang & Tang, 2001; McGartland Rubio et al, 2003). The content validity is evaluated before the investigation starts since it is supposed to give knowledge about the representativeness and clarity of the content. Face validity is characterized in content validity and is intended to see if the measures are valid (McGartland Rubio et al, 2003). Thus, measures should correctly reflect and cover the content that is investigated and this can be determined by asking people and experts in order to achieve feedback (Bryman & Bell, 2010; McGartland Rubio et al, 2003). This can revise and improve the measures and the study further can be pre-tested in a pilot study (McGartland Rubio et al, 2003). To ensure content validity students in the same research area, i.e. business students, and PhDs that supervise this investigation, scrutinized this investigation.

**4.9.2 Construct validity**

Construct validity refers to how well the test is assembled to measure the theoretical construct it is purported to do (McGartland Rubio et al, 2003; Paul Peter, 1981). It is necessary that there is compatibility between the theories and the measures (Paul Peter, 1981). When construct validity is based on a deductive approach the researcher must make sure that constructs measures what is relevant for the theory. Thus, an operationalization is required when a deductive research approach is performed (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Cronbach, (1955, pp. 177-178) writes “Studies based on myopic operationism are largely wasted effort when the operation does not correspond to potentially meaningful constructs”. This investigation’s measures were carefully designed with correct correspondence between the theories and the measures.

For construct validity to be present convergent validity should be established, which means the studies constructs should be similar to previous measures of a similar construct (Aaker et al, 2011). If strong relations are shown between quality, interaction, service recovery with satisfaction convergent validity is shown since those constructs have earlier been stated to correlate. The convergent validity of whether the outcome satisfaction leads to word-of-mouth
on social media can not be known since such studies have not been done before.

Construct validity is supported if there is a variance between the different constructs that are measured (Paul Peter, 1981). This investigation used correlation analysis in order to make sure that there were differences between the investigated constructs. Thus, this revealed if it existed constructs that were too similar to each other or confirmed the construct validity if there were a difference between the different constructs. Discriminant validity is needed for construct validity to be present, which means that concepts that are supposed to be unrelated actually are unrelated. If the correlation between two variables is too high it shows low discriminant validity, i.e. the variables might measure the same thing (Hair et al, 2009). The correlation needs to be smaller than 0.9 to be accepted as valid. If it is over 0.9 there is a too high correlation between the variables and there is a risk that they measure the same area (Farrar & Glauber, 1967). Therefore this study does not accept correlations over 0.9 in order to ensure that two independent variables do not correlate to an unacceptable extent.

4.9.3 Criterion validity

To see if there are significant relationships between criterions, statistics are used to confirm the criterion validity (McGartland Rubio et al, 2003) The criterion validity is based on some external validated standard (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). A criterion validity is shown if the investigations results matches the criterion. Statistical testing of hypotheses was pursued in this investigation hence it explored if the constructs performed in relation to other variables as expected. Thus in this study it was investigated if there were relations between the different criterions.

Criterion validity concerns relationships between measured scores and measurable criterion (Pallant, 2010) Concurrent validity is established if a test of criterions correlates well with another measure that is performed at approximately the same time. The two measures can be for the same construct or different but what is of importance is that it is related constructs. If the two tests show correlation concurrent validity is shown (Aaker et al, 2011). In this study two approaches measured the same related construct at the same time. Although the same sample was used and the same questionnaire. A concurrent validity could therefore not be supported even if the two approaches support each other. The two approaches where, as mentioned in chapter 4.8, regression model and independent sample t-test.
If the measurement can predict some future event a predictive validity is established. Predictive validity is important for managers to be able to implement strategies (Aaker et al, 2011). Since this study used hypothesis testing which shows future prediction of word-of-mouth behaviour on social media, predictive validity can be supported but not confirmed. To be able to confirm a predictive validity a later test must also be done to see whether the hypotheses are correct (Aaker et al, 2011). The result of this study was not tested and used as a benchmark for another sample and thereby the predictive validity cannot be confirmed by this study.

4.9.4 Reliability

There are two main factors to consider when evaluating the reliability of a study, external and internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2010).

External reliability concerns that an investigation can be performed a second time and that the result will be consistent, i.e. the investigation has a level of stability, which makes the research reliable over time (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Due to time constraints this study’s questionnaire is not tested over time and hence no external reliability can be supported.

If subjective interpretations of e.g. open questions are used, it will threaten the questions to be inconsistently interpreted by the researcher and hence harm the reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2010). This study used closed questions, which exclude this threat from this investigation.

The internal reliability treats if the respondents’ answers are related to the other answers measuring the same indicator. Cronbach’s alpha is a tool to determine the internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha should be over 0.7 to be reliable (Cortina, 1993; Emerson & Grimm, 1996; Bowman & Ambrosini, 1997) and hence the variables over 0.7 were determined as reliable.

When calculating Cronbach’s alpha it is preferred to use at least three questions for each variable to increase the reliability of the study (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003). Therefore this study used at least three questions for each variable to be able to calculate a reliable Cronbach’s alpha for quality, interaction, service recovery, satisfaction and word-of-mouth on Facebook.
4.10 Summary of research methodology

---

**Figure 4.6 Research methodology**
5. Data analysis

The previous chapter described which methodology that was used in the investigation. In this chapter the results of the survey, which was analysed in SPSS, are presented. At first descriptive data is presented. Secondly the reliability and validity of the variables used in the hypotheses testing is presented. Thirdly the hypothesis testing is presented followed by further explanatory data.

5.1 Descriptive data

5.1.1 Response rate

The sample size for this investigation aimed to reach 384 respondents but due to time constraints the study reached 272 respondents which although is well above the 50 responses that Wilson Van Voorhes & Morgan (2007) write as a required sample size to make an inference about a population in social science.

In the public Facebook event hypothetically everyone that uses Facebook had the opportunity to see the questionnaire. 814 Facebook users were invited to the event. The questionnaire was directly sent to 184 potential respondents on Facebook, through the third channel. The questionnaire was also spread on companies’ Facebook pages but it is likely to believe that it did not result in many answers since people may not feel obligated to answer when the questionnaire is not directly sent to them. When 245 responses were collected the fourth channel of distributing the questionnaire, e-mail, was taken into action because of the aim of reaching 384 respondents. The channel reached approximately 13 000 e-mail accounts. By using many channels (see the channels in chapter 4.7.1) of distribution the risk of a biased sample was reduced but the response rate was decreased.

The exact population size is impossible to know due to that it is unknown how many that has spread word-of-mouth on social media. It is also impossible to calculate a specific response rate if the respondents are not observed by the researchers as positive word-of-mouth spreaders on Facebook, before distributing an online questionnaire. The authors did observe 184 word-of-mouth spreaders on Facebook but due to time constraints more persons could not be observed and purposively selected. The response rate may be high or low depending on
the actual number of respondents that had the opportunity to answer the survey. These circumstances made it impossible to calculate a specific response rate number, i.e. it could have been a low response rate if a great amount of Facebook users who had written a positive comment about a retailer saw the questionnaire.

Even if not all met the requirements, it can be said that at least approximately 14 000 persons had the opportunity to see the questionnaire although it is for certain a higher number. For all of these 14 000 persons to be able to answer the questionnaire was however due to if they opened their e-mail or visited the Facebook event and in the same time met the requirements needed to be included in the sample. The response rate out of those who for certain had the possibility to see the questionnaire but are unknown whether they actually have seen the questionnaire or fit the investigation, were approximately 2 percent. The second channel is excluded in this calculation because it is impossible to know how many that has seen the questionnaire through that channel. How many of those that actually had the possibility to participate are unknown.

