Customer loyalty in rural grocery stores - a comparative study of Swedish and Spanish customers

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Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this research was to explain the determiners that influence customer loyalty in rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This is a quantitative research using a multi-cross sectional design with an explanatory approach. The data was collected with a questionnaire survey that was distributed using a face-to-face and online method.

**Findings** – The findings of the research revealed significant support for customer perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment to influence customer loyalty. The research also confirms that there are differences in customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores between Sweden and Spain.

**Research limitations/implications** – This thesis extend previous research by testing an adapted conceptual model of customer loyalty in a context of rural grocery stores and explain the determiners of customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain. The limitations of the research are discussed and directions for future research areas are suggested.

**Practical implications** – The study provides rural retailers with suggestions for marketing strategies related to the determiners (i.e. customer perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment) that might influence customer loyalty and attract the rural customers.

**Originality/value** – This research adds to the current stream of rural research by investigating how customer loyalty can enhance profitability. This research has originality since it makes a comparison of two countries, which can be of great interest and inspiration for how to maintain and develop rural grocery stores. Lastly, the research is significant as it provides implications to rural retailers as well as Provincial Governments.

**Keywords:** customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, trust, commitment, perceived value
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1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overall presentation of the topic of the thesis. It presents a background of the subject with a discussion of the different problems affecting rural grocery stores on the countryside in general. It also introduces the concept of customer loyalty as a key factor for to maintain and develop these stores. The chapter also identifies a research gap and the purpose of the thesis. At the end of the cheaper the delimitations are presented together with an overview of the thesis as a whole.

1.1 Background

The rural grocery stores, are located on the countryside and can be either privately owned or a part of a chain store (Bedford Borough Council UK, 2009). Countryside, also called rural area, refers to a geographic area located outside a bigger city (Oxford Learners Dictionaries, 2012). In general terms, the function of rural grocery stores is to provide general household goods, and nowadays they are typically used as a supplement to the larger purchasing in larger stores or supermarkets. People living in rural areas generally visit the rural grocery store weekly to buy things they are missing in their home, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, milk products and meat (Scarpello et al. 2009). Some rural stores do also offer diverse service functions such as post-delivery and pharmacy, which are important for the people living in rural areas in their daily life. Rural grocery stores are as well a social meeting place that fulfills an essential function for the rural society (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012). Accordingly, rural grocery stores are a key factor for a living countryside (Amcoff et al. 2011; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012).

Recent decades has observed a dramatic change of the rural grocery stores on the countryside (Johnson et al. 2008; Scarpello et al. 2009). The last decades have observed a decrease of grocery stores in the countryside (Maixé-Altés, 2009; Amcoff et al. 2011). Some of the factors behind this change is that customers in the past had less opportunities and the rural grocery stores were their only option, until the bigger stores such as the supermarkets gradually entered the market and started to replace them (Amcoff et al. 2011). Another factor is that rural grocery stores are disadvantaged because of the decreasing population on the countryside (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010). The reason is mainly because economic activities have moved to larger cities with higher evolution (Paddison & Calderwood, 2007). The changes that the rural grocery stores have experienced and which
have affected their business are a general problem concerning many countries around the world (Paddison & Calderwood, 2007; Amcoff et al. 2011; Johnson et al. 2008; Vias, 2004).

The issues rural grocery stores are facing is concerning both Sweden and Spain, two different countries within Europe that experienced the change in similar ways but because of different factors. As cited by Hsu & Burns (2012), Blackwell et al. (2001) explain that various countries have different cultures which affect what people purchases, as well as the structure of consumption, customer’s decision making and the customer’s loyalty behavior. Country differences do as well exist in relation to social welfare, demographic composition, and income (Turrini et al. 2010). Hence, living conditions influence food shopping habits and reflect the culture as well as the society the people lives in (Turrini et al. 2010). Sweden and Spain can be distinguished further, as Sweden is a country that mostly imports groceries, such as fresh vegetables and fruits, and Spain is one of the biggest exporters of such products (FAO, 2011; Pérez-Mesa et al. 2012). Finally, this may also imply that customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain are dissimilar. Customer loyalty refers to customers who feel commitment to repurchase at a preferred store, or re-buying a service or product (Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999).

1.2 Problem Discussion

The importance of customer loyalty for grocery stores has been a topic on the research field since as early as the 1960s (Mägi, 1999; Amanor-Boadu, 2009). Customer loyalty is of great interest, since its favorable business outcomes, such as increases in long-term profitability, customer retention and business growth (Reichheld, 1996; Hur et al. 2010; Mende et al. 2013; Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999). Further, in the area of strategic management, attracting customers has become increasingly important for many organizations. New customers have become more and more difficult to find (Grönroos, 2007), and the market options has increased (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). It is therefore even more important for a company to keep its existing customers. Keeping existing customers may have positive impact on profitability where it is difficult to find new customers, or to replace the ones that have been lost (Grönroos, 2007). Consequently, attracting customers may not be enough, customer loyalty have more favorable outcomes for an organization (Reichheld, 1996; Grönroos, 2007). As such, regarding rural grocery stores, the factors that influence customer loyalty are of significant concern and may be a key strategy for the survival and success of rural grocery stores.
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As mentioned in the Background, it is important to retain the rural grocery stores for a living countryside (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012; Amcoff et al. 2011; Paddison & Calderwood, 2007) as today the rural grocery stores are struggling to remain (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012). Last decade have demonstrated a decrease of grocery stores in rural areas (Amcoff et al. 2011) and the main effect of this problem is the lack of customers (Amcoff et al. 2011; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010). The major factor causing this problem is the great competition from the bigger stores and supermarkets (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010). These kind of stores have the advantage of economies of scale (Paddison & Calderwood, 2007; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010) and because of that, they are commonly offering lower prices, special offers and a large range of products (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010; Scarpello et al. 2009). Moreover, rural grocery stores have become a supplement for customer’s larger purchases, as customers choose to purchase more often in bigger stores (Scarpello et al. 2009). Consequently, the rural grocery stores are struggling as they have fewer customers, who are shopping less and less often, and spending smaller and smaller amounts on purchases per visit (Kim & Stoel, 2010; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012). It is hard for the small rural grocery stores to compete with the supermarkets, if not impossible (Kim & Stoel, 2010). However, supermarkets have been associated with a loss of community spirit (Scarpello et al. 2009).

Furthermore, many of the rural grocery stores in the countryside live today on the minimum limit, and it is hard for them to run a profitable business, even with support from the government (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012). For example, the Swedish government wants to preserve and develop the rural grocery stores and their services, as they are clearly important for a living countryside (ibid). Further, they support the rural grocery stores via public funds and grants to mention a few, which are an unsustainable solution (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012). In the end, the future will be depending on if the stores can make a turnover or not (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012; Amcoff et al. 2011). Therefore, it is important not only for rural retailers but also for the entire rural community to understand the factors that attract shoppers back into the rural market to purchase in their closest grocery store (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012; Paddison & Calderwood 2007). It has been argued that change must happen within those stores in order to become more attractive to customers living in rural areas (Narula & Garg, 2011; Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2010). Since, the small stores have difficulties when competing on
price with the big stores and supermarkets. They must instead have a customer focus and
attract clients with proximity, high service and high quality levels (Provincial Government in
Kronoberg, 2010). Several researches have noted that understanding what customers find
valuable is important for delivering the value creation of store offerings (Sánchez-Fernández

Regarding past research of rural grocery stores, a variety of them noted the importance of
understanding the specific needs and wants of the village people in order to understand what
would make them choose the store (Paddison & Calderwood, 2007; Amcoff et al. 2011;
Broadbrige & Calderwood, 2002). The review of the literature reveals that there are several
factors that influence the creation of customer loyalty. Satisfaction (Oliver, 1999; Paddison &
Calderwood 2007), quality (Cheng et al. 2008 as cited by Agrawal et al. 2012), emotions
(Nyer, 1991; Yu & Dean as cited by Agrawal et al. 2012), store image (Bonis et al. 2007;
Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998 as cited by Agrawal et al. 2012), commitment (Hur & Kang,
2012; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012), value (Hassan, 2012; Holbrook, 2006), trust (Kasper et al. 2006;
Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002), are amongst the most cited factors that are considered to play a
crucial role in determining customer loyalty (Agrawal et al. 2012).

Nonetheless, some of the factors have been more investigated than others since they have
been a part of the theory longer, such as satisfaction (Oliver, 1980; Oliver, 1999; Westbrook
& Oliver, 1991) and value (Oliver, 1997; Holbrook, 2006; Mägi, 1999; Lin et al. 2005). Other
concepts, such as trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Kasper et al. 2006) and commitment (Kasper
et al. 2006; Hur & Kang, 2012; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012), have been investigated significantly
less, partly because they have contributed to the theory of customer loyalty later. All the
concepts mentioned above are related to a conceptual model of customer loyalty created by
Agrawal et al. (2012) who gave further recommendations of testing it in their literature
review. Thus, there is a need for testing this model since it has never been tested before, and
as it could contribute to the theory regarding customer loyalty.

The literature review shows that much of the empirical research that refers to the survival of
rural grocery stores have been carried out in USA, Great Britain, Scotland, Sweden and
Australia, whereas the amount of studies focusing on Spain is significantly less. In Spain it is
known that rural areas are in danger and it can be read in the news frequently (e.g. Ferro &
Queralt, 2013). Moreover, there has been studies explaining the change grocery stores and
rural grocery stores have experienced (Maixé-Altés, 2009). Further, little research was found referring to the survival of the rural grocery stores or the determiners of customer loyalty in rural areas of Spain. There exist a greater amount of Swedish studies concerning customer loyalty and grocery stores (Mägi, 1999; Martenson, 2007). Although, significantly less research were found regarding the determiners of customer loyalty in rural grocery stores. Moreover, it seems to be a research gap and a need for further research in the area of customer loyalty in rural grocery stores (Provincial Government in Kronoberg, 2012).

Much research exists about how the situation over the last decades has changed for the grocery stores on the countryside in different countries (e.g. Amanor-Boadu, 2009; Amcoff et al. 2011; Broadbrige & Calderwood, 2002; Karlsson, 2012; Mägi, 1999). We are today living in an increasingly competitive global market. Therefore, there is a greater need for understanding the differences in consumers shopping behavior in different countries (Hsu & Burns, 2012). Although, comparable studies of different countries regarding customer loyalty and rural grocery stores are perceived as very few, and there seem to be a research gap in the area. This also applies to the factors that determine customer loyalty with a comparison of Sweden and Spain.

Since, culture and living conditions influence food shopping habits, the customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain may be different as well, and this is leading to the area of interest. Sweden and Spain are two countries within Europe, but the customer loyalty can be much different, and one country can take inspiration and knowledge from the other to become better (Turrini et al. 2010). The findings may also be used for developing resources better in order to meet the needs of the people living in the rural areas (Turrini et al. 2010). This may therefore be of concern for both countries as well as be useful information for the survival of rural grocery stores.

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Swedish and Spanish customers.

1.4 Delimitations
The delimitation for this research is focusing on the four factors value, satisfaction, trust, commitment and how these influences and determine customer loyalty. This research is
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delimited by using an adapted customer loyalty model by Agrawal et al. 2012. Moreover, the research is focusing on two countries, Sweden and Spain, since the purpose is to make a comparison. Furthermore, the research is delimited to implement the investigation in four rural grocery stores, two in each country.
1.5 Outline of Thesis

This research consists of seven chapters in total, using the following structure:

1. Chapter one introduces the reader to the topic of the thesis concerning rural grocery stores. Further, it provides a problem discussion leading to the research purpose.

2. Chapter two presents a literature review addressing factors influencing customer loyalty. Moreover, the chapter also delimitate which factors are chosen for the research and gives an explanation of it.

3. Chapter three presents the proposed research model as well as the research questions and the hypotheses used to meet the purpose of this investigation.

4. Chapter four presents and justifies the chosen methodology for the research of quantitative character and decided strategy for the survey.

5. Chapter five presents the collected data from the survey result.

6. Chapter six provides an analysis of the results of the empirical investigation presented in chapter five and the theoretical framework.

7. Chapter seven presents the conclusion of the thesis, where the purpose and research questions of the thesis are being answered. Further, this chapter also provides theoretical and managerial implications, and finally suggestions for future research.
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2 Literature Review

The previous chapter discussed the problems rural grocery stores in general are facing and how customer loyalty may be a key factor for the survival of these stores. This chapter presents a review of the existing literature referring to customer loyalty. It gives a deeper knowledge of the concepts that influence customer loyalty, as well as their definitions, dimensions and how to measure these conceptualizations. Further, the chapter does also explain how these concepts influence each other. Finally, gives the chapter an overview of different existing studies by a variety of researchers and the chosen model of customer loyalty.

2.1 Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty has been of great managerial interest, since its favorable business outcomes, such as increases in long-term profitability, customer retention and growth (Reichheld, 1996; Hur et al. 2010; Mende et al. 2013; Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999). The area of customer loyalty has received significant amount of attention (Mende et al. 2013; Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999), and the concern of how to enhance customer loyalty even more (Mägi, 1999). Hence, its importance is far from new. Authors appear to agree by defining loyalty as a repeat purchasing of same-brand or store, and a commitment held by a customer to re-buy a preferred product or service (Hur et al. 2010; Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999).

