

Where to shop?

Understanding consumers' choices of grocery stores

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To “Mommo”

You once told me: “Do something that you can be proud of, something that will last.” I’m doing my best, “Mommo”. This dissertation is for you!

I miss you!

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Appended papers

1. Nilsson, E., Gärling, T., Marell, A., and Nordvall, A-C. (2015). "Importance ratings of grocery store attributes", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 63-91.
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Elin Nilsson

Abstract

For the last couple of decades consumer decision-making has been of increasing interest for retail as well as for consumer behaviour research. Food shopping constitutes a unique type of shopping behaviour. In comparison to other types of shopping, food is essential to life, and not often are there as many choices to be made in a short period of time as when shopping groceries.

The purpose of this dissertation was to advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores. More specifically, the main focus has been on how different situations (e.g., type of shopping) influence choices of grocery stores. Five papers, which build on three surveys on how consumers choose grocery stores in Sweden, are included in this dissertation.

In the first paper a comprehensive set of ten aggregated attributes that determine store choices were developed. The second paper brought forward five consumer segments (Planning Suburbans, Social Shoppers, Pedestrians, City Dwellers, and Flexibles) based on where and how they shop. In the third paper it was shown that accessibility attributes (e.g., accessibility by car, availability) and attractiveness attributes (e.g., price, service) have different impacts on satisfaction, depending on consumer characteristics and shopping behaviour in supermarkets compared to convenience stores. In the fourth paper the result showed that satisfaction is affected by type of grocery shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) in conjunction with time pressure and which store attributes that are important for satisfaction. It was also shown that the effect of time pressure and type of shopping on satisfaction varied in different consumer segments. In the final paper it was shown that a store has to be more attractive in terms of attributes for a consumer to switch from the grocery store they usually patronage, even if the new store is situated right beside or closer than the consumer's regular grocery store. The view of a "good location" is further developed in this dissertation, arguing that consumers' mental distance to a store – their cognitive proximity – is much more important than the physical place of the store.

In sum, this dissertation revealed that the situation is more important than previous research has shown. Depending on the situation, consumers will face different outcomes (different stores) and value different store attributes. Hence, stores need to manage different store attributes depending on which consumer groups the stores want to attract and what situation the consumers are facing. Therefore, consumers' choices of grocery stores are situation-based choices.

Keywords

Consumer decision-making, store choice, situation-based choices, cognitive proximity

Sammanfattning (Swedish abstract)

I ett par decennier har intresset för konsumenters beslutsfattande ökat för både detaljhandeln och forskningen kring konsumentbeteende. Matinköp utgör en unik typ av köp-beteende då det i jämförelse med andra typer av handlande är livsnödvändiga samt att det sällan finns så många val som ska göras under kort tid som vid matinköp.

Syftet med denna avhandling är att främja kunskap om vad som påverkar konsumenternas val av livsmedelsbutik. Mer specifikt har fokus varit på hur olika situationer (t.ex. typ av handlande) påverkar valet av butik. Fem artiklar, som bygger på tre olika undersökningar om hur konsumenter väljer livsmedelsbutiker i Sverige ingår i denna avhandling.

I den första artikeln utvecklades en omfattande uppsättning av tio aggregerade attribut (baserade på 34 attribut) som bestämmer konsumenters val av livsmedelsbutiker. I den andra artikeln presenterades fem konsumentsegment (Planerande förortsbor, Sociala shoppare, Fotgängare, Stadsbor och Flexibla) som baserades på var och hur de handlar. Den tredje artikeln visade att tillgänglighetsattribut (t.ex. tillgängligheten med bil och öppettider) och attraktivitetsattribut (t.ex. pris och service) har olika effekter på konsumenters nöjdhet. Denna nöjdhet varierade även beroende på konsumentens bakgrundsfaktorer samt huruvida konsumenten handlade i stormarknader eller i närbutiker. I den fjärde artikeln visade resultaten att nöjdhet påverkas av typ av matinköp (storhandlande kontra kompletteringshandlande) i samband med tidspress och de attribut som är viktiga för konsumenternas nöjdhet med butiken. Det visade sig även att effekterna av tidspress och typ av handlande på konsumenternas nöjdhet med butiker varierade i olika konsumentgrupper. Det femte konferenspaperet visade att en butik måste vara mer attraktiv när det gäller attribut för att konsumenter skall byta från den livsmedelsbutik som de brukar handla i, även om den nya butiken skulle öppna precis bredvid eller närmre än den vanliga livsmedelsbutiken. Synen på vad som är ett "bra läge" utvecklas därför ytterligare i denna avhandling, med argumentet att konsumenternas mentala avstånd till en butik – deras kognitiva närhet – är mycket viktigare än den fysiska platsen för butiken.

Sammanfattningsvis visade denna avhandling att effekten av olika situationer är viktigare än vad tidigare forskning har visat. Beroende på situation kommer konsumenter att möta olika utfall (välja olika butiker) och de kommer även att värdera olika butikers attribut olika. Således behöver butiken hantera olika butiksattribut beroende på vilken konsumentgrupp butiken vill attrahera och vilken situation de konsumenterna står inför. Därför kan val av livsmedelsbutiker ses som situationsbaserade val.

Introduction

Why consumers behave the way they do has been studied over several decades in different disciplines, for different purposes, and with different research models. Compared to other types of consumer goods, food is essential for life and therefore consumers cannot choose not to consume, the way they can with other consumer goods, which makes the choice of grocery store unique. Shopping for groceries is a big and important part of consumers' everyday lives since Swedish consumers are spending about 14 % of their overall budget on groceries (SCB, 2014). Research has long focused on trying to understand and predict consumer purchase behaviour (e.g., Howard and Sheth, 1969; Hui et al., 2009), which is essential for the development of effective marketing strategy. Even though consumers cannot choose not to consume food, there are a lot of choices to be made regarding where and how to purchase groceries. Previous research has focused on understanding what consumers notice in the store (e.g., Chandon et al., 2009; Hui et al., 2009; Otterbring et al., 2014) and the focus has often been on particular brand choice behaviour (e.g., Howard and Sheth, 1969; Sheth, 1983). But, in order for consumers to walk along the shelves and choose products and brands in the store, they must first have chosen that particular store among available alternatives. The purpose of this dissertation is to *advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores.*

The complexity of choice

The view of how consumers make purchase decisions has evolved throughout history. Consumers have been shown to make both unconscious (e.g., Woodworth, 1929; Dichter, 1964; Dijksterhuis and Nordgren, 2006; Kahneman, 2011) and conscious decisions (e.g., Dewey, 1910; Ajzen, 1985; Howard, 1989; Kahneman, 2011). In the 1940s the view was rooted in economic theory with purchase decisions seen as a result of rational and conscious economic calculations. Consumer behaviour theorists in the 1950s and 1960s started to place the consumer as an irrational, impulsive decision maker vulnerable to external influences (e.g., Haire, 1950). Simon (1955) argued that decision makers have only bounded rationality and are seeking to satisfice their need, not to maximise. Consumers' unconscious reactions have been explained by the Stimuli-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework (e.g., Woodworth, 1929; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), in which the

environment contains stimuli that affect consumers (the organism) which results in approach or avoidance behaviour (response). In the 1970s one research stream started to view consumers as problem solvers actively searching for information about products and services before purchasing. When bringing forward consumers as conscious problem solvers, the five steps of the consumer decision-making process (problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice, and post-purchase behaviour) are traditionally referred to (e.g., Dewey, 1910; Foxall, 1983; Engel et al., 1986). In the 80s, one line of research saw consumers as having relatively low involvement and being unwilling to engage in extensive decision-making and therefore willing to settle for merely satisfactory decisions (e.g., Simon, 1956; Olshavsky and Grandbois, 1979; Marsden and Littler, 1998; Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008). During the 90s some researchers replaced the individual decision processes with a more collective decision-making approach. Throughout the years the different views on consumers have brought forward different research models.

Coming into the 21st Century, Lye et al. (2005) felt compelled to state that even though consumer decision-making is fundamental to marketing, there is a limited understanding of the decision process. They also argued that existing models are “out of date and inadequate to reflect the reality of third-millennium decision-making” (p. 225), because of the inflexibility of previous models. The explanation could be that previous models did not include contextual differences and consumers’ use of different decision-making processes including both automatic and more conscious thinking in complex situations, which would better fit the characteristics of today’s consumers. As the view of consumers has evolved, I argue that taking contextual matters from both unconscious decision-making and conscious decision-making into account will help to understand the complexity of, and thereby better predict, consumers’ choices of grocery stores.

Limited cognitive ability

Consumers are daily facing a variety of choices and they have rarely as many decisions to make in a short period of time as when shopping for groceries. Food shopping is embedded within the consumers’ increasingly complex everyday lives with responsibilities and commitments (such as childcare, work, leisure and so forth). It is usually regarded as a chore to be done in combination with other routines (Jackson et al., 2006) and may be perceived by consumers as an essential routine task (Herrington and Capella, 1995). In the same line, Wilson (2001) proposed that most day-by-day doings are governed by an adaptive unconsciousness that works independently of conscious awareness. In the area of food choices alone, consumers are estimated to make over 200 everyday-choices per day (Wansink and Sobel

2007), making it necessary to make some unconscious decisions in order to handle all everyday-choices. Also, Trout and Rivkin (2000) have stated that the complexity of consumer decisions is increasing due to the growing number of options available to choose from. Given the number of choices consumers make each day, they are not willing or even able to put in a lot of time and effort to each and every choice (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000; Schwartz, 2004a; Fasolo et al., 2007), and are therefore using heuristics (mental shortcuts) to minimize the cognitive effort (Hilbig and Pohl, 2008; Shah and Oppenheimer, 2008; Kahneman, 2011). Extensive choice sets are associated with decreases in both consumer satisfaction and likelihood to purchase because of the consumers' limited cognitive ability to process large amount of information (Schwartz, 2004; Iyengar et al., 2006). This phenomenon has been referred to in previous research as "choice overload" (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000; Mogilner et al., 2008), "the problem of too much choice" (Fasolo et al., 2007), and "the tyranny of choice" (Schwartz, 2004). The problem of too many choices is not just in the number of products but also in the number of attributes necessary for making the choice (Fasolo et al., 2007). The choice and information overload, which consumers are facing today, forces them to use strategies to spare their cognitive ability.

Because of the assumption of the consumers' limited cognitive ability, different consumers are driven to use different strategies to facilitate their individual cognitive ability (e.g., Verplanken and Aarts, 1999, Kahneman, 2011). In previous studies from cognitive psychology, this facilitation involved investigating how the context within which an individual acts, affects individual decision-making, given that contextual complexity and demanding activities affect cognitive ability (Juslin et al., 2003; Nordvall, 2014). In other words, individuals have access to different cognitive processes that work in parallel but one will dominate depending on the situation (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Gigerenzer et al, 1999; Olsson et al, 2006). This shows that which situation consumers are facing is important for how they make decisions. I argue that the choice of grocery store is not always an unconscious decision, but can rather be the result of both conscious and unconscious decision-making depending on different situations. The different situations that consumers are facing are in other words bringing forward different decisions.

Complexity of choice of grocery store

Consumers are exposed to, or expose themselves to, different situations and these situations require different considerations in which different factors become more or less important. Consumers' daily life is full of considerations of different factors. Due to limits of time and ability to process all information it is unlikely that consumers are evaluating all possible

alternatives when confronted with a large number of stores. For example, it is not likely that consumers living in Stockholm are evaluating all the grocery stores in Stockholm before making their choice; rather, they will focus on the stores closest to where they are situated. Grocery shopping constitutes an essential type of consumer behaviour that occurs more often than other types of shopping, with different outcome (different stores) depending on type of shopping trip (Popkowski Leszczyc et al., 2000). Research has also shown that consumers want different things from different shopping trips (Bell et al., 2011) and that, depending on type of grocery shopping (fill-in shopping or major shopping), different store attributes become important for the store choice (e.g., Reutterer and Teller, 2009), which indicates that the situation is influencing consumers. It is also an indication that choices of grocery stores are more complex than other types of store choices.

Previous research has shown that when under time pressure, consumers tend to shop with minimal investments of time and effort (Baker et al., 2002) and are likely to use less complex information search, less complex decision strategies, and different criteria for the evaluation of alternatives (Bettman and Sujian, 1987; Hastie and Dawes, 2010). This is why in some situations, such as when under time pressure, some attributes may become more important and relevant when making a decision while in other situations they do not matter for the consumer. Therefore, it is essential to focus on how context affects consumers' choices of stores, which will be done in this dissertation.

Retailing

For the last couple of decades consumer decision-making in retail contexts has been of increasing interest for retail as well as consumer behaviour research. Rather than being a coherent field, retail behaviour research is therefore characterized by work emerging from a variety of disciplines. For example, Geography has brought importance of location while the role of price and competition was brought from Economics. Consumers' consciousness and behaviour, as well as motivation and attitudes were applied from Psychology while human behaviour and social settings are learned from Sociology. Peterson and Balasubramanian (2002) state that in order to guide retailing practice, strategy, and empirical research more systematically and theoretically, there is room for, and a need for, a variety of conceptual as well as empirical research efforts focusing on both micro (individual differences and similarities) and macro (aggregated model building) phenomena in retailing. Due to the increased competitive environment in the retailing sector, understanding consumer behaviour has never been more important to retailers. As theoretical work in consumer

behaviour advances, retailing must therefore keep pace and pursue deeper consumer understanding and hence better predict their consumers' choices.

Different product categories

Retail has divided shopping into two different dimensions: Utilitarian, which relates to the functionality of shopping, and hedonic, which is the enjoyment of the shopping experience itself (e.g., Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Babin et al., 1994; Mathwick et al., 2001; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Kim et al., 2007). Shopping for clothes is hedonic shopping, seen as a pleasure where the consumers may spend an entire day walking from store to store without purchasing anything (Underhill, 2009), which means that in-store attributes and brands are important for attracting consumers. In comparison, consumers are seldom ending up leaving a grocery store empty-handed or walking from grocery store to grocery store just for pleasure. Consumers are more likely to choose one grocery store, the choice depending on what kind of grocery shopping is needed, and make product and brand choices in that particular store. Food retailing is therefore often viewed as a utilitarian, simple and practical subject. However, compared to other utilitarian shopping occasions, it is actually a mysterious subject due to its complexity. When shopping for groceries, consumers are most often shopping for several different products at the same time and are also facing a lot of options regarding products and brands in the store. Besides, shopping for groceries is occurring more frequently than other types of shopping. These conditions create a unique context in which purchase intentions and outcomes often differ depending on a variety of situational factors. The variety of choices (e.g., type of store, type of shopping, number of different products and brands) increases the complexity in the research area. Because of the complexity of different choices, the food shopping activity itself can be characterized as situation-dependent with many factors affecting consumers' choices. In this dissertation I will focus on how different factors influencing store choices are affected by the situation consumers are facing.

Major changes in food retailing call for more research

Food retailing has gone through a lot of changes since 1930 when Michael J. Cullen opened the world's first supermarket, thereby starting a new era of consumer choice. Self-service unleashed mass merchandising where food manufacturers could turn directly to the supermarket instead of only through wholesalers, and the market for food packaging and advertising exploded. The evolutionary consequence of this development is that food retail companies are facing a magnitude of challenges not seen before in terms of decreased profits and fierce price pressure. The price pressure in the retailing industry in Sweden is still lagging behind the largest markets in

Europe, such as Germany (Konkurrensverket, 2003), but the development is accelerating in the same direction.

Increased competition

In the Swedish food retailing sector, the top three companies ICA, Axfood, and Coop represent over 90 % of the market, where ICA alone stands for more than 50 % of the market (Abrahamsson, 2008). For a long time the retailing industry has been more local in comparison to other industries, but in recent years the internationalisation has slowly started to accelerate. Several new international store concepts and formats have expanded in Sweden, which increases the pace of development and intensifies the competition among the retailers (Maronick and Stiff, 1985; Popkowski Leszczyc et al., 2000; Pettersson et al., 2004). Swedish food retailing has been a somewhat “safe-market” for many years, since all consumers have to purchase food somewhere. However, with the heightened level of competition in the Swedish food retailing sector, an increasing number of grocery stores is currently facing difficulties in operating profitably. This has resulted in a development towards fewer, but larger, retail companies. Small traders have been forced to close, making the store network much sparser today. Consumers are forced to travel further to the nearest store. Instead of walking to the neighbourhood store, consumers might need to take the car in order to buy their groceries. In Sweden, the number of grocery stores has decreased from 39,000 stores in 1950 to under 7,000 stores in 1997 (Forsberg et al, 1994) and has continued to decrease to around 6,000 stores in 2004 (Pettersson, et al, 2004). However, even though the number of stores has decreased, some types of stores have increased in numbers. These are typically very large stores, and stores that rely heavily on consumers’ traveling by car (Svensk Handel/Öhman, 2000). The increased size of the stores has made it possible for retailers to supply consumers with an ever-growing number of choices (McAlister and Pessemier 1982; Kahn 1995).

Changes in the demographic structure have also occurred (e.g., Kumar, 2008). The rise in the number of single-person households (Clarke et al., 2006), increased mobility of the consumers (Marjanen 1997; Forsberg, 1998), and more commitments resulting in less time for shopping (Dellaert et al., 1998) are changes leading to new challenges for retail companies in order to satisfy new customer needs.

Change in consumer behaviour

Due to the larger number of choices supplied by retailers, consumers can afford to be selective in where and what they shop. This has changed consumer behaviour and given individual factors more space in the decision-making process. Elms et al., (2010) argue that the changes in the retail sector

and the innovations during the past 30 years have changed consumers' shopping habits and led to a need of not only investigating where consumers shop, but also how they shop. Consumers of today have different expectations than before and are quick at changing their wants and needs, which puts pressure on traditional brick-and-mortar stores to improve in order to keep and attract consumers. The changing and challenging retail landscape also puts pressure on retailers to develop an understanding of their consumers in order to re-define their stores to better fit consumer needs.

In previous studies, consumer segmentation has been based on demographic, psychographic, lifestyle, or attributes in the retail mix such as price and quality (e.g., Stone, 1995; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Kohijoki and Marjanen, 2013). However, the changes in consumers' behaviour call for another way of segmenting consumers. Gehrt and Yan (2004) argue that a crucial task when developing more efficient marketing strategies and tactics is to identify different consumer segments. Hence, those who can recognise and respond to the reality of changing consumer behaviours will survive the rough times ahead and emerge as winners in an entirely new landscape. Yankelovich and Meer (2006) argued that traditional segmentation techniques seem to be weak when aiming to predict consumers' future choices. Instead of solely segmenting on consumer characteristics there is a need to understand where and how consumers shop. Therefore, in order to understand consumers of today, this dissertation challenges traditional segmentation techniques by bringing forward segments based on where and how consumers shop.

Evolving technology

With the Internet being perceived as the "foundation for a new industrial order" (Hamel and Sampler, 1998), any retailer without a web page was often labelled as having little hope of future retailing success. Even though e-commerce is still standing for a small part of all sales in retail, it is growing rapidly and provoking a shift for the entire retail sector. Today, many retailers embracing the Internet treat it as a complement to other channels or media (e.g., Mahler, 2000). In a paper, which I wrote in collaboration with David Ballantyne, we argue that the growth of Internet has shifted the place for business more to a virtual space extending the understanding of service contexts and servicescape in new ways (Nilsson and Ballantyne, 2014). The evolving technology, the growth of the Internet and e-commerce, is making it easier for consumers to compare different products and stores. This facilitates shopping 24/7, whenever it suits them.

