Fast Fashion in the Experience Economy

Comparing online and in-store shopping experiences

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Abstract

Fast fashion retailers have faced a difficulty in translating in-store experiences to online experiences. Although online shopping is increasing, the in-store shopping is still very important for a superior shopping experience. Technology has had a major impact in making multichanneling retail more consistent, although there are gaps that technology can not fill.

This study attempted to measure how consistent the customer experiences were online and in-store. Shopping experiences were measured with different concepts such as: flow, usability, interactivity, atmospherics and tactility. These concepts were measured separately in-store and online, in order to be compared. The purpose was to find out which concept is inconsistent so the authors could make recommendations for improvement to fast fashion retailers. The research approach was a mixed method approach and the chosen research design was cross sectional, using quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings.

The results from a quantitative questionnaire of 263 experienced fast fashion consumers in Sweden show that the consistency varies between the concepts. The qualitative study was done at two occasions on a sample of six interviewees in each focus group, and gave a deeper understanding for why the shopping experience was or wasn't consistent. The qualitative results varied amongst the individuals and show that reasons for being inconsistent are intrusive salesmen, insufficient size measuring tools, long queues, lack of tactility and the most interesting of all: making better return and ordering policies.

The future lies in making it easier to order online, in order for the consumer to be able to experience the product in real life, through staff-free fitting rooms and showrooms and such, rather than making the experience better online. The future seems to lie in solving the reverse of the start point of this study, namely translating online to in-store experiences.

Keywords and phrases: Fast fashion, in-store shopping, online shopping, shopping experience, technology, multichannel retail, flow, usability, interactivity, atmospherics, tactility.
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1 Introduction

The following chapter is devoted to providing basic background information about the topic. It starts off with describing the phenomenon of experience economy, the chosen industry of this study, the fast fashion business model, creating seamless experiences and issues that occur.

The experience economy is a recent development from the industry of commodities, goods and services and implies that not the ingredients, goods or services differentiate the product but the experience that is delivered accordingly with them (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Consumers increasingly strive for a memorable event when looking for a product rather than only evaluating product features (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

According to Fiore (2002), fashion serves much more than just a functional purpose. The fashion industry is more than only clothing since it gives consumers identity and satisfaction (Tran, 2008). The fast fashion industry is a part of the fashion industry (Wenting, 2008) and can be experiences both online and in-store (Puccinelli, Goodstein, Grewal, Price, Raghubir & Stewart, 2009).

The internet is increasingly used as shopping channel for fashion goods (Nirmala & Dewi, 2012) even though the physical store is still the dominating distribution channel (Blázquez, 2014). Different motives drive online shoppers to buy their products on the internet (Blázquez, 2014) and brands start translating their online experiences to the physical store and vice versa (Nurun, 2013). Evolving technology is one of the important factors for being able to create online experience (Nurun, 2013).

1.1 Background

Nowadays it is important to keep up with the fast moving world of frequent innovations and evolving technology. The economy used to be divided broadly into three sectors: commodities, products and services. According to Pine & Gilmore (2011) recently another sector has emerged. During the development of the economy the pure selling of goods and commodities lost its value because these products were commoditized, now also services were commoditized and rated by price rather than customer value and can
be delivered on scale and by machines. The outcome of this new economy era is called experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011).

“Goods and Services are no longer enough to foster economic growth, create new jobs, and maintain economic prosperity” (Pine & Gilmore 2011, p.iii). An increasing amount of people are looking for “meaning, happiness, sensations, new forms of fulfillment and core values” (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2011). Thus, products and services alone cannot contribute to fulfill customer satisfaction anymore; experiential aspects are nowadays the added value for products (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Referring to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, products can satisfy physiological and safety needs, services can satisfy the needs for belonging and esteem; experiences however, reach even further and fulfill the need for self-actualization, knowledge, understanding and aesthetics (Yu & Fang, 2009).

Experience marketing is about creating a memorable event for customers that involves them emotionally and rationally (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Goods and services alone can not fulfill the customer's expectations anymore but can be differentiated by offering the customers an experience along with their purchase (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). According to Kriss, “customers who had the best experiences can spend 140% more money than those with poor experiences – and can remain customers for nearly six times as long” (Kriss 2014, p.1). This again shows that consumer demand has changed and that consumer wants nowadays much more individual treatment than in the service economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Literature suggests that product experiences can be created for any product (Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Schmitt, 2003).

Fiore (2002) stated that pleasurable experiences can influence the likelihood of the purchase of a fashion product. Fashion serves as much more than just a functional purpose (Fiore, 2002). According to Tran (2008), fashion has a strong relationship with marketing; it is the creative combination of fabric, colors, prints and silhouette of garments, which is communicated by marketing techniques. This is well explained in the comment of a designer: “...when clothes leave the factories where they are made, they are merely garment or apparel. Only when the marketers get hold of them they do magically become fashion” (Cited in Tran 2008, p. 25)
Fashion is a term used to describe trends worn by the majority, traditionally meant for clothing styles. It lasts from a few weeks to a few years, it comes and goes and might return it might spread from a small social group or worldwide. With reference to clothes, fashion serves a functional purpose. However, on a deeper level fashion is a blend between a functional and cultural product. It is a wordless but powerful communicator of what social group, religion and traditions the individual belongs to. It is important for fashion companies to understand the consumer's psychology, emotional needs and relationship with clothing (Tran, 2008).

Unlike other creative industries such as music, pictures and publishing fashion is a product people cannot live without, it is simply something that all people are engaged with, choosing what to wear or what not to wear on a daily basis. It expresses one’s identity, and is an extension of one’s personality, it tells the story about the wearer. It helps the wearer to identify the aesthetic identity, which changes with social movement (Tran, 2008). The symbolic value is so strong that people tend to keep on buying clothes although there is no “need” of it (Tran, 2008). Clothing is considered to be a high-involvement product category, related to personal ego. Fashion products need to be seen, felt and touched and tried otherwise it can be hard for the consumer to evaluate (Blazqués, 2014).

According to Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger (2009) and Jones, Comfort, Clarke-Hill & Hillier (2010) contemporary retailing is about emerging and developing “Experience stores”. There are a few examples which demonstrate the relationship between experience economy and fashion. Nike is one of the examples of experience business: Nike Town was created to build the brand image and vitalize buying at other retail outlets and the purpose of Nike was to show, not to sell (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Nike Parks for example were built up in order to engage customers into soccer variants, without focusing on selling products directly (Schmitt, 2003). According to Tran (2008), Danish fashion companies have moved to creative activities and focusing less on the production side. In a world in which brands rule, fashion brands are no longer bundles of functional characteristic but they are means to provide and create experience (Schmitt, 1999).
Wenting (2008) indicated that, currently, the fashion industry has become a global, multi-billion dollar industry. Design being a luxury good and with gross world income increasing, demand for fashion is still increasing (Ibid). On the other hand, Tungate (2005) stated that designers now can delight the customers who can not afford the originals and no longer see the point of trying. The fast fashion concept appeared because of the customers’ demand with the upstream operations of design, procurement, production, and distribution (Tokatli, 2008). “Fast fashion is a business strategy which aims to reduce the processes involved in the buying cycle and lead times for getting new fashion product into stores, in order to satisfy consumer demand at its peak” (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood 2006, p. 259).

According to Tokatli (2004), fast fashion ignore the difference between the designers, concentrate on the similarities, and select only the most marketable trends before “going” off and copying them. It all about speeding up the fashion delivery process and changing the consumers’ behavior. The fast fashion business model is about constant process innovation, customer response and smart management. Companies in this lower segment, who operate in this fast business model, offering the right products in the right time, create a competitive advantage for themselves when prices can’t be pushed lower (Tran, 2008).

Companies being pioneers in this segment are for example H&M, Zara and Topshop (Tran, 2008). H&M is considered to be one the fastest growing clothing retailers that sell cheap and chic fashion (Hines & Bruce, 2007). H&M and Zara are two most well-known international clothing retailers, which operate in fast fashion (Hines & Bruce, 2007). The management of fast fashion industry is experiencing a revolution as well because of the emergence of e-commerce (Zhenxiang & Lijie, 2011).

Today many fashion retailers and marketers use the internet to promote and sell their products (Nirmala & Dewi, 2012). The importance of retail atmosphere reaches to the online experience (Puccinelli et al., 2009) and many homepages try to create similar experiences online as those in in-store (Menon & Kahn, 2002). The online shoppers’ sensory data comes from several stimuli from the e-retailers’ website such as text based information, visual imagery, video or audio delivery (Rose, Clark, Samouel & Hair, 2012).
Also, as online sales continue to grow, retailers should prepare to invest in digital capabilities, such as website design and functionality user-friendly interfaces, enhanced content, data collection and analytics, price modeling, and advanced customer communications as well as seamless logistics and inventory (Kesteloo & Hodson, n.d).

However, the in-store experience is still important for value perception in retailing (Mintel, 2012) which is necessary in order to create a superior experience. The majority of overall retail sales are still taking place offline, although e-commerce sites have realized now that they also need to set up physical stores in order to gain significant market share. E-retailers need to provide seamless online to in-store experiences, and to do this successfully they have to be both physically and digitally present. Birchbox, firsthand an e-retailer for beauty, relied on video tutorials but now the retailer also offers hair, makeup and nail services in-store (Vend, n.d). Other retailers following the same path are Macy's, Nordstrom and Amazon (Kesteloo & Hodson, n.d).

Offering consistent experiences across whatever channel the customer choses (a store, purchases from a website, telephone ordering, mail orders, interactive television, catalog ordering and comparison shopping sites) is called multi-channel retailing (Linton, 2015).

Retailers are trying to create consistent consumer experiences across these two channels. In the autumn of 2015, Wilde rooms, a London based e-commerce company will launch service where their customers can through four easy steps get access to latest fashion. The consumer is asked to choose the clothes and order online, the clothes are then being delivered to one of their luxurious boutiques, the consumer can try on the clothes and be assisted by a professional stylist, and later on only pay for what she or he likes and the service fee (Handelstrender, 2015).

New technology has improved the online experience and become the most important tool for decreasing the gap between the channels (Drapers, 2012), technology blurs the differences between in-store and online shopping experiences (Merle, Senecal & St-Onge, 2012).
Technological solutions are also used in-store trying to enhance the customers’ in-store experiences (Nurun, 2013). Such solutions are digital mirrors, touch screens where customers can design their products and screens that show what is not in-store and can be ordered in place, and digital signage solutions offer the consumer the possibility to view and purchase on a single screen, without walking around in the store (Nurun, 2013). Many retailers will adopt and experiment with tech solution in order to find out how to enhance the customer shopping experience in-store, and technologies to be expected in 2015 are: POS-technology (point of sale), cloud based point of sale systems in order to make cashier solutions easier, beacons to provide in-store analytics and marketing solutions, information from wearable technology such as watches, glasses and fitness monitors, augmented reality, virtual fitting rooms, interactive window displays and 3D printed mock-ups for example helping the customer with jewelry fitting (Vend, n.d).

Many retailers are still struggling to find out the best way of combining e-commerce with in-store shopping in order to generate a consistent retail experience (Nurun, 2013). Although as e-commerce strives, in-store and online shopping are becoming more alike than what one might intuitively think (Kesteloo & Hodson, n.d).

1.2 Problem Discussion

According to Mintel (2012) in-store shopping is still the most popular channel for shopping clothes; stores provide an instant gratification of the product and experience in the service (Kilcourse & Rosenblum, 2009). In-store shopping is declining in dominance (Clifford, 2012) and time spent in-store is decreasing (Chu & Lam, 2007). Researchers claim that it is mainly due to the increasing usage of e-commerce (Clifford, 2012) since growth in online shopping reduces time spent in-store (Blázquez, 2014). The shift from in-store to online shopping may be seen a continuous innovation (Dholakia & Uusitalo, 2002).

The internet has become a major or complementary sales channel (Kwaf & Tagg, 2012) for many retailers. The increase of online shopping puts the focus on practical values such as convenience (Blázquez, 2014). On the other side, Childers, Carr, Peck, & Carson (2011) argue that academic research suggest that functional attributes no longer
drive online shopping, instead it is enjoyment. This makes the enjoyment factor as important for in-store as online shopping. According to Pine & Gilmore (2011) experiences in-store have been unchanged for more than 30 years, consumers want new experiences and they are willing to pay more for it. Mathwick, Malhotra & Rigdon (2002) explain that what customers expect from in-store shopping is a memorable shopping experience.

According to Blazquéz (2014), the reason for fashion industry being slower than other industries in adopting the e-commerce is due to the difficulty of translating the in-store experience into online experience. Decision makers following the fast fashion business model have been especially reluctant to go online. Traditionally retailers have been demanding on the consumer making regular visits to the store to see the updates. As mentioned before, clothes are high involvement products that need to be experienced (seen, felt, touched, and tried on) because of the difficulty to evaluate (Blazquez, 2014). To strengthen this problem further, Nirmala & Dewi (2012) advocate that some consumers may be reluctant to buy products online because of an inability to experience the products through the websites. Pérea y Monsuwe (2004) indicates that several characteristics of online and physical store retailers can be translated accordingly, yet they can not represent exactly the same experience.

Although, Schmitt (2003) states that the integration of consumer experience should be seamless in every aspect: be it the brand experience, the interface or the innovations. An example could be that the online store delivers the same “welcoming experience” as the service employee in the store itself. Also according to Blazqués (2014) multichannel behavior is a reality, and people interact with channels in different ways. Payne and Frow (2004) suggest that little research has been done in the field of experiences in a multichannel environment by measuring differences in interfaces and it is not known how consistency can be created across various channels.

Blazqués (2014) further argues that in an increasingly competitive retail environment, fashion retailers must be innovative and find new ways to connect with their customers and offer their propositions. Technology makes this integration of channels possible and gives new relevance to physical stores (Blazqués, 2014).
There are still gaps that technology can not fill, although multisensory input can be translated into the online environment in many ways, it still lack of direct experiences and the multisensory input, (Blazqués, 2014). It has been found out that consumer research on the product they want to buy much more often in retail shops than online, which is a big difference to other product categories (Schulz & Block, 2014). This implies that the in-store experience is still important, although the either does not exclude the other, therefore convergence on and off between the channels calls for further investigation.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to compare the shopping experiences online and in-store to measure consistency of the shopping experience, in order to highlight the deficiencies and make recommendations for improvement to fast fashion retailers.

1.4 Theoretical gap

Various books and papers indicate the importance of experiences in-store and online in the fashion industry. However, no research could be found that directly compares the online experience with in-store experiences. Therefore the authors split the concept of experiences up into different variables and measure online and in-store experiences in the fashion industry with the help of a quantitative survey research. To complete this new field, the authors did conduct qualitative research in order to find problems in this consistency.

1.5 Research Question

What are the differences of the shopping-experience for consumers in fast fashion, in-store and online?
1.6 Delimitation

The extent of the following study has been limited to the Swedish context and to the time of two months and a budget that is reasonable for students. The research was focused on the experiential aspect of the fashion industry only and delimits the service and product attributes factor in marketing. The sample for the focus group was limited to Linnaeus University students for convenience reasons, so the results for the focus group may have to be seen from a student perspective. Also approximately half of the quantitative sample was students as well, because of convenience reasons. Since most respondents did have experiences in the fast fashion industry this research has also been limited to the fast fashion industry in particular.
2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that the research has been based upon. The following concepts have been derived from an extensive literature review: Experiences in marketing and the concepts consists of flow, usability, interactivity, atmospherics and tactility. After the background has been built on books from most referred authors in the topic as well as on articles, the theoretical framework stems almost entirely from recent articles. In general it has been found that there are two different types of concepts: those that test customer experiences and those that differentiate perceptions of fashion online stores and brick-and-mortar stores.