A low response rate has for a long time been associated with a lower quality of a research. Recent studies have although shown that researches with a low response rate compared to researches with high response rate has indistinguishable statistically differences between each other. The median differences of the result between 84 compared researches were 2 percent. For 46 percent of the compared researches a difference of 0 or 1 percent in result was shown. A non-response bias is shown to not have a significant impact on the result of a research (Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best & Craighill (2006). Those arguments shows that even though this study cannot present a specific response rate it does not matter since even if it would be low or high the result could still be quite equal. A low response rate does not necessarily decrease the quality of the study.

5.1.2 Demography of sample

As mentioned in chapter 4.7.2 all respondents of the sample were Facebook users who had written a positive comment about a retailer. Below demographic data is presented about the respondents of the investigation.
Online on Facebook

I express myself on Facebook

Figure 5.1 Facebook usage

Distribution of age

Y-axis: Number of respondents
X-axis: Age
Figure 5.2 Distribution of age

The pie-charts in figure 5:1 show Facebook habits of the respondents while figure 5:2 shows the distribution of age in the sample.

The sample consisted of respondents with a median age of 24 years. 57.4 percent were females and 42.6 percent were males. Most of the sample was online on Facebook more than once a day while the expression rate on Facebook differed a lot.

5.1.3 Antecedents of word-of-mouth spreading on Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word-of-mouth expression</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Service Recovery</th>
<th>Something else</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of sample</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$n = 272$

Table 5:3 Respondents word-of-mouth spreading

Table 5:3 shows how many and percentage of the sample that have spread word-of-mouth about each variable. It was possible for respondents to choose more than one variable.

Out of the 272 respondents in the sample 162 (59.5 %) had spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality, 52 (19.1 %) about interaction, 11 (4 %) about service recovery and 69 (25.4 %) about something else. Note that the percentage sum of the variables is more than 100 percent since it was possible to choose more than one alternative. Also note that respondents had to choose at least one alternative to be part of the investigation.

When the responses were examined it turned out that there were many different reasons for writing something else, which made it hard to see a pattern. The main reason behind writing something else is not clear and therefore it was not analyzed.
5.1.4 Merged variables means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Very low</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Service recovery</th>
<th>WOM on Facebook</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>5.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td>1.589</td>
<td>1.102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:4: Merged variable means

Table 5:4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of the merged variables interaction, service recovery, quality, word-of-mouth on Facebook and satisfaction. The statements that were merged into those variables can be found in appendix 4.

The three merged variables interaction, service recovery and quality have their means within a range of 0.22. They are all between average and very high level. Proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook is lower. Among word-of-mouth spreaders the average satisfaction level however is higher, closer to very high level than average level.

5.2 Reliability and validity

The statements regarding the five different areas of the study were merged into the variables interaction, service recovery, quality, satisfaction and word-of-mouth on Facebook (see chapter 5.1.4). In this chapter the reliability and validity of those variables were tested to be able to proceed to hypothesis testing.

5.2.1 Reliability test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Service recovery</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>WOM on Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td>.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of items</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:5 Reliability test

A reliability test was done for the five variables to see if the different statements about each variable had been successfully operationalized i.e. measured the same area. The Cronbach’s
alphas of the five variables and number of items are shown in table 5:5. Number of items represents how many statements that were used to investigate each variable.

Cronbach’s alpha should be over 0.7 (Cortina, 1993; Emerson & Grimm, 1996; Bowman & Ambrosini, 1997). Since all of the five variables had a Cronbach’s alpha above 0.7 no scale purification had to be done. The high Cronbach’s alphas show that the variables are reliable.

5.2.2 Validity test – Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Service recovery</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>WOM on Facebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOM on Facebook Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 5:6 the correlation between the five merged variables are displayed. If correlations are over 0.9 there is a risk that the variables measure the same area (Farrar & Glauber, 1967). None of the variables had correlation over 0.9, which shows that there is construct validity between the five variables. The p-value of all correlations was 0.00, which means all the correlations could be further incorporated in this investigation.

Since the correlations between the variables are supported by the validity test the hypothesis tests could be done.
5.3 Hypothesis testing

In this chapter the hypotheses stated in chapter 3.1 were tested through regression models.

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction, service recovery and quality’s representation in satisfaction</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.826</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:7 Adjusted R square hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Constant) Quality</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Service recovery</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.815</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>3.898</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>10.492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:8 Beta of hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

*p-value < 0.05  **p-value < 0.01

Table 5:7 shows an adjusted R square of 0.678, which means that 67.8% of the dependent variable satisfaction can be explained by the independent variables’ quality, interaction and service recovery.

**Hypothesis 1**

Table 5:8 shows that the independent variable quality has an impact on the dependent variable satisfaction. When quality level goes up by 1 satisfaction is increased with 0.555. The formula of calculating quality’s independent impact on satisfaction is: 0.815 + (quality level x 0.555) = satisfaction level. The p-value is 0.00, which is below 0.05, which is this study’s level of acceptance. Hypothesis 1; quality leads to satisfaction is supported.

**Hypothesis 2**

Table 5:8 shows that the independent variable interaction has an impact on the dependent variable satisfaction. When interaction level goes up by 1 satisfaction level is increased with 0.179. The formula for calculating interaction’s independent impact on satisfaction is: 0.815 + (interaction level x .0179) = satisfaction level. The p-value is 0.00, which is below 0.05, which is this study’s level of acceptance. Hypothesis 2; interaction leads to satisfaction is supported.
**Hypothesis 3**

Table 5:8 shows that the independent variable service recovery has an impact on the dependent variable satisfaction. When service recovery level goes up by 1 satisfaction is increased with 0.191. The formula for calculating service recovery’s independent impact on satisfaction is: 0.815 + (service recovery level x 0.191) = satisfaction level. The p-value is 0.00, which is below 0.05, which is this study’s level of acceptance. Hypothesis 3; service recovery leads to satisfaction is supported.

**5.3.2 Hypothesis 4**

Table 5:9 shows an adjusted R square of 0.211, which means that 21.1% of the dependent variable word-of-mouth on social media can be explained by satisfaction of the population.

Table 5:10 shows that the independent variable satisfaction has an impact on the dependent variable word-of-mouth on Facebook. When satisfaction level goes up by 1 word-of-mouth is increased with 0.668. The formula of calculating satisfaction’s independent impact on word-of-mouth is: (satisfaction level x 0.668) = word-of-mouth.

The p-value is 0.00, which is below 0.05, which is study’s level of acceptance. Hypothesis 4; satisfaction leads to word-of-mouth on social media is supported.
5.4 Further explanatory data

Below data is presented that can further explain the hypotheses.

5.4.1 Word-of-mouth proneness at different levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At good level</th>
<th>At better than expected level</th>
<th>At the retailers current performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.913</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.896</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.895</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:11  Word-of-mouth proneness at different levels.

Table 5:11 shows the mean and standard deviation of proneness level to spread word-of-mouth because of interaction, service recovery and quality at good level, at better than expected level and at stores current performance.

The average proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook at good level of quality is lower than service recovery while service recovery is lower than interaction.

The average proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook at better than expected level is higher than at good level for service recovery and quality. Interaction has almost the same mean. The means of proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about interaction, service recovery and interaction are quite the same although interaction shows a little higher propensity.