Consumers have been found to use the Internet to shop more effectively

(Puccinelli et al., 2009), searching online and then shopping in a brick-and-mortar store, or testing the merchandise in a brick-and-mortar store before ordering (often with discount) from an online retailer. As a result, consumers have gained more power and their behaviour has become harder to predict. The consumers' freedom to choose where and what to shop has made them more demanding, which is why companies are forced to re-evaluate themselves and their view of the consumer.

As the retailing sector is growing increasingly technology-intensive, the task of prediction becomes more difficult. This, together with the developing of new store formats, puts pressure on traditional store formats to improve and stay attractive in order to win the battle for the consumers. In order to survive in the tense, competitive food retailing industry and to attract consumers, retailers need to know what influences consumers and what makes them satisfied in radically changing times. In this dissertation, I will therefore focus on traditional store formats (supermarkets and convenience stores) and what influences consumers' choices and makes them satisfied with the stores.

Factors influencing store choice

In order to understand consumers' choice of store, the context is of importance. Therefore, there is a need to understand the underlying choice criteria that influence consumers in different situations. When trying to understand consumers, factors such as consumer characteristics and their attitudes towards different attributes must be accounted for. The early studies on store choice have focused on gravitational attraction theories, predicting that store patronage primarily depends on distance to store (e.g., Huff, 1964; Christaller, 1966) while later studies have brought forward that other attributes such as pricing and assortment are of importance for store choice (e.g., Monroe and Gultinan, 1975; Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Also, Woodside and Trappey (1992) point out that consumers are likely to choose a store or brand by linking the store to some attributes. Like many types of in-store shopping decisions (Park et al., 1989; Inman et al., 2009), consumers' purchase decisions have also been realized to be influenced by different factors (e.g., Belk, 1974; Mogilner et al., 2012) such as limited available time (Payne et al., 1998; Gigerenzer, 2008) and type of grocery shopping (Woodside and Trappey, 1992; Walters and Jamil, 2003; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Reutterer and Teller, 2009).

Previous research has argued that choice of store is moderated by consumers' type of grocery shopping, e.g., major versus fill-in shopping (Woodside and Trappey, 1992; Walters and Jamil, 2003; Carpenter and

Moore, 2006; Reutterer and Teller, 2009). Major shopping requires that consumers invest more time and effort (Kollat and Willett, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992) as well as more money (Walters and Jamil, 2003). Fill-in shopping, on the other hand, is more frequent and demands less time and effort (Kollat and Willet, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992). Studies examining type of shopping show inconsistent results, which might be explained by contextual matters and individual differences. Previous research shows that there are individual differences between consumers depending on how they shop. Despite a large literature, there is not yet a comprehensive understanding of how type of shopping is related to importance and satisfaction of store attributes, or whether there is an individual difference in how each consumer relates to these retail mix attributes.

Retail mix attributes

When making retail-marketing decisions, retailers must consider what the shoppers need and want. The internal environment of the store creates its image, which in turn influences purchase and patronage decisions. A retail mix describes the various variables, which a retailer can combine in alternative ways to arrive at a marketing strategy for attracting the consumers. The retail mix is a set of controllable variables used by retailers to satisfy consumers' needs in order to influence consumers' buying behaviour (Mathur, 2010). The mix of attributes is different depending on what kind of retail store the consumers are facing and may also differ depending on each unique situation. In order to be successful, retailers must decide on the best combination of these attributes in the retail mix in their specific store.

Location

One important attribute in the retail mix that has been proven to influence choice of stores is location (e.g., Clarke et al., 2006; Zentes et al., 2007). The effect of location is shown by the fact that consumers usually report convenience as their most important criteria when choosing stores (e.g., Howard, 1992; Bell et al., 1998; Severin et al., 2001; Fox et al., 2004). It has often been said that the three most important things in retail are "location, location, location", since locations is a retailer's most costly and long-term marketing-mix decision (Engel et al., 1995). A poor store location will affect retailer performance for several years. One important question in retail therefore concerns selection of retail store locations because good locations are key elements for attracting consumers to the store. Moreover, a good location may sometimes compensate for a mediocre retail strategy mix (Zentes et al., 2007). Bell et al. (1998) refer to industry research in the US,

which indicates that location explains up to 70 % of the variations in choice of grocery store.

Shopping at a store closest to the consumer has been found to be the most important factor driving the main store choice (East et al., 2000). The focus of location in previous research has been on a physical place such as distance to consumers' homes and distance to city centre. This is questioned in this study since researchers have shown that consumers today are more mobile than previously (e.g., Marjanen, 1997; Forsberg, 1998; Banister, 2011). Consumers without access to a car might be more limited when it comes to choice of stores since some stores are located outside the city centre, making it difficult to travel there without car. Because some consumers have better accessibility to different stores than other consumers, the purchase location has an impact on consumers' choices of grocery store. All consumers are choosing among stores for purchases, but the possibility of free choice of stores and products are, for various reasons, limited. Consumers living far away from a grocery store and not having good transportation to the store might not be able to reach the store even though they may want to. The range of alternatives to evaluate is therefore limited for consumers who do not have the possibility of free choices. Hence, consumers' individual situation regarding access possibilities is affecting the choice of store but also consumers' satisfaction with the store.

The physical environment of a store (both location and servicescape in the store) has an impact on how consumers react and act. A store's servicescape includes layout, decor, equipment, parking and landscape attributes (Bitner, 1992; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). Depending on where the consumer is situated at one specific time, one store location may be attractive while in another situation that store is not interesting at all.

Inconsistency regarding importance of attributes

Store choice is not only influenced by location, but also by a number of attributes that affect consumers' decision making. A review of the literature reveals that the most frequently reported antecedents to retail patronage are price level, product assortment and store location (Pan and Zinkhan, 2006). Nevertheless, previous research reports little consensus among researchers with respect to importance rankings of different attributes in choice of store. For example, product supply was shown by Uusitalo (2001) as well as by Carpenter and Moore (2006) to be the most important attribute when choosing grocery store. On the other hand, Reutterer and Teller (2009), and Wong and Dean (2009) showed that product quality was the most important attribute, while Baltas and Papastathopoulou (2003) and Mitchell and Harris (2005) found price level to be the most important attribute.

When Marjanen (1997) asked consumers what factors are the most important for their choice of store, supply, price and distance were rated first. Yet, when asked about the reason for choosing the store they buy their major part of groceries, distance came in first place. This shows the complexity of how consumers make their decisions. The difference between preferences and actual behaviour might be due to the circumstances and the situation consumers are facing when making the decision (Marjanen, 1997). The results from previous research show inconsistency in regards to which attributes are most important. One reason for this inconsistency is the fact that the number of attributes and which attributes are taken into account differ in previous studies. Even though the literature brings forward different store attributes that influence the choice, there is no consensus of which attributes are important. Moreover, different studies have investigated different attributes, leaving out other attributes proven to influence the consumer. Due to this, the results might be misleading in regards to what attributes influence the store choice. There is therefore a need to simultaneously investigate a more comprehensive set of attributes in the retail mix determining store choice, and their connection to the context in order to understand the reasons why consumers choose to shop at a particular store rather than another, which will be done in this dissertation.

Trade-offs between retail mix attributes

Since consumers cannot take all attributes in the retail mix into consideration when choosing store and since all attributes are subjectively chosen, consumers make a trade-off between different store attributes in order to minimize the cognitive effort. Consumers usually have to sacrifice some factors in order to gain satisfaction regarding the most important factor. Consumers are for example making trade-offs between price level versus quality level or distance to store versus price level. In order to understand consumers' choice of grocery stores neither location nor price alone may be affecting the choice. Rather, the choice is influenced by yet unreported or under-examined factors. One interesting research question, which will be dealt with in this dissertation, is therefore to understand which attributes consumers' process and find important when choosing store and whether these attributes can be related to different consumer characteristics and the context.

Satisfaction and habits

In order to understand consumers' choice of store, retailers have to understand not only what choice criteria (e.g., different store attributes, habits, type of shopping) consumers use to evaluate the choice alternatives and choose from but also what makes consumers satisfied with a store. Satisfaction has been one of the most widely researched topics in various

research fields and is also an important explanatory construct in retail marketing research (Anselmsson, 2006). In general terms, satisfaction measures whether the product meets customers' needs and expectations (Oliver, 1980; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Traditional approaches to the study of consumer behaviour have emphasized the concept of consumer satisfaction as a main determinant of store loyalty (LaBarbera and Mazursky, 1983; Bitner, 1990; Oliver, 1993; Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998). In today's competitive environment with new store concepts and formats (Popkowski Leszczyz *et al.*, 2000; Huddleston *et al.*, 2009) coming into the market, consumers are offered more to choose from, such that instead of remaining loyal they may want to try out new store formats that better serve their needs (Kim and Jin, 2001; Elms *et al.*, 2010).

Previous research shows that while consumers have one store which they are most loyal to, over time they have a repertoire of stores they shop at (Uncles and Kwok, 2009). Consumers not satisfied with the store might therefore leave and search for other options that better serve their needs. The understanding and prediction of consumer satisfaction is therefore an important topic in order to keep and attract new consumers. If consumers are satisfied with a store so that they become loyal, it might be difficult to change their behaviour and influence them to choose another store. On the contrary, consumers who are not satisfied, or those who search for variety, may be willing to search for more information and try another store. However, even though consumers continue to purchase at a certain store; it does not mean that they are satisfied with and/or loyal to the store. The consumers may simply choose what they have always chosen, without conscious deliberation, in order to reduce the cognitive effort, or for some reason the consumers may be limited in their options to choose from. Due to large number of stores in a town, one may also question if consumers choose the store they are most satisfied with by comparing all options possible or if consumers' satisfaction with a store is an individual measure of the stores that are available to the consumer.

Habits

The majority of people's everyday actions is based on habits (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997; Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2000; Verplanken and Wood, 2006) and it has been argued that shopping is habitual in the sense that consumers follow established patterns of behaviour and are rarely using conscious choice or rational deliberation (Jackson *et al.*, 2006). Previous research has argued that habits can reduce the cognitive effort, facilitating consumers to make automatic choices done without almost any cognitive resources (Verplanken and Aarts, 1999; Kahneman, 2011; Duhigg, 2012). It may therefore be difficult to break habits and it often requires time and repetition

of interventions in order to succeed (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997). It is also not likely that strong habit individuals are seeking information about other brands or stores (Verplanken, and Aarts, 1999) as much as consumers who seek variety. The difference between habitual purchases and loyalty purchases is primarily that habitual purchases are the result of an unconscious simplification rather than a conscious choice, i.e. the degree of commitment governs whether it is habit or loyalty to the label that is crucial. Rhee and Bell (2002) suggest that consumers are unwilling to change stores if they lose the benefit of store-specific knowledge or if they have to gain new knowledge. This suggests that consumers' choice is based on their habits and that they will only switch to another store when perceived benefits of doing so outweighs the costs, making it inevitably important for retailers to know what is underlying consumers' store choice if they want to satisfy and keep, as well as attract, new consumers. It also suggests that consumers might choose to keep their habit of shopping in a store even though they are not satisfied with it, just because they are unwilling to invest more commitment in order to find a new store. Also, consumers may be restricted to shop in some store or stores for various reasons (e.g., lack of access to car, limited budget or time) and would perhaps make another choice if they had the possibility to choose freely. It is therefore important to take into account that consumers can only choose a store if it is available for them. If the available market place is changing and a new store is opening, it is important to understand what factors will make consumers break their habits and abandon their store to find and try a new one.

Purpose of the study

Knowledge of how consumers make decisions and upon what grounds these decisions are made is and will always be interesting for retailers in order to attract consumers. A clear understanding of why consumers choose one store and not the other has become a major objective of retail strategists and researchers. Hence, in order to understand consumers' needs and reactions, it is important to gain information of what influences consumers to choose a grocery store.

Food shopping constitutes a unique type of shopping behaviour, which, together with the variety of different choices to be made, increases the complexity of the research area. In comparison to other types of shopping, food is essential to life and there are seldom as many choices to be made in a short period of time as when grocery shopping. Despite a large literature, there is not yet a comprehensive understanding of how type of shopping is related to importance and satisfaction of store attributes, or whether there is an individual difference in how each consumer relates to different attributes.

There is therefore a need to simultaneously investigate a more comprehensive set of attributes in the retail mix determining store choice and their connection to the context. The complexity also calls for another way of segmenting the consumers. Instead of segmenting on consumer characteristics, there is a need to understand how different situations such as where and how consumers shop influence the choice of store. Given the complexity in the research area, research focusing on different situations that consumers are facing is needed to advance the knowledge of consumers' store choice.

The overall purpose of the doctoral dissertation is **to advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores**. In order to fulfil the overall purposes, the dissertation will focus on the following objectives:

- 1) Examine the effect of traditional attributes in the retail mix such as price, product quality, product range, service, and access, on choice of grocery store in combination with different situations.
- 2) Examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers' choice of grocery store.
- 3) Investigate how different situations affect consumers' satisfaction with their choice of grocery store
- 4) Investigate whether and how consumer characteristics have an impact on choice of grocery store.

The contribution of this study is of interest to a number of different parties. There is an absence of research in the field today, making the study an important contribution to retail research. The complexity in terms of how the context is influencing consumers' choice has been studied in other research fields but the effect on consumers' choice of store has not been clear in the retail field. How consumers are making their choices of stores are of great interest to retailers as well. Retailers want to know the consumers, what they like and dislike as well as how consumers are choosing store. Not only will the retailers gain from the knowledge of consumers, which this dissertation brings but also the municipality. With increased knowledge of how consumers make choices, the municipality will be better prepared when making decisions regarding city planning and traffic planning. Knowledge of how consumers choose store will also allow retailers to adjust market communications and store formats to accommodate existing shoppers and to attract different segments of consumers.

Overview of the dissertation

This doctoral dissertation is divided into two main parts. The first is an introductory part and the second a series of papers.

The introductory part provides a comprehensive picture of the common theme of the articles. Chapter two of the introductory part gives the reader a deeper knowledge and historical facts regarding the theoretical background, focusing on consumer decision-making and retail choice models. How the studies were conducted and the reason and argument for the chosen research method is presented in chapter three. The results are presented including a summary of the articles as well as a discussion on the articles' contributions. Although each of the papers constitutes a unique theoretical contribution and leads to findings, the combined knowledge arising from the papers makes an additional contribution to research and the practical knowledge about consumers' choices. The first part of the dissertation therefore ends with a general discussion related to the focus of this dissertation. Some future research and managerial implications are also proposed. The second part of the dissertation contains five papers based on empirical studies, each discussing a different aspect of consumers' choices of grocery stores.

Theoretical framework

In this chapter, a history of consumer behaviour theory and decision-making is presented. The complexity of choice is brought forward in relation to previous consumer behaviour theories. Previous store patronage behaviour models are discussed and previous literature regarding grocery shopping is brought forward. How different theories have considered the context is also brought forward in this review.

History of consumer behaviour theory and decision-making

A number of different approaches have been adopted throughout the years in the study of decision-making. In the 1900s-1940s the view of consumers was based on classical economic theories (Arndt, 1986) where the consumer was regarded as rational and someone who had, and made use of, full and perfect information when making decisions. John Dewey (1910) introduced a five-stage process on “the act of thought” consisting of the following steps: (1) A problem is felt or need is identified, (2) The problem is located and defined, (3) Possible solutions are suggested, (4) Consequences are considered, (5) A solution is accepted. Dewey used the label “reflective thinking”, meaning that people are focused, purposeful, rational, and intelligent in their way of thinking. Consumers were seen as largely rational actors who were able to estimate the probabilistic outcomes of uncertain decisions and through this could select the outcome that would maximize utility (satisfaction) and minimize cost. The Expected Utility Theory (von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1947) was then proposed arguing that consumers make decisions based on the expected outcome of their decision. The theory argues that the outcome is partly going to be affected by how important each choice criterion that consumers consider is, arguing that when making choices consumers should try to maximize their expected utility. However, even though the Utility Model was viewed as the dominant decision-making paradigm, critics (e.g., Bettman 1979) argued that consumers are typically not completely rational, nor consistent or even aware of the various elements when making decisions. The Utility Theory assumes that utility is primary measurable, yet we can only say whether satisfaction is more or less, not exactly how much. Also, the theory aimed to simplify assumptions and examined the effect of changes in single variables, holding all other variables constant. In this matter, the theory is not taking into account that factors

may be interlinked and that the utility of for example product quality or closeness to store is influenced by the utility of price.

In the 1950s researchers (e.g., Simon; Freud; Dichter, 1964) attempted to explain some of the shortcomings of for example The Utility Theory, by understanding consumers' subconscious motives for purchasing. The key tenets here were that behaviour is determined by biological drives, rather than individual cognition, or environmental stimuli. Outside academia, motivational research evolved in order to discover and explain why consumers behave as they do. Motivational researchers (e.g., Dichter, 1964) moved away from the thought of a totally rational decision-maker, assuming the existence of underlying or unconscious motives influencing consumer behaviour. Bettman (1979) argued that the rational choice theory is incomplete and flawed as an approach for understanding how consumers actually make decisions. As an alternative, he introduced the information-processing approach to the study of consumer choice. In the model consumers are seen as possessing a limited capacity for processing information, and are therefore using heuristics or simple decision strategies when faced with a choice. According to bounded rationality consumers seek to maximize utility in decisions but gather and evaluate information only until one alternative exceeds the acceptable level of satisfaction (Simon, 1955, 1956), which is one way to avoid information overload and also to save time. Heuristics are unconscious rules of thumb helping consumers to systematically simplify the search through the available information and the cognitive effort invested in the processing of this information (e.g., Kahneman, 2011). Heuristics are therefore helping consumers to navigate an increasingly complex world on a day-to-day basis without going crazy from all the stimuli that consumers are faced with.

In the late 1970s, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky developed The Prospect Theory expanding upon The Utility Theory and satisfaction theory of Bounded Rationality, to encompass the best of both. The theory states that consumers make decisions based on potential value of losses and gains rather than on final outcome, and that they value these using heuristics (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). The elements added were value (replacing utility) and endowment (an item is more precious if one owns it than if someone else owns it). Yet, since choice varies by being framed as a gain or a loss, The Prospect Theory cannot reveal underlying preferences (Dawes, 2001). During the 1970s, theories on acquisition, processing and storage of information as well as concepts such as cognitive complexity, memory organization and encoding processes were developed (e.g., Bettman, 1979), and the interest in research on attitudes increased (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Research on motivation and attitudes were still in focus during the

70s when research on involvement, information processing, consumer satisfaction, and decision-making were popular research areas.