New customers have become more and more difficult to find, it is therefore increasingly important for a company to keep its existing customers (Grönroos, 2007). Keeping existing customers may have positive impact on profitability where it is difficult or expensive to find new customers, or to replace the profitability ones that have been lost (Hur et al. 2010; Grönroos, 2007; Mägi, 1999). For many businesses does the customer become profitable first after a period of time and it is more expensive to gain new customers than serving existing customers (Hur et al. 2010; Grönroos, 2007). It is also assumed that the spending amount of the loyal customers increases (Mägi, 1999). Furthermore, studies have found loyal customer to be less price sensitive and needing less assistance because of their knowledge, which is efficient when it comes to company resources (Agrawal et al. 2012). Loyal customers does as well tend to speak good about the company (e.g. spread positive word of mouth) which is perceived to be a more reliable source of information, and thereby contribute to attracting new customers (Mägi, 1999; Agrawal et al. 2012). These factors suggest that it is more profitable to understand the needs of the existing customers than to acquire new ones (Mägi, 1999).
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Building customer loyalty is difficult (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). For a customer to become and remain loyal, he or she needs to believe that the products or services the organization offers are the best alternative for he or her (Oliver, 1999; Dhevika & Subramani, 2005). Consequently, if customers perceive that they can get better quality, higher value or greater service from another organization, there are rather few reasons for the customer to stay (Grönroos, 2007). For most people it is hard to find a place that they truly like and to whom they want to keep on going to. Consequently, many companies invest a lot of money and effort to build customer loyalty (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Although, according to Mägi (1999), even loyal customers that in general are more satisfied, or highly satisfied with a store, do not use it for the main part of their purchases. This suggests that there may be other drivers to customer loyalty than satisfaction (Mägi, 1999). This is strengthened by Oliver (1999), who agreed that satisfaction not necessarily translate into loyalty.

Researchers have found that there are several determiners that influence customer to become loyal (Agrawal et al. 2012; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002; Grönroos, 2007; Kasper et al. 2006). Additionally, customer loyalty may emerge when a customer feels something special and valuable in the contact with a store (Grönroos, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Mende et al. 2013). Some of the most important determiners of customer loyalty are perceived as trust (Agrawal et al. 2012; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002), commitment (Agrawal et al. 2012), value (Kasper et al. 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002) and satisfaction (Oliver, 1980; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Dixon et al. 2005).

2.1.1 Dimensions of Customer Loyalty

Since the concept of customer loyalty not only has many different definitions available, it has as well been lacking in concurrence among authors over the years. Therefore the approaches and methods to measure loyalty is significantly different too (Agrawal et al. 2012).

In order to measure loyalty, many variables could be used, such as frequency of purchase, propensity of brand switching or positive word-of-mouth (Agrawal et al. 2012). Although some of the measures appears to be more effective than others such as word-of-mouth (Baloglu, 2002; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Word-of-mouth is defined as recommendations about a company or a product by positive comments (Agrawal et al. 2012; Baloglu, 2002). Additionally, word-of-mouth is one of the most effective items for loyalty behavior (Reichheld, 2006 as cited by Hur et al. 2010).
Further, there is a certain agreement confirming that loyalty should be considered a multidimensional construct, which means that most definitions include both behavioral and attitudinal components. Jacoby & Chestnut (1978) contributed with a number of measures asserted to capture loyalty. They distinguished between three groups of measurement: attitudinal, behavioral and composite measure. Most measures used, fall into one of these three categories but studies on customer loyalty seem mainly to be conducted from either or both a behavioral and/or a attitudinal perspective (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml, 2000, cited in Wu et al. 2012).

The attitudinal refers to psychological factors meaning the consumers attitudes and possibility of purchase (Hur et al. 2010). Commitment and trust are two factors that highly influence loyalty and can be measured through customer loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Based on the previous definition of loyalty, commitment or attachment by a customer to an organization or product is a key factor to create loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Grönroos, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Mende et al. 2013). As cited in Randall et al. (2011), more recent research have attempted to link trust, commitment, and future intention (e.g. Jaworski & Kohli, 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This two concepts combine together to create the attitudinal variable of loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). From an attitudinal perspective, customer loyalty has been viewed as a specific desire to continue a relationship with a service provider (Czepiel & Gilmore, 1987, cited in Wu et al. 2012).

Based on Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) the behavioral dimension for measuring customer loyalty is related with the behavior of the customer toward the organization or a product (Baloglu, 2002; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The behavioral view defines loyalty in terms of repeated purchasing (Hur et al. 2010; Neal, 1999, cited in Wu et al. 2012). This behavioral variable can be measured by proportion of purchase, sequence of purchase and probability of purchase to mention some (Mägi, 1999; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Proportion of purchase measures are basically measures of the share of purchases devoted to a specific brand or store in comparison to overall use, or the spending, in the category (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978).

2.2 Customer perceived value

The concept value and its significance are well known (Lin et al. 2005). It has been reconsidered and refined by academicians and practitioners the last decades, but there seem
somehow to be a lack of coherence among researchers in the field (Gallarza et al. 2011; Lin et al. 2005). The concept value has in the marketing literature been discussed in different terms, such as perceived value, customer perceived value, judgment value, consumer value and or shopping value (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). Because of the many various approaches and lack of consistency, is the marketing literature offering not an agreed but various definitions, measurements, and conceptualization of the concept (Gallarza et al. 2011; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). As the concept is being perceived as underdeveloped, it clearly is a need for further research into the field of customer value (Hu et al. 2009; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009).

Further, as cited in Gallarza et al. (2011), Kotler (1972) defined value, as a process of exchange when each party gives up something of value for something of greater value in return. As cited in Oliver & Rust (1994), Holbrook (1994) later drew the conclusion that everyone is better off after the exchange than before it. On this logic, companies who improve the perceived value of products or services contribute to the society by increasing the standard of living (Gallarza et al. 2011). One of the most dominant researchers within the field, define customer value as an interaction between an object and a subject. For example a product and a consumer, which he means is related to three senses (Holbrook, 2006). These three are: comparative (among objects), personal (varying from one individual to another) and situational (depending on the situation in which this evaluation occurs). Hence, customer value is subjective preferences based on an individual comparison in a specific situation (Holbrook, 2006; Gallarza et al. 2011; Chang & Dibb, 2012; Smith, 1996). Additionally, a customer’s idea of “how to shop” is also affecting their purchase behavior (Mägi, 1999) and reflects their values (Prentice, 1987). For example, customer differ in household characteristics, income, working hours, attitude to shopping, food budget, time, etc., which determines the consumers buying behavior as well as their loyalty for stores (Mägi, 1999). Values are also influenced by cultural, societal and personal experiences, which affect and lead individual’s attitudes and behaviors in their life. For example, individuals living within a particular society often share values and act in accordance with these shared standards or beliefs. (Chang & Dibb, 2012)

Furthermore, the products and services that consumers purchase are outcomes of the buying process, during which individuals estimate the costs and benefits of acquiring the products and services (Chang & Dibb, 2012). As value judgments made in the buying process
influence customer purchase decisions, value is of concern (Chang & Dibb, 2012; Agrawal et al. 2012). Hence, the concept of value is truly fundamental for understanding customer behavior and organizational management (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009; Gallarza et al. 2011). Customer value has been used as a critical tool for analysis to understand customer’s intentions and selections, both before and after a purchase, and to know how to develop long-term relationships with the customers (Gallarza et al. 2011; Grönroos, 2007).

Consequently, more and more organizations think of customer value as a key factor in their strategic management to achieve and maintain sustainable market development and competitive advantage (Woodruff 1997; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009; Holbrook, 2006; Hu et al. 2009; Gallarza et al. 2011). Services and products can attract customers only when knowing how value is achieved (Peck et al. 1999 cited in Gallarza et al. 2011) and the organizations resources or capabilities needs therefore to meet the customer’s needs and be of value for them (Johnson et al. 2011). Further, Māgi, (1999) explain that the only way organizations can retain customer loyalty is by delivering constant high value creation. Finally, the value provided by an organization is linked to their success (Dhevi & Subramani, 2005; Hassan, 2012).

2.2.1 Customer perceived value influences satisfaction and loyalty

As mentioned, customer perceived value is relevant for the understanding of customer loyalty behavior and it is most often linked to positively influence customer satisfaction (Gallarza et al. 2011). According to Oliver (1996), value and satisfaction are determiners of each other even though they are a fully individualistic judgment by a person. Customer perceived values are strongly correlated with price, quality, sacrifice, satisfaction and personal values (Chang & Dibb, 2012; Oliver, 1996). A positive value judgment by a customer is found to result in higher purchase behavior as well as higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty (Agrawal et al. 2012). By that it is mean that something found to be valuable for a person does not necessarily mean that is as valuable for another person. Finally, positive perceived value is connected with customer loyalty since it makes a customer spread positive word of mouth and repurchase (Hassan, 2012).

2.2.2 Dimensions of Value

An overview of the existing literature shows that there are two main approaches to the conceptualization of value (Gallarza et al. 2011; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). The first
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approach perceives consumer value as a one-dimensional construct and can be measured by consumers’ cognitive and utilitarian perceptions of value (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). This means, that value is based on “get-versus-give”, in other words value is interpreted as the customer’s overall assessment on the perception of what is received and what was given (Zeithaml, 1988; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). This approach has been used among many marketers for decades (Gallarza et al. 2011).

The second approach is a broader perspective that defines consumer value as a multidimensional construct consisting of several coherent attributes or dimensions that form the complex phenomenon (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). Most studies consider the nature of value as multidimensional (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009; Holbrook, 1999). However, while suggesting innumerable ways of understanding consumer value as a multidimensional phenomenon, the literature offers no exact number of the relevant dimensions involved (Gallarza et al. 2011).

Holbrook has presented a number of different value dimensions involved. His typology is consisting of: efficiency (output/input, convenience), excellence (quality), status (success, impression management), esteem (reputation, materialism, possessions), play (fun), aesthetics (beauty), ethics (virtue, justice, morality), and spirituality (faith, ecstasy, rapture, sacredness, magic). Many others have been influenced and inspired by Holbrook’s typology and because it captures diverse aspects of customers experiences, both cognitive and affective (Smith, 1996; Oliver, 1996; Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). Holbrook’s construct, concerning the multidimensional, provides a scope for deeper understanding of the benefits sought by customers (Smith 1996; Gallarza et al. 2011) and captures more potential sources of value than other conceptualizations (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009). However, it is not suggest that researchers or managers should embrace the entire framework (Smith, 1996). Namely, many researchers have chosen not to examine all dimensions of the typology and the different values that have been proposed (Chang & Dibb, 2012; Oliver, 1997; Oliver, 1996). Sánchez-Fernández et al. (2009) has proposed an interesting exploratory consumer value model that represents an adaption of Holbrook’s proposal in 1999 consists of, efficiency, quality, social value, play, aesthetics and altruistic value.

To conclude this section, Sánchez-Fernández et al. (2009) explains efficiency as the get-versus-give aspects of consumption. Efficiency is often measured by comparing what the
CHAPTER TWO

customer gets in an exchange relationship (including goods, services, supplier–customer relationships, and so on) with what he or she gives for the purchase (money, time, effort, and so on). Another major example of efficiency involves convenience, which is viewed as a key input and reflects the time and access. (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009) The category excellence is explained as an appreciation of object’s or experiences potential ability to accomplish some goal, or to perform some function, and it is similar to the category quality (Holbrook, 1999). This category includes the quality that is inferred from objects such as goods, services, relationships and establishment (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009).

2.3 Consumer Satisfaction

Since the 1970s many researchers have been interested in the topic of customer satisfaction (Cronin et al. 2000). One of the most dominant researchers in the area of customer satisfactions is Richard Oliver (Oliver, 1980; Oliver, 1996; Oliver, 1999; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991), who highly influenced the work of many other researchers (e.g. Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Cronin et al. 2000). The concept of satisfaction has been defined over the years in different ways. According to Giese and Cote, (2000) consumer satisfaction definition has either emphasized the fact that is an evaluation processes (e.g., Fornell 1992; Hunt 1977; Oliver 1981 cited by Giese & Cote, 2000) or a response to an evaluation process (e.g., Halstead, Hartman, and Schmidt 1994; Howard and Sheth 1969; Oliver 1997, 1981; Tse and Wilton 1988; Westbrook and Reilly 1983 cited by Giese & Cote, 2000). It is then clear that most of the definitions have been defining customer satisfaction as a response to an evaluation process.

Furthermore, satisfaction based on Westbrook & Oliver (1991) is the pleasures after a consumption experience combine together with an evaluation confirming that the experience was at least as good as assumed before it (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). With consumption Oliver, (1999) means that this one fulfills some want need or desire and that this fulfillment has been pleasant. In addition, satisfaction is defined by and Fornell (1992), cited in Tsao & Hsieh (2012), as the evaluation of the perceived performance between the actual performance and prior expectations. Consumers evaluate service performance by comparing what they expected with what they perceive they receive from a particular supplier (Oliver, 1996). This means that consumers have a predicted service level in mind prior to the consumptions. This predicted level is typically decisive in the search and choice process before consumers decide to purchase a particular service or product. During and after the purchase the customer is
comparing it with his or her predicted service levels. This comparison is defined as the judgments of their satisfaction (Grönroos, 2007; Oliver, 1980; Oliver, 1996; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). The outcome of the judgment can be positive disconfirmation if it was better than expected, or negative disconfirmation if it was worse and simple confirmation if it was as expected (Grönroos, 2007). When the experience does not meet customer’s expectations, they may complain, suffer in silence, or switch to another supplier in the future (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Satisfaction is recognized for influencing attitudes for future purchase intentions, so the agreement here is that dissatisfaction of a purchase will in general decrease intentions to repurchase (Oliver, 1980; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Finally, successful independent retailers consider customer satisfaction a key factor for differentiation and also a powerful defense tool against competitors (Johnson et al. 2008).

2.3.1 Customer satisfaction influence trust and loyalty
Customer satisfaction has been found to positively determine customer trust and customer commitment which are two key determinants of customers' loyalty (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Agrawal et al. 2012; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). Garbarino & Johnson (1999) presented in their research that without satisfaction, trust cannot be achieved. Moreover, according to Singh and Sirdeshmukh, (2000) who are cited in Tsao & Hsieh (2012), customer’s satisfaction after purchase, has a direct impact on his or hers evaluations of trust. Referring the influence of customer satisfaction to customer loyalty, earlier researchers assume that satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases, remain loyal to a supplier, and spread positive word of mouth (Agrawal et al. 2012; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; Oliver 1999). Additionally, in order to achieve loyalty, a business has to understand the satisfaction of customer’s needs (Oliver 1999; Paddison & Calderwood 2007; Amcoff et al. 2011). Finally, although researches have shown that satisfaction does not necessarily lead to more loyalty, highly satisfied customers have been proved to stay with a firm (Agrawal et al. 2012; Oliver 1997).