Interaction has the highest means of proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook of the variables at all levels. The average proneness to spread word-of-mouth at the retailer’s current level of performance is lower than at good level for both interaction and service recovery. Word-of-mouth on Facebook is more likely to be spread about the variable quality at the retailer’s current level than at good level but although lower than at better than expected level. The average proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook at the current level of service recovery is clearly lower than for both interaction and quality.

The standard deviation is between 1.735 and 1.913 for all variables’ means.
5.4.2 Expectations and experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Very low</th>
<th>5=Very high</th>
<th>Expectation before WOM</th>
<th>Experience afterwards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>272</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( n = 272 \)

Table 5:12 Expectation and experience table

**Current opinion**

![Current opinion chart](image)

**Expectations before the incident**

![Expectations before the incident chart](image)

\( n = 272 \)

Figure 5:13 Expectation and experience diagram

Table 5:12 above shows mean, mode and median for expectations before the incident that lead to word-of-mouth on Facebook and the experience afterwards. In the two pie-charts in figure 5:13 it is shown how the answers is divided between current opinion and expectation.

There is a higher mean, median and mode of experience afterwards than the expectation before.
5.4.3 Comparing means of quality

The variable quality was tested through independent sample t-test to see differences between respondents that had spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality and respondents who had not. The tests were made to be able to see whether persons who had spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality had experienced a better or worse quality level, had been more or less satisfied, had lower or higher expectations of quality and/or had different levels of intention to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality than those who had not spread. A confirmed difference can support the hypotheses stated as well as helps explaining reasons of how the hypotheses works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived quality level</th>
<th>Not quality WOM spreaders (110 respondents)</th>
<th>Quality WOM spreaders (162 respondents)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived quality level</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.129</td>
<td>5.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction level</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>1.173</td>
<td>5.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:14 Perceived quality and satisfaction level between groups

Table 5:14 shows the difference in means, of perceived quality level of the retailer and the satisfaction level, between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook and respondents that have not spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook. Since the p-value of both perceived quality level and satisfaction level is lower than 0.05 a difference in means are supported.

The means shows that those who have spread word-of-mouth on Facebook have perceived both a higher quality level and satisfaction level than those who have not spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality.
Table 5:15 shows the difference in means, of expectations before the incident that lead to word-of-mouth on Facebook and experience afterwards, between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook and respondents that have not spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook. Since the p-value of both perceived quality level and satisfaction level is lower than 0.05, differences in means are supported.

The means show both a higher expectation before the incident that lead to word-of-mouth on Facebook and the experience afterwards was better for those who had spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook than those who had not.

Table 5:16 shows the means of how prone respondents are to spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook at different levels. The differences in means between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook and those who have not is supported since the p-value is lower than 0.05.

The means of proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality is higher at all levels for those who have spread word-of-mouth about quality on Facebook than those who have not.
5.4.4 Comparing means of interaction

The variable interaction was tested through independent sample t-test to see differences between respondents that had spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook and respondents who had not. The tests were made to be able to see whether persons who had spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook had experienced a better or worse interaction level, had been more or less satisfied, had lower or higher expectations of interaction and/or had different levels of intention to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about interaction than those who had not spread. A confirmed difference can support the hypotheses stated as well as help explaining reasons of how the hypotheses works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not interaction WOM spreaders (220 respondents)</th>
<th>Interaction WOM spreaders (52 respondents)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived interaction level</strong></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Very low</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.228</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 = Very high</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction level</strong></td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>1.130</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 272
*p-value < 0.05 **p-value < 0.01

Table 5:17 Perceived interaction and satisfaction level between groups

Table 5:17 shows the difference in means, of perceived interaction level and the satisfaction level, between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook and respondents that have not spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook. Since the p-value of both perceived interaction level and satisfaction level is lower than 0.05 a differences in means are supported.

The means shows that those who have spread word-of-mouth on Facebook have perceived both a higher interaction level and satisfaction level than those who have not spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook.
Table 5:18 Expectations & experience level between groups - interaction

Table 5:18 shows the difference in means of how the expectations and experience afterwards of an interaction in a retail store differ between those who have spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about interaction and those who have not. The p-value is over 0.05 in the table above, which is too high to for the data to be further incorporated in this investigation.

Table 5:19 Word-of-mouth intention at different levels of interaction

Table 5:19 shows the mean of how prone respondents are to spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook at different levels. The difference in mean between the groups at good level can be supported since the p-value is lower than 0.05.

A difference in mean between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook at current level and those who have not, is not shown since the p-value is over 0.05, which is too high to be supported for this investigation.

A difference in means of proneness to spread word-of-mouth at better than expected level between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about interaction on Facebook and respondents who have not has a p-value over 0.05, which is too high to be supported for this investigation, and therefore the data in the table above cannot be further incorporated in the investigation.
5.4.5 Comparing means of service recovery

The variable service recovery was tested through independent sample t-test to see differences between respondents that had spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about service recovery and respondents who had not. The tests were made to be able to see whether persons who had spread word-of-mouth about service recovery on Facebook had experienced a better or worse service recovery level, had been more or less satisfied, had lower or higher expectations of service recovery and/or had different levels of intention to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery on Facebook than those who had not spread. A confirmed difference can support the hypotheses stated as well as helps explaining reasons of how the hypotheses works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not service recovery WOM spreaders (261)</th>
<th>Service recovery WOM spreaders (11)</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived service recovery level</td>
<td>Mean 5.07 SD 1.074</td>
<td>Mean 5.48 SD 1.021</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction level</td>
<td>Mean 5.64 SD 1.096</td>
<td>Mean 5.13 SD 1.171</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5:20 Perceived service recovery and satisfaction level between groups

Since the p-value is over 0.05, which is too high to be supported for this investigation, the data in the table above cannot be further incorporated in the investigation.

The word-of-mouth spreaders on Facebook about service recovery are not shown to have experienced a different level of either perceived service recovery level or satisfaction level than those who have not spread.
Table 5:21 shows that the p-value is over 0.05, which is too high to be supported for this investigation, and therefore the data in the table above cannot be further incorporated in the investigation.

It cannot be shown that word-of-mouth spreaders on Facebook about service recovery had higher expectations before or/and experience afterwards they experienced a service recovery in a retail store.

Table 5:22 shows the means of how prone respondents are to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about service recovery at different levels. The difference in mean between respondents that have spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about service recovery and those who have not is supported since the p-value is lower than 0.05.

The means of proneness to spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about service recovery is higher at all levels for those who have spread word-of-mouth about service recovery on Facebook than those who have not.
6. Discussion of results and conclusion

In the previous chapter the results of the survey was presented and the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the relationship marketing elements quality, interaction and service recovery for triggering positive word-of-mouth on social media. Therefore this chapter presents a discussion around the results of the data analysis chapter connected to the purpose and literature review. After the discussion the main findings of the study is presented.

6.1 Quality as a trigger for word-of-mouth on social media

162 respondents had spread word-of-mouth on social media about quality, which was clearly the highest number of the variables. This indicated that quality was the strongest actuable antecedent of word-of-mouth on social media.