Howard and Sheth (1969) introduced the Theory of Buyer Behaviour that attempts to explain how the consumer processes information and makes decisions through perception and learning inputs, and translates these into purchase decisions. The model provides “a sophisticated integration of the various social, psychological, and marketing influences on consumer choice into a coherent sequence of information processing” (Foxall, 1990 p.10) and is divided into six stages; information, brand recognition, attitude, trust, intention, and purchase. Three levels of decision-making which influence consumers’ information search were also introduced; extensive problem solving, limited problem solving, and routine (habitual) response behaviour. In the extensive problem solving level the consumers are highly involved, spending time on information search and deliberation between alternatives. In limited problem solving consumers usually have some experience of the product in question and are therefore mainly searching for information internally through memory. In the routine (habitual) problem solving, consumers’ involvement is low; they have repeated the purchase earlier and are not evaluating any alternatives before making their decision. The routine (habitual) problem solving could be connected to unconscious reasoning where choice is made on previous experiences while extended and limited problem solving both are connected to conscious reasoning. Hence, in different situations, such as what type of purchase is to be done, different information processing is used. The model shows that consumers use both internal and external factors in the decision-making process. However, the model does not show the relationship between these factors and whether all individuals take the same factors into account in the same way. Different situations may influence the individual consumer and therefore the context is an important factor to take into account when studying consumers’ choice of grocery store, which will be done in this dissertation.

The consumer decision making process

Most of consumer behaviour textbooks refer to the elements of the consumer decision-making process in terms of the traditional five-step classification of; problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice, and post-purchase behaviour (e.g., Foxall, 1983; Solomon, 2009). The basic five-step decision-making process in Figure 1 has gone through numerous revisions over the years and is still often used and referred to as a source for study and research in consumer behaviour. The five-step decision-making process originates from 1910, when John Dewey itemized what he termed the steps in problem solving that an individual goes through in arriving at any type of decision (Dewey, 1910). Since that time, many conceptualizations

of the steps of problem solving have been advanced and used. The elements of the model are similar to those presented in The Theory of Buyer behaviour (Howard and Sheth, 1969) but the structure of presentation and the relationship between the variables differ somewhat. The consumer decision model (Engel et al., 1986; Blackwell et al., 2001) is structured around the stages: need recognition, information search (internally and externally), evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post-purchase reflections, and divestment.

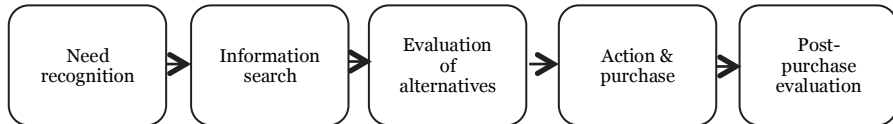


Figure 1: Five-step consumer decision-making process

In the first step of the decision-making process, a need caused by internal stimuli (e.g., our stomach is rumbling, we are hungry, we are out of food at home, some products are missing to make dinner etc.) or external stimuli (we pass by a restaurant and the aroma of food makes us hungry) is identified. The first step may be functional and occur as a result of routine depletion or unpredictably. When a need is found, consumers search for information about the product or service, talking to others, reading consumer magazines, searching the Internet, visiting retailers, and so forth in order to find an optimal choice alternative. Next stage in decision-making is the evaluation of alternatives. By using heuristics consumers are narrowing down the accessible information and alternatives, in order to avoid information overload (Kahneman, 2011). According to the satisfaction theory, consumers seek to maximize utility in decisions but they gather and evaluate information only until one alternative exceeds the acceptable level of satisfaction (Simon, 1955, 1956), which is one way of avoiding information overload and also saving time. In this step, consumers have narrowed it down to a few alternatives that are possible choices, evaluating these alternatives to find the best alternative. When all doubts and objectives have been overcome the most attractive alternative will be chosen according to choice criteria such as value, design, emotional attractiveness, price and so forth (Solomon, 2009). The fourth stage is the action and purchase decision, in which consumers are making the actual decision of approach or avoid. After the purchase consumers enter the post-purchase evaluation step, where they experience concerns after making a purchase depending on the importance and value of the decision (Solomon, 2009). Traditional approaches to the study of consumer behaviour have emphasized the

concept of consumer satisfaction as the core of the post-purchase period. Satisfaction is believed to mediate consumer learning from prior experience and to explain key post-purchase activities, such as complaining, word of mouth, and product usage (Howard, 1989). The traditional five-step classification is typical of the rational approach to consumer decision-making and is often used to explain consumer choices and behaviours. Researchers have however shown that it is unrealistic to assume that people have all information available before making a decision (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Gigerenzer et al, 1999) and that consumers violate the principles of rational choices (e.g., Olshavsky and Granbois, 1979; Marsden and Littler 1998; Nordfält, 2007). Consumers spend more or less time on searching for alternatives before making their choice depending on the situation and which perceived need they are trying to fulfil. The sequential nature of the five-step decision-making process has therefore been challenged as researchers question whether consumers actually go through all these steps in sequence and how different situations such as impulse, variety-seeking, and habitual purchases fit into the model.

Previous research has shown that some consumers are variety-seeking, driven by the search for variation regarding product choice (Kahn, 1995). When consumers search for variety, the need for recognition may look different each time they are facing a decision. Consumers may therefore be more engaged in the decision-making process when searching for variety than when buying out of habit or loyalty. Other studies have shown that the majority of people's everyday actions is based on habits (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997; Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2000; Verplanken and Wood, 2006). Habits are fundamental in human behaviour and have a great impact on the way we behave (Verplanken and Aarts, 1999). A decision made out of habit is a quick and effective way to make a decision or select a product since it requires little cognitive effort (e.g., Verplanken and Aarts, 1999; Duhigg, 2012), which is more similar to the unconscious thinking. Habits are maintained by the incentives (convenience to take the car to work), the biological factors (addiction to nicotine or alcohol) or the psychological needs (self-esteem boost from shopping) they serve. Breaking habits may be difficult; it often requires time and repetition of interventions in order to succeed (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997). It is therefore not likely that strong habit individuals are seeking information about other brands or stores (Verplanken, and Aarts, 1999) as much as variety-seeking consumers would. When buying out of habit, the need for recognition may be the same as in past experiences and the consumer would probably not engage in the first part of the decision-making stages.

Summary

Previous research on decision-making was initially founded on the assumption that humans are rational; people were assumed to have complete information about all alternatives as well as stable and well-organized preferences when evaluating alternatives before making a choice (e.g., von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1947; Arndt, 1986; Schwartz et al, 2002). However, if all consumers behaved as traditional economic models describe, all possible options would be accurately weighted in terms of cost and benefits and utility maximization, impatience would not exist, no relevant information would be overlooked and consumers would always behave according to their attitudes (Milkman et al., 2009). One explanation to the restricted ability for people to rationally process all available information when making product evaluations and choices, is that people have limited cognitive ability (e.g., Payne et al, 1993; Bettman et al., 1998). There is a huge amount of accessible information that could be used when making a decision, but the capacity of processing this information in a human's cognitive ability is limited. Due to this, there is considerable evidence that consumers' decision-making can indeed often be characterized as rules of thumb that work reasonably well in many situations (Payne et al., 1993; Kahneman, 2011). However, not all situations are similar, and what situation the consumers are facing might influence the choice. I argue that consumers with strong habits when purchasing might gain tunnel vision and not see other products than their usual brand or other stores than their usual store. Their choice of store may therefore be the same as always even though there might be "better" options that would better serve their needs.

The way consumers gather and evaluate information in order to avoid overload differs between consumers and affects the choices that they make. According to Berman and Evans (2005), the behaviour of consumers differs according to the place where they are shopping and their involvement level with the act of shopping. Consumers who are highly involved in the choice will take the trouble to find out more about the product or the store in order to evaluate the alternatives more critically (Dubois, 2000). Important influence to this dissertation is the research on involvement and consumer satisfaction. How involved consumers are when purchasing may influence how much time they are willing to spend searching for information and evaluating different options before making their decision. How satisfied consumers are with their previous decisions may influence their upcoming decision-making. This also strengthens my idea of the situation being very important and influencing the choice of store.

The strong, natural link between consumer behaviour and retailing research acknowledges that consumers interact with retailers at every step of

the consumer decision-making process from need recognition to post-purchase satisfaction. It was stated that the decisions were influenced by stimuli received and processed by consumers as well as by consumers' memories of previous experiences, external variables (culture, social class, personal influence, family, and situation), and individual differences (motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, and lifestyle). Even though situation is listed as an environmental influence, the factor is not clearly defined. The environmental and individual variables are vague in their definitions and in which role they play in the decision process. In parallel with the Theory of Buyer Behaviour, the influence of environmental and individual factors is specific to a certain process within the model, ignoring that it can also have an impact on the wider process. Even though previous research has not clearly defined the environmental influence, and its role in the decision process is vague, it has been shown that the environmental does influence decision-making. Due to the complexity of grocery shopping, I consider the situation as really important, and it is therefore taken into account in this dissertation.

The complexity of choice

In the last decades consumer decision-making has been of increasing interest for retail as well as consumer behaviour research. In previous research there are different views in regards to whether consumers use conscious or unconscious reasoning when making decisions. Consumer decision-making research has long been characterized by placing consciousness at their core (e.g., Dewey, 1910; Bettman, 1979; Ajzen, 1985; Howard, 1989) but researchers have also shown that complex cognitive processing occurs at an unconscious level as well (e.g., Woodworth, 1929; Dichter, 1964; Dijksterhuis and Nordgren, 2006). In psychology, decision-making is regarded as the cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternatives. In contrast, economics consider consumers as rational and free to make their own decisions. Consumers are believed to make choices leading to the best situation, taking into account all available considerations including costs and benefits. However, the main focus in business administration research has neither been on cognitive processing nor consumer rationality. Instead, the focus has been on the outcome of consumer choice and, later, on the process and consumer characteristics preceding the choice.

Kahneman (2011) has systematized previous research regarding consciousness and unconsciousness and tried to explain the mechanism behind people's thinking, in a simple way. Kahneman introduced System 1 and System 2 thinking, where System 1 is the unconscious reasoning which is

automatic, low effort, and rapid decision-making while System 2 is the conscious reasoning which is controlled, demands more cognitive capacity, slow, and rule-based decision-making. System 1 builds on previous experience such as words, images, feelings, actions, ideas and memories in order to more rapidly reach a conclusion and make decisions with a minimum amount of information and effort. System 2 on the other hand is known as the rational system because it reasons according to logical standards. Kahneman (2011) showed that conscious processes play a minor role in many choices. Also Simon (1956, 1957) argues that it is unrealistic to assume a perfectly rational consumer since consumers' information-processing ability is limited, and that consumers are influenced by emotional and non-rational considerations. He also claims that a decision will be immensely complex if a complete analysis is done and argues that consumers have only bounded rationality and are seeking to satisfice, not maximise, the utility.

It is believed that a great deal of human behaviour is based on unconscious processes (e.g., Dijksterhuis and Aarts, 2010; van Gaal et al., 2012) and it has been shown that unconscious mental processes facilitate decision-making (Dijksterhuis and Nordgren, 2006; Dijksterhuis et al., 2005; Strick et al., 2011). Many daily doings, such as grocery shopping, has been shown to be a routine task that works independently of the conscious awareness (Herrington and Capella, 1995; Wilson, 2001; Jackson et al., 2006). Due to this I argue that it is likely that once a consumer has gone through a choice situation using conscious inputs, it will be an unconscious choice next time the consumer is facing a similar situation since the decision will then be stored in the consumer's memory, facilitating using unconsciously made decisions in order to save energy.

The difference between habitual purchases and loyalty purchases is primarily that habitual purchases are the result of an unconscious simplification rather than a conscious choice, i.e. it is the degree of engagement that governs whether it is habit or the label that is crucial for the selection of product. If consumers are satisfied so that they become loyal it might be difficult to change their behaviour and influence them to switch. Buying groceries is seen as a habitual choice since it is performed frequently, regularly and under stable environmental conditions. When going through a habitual behaviour, consumers do so without really thinking about it. When consumers have set a habitual behaviour regarding which store to choose the choice might therefore be difficult for them to change, even if they intend to. Whether consumers are choosing out of habit/loyalty or seeking variety will influence their willingness to switch stores. This suggests that there is a relationship between conscious and unconscious choices and that our

conscious choices could turn into unconscious choices if they for example turn into a habit, i.e. there is an automatization of the behaviour.

In cognitive psychology it is argued that different cognitive processes work in parallel and that, depending on the situation, one will dominate in that specific situation (Olsson et al., 2006). Hence, I argue that the situation can influence whether the consumers are using unconscious or conscious reasoning. The choices made may be unconscious when consumers are facing a well-known situation and therefore the choice is made out of habit. However, if something happens, such as a new store opening, consumers might turn to more conscious decision-making again, evaluating the new alternative. The consciousness in a choice situation therefore represents only parts of the processes that the situation triggers. The unconscious reactions together may affect us to choose a certain alternative without us realising that we had a conscious thought. Yet, Simonson (2005) argue that even though unconscious inputs often are key determinants of consumer decision-making, they may be overstated, especially in regards to consumer choice. A choice could therefore be seen as a product of both conscious and unconscious reasoning. It is therefore inevitably important to also consider what situation consumers are facing in order to understand their choices. This will be done in this dissertation.

Store patronage behaviour models

Existing foundational retailing theories tend to be either derived from, or adaptations of, microeconomic theory (e.g., Tirole, 1989) or central place theory (e.g., King, 1984), both developed in, and for, other knowledge realms. Early research on store choice focused on gravitational attraction theories predicting that store patronage primarily depends on consumer's distance to the store (e.g., Huff, 1964). Retail gravitation models have been used extensively in the analysis of retail competition and for retail site selection decisions.

In the early 1960s Huff (1964) introduced "Retail gravitation", and was the first to use the revealed preference approach to study retail store choice. The model implies that consumers' choice of retail centres is governed by the attraction of the centres, which increases with the size of the centre and decreases with distance to the consumers' home. Fotheringham (1988) stated that the distance consumers would travel to a store increases with the level of attractiveness of the store. In Central Place Theory, which is an extension of retail gravitation (Christaller, 1966); it is argued that consumers will choose the closest retail centre. Reilly (1931) formulated a retail "gravity model" to predict patronage decisions of rural consumers on the basis of

distances to shopping towns and the sizes of those towns. In his model the proportion of trade from an area between two towns, A and B, is defined as a function of the sizes of the centres (population) multiplied by the distances from the intermediate place to the two towns. Hence, it was argued that consumers are willing to travel longer to a centre that is more popular or attractive. From this theory, the importance of location and distance to the store was learned. Still, what determined the attractiveness of the store or centres and made them the consumers' choice could not be answered with this model. The main critique of the Huff model is its over-simplification since it only considers two variables (distance and size) to describe consumer store-choice behaviour. In this dissertation, other important attributes are also taken into account in order to understand what attractiveness is for consumers. Other critiques regarding the models mentioned above were that they could only be applied to big stores and shopping centres and when consumers buy non-usual goods.

Environmental psychologists discuss patronage in terms of approach-avoidance behaviours. According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), approach behaviour is described as a willingness or desire to stay, explore, work, or affiliate. In contrast, avoidance behaviours are represented by opposite behaviours, a desire not to stay, explore, work, or affiliate. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) used the approach-avoidance concept by Mehrabian and Russell to study graduate students in retail settings. The study found that approach behaviours (i.e., shopping enjoyment, returning, attraction and friendliness toward others, spending money, time spent browsing, exploration of the store) influenced perceptions or responses to the environment. Donovan and Rossiter suggested that physical approach is linked to store patronage, that is, approach is defined by store patronage.

A wider perspective towards modelling store patronage was suggested by Monroe and Gultinan (1975). They developed the first general model of store choice through an attempt to analyse what elements and relations were important when choosing store (Figure 2). The model has four sets of variables; (1) General opinions and activities concerning shopping, (2) Specific planning and budget strategies, (3) Importance of store attributes dealing with buyer information (price and advertisement), and (4) Perceptions of stores in terms of attributes dealing with buyer information. The focus was the consumer/household and included attitudes, beliefs and purchase strategies regarding store choices and how this was affected by the strategies of the stores. The results indicated that consumers' attitudes towards stores are influenced by general opinions and activities as well as whether the stores possess desired price and advertisement. The model indicated which consumer characteristics (demographics and lifestyle) may

affect the importance consumers place on the store attributes price and advertising. The main focus in this model was that store choice is influenced by consumers' attitude towards the in-store attributes price and advertisement. Important influences of this model, which I will take with me include how previous experiences shape consumers' purchase behaviour, their habits and attitudes, and influence future decisions. This strengthens my arguments that previous conscious decisions may lead to habits and future unconscious decisions regarding what store to choose.

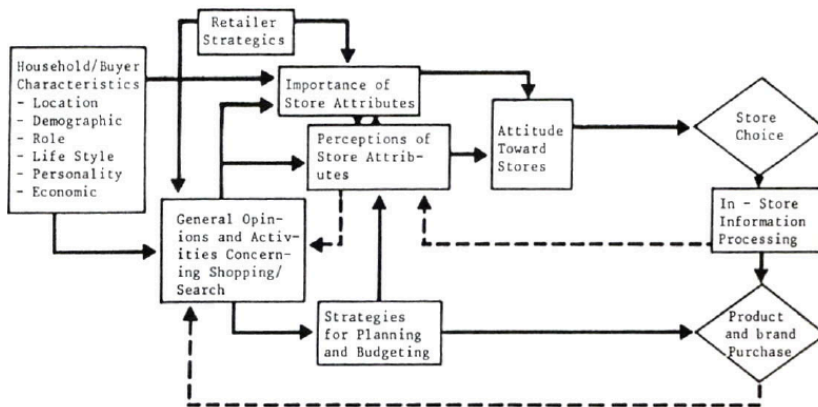


Figure 2: The Monroe and Gultinans model (1975)

The Monroe and Gultinans (1975) retail patronage model was refined by Darden (1980) which gave a more comprehensive picture of patronage behaviour, taking into account both product and store choices as well as singular and multi purchase shopping trips (Se Figure 3). Darden (1980) argued that patronage choice behaviour is more important to retailers than brand choice behaviour and that shopping trips are separate phases in the purchase process. Darden's model focused on the way consumers shop, their attitudes towards shopping, and their experiences. The model brought forward both choice of products and store, arguing that products were antecedent to store choice since many consumers make regular trips to a retail store to buy "something" or to "see what is available" and therefore first choose stores in which to shop without considering brands. The brand comparisons are therefore done in the store between available brands. Fotheringham (1988) mentioned that brand choice and store choice are dominating the marketing literature and that the decision-making process of these choices are similar, except that brand choice is not influenced by location while for choice of store it plays a significant role. Also Sinha et al. (2002) argue in the same vein that store choice can be seen as a cognitive

process which is similar to that of choosing a brand since both involve a process of acquiring information, selecting information, and making a final decision. According to Darden's model (1980), shopping orientations are composed of consumer characteristics including lifestyles, social class, and family. The shopping attitude was believed to trigger stimuli leading to need recognition and start of information search rendering into an evoked store set. The evoked store set then influenced store attribute importance leading to the decision and purchase stage. The fundamental in Darden's model is the way consumers shop and their attitude towards shopping. In comparison to previous models it takes both choice of products and stores into account and states that store choice comes before brand choice. The model also brings forward the information search as a big part of the choice process. From this model, the importance of type of shopping and personal characteristics is taken. I also bring with me the theory that consumers may have different reasons for shopping which could lead to different choices. This strengthens the thought of store choice being affected by the situation.