2.3.2 Dimensions of satisfaction
As mention above, satisfaction is believed to be a potential influence on consumer behavior intentions (As cited in Randall et al. 2011 e.g. Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994; Szymanski & Henard, 2001; Zeithaml et al. 1996). Consequently, has the concept of satisfaction been received much attention in the literature (Oliver 1997; Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Oliver & Rust 1994;
CHAPTER TWO

Randall et al. 2011). Although, given the lack of a clear definition for satisfaction, its measurement and dimensions have been summated to different models over the years (Cronin et al. 2000; Giese & Cote, 2000).

Since Oliver (1997) has been a reference for investigating customer satisfaction, his model to measure satisfaction has been also interesting for other researchers (Cronin et al. 2000; Lin et al. 2005). Satisfaction is the evaluation of the perceived performance between the actual performance and prior expectations (Randall et al. 2011). By that, Oliver (1997) stated that satisfaction within a product or a service is perceived as being an evaluative response as well as an emotional response. Evaluative response is defined as a cognitive response that evaluates the process of performance. For example, if a customer evaluates his or her choice of purchasing at a particular store (Cronin et al. 2000). Besides, emotional consumption is based on a set of emotional responses, which appear during the process of product or service performance (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). For example, if a customer feels angry when purchasing at a particular store (Cronin et al. 2000). Cited in Randall et al. 2011, Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) argue that satisfaction is best measured as a single dimension reflecting the attitudinal aspects. According to Tsao & Hsieh (2012) customer satisfaction is subjective and emotional judgment that the customer experience during or after the experience.

2.4 Trust

Morgan and Hunt (1994) conceptualize trust as a state when one party has confidence in an exchange partner. Further, trust has over the years been defined as when one party relies on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence and relies on (Dwyer et al. 1987; Kasper et al. 2006; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). According to Randall et al. (2011) trust relates the customer’s confidence that the company or store reliably provide service in a manner that is fair, competent, honest, responsible, helpful, and benevolent. Furthermore, where there is trust, the parties also value the relationship, and they continue to make commitments in order to make it grow (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Duhan and Sandvik (2009) cited in Tsao & Hsieh (2012), explain that the higher degree of confidence a customer feels, the more efforts is a customer willing to make.

Trust can focus either on the individual or the organization (Ganesan & Hess, 1995) even though the definition is valid for both of them (Ganesan & Hess, 1995; Garbarino & Johnson 1999). Garbarino & Johnson (1999) suggested that in order to understand trust the concepts of
CHAPTER TWO

confidence and reliability were of high significance. Further, Kasper et al. (2006) added the assumption of trust as the core of any relationship, which implies diverse expectations and obligations from two parts, such as a customer and an organization. Grönroos (2007) went further and annexed that if a party does not behave as the other party expected, the trust can become damaged, leaving the customer with a more negative experience than expected.

2.4.1 Trust influence commitment and loyalty

Trust has been found connected with satisfaction and commitment (Agrawal et al. 2012). Consequently, it has been identified that in order to deliver trust an organization needs to perform through satisfying and communicating well with its customers (Grayson et al. 2008). According to Tsao & Hsieh (2012) and Morgan & Hunt (1994) customer trust is shown to have a significant and positive impact on customer commitment. Trust has as well been found to be an important determiner for loyalty, as it is consider to be a key factor for building long-term relationships between customers and firms (Agrawal et al. 2012; Kasper et al. 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002).

2.4.2 Dimensions of trust

Regarding dimensions affecting trust, researchers have found to differ between many different levels that may conceptualize trust. It all depends on who are the parties investigated or analyzed (Ganesan & Hess, 1995). Firstly, the approach for analyzing trust needs to be decided (Ganesan & Hess, 1995; Garbarino & Johnson 1999). Trust can be analyzed via individuals that are called interpersonal trust (e.g. salesperson) or be investigated via organizations, which are called organizational trust (e.g. brand) (Ganesan & Hess, 1995).

Moreover, in order to measure trust a number of dimensions need to be measured. As cited in Randall et al. (2011) studies have demonstrated trust as an independent construct separate from commitment, whereas others have posit trust as a multidimensional construct (e.g. Liang & Wang, 2008; Palmatier et al. 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002). Trust is considered to be a multidimensional construct, which dimensions appear to be credibility and benevolence (Rempel et al. 1985 as cited by Ganesan & Hess, 1995; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Ganesan, 1994 as cited by Ba & Pavlou, 2002) Credibility is based on the ability to keep words and promises with a partner in order to lower the levels of inexpediency. It can be for example when delivering a good service to a customer, telling him that the product or service is reliable (Ganesan & Hess, 1995). In other words, credibility is the belief that the partner you
are trusting in is honest, reliable and competent (Ba & Pavlou, 2002). Benevolence instead, is related to when a partner demonstrates concern and care by the other partner and it is manifested by sacrifices (Ganesan & Hess, 1995; Ba & Pavlou, 2002). An example of it could be when there are no limits to how far an organization goes in order to solve a service or product problem that the customer may have, even if it is harmful for the organization itself (Ganesan & Hess, 1995).

2.5 Commitment

Over the years the concept of commitment has been described as an enduring desire to maintain a relationship which provides some functional or emotional benefits (Hur et al. 2010; Dwyer et al. 1987; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), and also as an absence of competing offerings (Gundlach et al., 1995 as cited in Wu et al. 2012). As cited by Agrawal et al. (2012), Bloemer & Kasper (1995) and Kiesler (1971) defined commitment as the intellectual anchored and positive attachment to behavioral acts, which is conditional for distinguishing true loyalty from spurious loyalty. According to Hur & Kang (2012) individuals can stay committed of different reasons: because they want to be, because they feel they ought to be, and because they feel they have to be. Commitment refers to pride in belonging, concern for the long-term success, and a desire for customers to participate as friends of the organization (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This conceptualization follows that commitment infers an enduring desire and willingness to maintain a relationship (Randall et al. 2011).

Commitment can be a source to a company competitive advantage because it can offer enhanced profits, positive word-of-mouth, and lower costs and provide sales at a premium price. Therefore, it is greatly important that a company understands what benefits are likely to induce such commitment and what it means for the customers (Hur et al. 2010). Morgan and Hunt (1994) cited in Wu et al. (2012) argue that the commitment that is formed during the consumption process is a key determiner of the customer’s loyalty. A relationship commitment is explained as the customer’s psychological attachment to the products or services of a company and it is discussed to enhance customer loyalty (e.g. Gilliland & Bello, 2002; Full- Ertan, 2003; Gilliland & Bello, 2002; Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005, as cited in Wu et al. (2012). Whereas, relationship marketing emphasizes the importance of establishing, developing, and maintaining customer’s relationship commitment to companies (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).
2.5.1 Commitment influence customer loyalty

It has been argued that commitment is an important factor that may lead to loyalty behavior (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Hur & Kang, 2012). Consequently, studies have demonstrated difference between commitment and loyalty and how increased relationship benefits may lead to increased customer commitment, which in turn enhance loyalty (Agrawal et al. 2012). Hur & Kang (2012) explain that is the combination of particular components of customer commitment that influence customer loyalty behavior. Researchers have treated customer commitment as a mediating variable, since it influence future intentions (Tsao & Hsieh, 2012). If commitment increases it may lead to an increment of customer’s intentions to make their voice hear, such as complaining, which is a common indicator of customer loyalty (Agrawal et al. 2012). As cited by Agrawal et al. (2012), Bloemer & Kasper (1995) also agreed that true loyalty implies commitment towards something or someone and not just a repurchase intention. Consequently this commitment translates into the desire to repurchase a brand while ignoring other alternatives available (Agrawal et al. 2012). Wu et al. (2012) and Hur et al. (2010) discuss the different factors needed in order to create customer loyalty, highlighting that commitment contribute to this creation.

2.5.2 Dimensions of commitment

According to Allen & John (1990) affective attachment is one of the most prevalent determiners for commitment. This affective or emotional attachment or commitment towards an organization or a product can be express for example by joining a membership within an organization (Allen & John 1990). Another approach described by Johnson et al. (2008) who investigated the Community attachment as part of commitment, came up with the measurement of commitment by asking about community support. For example, if the interviewed cared about the fate of the stores of his community or not.

According to Wu et al. (2012) and because of the various definitions suggest that it is a multidimensional construct. Marketing researchers suggests various types of commitment were two stands out to be the mainly discussed: affective commitment and calculative commitment (Hur et al. 2010; and as cited in Wu et al. 2012, e.g. Gustafsson et al. 2005; Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber, 2006; Ruyter, Moorman, & Lemmink, 2001). Calculative commitment is a more rational and economically based dependency on product benefits because of the lack of other choices, or of high switching costs (Hur et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2012). In contrast, commitment has also been defined and operationalized as affective
commitment and as one-dimensional (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Patterson & Sharma, 2000, as cited in Hur et al. 2010).

Affective commitment is a more positive emotional factor that develops through the reciprocity or personal involvement that a customer has with a company, which results in a higher levels of trust and commitment (Hur et al. 2010; as cited in Wu et al. 2012; Fullerton, 2003, Gustafsson et al. 2005). When customers come to like or, in some cases even love a brand or a service provider, they are showing affective commitment (As cited in Wu et al. 2012, Fullerton, 2003). Earlier studies have demonstrated that affective commitment positively influences customer loyalty, in other words, the higher customer affective commitment is, the higher loyalty they have (Wu et al. 2012). Affective commitment can result in strong trusting relationships based on personal involvement and reciprocity (Hur et al. 2010). Furthermore, as cited in Wu et al. (2012), Fullerton, (2003) have found that higher customers affective commitment results in lower switching intentions and that customers are willing to pay more (Hur et al. 2010; Wu et al. 2012). Hence, customers with high affective commitment are less likely to switch to other similar providers or competitors (Hur et al. 2010).

The measure of affective commitment refers to the pleasure of being a customer of the company, the feelings of trust towards the company, and whether the company takes care of the customers. Both calculative commitment and affective commitment create a condition that keeps customers loyal to a store, product or service (As cited in Wu et al. 2012, Gustafsson et al., 2005). For companies who wish to improve customer loyalty, the customer’s affective commitments effectively transform into loyalty and provide positive implications (Wu et al. 2012). Finally, a study made by Hur et al. (2010) showed that affective commitment has the strongest impact on all types of loyalty.

2.6 Conceptual model of customer loyalty

There exist a great amount of conceptual models of customer loyalty. The majority of them are influenced by the one made by Richard Oliver in the 1980s (Oliver, 1980; Agrawal et al. 2012; Oliver, 1997; Mägi, 1999; Mende et al. 2013). The chosen model made by Agrawal et al. (2012) is not only influenced by Richard Oliver but also it is based on a literature review from many other influencing authors. The model proposes a set of determiners of customer loyalty which is highly connected with the purpose of this research. Moreover, it is important
to mention that Agrawal et al. (2012) only presented the conceptual model and as a consequence they suggested that it needed to be tested in future investigations.

Figure 1 shows the model by Agrawal et al. (2012), which contains of seven factors that positively influence each other and determine customer loyalty. These are: image, perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction, emotions, trust, commitment and customer loyalty.

**Figure 1.** The conceptual model of customer loyalty by Agrawal et al. (2012).
3 Research Model, Research Questions and Hypotheses

When it comes to customer loyalty, the literature review in previous chapter showed that there are some factors critical to the success of customer loyalty. Four factors were chosen to be most important for aim of this research and in need for further investigation. In this chapter a proposed research model and research questions serving as the basis for such an investigation are presented.

3.1 Proposed Research Model

Since, the purpose of this research was to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores. A simplified conceptual model of customer loyalty was adapted from Agrawal et al. (2012) since this one was found to be the most suitable to reach the aim of the study. When mentioning that it was an adapted model, it means that some of the concepts in the original model have been combined for the purpose of the study. Since the literature showed that perceived quality can be measured through perceived value this was included within the concept of customer perceived value (Sánchez-Fernández et al. 2009; Holbrook, 1999). Referring to image, not all the stores were working consciously with corporate (store) image, which is related with how the store-brand is perceived (Martenson, 2007). Further, as cited in Agrawal et al. (2012), Andreassen & Lindestad (1998) describe corporate image as the outcome of the compiled attitude from experience and/or direct or indirect market communication. Consequently, as not all of the stores were working with conscious marketing communication to their customers the measurement of image as a concept was not possible. Finally regarding emotions, it is important to highlight that when trying to measure satisfaction, many authors agreed that questions about emotions have also to be included (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Therefore, the authors decided to include emotions within the measurement of satisfaction.

Having produced some changes (see figure 2), the adapted model focused on the concepts of customer perceived value, satisfaction, trust, commitment and loyalty. Moreover, in order to meet the purpose of the thesis and based on the literature review, all the concepts were positioned as positive determiners of customer loyalty. In other words, how customer loyalty is influenced by the customers perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment. The ground for modifying the model lies on the fact that the concepts in Agrawal et al. (2012)
model should have measured the correlation between the concepts and only providing commitment as a determiner of customer loyalty.

Figure 2. An adapted conceptual model of customer loyalty by Agrawal et al. (2012).

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

As the aim of this study was to explain the determiners of customer loyalty and to make a comparison of Sweden and Spain, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed for the aim of this thesis.

Research Questions

R1. What determines customer loyalty for rural grocery stores in the context of Sweden and Spain?
R2. How is customer loyalty different in Sweden and Spain?

Hypotheses

H1. Customer perceived value has positive impacts on customer loyalty.
H2. Customer satisfaction has positive impacts on customer loyalty.
H3. Trust has positive impacts on customer loyalty.
H4. Commitment has positive impacts on customer loyalty.
H5. There is a difference in customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores between Sweden and Spain.
CHAPTER FOUR

4 Methodology

The earlier chapters discussed the critical factors to the success of customer loyalty and presented the research model based on these as well as this thesis research questions and hypotheses. This chapter argues and explains the chosen approaches and methodology for this thesis. Firstly, it provides a discussion of the different approaches, inductive and deductive, and why this research is using deductive approach. Further, it as well explain why a quantitative research approaches was most appropriate for this research. Finally, the chapter describes the used method for the collection of data following with a presentation of description of data analysis.