2.1 Experience

As previously mentioned, Same and Larimo (2012) define different aspects of experience economy as follows:

“The experience is an economic offering and interaction between company/brand/service and customer, who perceive and meaningfully experience it. Experience marketing is strategic (customer centric) and holistic marketing of relevant (and meaningful) experiences that takes into account the affective, cognitive and conative perspectives of consumption experience” (Same and Larimo 2012, p.485).

Gentile, Spiller, & Noci (2007) explain customer experience (CE) as something that involves a customer at the rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual levels. Meyer and Schwager (2007, p.118) define customer experience as “the internal and subjective response that customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company”. Customer experience is a psychological construct, which is a holistic and subjective response resulting from a contact with a retailer and that may result in customer involvement (Gentile et al. 2007; Lemke, Clark & Wilson 2011).

While customer experience gives a background for online customer experience (OCE), OCE is defined as follows: “cognitive state experienced during navigation” (Novak, Hoffman & Yung 2000, p. 22). Gentile et al. (2007) proposes six elements to define OCE: sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational. Further they
summarize it to be a psychological state taken form as a subjective response to the e-retailer’s website.

“The customer engages in cognitive and affective processing of incoming sensory information from the website, the result of which is the formation of an impression in memory” (Rose et al. 2012, p. 308) and many antecedent conditions will affect the cognitive and affective state of the customers (Rose et al., 2012). According to Gentile, Spillers & Noci (2007), the customers interpret the data such as text-based information, visual imagery, audio delivery, from a cognitive and affective perspective creating impression formation of the e-retailer website. “The customers engages in cognitive and affective processing of incoming sensory information from the website, the result if which is the formation of an impression in memory” (Rose et al. 2012, p. 309).

Ten antecedent variables are given that affect the cognitive experiential state and affective experiential state of OCE (Rose et al., 2012). Antecedent of cognitive experiential state can be explained by flow, which includes telepresence, level of challenge, skill, and speed of interactivity (Rose et al., 2012). On the other side, antecedents of the affective experiential states include the ease of use, customization, connectedness, aesthetics, and perceived benefits (Rose et al., 2012).

“The Web experience can be explained as the consumer’s total impression about the online company resulting from his/her exposure to a combination of virtual marketing tools .. “under the marketer’s direct control, likely to influence the buying behavior of the online consumer” (Constantinides 2014, p. 113).

The main building blocks for online shopping experience can be classified into three categories: functionality factors, physiological factors, content factors (Constantinides, 2014). Functionality factors improve the online experience by presenting the virtual client with a good functioning, easy to discover, fast, interactive Website. “Usability” and “Interactivity” are important factors for functionality (Constantinides, 2014). Physiological factors are vital in helping online customers unfamiliar with the vendor or unfamiliar with online transactions to overcome fears of fraud and doubts as to the
trustworthiness of the Website (Constantinides, 2014). Lastly, content factors include aesthetic and marketing mix (Constantinides, 2014).

2.1.1 Flow

Various researchers (Rose et al. (2012), Novak et al. (2009), Klein (2003)) that have investigated consumer experiences mention the concept of flow in their researches.

Flow is a concept that describes a state of mind where persons are deeply involved in an enjoyable activity and their surroundings become irrelevant (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Flow describes the phenomenon where persons might engage in an activity that may not lead to a significant reward, and that still seems so engaging that the person seems to fade out surrounding events and becomes entirely focused on the occupation. This concept had been investigated for longer time until Csikszentmihalyi studied and named it.

Decisive for the state of flow is that a challenge and arousal is set for a person that is just doable with the skills and control the person has at that moment. Then, the individual focus attention to the task and experiences a distorted perception of time (Novak et al., 2009). Flow has been observed during leisure activity but it can occur in almost all kinds of processes. For some people it is the job, writing, reading, studying or mountain climbing (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

In-store

According to Czikszentmihalyi (1988) there are several circumstances that are usually present when a person experiences flow: Time distortion, skill and challenge. Skill and challenge work as follows: Activities during that a person can experience flow are tried to be repeated by individuals as much as often because of their enjoyable nature. However, Czikszentmihalyi (1988) observed that people get better and better in what they are doing when they practice a lot and in order for the activity to remain a flow activity it also has to become more and more difficult, or, challenging as their skill increases. Thus it is also important that during a shopping trip the customer is challenged in a way or the other since otherwise the activity might get boring. As
individuals are shopping more often than others there might also be differences in the skill of people. The skill aspect could regard how fast they find a product, how they orientate in a shop or simply how to find items that match together.

Time distortion is a concept that Czikszentmihalyi (1988) reported from qualitative research for his concept. He observed that many participants of his study reported that they lose the track of time completely. They were surprised when the activity ceased how much time had passed. Also, participants could engage in the activity for long periods of time without noticing. This phenomenon was called time distortion.

Online

While Csikszentmihalyi uses his concept mainly for the physical world, Novak, Hoffmann and Yung (2000) use this concept also for online experiences. They state that flow can be expected to be “a fairly typical aspect of the user experience in the virtual world” (Novak et al., 2009). Novak et al. (2000) have published a study which measures flow experiences in online shopping. According to them online flow is so compelling that irrelevant triggers are screened out. Also here, the time perception is distorted and self-consciousness disappears (Novak et al., 2009).

The authors also found that the components of the flow experience might be relevant online as well: Especially online shopping skills might be a decisive factor because individuals have different levels of experience with online shopping (Blazqués, 2014). Later research connected this phenomenon with the online world and called this time distortion in the context of flow “telepresence” (Novak et al, 2000).

Since both online environment and real world activities can engage a consumer into a flow and the concept is stated to be a part of shopping experience (Novak et al, 2009; Rose et al, 2012) the authors decided to measure flow as a concept as well.

2.1.2 Interactivity

According to Pine and Gilmore (2011) it is important for the customer experience to be able to interact with others. According to Constantinides (2004), customer service/after sales, interaction with company personal, customization, and personal affect are the
main factors that affect interactivity. Interactivity can be seen as underpinning two basic elements of internet revolution: personalization and networking (Ibid).

**In-store**

Looking at the comparison of Peréa y Monsuwe et al (2004) interaction can be translated between online and in-store, thus online contact with service facilities online can be translated to contact with a sales clerk in-store. Based on their research it can also be assumed that the same translation can take place from interactivity with persons that are not part of the company: Strangers that have the same interest or related persons or friends.

**Online**

A well-organized online helpdesk, quick response to email from the customers are some important factors that need to be taken into consideration by web designers (Constantinides, 2004).

Blázquez (2014) found that interactive tools can enhance the customer experience significantly. Tynan & Mc Kecknie (2010) also state that interactive media is a useful tool to create online experiences and can create bonds between the customer and the brand. Furthermore, interactive tools also contribute to positive customer experiences (Constantinides, 2004). Other than that, social media can connect people (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). These are facilitated by social media tools, ranking services and create a positive image of the website.

According to Constantinides (2004) there is also another kind of interactivity, which can be seen a network effects and includes forums, chat rooms, guest books and rating tools. These factors can be seen essential part of Web experience. Changing web technographics and technological innovation seem to advocate new forms of customer to customer interaction, often allowing consumer interaction and transactions outside the traditional or even the “classic” online trade environment (Constantinides, 2004).
According to this concept and by comparing to different studies it has been chosen to include the aspect of communication with the company (service, staff) and with social contacts as well as interactive tools to describe experiences.

### 2.1.3 Aesthetics

Constantinides (2004) uses the following elements for aesthetics: design, presentation quality, design elements and style/atmosphere. After thorough evaluation of the elements the authors of this paper argue that the concept of atmospherics cover these aspects to a degree sufficient enough to measure what is necessary for this study. Therefore the concept of atmospherics have been explained and used onwards.

**In-store**

According to (Kotler, 1973, p.50) the atmosphere is the "silent language" in communication and results of "the conscious designing of space to create certain buyer effects". Milliman & Fugate (1993) and Koo & Ju (2010) define atmospherics as simply as all components in a retail environment, which is consciously designed and external to the consumer that perceives perceptual this in their field, and stimulating both visual and non-visual senses that affect the totality of the experience.

Puccinelli et al. (2009); Baker, Julie and Cameron (1996) and Baker et al. (1994) suggest that retail environment elements can be categorized into a set of cues in order to create an atmosphere: Design, ambient and social cues.

- **Design cues** include both internal and external design cues such window display, flooring, decoration, layout, colors, clutter and cleanliness (Kozinets, Sherry, DeBerry-Spence, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit, & Storm, 2002).

- **Ambient cues** include lightning, sound, smell and use of technology in-store. Since the technology is part of the in-store experience (Rosenblum & Rowen, 2009) it should be used to improve the experience (Kilcourse & Rosenblum, 2009). It can be used to make the environment more attractive and the shopping experience more engaging and memorable (Drapers 2012; Kozinets, Sherry, DeBerry-Spence, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit and Storm, 2002).
- **Social Cues** include the presence of staff in a store and the perceived crowdedness as well as interactivity with these (Baker et al., 2002). Next to managing a quality perception of the store the behavior of the staff can also influence the customer’s trust in the store (Stock & Hover, 2005).

Technology integrates experience between channels, redefined store experience and store layout (Drapers, 2012). Also according to Blázquez (2014) deriving from previous research by Drapers (2012) and Chu & Lam (2007): in fashion industry, sensory elements are important as consumers want entertainment while shopping, and technology contributes to a convenient, relaxing, and fun environment that makes shopping a pleasurable experience. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) and Kotler (2003) argue that the atmosphere is vital to affect the customers’ impression about a sales outlet and defining the customer’s further actions and behaviors.

**Online**

Dailey (2004) translated Kotlers (1973) definition of atmosphere into the web atmospherics, suggesting that it is consciously designing environments to create positive web effects on users in order to increase favorable responses. Koo & Ju (2010) argue that when applying the same atmospherics to the online environment it becomes defined as the total sum that is visible and audible for the consumers.

Loureiro & Roschk (2014) developed a measurement scale to formulate and measure items that are similar in both online and in-store atmospherics (2014) drawing on previous work by Turley and Milliman (2000); Wakefield et al. (2007) and Koo & Ju (2010). Synthesizing the previous authors explanations of online and offline environments which had similarities in the elements, the output became two categories: graphic design and information design.

The authors argued that graphic design represents a synthesis of offline categories of interior (such as color schemes) and layout (such as space allocation) and online categories graphics (that are visually comforting) and use of colors (that are distinctive). Graphic design therefore catches the most visual elements in the environment, it also defines the stores’ or website’s attractiveness because of comforting design and style elements. Style elements are things like architecture, decoration and color schemes.
**Information design** on the other hand represents a synthesis offline category of point of purchase and decorations (such as signs, cards, price displays) and online categories links (such as buttons that help find products/services) and menu (that is clean and neat). Information design represents the access and amount of relevant information for the consumer, such as information about goods and services, forms of payment, disposition and finding their way around in the store (Manganari et al., 2009).

### 2.1.4 Tactility

As mentioned before, clothes are high involvement products that need to be experienced (seen, felt, touched, and tried on) because of the difficulty to evaluate (Blazqués, 2014). Therefore the authors argue that the tactile is an important aspect to include as part of the experience. It is not included or explained in the concept of atmospherics, therefore the authors chose to add this as a separate aspect. Technological innovation makes it possible to translate variables such as color, music, and lights alongside others such as smell and touch according to Menon & Kahn (2002).

Already Pine and Gilmore (2011) mentioned that sensory stimulants should enhance the experience’s theme and that an experience that has engaged the senses will be more memorable. Hult, Broweus and van Dijk (2009, p. 18) also state that “human senses are of vital importance to our experience of our existence and without the senses no impressions could be formed”.

Schmitt (1999) argues that sense-making is an important module of experiences and contributes to the physical perception of the experience. Also, as mentioned earlier by Blazqués (2014), in the fashion industry sensory elements are especially important, and as for clothing the clothes need to be experienced. Hultén (2011) for example found out in his study that touch amongst other senses contributes to a positive feeling and therefore to an experience that is beneficial for the brand-consumer relationship.

### 2.1.5 Usability

Nah & Davis (2002, p.99) state that Web usability is “the ability to find one’s way around, to locate the desired information, to know what to do next, and to do so with minimal effort”.

Usability is considered as a vital quality criterion of information system and websites (Preece et al., 1994; Osterbauer et al., 1999). The different elements can affect usability: convenience, site navigation, information architecture, ordering/payment process, search facilities and process, and findability/accessibility (Constantinides, 2004). According to Constantinides (2004), these different components of usability can be defined as follows:

- **Convenience:** Convenience is an important motivator for the Web customers to stop and interact with online vendors (Constantinides, 2004). Easy and fast information browsing, shopping and settling of the online transaction can be associated with the convenience (Constantinides, 2004). According to the online dictionary “Merriam-Webster” convenience is: “a quality or situation that makes something easy or useful for someone by reducing the amount of work or time required to do something” (Merriam Webster, 2015).

- **Site navigation, information architecture and search facilities/search process:** online customers anticipate easy site navigation and easily accessible information (Constantinides, 2004). “Search engines providing fast and reliable results helping the customer to quickly locate the information in the website, must be part of every well-designed commercial Web site” (Constantinides 2004, p.117).

- **Site findability and accessibility:** While shopping online, customers want to find the website easily and web designers must take into consideration to make the websites accessible from different type of browser (Constantinides, 2004).

- **Ordering and payment process:** Cumbersome and lengthy processes for ordering and settling online transaction are still one of the significant sources of customer irritation, loss of goodwill and interrupted online transaction (Constantinides, 2004).
According to Rose et al (2012), complex navigation and information overload disturbs customers and decrease the possibility of the likelihood of a repeat purchase. In the study of Rose et al. (2012), the researchers included one concept named ‘ease of use’ which is almost same to the usability and includes easy navigation, easy product search, easy use of the website and whether it is easy to learn how to use shopping websites (Rose et al., 2012). According to Rose et al., (2012), ‘ease of use’ should be included to measure online experience.
3 Methodology

This chapter comprises a variety of definitions and elucidation of the several methods that have been used throughout this thesis in order to build a clear understanding for the readers.

3.1 Research Approach/strategy

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that involve the steps from broad data assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). This section will show the types of research approaches that have been used by the authors and the explanation will be given to clarify the reasons of choosing certain methods instead of others.

3.1.1 Ontological/epistemological Theory

There are different philosophical standpoints that can be taken in business research: there is the concept of epistemology and ontology (Bryman & Bell, 2011). How research questions will be formulated and how the research is carried out can vary dependent on the standpoint that the researchers take.

Epistemology is according to Bryman & Bell (2011) the question of what should be regarded as acceptable knowledge and whether the social world should be studied the same way natural sciences are. Two different standpoints are positivism and interpretivism: positivism advocates that social sciences can be studied the same way natural sciences are (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Interpretivism on the other hand is the attitude that people and social constructs are different from phenomena of natural sciences and should thus be treated in a different manner from a social scientific point of view (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Traditionally positivism is associated with quantitative research and interpretivism is more frequently used in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study it is difficult to define how the general standpoint is as first the quantitative method is used
in order to determine frequencies in a social phenomenon and later the qualitative approach tries to understand human behavior in-depth.

Ontology deals with the question of whether social entities have an objective reality with measurable variables or whether social constructs cannot exist without human interaction and are therefore subjective imaginative constructs of social interaction (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The former is called objectivist ontology, the latter constructivist ontology (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the authors are both interested in measurable variables in human behavior and constructs and exploring the interaction of humans with each other during an experience the ontological standpoint is both objectivist and constructivist.