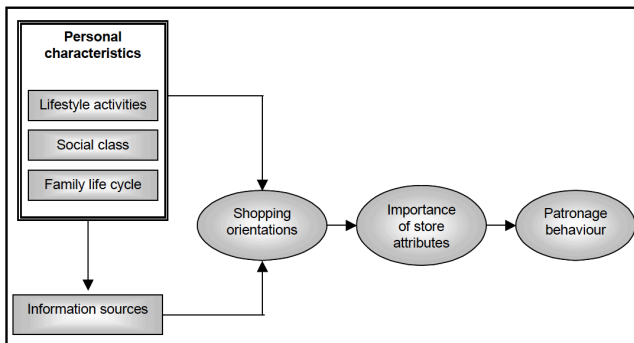


Figure 3: Darden's patronage model of consumer behaviour (1980).

Sheth (1983) developed the integrative theory of patronage preference and behaviour, which was divided into two parts. The first part concerned how and what consumers prefer to purchase. Personal values, product, market, and companies were taken into account resulting into buying propensity. The second part takes the buying propensity into account as well as if the purchase is planned or not, which is affected by time, money, and effort as well as by socioeconomic factors and what the store is offering. It was argued that personal determinants of shopping could be broadly understood as being influenced by functional and un-functional shopping motives. Functional motives included the in-store attributes (product assortment, product quality, convenience, price, etc.) while non-functional motives concerned the stores' reputation, promotions, and consumers' social

and emotional needs as well as how enjoyable consumers found the shopping experience. These functional and non-functional motivations were later named as utilitarian (product-oriented) and hedonic (shopping as pleasure) (Dholakia, 1999). An important issue to bring forward from this model is that different shopping motivations such as utilitarian or hedonic shopping will influence the importance of different in-store attributes. There is in other words a difference in how consumers choose store, depending on whether it is utilitarian or hedonic shopping.

The models described above are built on the thought of consumers being rational. However, depending on the situation and what kind of products consumers are going to buy, the choice may be different. When it comes to the choice of grocery stores, the choice is also based on routines and could therefore also be an unconscious choice. When trying to understand consumers' unconscious reactions to different stimuli, consumer behaviour research has generally relied on a Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. Woodworth (1929) introduced the S-O-R framework (Figure 4) to stress the difference from the Stimulus-Response (S-R) approach of the behaviourists by stating that the stimulus produces different response depending on the state of the organism (O). The organism is in other words mediating the relationship between stimulus and response. The framework has since then been used and modified in several different areas.

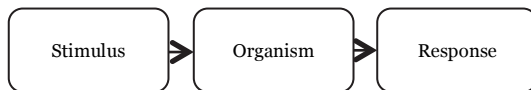


Figure 4. S-O-R Model

The S-O-R model was introduced in marketing context by Kakkar and Lutz (1975) and has since then been applied in various retail settings to explain the consumer decision-making process (Chebat and Michon, 2003) and the relationships between environment and consumer perception on the one hand, and in-store patronage intentions (e.g., Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Baker et al., 1992; Baker et al., 2002) on the other. The influence of environmental cues on consumer behaviour has been widely discussed in the scientific literature. Donovan's and Rossiter's (1982) basic model assumes a Stimulus-Organism-Response taxonomy, where the environment (stimulus) has an impact on the emotional states of consumers along the three dimensions pleasure, arousal or dominance (organism). These act as mediators on the response, which is behaviour characterized as avoiding or approaching (Woodworth 1929; Mehrabian and Russell 1974).

Environmental psychologists Mehrabian and Russell (1974) suggested that environmental stimuli of the atmosphere in a store (S) lead to an emotional reaction (O) that, in turn, drives consumers' approach and avoidance behaviour regarding store patronage (R). The Mehrabian-Russel model has emerged as the dominant concept of explaining atmospheric effects on emotions and behaviour. Much of the retailing research focusing on the influence of store atmosphere on store patronage behaviours is based on their stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) framework. Also Thang and Tan (2003) used the S-O-R Model as a framework to examine consumers' preferences regarding stores.

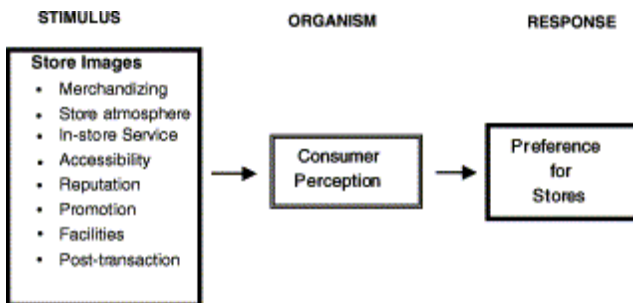


Figure 5: An S-O-R Model of consumer retail purchase behaviour. Source: Thang and Tan (2003: 193)

As shown in Figure 5, the stimuli pertaining to store attributes include merchandising, store atmosphere, in-store service, accessibility, reputation, promotion, facilities, and transaction service. The S-O-R Model of consumer retail purchase behaviour focuses on the most important elements for succeeding with store appearance and image. In becoming a customer-oriented business, management needs to be familiar with each of the elements in the model (Thang and Tan, 2003: 193). However, like other retail S-O-R framework-based studies, this model is solely focusing on the store image as stimulus for the organism response, ignoring other situational dimensions (e.g., type of store, major or fill-in shopping) that might influence the consumers.

The S-O-R framework-based models in retail have concentrated on the in-store purchase as response and are therefore focusing on the store environment and store attributes as stimuli. One exception is the study by Baker et al. (2002), which proposes a comprehensive store choice framework by adopting the S-O-R framework where stimuli (S) were three store environment cues; social, design and ambient cues, and the organism (O) stood for the five store choice criteria: service quality, merchandise quality, price, time/effort cost, and psychic cost, and where response (R) was the

store patronage intention. When studying consumers' choice of store the environment and store attributes could, in line with Baker et al. (2002), be seen as part of the organism as consumers' attitude towards the different attributes. The stimuli would then rather be what type of shopping trip the consumers are about to make. Belk (1974) revised the S-O-R framework by dividing stimulus into situation and object. He argued that situational variables can enhance the ability to explain and understand consumer choices and therefore need to be taken into account in the S-O-R framework. This dissertation will incorporate the thoughts from both Belk (1974) and Baker et al. (2002) regarding the content of the stimuli, the organism and the response, as well as the conscious steps of the decision-making process. The stimuli will not only be seen as the need to acquire food but also what type of shopping is needed as well as the attractiveness of the store. Hence, the situation the consumers are facing will be taken into account as environmental factor – the stimuli. When discussing the consumer (the organism) not only consumer characteristics will be taken into account but also the consumers' attitude towards different attributes.

Grocery shopping

Shopping is often seen as a recreational activity, and sometimes also as a means of escaping from the daily life rather than a transactional activity, which only fulfils material needs. It often happens that consumers browse around the shops for hours just for the fun of it. However, grocery shopping is different. Shopping for groceries is generally a purposeful activity, which is repeated at regular time intervals. It is seen as an essential and obligatory mode of shopping, which may often be felt as a burden, as something to be done with minimum effort.

In 1993, Laaksonen created a model which focused on a dynamic, interactive approach to retail patronage with a focus on grocery stores. This model is one of the more comprehensive, covering a large body of previous research. Most previous models focus mainly on consumers' internal problem-solving process, while the model by Laaksonen includes several other factors such as household characteristics, shopping orientation, the character and competitive activities of the stores, information search, and time pressure imposed by daily behaviour. The model is created to handle frequent purchases of groceries with low involvement. Laaksonen (1993) divides the choices into active and passive choices. The basic evaluation of the purchase place is made only when consumers are forced to it (if a store is shut down, the consumer moves, new stores are established, or the consumer has changed). If no such thing happens, the choice of a low-involvement purchase place will be a passive choice. Laaksonen (1993)

argues that habit is affecting active and passive choices. The more often a store is chosen, the bigger the chance of consumers continuing to choose that store. Laaksonen (1993) further argues that whether a purchase is of high- or low-involvement is an individual assessment and can therefore only be decided by the consumer. It is therefore not possible to categorize high- and low-involvement, which usually has been done in previous research. However, Laaksonen's store choice model (1993) is based on low-involvement purchases on a daily basis where habits and experience have a big influence on the choice, which is also the environment of this study.

The Laaksonen model brings forward that the choice process could be based on consciousness, curiosity, and habits. This dissertation will extend on the notion of choice suggested by Laaksonen, arguing that consumers use different strategies to solve the task of grocery shopping. The Laaksonen model, as well as most models of store choice behaviour, is developed to explain the store choice. However, the model does not take into consideration that consumers might choose different stores as well as find different attributes important depending on the situation they are facing. For example: a consumer might always find some attributes important and use one type of store for major shopping, while when doing fill-in shopping other attributes becomes important – leading to the choice of other types of stores. This will be taken into consideration in this dissertation.

Type of shopping

When it comes to grocery shopping behaviour, previous research has used a variety of approaches to determine type of shopping trip undertaken by different consumers (see e.g., Marjanen, 1997). Three specific types of shopping have been identified; major shopping trips, fill-in shopping trips, and shopping primarily for price specials. Shopping primarily for specials occurs when consumers' primary purpose for visiting the store is to buy the price specials offered there (Mulhern and Padgett, 1995). Major shopping trips require more time and effort by the consumer, due to the large number of items planned to be purchased in order to fulfil short- and long-term needs (Kollat and Willett, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992). These major shopping trips are less frequent. Kahn and Schmittlein (1992) showed that consumers' tendency to use coupons are greater on major shopping. Still, previous research has shown that consumers are spending more money on major shopping trips (Walters and Jamil, 2003). Previous research has also shown that the percentage of unplanned purchases is larger during major shopping trips (Kollat and Willet, 1967; Nordfält, 2009). Consumers are buying more items on major shopping trips and are also staying longer, which could be connected to consumers buying in bulk. Fill-in shopping trips are more frequent and aimed at meeting urgent needs with less demand on

time and effort invested by the consumers during the trip (Kollat and Willett, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992; Kim and Park, 1997). For instance, fill-in shopping trips are conducted to replenish perishables such as milk, eggs, and bread that are frequently consumed, or to purchase items for imminent use, such as a lunch. Because fewer items are purchased on fill-in trips, a smaller proportion of the overall grocery budget is spent on each occasion. Since the customers' need is more clearly identified, they are less susceptible to in-store promotions (Kollat and Willett, 1967). Type of shopping behaviour could affect the store choice for that specific purchase situation. People may for instance choose one store when doing major shopping and another when doing fill-in shopping. Hence, consumers' choices of grocery stores are affected by which situation consumers are facing. If consumers realize that there is nothing to eat at home, the need of doing a major shopping trip might occur, but if consumers are missing milk for breakfast there will be a need of fill-in shopping. The type of shopping trip is therefore connected to the need recognition step and will influence the entire decision-making process.

Consumers want different things from different shopping trips (Bell et al., 2011). Therefore, depending on what type of shopping is needed (major or fill-in shopping), and under what circumstances it is made, consumers are facing different grocery stores that will best suit the shopping situation and their need recognition. It is therefore also important to take into consideration the buying situation and what kind of shopping trip that is done, which will influence the need recognition. The buying situations are influencing how much effort consumers put into the decision-making process, and therefore become important to take into consideration.

Summary

The theoretical framework for specifying the process that leads consumers to choose a certain store from their consideration set of stores is drawn from the theories of consumer behaviour developed in marketing (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2001) and from the microeconomic theory of the consumer (e.g., Deaton and Muellbauer, 1980). In line with these theories consumers are assumed to form relative judgments about the available stores based on their attitudes towards the stores and on situational considerations. Since a grocery store is visited frequently, consumers probably do not evaluate the alternatives every time. The behaviour of consumers who are not much concerned about evaluating the alternatives becomes habitual, automatic and unconscious. In this routinized buying behaviour, consumers' information search and decision-making are assumed to be based on earlier experiences.

Retail store choice is one of the heavily studied areas in marketing (e.g., Monroe and Gultinan, 1975; Pessemier, 1980; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1989; Popkowski Leszczyc et al., 2000; Solgaard and Hansen, 2003). However, the major models of store choice mainly deal with choice processes as they relate to product and brand choice. Also, previous models are applicable for retail choices for a specific task in situations where the purchase task is a new or modified task in which consumers are searching for information and evaluating different alternatives. Hence, the models are mostly concerned with conscious thinking. However, when shopping for groceries, both unconscious and conscious thinking need to be taken into consideration. Decisions concerning grocery store choice may be similar to processes represented by traditional models of consumer decision-making (e.g., Monroe and Gultinan, 1975; Engel et al., 1995). In contrast, grocery store patronage is largely determined by the conscious purchase needs as well as by unconscious purchase habits. Retail store types and consumers' individual characteristics also influence choice of grocery store. Therefore, it is important to include both conscious and unconscious thinking as well as different store attributes when studying consumers' choice of store. However, there is a lack of previous research stating which level of accessibility that is acceptable for a store to be attractive and what attributes impact the level of attractiveness. When a store's attractiveness level increases, consumers will travel further to get to the store, which leads to other stores losing consumers. The time it takes to travel to a store is assumed to measure the physical (ability to travel to the store) and psychological (consumers' feelings towards store attributes, habits) effort it takes to reach the store. What type of effort is dominating will depend on the situation the consumer is facing. A store situated further away will of course demand more physical effort to travel to.

The models explained above have been borrowed from other areas (e.g., economics, psychology, etc.) and are developed in order to understand processes in situations eliciting a considerable degree of cognitive effort and commitment. Even though the models have been developed for other purposes, they all contain elements that could be helpful when understanding consumers' choice of grocery store. Therefore, parts of the models will be taken into consideration when trying to advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores.

Retail mix

In understanding the concept of store choice and patronage behaviour, previous retail research has focused on store image and importance of store attributes (Woodside and Trappey, 1992; Medina and Ward, 1999; Outi,

2001; Sinha and Banerjee, 2004; Sinha and Uniyal, 2005; Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Previous store-choice literature tries to understand the consumer store-choice process by studying the key variables that a consumer takes into account when shopping at a particular store, and how these variables interact. In previous models type of shopping, consumer characteristics, how and what consumers shop as well as store attributes have been shown to influence consumers' choice of store in different ways. Retail and marketing literature identify several retailer attributes as reasons for store patronage.

A retail mix describes various variables that a retailer can combine in a marketing strategy for attracting consumers. The retail mix is a set of controllable variables used by retailers to satisfy consumer needs in order to influence consumers' buying behaviour (Mathur, 2010). However, the mix of attributes is different depending on what kind of retail store the consumers are facing and could also differ depending on each unique situation. In order to be successful, retailers must decide on the best combination of the attributes in the retail mix in their specific store. Yet, there is no consensus on how, and which of, the different attributes have been used in previous research. Even though the literature brings forward different store attributes that influence the choice, there is no consensus of which attributes are important. Moreover, different studies have investigated different attributes, leaving out other attributes proven to influence consumers. Due to this, the results might be misleading in regards to what attributes influence the store choice. Therefore this dissertation will investigate simultaneously a more comprehensive set of attributes in the retail mix that determine store choice as well as their connection to the context in order to understand the reasons why consumers choose to shop at a particular store rather than another. In this dissertation, the attributes in the retail mix are divided into attributes concerning accessibility to the store and attributes concerning attractiveness of the store. The reason for this is that the retailers can control the attractiveness attributes while the accessibility attributes are uncontrollable attributes that still might affect the consumers.

Accessibility attributes

Consumers' choice of individual stores and the effect of location on that choice have been studied extensively, showing that consumers usually report convenience as their most important criteria when choosing store (e.g., Howard, 1992; Bell et al., 1998; Severin et al., 2001; Fox et al., 2004). The choice of a store's location is considered to be the single most important decision a retail organization makes since it is such a critical factor in the enterprise's success or failure. Given the importance of this issue, several lines of study have addressed the question of store location. Bell et al. (1998)

refer to industry research in the US that indicates that location explains up to 70 % of the variations in the choice of grocery store. Bell et al. (1998) showed, in their panel-data study, that travel distance from consumers' home to the store was a primary fixed cost of shopping and was found to be an important predictor of store choice. Fox et al. (2004) used travel time from the consumers' home to the store in order to predict consumers' patronage at stores of different retail formats. In other words, it is important for consumers where the store is situated when making their choice of grocery store (Engel et al., 1995). This is why retailers have to position themselves in such a way that they are accessible to consumers.

In studies from the 1930s, the consumer purchasing patterns are mainly declared by availability as measured by the store's proximity to the home. When few people had access to a car, distance was the most influential factor in society. In today's society where housing and trade is more dispersed, the supply is significantly higher and consumers are more mobile. Therefore, other factors such as the standard of the roads, speed limits, and parking facilities may be a better measure of availability (Marjanen 1997). In today's society, where most consumers have access to a car, the distance to the store is not an equally influential factor as in the past (Marjanen, 1997). A study of Marjanen (1995) shows that young people tend to use the car more frequently for purchase-travels than older people do. Also highly educated people are using the car more than lower educated people in the purchase. The use of the car for shopping is growing even as the family size and income increase. Married and cohabiting couples are using the car more than single people do (Marjanen, 1995). Moschis et al. (2004) argue that older consumers are not as strongly affected as others by the distance and geographical location of food stores. Howard (1992) found that most people chose a centre for its nearness or accessibility when choosing between four different stores. People with access to a car are therefore confronted with more options to choose from when deciding which store to visit than consumers without access to a car. The decision-making process might therefore be different depending on accessibility to car. The accessibility of the store is in other words important in order to understand consumer choices. Different consumer groups have different accessibility even to the same store. People who, for different reasons, are less flexible when it comes to time and distance have a more restricted accessibility and therefore not the same opportunity to choose freely. The action step in consumers' decision-making process is therefore limited for people who are less flexible.

Attractiveness attributes

In addition to accessibility, some criteria such as price level, assortment level, and product quality have received greater attention than others

(Solgaard and Hansen, 2003). McGoldrick and Thompson (1992) identified eight groups of factors affecting how attractive a shopping mall is perceived. These eight groups are: recreational, usability, business, environment, accessibility by car, crowdedness, accessibility by bus, and the price level. Other researchers (e.g., Severin et al. 2001) have also identified similar factors. Severin et al. (2001) argue that the factor proved to be most important for choice of shopping centre was location. Regarding consumer goods, the biggest influences are quality, range, service, price, and discounts (Severin et al., 2001). Baumol and Ide (1956) argue that a grocery store that wants to attract consumers located relatively far away from the store should have a large assortment of products (in line with Retail gravitation models). The reason behind this logic is that consumers with high shopping costs, in terms of having to put more effort and time into shopping because of longer travel distance, will only visit the relatively far-away located store if the probability of a successful shopping trip is high. This probability of success is however dependent on the chance of finding the product that consumers' need and want. Baumol and Ide (1956) therefore concluded that assortment and assortment size also play a role in the store choices of consumers. This is supported by Briesch et al. (2009), who argue that store choice decisions are more sensitive to assortments than to prices. In contrast, studies have failed to find a positive relationship between assortment size and category sales in grocery stores (Dreze et al., 1994; Broniarczk et al., 1998). In fact, one study of an Internet grocer found a significant negative relationship between assortment size and category sales (Boatwright and Nunes 2001) implying that grocery stores are over-assorted.