4.1 Research approach

The research approach adopted for a study will contain important assumptions about the way the world is seen. These assumptions will affect the research study and also its methodology (Saunders et al. 2009). There are different kinds of approaches that can be adopted, such as realism, pragmatism or positivism (Gray, 2009).

Positivism approach is commonly used in the social science. Its properties can be measured through observation, which can later be generalized (Gray, 2009). Positivism can accommodate elements of both deductive and inductive approaches. Choosing of one or another approach will make a sharp separation between theory and research. In the positivist approach, the researchers role is to try theories that provide materials and collect data by which can base generalize claims that later can be tried. Positivism means therefore, that the connection between theory and practical research data collection is impossible to be done without being affected by existing theories (Bryman & Bell, 2005). As cited in Gibbert et al. (2008), Campbell and Stanley (1963) and Campbell (1975), in the positivist approach there are four criteria existing, which are commonly used to assess rigor. Internal validity, construct validity, external validity and reliability, which will be explained at the end of the chapter. As this research belongs to the social science and aims to test a model, which is based on theories, positivism was the approach used of this study.

4.1.1 Inductive vs. deductive research

Essentially, there are two different approaches in research methodology, inductive and deductive. An inductive approach is when the data collection is the foundation to draw
conclusions and developing new theoretical frameworks. (Bryman & Bell, 2005) A deductive approach does the opposite, which means that already existing theories in the area leads to formulated hypotheses that later will be tested through empirical scrutiny (Gray, 2009). As the deductive theory explains the connection between theory and research it represent the most common approach (Bryman & Bell, 2005).

Since the purpose of this research as well as research questions and hypotheses were formulated based on the literature review, it will steer the empirical collection process and give it a deductive character. Additionally, this research aimed to fill the existing research gap and test a conceptual model of customer loyalty adapted from Agrawal et al. (2012) since it has not been tested before.

4.1.2 Quantitative vs. Qualitative research

Qualitative and quantitative are the two different research approaches to choose between (Bryman & Bell, 2005). It is possible to distinguish between a qualitative and quantitative research based on their approaches, where the qualitative data consists of words and images, and quantitative data focuses on numbers (Christensen, 2010). The consequence of this distinction is that a qualitative data is seen as something to interpret and to create a deeper understanding of the social reality (Greneer, 2008). Qualitative data gathering is often done verbally by interactions with people, groups or organizations through interviews and observations (Gray, 2009). A study of a quantitative character registers figures and focuses on the amount, numbers and frequency of quantifiable things, which can be analyzed instrumentally and statistically (Christensen, 2010). Quantitative research is more structured and used to generalize results of the investigation (Greneer, 2008). The main emphasis of quantitative research is to detect, identify and measure the relationship between variables, or differences by testing theories (Christensen, 2010; Greneer, 2008). Quantitative research is favorable when there is already a lot of theories that can be used as well as developed and improved further (Christensen, 2010). Quantitative data is often collected in forms of surveys, interviews or from archives (Eriksson & Widersheim-Paul, 2011).
Table 1. Differences between quantitative and qualitative approach, adapted from Greeneer (2008, pp. 80).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point of view</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvedness</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of theory</td>
<td>Researcher distant</td>
<td>Researcher close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Theory testing</td>
<td>Theory emergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of structure</td>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Un-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data reliability</td>
<td>Generalization</td>
<td>Contextual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of research</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this study aimed to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain. Because of the use of a comparison, this research aimed to collect as many answers as possible. Consequently, quantitative research was the most suitable. In addition, the main emphasis was to detect, identify and measure the determiners of customer loyalty to be able to explain them. Therefore, a quantitative research was also favorable.

### 4.2 Research design

A research design is a framework or plan for the collection of data that fits for the specific research (Bryman & Bell, 2005). In other words, a research design is a structure that should guide the researcher in the process of collecting, measurement and analysis of obtained data (Gray, 2009). The main purpose of a research design is to bring the researcher from here to there and to make sure that the empirical data are related to the research questions (Yin, 2002). There are three basic types of research design: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Brown & Suter, 2011).

**Exploratory**

Exploratory research design is conducted to give insights and a better understanding of an existing situation (Gray, 2009). These researches are normally carried out at early stages of a project to clarify the research problem and to produce hypotheses (Brown & Suter, 2011). This research design is particularly useful when the existing knowledge in an area is limited. Some more popular methods of exploratory researches are performed by search of literature,
collecting information by speaking to field-experts, or conducting focus group interviews (Gray, 2009).

**Descriptive**

A descriptive research design is useful when focus lays on finding fact about a subject of interest with concern to important variables (Brown & Suter, 2011). It is a common way to describe characteristics, opinions and behaviors of certain groups (Gray, 2009). It is also useful to determine differences and or how things are related to each other. The disadvantage of a descriptive research is that it cannot explain why something has occurred. The main emphasis of a descriptive study is to gain an overall picture of a phenomenon as it naturally is occurs. (Gray, 2009) Descriptive research design can answer the what, who, where, why and how research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2005). However, for the descriptive data to become useful, the researchers need to have clearly specified research questions and hypotheses to guide the process (Brown & Suter, 2011).

**Explanatory**

An explanatory research design sets out the study to explain and account for the descriptive information. So, while descriptive studies may ask "what" kinds of questions, explanatory studies seek to ask "why" and "how" questions (Gray, 2009). This framework also examine on how one variable determine the value of another variable (Brown & Suter, 2011). Some studies can therefore be correlative in nature, with the emphasis on discovering causal relationships between variables (Gray, 2009). Explanatory design is commonly used when there is a need for stronger evidence. By testing hypotheses knowledge can be obtained about if a particular action can produce a particular outcome (McMurray, 2010).

Since explanatory research design gives a study a explaining character, it was the most appropriate for this study. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain. Further, this research adapted a model that has never been used to test it, which needed hypotheses in order to test and validate them. Consequently, this research was clearly explanatory. Finally, the purpose of study was as well to make a comparison of Sweden and Spain, which exclusively made it a multi cross-sectional study.
4.3 Data sources

The data collection can stem from either existing or induced data. Already available data is being called secondary data. Secondary data is data that have been collected for another purpose than the current research. This data may consist of external information in the public and commercial databases or internal information within organizations (Christensen, 2010). Furthermore, secondary data can be classified as raw data, which means that processing has been little or inexistence, and compiled data, which has received a process of summarizing (Saunders et al. 2009). Such data may become harder to apply because of the nature of its creation and a researcher should evaluate the documents well before use (Gray, 2009). However, researchers usually need more or other type of information than the existing data and therefore needs to induce new data (Christensen, 2010). Induced data is also being called primary data, and it is collected and created by the researcher specifically for the actual research with the purpose to answer the research questions (Saunders et al. 2009).

Secondary data was also used in order to build up knowledge and a deeper understanding surrounding the purpose of the research. Although, there was a need of inducing new data in order to meet the thesis purpose. For the quantitative nature of this research, primary data was collected and used as a main source.

4.4 Research strategy

There are five research strategies; experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. The researcher needs to consider and choose an appropriate strategy that shall lead the researcher in the process of collecting relevant data and allowing to answering the research questions (Yin, 2009).

In order to make the decision correctly, there are some properties to consider. Yin (2009) presents three main conditions that can help to evaluate the most appropriate strategy for a study. These conditions by Yin (2002, pp. 8) are: 1) Type of research question 2) Requires control over behavioral events 3) Focuses on contemporary events. These three conditions are related to the five research strategies in the table 2.
Table 2. Relevant situations for different research strategies, adapted from Yin (2002, pp. 19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Forms of Research Question</th>
<th>Requires Control of Behavioral Event?</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</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>

The table allows the researcher to determine whether one strategy is more suitable than the others. (Yin, 2002) For example, when the research question consists of who, what, where, how many and how much, is in no need for control of behavior events and does focus on contemporary events, one suitable strategy are surveys.

A survey is one of today’s most popular methodologies. Surveys can be described as a system for collecting information with purpose to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. They may also look for associations between variables and attitudes and behaviors. One reason for its popularity is allowing of collecting significant amounts of data from a greater population. Most surveys are conducted using questionnaire and these can be either analytical or descriptive. Because of the systematic nature, in the heart of surveys lies an importance of standardization. (Gray, 2009) Analytical surveys place an emphasis on reliability of data and statistical control of variables, sample size, etc. It is hoped that the rigor of these controls will allow for the generalization of results (Gray 2009). Moreover, survey strategy is also perceived as easy to explain and understand while being authoritative by people in general, which might have to do with the statistics used for presenting the data (Saunders et al. 2009).
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Since the aim of this research was to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain. Survey, archival analysis and case studies were the three strategy options for this research. But since there was also a need of knowing about peoples beliefs and report their behavior, made survey the most matching strategy for this research. Furthermore, the available time scale may also determine the choice (Gray, 2009). Since this research was of short-term, consequently, this research will have to collect the data at only one point in time, which also makes surveys the most appropriate choice.

4.5 Data collection method

There is large variety of methods to use for collecting data. The most common data collection methods seem to be questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups and secondary data (archival material) (Bryman & Bell, 2005; Yin, 2007; Gray, 2009). The choice of method will influence the survey design, sampling, data collection techniques and analysis, and consequently the end result of the research. It is therefore important to use a data collection method that is appropriate for the research problem and its purpose (Christensen, 2010).

Questionnaires are the most used instrument for quantitative survey strategies (Saunders et al. 2009). In general terms, a questionnaire is a data collection technique in which different people are asked several question in a particular order. The questionnaire instrument provides help while identifying and describing variability in different phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2005; Saunders et al. 2009). Questionnaires tend to be the first choice when working with a survey strategy because it provides the most effective way to collect data from a large sample (Saunders et al. 2009). The main issue when choosing method has to do with accuracy as it has been argued that there are complications because of not having the option to go back and collect the data again (Bryman & Bell, 2005; Saunders et al. 2009; Diaz de Rada, 2005).

Questionnaires are often use in quantitative approach and explanatory research (Saunders et al. 2009) therefore were questionnaire the used instrument. The main reason was because of the purpose of the study. In addition, questionnaires seemed to be a strong option, since many authors have used them for similar research earlier, e.g. Mohd (2012) and Ben-Bassat et al. (2006).
4.6 Data collection instrument

4.6.1 Operationalization and measurement of variables

Operationalization means to carry out the concepts and their definitions from the theory and break them down into easy understandable words that are possible to measure (Eliasson, 2010; Saunders et al. 2009). Hence, to operationalize is about making the concepts possible to measure and to create questions that the respondents will be able to understand (Eliasson, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2005). By making the concepts measurable, they become possible to investigate, which is needed in a quantitative study as they turn into focus when conducting a questionnaire (Saunders et al. 2009; Eliasson, 2010). It is important that the concepts that are operationalized are the most relevant for the thesis and its purpose. Further, it is also important that the concepts are defined as clearly as possible and being consistent with the theory from where the concepts are collected (Eliasson, 2010).

Saunders et al. (2009) explain that to create questions that are measuring the concepts investigated is very inadvisable. On the other hand the use of adapted questions from earlier studies measuring the particular concepts is highly commendable (Saunders et al. 2009). The questionnaire questions were created specifically for the aim of this study, its research questions and hypotheses. Developing these items were to a large extent inspired by earlier studies, mainly those by Mägi (1999), Lin et al. (2005), Baloglu (2002), Cronin et al (2000), and Hess (1995), which in turn was inspired by earlier researchers. The operationalized concepts are shown in table 3.
## Table 3. Operationalization customer loyalty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>A measure that reflects the concept of value in the context of local grocery stores (Keller, 1993). Value is a commonly used measure of customer satisfaction (Oliver, 1997; Cronin et al., 2000).</td>
<td>Efficiency: The quality of the food served is good (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009). Excellence: The prices are good considering what you receive from the restaurant (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009). Efficiency: The food is good (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfaction is not only the pleasure after a consumption experience but also an affection for something of greater value in return. Satisfaction is higher when people give up something of lesser value in return for a purchase if the conclusion everyone is better after the exchange than before it. (Westbrook &amp; Oliver, 1987). In addition, satisfaction is later defined as the difference between the actual performance and the perceived performance of the exchange.</td>
<td>Emotional response: When purchasing products from this grocery store I feel positively surprised (Cronin et al., 2000). Emotional response: When purchasing products from this grocery store I sometimes feel angry (Cronin et al., 2000). Emotional response: Promises made by this resource are reliable (Hess, 1995).Credibility: Promises made by this resource's representative are reliable (Hess, 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Trust, has a good sense of goods (Mag, 1999).</td>
<td>Emotional: The friendliness of the staff in this casino makes me feel good (Baloglu, 2002). Emotional: The friendliness of the staff this casino makes me feel good (Baloglu, 2002). Emotional: You think you did the right thing to purchase at the site (Lin, 2005). Emotional: This website is visited in one's extra time for enjoyment (Shin, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Commitment as an enduring desire to continue an attachment or relationship (Morgan &amp; Hunt, 1994).</td>
<td>Support: I care about the fate of the small retailers in my town (Johnson et al., 2008). Support: I try to support the small grocers in my town (Johnson et al., 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Loyalty</td>
<td>Loyalty is defined as repeat purchasing of the same brand or store and a commitment held by a customer to rebuy a preferred product or service. (Mag, 1999; Oliver, 1999)</td>
<td>Attitudinal: Consider X YZ your first choice to buy ____ service (Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999). Attitudinal: You would say positive things about this website to other people (Lin et al., 2005). Attitudinal: You think you did the right thing to purchase at the site (Lin, 2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Operationalization

#### Value

- **Excellence:** The quality of the food served is good (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009).
- **Efficiency:** The prices are good considering what you receive from the restaurant (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009).
- **Efficiency:** The food is good (Sánchez-Fernández et al., 2009).