### 3.1.2 Abductive Research

Inductive and deductive researches demonstrate the relationship between theory and research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researcher takes the basis of what is known about a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces assumptions that must be subjected to empirical study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). On the other hand, theory is the outcome of the research in inductive research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The process of induction requires drawing generalizable inferences out of observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The separation of quantitative and qualitative method caused fundamental separation between theory generation and verification (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). Abductive research means the ability to see patterns, to find out deep structures (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). According to Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000), qualitative and quantitative data can be used for the purposes of generation and verification so they cut across each other in many studies including this study as well. What differentiates abductive research from other approaches is that in studies that rely on abduction, the outcome of the study is generated from the findings in the light of theoretical insight used during the process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

In this thesis, the authors have used an abductive strategy, which means they have taken into account theories and concepts, but there was room for improvement for new assumptions as well. Firstly, the existing theories in the area were reviewed and in order
to verify the existing theories and the authors have collected relevant data to build reliable and accurate information. Parallelly, the authors have collected the detailed views about the concepts and it is likely that the findings of qualitative data may support the quantitative findings. There has been the possibility of facing new assumptions as well. Therefore, the authors were going ‘back and forth’ from one type of research activity to another and between empirical observation and theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

3.1.3 Mixed method research

While conducting a research, it is important to choose the right method that can give you most appropriate data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). “The worldviews, the designs, and the methods all contribute to a research approach that tends to be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed” (Creswell 2014, p.17).

Quantitative research can be seen as a research strategy that highlights quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that embodies view of social reality as an external, objective reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this type of research, the researchers test a theory by specifying narrow hypothesis and the collection of data support or reject the hypothesis (Creswell, 2014).

On the other hand, in qualitative studies, words are emphasized rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that highlights an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. The generation of theories has been focused on (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

However, the interconnections between the different features of quantitative and qualitative research are not so straightforward (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the mixed methods approach the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data sequentially in the design and collecting diverse types of data provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone (Creswell, 2014).
Hammersley (1996) has proposed three approaches to mixed methods research: Triangulation refers to the use of quantitative research to collaborate qualitative research findings while facilitation approach arises when one research strategy is used to aid research using the other strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Lastly, complementarity approach can be used when the two research strategies are employed in order that different aspects of an investigation can be harmonized (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Triangulation requires using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Triangulation can be associated with a quantitative strategy, as an approach to the development of multiple measures in order to improve confidence in findings and the likelihood of low response rate to the questionnaire can be compensated by using triangulation (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The authors have used mixed methods and the chosen mixed method approach is triangulation. This method has been chosen as most suitable approach for this study since the research question demands verification of existing theory and a deep knowledge is needed to construct a rich and reliable analysis. The limited research about the research area requires more detailed knowledge to be gathered. Also the limitation of results and the possibility of non-response rate have been decreased by using qualitative method.

The study begins with quantitative research to generalize results to a population. In a second phase, qualitative method has been used to collect detailed views from interviewees. The authors have improved confidence in the findings by using a mixed approach also the limitation of one method has been eliminated by using other method in the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.2 Research Design

“A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.40). A research design gives the basic directions or recipe for carrying out the projects (Hair, Babin, Money & Samuel, 2003) and decisions about the priority being given to range of dimensions of research process (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
According to Bryman & Bell (2011), there are five types of research designs: experimental design; cross sectional design or social survey design; longitudinal design; case study design; comparative design.

In order to decide the research design that should be implemented, the research question and the aim of the study were taken into consideration. Since the purpose of the study is to compare the shopping experience and find out the consistency of the shopping experience online and in-store, the authors needed to use a research design, which could enable them to examine the relationship between variables.

Longitudinal study is eliminated since the authors are not trying to map out a change over time in the thesis. The authors are not focusing in a single organization or event so the case study was not considered. Since the theories of the concepts has been tested and a detailed view has been gathered about the concepts at a single point in time, the cross sectional design was selected.

Cross sectional design entails the collection of data one more than one case and a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then analyzed to find out patterns of association (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Bryman & Bell (2011) stated that by using a cross sectional design it is possible to examine the relationships between variables. Social surveys, and focus group methods can be used in the cross sectional design (Ibid).

3.3 Data sources

Data can be explained as primary or secondary based upon its source (Hair et al., 2003). Primary data are resulting from completing a research project where the researcher has been involved in designing a data collection device, collection of the data and coding the data (Ibid).

On the other hand, secondary data have been gathered for some other research purposes (Hair et al., 2003). Secondary data can be analysis of either quantitative or qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Hair et al., (2003) researchers should always check for the potential secondary data sources before collecting primary data.
Both primary data and secondary data are used in this study. The primary data has been collected in the form of focus group interviews in order to reach new knowledge about the concepts and see variety of the customers’ perceptions. On the other hand, the authors have collected and reviewed the studies of other researchers in order to find the most appropriate concepts that measure experiences both in-store and online.

The concepts are created on the basis of other researchers’ studies about the customer experience in-store or online environment. Although many scholars and practitioners acknowledge that customer experience should be the new focus of managerial attention and organizations are extremely competing in this area, the definition concept and its measures are still not unified amongst them (Maklan & Klaus, 2011). Therefore, after examining all the concepts that measure experience in-store or online, the authors chose the most appropriate ones that can cross both in-store and online experience.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The type and amount of data to be gathered depends on the nature of the study together with its research objectives (Hair et al., 2003). The qualitative data can be collected interviews, observations, documents, and records and quantitative data can be instrument data, observational checklist, numeric records such as census data. (Creswell, 2014). The key idea with the mixed design is to collect both forms of data using the same or parallel concepts (Ibid). In other words, if the concept is being measured quantitatively, the same concept is asked during the qualitative data collection process (Ibid).

For a quantitative approach, data collection can be done through structured interviews, self-completion questionnaire and structured observation, on the other side unstructured observation, and interviews, ethnography and focus group are the main methods to gather data in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Structured interviewing is called standardized interview as well, it requires the administration of an interview schedule by an interviewer (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
Structured observation is a method for systematically observing the behavior of individuals in terms of schedule” (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.270).

A self-completion questionnaire is used in order to obtain large quantities of data, usually in numerical form (Hair et al., 2003). Mail questionnaire or postal questionnaire are the most prominent ways of self-completion questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011) and mail surveys are popular, inexpensive, can be completed in a short period of time (Hair et al., 2003). These reasons convinced the authors to use self-completion questionnaires and also in order to obtain larger quantitative data so the data would give information about the concepts that reflects the population. The most damaging limitation of a survey is low response rate (Ibid). As it has been mentioned before, with the use of triangulation the problem of a low response rate has been eliminated (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Focus group is a form of group interview in which there are several interviewees, and moderator; there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular topic and group discuss certain issue as a member of groups (six to twelve people) rather than simply as individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In order to reach a deep understanding about the concepts, the authors conducted focus group interviews and the concepts have been discussed in the group. In this way interaction among the customer can generate a new understanding about the concepts since there is limited research about the area.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

Focus group

As it has been mentioned before, focus group emphasizes a specific theme or topic that is explored in depth (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The person who runs the focus group session is called moderator (Ibid). In this study the focus groups are structured in that the moderator has a list of topics or concepts to cover, but they are unstructured because the moderators allows interviewees to answer questions freely and encourages them to elaborate on their responses as recommended by Hair et al. (2003). However, the researcher has been prepared to allow some discussions that depart from the interview
guide as long as the discussion does not go off at a total tangent and the moderator might need to refocus the interviewees’ attention in that case (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

According to Malhotra (2010) the minimum number of focus groups required for a marketing research is two, the maximum is 6-15 groups. The social phenomenon is not undertaken by individuals in isolation from each other, instead it occurs in interaction and discussion with each other (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In this study, the authors have run two focus group sessions because of time and monetary limitation. The focus group consisted of 6 members in each group, 4 females and 2 males at each occasion, the reasons for an uneven gender dispersion was due to that fewer males had a possibility to join the group. The participants were aged between 22-27, both Swedish and foreign exchange and free-mover from different parts of the world currently studying at Linnaeus university. Although, in focus group 2 one graduated at LNU and is now employed as a user interface/user experience designer. The students were studying in different fields such as social and political science, information and communication, marketing, product design, innovation through business design and engineering, and fashion design both on bachelor and master level. Since the study is a mixed method approach, the focus group provides in-depth information about the concepts while the questionnaires give information about the population, which is too big to have interviews or observe (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

At the beginning of the session, the authors have asked for the permission to record the discussion because of ethical consideration. The authors have explained the concepts briefly since some of them are not well known and they have started the session by asking some explanatory questions about the concepts. The moderator did not involve in the discussion as long as the discussion goes in consistent with the topic. The interview guide can be found in appendix A.

3.6 Questionnaire Design

While designing a questionnaire researcher must realize that there will be only one chance to interact with responses, since a reasonable interval time is necessary before the same respondents can be contacted again (Hair et al., 2003).
For designing the content, structure, and appearance of the questionnaire, a number of aspects have been taken into consideration (Hair et al., 2003). First, the concepts to be measured must be clarified, clearly defined, and the method of measurement found (Ibid). Also, decisions on other questions to include such as classification or personal information, types and wording of questions, questionnaire sequence and general layout must be decided by the researchers (Hair et al., 2003).

As it has been mentioned before, the questionnaire has been distributed through email and ‘Thesis Tools’ (a survey tool for thesis, http://www.thesistools.nl/) have been used to spread the questionnaire as well. The printed questionnaire has been distributed in the library (Appendix B). The authors aim to increase response rate by using different channels to distribute the survey.

The concepts of this study were taken from different articles, which are found consistent with the research topic. Adapting questions can allow reliability to be assessed and it is more efficient than developing your own questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) however, in this study, new questions are generated as well, which are based on a theoretical framework, to fit in with this study. Since the authors have focused on the consistency of experience, this required customization of specific questions that can fit in with online and in-store shopping experience. The customization of the questions was also necessary in order to match the questions with the context of the industry. In this way, the questions became more contextualized and understandable for the respondents.

All of the items are derived from an intensive literature review, and the aesthetic/atmospherics items have been taken directly from one article. However, the other items of concepts (flow, interactivity, usability, trust, and multi-sensory experiences) are created by taking into consideration the theoretical framework. Table 1 shows the detail of generation of question.

According to Bryman & Bell (2011), shorter questions tend to achieve better response rate than longer one. For this reason, the author tried to keep questionnaire fairly short.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>How are the questions created?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>No questions used in the questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>According to most of the researchers (Novak et al.; Rose et al) in the field of flow this concept consists of different variables: Challenge, skill and time distortion. Since according to Rose et al (2012) the concept consists of three main items, i.e. skill, challenge and time distortion, the authors have tested the concept with three items that ask the respondents about the effects that are associated with flow (forget problems, lose self-consciousness, focus on occupation) and then asking shopping specific questions to the three main items that flow consists of. This approach of measuring first flow as a phenomenon and then the three items it consists of is derived from previous research and is advised by Hoffmann and Novak (2009). The question for skill chose a skill that can be used during shopping (easily and fast knowing how to find a certain product) and asks the participant whether he or she thinks they perceive themselves skilled or not. The challenge question is similar the skill question but instead of asking for abilities it asks rather whether there is a perceived challenge while shopping. The phenomenon of time distortion is asked indirectly by assessing whether a person has experienced the loss of track of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity</td>
<td>Interactivity can be divided into connectedness with the company service and on the other hand with other customers (Constantinides, 2011). Therefore one question have been taken from Rose et al.’s (2012) questionnaire asking about the connectedness with the staff as well as be thought of by the authors themselves. As interactivity consists of communicating with service staff and social networks (Constantinides, 2004), questions for social networks and customization still have to be thought of. It was thought about how social contacts can be communicated with online and offline in order to compare these experiences and then a question for each possibility has been created: whether interactive tools can be used online or the store is a socializing platform for social groups. On the other side, Constantinides (2004) argues that customization is an element of interactivity while Clifford (2012) specify this by suggesting digital profiles as example, the translation of customization or personalization online has by the authors been translated to the level of customization/personalization experienced in-store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>In order to measure atmospherics the original questions from Correia Loureiro and Roschk (2014) have been chosen since their questionnaire offered the measurement of the concept both for physical and online stores. Since no previous researcher measured sensorial experiences online and in-store and it was very difficult to find a measure to compare online and to real life sensory experiences the researchers have asked direct questions about the perception of music, color schemes and if technology can compensate someone’s need to touch the product which</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29
covers the senses of vision, audition and tactics.

| **Tactility** | Multi-sensoric experiences have not been measured so far for both in-store and online experiences. Therefore the authors decided to come up with own questions based on previous research on the effect of tactile stimulation during shopping. It was important to the authors to find out how sensory experiences can be replaced and compared online to in-store. |
| **Usability** | The main factors that affect usability are: convenience, site navigation, information architecture, ordering/payment process, search facilities and process, site speed, findability and accessibility (Constantinides, 2004). Since the authors are looking the consistency of the experience in both of the channel, the factors, which are mentioned above, are found most appropriate which fit into both channels. The items are generated by taking into consideration the factors that affect usability (Constantinides, 2004). Each item is generated in a way that can reflect different factor. As it has been mentioned above, here the questions were generally applicable to both online and offline situations so just words like “internet shopping” had to be changed to “in-store”. The formulation remains similar in order to keep the validity of the question. |

Table 1: Generation of Questions (owned)

### 3.6.1 Operationalization and measurement of scales

The process in which a concept is defined is called operationalization. A concept is the building blocks of theory and categorizes the organization of ideas and observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When a concept is defined it needs an index or a similar measurement indicator to calculate how much or to what degree a concept exists (Berg, 2009). An indicator stands for the concept and can be devised through questions as in a structured interview schedule, questionnaire, or structured observation schedule (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Operational definition as it is called, clarifies what a concept means and how it is to be measured, this is necessary in order to avoid results lacking explanatory power or applicability (Berg, 2009). The authors have made an attempt to explain the concepts that contribute to experiences both online and offline in the table 13 (Appendix C).

### 3.6.2 Question format

In broad terms, two forms of questions are used in the questionnaire and these two types are known as close ended or structured and open-ended questions or unstructured (Hair
et al. 2003; Malhotra, 2010). Open-ended or unstructured question place are relatively easy to generate and the respondent are free to answer them in their own words (Hair et al., 2003). These kinds of questions provide rich and detailed answer (Ibid). The main disadvantage of these kinds of questions is that interviewer bias is high (Malhotra, 2010).

Close ended or structured question can be pre-coded, but their design is more difficult and time consuming than open-ended questions (Hair et al., 2003). However, close ended questions can be pre-coded, data input and computer analysis of data is easy and less expensive (Ibid). A close question may be multiple choices, dichotomous, or a scale (Malhotra, 2010). The disadvantage of the questionnaire can be due or position bias, which is respondent’s tendency to check an alternative merely because it occupies a certain position or is listed in certain order (Ibid).

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions due to the easiness of processing answer and they are easy for respondents to complete. The questions are mostly scale or multiple choices so the respondent could choose the answer among these options. Also, the printing style (different fonts, print size) was consistent as it has been recommended by Bryman & Bell (2011). Even though there is a clear advantage of leading questions’ simplicity and convenience the researchers are aware that the results may be biased due to these leading questions. That is why in some concepts both negative and positive formulations have been used.

3.6.3 Wording of questions

“Question wording is the translation of the desired question content and structure into words that respondent can clearly and easily understand” (Malhotra 2010, p.346). Deciding on question wording is most important and difficult part of generating questionnaire (Malhotra, 2010). If a question is worded poorly, respondents may reject to answer or may answer it incorrectly (Ibid).

To avoid these kinds of problems, it is important to use ordinary and unambiguous words, avoid leading or biasing questions, and avoid implicit alternatives and assumptions (Malhotra, 2010; Hair et al., 2003). The questions should always define the issue and the clear instruction must be given how to respond the questions (Bryman &
Bell, 2011; Malhotra, 2010) and presenting, spacing, and layout must be taken into consideration as well (Hair et al., 2003). The researchers tried to keep all formulations from previous researchers in order to maintain validity. Yet, the authors tried to reformulate questions that were unclear for trial respondents and that were too general for the topic that has been researched about.