The hypothesis 1, which stated that quality leads to satisfaction, which in turn leads to word-of-mouth on social media was supported in the hypothesis testing. An increase of quality level leads to a high increase of satisfaction level. The satisfaction level (hypothesis 4) gained from quality leads to an increased proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media. Earlier research has suggested quality as a trigger of word-of-mouth since its connection to satisfaction (e.g. Mägi & Julander, 1996; Smart et al 1996; Helm, 2000; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003; Tsiotsou, 2005; Buttle, 2011) and hence this study can confirm this theory's legitimacy specifically on social media.

Earlier research has also suggested that the higher the perceptions of quality are the more likely word-of-mouth is to be spread (Buttle, 2011). It is shown in figure 5:14 that respondents who have spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality has experienced a higher satisfaction level as well as a higher level of quality than those who have not spread. This supports that the higher the level of quality is the higher the proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media will be.

Those who have spread word-of-mouth about quality on social media had a higher expectation than those who had not spread word-of-mouth about quality, although the experience for quality-word-of-mouth spreaders was better as well. This strengthen the discussion that the gap between expectation and experience seemingly affect the hypothesis
and thereby the proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media.

Researchers have earlier suggested that how quality is perceived is depending on previously held expectations (Grönroos, 1978; Parasuraman et al. 1985). This study indicates that perception of quality is affected by expectations since expectations were shown to be lower compared to the experience after the incident that lead to word-of-mouth on social media for those who had spread word-of-mouth about it. According to Wangheim & Bayón (2006) the perceived quality in comparison to previously held expectations have an impact on whether customers feels satisfied or not. Since those who had spread word-of-mouth about quality were more satisfied and also had a bigger gap between expectation and experience than those who had not spread word-of-mouth on Facebook about quality, it is plausible to infer that perceived quality in comparison to expectations have an impact on customer satisfaction.

The satisfaction that comes from performances above predicted level is said to be associated with positive word-of-mouth (Buttle, 2011). This indicates that quality’s strong connection to satisfaction might be explained by the gap between expectations and experience since relation testing showed that quality has a strong impact on satisfaction and satisfaction in turn has an impact on word-of-mouth on social media. Therefore it is possible to say that quality levels above predicted level is associated with word-of-mouth on social media.

The proneness to spread word-of-mouth about quality is higher for those who have spread word-of-mouth about quality at good level, better than expected level and at current level. This suggests that people who already have spread word-of-mouth about quality is more prone to spread more word-of-mouth about quality again than those who have not spread word-of-mouth about quality are likely to spread for the first time.

The proneness to spread word-of-mouth about quality at the current level is higher than at good level but lower than at better than expected level. This suggests that the reason that most word-of-mouth is spread about quality today is due to a generally high level of quality. It also shows that if the general level of quality would increase to better than expected level the proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media would increase for both groups.

Quality has the highest impact on satisfaction today of the tested elements. However it is also shown that quality has a high potential but although the lowest potential to be a word-of-
mouth trigger on social media of the variables tested if it is performed at a good or better than expected level. Since quality has the highest impact but also lowest potential it seems to indicate that either quality is easier for retail stores to reach a high enough level of, or retailers have already put much effort on having a high enough level that triggers word-of-mouth on social media compared to the other variables tested. This shows that quality is as an important component of relationship marketing for triggering word-of-mouth on social media.

### 6.2 Interaction as a trigger for word-of-mouth on social media

Hypothesis 2, which stated that interaction leads to satisfaction, which in turn leads to word-of-mouth on social media is shown in the hypothesis testing. An increase of interaction level leads to an increase of satisfaction level. The satisfaction level (hypothesis 4) gained from interaction leads to an increased proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media. Interaction is argued as an antecedent to utter word-of-mouth (e.g. Crosby et al, 1990; Gremler et al, 1994; Chandon et al, 1996; Gremler et al., 2001; Buttle, 2011) and this relation is further emphasized due to this studies confirmation of interaction’s influence on word-of-mouth on social media.

That interaction serves as a vital determinant for the perceived level of satisfaction (Gremler, Bitner & Evans, 1994; Chandon, Leo & Phillipe, 1996) is supported in this study since interaction is shown to have a relation with satisfaction. This study shows that those who have spread word-of-mouth about interaction has experienced a higher level of interaction and a higher satisfaction level than those who have not spread word-of-mouth about interaction. This finding suggests that the higher level of interaction the retailer has the more word-of-mouth on social media will be spread since the proneness to spread word-of-mouth will be increased.

Earlier research has shown that customer’s that have been satisfied by social support in the service encounter are more prone to recommend the service (e.g. Gremler et al, 2001; Buttle, 2011). Since the relation testing showed a positive relation between both interaction and satisfaction, and satisfaction and word-of-mouth the study support that well performed interaction leads to more positive word-of-mouth. The test between groups showed that those
who had spread word-of-mouth on social media about interaction had also experienced a higher level of interaction than those who had not spread word-of-mouth about it, which further supports that high level of interaction leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

A difference of expectations before spreading word-of-mouth about interaction could not be shown between those who have spread word-of-mouth about interaction and those who have not. Both groups had lower expectations than experience. This indicates that interaction does not need a bigger gap between expectations and experience than other variables. It is although shown that there is a gap between expectations and experience, which is as big for interaction as for other variables, contributing with satisfaction and word-of-mouth on social media.

When the mean is described in proneness to spread word-of-mouth at different levels it is shown that there is a higher mean for at a good level compared to at a better than expected level for interaction. This indicates that the expected level can be low and even if it is exceeded it is still perceived as lower or as the defined good level. This indicates that it is hard to reach a level of interaction that is satisfying enough for word-of-mouth on social media to be triggered. This is supported by the relation test between interaction and satisfaction where interaction is shown to have a weaker relation to satisfaction than the other tested elements.

A difference in proneness to spread word-of-mouth between those who have spread and those who have not spread word-of-mouth about interaction on social media cannot be shown. However there is a difference in proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media at good level, which is shown to be the level where word-of-mouth on social media is most likely to be spread. This shows that a good level of interaction generally might be perceived as a better level than better than expected level for customers. Chandon et al (1996) write that a good performed service encounter increases positive word-of-mouth spreading. Since both good level and better than expected level increases the proneness for word-of-mouth on social media for both groups compared to current level of interaction there is an obvious possibility to increase word-of-mouth on social media by increasing the level of interaction. It might also indicate that customers do not expect a well-performed interaction in a retail store.

Interaction has the lowest impact on satisfaction today. However it is also shown that interaction has the highest potential to be a word-of-mouth trigger on social media if it is
performed at a good or better than expected level of the variables tested. This shows that more effort is demanded from retail stores to reach a high satisfaction level gained from interaction than the other variables tested.

### 6.3 Service recovery as a trigger for word-of-mouth on social media

Only eleven respondents, clearly the lowest number of the variables, had spread word-of-mouth about service recovery, which indicated that service recovery is not a good triggering actuable word-of-mouth on social media antecedent.

The hypothesis 3, which stated that service recovery, leads to satisfaction, which in turn lead to word-of-mouth on social media is shown in the hypothesis testing. An increase of service recovery level leads to an increase of satisfaction level. The satisfaction level (hypothesis 4) gained from service recovery leads to an increased proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media. Earlier research have suggested that a well performed service recovery can make customer satisfied as well as make them prone to spread word-of-mouth (Spreng et al, 1995; Maxham III, 2001). This study supports that service recovery can contribute with satisfaction as well as positive word-of-mouth on social media.