#### Satisfaction

- **Emotional response:** When purchasing products from this grocery store I feel positively surprised (Cronin et al., 2000).
- **Emotional response:** When purchasing products from this grocery store I sometimes feel angry (Cronin et al., 2000).
- **Emotional response:** Promises made by this resource are reliable (Hess, 1995).
- **Credibility:** Promises made by this resource's representative are reliable (Hess, 1995).

#### Trust

- **Emotional:** The friendliness of the staff in this casino makes me feel good (Baloglu, 2002).
- **Emotional:** The friendliness of the staff this casino makes me feel good (Baloglu, 2002).
- **Emotional:** You think you did the right thing to purchase at the site (Lin, 2005).
- **Emotional:** This website is visited in one’s extra time for enjoyment (Shin, 2006).

#### Commitment

- **Support:** I care about the fate of the small retailers in my town (Johnson et al., 2008).
- **Support:** I try to support the small grocers in my town (Johnson et al., 2008).

#### Customer Loyalty

- **Attitudinal:** Consider X YZ your first choice to buy ____ service (Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999).
- **Attitudinal:** You would say positive things about this website to other people (Lin et al., 2005).
- **Attitudinal:** You think you did the right thing to purchase at the site (Lin, 2005).
- **Attitudinal:** You think you did the right thing to purchase at the site (Lin, 2005).
4.6.2 Questionnaire design

Letter of intent

According to Bryman and Bell (2005) it is important to have a cover letter as an introduction for the questionnaire. Both questionnaire versions included the same information. First, it explained the purpose of the study, who the authors were, how long time it would take to fulfill, that it was anonymous and had contact details. It was also important to annotate to them that they had the opportunity to do it either in the store or online.

Structure

When designing the questionnaire there are several strategies available for the order of the questions. This survey used a standardized questionnaire, meaning that the question stands in a certain order and that the questions were formulated in the same way for all respondents. Further, the questions mainly consisted of structured response alternatives. This is mostly used when wanting all the respondents to perceive and answer each question in the same way. It does also mean that the questionnaire is easier to analyses (Christensen, 2010). It was important to only request questions that were relevant for the aim of the research, which made the questionnaire shorter and faster to answer (Christensen, 2010). To make sure that the respondents could understand how to answer the questions, a short explanation concerning how to answer the question was given to each part of the questionnaire.

According to Malhotra (2010) and McMurray (2010) the questions in a questionnaire can be built up in three different ways; open-ended, close-ended and partially closed-ended. Open-ended is when the question does not provide any answer alternatives, but instead leaves it opened for the respondent to answer what he or she wants. Close-ended questions are when the respondent is given answering alternatives to a question, for example when asked for gender and next to it there is two boxes, one for male and one for female. This is easier to analyze due to that the possible answers is controlled in forehand (Malhotra, 2010; McMurray, 2010). The disadvantage with close-ended questions is that the answer choices do not cover the respondent’s opinions (Christensen, 2010). Partially closed-ended question is a combination of the two above. One example can that after the question it is two checkboxes followed by a line where the respondent can leave their comment as well (Malhotra, 2010).

Referring the structure of the questionnaire, firstly to ensure that the respondent was of the target population, was a control question the first question in the questionnaire. It was a
simple question with four checkboxes, where the respondent could choose one four stores of the research. If the respondent was not familiar with the store, the questionnaire was ended. Further, the first part contained of three close-ended questions. The second part of the questionnaire uses a five-point scale, which mainly measure the majority of the concepts. Further, the last part of the questionnaire had the intention of gaining a deeper understanding about what the customers purchase at the stores and what they would like their store to have that it is missing today. These questions were partially closed-ended. The information from the final part of the questionnaire was also meant to be given to the provincial government of Kronoberg in Sweden and the owners of the stores. Lastly, the ending of the questionnaire were open-ended with a blank box, for the respondent to write what he or she wanted.

**Likert scale**

It is important to not have too many response options. The literature recommends three to seven alternatives if the opponent is indicating the degree of something (Christensen, 2010). This study used a scale of one to five that will say a five scale or five alternatives, which is also more common for measuring a pattern in the responses of the respondents. There are several different types of scales and depending on the scale there are different answer alternatives. The most common scales are nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scale. This questionnaire consisted of nominal, interval and ratio scale. A nominal scale represents readings classes or properties in which the object under examination should be placed, for example, a residential area. Interval Scale is the most common one and it can calculate both the means and standard deviations as dispersion measures, since the distances between the various scale values are equal. A ratio scale is an interval scales with a natural zero point. This enables one to measure the number of purchases and the amount. (Christensen, 2010; Gray, 2009)

**Conduction**

As cited in Grey (2009), Saunders et al. (2009) explain that the design of the survey questionnaire will depend on the administration of it, that is, whether it will be self-administered, or interviewer-administered. For this research a visit questionnaire of a self-administered design was used as the main method. The visit questionnaire, also being called face-to-face interviews (Gray, 2009) can be assigned to one or more respondents at one time (Christensen, 2010). The response rate at visit surveys is very high, up to 90 and 100 percent are not uncommon. The main advantage of visits surveys is that the interviewer gets personal
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contact with the respondents, which also give the advantage of that the respondents can ask questions if anything is unclear (Christensen, 2010).

Furthermore, to increase the response rate of the survey and make it more available to possible respondents the questionnaire also was distributed online in both countries. Online questionnaires or other survey conducted electronically have increased significantly in recent years (Christensen, 2010; Grey, 2009). The advantages of online questionnaire are many, it has fast speed, are of low costs and it is convenient, to mention some (Christensen, 2010). The processing of the data may also have advantages in that the investigator does not have to input and process the answers by him or her.

4.6.3 The Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to test the importance of the factors that influence customer loyalty. As well as measuring customer loyalty within the context of Sweden and Spain by doing a comparison. The main part of the questionnaire concerns customer’s evaluations regarding their rural grocery store. The other part in the questionnaire is general questions about their grocery shopping behavior. (See appendix 1 for the English version of the questionnaire).

4.6.4 Pre-testing

Pre-testing means a testing of the sampling frame, survey questions and tools for data collection. It is done since questionnaires sometimes need changes before the final version is reached to make sure that it is understandable and measuring what it suppose to (Christensen, 2010; Gray, 2009). This can be achieved by allowing relevant persons test the questionnaire and discuss it overall and question the validity (Gray, 2009).

Firstly, the questionnaire was tested by the author’s tutor who gave the approval. Once the approval was given, the authors had to translate the questionnaires to both languages (Swedish and Catalan) and pre-test it before data collection procedure. This one was pre-tested by responders who were representing the target population from both countries in order to ensure that the questions were easy to understand. After receiving the feedback from the pre-test respondents, the questionnaires were modify in its final version and printed.
4.6.5 Data collection procedure

After the pre-test and the final changes, the questionnaires were introduced online as a website and printed. The online version could be fulfilled by respondents through an easy link that was introduced in different social medias. Namely, different Facebook pages where potential responders were members such as the page of the store ICA-Nära in Ryssby and peoples house of Skruv. Further, the questionnaire link was also printed on small paper flyers, which also contained a short explanation of the research, and these were given to the customers in the stores. The printed questionnaire version had as well the online link to increase the answers and to give the respondents the opportunity to answer online. The printed questionnaires were handed out to the customers by the authors when visiting the rural stores. To increase the amount of answers the authors gave one part of the questionnaires to people working in the villages and being customers to the store. For that, the authors went to several shops around the towns and also manufactures and companies. Finally, another amount of questionnaires were left them in the grocery stores for customers to participate even when the authors were not in the store.

4.7 Sampling

There are two different ways a survey can collect and analyze data. These are census or sampling (Gray, 2009; Saunders et al. 2009). A sample is a smaller piece of a whole target population (Gray, 2009). Before making a primary data collection there may be a need for deciding who the target population is, and which respondents in that population to investigate, i.e., the sample (Christensen et al. 2010). The sample selection has to be done based on the research problem and purpose of the study (Christensen et al. 2010). A good sample is a small representative selection of the population as whole, which will appear just like it, only smaller (Flink, 2002 cited in Gray, 2009). When a survey is collecting and analysis data from the whole target population, the survey is being called census (Saunders et al. 2009). This is commonly used for authorities that have time and resources to develop it (Gray, 2009; Saunders et al. 2009). On the other hand, sampling makes possible to have more time for each respondent and also gain more detailed information (Christensen et al. 2010; Saunders et al. 2009). Moreover, sampling techniques makes it possible to limit the investigation by collecting data from a smaller group of the target population (Saunders et al. 2009).

There are two different types of sampling techniques, random probability sampling and non-random sampling (Christensen et al. 2010; Saunders et al. 2009). Random profitability
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sampling means a selection of a random sample whereby each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Gray, 2009; Christensen et al. 2010; Saunders et al 2009). Clearly, this can be of practical difficulties, due to constraints of time and resources. Sometimes, when not having access to a complete list of the population to randomly select the sample, i.e. respondents, the only option is to do a non-random sample. A non-random sampling means that the chance that respondents will be selected cannot be predicted, and that they are not chosen randomly (Christensen et al. 2010). There are several different non-random sampling approaches, one of them is quota sampling. Quota sampling implies when a researcher non-randomly selects subjects from the identified strata until the planned number is reached. An advantage of quota sampling is that each group is of equal size which can be important for inferential statistical tests. (Gray, 2009)

As mentioned, choosing a sample of the whole target population is not only less time and cost consuming, it also give the opportunity for more detailed answers. This research was therefore using a sample survey. It chose a smaller piece of the whole population of the rural village, namely, the target population, to make more general conclusions of the whole target population. Further, because of the limitations of not having access to a complete list of the entire populations e-mail addresses or phone numbers, a sample were the most suitable approach for this study.

Consequently, this study was using a non-random sampling approach as the sample did not have an equal chance to be a responder for this study. Further, because the purpose of this study was to make a comparison of Sweden and Spain, and for being a multi-cross sectional survey it was using a quota sampling approach. Accordingly, this study was using quota sampling as it has the advantage of that each group is of equal size which can be important for statistical tests and analysis. Since the purpose of this study also was to make a comparison between Sweden and Spain, there was a need to decide the size of answers of each country. For a comparable study it is most efficient if the two groups are of equal sample sizes (CSTAR, 2010). The size for each country is as based on what other researchers have come up with, which was mostly of equal size when comparing two independent groups (RNOH. NHS; Radiology, 2003). Finally, the sample size for each country was of equal size since it was perceived as most efficient for the study.
4.7.1 Sampling Frame

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the sampling frame is a complete and final list of all the cases in a population. Therefore it needs to be ensuring that this sampling frame is as complete and accurate as possible. The way the sampling frame is defined has implications regarding the extent of generalization in the sample (Saunders et al. 2009; Gray, 2009). The sampling strategy should include details on the size of the sample, the composition of the sample and how the sample actually is chosen (Gray, 2009). The sampling frame should provide the researcher with detailed information of the entire population, which often makes the sample itself smaller than the sampling frame. This is on account of that it is not possible to use the whole record (Gray, 2009).

The sample for this survey is based on some general factors concerning the rural area. The rural area must contain a rural grocery store, which has to lie not more far than 20 km to a supermarket and with a population about 800 inhabitants. The authors considered supermarket as a retail which offers groceries and non-food products and has a dimension of 2500 m² or more (OECD, 2007). To be able to investigate the factors determining customer loyalty for rural grocery stores, it is clearly that people who live in the rural areas were the target population for this survey. There were no restrictions of gender or income, only that they were actual inhabitants of the villages and that were familiar with the store. Further, children were not asked to participate in the investigation.

Since research aimed to explain what determines customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain, one village of each country had to be picked out. Those two places, Ryssby and Carme, fulfilled the restrictions of inhabitants and distance. Ryssby is a village in Sweden, having 707 inhabitants (NE, 2013) and located 17 km from the nearest supermarket. Carme is a Village in Spain with 866 inhabitants (Idescat, 2012) and located 12 km from the nearest supermarket. In order to get the population size the mean was calculated based on the inhabitants of the villages of both countries. The population size was calculated to be 785.

\[
\frac{707+866}{2} = 785
\]

Furthermore, one more village was added for Sweden since this research was in cooperation with the Swedish provincial government in Kronoberg. The cooperation was developed because the Provincial government in Kronoberg is highly concerned about finding new ideas.
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of how to develop and maintain the grocery stores on the countryside in Kronobergs province. Moreover, this research aimed to make a comparison between Sweden and Spain. Consequently, another village for Spain was added as well. Finally a total of four villages, two for each country were used to develop this investigation.

The two additional villages were Skruv and Sant Martí de Tous, which fulfilled the previous restrictions. For Sweden, the village Skruv had a number of inhabitants of 490 (NE, 2013) and was located more than 15 km to the nearest supermarket. For Spain, the village Sant Martí de Tous had a number of 1173 inhabitants (Idescat, 2012) and was located more than 10 km from the nearest supermarket.

4.7.2 Sample selection and data collection procedure

After the sampling frame have been established, it is necessary to decide the amount of responders needed (Christensen, 2010; Gray, 2009). The first stage when deciding what sample size to use is to determine the actual size of the sample needed. In order to do so, the size of the confidence interval needs to be decided. This is a range of figures between which the population parameter is expected to lie. One must also decide the confidence level, which is usually either of 95 percent or 99 percent. (Gray, 2009) In order to get the sample size, a statistical formula is presented by Malhotra (2011), which was used to generate the statistically wanted sample for the empirical investigation.

Figure 3. Calculation of Sample Size, formula from Malhotra (2011).

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

- \( n \) = Sample size
- \( N \) = Population size
- \( Z \) = Number of standard errors (1.96 for 95% confidence level)
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By the formula using a population size (N) of 785, a number of standard error (Z) of 1.96, the sample size (n) of total desired number of responders was calculated to be 258. At last, the desired size of each country were therefore 129.