3.6.4 Question sequence

According to Stone (1993), the sequence of questions is from the general to the particular. The first part of the questionnaire should be neutral, but interesting with the more sensitive items coming later on. The hard questions and demographic characteristic questions can be placed at the end (Stone, 1993).

In this study, the questionnaire starts with simple and clear questions, and the harder questions are put before demographic part. Demographic characteristic questions are placed at the end of the questionnaire.

3.6.5 Pretesting

No questionnaire should be sent to the sample before the researcher has examined the likely and accuracy of the responses (Hair et al. 2003, p.208). This can be done by pretesting the questionnaire using a small sample of respondents (Ibid).

In this study pretesting has been done by contacting two to three different experts in the area of business and economics research. Their suggestions and recommendation have been taken into consideration by the authors. On the other side, the questionnaire has been distributed to five consumers for pretesting and these contacts have been established through the authors’ personal networks. By taking into considerations experts’ and consumers’ feedback, the authors have been able to increase face validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Also wording and formulations can be improved in order to increase response rate and decrease the number of incomplete surveys.

3.7 Sampling

“Sampling design is part of the business research process” (Hair et al. 2003, p.208). The sampling design must answer the following questions: (1) should a sample or
census be used? (2) If a sample, then which sample is best? (3) What sample size is necessary? (Ibid). Since the contacting entire population would be costly and time consuming, sampling method can be encountered in almost every research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The population in this study is narrowed down to the people who have shopped online and in store in Sweden since the aim of this study to understand what might influence the perception of the differences between online- and physical store experiences. However the authors still face delimitation since the size of chosen population is not known.

A sample is subgroup of the population selected for participation in the study and they are used to make inferences about the population parameters (Malhotra, 2010). In order to be able to generalize the findings from the sample to the population, the sample must be representative (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There are two techniques to choose to sample: Probability sampling, and non-probability sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In probability sampling, the chance, or probability of each case being selected from the population is known and is mostly even for all cases (Saunders et al., 2009). For non-probability sample, the probability of each case being chosen from population is not known and one may generalize the findings from non-probability sampling but not on statistical grounds (Ibid). Convenience sampling is one type of non-probability sampling that simply sample is chosen available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Considerations of sampling size are likely affected by time and cost juncture (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this reason, the authors decided to use convenience sampling for the questionnaire and focus group because of time and monetary limitations. After distributing the online questionnaire and handing out the questionnaire in the library, the consumers, who were available and keen to answer questionnaire, have been chosen. The authors used their personal network to choose the interviewees of focus groups and the sample has been sent an invitation letter by email (Appendix D).
3.7.1 Sampling frame

A sampling frame is extensive list of elements from which sample is drawn (Hair et al., 2003). It consists of a list or set of directions in order to determine the target population (Malhotra, 2010). In this study, first of all, the population included the people who shop online and in-store as well in Sweden.

As it has been mentioned before, the authors used convenience sampling since it is the least expensive and least time consuming (Malhotra, 2010). However, the authors have not been able to have any list that represents the population. The authors have used their own personal network and the students of Linnaeus university to represent the population, which cause a delimitation if the other researchers want to replicate this study.

On the other hand, the authors have chosen the sampling frame for focus group from students in Linnaeus University who has experienced shop online and in-store so the participants can understand the concepts better since it is about measuring experience online and in-store.

3.7.2 Sample size

There are three factors that affect the sample size while trying to estimate a proportion (Lind, Marchal & Wathen, 2011). The first factor is the level of confidence (Ibid). According to Lind, Marchal & Wathen (2011) the 95 percent and the 99 percent levels of confidence are the most common. The other factors that helps to determine the size of sample is the size of population and the variation in the population (Lind, Marchal & Wathen, 2011).

Unfortunately there are no precise numbers about the population that can be used but the researchers have estimated the population that has been researched according to available sources. One source, a research about the e-commerce occurrence in Sweden (Posten, 2012) used the population of Swedes aged between 18 and 79 as a target group to investigate. The authors agreed on this population. The number of people in this population has been estimated to be 7,130,000.
According to Posten (2012) 63% of studied Swedes shop online every quarter year or more. 42% of the purchased goods are clothes and footwear. This means for this research that the total population can be estimated to be $7,130,000 \times 62\% \times 42\% = 1,856,652$ inhabitants.

Generating the sample size with the formula for an unknown population the following results appear:

$$\frac{((Z)^2 \times \sigma \times 1 - \sigma)}{(E)^2} = \frac{((1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Formula 1: Adam (2007)

Taking population size into consideration delivers a sample size of

$$\frac{2500 \times N \times Z^2}{(25 \times (N - 1) + (2500 \times Z^2))} = \frac{2500 \times 1,856,652 \times 1.96^2}{(25 \times (1,856,652 - 1) + (2500 \times 1.96^2))} = 384$$

Formula 2: Malhotra (2011)

$Z =$ Standardized normal value
$\sigma =$ estimated rate (0.5 when unknown)
$E =$ Precision range
$N =$ population size

This is identical with the previous calculation. Therefore the researchers needed a sample of 384 completed questionnaires in order to reach a representative sample.

The actual survey however did deliver 265 answers. Due to time constraints and a mixed method research approach the authors decided to start analyzing the 265 answers. The researchers are aware that the sample might be too small in order to represent the whole population but yet the results have been used because the standard deviation is 90% and thus might the sample size be representative enough. Furthermore, the authors did gain a rough overview about the outcomes of the quantitative research with these findings. Since the topic has been investigated in depth later on during the focus group study the authors take the risk of a sample with less representation and sample size of a bit less than 90% standard deviation because more in-depth research followed.
3.7.3 Selecting Sample

According to Bryman & Bell (2011) while choosing focus group participants, interviewees for each group can be selected randomly or through some kind of snowball sampling. The other issue about selecting sample for the focus group is whether to select people are unknown to each other or to use natural grouping (Ibid).

Bryman & Bell (2011) suggest that if it is important for research to bring out new assumptions about the concepts, groups of strangers are likely to work better. One problem with using natural groups is that people who know each other are likely to generate with taken for granted assumption (Ibid).

For this study, the authors are trying to explore new understanding, and new assumption about the concepts so the authors tried to select interviewees that do not know each other in the group. In every group, at the beginning of the session, the interviewees are asked to introduce themselves briefly so they can address to each other by using names. They were also given name-tags and supplied with a rich breakfast in order to make them as comfortable as possible.

3.8 Data analysis method

Data is collected in business research two broad purposes-discovery and testing assumption (Hair et al., 2003). Since this study consists of quantitative and qualitative data, the authors have analyzed both. In order to analyze the quantitative data, IBM SPSS will be used. IBM SPSS is statistical analysis software that delivers core capabilities to take the analytical process from start to finish (SPSS, n.d.). The analytic induction, grounded theory, and hermeneutic approach are the general strategies for analyzing qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

3.8.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

For qualitative data analysis, the authors entered all data of the questionnaire to SPSS. After entering the data, the descriptive statistic has been used in order to generate frequency tables, diagrams, and it demonstrates measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Descriptive statistic organizes, summarize, and communicate with group of numerical observation (Nolan & Heinze,
The correlation analysis calculates the association between two variables (Hair et al., 2003). The number representing the Pearson correlation is referred to as a correlation coefficient and it ranges -1.00 to +1.00 (Ibid). While -1.00 or +1.00 demonstrates the perfect association and it seldom occurs (Ibid). The coefficient can be either positive or negative which indicates the direction of relationship (Hair et al., 2003). The larger correlation coefficient means the stronger the relationship (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

While doing correlation analysis, two factors are needed to be taken into consideration. The size of the computed coefficient and the size of sample (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The computed coefficient or the correlation coefficient assesses the association between two variables and the larger the correlation coefficient mean the stronger the linkage or level of association (Hair et al., 2003). The second factor, sample size, is related with the statistical significance (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A test of statistical significance allows the analyst to estimate how confident he or she can be that the results deriving from a study based on randomly selected sample are generalizable to the population from which sample was drawn (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The correlation analysis has been applied to the each concept in order to measure association between two variables which are in-store and online variables. The correlation coefficient and the significance level have been examined in order to determine the relationship between variables as it is suggested by Bryman & Bell (2011).

### 3.8.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

“Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing data (i.e., text data as in transcript, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data” (Creswell 2013, p.180).
According to Bryman & Bell (2011), analytical induction and grounded theory are the general strategies of qualitative data analysis. On the other side, hermeneutic approach can be used to analyze the qualitative data, which is more flexible in comparison to the grounded theory and analytical induction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

Analytic induction is extremely rigorous so it is not so common for researchers to use (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The grounded theory is most widely used framework for analysis of qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The theory was derived from the data, systematically collected and analyzed through the research process and the purpose is to generate theory out of research by achieving a close fit between the two (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Coding is the key process, whereby the data are broken down into component parts, which are given names (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A hermeneutic approach emphasizes understanding the data (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). A hermeneutic circle can be generated by going ‘back and forth’ between theory and empirical data and the data are always interpreted (Ibid). The circle demonstrates that the parts can be understood from the ‘whole’ and the ‘whole’ can be understood by looking its parts (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

The first step of analyzing qualitative data has been transcribing the focus group session by sorting them according to the concepts that are discussed. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher should read all transcripts; immerse themselves in the details, trying to make sense of the interviews as a whole before breaking into parts.

The next step consists of moving from reading to describe, classifying, and interpreting the data (Creswell, 2013). Forming the codes and categories in the process has been the heart of data (Ibid). Since the authors divided the transcripts into the predesigned concepts from the interview schedule, they were trying to create ‘detailed description’, develop themes or provide interpretations in the light of the existing theories related to the concepts (Creswell, 2013). As it has been mentioned before, the authors have been going ‘back and forth’ between empirical observation and theory.
3.9 Quality criteria

Research design is supposed to include a logical set of statements, and it can be judged the quality of any given design according to certain logical test (Yin, 2009). The researcher must ensure that selected concept represent and measure the concept in an accurate and consistent way population (Hair et al., 2003). Accuracy is associated with validity, while consistency is associated with reliability (Ibid).

3.9.1 Validity

Validity in quantitative research

“The issue of measurement of validity has to do with whether or not measure of concept really measures of the concepts” (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.159). There are three important forms of validity to be considered: content validity; construct validity and criterion validity (Hair et al., 2003).

Content validity or face validity might be established by asking other people whether or not measure seems to be relevant to the concept (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As it has been mentioned before, the measures of the concepts were taken from different articles, which are consistent with study area. Also, the authors went to experts for validation, who are specialized in the area, and five respondents/consumers to do pretest and this has increased the face validity.

Construct validity evaluates what the concept or scale is, in fact, measuring (Hair et al., 2003). To evaluate the construct validity, two criteria must be used: convergent and discriminant validity (Ibid). The convergent validity is the extent to which the construct is positively correlated with other measures of the same construct on the other side discriminant validity is the extent to which the construct does not correlate with other measures that are different from it (Ibid). Pearson’s correlation test has been used to measure construct validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

“Criterion Validity assesses whether a construct performs as expected relative to other variables identified as meaningful criteria “ (Hair et al. 2003, p.175). Concurrent validity and predictive validity are two measures that need to be checked to measure criterion validity. In concurrent validity, the researcher employs a criterion on which
cases are known to change and that is relevant to the concept in question (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In predictive validity researchers use a future criterion measure rather than current one as in the case of concurrent validity (Ibid). Since the authors are looking at the difference of customer experience in online store and in-store in fashion industry and Blazqués (2014) suggested that there are some differences between online experience and in-store experience, the results of this study have demonstrated the type of differences for fast fashion customer experiences in Sweden.

Validity in qualitative research

Validity in qualitative research can have different meanings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Internal validity evaluates whether or not there is good match between researchers’ observation and theoretical ideas that are developed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As it has been mentioned before, the authors reviewed literature and chose the concepts in consistent with theories, and the concepts that are chosen for questionnaire have been discussed in the focus group which have helped the authors to evaluate the outcomes according to the theories. The analysis of the focus group results has been generated in the light of the theoretical framework in order to reach internal validity.

External validity refers to the degree findings that can be generalized (Bryman & Bell, 2011). External validity can be a problem for researchers because of their tendency to employ case of small samples (Ibid). The focus group has been a small sample of the population in this study and the authors are aware that the results of the focus groups can not be generalized and create a problem for external validity. However, in order to reach external validity the authors have been using mixed method approach and the results of the quantitative method have been taken into consideration to generalize the findings and the focus groups results have been used to elaborate on the concepts.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability in quantitative research

Reliability is concerned with whether the results of the study are repeatable. The term is used in order to question if the measures devised for concept in business and management are consistent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Questionnaires are considered reliable if repeated application results in consistency score, consistency is important
especially in multi item scales. A multi item scales such as the one designed in the questionnaire used in this research consists of multiple items (variables and indicators) that represent a concept. The items are questions that the respondents are asked to evaluate. For the multi item scale to be reliable the scores (ratings) of the individual questions (items) that make up the scale should be correlated.

Internal consistency reliability, is a type of internal reliability used to get a summated scale where several items are summarized to form a total score for a construct (Hair et al., 2003). Coefficient Alpha or Alpha Cronbach can be used to test internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The number can vary between 0 denoting that there is no internal reliability and 1 denoting that there is perfect reliability (Hair et al., 2003) An Alpha of 0.7 is considered as a rule of thumb to be efficient (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The results of the reliability test are presented in the quantitative result chapter.

Reliability in qualitative research

Reliability can be divided into two; internal and external reliability in qualitative research. Internal reliability is concerned with how good the match is between the researcher's observation and the theoretical ideas they derive from it and to which degree, when there is more than one observer, the members of a team agree to what they hear and see. External reliability refers to whether a study can be replicated. This is especially important in quantitative study. In contrast this is hard to apply on qualitative research due to problems of “freezing a social setting” and circumstances to make it replicable. An important point to make is that validity and reliability are analytically distinguishable but in practice they are related since validity presumes reliability, in other words, if the measure isn't reliable it cannot be valid. (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The authors have conducted two focus groups, which consist of different students in order to the see variety of the perception about the measurement of the experience concepts, however they just chose the students from Linnaeus university in order to ensure the reliability. Also, the detailed interview guide (Appendix B) can enable other researchers to replicate the focus group in another university or another context. On the other hand, all three authors joined to the focus group session in order to evaluate what they see and observe and they all agreed upon the outcomes of the focus group by taking into account the theoretical framework and transcription of the interviews.
3.9.3 Quality criteria in sources

Source Criticism

According to Thurén (2013) time connection is one of four important principles to follow when it comes to source criticism. The more the time has passed between a happening and a sources explanation of a happening, the more reason there is to be suspicious about a source which has been taken into consideration when choosing the references for the theoretical framework in this study. The other three principles used here are authenticity, i.e. is the source what it claims to be? Independence stands for whether the source is supposed to be able to “stand alone” and not be a transcript or refer at of another source. Lastly used articles were assessed on a tendency freedom, and not give a false view of reality because it's biased by political, economic or personal interests.