The study cannot show a difference in perceived service recovery level or satisfaction level between those who have spread word-of-mouth about service recovery and those who have not. Although the proneness to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery on social media about a retailer at the current level, at good level and at better than expected level differs a lot between the groups. This suggests that those who have spread word-of-mouth about service recovery are satisfied enough to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery at a lower level and that a higher level of service recovery can increase word-of-mouth on social media. The reason might be that service recovery actually is a very triggering variable for word-of-mouth but not many have experienced good service recovery.

Maxham III (2001) writes that satisfaction is increased quite equally no matter of high or moderate levels of service recovery while positive word-of-mouth will increase significantly if moderate levels are increased to high levels. The average mean of the whole sample for proneness to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery at the current level is 3.83. That is...
clearly the lowest number of all variables and might explain the low number of respondents that have spread word-of-mouth on social media about it. The average proneness to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery is the same as for quality at better than expected level. This indicates that an increase of service recovery level would lead to at least as much word-of-mouth online as quality.

Maxham III (2001) means that effective service recovery programs that satisfy customers and triggers positive word-of-mouth can become a clear competitive advantage for companies. The average level of proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media at current level of service recovery is well below the proneness to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery above expected level. The study also shows that a low number of respondents have spread word-of-mouth about service recovery. Those findings indicate that a high level of service recovery has the potential to be a competitive advantage for companies since it can generate an increase of satisfaction and word-of-mouth on social media. For both groups there is a much higher proneness to spread word-of-mouth about service recovery at good or better than expected level than the current level, which shows that an increase of service recovery level can increase the proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media.

Some researchers mean that customer satisfaction can be perceived as higher due to a successful service recovery compared to if the mistake never would have occurred in the first place (e.g. Spreng et al, 1995; Ok et al, 2007; Buttle, 2011) while others mean that successful service recovery alone will not reach the level of satisfaction that would be achieved if the failure would have been avoided in the first place (e.g. Kau & Loh, 2006; Maxham III, 2001). The study could not show a higher satisfaction level for those who had spread word-of-mouth about service recovery than those who had not. The study also showed that service recovery has a weaker relation to satisfaction than quality. Therefore this study cannot support the service recovery paradox. This indicates that service recovery has a weaker impact on satisfaction and thereby word-of-mouth on social media compared to no service failure.

The results suggests that customers has the lowest propensity to spread word-of-mouth on social media about service recovery at the current level of the variables tested but has a stronger relation to satisfaction than interaction. It shows that a high level of service recovery is important for triggering word-of-mouth on social media.
6.4 Word-of-mouth on social media similarities and differences between quality, interaction and service recovery

Earlier research has suggested that very satisfied customers are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth (e.g. Spreng et al, 1995; Söderlund 1998; Meiners et al. 2010; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Buttle, 2011). This study support that view since all respondents of the sample had spread word-of-mouth on social media and the average satisfaction level of the sample was high. According to Ranawera & Prabhu (2003) word-of-mouth behavior is a reflection of customers true opinion of a company hence word-of-mouth is a strong confirmation of satisfaction. Since satisfaction was shown to increase word-of-mouth proneness on social media it can be said that word-of-mouth seems to be a strong confirmation of satisfaction.

An increase of quality level is shown to be highly related to satisfaction and that satisfaction is shown to have a relation to the proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media. Service recovery has a slightly stronger relation to satisfaction than interaction, while both are clearly lower than quality’s relation. The satisfaction level gained from the variables quality, interaction and service recovery leads to an increased proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media.

Quality is seemingly the best trigger for word-of-mouth on social media. However the average proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media about quality is higher at the retailer’s current level than at good level while that is not the case with service recovery and interaction. This suggests that the reason that quality is more closely connected to proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media is not necessarily true. The result suggests that it can as well be due to a generally higher level of quality at the retailers or that high level of quality is easier to gain than a high level of interaction or service recovery. If service recovery and interaction would be performed at the same level it might lead to as much word-of-mouth on social media as quality does. Quality is the only variable that customers have a higher proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media about at the current level than at good level. This suggests that quality is the only of the three variables that is generally performed at a better than good level. It is seemingly harder to reach a level of interaction that is satisfying enough to trigger word-of-mouth on social media compared to quality but if a better than expected level is accomplished the variable has the highest propensity to be spread about. Therefore it can be argued that today quality has the highest impact for triggering word-of-
mouth on social media while Interaction has the highest potential for triggering word-of-mouth on social media.

Since all variables has a high potential to trigger word-of-mouth on social media but yet quality, which has the highest perceived current level, has triggered most. This indicates that by implementing a high level of relationship marketing the company can gain more satisfied customers, which spread more word-of-mouth on social media. The results shows that once a customer has spread word-of-mouth about one of the tested variables he or she is generally more prone, than someone who have not written about the variable, to write something positive again. Therefore if a high enough level of the tested variables is achieved a positive spiral of satisfaction and word-of-mouth spreading on social media is triggered.

The expectations before the incidents that lead to word-of-mouth on social media were clearly lower than the experience afterwards for the variable the respondents had chosen to spread word-of-mouth about. This also indicates that the hypotheses in this study are affected by expectations as well. All variables have a higher tendency to be word-of-mouth triggers on social media if the expectations are lower than what the retailer performs. This supports Buttle (2011) when he write that it is plausible to infer that positive word-of-mouth is associated with performances above predicted level. To perform better than expected is equal to performances at a satisfying level (Parasuraman et al, 1985; Grönroos, 1978), which further supports that all variables of the study leads to satisfaction that potentially leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

The results suggest that different efforts are needed for the different variables to reach a satisfaction level that have an impact on word-of-mouth on social media. Since this is the case with the three tested variables it might as well be true for other relationship marketing aspects that have not been tested in this study. The difficulties of knowing which level of the variables that is necessary to reach to gain a satisfaction that is satisfying enough to trigger word-of-mouth can be an explanation of why relationship marketing have had difficulties in being successfully implemented. Relationship marketing may in many cases have failed due to an existing too general approach towards what the customer demands. The results might be an indication that there should be more individualized and company specific relationships to achieve satisfaction that trigger word-of-mouth.
The proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media about service recovery and interaction at the retailer’s current level are well below the proneness to spread word-of-mouth at good or better than expected level. This shows that the interaction and service recovery levels are generally too low to maximize word-of-mouth behavior about them. To reach a high enough level it is necessary to know what the expectations are since the expectation level compared to what are experienced affects all tested elements. When customers’ expectations are exceeded proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media about all tested elements are high. Those findings suggests that relationship marketing today is performed at levels where not all variables reaches their potential for maximizing word-of-mouth on social media while the findings also suggest that relationship marketing performed at high levels can trigger much word-of-mouth on social media. Since customers had higher proneness to spread word-of-mouth about all tested variables at better than expected level it indicates that it is important that relationship marketing is performed at better than expected level. For relationship marketing to be successfully implemented and thereby have an impact on word-of-mouth on social media a company needs to know what their customers expect to be able to exceed that level.

6.5 Conclusion

Quality is performed at the highest level of the tested elements today and thereby has the biggest impact on satisfaction, which leads to quality being most closely connected to positive word-of-mouth on social media today.

More effort is needed for interaction to have an impact on satisfaction, which leads to word-of-mouth on social media than the other tested variables. Although the satisfaction gained when interaction is performed at better than expected level has a higher potential to be a word-of-mouth trigger than quality and service recovery. It seemingly has a higher maximum level.