A study by Baltas and Papastathopoulou (2003) shows that supply in some situations is more important than distance and price level regarding choice of store. Low price, large selection, convenient location, clean store, good quality in general, friendly employees, and fast service was mentioned as the main reasons for shopping at the store (Woodside and Trappey, 1992). The primary reasons for choosing a specific store, according to a study by Sinha and Banerjee (2004), are closeness to home and merchandise (quality, variety and availability). Also von Freymann (2002) argues that location is the most important thing for store choice. Other factors that might affect the choice of store are convenience, price, service, selection & assortment, quality, freshness, parental/friend recommendation, and cleanliness (von Freymann, 2002). Even though studies have shown factors that are important and influence the choice of store, we still do not know whether these factors differ in different situations. Diep and Sweeney (2008) argue that purchasing trips carry both practical values and enjoyment values. Still, there ought to be a trade-off between practical and enjoyment values when making a purchase travel. The attributes in the store are very important

factors for consumers to choose the store. Consumers have little possibility to affect the store attributes but they can choose a store that fulfils the attributes suitable to their preferences. In the decision-making process, consumers will take different attributes into consideration in different situations such as when deciding what store format is of interest for that specific type of shopping trip.

The servicescape is a factor, which also influences consumers, whether they recognize it or not. The stores' environment and the circumstances connected to one specific purchase situation have an effect on consumers' attitude and decision-making (Shamdasani et al., 2001). Background music is one factor that can influence what consumers buy and how long they stay in the store. Research has shown that soft music makes consumers stay longer and fast music makes them move faster (Dijksterhuis et al., 2005). Further, women tend to be more affected by a retail environment while men are more affected by practical aspects (Diep and Sweeney, 2008). In a study by Baker et al. (2002) it was shown that being able to physically move store components and modifying these components relatively easily were considered to be advantages by experts. Consumers are drawn to retailers on the cutting edge with regard to store design. Since products and needs are changing, so must the stores' layout. How the store is built and designed is therefore important in order to gain satisfied customers. A storeowner must have knowledge of how to create a servicescape that makes customers feel good in the store and inspires them to make purchases.

Finn and Louviere (1996) argue that the presence of a low-price store gives consumers an idea of a lower quality, bad service grade, and small product supply. Specialty stores on the other hand were, according to consumers, connected to everything but low prices. The choice of store has been recognized as a cognitive process. A study by Carpenter and Moore (2006) showed that consumers found other factors to be more important in specialty grocery stores than in supermarkets. Cleanliness, product selection, courtesy of personnel, crowding and price competitiveness were seen as the most important factors in specialty grocery stores. When it comes to supermarkets the five most important attributes were cleanliness, product selection, price competitiveness, crowding and courtesy of personnel. Parking facilities and ease of access was also mentioned as very important factors (Carpenter and Moore, 2006). In other words, research must not only take into consideration that consumers are searching for information and making their choice out of the different factors they find important, but also the fact that these important factors change, depending on which store consumers use and which type of shopping is undertaken. The trade-off

consumers make might in other words not only be personal, but also based on the situation the consumers are facing.

Summary

As seen above, different store attributes have been shown to be important for different consumers. One reason for the inconsistency of which attributes are important might be that a different number of attributes, and also not the same attributes, have been used in different previous studies. Another explanation could be that the considerations of attributes differ between consumers and therefore it becomes difficult to see any real pattern regarding the examined attributes between consumers. It might also be that different consumers find different attributes important. Consumer characteristics will always have a high impact on how consumers make their decisions and also on what they prefer. Therefore, consumers' characteristics are also taken into consideration in this dissertation.

In this dissertation the attributes are divided into attributes concerning accessibility to the store and attributes concerning attractiveness of the store. Retailers can control the attractiveness attributes while the accessibility attributes are connected to consumers and therefore not possible for the retailer to control. All consumers are choosing among stores for purchases, but the possibility of free choice of stores and products are, for various reasons, limited. Consumers living far away from a grocery store and not having good transportation to the store may not be able to reach the store even though the consumers may want to. The evaluation of alternatives is therefore limited for consumers that do not have the possibility of free choices. No matter how attractive the store is, consumers cannot choose that store if it is not accessible for them. Due to this it is important to understand the consumers' individual situation since it is affecting the choice of store as well as their satisfaction with the store.

The consumer and satisfaction

Understanding how or why customer satisfaction develops remains one of the crucial management issues today. Satisfaction has often been regarded as an antecedent of store loyalty (Bitner, 1990). Store satisfaction can be defined (see also Engel et al., 1995) as: *“The outcome of the subjective evaluation that the chosen alternative (the store) meets or exceeds expectations”*. Knowledge of what makes customers satisfied is therefore critical. Satisfaction has been used in general terms to measure whether a product meets consumers' expectations (Oliver, 1980; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). It has been emphasized as a main determinant of store loyalty (LaBarbera and Mazursky, 1983; Bitner, 1990; Oliver, 1993; Bloemer and De

Ruyter, 1998). How satisfied consumers are with the store has in other words been shown to determine whether or not consumers will return.

Store choice has been modelled extensively at the aggregate level, assuming that all consumers share the same preferences. More recently, disaggregate analysis of shopping decisions, assuming that preferences vary by consumers, has become possible due to market data from household scanner panels, advances in choice modelling (e.g., Bell and Lattin 1998; Bell et al., 1998; Rhee and Bell, 2002; Fox et al., 2004). Rhee and Bell (2002) believe that while shoppers often patronize many stores, they typically have a primary affiliation to a 'main store' that captures the majority of their purchases. Bell et al. (1998) assume that consumers formulate a shopping list, calculate the total costs of shopping and finally select the store that has the lowest total cost of shopping for that consumer in terms of fixed costs, such as the distance to the store, and variable costs, such as the expected prices listed at the store. Noteworthy to say is that Bell et al. (1998) mention that the assumption consumers make regarding the decision-making process is not the only process they can use when deciding which store to choose, because other factors can matter in the store choice decision. Popkowski, Leszczyc et al. (2000) investigated these other factors and came to the conclusion that choosing a store is a dynamic and interrelated decision in which a consumer must decide on when and where to shop. Furthermore, they conclude that these decisions are dependent on the characteristics of the consumer.

Consumer characteristics influence patronage behaviour at each stage in the decision process, and choice involves how consumers decide where a particular purchase will be made. Previous research has shown that different consumer characteristics have an impact on consumers' store choice (Carpenter and Moore, 2005; Prasad and Aryasri, 2011). Individual decision-making is affected by the consumer's personality (Hawkins et al., 2004), demographical factors (Bellenger et al., 1976; Mägi, 1999; Mägi, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2004), socio-economical background and lifestyle (Laaksonen, 1993), as well as attitudes, image, and values (Mägi, 1999), which will influence and affect all decision-making stages. Kahn and Schmittlein (1989) argued that consumers making fill-in shopping trips are smaller households, have lower incomes, and are more frequently older and retired people. Moreover, consumers making fill-in shopping trips are usually buying less items and are more focused on buying what items they lack, which is connected to fill-in shopping. It has also been shown that different consumers value in-store attributes differently and therefore, different attributes make them satisfied in different situations.

When consumers are choosing grocery store they might also choose a different store when having limited time compared to when having unlimited time. Payne et al. (1988) showed that consumers with limited time for making decisions shift from using compensatory to non-compensatory decision rules. When having limited time consumers tend to filter information and focus on the more important attributes (e.g., Ben Zur and Breznitz, 1981). This means that consumers will allow positive attributes to make up for negative attributes by selecting the attribute they find most important and base their decision on that attribute. People who are hungry when purchasing groceries tend to buy more than under other conditions (Dijksterhuis et al. 2005), which indicates that the situation is important for how consumers act.

Summary

Consumers' satisfaction with the store has been shown to determine whether or not they will return to the store. However, I argue that even though consumers are satisfied with an attribute, it will not affect consumers' choice if they do not find the attribute important for their satisfaction. For example: If consumers are satisfied with the product range in a store but do not find it important that the store has a big range of products, the satisfaction with that attribute might make the retailer value the attribute more than the consumers do. Therefore, what consumers consider as important and what they are satisfied with does not have to be the same thing. Consumers' attitudes towards different store attributes might also differ depending on the situation and consumer demographics. For retailers to understand their consumers and to offer them the best service they can, the retailers must know what kind of customers they have and how they shop, as well as what the consumers find important for their satisfaction and what they are satisfied with. When the retailers know what kind of consumers they have and want to have, as well as which situation the consumers are facing (e.g., which type of shopping the consumers usually undertake), it will be easier to decide what attributes the store should have to fill the needs of their specific customers.

The review of the existing models indicates that store attributes, attitudes towards store formats and attributes, retail formats, the consumer, repeat patronage intentions, patronage loyalty, and time are involved to explain consumers' store choice and patronage behaviour. The stages of need recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives will gain more or less effort depending on the situation the consumer is facing (e.g., type of shopping, time pressure) and consumer factors such as demographics. In this dissertation, different streams of conscious and unconscious research

are taken into account with a special emphasis on the context in order to understand choice of grocery store.

Methodology

When conducting research, there are always many different approaches and methodologies available. Every approach and methodology have their advantages and drawbacks and are inevitably influencing the outcome. This chapter deals with choices made regarding methodology of the research in the different studies and the more practical data collection procedures.

View of the consumer

My view of consumers is that many factors can have an effect on their choice of grocery store. In previous research, there is no coherent view of the consumer. Different disciplines and different streams of research have their own views upon the consumer ranging from a very rational decision-maker, where the consumer is seen as a problem solver making conscious decisions (e.g., Dewey, 1910; Foxall, 1983; Blackwell et al., 2001) to an irrational and impulsive decision-maker vulnerable to external influences (e.g., Haire, 1950; Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). I consider consumers' decision making as based both on biological and unconscious needs as well as a more rational and conscious choice. In other words, consumers are not only driven by their own rational choices, nor are they victims of external influences alone. It is rather a mix of both internal and external factors that influence consumers' choice. I see consumers as complex individuals who act differently in different situations, varying in how rational they are when making decisions depending on what situation they are facing. Therefore, I argue that the way consumers are making decisions could not be explained solely by rational and conscious theories nor on irrational and unconscious theories. Lye et al. (2005) argue that consumers have been shown to use different strategies for different decision context, but that the models existing today are out of date, not reflecting the reality of third-millennium decision-making. They also argue that there is a need to understand which strategies consumers use in different decision situations (Lye et al., 2005). Consumers act in an environment; different factors could therefore affect the choices in different situations and environments. For example, in line with Darden (1980), I argue that consumers will act differently depending on what type of purchase is to be made. Consumers will for example choose a clothing store in a procedure different from that of choosing a grocery store. In the same way they might choose different grocery stores depending on what type of shopping is undertaken (Popkowski Leszczyc et al., 2000).

Research approach

When investigating consumers' choice of grocery store, many different approaches and methods can be used. Most previous research in retail has had a deductive approach, striving to test various theories from different fields such as marketing and psychology, in the field of retail. This study is not purely deductive since a strict deductive approach has its base in conceptualization of a research phenomenon, formulation of hypotheses, and testing these hypotheses (Holden and Lynch, 2004), which is not done in this study. Nor is the dissertation purely inductive since the dissertation is grounded in literature and not empirical observations, whereas a strict inductive approach is assuming theory generation (Orton, 1997). In this dissertation, a thorough literature review rendered into the development of research questions and the aim to integrate and build on existing theories from different fields in order to further develop them in the field of retail. The insights learnt during the process have also led to different research questions over time. Hence, three different data collections were done in order to answer these questions.

This dissertation focuses on consumers' decision-making regarding choice of grocery stores by investigating where and how consumers shop, which could be seen as partly an exploratory study. However, the dissertation is also partly descriptive since it is examining which retail mix attributes consumers regard as important in their evaluation, and also examining different consumer groups. The dissertation also has an explanatory part when addressing the consumers' satisfaction as well as the influence of shopping behaviour and consumers switching behaviour regarding stores. Van Maanen et al. (2007) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) argue that which approach a researcher takes is a question about how a research problem is defined and tackled, and that, depending on whether the objective of the study is an exploratory ("how" and "what" questions), explanatory ("how" and "why" questions) or a descriptive ("what" and "who" questions), different approaches will assist the researcher. By addressing these different issues, the dissertation contributes to the retail literature.

The quantitative survey method is equipped to build on already developed theories and constructs, and to test them on a larger population, which is suitable in terms of the research focus of this study. A quantitative technique also has the potential to measure different constructs and then test relationships between the different constructs by using statistical techniques. Therefore, considering the purpose of this dissertation, the quantitative survey method was applied. Brown and Dant (2009) conducted a review of different scientific methods in retailing research published in *Journal of Retailing* in 2002-2007. They found that previous studies in

consumer behaviour and retailing employ a broad range of methodologies. The most common method used during the period was student survey followed by consumer survey, secondary data, laboratory, industry survey, qualitative method, and modelling. The less common qualitative method may well provide new insights into how consumers choose stores, which could include insights into alternative methods of studying these problems. However, the quantitative survey method gives the opportunity to use a large sample, which gives a better opportunity to examine where and how different consumer groups shop. Therefore, after considering the different options as well as advantages and disadvantages in relation to the overall research focus, the quantitative survey methodology was chosen.

The advantages of quantitative survey methods are the ability to distinguish small differences and the capability of using statistical analysis (Hair et al., 2006), which makes them the most suitable for this research given the focus of this dissertation. The research method used in this dissertation was a web-based survey. Traditionally acknowledged advantages of mail and web-based surveys include high quality of results, fast response, and low cost (Kent, 2007). The online survey also offers anonymity and convenience for the respondents since they can reply at any time of the day, any day of the week (Kent, 2007), which could improve the response rate. One disadvantage that has been put forward regarding web-based surveys is that it is more likely that the responses will come from younger people since they are more comfortable with new technology. However, the use of Internet in Sweden has increased over the years. In spring 2011, 93 % of the population from 16-74 years in Sweden had access to Internet in their homes (Statistics Sweden, 2012). Therefore, there is a limited risk that there would be a huge difference in regards to respondents when making the survey web-based compared to postal.

Data collection and research design

The data collection was divided into three studies, with different focus, composed to answer to the purpose of the dissertation and the different objectives. Study 1 was designed to investigate where and how consumers shop as well as which retail mix attributes consumers regard as important in their evaluation when choosing store, as well as their satisfaction with these attributes. Study 2 covers the effect of type of shopping on choice of grocery store and how different situations affect consumers' satisfaction with a store. Study 3 was composed to further examine which retail mix attributes consumers find important for their choice of store and how attractive a store needs to be in order for consumers to switch their regular store to a new one.

For all the studies, the participants were informed about the confidentiality of the collected data before answering the survey.

How the survey and measures have been developed have an impact on the validity of the study (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2002). In order to ensure a high level of reliability and validity of the surveys, the questions originated from the rigor literature review and were pre-tested several times in different settings. The main objective of the pre-tests was to test how participants interpreted and responded to different questions. During the pre-tests, the surveys were improved and changed in order to fully capture the essence in the research problem and ensure that the measurement of the concepts were as valid and reliable as possible. How the pre-tests were constructed is described in more detail under the description of each study.

The quantitative surveys in Study 1 and 2 were designed as web-based surveys and presented on a computer screen. The samples for these two studies were drawn from a panel of Swedish residents managed by a market-research firm. One weakness of using web panels is that members might not be representative of the population at large (Hair et al., 2006). One advantage of panel-members is that the respondents have already agreed to participate in data collection, which increases the likelihood of higher response rate. It is also less expensive and quicker than for example direct mail surveys. Both in Study 1 and Study 2, the sample differed only marginally from the population of Swedish residents (Statistics Sweden, 2013). Therefore, both samples were defined as appropriate to draw conclusions from regarding consumers' choice of store. For both studies, the introductory text in the e-mail was written together with employees from the market-research firm, thanking the panel-members for being part of the consumer panel, stating what they will earn by answering the survey, and including information about what the survey was about as well as contact information to me. Study 3 was designed as a survey, distributed to students at Umeå School of Business and Economics. The results may have differed if I had had Swedish households as a sample due to this. However, since the aim of Study 3 was to examine how attractive a store must be for the consumer to switch store from their regular to a new one, I considered it an advantage if the respondents had less access to a car. Since students usually have less access to a car they were chosen for Study 3.

Table 1 shows the response rate for the three data collections. Sample size is the number of people in the web-panel as well as the number of students registered on the course. The column "Responses" is the number of consumers who actually answered the survey. "Usable responses" is the number of consumers who filled in the survey completely. "Response rate"

then is the percentage of the sample size that answered the survey completely (usable responses/sample size). The column “Viewed by” shows the number of consumers who actually saw the e-mail with the survey for Study 1 and 2 before it was closed down, and for Study 3 it states the number of students attending the lecture when the survey was distributed. In Study number 2, 53 consumers were screened out because they were under 18 years old or did not purchase groceries. The column “Usable response rate” states the percentage of consumers who viewed the survey and answered it. A more thorough description of the three studies is given below.

Table 1. Response rate for the three data collections

Data collection	Sample Size	Responses	Usable responses	Response rate	Viewed by	Screened out	Usable response rate
Study 1	13 500	2706	1575	11.67%	2706	0	58.20%
Study 2	13 500	1453	1023	7.58%	1506	53	67.93%
Study 3	318	271	266	83.65%	279	0	95.34%

Study 1

In order to advance the knowledge of what influences consumers’ choice of grocery store, knowledge about what consumers find important when choosing store and their shopping behaviour is needed. The main focus of Study 1 was therefore to investigate consumers’ attitude towards different store attributes and consumers’ shopping behaviour, such as where and how they shop. Study 1 relates to the first objective of this dissertation, “*Examine the effect of traditional attributes in the retail mix such as price, product quality, product range, service, and access, on choice of grocery store in combination with different situations*”, the second objective “*Examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers’ choice of grocery store*” as well as the fourth objective “*Investigate whether and how consumer characteristics have an impact on choice of grocery store*”.

For data collection one, the first pre-test was done with four colleagues and five former students. After some minor changes the survey was tested on a company gaining 44 fulfilled surveys and on 19 researchers on the Departments of Psychology and Geography at Umeå University. The survey was corrected when minor interpretation errors were detected from the pilot study. Since there is a difference in how the survey looks like on paper and on the web, a pilot study was also made with the web-based version, gaining 100 responses. In April and May of 2009 e-mails were sent to 13,500 members of a panel of Swedish residents managed by a market-research firm recruiting panel members by telephone or via Internet among people who express an interest in participating in consumer surveys. The panel members were asked to access a web address and answer a survey for which they were

awarded points later exchangeable for lottery tickets or cinema vouchers. Out of the 13,500 members 2,706 members viewed the web address before the survey was closed. Participants answered the surveys by clicking on available response alternatives or typing in their responses. When a question had been answered, the next question appeared making it impossible to go back. The participants were able to quit whenever they wanted by clicking on an exit button. On the start page the respondent was informed that the survey would take approximately 20-30 minutes to answer. Usable surveys were obtained from 1,575 participants representing a usable response rate of 58.20 %.