### Table 2: Summary of the Research Method (Owned)

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4 Empirical investigation

*This chapter demonstrates the focus group findings. The data are divided into categories, which are consistent with the theories.*

4.1 First Focus Group - Flow

In the focus group one of the findings concerning flow was that flow is experienced mostly online in solitude. Interviewee 1 explains it as follows “It’s easy for me to get into a flow online, because then I’m alone, no one can distract me. I mean when you’re in the store you can get distracted by lots of things, by the salesman or something” The interviewees valued their integrity in-store and interaction with salesmen could be the factor to stop the flow. As interviewee 6 puts it: “Online you get into flow but when you’re shopping (in-store) and someone starts to talk to you, like the salesmen, then you get awkward and aware of your environment again... when you try on the clothes there’s always one guy standing there in front of the mirror and immediately start to talk to you. Then I never get in a flow, I actually become eager to leave” Interviewee 4 mentioned that flow is connected to how the salesmen works. For interviewee 3 flow was connected to shopping for enjoyment, not for necessities and when being time constrained. When shopping for fun with families or friends she could experience the loss of time perception, this was not experienced when the purpose of the shopping was to find a specific item. Interviewee 1 agreed to this.

4.2 Second Focus Group - Flow

The second focus group had different ideas about what causes flow and concluded that they would rather experience flow online because there they are not disturbed by other customers. Interviewee 4 argues that interactivity with friends during shopping in-store can cause flow: “I think it is really easy to get into flow especially when you are with friends in town”. On the other hand, a few of the interviewees disagreed because they felt that in the store flow is easily disturbed by other customers or long queues at the cashiers. They argued that at home on the computer nobody can disturb them and that is when they are more in a flow. Furthermore the focus group concluded that too much choice in-store can disturb the feeling of flow because it was tiring. On the other hand,

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¹ Transcription of the focus groups can be distributed upon request
the availability of many items online enhance flow because it is possible to shop things that belong together.

Speaking of this, the group concluded that recommendations of related products online facilitate a feeling of flow as well and that it is comparable to walking around in a store looking for other clothes and accessories or the organization of items in grouping of outfits rather by single item.

### 4.3 First Focus Group - Interactivity

In focus group one, social interactivity was more distinctive in-store, when shopping with friends and family. The majority of the interviewees agreed to that there were no technical functions provided to comment the clothes as in interacting with strangers online. Although they explained that they don't interact with strangers in-store either. Fast fashion brands don’t offer these tools on their websites. As interviewee 3 puts it: 

“It would be nice to have more possibilities to comment something. Sometimes I would like to know before if it's good quality or not because sometimes you buy stuff and it looks horrible, doesn't fit at all or look like it does on the pictures... I always read the comments I don't think they have this possibility for big stores”. The interviewees explained that in-store you talk to friends, online you shop in solitude or share with friends when buying for special occasions.

As for a meeting place for social interaction in-store shopping was more important. As interviewee 1 puts it “When you see it on the computer, it's not so social... in-store shopping is a fun activity”.

When asked about service interviewee 2 explained that service is not same online as in-store, neither do you ask the same questions. One concern was intrusive salespersons concerning service as well. Also in-store they try to sell add-ons while online you decide on your own according to interviewee 3. As she puts it: “Sometimes it’s annoying when you for example just want to buy shoes and they try to sell something extra... I won't buy it, It's annoying sometimes”. Also according to interviewee 1 in-store they can be persuasive and tell lies, online it’s more about pure facts and therefore more reliable. As she puts it: “... But some stores like H&M, it feels like they are lying to you, you’re like: does it look nice? And they go: yeah that looks perfect. Just to make
you try it... so I don't really trust that people that work there because you know that they just want to sell... online you don't really have any people, there you can look up the product information on your own, just have a look, it feels more reliable, they can't write false stuff there... but yeah of course it's not like all the store lie it's just the impression I get sometimes”.

Suggestions online make it more difficult to make the right decision, although this might happen online as well. Interviewee 5 explains “It's an annoying thing there (online) when you decide to buy a pair of jeans and you see the other recommended products, maybe there's more jeans there, then you need to look at them as-well so it takes time to do the right choice”. Interviewee 3 responds to this with: “Yeah but I think it’s the same thing in-store, because sometimes you don't have all jeans at the same place, maybe you choose 3 pairs of jeans and want to try them and then you walk around in the store and find another pair, everywhere there are some jeans”.

4.4 Second Focus Group - Interactivity

Regarding interactivity with social contacts the second focus group agreed that interaction with friends and family is only possible in-store and not online. On the other hand, interaction with strangers is only possible online and not even desired in-store: “If I could, I would remove absolutely everyone (strangers) from the store” (Interviewee 1).

The interacting functions for social interaction online with strangers in terms of the possibility of rating is a good way according to the focus group and mostly found useful even though it is not yet widely available: “for people there is actually no time to review that [the clothes] until it is on sale” (Interviewee 2).

4.5 First Focus Group - Aesthetics

When asked about similarities or differences concerning aesthetics online and in-store Zara, H&M and Monki were the best known brands amongst the group. Interviewee 1 states that it is hard to translate the same aesthetics but most of them are really good at it. The same attributes in-store can be found on Zara’s website. As she puts it “I think it has the same vibe... if you go online it's really wide and clean”. Interviewee 1,2 and 5 agreed to that sometimes it was so messy, too much clothing and hard to find yourself
around in-store at H&M, interviewee 1 further explained that it could also at times be messy online at H&M webpage. “Sometimes I think it can get a little bit messy, but it's still kind of ‘clean’... the store is a bit different, it usually crowded”. The focus group explains that “messy” stores are those that exhibit a huge number of clothes on small place which makes it look full and crowded and at times confusing. Clean and bright stores on the other hand have an organized layout and much space between the shelves.

The interviewees explained that Monki with a more precise style has been more successful than H&M with more consistent aesthetics. As interviewee 2 puts is: “You get the same kind of feeling that you get in-store, although the store is a bit more messy, it’s easier to organize a page than in a store, but it’s the same vibe, the same feeling”. Mainstream brands are more general and more difficult to keep consistent because of the wide variety of collections, while niche brands are more focused taking effort in distinguishing their brand and making it consistent.

Interviewee 3 mentioned that in-store, sensory input that can go wrong, while online it's easier to create the right atmosphere and present the brand in a wanted way. As she puts it “In-stores it’s sometimes hard to create the atmosphere they (retailers) want to create, like perfumes for example, they might think it’s nice but most people maybe hate it and therefore it doesn't do what it should do. In general it should be easier to create an atmosphere in-store because of interaction with all senses... you can touch the clothes and see the material and you can do a lot with music, pictures and stuff but on internet it’s not that much stimulation, it’s easier to really show what you want to show. For me it works better if they have really nice photos then if you go in-store and it’s too loud and smells a lot... it can't be as wrong as in-stores... online it's just one two senses activated ”. Over stimulating experiences were not desired by the interviewees.

When asked about how the usage of technology is different in-store and online the majority of the group believed that technology is less important in-store than online because of the lack of multisensory input and interaction with the product. Some different technologies are suggested (see below). The interviewees mentioned that there was not much technical devices (e.g. iPads, interactive screens) in fashion stores yet but they are desired by the focus group. Bright and tidy websites and stores are preferred in comparison to crowded and messy.
4.6 Second Focus Group - Aesthetic

The group starts discussing what their general experiences with in-store atmospheric impressions are. Also this focus group was of the opinion that overstimulation through too loud music, strong smell and dim lightening are disturbing and irritating. They found it annoying when “the music's too loud in some stores so you don’t even hear what you are thinking” (Interviewee 6).

In general the focus group preferred tidy and bright stores in comparison to crowded and messy places for which they named H&M as an example. The Interviewees first mention that the consistent thing about H&M is the colors schemes used in the store and online. It is described as “messy” as in the store, although interviewee 1 adds: “sometimes you want it to look messy as well! If you go and look at these flyers, from Netto or something like that, they look crappy on purpose! Because they want you to have the feeling that this is cheap. I am sure that this is also the case in how you put up H&M stores that you also have the feeling that’s, ok we have like all these things. We don’t put it into sections or give you some sort of storytelling of like flow or like steering people around and the way you put up shelves. [...] At H&M they also have ALL their products on the shelves and if you look at the web: they have EVERYTHING there”.

Also, regarding the aesthetics and the design of a store, the focus group noticed that many stores are looking similar, both online and in-store. Stores that fall out of the scheme and are exceptionally differentiated from other stores are perceived positively by the focus group. Examples are the contrast between H&M and Monki. “It is like can you imagine going into forever 21 and going into H&M and going into BIKBOK or Lindex or you know like Gina Tricot, without the label would you be able to tell that it is a different shop?” (Interviewee 2).

The participants thereby mentioned not only the similarity of the store aesthetics but also of the products. This results as well in a similarity of the website and the store.
4.7 First Focus Group – Tactility

When asked if technology can compensate for multisensory experiences, interviewee 3 answered that it works at times and at times it could be deceiving. As she put it: “Sometimes you see something on a picture, it looks nice and you order it, and then it looks completely different, it’s more shiny or something you can't see on the photos. Often I want to touch the clothes and see what the material is like”. There is still room for improvement for online stores. Named examples were online videos in order to make visible how the garment moves.

Online the interviewee found advanced technology more necessary since the buyer cannot touch the products. Online companies have to make a bigger effort to sell the product. Interviewee 3 explains: “Online it's nice because you don't have the possibility to try it on, hold it in your hand and touch it, then you maybe need a different kind of technology to make it possible to experience it. I think it's more important online because you don't have the things in front of you, so they (the companies) have to create an atmosphere, they have to make you want to buy it, there they have to put more effort to it, in-store you wouldn't decided because of any technical stuff around you”.

4.8 Second Focus Group - Tactility

The question about the sensory experiences online or in-store were answered by the whole group starting from the opinion that no matter how good the brand is or how different the options they have, people will still want to try the clothes.

The best solution is, according to the focus group, to improve the return policies or find similar solutions that make it easy for the customers to order a product online and to get to feel it in reality. Examples were logistical solutions, showrooms without staff or similar.

In order to improve the grasp of the products, it was suggested that more retailers should offer videos from models on a catwalk where one could see how the cloth moves. This is advantageous because pictures are so much elated that they often look completely different from the actual product, videos are more natural.
The group was of the opinion that since the stores are so similar they have to differentiate each other with other points, for example experiences. They also conclude that the future for online shops lies in making the products easier accessible in order to grasp the product.

4.9 First Focus Group - Usability

In focus group one the interviewees explained that shopping in-store is more convenient because of direct estimation and quick access to the clothes. “Then (in-store) you know how it fits, you know how it looks, one time when I ordered from a site, the color didn't fit with what I was expecting, then (in-store) it’s always right, you don't have to send it back ” (Interviewee 6), “You know what you get in-store” (Interviewee 1). Although interviewee 3 found it more comfortable shopping online having access to your wardrobe.

Concerning what was faster, interviewee 1 explained that shopping online was faster, if you know what you want, the rest of the group agreed to this. Although the access is faster in-store.

Concerning how easy it was in terms of spending energy the interviewees explained that it's dependent on where you live. Payment and return process was experienced easier in-store also because there were no delivery or return costs. Interviewee 3 explained her resistance to purchase online because of shipping fee: “If you buy something online at H&M it cost approximately 6 EUR (60 SEK), that is why I never order there, I just look it up and go to the shop to find out if I can find it there, because I know most times when I order things online I know I’ll send it back”.

4.10 Second Focus Group - Usability

Regarding usability the group concluded that the convenience in general depends on the location of the customer’s residence. They argued that customers living outside of cities might rather find online shopping more convenient because the physical stores are not as available as in cities. On the other hand, people living in the city might therefore prefer to go to the store because it is closer and the item can be fetched immediately. Also, items can be tried on immediately so there is a much less chance that they have to
be returned: “you actually see the product and its attributes and differences and you get them immediately and if you tried a product and don’t buy it then you just don’t buy it” (Interviewee 3).

It might even be more complicated to go to a post office to pick the package up or to return it. Interviewee 5 explained accordingly: “When you live in the center, you could go down and just go to an H&M or whatever. I couldn’t do it when I was younger so I always shopped online. And I still do, Växjö is not so big”.

Yet, the group could not decide which is faster: online or offline shopping. Both have their complications with returning items or going to the store and waiting time. As Interviewee 6 puts it: “You still have to go to ICA and pick it [the delivery] up, right?”

Still, shopping online is seen as more convenient in terms of effort as long as the products do not have to be returned.

The payment in-store or online has each its advantages: “Online they have like this payment plans: when you shopped too much from a special amount you can pay it back like one month later, like 50 SEK each months [...]”, Interviewee 5 says. The different payment options online were appreciated but perceived “dangerous” by the focus group since they include a mini-credit or options to pay a product much later. Yet, the freedom of choice to pay with different methods is appreciated.

In-store however it is possible to pay with cash.

**Recommendations from the focus groups**

At the end the focus group was asked for recommendation and improvements in-store and online. The group highlighted the importance of problems with measurements and sizes. As interviewee 1 puts it: “It would be good if they had your measurement but nothing personal... like contact information... I wouldn't feel comfortable to give them all my information”. When asked about their opinion on an anonymous digital profile as an option, that is not connected to them personally, a profile that holds information such as height and size interviewee 1 responded: “It would be good to have your sizes so you
know that there are available items”, “Yeah online the problem is that even though they have your size maybe it doesn't fit” (Interviewee 3). Interviewee 3 mentioned the problem with usually being forced to ordering different sizes because she was usually unsure when ordering online. The majority of the group agreed to that a digital profile would be handy and time saving. Interviewee 5 mentioned that a platform where you could have suggestions of brands that suit your measures would be handy. Interviewee 3 mentioned it would be nice to be able try it on online, where one could upload photo of oneself and not just see any random person.

The second focus group was thinking about points of improvement starting at problems that they saw while shopping. The first suggestion that they came up with was to establish self-checkout systems like in grocery stores that would reduce waiting times and queues.

They also were of the opinion that different models on websites could be helpful to figure out how the clothes look on a person that is not shaped like an average model. Different body types of models should be available. Thereby tools would be helpful where actual body masses could be saved and size recommendations would be made.

Also, the group mentioned that it will be important to customize the business and to make the customer feel special in the store: “Everybody these days is like: Yeah but I am my own person, yes you are your own person and again I wear my own clothes and so are a million other people by the way, but I would like to downssize everything where you can have like you know these more personalized experience and you can actually get something that you really like you and that will stay with you”.

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5 Results

In the following the results of the quantitative part of the research will be presented. The authors will demonstrate the descriptive findings, results of reliability and validity of the study. Lastly, the correlation analysis is presented in order to measure the consistency of experience.

5.1 Demographics

The last part of the survey consisted of demographic information to the respondents. They were asked for their age, gender, level of education, work activity and income level. Respondents of this study had the following composition:

Out of the 263 participants that answered the question 58.6% were female and 41.4% were male respondents. By far the biggest part of them was aged between 18-25 years old (68.8%) and 72 were between 26-35 years old (27.3%). This age spreading has its reason in the sampling method. The analysis of the work activity showed as well that most participants were students (66%). Next to that 17.1% were full-time workers and 14.1% of the respondents were part-time workers.

It is thus not surprising that 68.6% of the respondents reported to have a higher education level and 27.7 were post-graduates.

The demographics reflect the population of a university and may thus not be representative for everyone shopping online in the country. However, a study by Kau, Tang & Ghose (2003) shows clearly that the age group of this sample is also that group which is the most involved in online shopping.

The income level of the respondents was very spread: 47.9% of the respondents earned 8,000-14,000 SEK per month, 29.7% less than 8,000 SEK and 11% between 15,000 and 19,000 SEK. Since most of the respondents have quite a high income even though they are students, this sample is acceptable because the participants seem to have money to spend and thus it is principally possible to shop fashion from time to time.
5.2 Reliability & Validity

5.2.1 Reliability

Before analyzing the data derived from the survey a reliability test is carried out in order to measure whether the variables used are reliable and if it’s worth analyzing them. Reliability measures whether the results of the survey are repeatable and if we are really measuring what we are supposed to measure (Adams, 2007). In this research the internal reliability has been tested in the program IBM SPSS calculating the Cronbach alpha for every variable (Hair et al., 2003). As mentioned earlier, an alpha score above 0.70 can be seen as reliable as a rule of thumb (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The results can be seen in Table 3. As seen there the reliability of the variables for Aesthetics and flow are reliable scoring over 0.70. The scores for usability are slightly under 0.7. Since this border is mentioned “as a rule of thumb” the researchers interpreted this result as weakly reliable, decided however to take the results into consideration keeping the low reliability in mind.