Less word-of-mouth on social media is spread about service recovery than about quality and interaction but service recovery has a stronger connection to satisfaction than interaction. It can be due to a low level of service recovery or due to not many customers having experienced a well-performed service recovery. Therefore service recovery cannot be said to have a lower impact on word-of-mouth on social media than interaction but since it either occurs less
frequently or at a too low level it has been less spread about.

A positive spiral of word-of-mouth on social media can be started if the level of quality, interaction and/or service recovery is high enough since once a person has spread word-of-mouth on social media about those variables he or she is more prone to spread word-of-mouth on social media again.

Which expectation the customer has in comparison to what is experienced affects quality, interaction and service recovery’s impact on satisfaction that leads to word-of-mouth on social media.

Since all tested elements of relationship marketing increase positive word-of-mouth it can be argued that the higher the level of relationship marketing through the elements quality, interaction and service recovery is performed, the more satisfaction will be triggered, which in turn has an impact on positive word-of-mouth on social media.
7. Implications, limitations and future research

In the previous chapter a discussion around the findings of the study was held and a conclusion was presented. In this chapter implications of those findings will be presented. In this chapter factors that may have limited the study as well as future research connected to the findings is presented.

7.1 Academic implications

Cheung & Lee (2012) emphasized that future research should investigate antecedents for word-of-mouth on social media. This investigation can contribute to the research field by determine that relationship marketing performed through a good quality of their products and services, a good interaction between their employees and their customers and a good service recovery will result in satisfaction that in turn results in favorable word-of-mouth on social media.

This investigation has identified that quality, interaction and service recovery are three antecedents for word-of-mouth on social media since they are confirmed to have a relation with satisfaction that in turn leads to word-of-mouth spread on social media. Therefore performing those variables at high levels can be seen as guidelines of relationship marketing.

The investigation also contributes with knowledge that proneness to spread word-of-mouth on social media would be higher for interaction and service recovery if they are performed at good or better than expected level than at current level. This means that the level of those elements of relationship marketing today is lower than good and that companies do not perform at levels better than expected.

The investigation also contributes to the research field by showing that quality has the highest relation to satisfaction that leads to word-of-mouth on social media of quality, interaction and service recovery. It is also shown that interaction has the highest potential for word-of-mouth to spread on social media when it is performed, at for the customer perceived, good level or better than expected level compared to quality and service recovery.
7.2 Managerial implications

Managers should focus on their quality, interaction and service recovery because these three elements of relationship marketing enhance their customers’ satisfaction in a manner that results in positive word-of-mouth on social media. It is of importance for managers to continuously investigate what their customers’ expect of their interaction, quality and service recovery. To specifically investigate the individual level that is required for a particular retail store is of importance when implementing the findings of this study. The survey of this investigation used a Likert scale to measure how respondents relate to the various statements concerning the three antecedents behind word-of-mouth on social media. The Likert scale cannot be directly translated into the reality, for example; the antecedent quality had a mean of 5.27 and that number needs to be specified for a specific company. The data help companies to know what level they need to reach to trigger word-of-mouth on social media. When the managers know what their customer demands they should out of that aim to exceed these expectations because that is shown to generate more positive word-of-mouth on social media compared to if they just meet their customers expectations. If the three investigated actuable antecedents of word-of-mouth on social media increase it is satisfaction triggers, but it should also be seen as an advertising activity. Word-of-mouth is earlier shown to be a credible marketing source, which is perceived as non-commercial, that affect purchase decision and attracts new customers. Therefore improved relationship marketing through increasing the levels of quality, interaction and service recovery captures those positive opportunities. This should be seen as a marketing activity due to its connection to word-of-mouth on social media.

This study does not show if quality, interaction and service recovery are the most effective word-of-mouth on social media triggers that exist. Self-enhancement and incentives are examples of word-of-mouth triggers that may be as closely or more closely linked to word-of-mouth on social media. This means that there may be elements that triggers more word-of-mouth on social media but the variables quality, interaction and service recovery triggers word-of-mouth through their impact on satisfaction, which is a key aspects of relationship marketing. Therefore the satisfaction gained through quality, interaction and service recovery does not only create word-of-mouth but it also builds relationships between customer and company. To require new customers is much more expensive than retaining existing ones therefore by focusing on increasing quality, interaction and service recovery a cost-effective
way to build relationships as well as a marketing activity through word-of-mouth to require new customers can be achieved.

A way for companies to investigate their customers’ expectations is to keep track of what has been written about them in social media. The study shows that those who have already spread word-of-mouth on social media regarding any of the three variables interaction, service recovery and quality tend to do it again. Hence the company should find these people and show them appreciation each time to thereby obtain additional word-of-mouth on social media. This can give rise to a positive spiral of satisfaction, as the company tries to get their customers satisfied to achieve positive word-of-mouth on social media and at the same time see what made the customers satisfied to improve further.

Quality is the variable that has the highest influence on satisfaction and therefore is the main trigger for word-of-mouth on social media today. However, the survey shows that quality has the lowest potential to increase word-of-mouth on social media. Service recovery has, just like interaction, a higher potential to increase the word-of-mouth on social media than quality, but has a lower correlation with satisfaction. This shows that companies today have achieved a higher perceived level of quality. To do their business more unique on the competitive market and get their customers more satisfied the companies should invest in training and communicate the importance of a good relationship between employees and customers. This can be done by investigating their customer’s expectations of them and from that knowledge communicate a tailor made employee behaviour strategy which will lead to increased favourable word-of-mouth on social media.

7.3 Limitations of the study
The variable quality consists of both service quality and product quality. It might have been a clearer demarcation between quality and interaction if quality only would have represented product quality. This since the service quality and interaction in some way are similar to each other, e.g. the human contact is present for both the variables.

In the questionnaire there was a Likert scale graded with seven options for the respondents, except for two initial questions that used a scale with five options (see appendix 2) since
initially those two questions did not have an aim of being compared to other parts of the questionnaire. Later the authors realized that the opportunity to compare these two questions to other parts of the questionnaire would have been beneficial. This limited the opportunity to directly compare the questions in SPSS hence a consistency with the offered number of options for the respondents to consider would have been preferable. Therefore to compare means of the two different scales was not possible.

The low level of significance when comparing the groups that had spread word-of-mouth on social media about service recovery and those who had not might be a consequence of the low amount of respondents that had experienced service recovery. With this aspect kept in mind it would have been advantageous to reach more respondents but due to time constraints this was not accomplished. The authors’ speculations regarding this are that service recovery requires that the customer experiences a mistake that can be followed by a service recovery, unlike interaction and quality which can be offered with no specific previous history.

The authors of this paper were not aware that the distribution through Linnaeus University e-mail could potentially risk the sample to become biased due to the fact that this channel only consisted of students, but later realized this. Since 245 responses were already collected when the distribution by mail was done the maximum number of responses origin from mail were 27 responses. All other channels were still in effect and therefore it is very likely that not all 27 responses came from the e-mail channel. Although it is important to note that potentially almost 10 percent of the respondents came from this source, which may skew the sample, compared to the population and thereby make it biased. The distribution channel through the Facebook group consisting of mainly friends of the authors also increases the risk of a biased sample. It is important to note that the group was open for every Facebook user but it is likely to believe that mainly friends of the authors were reached through this channel. The authors had friends from ages between 16-61 and they were geographically spread throughout Sweden but most of the Facebook friends were in ages between 20-30 and from the Swedish provinces Småland or Blekinge.