The survey consisted of 33 questions containing six sections. The first section of the survey included questions regarding the buying habits of the households. The questions concerned to what extent the participants are doing major shopping compared to fill-in shopping, how much in SEK they spend per month on groceries, and how frequently they buy groceries in supermarkets and convenience stores. The second section contained questions regarding how much the consumer was willing to sacrifice in terms of money, time and effort to travel to a grocery store with low price, big range and high quality of the products, high service level, and long opening hours. In the third section the participants assessed, on a seven-point scale, the importance of 34 different general attributes that an ideal grocery store should have. The attributes were selected from previous research (see Table 4 in Paper 1). In the fourth section the participants assessed each of the 34 attributes for the supermarket where they usually do their shopping. The participants were first asked whether the attribute was important to them and then, on a 7-point scale, how satisfied they were with the attribute in that store. An overall assessment of total satisfaction with the selected supermarket was made on six 7-point scales. In the final section the participants made the same assessment concerning the convenience store where they usually shop and in the final section questions were asked about socio-demographic variables.

Study 2

In order to further investigate what influences consumers' choice of grocery store, knowledge about the effect of different situational factors is needed. Study 2 relates to the second objective of the dissertation: "*Examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers' choice of grocery store*" and the third objective: "*Investigate how different situations affect consumers' satisfaction with their choice of grocery store*". The main focus of Study 2 was therefore on the trade-off that consumers are forced to make between price, supply, service, and accessibility and whether there were any

differences in consumers' satisfaction with a store depending on the situation.

The second data collection was also pre-tested on five colleagues and five former students. Small interpretation errors were detected and corrected before the questions were entered into a web-based pilot study, gaining 112 responses. In March and April 2010, e-mails were sent to the same panel of Swedish residents as in Study 1. Also in this study, the panel members were asked to answer a survey for which they were awarded points later exchangeable for lottery tickets or cinema vouchers. The second survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to answer, which the participants were informed of on the start page. 1,506 members of the panel viewed the web page with the survey before it was closed; out of these 53 were screened out because they were under 18 years old or did not purchase groceries. Also in this study, the participants were asked to answer the surveys by clicking on available response alternatives or typing in their responses. When a question had been answered, the next question appeared, making it impossible to go back. The participants were able to quit whenever they wanted by clicking on an exit button. Usable surveys were obtained from 1,023 participants representing a response rate of 67.93 %.

The survey contained three sections. In the first section of the survey, respondents were presented with descriptions of nine fictitious stores that varied on the four attributes access, price level, supply quality/range, and service quality. Access was combined by distance from home, access by public transport, parking opportunities, and opening hours; price level was described as below average, average, and above average; supply quality/range was combined with high or low quality of products and few or many product categories as well as brands, and service quality was combined by staff response and speed of checkouts. In a pilot test the indicated rank orders of the attribute levels were determined. For each attribute a low, medium, and high attractiveness level was constructed. These levels were then combined in a fractional factorial design that allows independent estimates of main effects of the four attributes. For each store, participants were requested to rate their satisfaction with making purchases in the store in the following scenarios: (1) *In the morning you discover that you need to buy a few important groceries for tonight's dinner* (fill-in, low time pressure); (2) *You have nothing at home and need to buy groceries for the coming week* (major, low time pressure); (3) *After dinner you discover that there is no breakfast food, so you need to buy it before the grocery store closes* (fill-in, high time pressure); (4) *The next few days, you will not have time to shop, so you must buy everything needed for the coming week even though you are in a hurry home* (major, high time pressure). The ratings

were made on nine-point scales ranging from very dissatisfied (-4) to very satisfied (4). The stores were presented in individually randomized order. The order of presenting the scenarios was the same for each individual but varied across individuals according to a Latin square (1-2-3-4, 2-3-4-1, 3-4-1-2, or 4-1-2-3). The second section consisted of questions concerning the respondents' shopping behaviour and their involvement regarding food. The respondents were asked questions about how they buy groceries and whether they agreed or disagreed with 12 different statements about food. The final section consisted of questions about socio-demographic variables.

Study 3

The results from Study 1 showed that there is a difference in what consumers find important when choosing store and what they actually are satisfied with in the store they usually patronize. These results indicate that consumers for some reason are reluctant to leave their grocery store, even though there may be better options. To advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choice of grocery store further, Study 3 was conducted in order to investigate the third objective of the dissertation: "Investigate how different situations affect consumers' satisfaction with their choice of grocery store" and the fourth objective: "Investigate whether and how consumer characteristics have an impact on choice of grocery store".

Data collection 3 was pre-tested on researchers on Umeå School of Business and Economics doctoral student days. Fruitful insights were gained, and the survey was further developed and then tested on five former students. The changes made after the pre-study were regarding interpretation and formulations of the questions in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements. In January 2013, surveys were given (in class) to three classes of undergraduate students at Umeå School of Business and Economics. The survey took approximately 20-30 minutes to answer. The empirical findings are presented in an aggregated way to ensure the privacy of the participants. There were 318 students registered on the classes; 279 students were in class when the surveys were distributed and answered. Out of the distributed survey, 271 were returned and five of these were incomplete. Usable surveys were therefore obtained from 266 participants, representing a response rate of 95.34 %.

The first section of the survey consisted of questions about social-demographic variables and the respondent's shopping behaviour. The participants were then asked to rate their attitudes and habits regarding food on a scale from do not agree at all (1) to fully agree (7). The questions regarding habits were taken from the established measurement The Self-Reported Habit Index (SRHI) developed by Verplanken and Orbell (2003).

SRHI has been used when measuring different habits such as tourism (Björk and Jansson, 2008), leisure activities (Verplanken and Orbell, 2003), health behaviour (Orbell and Verplanken, 2010), and car habits (Jansson et al., 2010). Researchers having used the SRHI have had good results for measuring consumers' habits, which is why the index was used in this study. The index was translated into Swedish, which, if not translated correctly, might threaten the validity of the questions. When translating instruments and instructions in research, back-translation (Brislin, 1986) or a native language speaker reviewer (Grisay, 2003) is often used. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, as well as making sure that the words and the linguistic meaning are the same in the original and the translation, a native Swedish speaker with knowledge in the subject was asked to review the translation.

The second section covered questions about "their" grocery store and why they choose to shop in that particular store. The participants were asked about the name and place of the store, how they travel to get to the store, and how satisfied they are (on a scale from (1) very dissatisfied, to (7) very satisfied). The participants were also asked to indicate one or up to three reasons why they shop in that particular store before they were confronted with 34 attributes (taken from Study 1) and asked to what extent these attributes affected them in their choice of store. The ratings were made on a five-point scale from very large extent (5) to not at all (1). The participants could also indicate if the store did not have that attribute.

In the last section of the survey, the participants were asked to rate to what extent different attributes would affect them to choose a new store over their regular store when the new store is located closer, right beside, or further away from their regular store. The ratings were made on a five-point scale from very large extent (5) to not at all (1). The participants could also indicate other attributes that would affect them. If nothing would affect them they could indicate why.

Data analyses

Data required for this dissertation consists of many variables and factors affecting choice of grocery store derived from the literature review. The results from this dissertation is generalizable to other consumers choosing grocery stores, but the results can also be generalized to other types of choices affected by which situation consumers are confronted with. The data for the study has been analysed using different statistical techniques driven by the objectives of the specific study in the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 software.

Study 1

As shown in the theoretical framework, previous research has shown the importance of different attributes. But even though a large number of studies has been conducted, many have focused on the impact on store choice of a single or a few attributes. Some studies have investigated the importance of specific attributes such as friendliness of staff, whereas others have investigated more general, aggregated attributes such as service quality. Due to the variation of which attributes, as well as the number of attributes, included in different previous research, 34 store attributes were selected from the review of previous research to facilitate a more structured investigation of which attributes in the retail mix consumers use and regard as important in their evaluation of a grocery store. Product moment correlations were computed between the importance ratings of the 34 store attributes and submitted to a Principal Component Analysis (PCA). A PCA was used to investigate the possibility of reducing the number of attributes in the data in order to facilitate further statistical analyses without risking correlation. The feasibility of performing a PCA was indicated by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and a significant ($p < .001$) Bartlett' test of sphericity (Hair et al., 2006). On the basis of the PCA results, ten components were extracted (see Table 2 in Paper 1). From these ten components, aggregated attributes were identified as *supply quality*, *supply range*, *price level*, *service quality*, *storescape quality*, *closeness to other facilities*, *child-friendliness*, *availability*, *accessibility by car*, and *accessibility by other modes*. To secure that the attributes are reliable Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated with $>.60$ for each aggregated attribute to confirm their reliability.

A split-sample validation with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted as well as a PCA on split samples, finding no important differences in result. The overall fit of the 10-factor model was acceptable $NFI = .82$; $CFI = .85$; $SRMR = .07$; $RMSEA = .07$. The 95 per cent confidence interval for pairwise correlation between constructs was well below 1, all factor loadings were high (above .5) and significant ($p < 0.01$), composite reliabilities were larger than .7 except for supply quality (.63) and availability (.63). Therefore, conditions for convergent and discriminant validity were met. Average variance extracted (AVE) of the constructs was higher than maximum shared squared variance (MSV) and average shared squared variance (ASV), reinforcing the conclusion of sufficient discriminant validity. Paper 2 details the CFA results and reports the input covariance matrix.

When investigating differences in importance placed on the aggregated store attributes related to socio-demographic variables, sets of OLS multiple linear regression analyses were performed with the ratings of each of the

aggregated attributes as dependent variables. Regression analysis is a common technique for measuring linear relationships between two or more variables (Hair et al., 2006) and can help in determining if a relationship exists between two variables and how strong this relationship may be. Before performing these analyses, the ratings were mean-adjusted by subtracting individual means computed across all the aggregated attributes in order to eliminate any fixed effects.

A second aim of Study 1 was to examine possible differences between consumer groups. In previous studies consumer segmentation has been based on different types of demographic, psychographic, lifestyle or choice criteria variables such as price and quality (e.g., Stone, 1995; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Rigopoulou et al., 2008; Kohijoki and Marjanen, 2013). However, when aiming at knowing consumers in order to better predict their future choices, traditional segmentation techniques seem to be weak, according to Yankelovich and Meer (2006). They argue that, instead of focusing only on grouping by demographic factors such as age, household size and income, segmentation should also focus on exploring the personality of the consumers, their attitudes and behaviour. In this dissertation segments of consumers are therefore based on where and how they shop instead of on socio-demographical factors. In Paper 2, Nilsson et al. (2014) bring forward five consumer segments based on where and how they shop (Planning Suburbans, Pedestrians, Social Shoppers, City Dwellers, and Flexibles). Socio-demographic factors are then used to further explain the characteristics of the consumer segments doing different types of grocery shopping in different store formats. Three OLS multiple linear regression analyses were performed in order to answer to this, one with frequency of major versus fill-in shopping (measured on a scale from 1 to 5) as dependent variable ($R^2_{adj} = .278$) and the other two with the difference between the frequency of grocery shopping in supermarkets and the frequency of grocery shopping in convenience stores as dependent variable ($R^2_{adj} = .06$ and $.066$). In order to understand if there are any differences between different consumer groups, the independent variables used in this research were background information that is commonly used in consumer research, such as gender, age, access to a car, household size, income, education, and living conditions. Distance to the closest store, frequency of shopping and shopping behaviour pattern were also included as independent variables in order to fully understand consumers and to find different behaviour patterns due to demographical attributes.

When examining if there is any difference in satisfaction with attributes regarding what kind of grocery store is concerned, participants were excluded if they indicated that they never purchased groceries in a

supermarket or convenience store since some of the subsequent analyses required excluding participants not providing data for both the supermarket and the convenience store. An analysis was therefore performed to assess whether the excluded group who did not rate the convenience store differed in overall satisfaction and satisfaction with supermarket attributes from those who rated both the supermarket and the convenience store. In order to further examine different behaviour patterns, paired *t*-tests were performed testing the difference of population means between store formats. The *t*-tests showed significant differences between supermarkets and convenience stores. In order to investigate the relationship between overall satisfaction and satisfaction with the different aggregated attributes, multiple linear regression analyses were performed separately for supermarkets and convenience stores. Dependent variables were overall satisfaction with convenience stores and supermarkets and independent variables were gender, age, access to a car, household size, income, education, living conditions, distance to the closest store, frequency of shopping, and shopping style. The ratings of satisfaction with the ten aggregated attributes were also included as independent variables in both regression analyses. Regression analyses were also performed for different consumer groups and the weights for overall satisfaction with supermarkets and convenience stores separately and satisfaction with the different aggregated attributes.

Study 2

As seen in the theoretical framework, previous research has shown that consumers might differ in their choices depending on if they have a time limitation or not. Therefore, Study 2 was constructed as an experiment where the respondents were faced with four different scenarios varying in type of shopping and time available. They were asked to rate how satisfied they would be to shop in different fictitious stores for each scenario. In order to come up with realistic stores, stores with for example high level on all attributes were deleted. From the result of the pre-test, nine fictitious stores were selected and we could also find the right level of what the pre-test respondents considered as low, medium or high level of the different attributes. A reduced factorial design was used in this study since the number of combinations is too high for a full factorial design. The attributes were operationalized based on the results from Study 1. For each attribute low, medium, and high attractiveness levels were constructed in this study. These attribute levels were then combined in a fractional factorial design permitting independent estimates of the main effects of the four attributes. The levels low, medium, and high were chosen relative to each other and not in order to test individual attributes.

In Study 2, a 2 (time pressure: high versus low) by 2 (shopping style: major shopping versus fill-in shopping) by 4 (store attributes: access, price level, supply quality/range, service quality) repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to investigate how situational factors influence satisfaction with shopping in different grocery store formats. Before submitting the results to statistical tests, means were computed for the attractiveness levels of each attribute. In order to measure the importance of each attribute in influencing satisfaction, the contrasts¹, $((2/3) (\text{mean high attractiveness}) + (1/3) (\text{mean medium attractiveness}) - \text{mean low attractiveness})$, were constructed based on the means for the attractiveness levels of access, price level, supply quality/range and service quality, respectively. For each attribute (access, price level, supply quality/range, and service quality) orthogonal contrasts were then computed to obtain a measure of the importance of the attribute for satisfaction with the stores. Each attribute is handled as independent (even though there is an interaction), which is appropriate when the aim is not to test relationships between attributes but external factors' importance in different combinations. Rather, situations of actual attributes are created to see if and how time-pressure and type of shopping is affected. Therefore, orthogonal Helmert contrasts were used since they do not affect the distributions of the dependent variable and also do not affect each other (i.e. they allow independent conclusions). The contrasts are measures of how much the attributes increase satisfaction due to any monotonic increase with the attribute level as well as the average effect of all attribute levels. The contrast is in other words the sum of the following two orthogonal Helmert contrasts between means for the attractiveness levels high, medium, and low

$$\varphi_1 = M_{\text{high attractiveness}} - (1/2)(M_{\text{medium attractiveness}} + M_{\text{low attractiveness}})$$

$$\varphi_2 = M_{\text{medium attractiveness}} - M_{\text{low attractiveness}}$$

and after multiplication by 2/3 (following the convention to set to 2 the sum of the absolute weight values): $\varphi(\text{attribute}) = (2/3)(\varphi_1 + \varphi_2)$

$$= (2/3)M_{\text{high attractiveness}} + (1/3)M_{\text{medium attractiveness}} - M_{\text{low attractiveness}}$$

If $M_{\text{high}} \geq M_{\text{medium}} \geq M_{\text{low}}$ φ will be 0 if all means are equal and will increase with any linear or nonlinear increase in the means from the low to the high attractiveness level. In order to also take into account the level, $(M_{\text{high attractiveness}} + M_{\text{medium attractiveness}} + M_{\text{low attractiveness}})/3$ was added. This resulted in

$$\varphi(\text{attribute}) = M_{\text{high attractiveness}} + (2/3)(M_{\text{medium attractiveness}} - M_{\text{low attractiveness}})$$

¹The contrast is a normally distributed measure of effect size. The measure is zero if all means are equal. The higher the value, the more the means differ between the attribute levels.

Mixed ANOVAs were also performed with socio-demographic factors as between-groups factors in order to investigate whether the main findings from the repeated-measures analysis of variance were moderated by socio-demographic characteristics. Four 2 (time pressure: high versus low) by 2 (type of grocery shopping: major shopping versus fill-in shopping) by 4 (store attribute: access versus price level versus supply quality/range versus service quality) ANOVAs were conducted to test the two-way interactions between the socio-demographic factors and time pressure, type of shopping, and store attributes.

Study 3

In the third study, the objective was to test how attractive a store needs to be for consumers to switch their regular store to a new one. The 34 store attributes in Study 1 were used also in this study. Product moment correlations were computed of the 34 store attributes and submitted to a Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The feasibility of performing a PCA was indicated by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and a significant ($p < .001$) Bartlett's test of sphericity (Hair et al., 2006). On the basis of the PCA results, ten components were extracted also in this study. From these ten components, aggregated attributes were identified as the same as in Study 1; *supply quality, supply range, price level, service quality, storescape quality, closeness to other facilities, child-friendliness, availability, accessibility by car, and accessibility by other modes*. To secure that the attributes are reliable Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated with $>.60$ for each aggregated attribute to confirm their reliability. One sample *t*-tests were performed for each of the 34 attributes, comparing consumers' regular grocery store with a store right beside, closer than, and further away. Also in this study, *t*-tests were used in order to compare the difference between population means.

Article writing process

This dissertation is part of a research project called "Choice of store" which is funded by Hakon Swenson Stiftelsen. The members of the research project have contributed to the research in various ways during the process, and the articles in this dissertation have been co-authored with members of the research project. Writing the articles has been a process, like the doctoral education itself, and my contribution and independence have varied and grown with time and the experience I have gained. My contribution lies in every stage of the research process, as well as in all parts of the papers. I have taken the role of first author on all articles and my contribution to each article represents at least 50 % of the amount of work even though there are three or four authors on tap

Summary of the papers

The five papers included in this dissertation answer to the objectives and contribute to fulfilling the purpose: ***to advance the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores.*** In the following, extended abstracts of the five papers are given.

Paper 1 – Importance ratings of grocery store attributes

Paper 1 is built on the first data collection and aims to answer to the first objective of this dissertation: *“Examine the effect of traditional attributes in the retail mix such as price, product quality, product range, service, and access, on choice of grocery store in combination with different situations.”* The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive set of grocery store attributes that can be standardized and used in empirical research aiming at increasing retailers' understanding of determinants of grocery store choice, and to assess how the relative importance of the attributes is affected by consumer socio-demographic characteristics and shopping behaviour.

In order to compete with new store formats, traditional stores (supermarkets and convenience stores) need an effective marketing strategy based on a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the relative importance of different attributes, socio-demographic characteristics, and shopping behaviour. A large attention in research has been paid to determine which attributes different consumers find important when making store choice (e.g., Woodside and Trappey, 1992; Reutterer and Teller, 2009). Yet, even though there is a large literature investigating the importance of store attributes, there is no consistency in previous research regarding which attributes that have been included in different previous work. Further, previous research has to a large extent targeted single attributes at a time; thus, information is lacking about the complexity and simultaneous influences of several attributes. In this paper we seek to fill this gap by simultaneously investigating the importance for choices of grocery store played by a majority of the attributes found to be important in previous research. One aim of the present study is to provide a meaningful set of store attributes including wide ranges of both (controllable) attractiveness and (uncontrollable) accessibility attributes. It may be noted that previous research has investigated a mix of general, “aggregated” attributes (e.g.,

product quality, supply range) and specific, “disaggregated” attributes (e.g., availability of parking lots, retailing organic products). In this paper we generated an extensive set of specific attributes, which was then reduced to a set of indexes of the importance of aggregated attractiveness and accessibility attributes. Such indexes may be expected to give more generally valid results concerning how consumer socio-demographic characteristics and type of shopping moderate how important different attributes are perceived.