So, the concepts of usability, aesthetics and flow have been used for the further analysis and interpretation of the results. Only the concept of interactivity cannot be taken into consideration because the reliability score is too weak with only 0.438 (online) and 0.526 (in-store). Reasons for this low score might on the one hand be the low number of items or on the other hand the fact that the items have been created by the researchers themselves and not been copied from previous researchers.

Hair et al. (2003) mention that depending on research objective lower alphas may be acceptable, too. Since a general overview has to be won the authors consider the variable interactivity as acceptable as well. The concept of interactivity is still a subject to investigation in the qualitative part of the research. The other outcomes have been used in the quantitative analysis and are the basis for the analysis of the focus group research later in this study.
Variable | Items | Alpha  
---|---|---
**In-Store** | |  
Usability | 5 | .689  
Interactivity | 3 | .526  
Aesthetics | 8 | .772  
Flow | 6 | .702  
**Online** | |  
Usability | 5 | .698  
Interactivity | 3 | .438  
Aesthetics | 8 | .701  
Flow | 6 | .786  

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha Values, (owned)

### 5.2.2 Validity

As mentioned in the methodology, a validity test has been carried out with the results of the survey. Thereby correlation tables have been created that monitor the Pearson Correlation indicator.

This indicator determines how much the different items of a variable are related. If they are too related the case might be that two items measure the same thing and one item might have to be excluded. The line for this determinant is drawn at 0.8 or -0.8, meaning that a higher or lower score is unacceptable (Field, 2009).

In summary, the validity test delivered the following results: Usability in-store items were significant on 0.01 or 0.05 level and none of them showed too much correlation. Also, the significance and validity scores of the concepts of aesthetics in-store, usability online, interactivity online, aesthetics online and flow
online were acceptable. The only measures that were questionable were items 1 and 3 in the concept of interactivity because the significance level of that measure was on 0.57 level and thus slightly less significant than all other outcomes. However, since the divergence to the significance level of 0.05 is only 0.007 and the Pearson correlation is very acceptable the low significance will be neglected.

A problem has been found with the validity of the item 4 in the flow in-store concept: This item had a very low significance (0.983) and exceptionally low validity. Therefore it had to be excluded from further analysis. In the online variable of flow however, skill could be accepted as a part of the flow concept. The tables with the actual levels of significance can be found in the Appendix E.

5.3 Last shopping experience

The first question of the survey asked for the shop in which the participant had shopped the last time online and in-store. This question should mainly prepare the respondents for the upcoming questions so they would have their store they used the last time in mind when answering. The specification however was that they should have used a fast fashion store, thus expensive brands should not be taken as an example. Most of the participants (33,4%) mentioned H&M to be the store where they shop online and in-store. Afterwards, with 7,4% the second most popular store was Zara followed by Monki (3.0%), Dressman (2.3%), MQ (2.0%), Gina Tricot (1.7%) and Lindex (1.7%). Other stores scored 1.0% or lower and contributed with 48.5% to all answers. The results show that most of the people really chose a fast fashion brand according to which they answered all questions. A pie chart of the results can be found below in figure 1.
5.4 Usability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usability store</td>
<td>3,3420</td>
<td>.60140</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability online</td>
<td>3,8243</td>
<td>.86069</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mean & Standard Deviation-Usability (owned).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Usability store</th>
<th>Usability online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usability store</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability online</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Correlation Analysis- Usability (owned).

The correlation table shows that how the two variables are related (Hair et al., 2003). The intersection of a column and row is important in order to interpret the data (Ibid).
The numbers in the row labeled N (table 1) represent the number of the respondents used to compute the correlation (Hair et al., 2003). In this study, 262 respondents answer online questions about usability, on the other hand, 263 respondents answer the usability in-store questions. The mean of the answer for the usability in-store is 3.34 and the standard deviation is 0.60. The mean for the usability online is 3.84 and the standard deviation is 0.86. If the standard deviation is less than 1.0, it means the respondents’ opinions are consistent, in contrast, if the standard deviation is higher than 3.0, there is high variability in the respondents’ answers (Hair et al., 2003). The results indicated that respondents’ answers were not varied so much and they were mostly neutral or agree about the convenience items.

Examining the statistical significance of a computed correlation coefficient, which is based on a randomly selected sample, gives information about the likelihood that the coefficient will be found in the population from which sample was taken (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The correlation coefficient and significant level must be examined in order to examine the relationship between variables (Ibid). The correlation coefficient assesses the association between two variables (Hair et al., 2003).

The number at the top of the column (−.109) is the correlation coefficient (Hair et al., 2003). The correlation coefficient represents the amount of variation explained or accounted for in one variable by one or more other variables (Hair et al., 2003). It indicates that the consistency between usability in-store and usability online when the significance level is 0.079 (Ibid). The significant level demonstrates the correlation is not supported since the correlation can be significant at the 0.01 levels or 0.05 for the two-tailed (Ibid). If the correlation is significant, it is possible to conclude with some degree of confidence the two variables that are examined share some association in the population (Hair et al., 2003).

The results indicate that the variation in each variable is associated with other variables than the ones present in this analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There is no consistency between usability in-store and online.
### 5.5 Interactivity

#### Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity store</td>
<td>3.1394</td>
<td>0.70620</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity online</td>
<td>3.0616</td>
<td>0.68410</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Mean & Standard Deviation-Interactivity (Owned)

#### Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interactivity store</th>
<th>Interactivity online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity store</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactivity online</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Correlation Analysis- Interactivity (Owned)

263 consumers answered interactivity in-store questions and 265 consumers answered interactivity in online interactivity part’s questions. The respondents of the interactivity store’s mean is 3.13 and the standard deviation is 0.70. On the other side, online part of the interactivity is 3.06 and the standard deviation is 0.68. The results demonstrate that the respondents’ answers are not varied so much and most of them were neutral about the interactivity online and in-store.

As it has been mentioned before, the number at the top of the top of the column is the correlation coefficient (Hair et al., 2003). In this study the correlation coefficient for interactivity is 0.078 and the significance level is 0.206. Since the significance level is higher than 0.05 the correlation is not consistent between interactivity online and interactivity in-store (p>0.05). This means as well that the online and in-store experience of consumers regarding interactivity is not consistent. Since the reliability of
this measurement was weak, this outcome has been acknowledged but with keeping in mind that measures may not be reliable.

5.6 Aesthetics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Mean & Standard Deviation-Aesthetic (Owned)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Table 8: Correlation Analysis-Aesthetic (Owned)

264 consumers answered the aesthetic in-store questions and 261 consumers answered the questions of aesthetics on the website. The mean of the respondents of the aesthetics in-store concept is 3.32 and the standard deviation is 0.56. Also, the mean of the respondents of aesthetic online concept is 3.27 and the standard deviation is 0.511. The results show that there is not much variation in the answers and the respondents were neutral about the questions as it was in the other concept.
The correlation coefficient is 0.401 and the significance level is 0.000. The results show that the consistency of aesthetic online and in-store is significant the p<0.01. As it has been mentioned before, the coefficient will be positive or negative and this indicates the direction of the relationship (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the coefficient is positive, the relationship of the variables can be accepted positive. The result demonstrates that the relationship between aesthetic in-store and aesthetic on the website is significantly consistent. Since p<0.01, there is one percent chance in 100 that no correlation exists between aesthetic in-store and online.

The square of the correlation coefficient gives the coefficient of determination and it represents the how much variation explained or accounted for in one variable by one or more other variables (Hair et al., 200; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study r is 0.401 and r² is 0.1608. R² would be meaning that approximately 16 percent of the variation in one variable is associated with the other variable (Ibid). The larger the coefficient of determination means the stronger the relationship between variables being examined (Ibid).

In this study, the relationship is found positive and significant at p<0.01 and thus the respondents feel that they can experience aesthetics online as well as in the store in a consistent way.

5.7 Flow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow store</td>
<td>2.8462</td>
<td>.79360</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow online</td>
<td>2.7079</td>
<td>.78166</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Mean & Standard Deviation- Flow (Owned)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Flow store</th>
<th>Flow online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flow store</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow online</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.505*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total respondent number, who answered flow in-store questions, is 264 and the number of respondents of flow online is 263. The results demonstrate the mean of the respondents, who answered the flow in-store, is 2.84 and the standard deviation is 0.79. On the other side, the respondent of flow online concept’s mean is 2.70 and the standard deviation is 0.78. The results indicate that the respondents did not experience flow in-store or online and there is not much variation in the answers. The participants who experienced flow in-store are slightly higher than the respondents who experienced online flow.

In this part, the correlation coefficient is 0.505 and the significance level is 0.000, which is the strongest coefficient of determination among all concepts. The results indicate that there is a positive relationship between flow online and in-store, which means if the person did experience flow in-store, he or she may experience flow online for the same brand. Since p<0.01, there is one percent chance in 100 that no correlation exists between flow online and in-store.

As it has been mentioned, the square of the correlation coefficient gives the coefficient of determination and it expresses how much variation in one variable due to the other variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The coefficient of determination was 0. 255, which means 26 percent of the variation in flow in-store is associated with the flow online (Hair et al., 2003). The relationship is stronger in comparison to the relationship aesthetic online and in-store (%16).
5.8 Tactility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense (In-store)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table11: Mean & Standard Deviation Multisensory (owned)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense (Online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense (In-store)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 12: Correlation Analysis- Multisensory (owned).

According to the results, all respondents answered both tactility online and in-store questions. The mean of the online part of the question is 2.36 and the standard deviation is 1.093. On the other hand, the mean of the in-store part of the question is 4.15 and the standard deviation is 0.971. The results indicated that most of the respondents did not agree that the technology could compensate the need for touching the product in order to evaluate it, and there is higher variation in the answers of online part questions in comparison to the in-store question. The respondents mostly agreed that they needed to touch the product to evaluate and experience it and there is not much variation in the answers.
In this concept, the coefficient correlation is -0.157 and the significance level is 0.011. The results show that there is a negative relationship between two variables at p<0.05. It means that people have to touch the product and the technology cannot compensate the need to touch the product. The significance level shows that there is only 5 percent chance in 100 that a correlation of at least -0.157 could have arisen by chance alone (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The coefficient of determination is 0.024 (r²) which shows that 2 percent of the variation in one variable is associated with the other variable. The results state that the relationship is not so strong between these two variables.
6 Qualitative Analysis

This chapter represents the analysis of the focus group interview.

6.1 Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1975), Novak et al. (2009) and Rose et al. (2012) described flow as a concept that describes a state of mind where persons are deeply involved in an enjoyable activity and their surroundings become irrelevant. According to the findings it’s clear that the majority has experienced this state of mind, it’s experienced mostly online in solitude, factors such as intrusion of salesperson, unorganized items, other customers or long queues can “ruin” the flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) also mentions that the flow activities can easily be interrupted by events or persons intruding into the activity. In this study both focus groups agreed on sales assistant interrupting their experience of flow. The same goes for fellow customers, a bright, tidy store with much space increases flow because of less contact to fellow shoppers. This disturbance would not happen in an online environment.

Novak et al (2009) argue that an activity that leads to flow does not necessarily have to deliver a significant reward. Accordingly this research, it has been found that shoppers are rather in a flow when shopping is seen as a free time activity, rather than shopping because of being in need of something, and doing so online and in-store it wouldn't necessarily always lead to a purchase.

As Rose et al. (2012) and Novak et al. (2009) explain that flow is dependent on different conditions, like the level of skill, challenge and time distortion. If the challenge is too big and the tasks seems too difficult people might stop the activity and flow is reduced. This can be compared to the outcomes of the focus group as well because they mention that too much choice can affect flow negatively when it is an overload or it can affect positively when the items are easily findable: either the challenge to find the best items is too big or it is just big enough so it can be continued to shop.

Other outcomes of the focus group were that regarding shopping the option of receiving recommended items online increases flow because people are given more options. Other
interviewees were of the opposite opinion and said it would decrease their flow to have recommendations. This flow is comparable to in-store experiences where items are organized fitting together or just by walking around in the store on the search for compatible items.

6.2 Interactivity

The interactivity can be divided into two component parts: interactivity with online vendors, and interaction with web users (Constantinides, 2004).

Interaction with the online vendors

Customer service/ after sales service online and interaction with the company personnel is the essential part of the interactivity (Constantinides, 2004). Good organized online and offline helpdesk, quick response to email from the customers are some important factors that need to be taken into consideration by web designers (Constantinides, 2004). The theory can be supported in the focus groups’ discussion. All focus group agreed that the live chat option with online vendor could be really helpful since they cannot see or feel the real product. Constantinides (2004) states the customization is the important part of the interactivity between online vendor and the customers, and affects the web experience as well. The focus group also confirms this by recommending to improve customization in the online shopping and in-store.

According to Peréa y Monsuwe et al (2004) interaction can be translated from online also in-store, thus online contact with service facilities represent contact with a sales clerk in-store. The participants reflect their concern about the intrusive salesperson in-store. Generally they agreed that service is not the same online as in-store and they mostly complained about the intrusive sales clerk. On the other hand, they stated that the interactive tool with online vendor is useful for them and they want to communicate with online vendor while shopping online, which contrast to their opinion about the salesperson in-store. Also, one of the focus groups states that they cannot trust the salesperson in-store, however websites are perceived to provide ‘pure facts’.
Interaction with the web user

According to Tynan & Mc Kecknie (2010), the interactive media is useful to create online experiences and can create bonds between the customer and the brand. Also, Constantinides (2004) stated that interactive tools contribute to the positive customer experiences and Blázques (2014) supported that interactive tools can enhance the customer experience significantly. The focus group findings confirmed the theory as well. They stated that the commenting on the website or reading the strangers’ comment on the website is useful to enhance their shopping experience. Focus groups agreed that it would be useful to have ‘comment option’ in every website since most of the fast fashion retailer do not provide these interactive tools now.

Pine & Gilmore (2011) state that ranking services can create a positive image of the website. The interacting tool for social interaction online with strangers in terms of the possibility of rating and ranking are helpful in order to have a better idea about the product according to the focus group and mostly found it useful even though it is not yet widely available in many website.

The other arguments that the focus group state cannot be seen in the theory. For example, they stated that interactivity with the strangers in the store is not desirable. In opposite, in-store, they just would like to communicate with the friends and family. The second focus group states that they want to communicate with sales staff especially while shopping expensive items online.

6.3 Aesthetics/Atmospherics

Milliman (1993) and Koo & Ju (2010) define atmospherics as simply as all components in a retail environment that are stimulating both visual and non-visual senses that affect the totality of the experience. Koo & Ju (2010) argue that when applying the same atmospherics to the online environment it becomes defined as the total sum that are visible and audible for the consumers.

Applying this to the findings, design cues such window display, flooring, decoration, layout, colors, clutter and cleanliness in-store was explained by focus group one to be
hard to translate in order to be consistent in both channels. Online it was easier to organize than in-store. Online it was also perceived easier to create the right atmosphere than in-store. However, comparing design cues in-store and online Zara, Monki an H&M were the retailer's perceived by the group to each have the same attribute or "vibe". However, H&M was consistent in having the same attributes such as “messy” and wide ranged collections both in-store and online. Mainstream brands (such as H&M) in comparison to niche brand (such as Monki) were perceived less consistent and distinguishable. The findings in the second focus group was that in most cases attributes found in-store retailers could be found online as well, although findings also show that the group perceived that most retailers websites and stores (except for Monki) are looking the same and that unique experiences need to be used as an competitive advantage. As mainstream stores are perceived less consistent and weak in own "character" they are perceived as less attractive than stores with a unique atmosphere that make a lot of effort to make online and in-store consistent.