To ensure an exact response rate another type of distribution of the questionnaire should have been chosen. An open event on Facebook made it impossible to know how many that had seen the questionnaire and therefore the exact response rate could not been calculated.
Gripsrud (2002) describes habitus, which aims to that every human carries a load of beliefs and values that characterize their actions, i.e. actions and interpretation tends to be subjective. The authors had no preconceptions about the outcome of the study and an open-minded attitude towards the objective of answering the purpose of this investigation has consistently been present.

7.4 Future Research

A longitudinal designed case study can be done to show differences in word-of-mouth spreading on social media over time. It would be interesting to see how a consciously improved interaction, quality and service recovery increase word-of-mouth on social media for a specific company from time point A to time point B.

It would be of interest to investigate the individual level that is required to meet customers’ expectations in order to trigger word-of-mouth on social media for a particular retail store. This can be done through a case study. The result from this study can be used as a guide for what level of interaction, quality and service recovery that should be performed. The researcher should firstly make a qualitative study of what is important for the three variables for a retail stores specific customers. The qualitative approach should be done to get a deeper understanding of important issues in the company's specific environment. When the results of the qualitative approach is analysed the most important elements of interaction, service recovery and quality should be quantitatively tested to see which level of each variable that is needed to reach the level where word-of-mouth is spread. An example of how this can be performed is to do a qualitative case study for one company and find out the level of expected performance within the three elements. To make the result generalizable the data from the qualitative study can be tested with help of hypothesis testing for several other companies. The hypothesis can be stated and tested to see if the expected levels of the three variables are the same level in other companies and thereby be generalized. Either is the hypothesis rejected or supported for the investigated company. With help of this method, the three antecedents interaction, service recovery and quality can be tested on several companies in different industries.

Almost 60 per cent of the sample consisted of respondents that had spread word-of-mouth
about quality. As earlier mentioned, since word-of-mouth is an indication of satisfaction the result that showed that quality had the strongest connection to satisfaction might be explained. If the sample had consisted of a dominance of respondents that had spread word-of-mouth about interaction the relation between satisfaction and quality might have been different. To test the variables impact on satisfaction and word-of-mouth on social media separately with samples only consisting of respondents that have spread word-of-mouth about a specific variable would be of academic and managerial interest.

It would be of managerial interest to know which impact badly performed interaction, service recovery and quality have on word-on-mouth on social media. If the result is similar to this study, with the same relation between dissatisfaction and the three variables it would further emphasize the importance of performing those variables well. A similar study could be performed to investigate this.

The criterion validity of this study’s findings would be improved if a study would be performed in the same manner as this one but with another social media and another type of business field under investigation.
Reference list


Carlsson, B. (1990) “Grundläggande forsknings metodik” Publisher: Almqvist & Wiksell


84


Facebook (2012), Facebook.com, “About”

- http://www.facebook.com/facebook/info, viewed 2012-03-21

Facebook (2012) “Fact Sheet”

- http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22, viewed 2012-03-21


Godes D, Mayzlin D (2004), "Using online conversations to study word of mouth communication” Marketing science, vol 23, no 4, pp 545-560


Gripsrud, J (2002) "Mediekultur, mediesamhälle" Publisher: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB


Grönroos, C (1994) "From marketing mix to relationship marketing: towards a paradigm shift in marketing" Management decision, Vol. 32, No. 2 pp. 4-20


joinsimon.se (2012) “Facebook Sverige Statistik 2011”

- http://www.joinsimon.se/facebook-statistik-2011, viewed 2012-03-16


Nationalencyklopedin.se "Kvantitativ metod"

- http://www.ne.se/kvantitativ-metod, viewed 2012-03-13


Patel, R. & Davidson, B. (2011) “Forskningsmetodikens grunder – Att planera, genomföra och rapportera en undersökning” Publisher: Studentlitteratur AB


Sch.se (2011) “Folkmängden närmar sig 9,5 miljoner”
- http://www.scb.se/Pages/PressRelease____308293.aspx, viewed 2012-03-20


### Appendix 1. Operationalization scheme for the questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Theoretical Area</th>
<th>Theory/Concept</th>
<th>Inspired of article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was your expectation of the retail store before the positive experience which led to you writing your latest comment about the company on Facebook?</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>The gap model</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your experience of the company afterwards?</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>The gap model</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees in the retail store care about me</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Gremler et al (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have a personal relation with the employees</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Gremler et al (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retail store has nice employees that make me think better about the retail store.</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Baker (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees of the retail store listen to what I have to say</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Chandon et al (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees in the retail store is perceived as engaged</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Chandon et al (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the employees of the retail store are competent</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Chandon et al (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the retail store has a good customer treatment</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Baker (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Baker (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store on Facebook because of the customer treatment that the retail store offers today</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the level of customer treatment is overachieved</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Baker (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other retail stores this retail store is good</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retail store I am thinking about is a good retail store</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often feel pleased when I leave the retail store</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel satisfied when I leave the retail store</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unsatisfied when leaving the store</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the retail store is good at correcting a previously mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the retail store is bad at correcting previously mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the retail store has good guarantees</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Butler (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the retail store indemnify a mistake in a good manner I can feel even more pleased than I would have done if the mistake have never occurred</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the handling of mistakes that the retail store have caused, is good</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the handling of mistakes the retail store have caused, is better than expected</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way that the retail store handles their mistakes today, makes me prone to write a comment on Facebook</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>Maxham III (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have mentioned the retail store’s name frequently to people I know</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>Bala, Sandhu, Nagpal (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mention the retail store favourably at several times on Facebook</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to say positive things about the retail store on Facebook</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Online word-of-mouth</td>
<td>Harrison &amp; Walker (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the retail store has products of good quality</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the retail store has services of good quality</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I associate the retail store with good quality</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the retail store is not linked with quality</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the retail store rarely makes mistakes</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store if my expected level of quality is achieved</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>(1985)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about a Retail store if the level of quality is higher than expected</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook at the level of quality that the store offers today</td>
<td>Relationship marketing</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Parasuraman et al (1985)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. The questionnaire

We are students from Linnaeus University in Växjö and we are conducting a study that will investigate why people tend to spread positive opinions about companies on Facebook. To be able to conduct a conclusion we need your help!

For every answer we get we will donate 1 SEK to UNICEF.

You are in this survey since we have noticed that You have chosen to write something positive about a company on Facebook. The aim of this survey is to gain knowledge about why You have chosen to do so.

**Have You written a positive status or comment about a retail store on Facebook?**

It is enough if you ever have written as status update or commented e.g. “Elgiganten”, “My new shoes from DinSko” or “Great day at IKEA”. Alternatively you made a “check-in” at the store.

Yes ○
No ○

Please fill in your age  __________

**Your gender**

Male ○
Female ○

I am online on Facebook...

Less than once a week ○
1-3 times a week ○
4-6 times a week ○
98
Every day

I express myself on Facebook (through e.g. status updates or comments)...

Less than once a week

1-3 times a week

4-6 times a week

Every day

Why did you write your latest comment about a retail store? Because of (more than one alternative can be filled in)...

One or more employees’ behavior in the retail store

Product- and/or service quality in a retail store

The retail store had corrected a previous mistake (e.g. a broken product, bad quality of product or service etc)

Something else

If you have chosen to answer something else on the previous question, what was it?

___________________________
What was your expectation of the retail store before the positive experience which led to you writing your latest comment about the company on Facebook?

- Very low
- Low
- Average
- High
- Very High

How is your experience of the company afterwards?