4.8 Data analysis method

Depending on the data analysis method used, the gathering of data differs and it has to be the appropriate to make a certain data analysis method possible. It is of importance to retrieve the right variables in order to make a certain analysis method. (Bryman & Bell, 2005) One of the essential features of quantitative analysis is that the process of selecting statistical tests should take place at the planning stage of the research, not at implementation stage. The reason is that is easy to end up with data that is no meaningful statistical test (Gray, 2009) At the stage of coding, each question is given an unique name and has unique characteristics depending on the measurement (Bryman & Bell, 2005). Moreover, each survey is given a unique identity number in order to be reachable at any time if necessary. These are then entered into a data record that includes all the responses from one respondent. Before starting the data analysis the data has to be cleaned, that means that it has to be checked for errors. (Gray, 2009)

Handling missing data

According to Little & Rubin, 2002 as cited in Zhang & Wang (2013), the issue of missing data is a challenge for any statistical analysis and the issue is hardly avoidable even with a well-designed study. The missing data can either reduce the efficiency of statistical inference or render it incorrect. Several strategies have been developed to deal with missing data (Pallant, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2013).

The three most commonly strategies are, a list wise deletion is when an entire case is excluded from analysis if any single value is missing, which means that only the cases with full data will be used in the analysis of data (Pallant, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2013). These can critically, and unnecessarily, limit the sample size (Pallant, 2011; Gray, 2009). Another one is a pair wise deletion, which means that when data is missing from one or both variables of a subject are excluded as well as the case of the covariance between the two variables (Pallant, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2013). The questionnaire will still be included in the analysis of data with fulfilled questions. Pallant (2011), suggest using pairwise exclusion of the missing data, unless you have a reason to do otherwise. Finally, the third option is multiple imputations, which replaces the missing data with plausible values, meaning the mean value, and analyzes
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it as complete data (Pallant, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2013; Gray, 2009). However, this option can distort the result if there is a lot of missing values (Pallant, 2011) and particularly for single item questions (Gray, 2009). For this study it has been decided that the mean will be used when handling missing data, since this study was conducting a smaller amount of data from each country.

4.8.1 Measurements

When analyzing data, it is important to understand how to interpret the statistical variables and its numbers (Gupta, 2000). Following, a brief explanation of the statistical variables used when analyzing the survey results.

R Square explains the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the variation in the independent variable (Pallant, 2011; Gupta, 2000). The maximum R Square can get is 1 and the minimum 0. A value of 0 would represent that there is no correlation between the variables measured (Pallant, 2011).

Significance or p-value presents whether the tested variables are making a significant unique contribution to the equation. This highly depends on the included variables and how much superposition there is among the independent variables. Consequently, if the Sig value is less than 0.5 it can be said that the variable is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable (Pallant, 2011). Furthermore, the Sig level is said to be connected with the Beta value, for example, if Sig is less than 0.05 it is assumed that this one has asserted Beta as true in 95% (Gupta, 2000).

According to Gupta (2000), Beta provides information effect of the individual variable on the dependent variable. Beta is usually used when comparing the contribution of each independent variable. Moreover, it could be said that the variable with the largest Beta coefficient would make the strongest unique contribution to explain the dependent variable (Pallant, 2011).

4.8.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics helps to compare and describe variables numerically. This one shows a clear summary of the sample and its measures (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). Descriptive
statistics include measurements of dispersion, central tendency or others, which can be shown via statistics tables, histograms to mention a few (Saunders et al. 2009; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). According to Saunders et al. (2009) there exist two main uses of descriptive statistics, which are called central tendency and dispersion. Central tendency is commonly measured in three ways, median, mode and mean. The median shows the middle value, the mode displays the most frequently value and the mean that sometimes can be affected if there is too much missing information (Saunders et al. 2009).

4.8.3 Correlation analysis
Correlation analysis is used to know whether a change in one variable is followed by a change in another one (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). On the other hand regression variable is used to know whether a change in a dependent variable has been caused by the change of an independent variable. In order to illustrate this relationship there needs to be a dependent variable and one or more independent. (Sanders et al. 2009) Correlation analysis can be between -1.00 and 1.00. If the correlation is close to zero the variable will become unrelated (Greener, 2008). It is important to mention that if the correlation between the variables is too high the variables can become indistinguishable (Saunders et al. 2009). Moreover, according to Bryman & Bell (2011) the p-value needs to be 0.05 in business research field in order to become accepted.

4.8.4 Regression analysis
According to Pallant (2011), regression analysis can be used when exploring the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This is related to correlation but allows a more detailed explanation of the relationship among a set of variables. Moreover, regression can be used to address a variety of research questions and also to know how well a set of variables is able to predict a particular outcome. (Pallant, 2011)

4.8.5 Independent Sample T-Test
An independent-samples t-test is a tool that helps to compare the means between two groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. Alternatively, it could be used to discover differences between groups (Laerd statistics, 2012). When running an independent t-test it is important to understand what the values mean. It is important to have a look at the Sig. value. This one, can be either higher than 0.05 or lower. If the value is greater than 0.05 it means that the variability in the conditions is about the same. On the other hand if Sig is lower or
equal than 0.05, IT will mean that the variability in the conditions is different. Additionally, Sig (2-Tailed) value also needs to be taken into consideration. This one will tell if the conditions Means are statistically different. If Sig (2-Tailed) value is greater than 0.05 it can be conclude that there is no statistical significance between the conditions (Maths-Statistics-Tutor.com, 2010).

**4.9 Quality Criteria**

Yin (2009) stated that quality in a research needs to be measured through validity and reliability. In order to ensure validity, the chosen research instrument needs to measure what it was intended to measure (Gray, 2009). In order to ascertain about it, Gray (2009) listed a list where is possible to find at least seven types of measures for validity such as internal, external, content, construct, criterion, predictive and statistical validity.

**4.9.1 Content validity**

According to Gray (2009) content validity is associated with how accurate a measurement reflects the concept in a question. This is because it is of high importance to create a match between what is taught with what is tested. A way of testing content validity might contemplate subjective evaluations generally made by experts (Bryman & Bell, 2005). For the current study content validity was achieved by performing a first pretest with the tutor of the authors who helped to discard ambiguous questions and who gave the approval of sending the questionnaire out since the questions were measuring the concepts used in this study. Moreover, a second pretest was performed with possible responders from both countries who gave their honest opinion about the formulation of the questions.

**4.9.2 Construct validity**

Construct validity refers to the quality of the conceptualization or operationalization of the relevant concepts (Gibbert et al. 2008). Construct validity is also referring if a study investigates what it claims to investigate, that means, that the course of action leads to a correct observation of the investigated reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, cited in Gibbert et al. 2008). It is therefore important to consider construct validity during the data-gathering phase (Gibbert et al. 2008). Construct validity has been achieved in this study by measuring a correlation test. A strong positive correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable is an indicator of the validity of this study as hypotheses are based in established theories.
4.9.3 Criterion validity

Criterion validity refers to when comparing how people have answered new measure of a concept, with existing accepted measures of a concept. If the new answers and measures are highly correlated, then the new measure is usually accepted to possess criterion validity (Gray, 2009). However, low correlation means that the old measures have become invalid. Furthermore, many concepts can be hard to measure as there may not be well-established measures to use for testing the new measure. (Gray, 2009) Regarding the concepts of this research, a great amount and well established measures did exist for testing the new measures. Moreover, as this thesis intended to measure the concepts that influence customer loyalty for rural grocery stores in a context Sweden and Spain, the questions used were built on existing measures of these concepts.

4.9.4 Reliability

According to Gray (2009) reliability is an indicator of consistency between two equal measures. Reliability aims to let other researchers reply a same study in another period of time (Yin, 2008). As a consequence, if a research wants to be reliable it needs to give the same results in the current moment of investigation and in the past (Gray, 2009).

Bryman and Bell (2005) and Saunders et al. (2009) mentioned that the Cronbach alpha is one of the most common ways to measure reliability. This one calculates an average of all the possible reliability coefficients which term is called split-half and has a number, which goes between 0 and 1 (Bryman & Bell, 2005). According to Gray (2009) reliability is never perfect. Further, according to Hur et al. (2010) and Bland & Altman (1997) Cronbach alpha should be greater than 0.7 for all the constructs to confirm that the items measured the constructs in a reliable way. As a consequence If Cronbach alpha appears to be between 0.6 and 0.7 it is said that is questionable and if it is lower than 0.6 then it becomes invalid (Bland & Altman, 1997).

Saunders et al. (2009) explain that adapting questions from previous studies is another option when trying to increase reliability. It is because the previous studies already got acceptance from other researchers and also because it is more efficient than developing new questions. Finally, other researchers recommend using at least three questions per concept in order to increase reliability. (Saunders et al. 2009)
5 Survey Results

The previous chapter discussed and explained the chosen methodology for this research. It also described the used method for data gathering and a description of the data analysis. This chapter presents the data survey results with explanations and use of tables.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Response examination

The total amount of 227 responses were collected, although, only 219 of them were valid because of too much missing data. For the total amount of 219 questionnaires, 118 were collected in Sweden and 101 were accumulated in Spain. For Sweden the specific amount of answers were 63 for Skruv and 55 for Ryssby. Whereas, for Spain, 60 responses were for Sant Martí de Tous and 41 were collected for Carme. Further, since this was a comparative study, there was a need for an equal sample size from each country. Consequently, because the answers were not of equal size from the both countries, 17 questionnaires from Sweden had to be randomly excluded. Finally, a total amount of 202 questionnaires was used for the survey analysis.

Frequency of purchase

Referring to the questions regarding the frequency of the consumers grocery purchasing, most responders do grocery purchasing three times per week, in both Sweden and Spain. The Swedish consumers usually purchase groceries three times per week (26.7%), or more than four (17.8%). The Spanish consumers do as well usually purchase three times per week (28.7%) or unlike the Swedish consumers one time per week (21.8%). Further, the results showed that the percent of how many of these purchases are done in their village grocery store was less in the both countries. However, the findings presented that the Spanish customer’s purchases significantly less in their village store than the Swedish. See table 4 and 5.
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Table 4. Frequency of purchasing – Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of purchase</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than one</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Frequency of purchasing – Spain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of purchase</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than one</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the question concerning the share customers usually purchases in their village store, see table 6 and 7. The results showed that the respondents mainly use their closest grocery store for a minor part of their grocery purchasing, both for Sweden (31.7%) and for Spain (42.6%). This indicates that the rural grocery stores usually are used a supplement to
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the customer’s main purchases in other stores. On the other hand, there were respondents who uses their closest grocery store for all their purchases in both Sweden (25.7%) and Spain (29.7%). Finally, the results showed that the Swedish customer’s purchase slightly more often and more in their closest grocery store.

Table 6. Share of grocery purchases – Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How large share of the grocery purchasing do you usually make in your village store per week?</th>
<th>Frequency of purchase</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase all my groceries from this store</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase a large part of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase about half of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase a minor part of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Amount of grocery purchases – Spain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How large share of the grocery purchasing do you usually make in your village store per week?</th>
<th>Frequency of purchase</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase all my groceries from this store</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase a large part of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase about half of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually purchase a minor part of my groceries from this store</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average of response rate

The descriptive statistics compares and describes variables numerically in order to create a picture of the average value of each concept. Namely, it represents the average of what the respondents were answering of their evaluations. In order to measure the concepts, this research used a five-point scale. Moreover, the number one was called “strongly disagree” and number five called “strongly agree”. The table 8 and 9 shows a clear summary of the sample and its measures.

The results of the respondents shows that the average value of customer perceived value was 3.79, which is very similar to the Spanish which was 3.74. For satisfaction the Swedish average value was 3.71, which was a little higher than the Spanish with 3.25. The average value of trust was very similar of the both countries, 3.86 for Sweden and 3.85 for Spain. For commitment, the average value was a little bit higher for Sweden with 3.67 than Spain with 3.41. As well as the average value of customer value that was 3.87 for Sweden and 3.47 for Spain. Finally, according to the results, the average value of the concepts for both Sweden and Spain was very similar. See table 8 and 9.
Table 8. Concept Correlation, Descriptive Statistics and Reliability for Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Customer perceived value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trust</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Commitment</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>0.862</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Customer loyalty</td>
<td>0.924</td>
<td>0.974</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**
### Table 9: Concept Correlation, Descriptive Statistics and Reliability for Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Cronbach α</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Customer perceived value</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trust</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.698</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Commitment</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Customer loyalty</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
5.2 Quality Criteria

Reliability and Validity

The quality criterion in a research is measured through reliability and validity (Yin, 2008). Regarding the methodology chapter, Cronbach alpha test was done with the intention to assess the reliability and validity of all the variables. Table 8 and 9 were created in order to display Cronbach alpha for each variable in both countries.

As a result, all the items included in the model showed to measure the constructs with an appropriate level of reliability and validity for Sweden. The lowest level for Sweden was found in satisfaction ($0.765\,\alpha$) meaning that all the items had and Alpha above 0.7 which consequently made them reliable. On the contrary, when measuring the constructs for Spain two items in the model, trust ($0.698\,\alpha$) and commitment ($0.63\,\alpha$), were showing an only accepted level of reliability and validity. According to Bland and Altman (1997) if alpha is between 0.6 and 0.7 it is said that the reliability is just accepted and even the concept could be questionable. Overall, Alpha showed that all the items regarding both countries were accepted.

Moreover, for the concept trust, the authors decided to remove question number 18 (see Appendix 1) since this one was decreased reliability, particularly for Spain. This question was “This rural grocery store is interested in more than just selling me goods and making a profit”. The reason for the low reliability can have been because the respondents did not understand the question.

Additionally, for the concept customer loyalty, the questions 2, 3 and 27 measuring loyalty behavior (see Appendix 1) were discarded when measuring reliability. The reason to do so was the differences in scale measurement. Questions 2 and 3 were added in SPSS as a 0 to 5 point scale, whereas, question 27 was added in SPSS as a 0 to 3 point scale. Conclusively the authors run a reliability test for customer loyalty with the rest of the items (questions 24, 25 and 26) and as a result got that the concept customer loyalty was reliable with an Alpha of 0.924 for Sweden and 0.865 for Spain. Although, these discarded questions were still used but with another purpose since they were interesting for the study.
5.3 Correlation Matrix

Table 8 and 9 present the correlation data for each country. As this research aimed to explain the determiners of customer loyalty, the correlation of highest interest is the correlation between the concepts and customer loyalty. To illustrate the correlation, in this survey was the concept customer loyalty the dependent variable and the concepts tested to determine customer loyalty the independent variables.