To further examine the complexity of choice of grocery store a second aim was to investigate the importance grocery-shopping consumers place on the controllable attractiveness attributes compared to the uncontrollable accessibility attributes, and to investigate the relative importance of the different attributes within each category. Accessibility attributes may function as “gatekeepers” in that they prevent consumers from freely choosing the most attractive store. For this reason we conjecture that accessibility attributes are more important than attractiveness attributes. Moreover, in a Swedish grocery retail context with a restricted price and product quality variation, the accessibility attributes would in general be more important. In addition, we expect differences in importance of both the accessibility attributes and attractiveness attributes, depending on socio-demographic characteristics and differences in shopping behaviour, showing that consumers’ choice of grocery store is depending on the context.

An Internet survey of 1,575 Swedish consumers was conducted. A large set of attributes was rated by the participants on seven-point scales with respect to their importance for choice of grocery store. Principal component analysis resulted in a reduced set of reliably measured aggregated attributes. This set included the attractiveness attributes *price level*, *supply range*, *supply quality*, *service quality*, *storescape quality*, *facilities for childcare*, and *closeness to other stores*, and the accessibility attributes *easy access by car*, *easy access by other travel modes*, and *availability* (closeness to store and opening hours). Cronbach’s alphas $>.60$ suggested that the measures of importance of the aggregated attributes had a satisfactory reliability, indicating that the established comprehensive set of attractiveness and accessibility attributes of grocery stores could be standardized and used in empirical research.

The results showed that *accessibility by car* is the most important grocery store attribute, *storescape quality* and *availability* the next most important and *facilities for childcare* the least important. The results reveal the relative importance grocery-shopping consumers place on controllable attractiveness attributes compared to uncontrollable accessibility attributes

as well as the relative importance of the attributes within each category. It was also found that socio-demographic factors and type of shopping have an impact on the importance of the store attributes. The importance of accessibility attributes was primarily affected by distance to store, car access, frequency of shopping, and major versus fill-in shopping. The importance of attractiveness attributes were mainly affected by gender and money spent. This shows that choice of grocery store is a complex choice that is influenced by the context.

This paper contributes to the literature by bringing forward a more comprehensive set of attributes that could be tested in research regarding choice of store. In comparison to previous research stating that the most important attribute is distance to store (e.g., Bell et al., 1998; Fox et al., 2004), distance was seen as the least important attribute in this paper. Instead, other factors regarding accessibility such as accessibility by car and parking facilities were seen as most important.

Paper 2 – Who shops groceries where and how? – The relationship between choice of store format and type of grocery shopping

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between consumers' grocery shopping and their choice of grocery store format and consumer characteristics. This article is built on the first data collection and aims to answer to the second objective of this dissertation: *“Examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers' choice of grocery store”* as well as the fourth objective: *“Investigate whether and how consumer characteristics have an impact on choice of grocery store”*.

The development of retail outlets may have led to a situation where some segments of grocery shoppers do not have access to the store formats they prefer. Lack of transportation and time pressure are examples of factors preventing consumers from doing major shopping in supermarkets, instead forcing them to use convenience stores not designed for such type of shopping. Others may need to be flexible in their choice of store format or type of grocery shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) because of inconvenient work hours or family logistics. Knowledge of segments of grocery shoppers deviating from the traditional pattern of choice of store format and type of grocery shopping is of vital importance to help retailers structure and develop stores and offerings in order to win the battle for the consumers. By simultaneously observing consumers' choice of store format and whether they are doing major or fill-in shopping, we are able to investigate more combinations of shopping types and store format than has

been done previously, which better shows the complexity of choice of grocery store.

In previous studies consumer segmentation has been based on different types of demographic, psychographic, lifestyle or choice criteria variables such as price and quality (e.g., Stone, 1995; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Rigopoulou et al., 2008; Kohijoki and Marjanen, 2013). However, when aiming at knowing consumers better in order to predict their future choices, traditional segmentation techniques seem to be weak (Yankelovich and Meer, 2006). In this paper we contribute to existing knowledge by identifying the prevalence and characteristics of segments of consumers based on where and how they shop instead of solely on their characteristics. Socio-demographic factors are then used to further explain the characteristics of the consumer segments doing different types of grocery shopping in different store formats.

In an Internet survey, 1,575 Swedish consumers reported how they shop groceries. Statistical analyses were performed to determine the extent to which choice of supermarket versus convenience store is related to type of grocery shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) and different consumer characteristics. Three OLS multiple linear regression analyses were performed. The first regression analysis had frequency of type of grocery shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) as dependent variable and the other two the difference between the frequency of grocery shopping in supermarkets and the frequency of grocery shopping in convenience stores as dependent variables. In all three regression analyses, the independent variables were gender, age, household size, full-time employment, income, frequency of shopping groceries, money spent per month on groceries, whether one shops alone or in company with family members, access to car, distance to most patronized store, type of shopping trip, and central versus not central place of residence.

The results showed that consumers who are less frequently doing grocery shopping are mostly doing major shopping. It was also shown that consumers doing major shopping trips are younger, have larger households, are part-time employees, spend more money on grocery shopping, have frequently access to car, live further away from the store they usually patronize, are shopping with others, and do not combine the grocery trip with other errands. The results also showed that difference in frequency of shopping in different store formats was significantly affected by shopping frequency, age, household size, access to car, distance to most frequently patronized store, and type of shopping trip. The results showed that there

were differences in consumer demographics in regards to what store format consumers most frequently visit.

The results of the study indicated that more major shopping was made in supermarkets than in convenience stores where fill-in shopping was more frequent. The modest positive correlation found between type of shopping and choice of store format implies that the traditional store formats may not fulfil grocery shoppers' needs. In order to understand this potential discrepancy, it was important to examine the segments of consumers who do major shopping in supermarkets, fill-in shopping in supermarkets, major shopping in convenience stores, and fill-in shopping in convenience stores. These segments of consumers differ on different characteristics. Retailers need to be aware of what type of consumers is patronizing their stores, in order to change the store attributes to fit the consumers' needs. This knowledge may also be used to attract new consumers.

The study integrates consumers' choice of store format and type of shopping in a grocery retail setting. By addressing both consumers' choice of store format and whether consumers are doing a major or fill in shopping trip, the study fills a gap in the research literature and challenges the generally accepted view that consumers are doing major shopping trips in supermarkets and fill-in shopping trips in convenience stores. Our main contribution is therefore that we have been able to identify and characterize these segments of grocery shoppers. The segments of consumers distinguished in this paper are: *Planning Suburbans (major shopping in supermarkets)*, *Pedestrians (major shopping in convenience stores)*, *Social Shoppers (fill-in shopping in convenience stores)*, *City Dwellers (fill-in shopping in convenience stores)*, and *Flexibles (doing both major and fill-in shopping in both convenience stores and supermarkets)*. The results inform retailers of the characteristics of the consumers patronizing their stores so that they will be better able to change the store attributes to fit the patronizing consumers' needs as well as the needs of new consumers. Having in mind that segmentation should offer retailers a deeper view of their consumers, it becomes important to also take into account consumers' preferences regarding how and where they shop in order to obtain useful consumer segments. This result showed the complexity of choice of grocery store and that what situation consumers are facing is influencing the choice. Not only what store or what type of shopping that is undertaken but also the consumer itself could be described as the situation.

This paper strengthens Yankelovich's and Meer's (2006) argument that the traditional segmentation techniques to focus on consumer characteristics seem to be weak, and contributes to the literature by adding another way of

segmenting the consumers in order to understand how consumers choose grocery store. Previous research has focused either on where consumers shop or how they shop. It has more or less been taken for granted that consumers doing major shopping visit the supermarket and consumers doing fill in shopping visit the convenience store. By combining the variables where and how consumers shop, less common segments emerged. These segments contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how type of shopping and store format relates to the differences in how consumers relate to different attributes in different store formats.

Paper 3 – Consumers’ satisfaction with grocery shopping in supermarkets and convenience stores

Paper 3 is built on the first data collection and aims to answer to the third objective of this dissertation: *“Investigate how different situations affect consumers’ satisfaction with their choice of grocery store”*. In this paper we asked whether there are differences between choice and satisfaction, which attributes are important for satisfaction with grocery shopping in supermarkets compared to convenience stores, and whether accessibility attributes and attractiveness attributes have different impacts on satisfaction depending on consumer characteristics and shopping behaviour in different store formats.

Since different store formats are explicitly designed to fit different consumers’ needs through customized assortments, opening hours, and atmospheres (e.g., Morganosky, 1997; Findlay and Sparks, 2008), there is a need for knowledge of which store attributes make different consumer segments satisfied with their grocery shopping in different store formats. The specific question we raise in the present study is whether consumers who differ in choice of traditional store formats (supermarket versus convenience store) and style of shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) are satisfied with shopping in the stores they chose and which store attributes make them satisfied. The present research also investigates whether factors important for choice of grocery store also affect satisfaction – an issue that appears to have attracted less research interest than it deserves.

In an Internet survey 1,575 Swedish consumers assessed their satisfaction with different attributes as well as their overall satisfaction with supermarkets and convenience stores where they do grocery shopping. This study has increased the understanding of the differences between supermarkets and convenience stores with respect to how these store formats makes consumers satisfied depending on how they shop.

Satisfaction with different store attributes is found to vary with both store format and whether consumers do major or fill-in shopping. The overall satisfaction was higher for supermarkets than convenience stores. The consumers were more satisfied with availability and accessibility with other travel modes in convenience stores than in supermarkets, while the satisfaction with all other attributes were rated higher for supermarkets than for convenience stores. The overall satisfaction with supermarkets are significantly related to satisfaction with supply quality, supply range, price level, service quality, storescape quality, child-friendliness, and availability. The overall satisfaction with convenience stores are significantly related to supply quality, supply range, price level, service quality, storescape quality, child-friendliness, and availability. Yet, supply range and price level were significantly less related to satisfaction for convenience stores than for supermarkets, while service quality was significantly more related to satisfaction for convenience stores than for supermarkets.

Our results also demonstrate that the degrees to which consumers are satisfied depend on different socio-demographic characteristics. The results show differences in what the different consumer groups find important for satisfaction with the different store formats. The results also show a higher overall satisfaction with supermarkets than with convenience stores for all consumer groups, and within these store formats, a higher satisfaction (compared to other consumer groups) with the chosen store format for each consumer group. Still, City Dwellers and Pedestrians who predominantly shop in convenience stores are more satisfied with supermarkets. These results suggest that consumers may be forced to choose an alternative even though they would be more satisfied with another store. Another possibility is that consumers' choices are habitual, implying that no deliberate choice is made. Retailers should take this into consideration when developing retail formats and promotional strategies. The consumer groups differ in which attributes they find most important for their overall satisfaction. Grocery retailers should therefore take into consideration that depending on the store formats, consumers are satisfied with different attributes. However, if consumers are limited in their choice, accessibility attributes become more important determinants of their choice of store. Only if consumers have the possibility to choose the store, attractiveness attributes will become important, such that they differentiate the specific store from other stores.

This paper contributes to the literature by addressing the influence of the context on the choice. Depending on what type of store consumers are visiting, they are satisfied with different attributes, making importance of attributes dependent on the situation. Also, the paper shows that the consumer groups brought forward in paper 2 are satisfied with different

store attributes. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, satisfaction has been regarded as the main determinant of store loyalty (e.g., Bitner, 1990; Bloemer and De Ruyter, 1998). However, this paper shows that all consumer groups are more satisfied with the supermarket than with the convenience store, which indicates that consumers are not always choosing the store they are most satisfied with. Consumers can therefore be seen as loyal and satisfied even though they would be more satisfied with another store. Hence, other factors than satisfaction make them return to the store.

Paper 4 – The effect of time pressure and type of shopping on consumers’ satisfaction with grocery store attributes

The fourth paper is built on the second data collection and refers to the second objective of this dissertation: *“Examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers’ choice of grocery store”* as well as to the third objective: *“Investigate how different situations affect consumers’ satisfaction with their choice of grocery store”*. In this paper, the primary aim is to investigate whether satisfaction is affected by type of grocery shopping (major versus fill-in shopping) in conjunction with time pressure and which store attributes that are important for satisfaction. An additional aim is therefore to investigate whether the effects on satisfaction of time pressure and type of shopping vary in different consumer segments.

Different store formats have explicitly been designed to fit consumers’ needs through customized assortments, opening hours, and atmospheres (Kim and Jin, 2001; Prasad and Aryasri, 2011). However, not only the store format affects how consumers shop, and therefore store format cannot explain what store attributes are important for consumers’ satisfaction with the store. Instead of solely focusing on where consumers shop, it is therefore necessary to consider how consumers shop in order to gain knowledge about what attributes make consumers satisfied. In this paper we do not explicitly compare store formats when confronting consumers with different situations. Instead, the degree to which bundles of store attributes at different levels makes consumers satisfied with shopping is examined. In this way store formats are indirectly investigated through attributes associated with grocery stores. This is done to control for possible influences of factors associated with defining store formats by labels.

Today, when retailers face increased competition (Gomes et al., 2004), it is becoming even more important to understand what motivates consumers, what influences their in-store behaviour, and what makes them satisfied with the store so that they will return. Still, there is little consensus among researchers with respect to the importance rankings of different attributes in

choice of grocery store. A reason for this lack of consensus may be the moderating role played by consumer characteristics, consumers' type of shopping, and the conditions under which they shop – which constitute the situation consumers are confronted with.

Fictitious grocery stores were constructed according to a reduced fractional factorial design by independently varying levels of *access*, *price level*, *supply-quality/range* and *service-quality*. In an Internet survey 1,023 Swedish consumers were asked to rate satisfaction with shopping in these stores for four different scenarios, crossing buy-in-bulk versus complementary shopping with high versus low time pressure.

In the paper we have shown that satisfaction is higher for fill-in shopping than major shopping, that time pressure has no effects on satisfaction, and that price level, service quality, and product quality/range are more important for satisfaction with major shopping, whereas access is more important for satisfaction with fill-in shopping. In contrast to previous research, this study shows no significant effect of time pressure on satisfaction. This suggests that grocery shopping is not influenced as much by time pressure as other types of shopping. The results also show that different attributes become important in different situations, suggesting that what consumers value when buying groceries is depending on the situation. The study also disentangles that different consumers place different weights on what importance different attributes have on their satisfaction. For fill-in shopping the effect of access was stronger, whereas for major shopping the effects of price level, supply-quality/range and service-quality were stronger. Individuals also differed in the weights they placed on the attributes depending on age, household size, income, and car access.

This paper contributes to the literature by further investigating the importance of the context consumers are facing. The paper shows that satisfaction with a store differs depending on the situation consumers are facing.

Paper 5 – How to attract the picky, lazy consumer

The final paper in this dissertation is built on the third data collection and aims to further contribute to the first objective: *“Examine the effect of traditional attributes in the retail mix such as price, product quality, product range, service, and access, on choice of grocery store in combination with different situations”*. The purpose of this study is to assess how attractive a grocery store ought to be, and what attributes influence this attractiveness, for a consumer to switch from the grocery store they usually

patronage, to a new store situated right beside, closer than, and further away from the consumers' regular grocery store. Retail Gravitational models state that the attractiveness of a store increases the acceptable distance to the store. A store can thus be considered attractive even though it is located further away as consumers would still travel to get there. Store switching is an increasingly important issue particularly as the competitive environment intensifies. Previous research on switching behaviour has mostly focused on brands; surprisingly little effort has been put on store switching. There is little information on how new entrants to a market impact the shopping behaviour and what would make consumers switch from their existing store to a new entrant.

Surveys were given to 279 undergraduate students and 266 usable surveys were obtained, representing a response rate of 95.34 %. One-sample t-tests were performed for each attribute, comparing consumers' regular grocery store with a store right beside, closer than, and further away.

In line with gravitational models, the results show that consumers are demanding a store situated further away to be better on many more attributes (26 out of 34 tested attributes) than the other stores (13 for the store right beside, 11 for the closer store) in order to be chosen. Also, for the stores right beside and closer, the attributes that need to be better are mainly attributes concerning the store's accessibility, while for the store further away also in-store attributes need to be better. Many consumers answered that they would not change store to one further away, and those who would needed several attributes to be better in order to make that effort. The result indicates that consumers are pickier with a grocery store situated further away, and that to overcome this and consumers' laziness to travel there, much more is demanded of the stores' level of attractiveness. This suggests that consumers, when putting in more physical effort to travel to the store, want their psychological effort to be compensated in terms of for example better service, lower price or better quality products. Consumers' perception of location is therefore not only focused on the physical place of the store but rather on the mental distance to the store. The results also imply that consumers more easily switch stores if the effort to get to the store is similar or less than getting to their regular store. The barrier to switch store is in other words lower when there are other store options close to the store. In order to win the battle for the consumers in such a situation, the store ought to focus on the attributes which showed to be most important for consumers' willingness to switch, namely storescape quality and accessibility. If a store is closer, the difference in physical effort is small and the stores are therefore competing on similar grounds.

This paper contributes to the literature by questioning the view upon location. The paper strengthens the research arguing that habits could be hard to break (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997) and that consumers are reluctant to change store if they lose the benefit of store-specific knowledge (Rhee and Bell, 2002). In previous research, distance to the store has been found to be the most important factor driving choice of store (e.g., East et al., 2000). However, this paper shows that the store needs to be better on other attributes as well in order to be chosen, even though the store is closer to the consumer.

Choice of grocery store – a situation-based choice

This dissertation set out to contribute to the retail literature by advancing ***the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores***. Each of the papers presented in the previous chapter individually contributes to the literature by bringing forward different factors influencing consumers, but the dissertation itself also contributes both empirically and theoretically to the literature by focusing on the context characteristics that affect consumers.

Most previous research in retail has been done on new purchase task where the conscious choices are dominating. Yet, decisions such as where to do one's grocery shopping are made repeatedly or frequently over time evolving into habits, which is considered as more unconscious choices. Traditional consumer choice models have shown that situational factors are affecting consumers' choices, but the way different situations are treated in previous research differs and how situations affect consumers' choices of grocery stores is not clear. Therefore, the views of both conscious and unconscious choice theories upon contextual characteristics are taken into account in this dissertation. This chapter will discuss different factors that, in various ways, affect the situation consumers are facing and therefore also their choices of grocery stores.