- Very bad
- Bad
- Average
- Good
- Very good
Think about a retail store that you have made a comment about on Facebook and consider the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The employees in the retail store care about me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have a personal relation with the employees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retail store has nice employees that make me think better about the retail store</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees of the retail store listen to what I have to say</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees in the store is perceived as engaged</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the employees of the retail store are competent</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the retail store has a good customer treatment</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook because of the customer treatment that the retail store offers today</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the level of customer treatment is overachieved</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared to other retail stores this retail store is good</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retail store I am thinking about is a good retail store</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often feel pleased when I leave the retail store</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel satisfied when I leave the store</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel unsatisfied when I leave the store</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the retail store is good at correcting a previously mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the retail store is bad at correcting previously mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the retail store has good guarantees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the retail store indemnify a mistake in a good manner I can feel even more pleased than I would have done if the mistake have never occurred</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the handling of mistakes that the retail store have caused, is good</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook if the handling of mistakes the retail store have caused, is better than</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The way that the retail store handles their mistakes today, makes me prone to write a comment on Facebook | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
---|---
I have mentioned the retail store’s name frequently to people I know | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I mention the retail store favourably at several times on Facebook | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am prone to write positive things about the retail store on Facebook | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I do not avoid writing positive things about the retail store on Facebook | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel the retail store has products of good quality | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel the retail store has services of good quality | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I associate the retail store with good quality | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel the retail store is not linked with quality | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I feel that the retail store rarely makes mistakes | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am prone to write a comment about the retail store if my expected level of quality is achieved | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am prone to write a comment about a Retail store if the level of quality is higher than expected | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am prone to write a comment about the retail store on Facebook at the level of quality that the store offers today | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Appendix 3. The questionnaire in Swedish

Vi är studenter från Linnéuniversitetet i Växjö och vi genomför en studie vars syfte är att ta reda på varför människor väljer att sprida positiva åsikter om företag på Facebook. För att kunna nå en slutsats behöver vi din hjälp!

För varje svar som vi får in så kommer vi att skänka 1 kr till UNICEF!

Du är med i denna undersökning eftersom vi har märkt att du har valt att skriva något positivt om ett företag på Facebook. Syftet med denna undersökning är att få kunskap om varför du har valt att göra det.

Har du skrivit en positiv status eller en positiv kommentar om en butik på Facebook?

Det räcker att du någon gång skrivit som status, gjort en incheckning eller kommenterat t.ex. "Elgiganten!", "Mina fina nya skor från Dinsko" eller "Lyckad dag på IKEA".

Ja

Nej

Var snäll och fyll i din ålder: ________

Kön:

Man  ○

Kvinna  ○

Jag är uppkopplad på Facebook...

Mindre än en gång per vecka  ○

1-3- gånger i veckan  ○

4-6 gånger i veckan  ○

Varje dag  ○
Jag uttrycker mig på Facebook (Genom t.ex. statusuppdatering eller kommenterar)...

Mindre än en gång per vecka  ○

1-3 gånger per vecka  ○

4-6 gånger per vecka  ○

Varje dag  ○

Varför skrev du din senaste kommentar om en butik? På grund av (mer än ett alternativ kan fyllas i)...

De anställdas agerande i butiken  ☐

Kvaliten på produkter eller servicen i butiken  ☐

Butiken har åtgärdat ett tidigare misstag (t.ex. en trasig produkt, dålig kvalité på derasprodukter eller service etc.)  ☐

Någonting annat  ☐

Om du på föregående fråga valde "någonting annat" vad skrev du då om?

_____________________________
Vad var dina förväntningar på butiken innan de positiva erfarenheter som ledd e fram till att du skrev din senaste kommentar om företaget på Facebook?

Väldigt låga
Låga
Medel
Höga
Väldigt höga

Hur är din uppfattning om butiken efter denna händelse?

Väldigt dålig
Dålig
Medel
God
Väldigt god
Tänk på en butik som du har gjort någon positiv kommentar om på Facebook och ta ställning till nedanstående påståenden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Påstående</th>
<th>Instämmer inte alls</th>
<th>Instämmer helt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalen i butiken bryr sig om mig</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag känner att jag har en personlig kontakt med personalen</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butiken har trevliga anställda som gör att jag tycker bättre om butiken</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De anställda i butiken lyssnar på vad jag har att säga</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De anställda i butiken uppfattas som engagerade</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag upplever att de anställda i butiken är kompetenta</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om butiken har ett bra kundbemötande</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook på grund av kundbemötandet butiken erbjuder idag</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om nivån på kundbemötande överträffas</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jämfört med andra butiker är denna butik bra</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butiken jag tänker på är en bra butik</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag känner mig ofta nöjd när jag lämnar butiken</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag känner mig tillfredsställd när jag lämnar butiken</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag känner mig missnöjd när jag lämnar butiken</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag tycker butiken är bra på att tillrättalägga tidigare misstag som de har orsakat</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag tycker butiken är därför på att tillrättalägga tidigare misstag som de har orsakat</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag uppfattar att butiken har bra garantier</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>När butiken gottgör ett misstag på ett bra sätt kan jag känna mig mer nöjd än vad jag hade gjort om misstaget aldrig hade uppstått</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om hanteringen av misstag, som butiken har orsakat, är bra.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om hanteringen av misstag, som butiken har orsakat, är bättre än förväntat.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det sätt som butiken idag hanterar sina misstag på, gör mig benägen att skriva en kommentar på Facebook</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag har nämnt butiken frekvent till människor jag känner</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag har nämnt butiken i positiva ordalag vid ett flertal tillfällen på Facebook</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva positiva saker om butiken på Facebook</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag drar mig INTE från att skriva positiva saker om butiken på Facebook</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag upplever att butiken har produkter av hög kvalité</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag upplever att butiken har god kvalité på sin service</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag associerar butiken med god kvalité</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag upplever att butiken INTE är av bra kvalité</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag upplever att butiken sällan gör misstag</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om min förväntade nivå av kvalité är uppnådd</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook om kvalitetsnivån är över förväntan</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag är benägen att skriva en kommentar om butiken på Facebook vid den nivå av kvalité, som butiken idag erbjuder.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 Statements merged to common variables

The statements that were tested with a reliability test were as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>The employee in the retail store care about me</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>I often feel pleased when I leave the retail store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>I feel I have a personal relation with the employees</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>I feel satisfied when I leave the retail store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>The retail store has nice employees that make me think better about the retail store</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>I feel unsatisfied when leaving the retail store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>The employees of the retail store listen to what I have to say</td>
<td>WOM on Facebook</td>
<td>I have mention the retail store favourably at several times on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>I feel that the employees of the retail store are competent</td>
<td>WOM on Facebook</td>
<td>I am prone to say positive things about the retail store on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>The employees in the retail store are perceived as engaged</td>
<td>WOM on Facebook</td>
<td>I do not avoid writing positive things about the retail store on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>I believe the retail store is good at correcting previously mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>I feel the retail store is not linked with quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>I believe the retail store is bad at correcting a mistake that they have caused</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>I feel that the retail store rarely makes mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>I think the retail store has good guarantees</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>I feel the retail store has products of good quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service recovery</td>
<td>When the retail store indemnify a mistake in a good manner I can feel even more pleased than I would have done if the</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>I feel the retail store has services of good quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Compared to other retail stores this retail store is good</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>I associate the retail store with good quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>The retail store I am thinking about is a good retail store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.

Lnu.se

Linnaeus University
SE-351 95 Växjö
Telephone +46 772-28 80 00