Ambient cues include lightning, sound, smell and use of technology in-store. Kilcourse & Rosenblum (2009) suggest that technology as part of the ambient cues should be used to improve the experience. Also, it can be used to make the environment more attractive and the shopping experience more engaging and memorable (Drapers, 2012; Kozinets, Sherry, DeBerry-Spence, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit & Storm, 2002). Applying this to the result from the focus groups, technology was not something offered in the present by fashion retailers, but desired in both groups as a factor for the future in order to make a more interesting experience. Further, focus group one perceived technology less important in-store than online for the experience. For some interviewees technology was not perceived as a determinant factor for the experience and for purchase or contact with the product in-store which it quite the opposite to the recommendations.

According to Loureiro & Roschk (2014) graphic design and information design were the two that had similarities in both online and offline environments. The authors argued that graphic design represents a synthesis of offline categories of interior (such as color schemes) and layout (such as space allocation) and online categories graphics (that are visually comforting) and use of colors (that are distinctive). Information design on the other hand represents a synthesis offline category of point of purchase and decorations (such as signs, cards, price displays) and online categories links (such as
buttons that help find products/services) and menu (that is clean and neat). Information design represents the access and amount of relevant information for the consumer, such as information about goods and services, forms of payment, disposition and finding their way around in the store (Manganari et al., 2009). Although no comments were provided specifically about graphic and information design the majority felt that the same attributes, vibe and range (width, cleanliness, messiness) was perceived to be the same in the online and offline environment, especially in the case of Zara, Monki and H&M. Although the majority perceived the “messiness” online and in-store at H&M to be negative, crowded and confusing. This is the opposite function of the information design which according to Loureiro & Roschk (2014) should be clean and neat and help the customer easily navigate himself around the store and web. Although H&M was perceived to have the same color scheme in-store and online as suggested by Loureiro & Roschk (2014).

According to Kotler (1973, p. 50) atmospherics is the conscious designing of space to create certain buyer effects. Dailey (2009) translated Kotler's definition of atmosphere into the web atmospherics, suggesting that it is consciously designing environments to create positive web effects on users in order to increase favorable responses. Also, Rossiter (1982); Lewison (1994); and Kotler (2003) argue that the atmosphere is vital to affect the customers’ impression about a sales outlet and defining the customer’s further actions and behaviors.

Looking to the empirical findings from the focus group, the authors interpret it such as the atmospherics had a definite impact on the consumer, both positive and negative. Being decisive to whether they would return to the retailer or not and their relationship to the brand. The interviewees were mostly unconscious about the store and web aesthetics, interpreting sensory input to determine if it was pleasant or not. On a conscious level they were aware that it was designed in order to make them buy more, such as staged lightning, scents, organization of clothing and how it was strategically placed in-store, recommendations, structure and user friendliness online in order to make them stay longer.
6.4 Tactility

According to Blazqués (2014) clothes are high involvement products that need to be experienced (seen, felt, touched, and tried on) because of the difficulty to evaluate. Technological innovation makes it possible to translate variables such as color, music, and lights alongside others such as smell and touch according to Menon et al. (2002).

The findings in the focus group are confirming this because although technology is becoming more advanced it can’t ever compensate the lack of tactility as in the case for online-shopping, the consumers’ desire to try it on. The group perceived that technology is important when there is a lack of multisensory input, and although technology is at times pretty good at translating the clothes as in the case for videos, picture enlargements, presented on models with different body types, it is also at times deceiving and styled and therefore it cannot give a proper display of the clothes. The future is perceived to be more about logistics, return policies and staff free showrooms in order to creating a better way for the customer to order online and try on the clothes in reality, as a way of multichanneling, rather than using advanced technology to compensate for the lack of multisensory experiences.

Already Pine and Gilmore (1989) mentioned that sensory stimulants should enhance the experience’s theme and that an experience that has engaged the senses will be more memorable. In both focus groups the findings were that in general, over-stimulating experiences in-store, such as dim lightning, loud music, overpowering scent was not desirable in-store and could influence the customer to the point that they wished not to return. Findings also show that sensory input in-store was perceived more risky in-store than online, because online it’s perceived more manageable.

6.5 Usability

Constantinides (2004) argues in his article that convenience is the prime motivator to shop online because the process of shopping is faster than in-store. Also, he states that the location of the retail stores plays a role in convenience. The focus groups both partly disagreed: They were also of the opinion that the convenience of online shopping is only higher when the residence is located far away from the next physical store. Apart from that people tend to see physical shopping as more convenient because in-store the
product can be tried and bought if liked, online there is first the waiting time until the product arrives and then struggle with return policies. There is also less product uncertainty in-store.

Constantinides (2004) and Rose et al. (2012) also mention that websites should have a simple process of ordering and payment. Here the focus groups were of the same opinion: the first one came to the conclusion that in-store the payment process is much easier and therefore the experience is different. However, the second focus group acknowledged that each shopping way has advantages in the payment process and the experience is therefore the same.

Additional points the focus groups came up with were brought up during the focus group: waiting time at the cashier is perceived negatively in-store and could be reduced with self-checkout systems. It is remarkable that both focus groups were focusing on the problem of returning items when ordered online as well as focus group 1 perceived negatively that sometimes shopping online is charged with high delivery costs or returning fees.
7 Analysis: Comparing quantitative and qualitative results

This chapter presents the interpretation of the comparison of the quantitative and qualitative studies.

7.1 Flow

The concept of flow was experienced in the quantitative study to be consistent. In-depth qualitative study the flow was experienced unclear if it was consistent or not in both channels.. The groups provided information such as that there were a few negative influences on flow for both in-store and online. In-store, intrusive and annoying salesperson could stop the flow. Online recommended products were perceived to both enhance and stop flow while, because recommended products increased creativity to make outfits but it was also perceived as a factor that made the decision harder, in-store too much unorganized items could stop the flow.

7.2 Interactivity

Both the quantitative results and focus group discussion indicate that there is no consistency between interactivity in-store and online. The quantitative results gave the general opinion about the interactivity in-store and online, however, it did not explain the reason of the inconsistency. In this study, the authors tried to understand the reason by conducting a focus group. According to the focus group, the reason of the inconsistency was a different kind of interaction in online and in-store. Mostly, they wanted to interact with friends and family in-store, not with strangers. However, in contrast, while shopping online, they stated that they do not mind interacting with strangers, even reading the stranger’ comment was helpful for them.

7.3 Aesthetic/Atmospherics

The results of both quantitative and qualitative demonstrate that aesthetic in-store and online are consistent. However, the focus groups indicate that some stores (Monki, Zara) were better than the other retailers at creating a consistent atmosphere. According to the group, H&M store was crowded and messy and they can feel the same atmosphere in the website, which shows that H&M aesthetic in-store and online is also consistent but in a negative way.
7.4 Tactility

The result of both quantitative and qualitative studies of tactility concept demonstrated a negative relationship between multisensory experiences in-store and online. The focus group findings supported this negative relationship as well. According to the focus groups the reason of the negative relationship was the need to touch the products no matter which brand it is. The videos from the catwalks, the picture enlargements were important and helpful for them to understand the product, but they still think that it can be misleading on the actual appearance of the product. Some participants shared their online shopping experience and according to them, the product they ordered was really nice and appealing on the picture however what they got was completely different from the picture. The focus groups stated that the pictures or other technological improvements on online shopping cannot give a proper display of the clothes that is why they still need to touch them.

7.5 Usability

The concept of usability was not consistent in either the quantitative nor qualitative study. The reason given for inconsistency in the focus group was that when it comes to convenience in-store, it was dependent on the location. If the location was far away, online shopping was perceived the most convenient, and if it was closer to the consumer than in-store shopping was more convenient, and therefore convenience was not perceived equal in both channels.
8 Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter includes the conclusion of the study, interpretation of each concept, recommendation to the fast fashion retailers, and future research suggestion.

8.1 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to measure how consistent these experiences were online and in-store in order to highlight deficiencies and give recommendation to fast fashion retailers. The conclusion of the study shows that there are still some difficulties for fast fashion retailers to satisfy the customers in both channels. Since the authors measured the experience by using different concepts from different studies, each concepts’ result differ from each other and there is a variety of the perceptions in each concepts.

The results of the flow indicated that overall people experience flow both online and in-store. These experiences of flow were perceived consistent in the quantitative study but the focus group showed a variety of perceptions so on individual level there were some differences found in how flow was experienced online and in-store.

Usability as the second concept has not been perceived consistent throughout the study. As a third concept interactivity has been measured since Tynan & Mc Kecknie (2010) states that interactive tools is a useful to create online experiences and can create bonds between the customer and the brand. It was found out that interactivity experience is not consistent in-store or online due to huge differences in the kinds of interaction. It was mentioned however, that there are tools that would make the experience more consistent and that these are desired.

The aesthetics were also measured as a separate concept since Drapers (2012) mention that aesthetics can enhance the customer experience. It was found out that the experience of atmospherics cues (design cues and atmospheric cues) were consistent in-store and online even though there are some stores that are better at creating consistent atmospherics than others.
The last concept having been measured was tactility. It was found out that it is very important for customers to touch and feel the product but that online stores cannot yet deliver an experience that can compensate the non-touching of the product.

Thus overall it can be said that the online and in-store experience is consistent in some of the aspects but there is still room for improvement in each channel.

8.2 Recommendation

In an increasingly competitive world of fast fashion, retailers have to make an exceptional experience for the customers in order to gain a competitive advantage. This opinion is supported by Pine & Gilmore (2011) and also by the results of the focus groups. Customization is getting more important and in a technologically fast developing world customer experiences can be enhanced by technological solutions as it has been recommended by Blazqués (2014). In the following section some examples will be presented that can contribute to enhance the customer experience online and in-store of a fashion shop that have been the outcome of this research.

8.3 Interpretation of each concept

For flow the following aspects have been found that affect flow: It has been found that over motivated interaction with a salesperson can stop the flow in-store. A recommendation would be a sales training for the staff and personnel when a person wants help and when contact could be intrusive. Long queues are also perceived as disturbing queues and solutions should be found to avoid them. A tool to improve flow has been found to be possibilities to be directed to the next, matching product (both online and in-store). This could be “recommended” sections online or the way clothes are organized in the store.

A shipping fee keeps many customers from buying online. In order to increase the convenience of online shopping the ordering process should be made as easy as possible without high charges for returning or delivery. Also, payment should be made after clothes have been delivered and valuated.
For the interaction part, while shopping online, commenting functions were found useful and it would be helpful for the customers to see this function in every shopping website since it is not available in many of them. A tool to increase interaction with the strangers in the online shopping was demanded by the groups. These kinds of tools were perceived as ‘pure fact’ about the products.

Atmospheric, clean and organized stores are preferred before crowded and messy stores, overstimulation of senses should be avoided by retailers, the most appreciated atmospherics were the ones that were the most differentiated. The importance and demand of technology will increase in-store to make a more interesting experience.

The future lies rather in improving return policies so the customers are able in a convenient way to try on and experience the product rather than improving the experience online in absence of the multisensory input or tactility. In future the discussion was about showrooms and fitting rooms without staff.

**8.4 Recommendations by the focus group**

At the end of each focus group the interviewees gave recommendations for improvement, these are presented below. Problems with measurement is a fact for the majority, in future a recommendation will be to make fitting (and save time) both in-store and online easier, for this anonymous profiles online that hold measurement and technological solutions in-store was suggested. Also, a tool with recommendation for which brand matches with the personal measurements was suggested. Self-checkout systems such as the scanning systems used in grocery stores for shopping in-store was suggested in order to decrease waiting times and queues. More fast fashion retailers should use varied models with different body shapes to present the clothes. Although the focus was moved from online shopping to in-store shopping translation, videos of the products were more desired than pictures. Also, the group mentioned that it will be important to individualize the business and to make the customer feel special in the store.
8.5 Reflection

In this research, the authors has tried to identify the consistency of online and in-store experiences in order to draw conclusions and recommendations for businesses and theory on what is needed for the future in order to enhance the customer experience. Therefore, next to a quantitative study qualitative focus groups have been conducted. The advantages of using a mixed method approach is the variation richness of answers and the possibility to compensate where the other lacks explanation. The challenges on the other side were to structure and organize the findings for triangulation in the analysis. In general having a mixed method approach is time consuming and demands of the researcher to devote a lot of effort into the thesis.

The results of the qualitative study have been identified to be reliable and valid, due to triangulation measures taken to ensure quality. However it has to be taken into consideration that the sample with the convenience sampling and the probably limited diversity due to a survey conducted in the university library might not be representative for the entire population. Also, as stated before, the sample was probably too small in order to increase the reliability. However, the authors are well aware of the fact and took these facts into consideration when interpreting the results. The same goes for the sampling of the focus group: even though most people had some background information about the topic still most of them were not educated or working in this field, therefore the answers were most from a consumer perspective and not a professional or expertise perspective, therefore the insight and richness of the answers varied. Yet, the authors decided for this sample due to convenient gathering of people and believe that the mix of knowledge could provide interesting discussion.
8.6 Future research

One of the purposes of this study was to generalize the findings for all the fast fashion retailers and give recommendation for their improvement. Even though the focus group results elaborated on the reasons of inconsistency or consistency, the authors did not focus on one specific brand.

The further research can be conducted to investigate one specific brand in order to measure the consistency of experience online and in-store and case study on one fast fashion retailer can provide elucidative information about the customer experience. In focus group interviews, most of the time, H&M was the first option that coming to the customers’ mind when it comes to fast fashion. The case study can be conducted on H&M in order to highlight the deficiencies and give recommendation when it comes to customer experience in-store and online.

The other option can be a comparative study in order to compare two fast fashion retailers’ customer experience to gain deeper understanding about the industry. The study could be carried out with the two big mainstream brands or two niche brands, which will give a clear understanding for the fast fashion retailers.

Also, future research can also be conducted on how consumers online or offline device (smart-phone, tablets) shopping experiences influence their in-store shopping experience demands, being influenced by the benefits of online and offline divide shopping, as a part of a multi-channel behavior. One can imagine that these benefits put a pressure on the fashion-retailer to increase the convenience and customer experience for the customer, such as return policies, improved logistic and supply management.