The results of the correlation test showed that all the concepts were correlated to customer loyalty. This means that the customer perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment are related to customer loyalty. Furthermore, correlation analysis is used to know whether a change in one variable is followed by a change in another one (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). In addition, a change in one of the concepts can consequently affect customer loyalty.

For Sweden, the highest level of correlation was between commitment and customer loyalty with a number of 0.874. The table also showed that the lowest level was 0.771, in the correlation between trust and customer loyalty. For Spain was the highest correlation between trust and customer loyalty with a number of 0.821. Further, the lowest correlation was between commitment and trust, which showed a number of 0.615. Correlation analysis can be between -1.00 and 1.00 for the variables to be related. According to Pallant (2011) if those numbers had been 0.9 or above it would have meant that the variables were measuring the same concept.

5.4 Hypotheses Result

The hypotheses test was made with a linear regression analysis and it revealed some interesting outcomes. See table 5.4 below which presents a list of the hypotheses and whether they were accepted or rejected.

The findings showed that hypothesis 1 was strongly supported by our data for both Sweden (R Sq 0.697; Beta 0.835) and Spain (R Sq 0.74; Beta 0.825), meaning that customer perceived value has a positive impact on customer loyalty. This implies that this concept makes a unique contribution to explain customer loyalty. Hypothesis 2 stated that customer satisfaction positively influence customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction gave a unique contribution for explaining customer loyalty for both Sweden (R Sq 0.734; Beta 0.857) and Spain (R Sq 0.602; Beta 0.776). Moreover, hypothesis 3 tested if trust positively influences customer
loyalty. The results showed that trust uniquely explains customer loyalty for both Sweden (R Sq 0.595; Beta 0.771) and Spain (R Sq 0.378; Beta 0.615). Although, it has to be taken into consideration that the concept trust for Spain had a reliability of 0.698, which is according to Bland & Altman, (1997) questionable. Further, hypothesis 4 was accepted as well for both Sweden (R Sq 0.763; Beta 0.874) and Spain (R Sq 0.503; Beta 0.709), which means that commitment has positive impact on customer loyalty. This implies that the concept commitment makes a unique contribution to explain customer loyalty. Despite, the concept of commitment was found to have a reliability of 0.63 in Spain, which is said to be questionable.

Lastly, there is a difference in customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores between Sweden and Spain. The evidence showed that customer loyalty for rural grocery stores is greater in Sweden than in Spain, making hypothesis accepted. Table 5.5 provides a comparative analysis of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores in Sweden and Spain.

As to conclude this section, all the concepts tested in the conceptual model of customer loyalty were found to positively influence customer loyalty. This means that the adapted model by Agrawal et al. (2012) is accepted for measuring customer loyalty and in line with the theory. Hypotheses are presented in table 10 below.

**Table 10.** Hypotheses results for Sweden and Spain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of hypothesis</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.835</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.857</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>0.000b</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cronbach α was between 0.6 and 0.7
5.5 Comparison of customer loyalty

According to the results, customer loyalty for rural grocery stores is higher in Sweden than in Spain. The table 11 presents the three loyalty items that were measuring customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain. Further, the table shows that Swedish customers would recommend their village grocery store to others more than the Spanish customers. The mean value shows that 4.04 of the Swedish respondents would recommend the store to others, whereas the mean value for Spain was 3.43. In addition, the table shows that the respondents in Sweden would say positive things about their closest grocery store more than the Spanish respondents. Moreover, the difference is not large, but the results do as well show that the Swedish customers consider their nearest grocery store to be their first choice for purchasing groceries more than the Spanish.

Moreover, the significance value is shown to be greater than 0.05 for all the three items, which means that the varieties of the conditions are about the same. Although, the item number 25 showed a significance value of 0.078, which is really close to 0.05 and confirmed that customer loyalty is different between the both countries. Further, significance 2-Tailed showed to lower that 0.05 for two items, item 23 and 24, which means that there exists an statistical difference between the two countries. In other words, this means that the difference is significant.

Finally, this result is in line with the frequency of purchase, which was an excluded measure of the respondents’ loyalty behavior. Both parts measuring customer loyalty shows that the Swedish respondents has higher loyalty regarding the rural grocery stores.
Table 11. Question 3, 4 and 5 for customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This grocery store...</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend to others</td>
<td>Sweden 4.04</td>
<td>0.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 3.43</td>
<td>0.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would say positive things about</td>
<td>Sweden 4.04</td>
<td>0.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 3.72</td>
<td>0.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is considered to be my first choice for purchasing groceries</td>
<td>Sweden 3.53</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 3.27</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Analysis

The previous chapter presented the results of the survey. In this chapter follows an analysis of the data collected from the survey and the earlier literature review. Further, the chapter discusses parallels and similarities between the theory and the findings. Finally, it provides the reader with our interpretations of what the theory explained and what the collected data revealed.

Customer loyalty with a comparison of Sweden and Spain

The results of this research show that customer loyalty is different in Sweden and Spain, as well as that there are several determiners that influence customer loyalty.

Further, the findings of this research revealed that the people who live in rural areas are caring and feeling concern for the survival of their closest grocery store, and that its fate is important to them. However, the results also showed that the Swedish customers were more concerned about their village store than the Spanish. Some of the answers collected in the open question for Sweden were:

“It is important to buy here otherwise the store will disappear and the community will die out. Although, one knows that you can get better products for lower prices elsewhere.”

“I know it’s hard for a small store in an small community to survive. I buy here to help the store to stay although I know that the prices sometimes are high”

On the other hand, some of the Spanish respondents wrote:

“This is the store that has always been here. It is important that the family that runs the store knows you and you know them, consequently, you know that they won’t lie to you”

“They are shopkeepers with more than 100 years of experience, therefore the shop has always been here and everybody knows them”

As the theory explained, different countries have different cultures which affect what people purchases, the structure of consumption and their decision making (Turrini et al. 2010). We
can see great similarities with the acceptance of hypothesis 5, which confirmed that there is a difference in customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores between Sweden and Spain.

Researchers have explained the concept customer loyalty as repeat purchasing at a store or of same brand, but also a commitment by a customer to continue buying from a preferred store or brand (Hur et al. 2010; Mägi, 1999; Oliver, 1999). This is very similar to the results of our data and also the commitment the respondents feel to maintain their village store. Further, we interpret that the rural grocery stores may produce a feeling of something special and valuable, which is clearly important to the people living in the village (Grönroos, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Mende et al. 2013). Since the grocery stores are struggling as they have fewer customers, there may be favorable outcomes if they enhance these feelings of them being special and valuable.

Further, the respondents are usually purchasing groceries three times per week. The survey results showed that the respondents mainly use their closest grocery store for a minor part of their grocery purchasing, both in Sweden (31.7%) and in Spain (42.6%). We interpret this as the people usually use the village store as a supplement for larger purchases in other stores, such as things they are missing in their homes or need, which is in line with earlier researchers explaining the situation for the rural grocery stores nowadays (Scarpello et al. 2009; Amcoff et al. 2011).

Furthermore, the result showed that the Swedish customers are more loyal to their village store, and that they purchases more often and more than the Spanish customers. The difference is not big but it is still significant. Considering this fact, the situation for the Spanish rural grocery stores may be in a worse situation than the Swedish ones. Consequently, the rural grocery stores in Spain need to be aware of the situation and pay a closer attention on the local residents’ wants and needs (Broadbrige & Calderwood, 2002). Additionally, we can make a parallel to the theory since this information confirms the differences it can be of great value for Spanish rural grocery stores to take inspiration of in order to become better (Turrini et al. 2010). Significant opportunities exist for developing the Swedish rural grocery stores to become more beneficial, since our data revealed that the Swedish customers are caring for their village store. On the other hand, the problems are concerning both countries but in different levels. Further, regarding what Amcoff et al. (2011) explained, if the rural stores omit these problems and do nothing to solve them, a consequence
can be that they in the end may have to close. As Turrini et al. (2010) and Hsu and Burns (2012) explained, country differences exist because of various cultures and living conditions, which influence how and what people purchase. Thus, socio-cultural aspects influence people buying behavior. Therefore, we interpret this as an opportunity and want to point out the importance of both being inspired by what makes other countries more successful and not excluding the customers’ needs and wants.

Several researchers have discussed the positive effect of keeping existing customers since it is difficult to find new customers or to replace the ones that have been lost (Hur et al. 2010; Grönroos, 2007; Mägi, 1999). We can make a parallel to the rural grocery stores and the fact that it is harder for them to attract new customers due to their location and size of population. Therefore, it may be of great importance for them to try keeping their existing customers. Furthermore, earlier studies have found loyal customer to be less price sensitive (Agrawal et al. 2012). Additionally, it is said that it might be impossible for rural grocery stores to compete with price. Therefore, we as well contemplate great opportunities if the rural grocery stores try to enhance their customer’s loyalty.

We can as well see similarities with Mägi’s (1999) description of how it is more profitable to understand the needs of existing customers because of the favorable outcomes this provides. In addition, it may be that rural grocery stores not get to understand their customer’s needs as much as they should today. Consequently, we interpret this as the customers do not believe that what they are being offered is the best alternative for them. This is of great importance to gain customer loyalty (Oliver, 1999; Dhevika & Subramani, 2005; Grönroos, 2007).

Moreover, we also agree with the conclusions made by previous researchers regarding the several determiners that influence customer loyalty (Agrawal et al. 2012; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002; Grönroos 2007; Kasper et al. 2006). According to our results, there are several determiners that positively influence customer loyalty considering the rural grocery stores. In line with the existing theory, to some degree the results confirm a positive and significant impact of customers perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment on customer loyalty. Consequently, the adapted model we used was supported.
CHAPTER SIX

Determiners

Customer perceived value

According to the results, customer perceived value has been found to be an important determiner for customer loyalty for both countries. Moreover, beta showed that the way both concepts are related to each other for both countries is positively similar. Beta showed the highest correlation between the concepts for Spain, which means that rural grocery stores in Spain need to have a special focus on customer perceived value in order to enhance customer loyalty.

The concept value and its significant are well known and with that we agree. According to the results and in line with the theory, customer perceived value is strongly correlated with product quality, product range, prices and the sacrifice made (Chang & Dibb, 2012; Oliver, 1996). Agrawal et al. (2012) explain how a positive value judgment by a customer can result in higher purchasing behavior as well as higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. We can make a parallel to the situation for the rural grocery stores, and if they improve the factors that enhance the perceived value, they may increase the amount of grocery consumption and gain more loyal customer. Another interpretation is that if grocery stores increase the perceived value of their products and services, they may also contribute to the society and enhance the people’s standard of living. Considering that not everyone has the opportunity to make the purchases in another store outside their village of living (Broadbrige & Calderwood, 2002).

We lastly want to make a connection with what Mägi (1999) explanation of that the only way an organization can retain customer loyalty is by keeping constant value creation. Regarding the rural grocery stores location and the fact that it is harder for them find new customer we find the concept value of great importance since it can influence customer loyalty.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction was found to be a decisive determiner for customer loyalty in both countries as well. Although, the results revealed that the concept had higher correlation to customer loyalty when referring to rural stores in Sweden. This means that satisfaction had greater influence on customer loyalty in Sweden, which might also mean that if customer satisfaction is enhanced, it has higher chances to affect customer loyalty in Sweden than in Spain.

According to the theory, customer satisfaction is an important factor for achieving customer loyalty. Moreover, we can see a similarity with that satisfaction is an evaluation process, or a
response to the evaluation process (Oliver, 1996; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). By making the respondents evaluate their village store, it was possible to measure their satisfaction regarding their village store. That the customers are comparing their expectations with what they receive, and that this judgment can make them either satisfied or dissatisfied, can make a parallel to our collected data. This is typically critical in the customer’s search and choices before they make a purchase. It is also decisive regarding their attention to re-purchase (Agrawal et al. 2012; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; Oliver 1999). Further, gaining satisfied customers is based on that the consumption experience was at least as good as expected. Additionally, we interpret this as if the customers think that their grocery store lives up to their expectations, or better than their expectations, they are more likely to become loyal and spread positive words. For this current research it could imply that the grocery stores understand the satisfaction of customers’ needs and wants (Oliver 1999; Paddison & Calderwood 2007; Amcoff et al. 2011).

**Trust**

In contrast to the other determiners, trust was found to be important, but less decisive determiner for customer loyalty in both countries. Especially when referring to Spain, as Beta showed the lowest level of all the other determiners. Moreover, R Square for Spain showed that the correlation between concepts was really low with 0.378. Consequently, it could be said that for Spain is trust a representatively less important determiner for customer loyalty.

As explained by Grönroos (2007) it is important to treat customers in an expected way for not damaging the customer’s trust and we can agree with this. Regarding Grönroos (2007) explanation, we are not fully sure that the rural grocery stores give the customers the most positive store experience when analyzing the collected data. Furthermore, trust is connected to the relationship and obligations build between a customer and a store (Kasper et al. 2006). We can make parallels with Kasper et al. (2006) description and sees this as an opportunity for the rural grocery stores to create advantages. Rural grocery stores have a closer customer focus that can build relationships with the customers, and the possibility to make unique obligations. Which bigger stores and supermarkets cannot since they have less ability for customer focus.

Additionally, trust relates to the customers confidence that the stores provides fair service, are competent as well as honest, responsible, helpful and benevolence (Randall et al. 2011; Ba &
CHAPTER SIX

Pavlou, 2002). Thus, our interpretation is that many of these factors should be obvious but their importance may sometimes be forgotten and it damages the customer’s trust and loyalty. We consider it positive for the rural grocery stores to focus more on these factors, which can lead to a more unique expertise, which other stores supermarkets may not have.