Many predict advanced technology used in order to enhance in-store experience and gather consumer behavior data, to evolve in the future, but there is not much research has been done in this area. Therefore suggestions to do research on this would be beneficial and maybe help fashion retailers to gain a competitive advantage being ahead of competitors. In this study social media has been touched upon as a tool for social interaction, although in future it might be beneficial to view it from a perspective as another channel to sell rather than just to market fashion.
References


**Electronic Sources**


# Appendices

## A. Interview guide for the focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time / Location</th>
<th>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May and 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 2015-05-09 Linnaeus University Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Welcome speech, introduce topic and researchers participants introduce themselves (names, occupation, favorite store)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging Max 2 question</td>
<td>Do you like shopping? Where did you shop online or in-store last time and what did you buy? Have you ever had an amazing or memorable experience in store or online while shopping for clothes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Exploration     | **1) FLOW**  
*Explain Flow, mention challenge, skill, time distortion*  
Is there any differences in flow when shopping in-store and online?  
**2) USABILITY**  
What do you think is more convenient: Shopping online or in-store?  
Which is faster?  
Which is easier?  
Payment process?  
**4) INTERACTIVITY**  
*Explain difference between social and service interaction*  
What are the differences between social interaction online and in-store service?  
What are the differences between service interaction online and in-store service?  
**5) AESTHETICS**  
*explain concept and aspects*  
Which similarities/differences are there concerning aesthetics online and in-store?  
**6) Senses:** Does technology compensate your needs to touch/smell/try on the product?  
Most retailer use technology to enhance and make the experience more memorable, how is the usage of technology different in-store and online? |
| Exit Question Max 2 Questions | If you were given the task to design a webpage for fashion shopping, what would you invent to increase the shopping experience? If you were given the task to design a physical store or worked with experience marketing what would you invent in order to enhance the in-store shopping experience? |
B. The questionnaire

Online/In-store Shopping

Please name a store where you recently have experienced both online and in store shopping

We would like to thank you in advance for your time and assistance in helping us to collect data for this important research. Your opinion is highly valuable and greatly appreciated!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first part of the questionnaire will deal with your IN-STORE perceptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1= Strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= neutral 4= agree 5= strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When shopping in-store the retailer has made it’s easy for me to find the clothes and accessories I’m looking for. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store the product information is easy to obtain. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store I save effort. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store I save time. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store payment is easy. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The guarantees and return-policies are good in the physical store. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
I am sure my payment information will be protected when I am shopping in-store. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
I am afraid that my private information will be used in an unwanted manner by the store. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The retailer’s customer service is willing and ready to respond to customer needs. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store provides a meeting place where I may interact with my friends and family. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store tries to make my experience more personal. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store’s architecture gives it an attractive character. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store is decorated in an attractive fashion. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store color schemes are attractive. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store information about goods/services is sufficient. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The information inside the store is relevant. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store layout makes it easy to get around. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The music in the store gets me in the right mood. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
The store uses technology in order to make my experience more engaging and memorable (hubs, iPads, and display screens). ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

When shopping in-store I enjoy myself so much in the event that it makes the surrounding events fade out and I’m focused on the occupation. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store I am able to forget my problems. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store I tend to lose my self-consciousness. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
I know how to find what I am looking for in-store. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When I am going in-store shopping I feel challenged to find the best value for money Items. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
When shopping in-store, I tend to lose track of time. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
I have to touch the clothes in order to evaluate and experience them. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The second part of the questionnaire will deal with your ONLINE-STORE perceptions.</th>
<th>1 = Strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When shopping online it’s the retailer has made it easy for me to find the clothes and accessories that I’m looking for.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shopping online the product information is easy to access.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When online shopping I save effort.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When online shopping I save time.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When online shopping payment is easy.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The guarantees and return-policies are good online.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sure my payment information will be protected when I am shopping online.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am afraid that my private information will be used in an unwanted manner by the retailer online.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retailer’s customer service is willing and ready to respond to customer needs.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The online store provides interactive tools (e.g. ratings, forums, social media) where I may interact with other shoppers.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The online retailer tries to make my experience more personal (create digital profile with preferences and requirements).</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website's architecture gives it an attractive character.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website is decorated in an attractive fashion.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website color schemes are attractive.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website information about goods/services is sufficient.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information on the website is relevant.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The website has links that allow us to move to other sub-sites.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The music gets me in the right mood.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The web pages use different technologies in order to make my experience more engaging and memorable (picture enlargement, mix and match technology, augmented reality, virtual fitting rooms).</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shopping online I enjoy myself so much in the event that it makes the surrounding events fade out and I’m focused solely on the occupation.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shopping online I'm able to forget my problems.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When shopping online I tend to lose my self-consciousness.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to find what I am looking for online.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online shopping websites challenge my searching skills.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When online shopping, I tend to lose track of time.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology compensates my need for to touch the product in order to evaluate and experience them.</td>
<td>[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Respondent Information

**What is your gender?**

- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male

**What is your age?**

- [ ] under 18
- [ ] 18 - 25
- [ ] 25 - 35
- [ ] 35 - 45
- [ ] 45 or older

**What is your level of education?**

- [ ] Secondary school
- [ ] Higher education
- [ ] Postgraduate

**What is your work activity?**

- [ ] Full-time worker
- [ ] Part-time worker
- [ ] Student
- [ ] unemployed

**What is your income level?**

- [ ] Less than 8 000 SEK
- [ ] 8 000 - 14 999 SEK
- [ ] 15 000 - 29 999 SEK
- [ ] 30 000 - 54 999 SEK
- [ ] 55 000 - 69 999 SEK
- [ ] 70 000 SEK or more

---

Please make sure you have answered all the questions.

Thank you very much!
C. Operationalization of the concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Conceptual definition</th>
<th>Operational definition and resulting questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>An economic offering in interaction between company/brand/service and customer. Who perceive and meaningfully experience it (Same &amp; Larimo, 2012). Something that involves a customer at the rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual levels (as in Klaus et al. 2013). Ten antecedent variables are given that affect the Cognitive Experiential State and Affective Experiential State of OCE (Rose et al., 2012). Antecedent of cognitive experiential state can be explained by flow, which includes telepresence, level of challenge, skill, and speed of interactivity (Ibid). On the other side, antecedents of the affective experiential states includes the ease of use, customization, connectedness, aesthetics, and perceived benefits. The main building blocks for online shopping experience can be classified into three categories: functionality factors, physiological factors, content factors (Constantinides, 2014). “Usability” and “Interactivity” are important factors for functionality (Ibid). Physiological factors are fears of fraud and doubts as to the trustworthiness of the Website (Ibid). Content factors are divided to ‘Aesthetic’ and ‘Marketing Mix’ (Ibid). In this study experience is defined with following elements derived from Constantinides (2014) and (Rose et al., 2012) definitions: flow, usability, interactivity, aesthetics/atmospherics.</td>
<td>There are several explanations of what an experience is, they differ slightly amongst authors of the subject, as-well for online and in-store, although with the aim to cover the same concept. The authors of this paper have chosen the concepts that are most commonly used, elaborate on different variables in each concept definition and then chosen to design a set of variables deriving from the various definitions. The concept of experiences can be measured with different variables that have been listed below.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and multisensory experiences (because atmospherics does not include tactility).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flow</th>
<th>State of mind sometimes experienced by people who are deeply involved in a certain activity (Novak, Hoffman, and Yun, 2000). Skill, challenge, and time distortion are chosen to describe flow experience (Rose et al., 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrence of flow while shopping <strong>In-store:</strong> F1: When shopping in store I enjoy myself so much in the event that it makes the surroundings fade out and I'm focused on the shopping activity. F2: When shopping in the store I am able to forget my problems. F3: When shopping in-store I tend to lose my self-consciousness. <strong>Online</strong> FO1: When shopping online I enjoy myself so much in the event that it makes the surrounding events fade out and I'm focused solely on the shopping activity. FO2: When shopping online I’m able to forget my problems. FO3: When shopping online I tend to lose my self-consciousness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Degree of skill required to engage in experiences (Novak, Hoffman, and Yun, 2000).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree of skill (quickly find desired product with a good money for value ratio) used during the shopping process. <strong>In-store</strong> S1: I know how to find what I am looking for online. <strong>Online</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenge</strong></td>
<td>Degree of challenge required to engage in experience otherwise the activity might get boring (Novak, Hoffman, and Yun, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td>CO1: Online shopping websites challenge my searching skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-store</strong></td>
<td>CI1: When I am going in store shopping I feel challenged to find the best value for money items.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Time distortion</strong></th>
<th>Engaging in the activity for long period of time without noticing (Czikszentmihalyi, 1988).</th>
<th>Occurrence of deep engagement into the shopping activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-store</strong></td>
<td>TS1: When shopping in-store, I tend to lose track of time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td>TO1: When online shopping, I tend to lose track of time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Usability</strong></th>
<th>As the ability to find one’s way around, to locate desired information, to know what to do next, and very importantly, to do so with minimal effort (Constantinides, 2004).</th>
<th>How easy is it to find desired items and to save time and effort by doing so.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-store</strong></td>
<td>US1: When shopping in-store the retailer has made it’s easy for me to find the clothes and accessories I’m looking for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US2: When shopping in-store the product information is easy to obtain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US3: When shopping I save effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US4: When shopping in-store</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Interactivity**  
Interactive tools can enhance the customer experience significantly (Blazqués, 2014). Presenting to customer more personalized services and facilitating interaction with others willing to share experiences and suggestions (Constantinides, 2004). Personalization and networking are two basic elements of interactivity (Ibid).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How does interactivity differ online and in-store?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **In-store:** | IS1: The retailers customer service is willing and ready to respond to customer needs.  
IS2: This store provides a meeting place where I may interact with my friends and family.  
IS3: The retailer tries to make my experience more personal in-store. |
| **Online:** | IO1: The retailer’s customer service is willing and ready to respond to customer needs.  
IO2: The online store provides interactive tools (ratings, forums, social media) where I may interact with other shoppers.  
IO3: The retailer tries to make my experience more personal. |
| Atmospherics | The conscious designing of space to create certain buyer effects (Kotler, 1973) Dailey (2009) translated Kotler’s definition of atmosphere into the web atmospherics, suggesting that it is consciously designing environments to create positive web effects on users in order to increase favorable responses. | How do atmospherics differ online and offline?  
**In-Store:**  
AS1: The store’s architecture gives it an attractive character.  
AS2: The store is decorated in an attractive fashion.  
AS3: The music in the store gets me in the right mood.  
AS4: The store color schemes are attractive.  
AS5: The store information about goods/services is sufficient.  
AS6: The information inside the store is relevant.  
AS7: The store layout makes it easy to get around.  
AS8: The store uses technology in order to make my experience more engaging and memorable (hubs, iPads, and display screens)  
**Online:**  
AO1: The website’s architecture gives it an attractive character.  
AO2: The website is decorated in an attractive fashion.  
AO3: The music gets me in the right mood.  
AO4: The website color schemes are attractive.  
AO5: The website information about goods/services is sufficient. |
A06: The information on the website is relevant.
A07: The website has links that allow us to move to other sub-sites.
A08: The web pages use different technologies in order to make my experience more engaging and memorable (picture enlargement, mix and match technology, augmented reality, virtual fitting rooms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactility</th>
<th>The sensations are described by Hultén (2009) as to be atmospherics (smell), auditory (sounds), visual (sight), gastronomic (taste) and tactile (touch).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do multisensory (tactile, visual and auditory) experiences differ online and in-store?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-store:</strong></td>
<td>MS1: I need to touch the clothes in order to evaluate and experience them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online:</strong></td>
<td>MO1: Technology compensates my need to touch the clothes and accessories in order to evaluate and experience them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Operationalization
D. Focus group invitation

Dear Participant,

As you know, we are in the middle of writing our thesis. We ask you fashionable people to join our focus group where we discuss differences and similarities in fast fashion shopping experiences online and in-store. The only requirement is that you speak English, shop in-store and online and like to eat and drink.

If you feel like an intensive discussion about one of your favorite hobbies – shopping – then please feel very welcome to help us with our research. We welcome you on one of the following dates in the library:

May 4\textsuperscript{th} (10.00-12.00 or 15.00-17.00)
May 8\textsuperscript{th} (10.00-12.00 or 15.00-17.00)
May 12\textsuperscript{th} (10.00-12.00 or 15.00-17.00)

Please let us know which date would suit you the best:

Best Regards

Aylin/Anja/ Christiane
E. Validity test

Usability in-store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>usab1</th>
<th>usab2</th>
<th>usab3</th>
<th>usab4</th>
<th>usab5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>usab1 When shopping in-store the retailer has made it’s easy for me to find the c...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usab 2 When shopping in-store the product information is easy to obtain</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usab 3 When shopping in-store I save effort</td>
<td>.256**</td>
<td>.269**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usab 4 When shopping in-store I save time</td>
<td>.161**</td>
<td>.184**</td>
<td>.489**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usab 5 When shopping in-store payment is easy</td>
<td>.091*</td>
<td>.145*</td>
<td>.108*</td>
<td>.133*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Validity of usability in-store measure

Interactivity in-store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>intera1</th>
<th>intera2</th>
<th>intera3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intera1 The retailer’s customer service is willing and ready to respond to customer needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intera2 The store provides a meeting place where I may interact with my friends and family</td>
<td>.156*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intera3 The store tries to make my experience more personal</td>
<td>.117*</td>
<td>.305**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Aesthetics in-store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>aest1</th>
<th>aest2</th>
<th>aest3</th>
<th>aest4</th>
<th>aest5</th>
<th>aest6</th>
<th>aest7</th>
<th>aest8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aest1 The store's architecture gives it an attractive character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest2 The store is decorated in an attractive fashion.</td>
<td>.603**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest3 The store color schemes are attractive</td>
<td>.526**</td>
<td>.588**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest4 The store information about goods/services is sufficient.</td>
<td>.271**</td>
<td>.321**</td>
<td>.328**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest5 The information inside the store is relevant</td>
<td>.248**</td>
<td>.252**</td>
<td>.286**</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest6 The store layout makes it easy to get around</td>
<td>.344**</td>
<td>.283**</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>.363**</td>
<td>.295**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest7 The music in the store gets me in the right mood</td>
<td>.273**</td>
<td>.333**</td>
<td>.288**</td>
<td>.178**</td>
<td>.206**</td>
<td>.178**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aest8 The store uses technology in order to make my experience more engaging and ...</td>
<td>.288**</td>
<td>.274**</td>
<td>.327**</td>
<td>.220**</td>
<td>.126*</td>
<td>.126**</td>
<td>.250**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Flow in-store

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>flow1</th>
<th>flow2</th>
<th>flow3</th>
<th>skill</th>
<th>challenge</th>
<th>time</th>
</tr>
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<td>flow1 When shopping in store I enjoy myself so much in the event that it makes th</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flow2 When shopping in-store I am able to forget my problems</td>
<td>.596*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flow3 When shopping in-store I tend to lose my self-consciousness.</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skill I know how to find what I am looking for in-store.</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.147*</td>
<td>.139*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenge When I am going in-store shopping I feel challenged to find the best value for money</td>
<td>.232**</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>.209**</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time When shopping in-store, I tend to lose track of time.</td>
<td>.379**</td>
<td>.482**</td>
<td>.483**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.231**</td>
<td></td>
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Usability online

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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ousab2 When shopping online the product information is easy to access</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ousab3 When online shopping I save effort</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>.394**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ousab4 When online shopping I save time.</td>
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<td>.320**</td>
<td>.615**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ousab5 When online shopping payment is easy.</td>
<td>.116*</td>
<td>.114*</td>
<td>.181**</td>
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Validity usability online measure

Interactivity online

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<td></td>
<td>.115*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ointera3 The online retailer tries to make my experience more personal (create digit...</td>
<td></td>
<td>.278**</td>
<td>.235**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Validity interactivity online measure
### Aesthetics online

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<tr>
<td>Oaest1 The website's architecture gives it an attractive character</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaest2 The website is decorated in an attractive fashion.</td>
<td>.567**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaest3 The website color schemes are attractive.</td>
<td>.515**</td>
<td>.595**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oaest4 The website information about goods/services is sufficient.</td>
<td>.199**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oaest5 The information on the website is relevant.</td>
<td>.196**</td>
<td>.272**</td>
<td>.230**</td>
<td>.402**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oaest6 The website has links that allow us to move to other sub-sites.</td>
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<td>.247**</td>
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## Flow online

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<th></th>
<th>Oflow1</th>
<th>Oflow2</th>
<th>Oflow3</th>
<th>Oskill</th>
<th>Ochallenge</th>
<th>Otime</th>
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<td>Oflow2 When shopping online I’m able to forget my problems</td>
<td>,621**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oflow3 When shopping online I tend to lose my self-consciousness.</td>
<td>,455**</td>
<td>,635**</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ochallenge Online shopping websites challenge my searching skills.</td>
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<td>,491**</td>
<td>,395**</td>
<td>,280**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otime When online shopping, I tend to lose track of time.</td>
<td>,388*</td>
<td>,448**</td>
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<td>,147*</td>
<td>,361**</td>
<td></td>
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