Further, when the customers feel trust, they value the relationship they have with the store in some way, and have a willingness to continue the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Consequently, we can make a parallel to commitment, as commitment is an enduring desire to continue a relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Our interpretation is that trust can influence customer commitment. In addition, customer loyalty as well, as it is considered to be a key factor for building long-term relationships between customers and firms (Agrawal et al. 2012; Kasper et al. 2006; Sirdeshmukh et al. 2002). Hence, it is significant for the rural grocery stores to be aware of this and bear this in mind.

Commitment

According to the results, commitment was found to be another decisive determinant for customer loyalty for both countries. Particularly for Sweden as the results showed that it was the strongest determinant of customer loyalty. This means that if Swedish rural grocery stores want to improve customer loyalty, they need to focus especially in customer commitment. It is therefore of high importance for Sweden to try to enhance customer commitment.

Over the years, the concept of commitment have been described as an enduring desire to maintain a relationship providing some functional or emotional benefits (Hur et al. 2010; Dwyer et al. 1987; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), which we can see similarities with since this research showed that the customers feel both caring and concern for their village store. Additionally, and in line with how commitment has been explained in the theory, the customer’s feel that the village store fulfills some important benefits. Our interpretation considering this fact is that if the customers feel no commitment at all for their village store and choose other alternatives, it may be hard for the rural grocery stores to maintain.

There are many different reasons for why the customers feel commitment to their village store. It may be of belongingness, concern for the long-term success of the store, or the desire of being a friend of the store (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Further, as explained by Hur and Kang
(2012), it may also be because they feel that they want to be, ought to be, or because they feel that they have to be. Consequently, we make a parallel, as this can be associated with customer loyalty since the customers feels a commitment for maintaining the relationship and re-purchasing at the store even if there are other alternatives.

Another perspective is regarding Scarpello et al. (2009) explaining that supermarkets are associated with a loss of community spirit. Our interpretation is that the community spirit is highly valuable for the people who live in rural areas. Therefore, we want to highlight the significant importance that the rural grocery stores understands what benefits are likely to induce such commitment and what it means for the customers in order to enhance the customers loyalty (Hur et al. 2010). Referring to the theory, in order to increase commitment, a business, or in this case rural grocery stores, might want to increase customer’ desire to repurchase at the store (Agrawal et al. 2012; Hur et al. 2010). Or the customers desire to somehow participate at the store (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

**Sum up**

The results showed that the concept of customer perceived value was the most decisive determiner for customer loyalty in Spain and the concept commitment to be the most decisive determiner for customer loyalty in Sweden. This means somehow that in order to gain customer loyalty the rural grocery stores in Spain should be focusing more on the products, the variety or product range, prices and good product quality, to mention a few factors. In contrast, to gain customer loyalty in Sweden, the stores should be focusing more on the relationship with the customers, the social and emotional aspects, and functional benefits (Hur et al. 2010; Dwyer et al. 1987; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Although, these determiners have higher impact on customer loyalty than satisfaction and trust, it is important to focus on the other factors as well in order to achieve customer loyalty. Additionally, some determiners are more effective than others depending on the business, situation and environment. See appendix 2, which shows country differences in Sweden and Spain, and provides a deeper understanding.
7 Conclusions and Implications

The previous chapter provided the reader with an analysis leading to the conclusions of this research. This chapter presents the conclusions of this research as well as its limitations. Further, it gives practical implications with suggestions for marketing strategies related to the rural grocery stores. Finally, directions for future research areas are suggested.

7.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explain the determiners of customer loyalty regarding rural grocery stores with a comparison of Sweden and Spain. This study was supported by two research questions, which aimed to discover what determines customer loyalty for rural grocery stores in the context of Sweden and Spain and how customer loyalty is different between the both countries.

What determines customer loyalty for rural grocery stores in the context of Sweden and Spain?

The findings of this research broaden appreciation of how the concepts of customer perceived value, satisfaction, trust and commitment determine customer loyalty in some extent. Moreover, the results showed some differences regarding the determiners of customer loyalty for Sweden and Spain. Consequently, some of them were determining customer loyalty more than others in each country, namely some had higher impacts on customer loyalty than others. For Sweden was commitment found to be the strongest determiner. On the other hand, for Spain it was found to be customer perceived value. This means that by improving all the determiners, especially those with the highest impact, customer loyalty can be enhanced. As previously mention in chapter one, the differences in culture may have an effect on the structure of consumption, customer’s decision making and the customer’s loyalty behavior (Hsu & Burns 2012).

Furthermore, according to the analysis, rural grocery stores are in general not focusing on these determiners in a level they could, and therefore they are not gaining as high customer loyalty as they could. The main advantages these determiners provide are that they influence the customers positively and make them more pleased with purchasing at the store. These findings can further be a motivation and an encouragement to maintain and develop the rural grocery stores. In this light, although the rural grocery stores are struggling today, the
development of these determiners will not only have a positive impact on the customer loyalty but also on the store's profitability and the community as whole.

How is customer loyalty different in Sweden and Spain?

This research showed that there is a difference between the customer loyalty in Sweden and Spain. The research also found that the Swedish customers had a higher level of loyalty to their closest grocery store than the Spanish customers. Moreover, the finding showed that Swedish customers tend to recommend and say positive things of their grocery store more than Spanish customers. Finally, the results showed as well that, Swedish customer purchase more often in their villages grocery stores than the Spanish. Those results might be related with culture as a customer’s idea of “how to shop” also affects their purchase behavior (Mägi, 1999) and reflects their values (Prentice, 1987). Additionally, not only the customer idea of “how to shop”, but also what the stores provide, such as products, services, opening hours and the environment as whole influence the customers purchasing behavior. Therefore, these findings are an opportunity for the stores to take inspiration and gain knowledge in order to become a better than they are today. This is concerning both countries as it is useful information for the survival of rural grocery stores. In order to gain competitive advantage, Spanish rural grocery stores should examine why Swedish customers are purchasing more and also more frequently at their rural grocery stores. As the data revealed, it should not be forgotten that the Spanish rural grocery stores as well have elements in their stores that can be an inspiration for how to develop the Swedish stores.

7.2 Limitations

As mention in the methodology chapter, the number of responses needed was 259. In the end, the total amount collected was 227 but only 202 were used in the investigation. The reason for discarding 19 responses was related to the need of an equal amount of answers (Gray, 2009; RNOH. NHS; Radiology, 2003). Although the removal of those questionnaires was made randomly, it might have slightly affected the results. On the other hand, the reason for not getting as many answers as needed was considered to be related to time limitations since the authors had limited days to collect the data. Another limitation in this study is related to the concept of trust. From a beginning this concept was supposed to have a determined number of items, but in the end some of them had to be removed since they were complicating the analysis of the survey. Additionally, due to the time constraint there was no possibility to make an improvement for the concept of trust and create a new measurement. Further, for the
concept of loyalty and referring to the reliability test, all the chosen items were found to have different scale measures. Consequently, only three of them were used to test reliability.

7.3 Implications

Managerial implications

This research indicates that the determiners for customer loyalty are an important key factor for the long-term profitability of rural grocery stores in Sweden and Spain. Based on the literature and the information gained from the empirical investigation in Sweden and Spain, we recommend that managers of grocery stores in rural areas take the determiners of customer loyalty seriously, in order to gain loyal customer. Additionally, it should be a fundamental strategy of the rural grocery store to strive to gain customer loyalty by focusing on its determiners in this competitive environment. According to the results and as already explained, if rural grocery stores want to become more profitable in Sweden and Spain, they need to focus on all the determiners cited but with different preference level. Rural grocery stores in Sweden should focus particularly in customer commitment, whereas the Spanish should be focusing on customer perceived value. Because the small stores will never be able to compete on price with the bigger stores, they must instead have a customer focus based on their customers’ needs and wants, as well as attract them with uniqueness. By attracting customers back to the store, rural grocery stores will become more profitable. The current study illustrates that it is time and meaningful to investigate in the specific concepts by a business, which could have favorable business outcomes, such as increases in long-term profitability, customer retention and growth. Therefore, it is important for managers of rural grocery stores to strive for not only meeting the village people’s needs and wants, but also consciously seek out and create new strategies based on the determiners of customer loyalty.

Theoretical implications

This research contributes to the theory by giving a new perspective on the determiners of customer loyalty in the area of rural grocery stores. It also tested an adapted conceptual model of customer loyalty by Agrawal et al. (2012) which showed acceptance and reliability. Consequently, this adapted model contributes to the theory as it never had been tested before, or applied in the investigated context. Further, this research wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts of trust and commitment since little research was found regarding those topics in the area of customer loyalty. By testing them in a new context and perspective, it can be said that this study makes a contribution to the concepts of trust and
commitment. Additionally, as the analysis showed, all the concepts presented in the literature review were proven to correlate well with the adapted model and also with the results of this study. Finally, our findings make an addition to the theory by further identifying the concepts that influence and determine customer loyalty.

7.4 Suggestions for future research

This study aimed only to explain some of the determiners of customer loyalty regarding Swedish and Spanish rural grocery stores. Since this research investigated only a few determiners of customer loyalty, it could be interesting to investigate if there are other determinants that positively influence customer loyalty. Further, other researchers could explore what factors influence customer loyalty negatively. Additionally, further research could investigate how the rural grocery stores can be developed to become more unique and valuable for the village people to purchase at. Thus, this research did not investigate the needs and wants of the people who live in the rural areas. Moreover, further research could investigate what could increase the customer traffic to the rural grocery stores, such as other services or social venues that creates more value for the people living there. Other suggestion is referred to the model, since this one has been proved to be accepted, this could be applied in other areas as well.
References


**Brown, T.J. & Suter, T.** (2011) *MR*, South Western College, USA.


Appendix

1. The Questionnaire

Dear Customer,

We are two students from Linnaeus University in Växjö (Sweden) writing our bachelor thesis, which is about customer loyalty for rural grocery stores in Sweden and Spain. We are doing this in cooperation with the Swedish provincial government in Kronoberg, to come up with new ideas for how to maintain and develop the grocery stores. We would like you to participate in our marketing research by filling in this questionnaire. Your answers will remain anonymous and only be used for research purpose. Your cooperation is of great value to us and it is important that you try to answer all questions. There are no right or wrong answers, it is your answer that matters! The questionnaire consists of six questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

You are welcome to contact us, Jacqueline Basmanji and Angelica Rodriguez, on this e-mail address for more information: jb222ex@student.lnu.se

In the first part of this questionnaire, we would like to ask some questions about your shopping behavior.

1. Within the following options please choose your village store. (Please select one)

☐ Matöppet in Skruv  ☐ Cal Codina in Sant Marti de Tous
☐ ICA-nära in Ryssby  ☐ Tandy in Carme  (1)

2. How many times per week do you purchase household groceries? (Please select one)

☐ less than one  ☐ three
☐ one  ☐ four
☐ two  ☐ more than four  (2)

3. How many of these purchases per week are in your village store. (Please select one)

☐ less than one  ☐ three
☐ one  ☐ four
☐ two  ☐ more than four  (3)
In the following part of this questionnaire we would like you to evaluate the grocery store in your village with a number of statements. Mark the number that corresponds to your opinion.

4. This store...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>…has products of good quality</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>…carries fresh fruits and vegetables of good quality</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>…provides good service</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>…has good variety of goods</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>…gives value for the money spent</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>…has prices that I am generally happy with</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>…makes me feel that the time and effort spent for purchasing is about right</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>…feels as a wise choice to purchase at</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>…makes me feel that I made the right thing when purchase there</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>…satisfies me with my decision to purchase there</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>…sometimes makes me feel angry when purchasing products</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>…makes me feel positively surprised when purchasing there</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>…is very reliable</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>…is saying the truth about its products</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>…is interested in more than just selling me goods and making a profit</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>…shows no limits for solving a problem I may have</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>…is the one I like to go to, even though there are other alternatives</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>…has friendly employees that makes me feel good</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>…makes me feel emotionally attached</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>…and its fate is important to me</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>…I would recommend to others</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>…would I say positive things about</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26)</td>
<td>…is considered to be my first choice for purchasing groceries</td>
<td>1   2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75
5. How large share of the grocery purchasing do you usually make in your village store per week? (Please select one)

- I usually purchase all my groceries from this store  ○
- I usually purchase a large part of my groceries from this store  ○
- I usually purchase about half of my groceries from this store  ○
- I usually purchase a minor part of my groceries from this store  ○

6. What would you like this store to have, that it today is missing?

- More variety of products  ○
- Greater range of fresh fruits and vegetables  ○
- More ecological products  (28)
- More local produced food  ○
- More opening hours  ○

Others?

Thank you for your cooperation.
If there is anything that you would like to share with us regarding the grocery store where you shop, please use the space below:

[Blank space for comments]
### Descriptive Statistics for all the items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Desv.</th>
<th>Error tip. de la media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>has products of good quality</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>carries fresh fruits and vegetables of good quality</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>provides good service</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>has good variety of goods</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>gives value for the money spent</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>has prices that I am generally happy with</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>makes me feel that the time and effort spend for purchasing is about right</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>feels as a wise choice to purchase at</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>makes me feel that I made the right thing when purchase there</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.016</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>satisfies me with my decision to purchase there</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sometimes makes me feel angy when purchasing products</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>makes me feel positively surprised when purchasing there</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>is very reliable</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>is saying the truth about its products</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shows no limits for solving a problem I may have</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>is the one I like to go to, even though there are other alternatives</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>has friendly employees that makes me feel good</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>makes me feel emotionally attached</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>and its fate is important to me</strong></td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.367</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>I would recommend to others</strong></td>
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<td>101</td>
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<td>1.048</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>1.126</td>
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<td><strong>would I say positive things about</strong></td>
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<td>1.019</td>
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<td>1.141</td>
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<td><strong>is considered to be my first choice for purchasing groceries</strong></td>
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<td>1.293</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.385</td>
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<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval</td>
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3. Independent sample t-test for loyalty
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.