Attributes in the retail mix

The first objective of this dissertation was to “*examine the effect of traditional attributes in the retail mix such as price, product quality, product range, service, and access on choice of grocery store in combination with different situations*”. Sheth (1983) argued that different shopping motives, such as utilitarian or hedonic shopping, will influence the importance of different in-store attributes. By examining consumers' importance ratings of different accessibility and attractiveness attributes for choosing grocery stores, knowledge about consumers' preferences and attitude towards in-store attributes in grocery stores were gained. The ratings of store attributes indicate why consumers are choosing one store instead of another since the attributes consumers find most important for their choice is part of what they base their choices upon. In order to win the battle for the consumers, the store ought to focus on the attributes that showed to be most important for the consumers. This dissertation has

brought forward a comprehensive set of ten aggregated attributes influencing consumers' choices of grocery stores. Which attributes are most important for different consumers in different situations is further discussed in the section Managerial implications. The discussion here will focus on a more overall level of the attributes, namely the relationship between accessibility and attractiveness attributes.

Accessibility vs. attractiveness attributes

Overall, the results of this dissertation revealed that consumers find accessibility attributes more important than attractiveness attributes. One reason why accessibility attributes become most important could be because accessibility is a fundamental condition for the consumer to shop in that particular store. If the store is too far away, or in other ways not easily accessible for consumers, that particular store will not be part of the choice set. Hence, accessibility attributes could be seen as fundamental conditions for the consumers enabling them to even consider that particular store as an option. Later, when the consumers have access to the store, attractiveness attributes play a more important part in the choice of grocery store.

Previous research in retail has long focused on the importance of place, stating that location is the most important criteria when choosing store (e.g., Howard, 1992; Bell et al., 1998; Severin et al., 2001; Fox et al., 2004; Hsu et al., 2010). Location has been proven to influence consumers' choice of store (East et al., 2000; Clarke et al., 2006; Zentes et al., 2007). The Retail gravity models (Reilly, 1931; Huff, 1964; Christaller, 1966; Fotheringham, 1988) argued that a high level of attractiveness makes consumers accept a longer physical distance to the store. This dissertation shows a significant relationship between how much better in terms of attractiveness attributes a store further away ought to be than the usual store, and the consumers' willingness to switch to that store. Hence, in order for consumers to be willing to spend more energy on getting to the store, they need to be compensated for the energy loss by for example getting lower prices, better quality, or better service. In order for consumers to switch store to a store located further away, eight out of ten aggregated attributes (supply range, supply quality, price level, service quality, storescape quality, availability, accessibility by car, and accessibility by other travel modes) need to be better, which is not surprising. In comparison, a store located right beside the usual store needs to be better in two out of ten aggregated attributes (storescape quality and accessibility by car) in order to be chosen. A store located closer than the usual store also needs to be better in two out of ten aggregated attributes in order to be chosen (storescape quality and accessibility). In other words, this study has shown that when a store is situated further away, consumers demand more of the store in order to

switch to that particular store. However, this is also true for a store situated closer than the consumers' regular store. Hence, even though the new store is located closer than, or right beside, the regular store, it still needs to be better in attractiveness in order to be chosen. This shows that even though the location is better in terms of distance to store, consumers are still reluctant to switch from their regular store.

As seen in Rhee and Bell (2002), consumers were reluctant to lose the benefit of store-specific knowledge, which could be the reason why a new store situated closer than, or right beside, consumers' regular store still has to be better on some attributes to be chosen. The results showed that the barrier to change to another store is lower when there are other store options close to the store and if the effort to get to the store is similar to, or less than, getting to their regular store. Consumers' psychological effort would be higher in a new store than in the old store and this effort must therefore be outweighed by better store attributes. The result therefore indicates that consumers are pickier with a grocery store situated further away and to overcome that, much more is demanded of the store's level of attractiveness.

Another reason for consumers being reluctant to switch store could be that the consumers have established a habit of choosing one particular store. Laaksonen (1993) argued that the more times a store is chosen, the bigger the chance of the consumers continuing to purchase in that particular store. Previous research has stated that when a habit is established it might be difficult to break it (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997). Therefore, the consumer might feel a larger mental distance to change to an unknown store even though the store is located closer and/or demands less effort. Depending on where the store is situated, a different number of attributes needs to be better in the new store than in the consumers' regular store in order to be chosen. Hence, the results of this study showed that consumers' willingness to switch stores is situation-based.

Cognitive proximity

Due to the results of this dissertation, I argue that the view of what a good location is must be reconsidered. Good location is not where the store is actually physically located. Rather, good location is connected to where the consumers are, both in mind and physically, at the time. Consumers' habits and where they are situated therefore have an effect on what is considered as a good location for a store for that specific consumer. Hence, consumers have their own individual reference-point. When consumers are used to a certain store, it is likely that they know where to find their products in the store, and the location of the store might therefore not be as important. However, if consumers do not know where to find the products in a new

store, that store might feel further away and less convenient than the store consumers usually patronage, even though it is situated further away. Hence, consumers have a mental distance to a store, which influences them more than the actual distance to the store. Some consumers are shopping on their way home from work or in combination with other errands; the perception of good location is therefore differing depending on the situation the individual is facing. The consumers' mental distance to a store can differ depending on where the consumers are situated. Cognitive proximity could therefore be seen as the new construct for location since it more clearly explains consumers' choices of stores both from internal and external conditions.

Type of store and type of shopping

The second objective of this dissertation was to “*examine the effect of type of store and type of shopping on consumers' choice of grocery store.*” Elms et al. (2010) noted that the innovations and changes in the retail sector during the past 30 years have led to a need of not only investigating where, but also how consumers shop.

Type of shopping

In line with previous research (Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992; Reutterer and Teller, 2009; Bell et al., 2011), this dissertation showed that consumers desire different things from different types of shopping. The result of this dissertation showed that when doing fill-in shopping, access was more important than price level, supply quality/range and service quality for satisfaction with the store, whereas for major shopping price level, supply quality/range and service quality was more important than access. These results also demonstrate that consumers demand different things in different situations in order to be satisfied with the store. This indicates that the situation consumers are confronted with is affecting what store attributes become important.

When consumers are involved in major shopping they have to spend more time and effort than when doing fill-in shopping (e.g., Kollat and Willett, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992). This may be the reason why they demand more from the store making attractiveness attributes such as price level, supply quality/range and service quality therefore important. When spending less time and effort, the accessibility is shown to be more important. The dissertation shows that consumers' choice of grocery store is a situation-based choice in terms of situation dependency. Hence, consumers value different attributes and are also affected by time scarcity differently depending on their social-demographical characteristics. In this dissertation it is also shown that consumers are more satisfied with fill-in

shopping than major shopping. This indicates that consumers may want everything under the same roof but they still do not want to spend more time, money, and effort to get what they need. These results make me question if the store formats existing today really fit consumers' needs and type of shopping.

Undertaking fill-in shopping takes less time and effort than major shopping (Kollat and Willett, 1967; Kahn and Schmittlein, 1992; Kim and Park, 1997), which could be one reason why consumers are more satisfied with fill-in shopping. Baker et al. (2002) showed that shoppers invest minimal time and effort under time pressure, which could be another reason why consumers are more satisfied with fill-in shopping which takes shorter time. Hence, less energy is spent than when doing major shopping, which could be a reason why consumers are more satisfied with fill-in shopping than with major shopping. Previous research (Park et al., 1989; Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Skallerud et al., 2009; Inman et al., 2009) has also shown that when consumers are under time pressure, they focus on the primary shopping purposes and do little in-store browsing. In contrast to previous research showing that time pressure influences consumers' shopping (Skallerud et al., 2009), the results in this study did not show any significant effect on time-pressure. However, it might be that consumers' time scarcity (e.g., Richbell and Kite, 2007; Bergström and Fölster, 2009; Manolis and Roberts, 2012) puts them in constant time pressure when shopping. The time pressures that consumers feel is then linked to consumers' characteristics, not to a specific purchase situation. Another reason for why there were no effects on time pressure might be that when shopping for groceries, consumers purchase what they need and therefore the end-result is the same with or without time pressure. This could explain why the results of this dissertation showed that consumers are overall satisfied with the grocery store they usually patronage even though the attributes they stated were important for their satisfaction were not the same as the attributes they were satisfied with in the store they usually patronage.

Type of store

Previous research has argued that the context the individual is facing affects the decision-making (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Gigerenzer et al., 1999; Juslin et al., 2003; Nordvall, 2014), and that different cognitive processes will dominate in specific situations (Olsson et al., 2006). Therefore, the differences in which store attributes become important in different stores may be due to consumers' using different cognitive processes in the different situations. When visiting supermarkets consumers feel that they need the car to get there since the store is most often located outside the city centre. Accessibility attributes such as parking are therefore more

important for their satisfaction when visiting supermarkets than when the store is closer to home, as convenience stores in most cases are. The accessibility by car therefore becomes less important for consumers to be satisfied with a convenience store than availability attributes such as opening hours. The results also show that, depending on what type of store consumers are visiting, different attributes become more or less important for consumers' overall satisfaction with the store.

The results indicated that more major shopping was done in supermarkets than in convenience stores (where fill-in shopping was more frequent). Still, the correlation between *how* (major versus fill-in shopping) and *where* (supermarket versus convenience store) was weak, suggesting that there are consumers who deviate from this pattern. Hence, it can not be taken for granted that consumers are doing major shopping in supermarkets and fill-in shopping in convenience stores even though the different store types have been created to suite that type of shopping. In other words, the results show that some consumers are shopping in a store not really designed to fit the type of shopping that is undertaken. Previous research has failed to cover consumers who are deviating from the traditional pattern of doing major shopping in supermarkets and fill-in shopping in convenience stores.

Consumer segments

Yankelovich and Meer (2006) argued that traditional segmentation techniques are weak in regards to predicting consumers' future choices. In this dissertation the consumer segments were therefore created on the basis of where and how consumers shop instead of on consumer characteristics. In this dissertation, five consumer groups varying on how and where they purchase (Planning Suburbans, Pedestrians, Social Shoppers, City Dwellers, and Flexibles) were brought forward. The results showed that consumers are flexible in one aspect but inflexible in another. Some consumer segments are bounded to how they shop, while others are bounded to where they shop. These consumers may for some reason be prevented from making a different choice, even though they would like to. The consumers may for some reason be forced or limited to shop in one particular store format, even though it does not fit their type of shopping. Moreover, even though these consumer groups may know of other stores, these stores may not be accessible for them, or they are trying to save energy by putting less effort in getting to a store. Some consumers are "locked" to some stores. They may lack access to a car or live in a place where free choices of store are limited or non-existing. The results of this dissertation showed that some consumers are shopping in a store not really designed to fit the type of shopping that is undertaken. From my results it would therefore be relevant to question if the traditional

store formats existing today are what consumers actually want, or if they for example have been inherited from other contexts and countries.

Consumers satisfaction

The third objective of this dissertation was to *“Investigate how different situations affect consumers’ satisfaction with their choice of grocery store”*. When looking upon what consumers are satisfied with in the store they usually patronage, the results yielded several significant differences between supermarkets and convenience stores. The results also showed that overall satisfaction was higher for supermarkets than for convenience stores. In line with previous research (e.g., Popkowski, Leszczysz et al., 2000; Huddleston et al., 2009) it was shown that there are differences between which attributes consumers are satisfied with in different store formats. Consumers’ satisfaction with different store attributes was in other words different in supermarket and convenience stores.

When visiting supermarkets consumers need – or feel that they need – the car since the store is most often located outside the city centre. Accessibility attributes such as parking are therefore more important for their satisfaction when visiting supermarkets than when the store is closer to home, as convenience stores in most cases are. The accessibility by car therefore becomes less important than availability for consumers to be satisfied with the convenience store. The results also show that depending on what type of store consumers are visiting, different attributes become more or less important for their overall satisfaction with the store. One reason why accessibility becomes most important could be because accessibility is a fundamental condition for consumers to shop in that particular store. If the store is too far away or in other ways not easily accessible for consumers, that particular store will not be part of the consumers’ choice set. Hence, accessibility attributes could be seen as conditions fundamental for consumers enabling them to consider that particular store. Then, when having access to the store, attractiveness attributes plays a more important part in the choices of grocery stores.

The results showed that all consumer groups (Planning Suburbans, Pedestrians, Social Shoppers, City Dwellers, and Flexibles) were more satisfied with supermarkets than with convenience stores, which is in line with previous research (e.g., Huddleston et al., 2009). Even consumers who predominantly shop in convenience stores were more satisfied with supermarkets than with the convenience store. Consumers may want to switch to a supermarket if this was possible. This suggests that these consumers may be forced to choose an alternative they are less satisfied with

or their choice of grocery store is made out of habit even though a better option is available. This would be in line with previous research showing that the majority of people's everyday actions are based on habits (Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997; Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2000; Verplanken and Wood, 2006). Since satisfaction must be measured in relation to the alternatives that are available to the consumers, the mental distance consumers have to different store alternatives might influence the satisfaction with a store. The cognitive proximity consumers feel for different store alternatives can also turn into a habit of always choosing one store for which the consumers feel the least mental distance to. Previous researchers have argued that it might be difficult to break habits (e.g., Dahlstrand and Biel, 1997; Verplanken and Aarts, 1999), which might be the reason why this dissertation shows that consumers are shopping in a certain store even though they might be more satisfied in another store.

Consumer characteristics

The fourth and final objective of this dissertation was to “*investigate whether and how consumer characteristics have an impact on choice of grocery store.*” The results showed that there are several significant differences between different consumers regarding how they shop. Kahn and Schmittlein (1989) argued that consumers making fill-in shopping are smaller households, have lower income, and are more frequently older and retired people. In contrast, consumers doing major shopping are bigger households, have higher income, are more frequently younger people (Kahn and Schmittlein, 1989), and spend more money on a shopping trip (Walters and Jamil, 2003). However, this dissertation shows that the pattern is more complex than that.

In line with Kahn and Schmittlein (1989), the segments City Dweller and Social Shoppers are smaller households that are doing fill-in shopping. However, when it comes to the age of the different consumer groups the results of this study were not in line with previous research showing that consumers doing fill-in shopping are older than other consumers (Kahn and Schmittlein, 1989). The Social Shoppers are older than the other segments but City Dwellers are not, which shows that consumers' shopping pattern is more complex than previously shown and therefore strengthens the argumentation for segmenting consumers in another way than on demographic variables. In previous studies consumer segmentation has usually been based on demographic variables or different variables such as price and quality (e.g., Stone, 1995; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Kohijoki and Marjanen, 2013). This dissertation shows that the previous view upon consumers' shopping and how these consumers have been segmented into

groups based upon consumer characteristics are not reflecting how consumers actually choose store today. The changes in demographic structure such as the rise of single-person households (Clarke et al., 2006) and the fact that consumers are faced with more commitments today, leading to less time for shopping (Dellaert et al., 1998) are changing the way consumers make decisions which is one reason why the shopping behaviour has changed. Researchers have also shown that consumers are more mobile today than previously (e.g., Marjanen, 1997; Forsberg, 1998; Banister, 2011), making it easier to reach different types of stores and hence changing consumers' shopping behaviour. The development of the demographic structure has in other words affected the way consumers make decisions today.

Due to the results of this dissertation, I argue that choosing grocery store is a situation-based choice influenced by consumers' characteristics. The choice of grocery store is therefore built on non-stable preferences, which change with the context (e.g., consumers' lifecycle and living condition). Therefore, consumers themselves will have an impact on the other factors mentioned in this discussion. The consumers themselves will for example influence how willing they are to switch stores. If consumers have access to a car, the longer distance to the new store might not affect them in such a negative way as it would for consumers who do not have access to a car. Even though previous research (e.g., Carpenter and Moore, 2005; Prasad and Aryasri, 2011) has shown that socio-demographic variables influence consumers, it has not previously been settled how they affect the relative weights on different store attributes. Thang and Tan (2003) saw store attributes as a stimulus influencing the organism (consumers) in their choice of store (response), while Baker et al. (2002) saw the attributes as part of the organism (consumers).

The result of this dissertation demonstrated that importance of different store attributes and consumers' satisfaction with the store were influenced by socio-demographic and shopping behaviour variables. The results showed how consumers differ in what they value and therefore different attributes become important for different consumers. Hence, I argue that the attributes could be seen as part of the organism and that the stimulus is rather what type of shopping and type of store the consumers are facing. The variation of different attributes that different consumers find important confirms my idea of store choice being situation-based choices.

Summary

Habits have been argued to be fundamental in human behaviour and to have a big impact on our behaviour (e.g., Verplanken and Aarts, 1999; Jackson et

al., 2006; Kahneman, 2011; Duhigg, 2012). When buying out of habit, consumers usually gain a tunnel vision where other options are not accounted for. However, I argue that all situations are unique and therefore it is implied that consumers act according to the specific situation that the consumers are facing in that specific moment. Different situations lead to different habits, and the situation is therefore important even in choices where consumers act according to their habits. Previous retail researchers are also bringing forward how and what consumers shop (Sheth, 1983), consumer attitudes (Monroe and Gultinan, 1975), and consumer characteristics (e.g., Darden, 1980). This dissertation has shown that these factors are differing for consumers in different situations. Hence, depending on different factors, consumers will act differently regarding what store they will choose. Therefore, I refer to the choice of grocery store as a “situation-based choice”.

This dissertation has shown that there is a difference in what consumers say is important for their satisfaction and what they actually are satisfied with in the store they patronage. One reason for this might be that consumers are having a hard time to break the habit of choosing a specific store even though they are not satisfied with that store. It could also be that grocery shopping is a very unique type of shopping that consumers cannot be without, which makes it impossible to choose not to choose, as with other types of shopping. Once a consumer has entered a grocery store they will therefore shop in that store, no matter what they think about the store; consumers are very seldom walking out of a grocery store empty-handed in order to go to another grocery store, even though the store did not have the attributes the consumers are valuing. What type of shopping (major or fill in shopping) consumers decide to undertake is a conscious choice. Depending on if consumers are going to do major shopping or fill-in shopping, different attributes become important and form part of the choice criteria for which store the consumers end up in. However, since consumers are reluctant to switch store from their regular one to a new one, it seems that after the choice of type of shopping has been done, consumers have strong habits of which store will be chosen. Hence, the unconscious takes over. Even though consumers' habits are strong, they have different habits in different situations. Consumers will first make a conscious choice about what type of shopping will be undertaken. Then the unconscious will take over since the choice has been made many times before. In other words, consumers are not going through the decision stages and the cognitive process of making a decision except if something happens; if, for example, the store the consumers usually patronage is closing. In such a case, consumers are forced to make another evaluation of the options and choose a new store.

Based on the results of this dissertation I argue that what consumers regard as a good location of a store is not connected to a specific place but should rather be seen as the mental distance consumers have to that specific store. I suggest that location therefore should be seen as cognitive proximity – a state of mind rather than the actual distance to the store and the physical place of the store.

Concluding remarks

The purpose of the dissertation was to contribute to the literature by advancing *the knowledge of what influences consumers' choices of grocery stores*. The results of this dissertation show the complexity of choices of grocery stores by bringing forward that the situation is more important than previously shown. The results have shown that different situations lead to different choices and that different attributes are important for different consumer groups. Table 2 shows the relationship between store format, type of shopping, and the attributes consumers find important for their choice of store as well as what attributes they are satisfied with in the supermarket and convenience store they usually patronage.

Table 2: The relationship between store format, type of shopping, and store attributes

	Fill-in shopping	Major shopping	Attributes satisfaction
Supermarket	Social Shoppers	Planning Suburbans	Access car Product range Storescape
Convenience store	City Dweller	Pedestrians	Availability Access car Access other
Attributes importance	Supply quality Availability Access other	Service Child-friendliness Price Access Car	

Retail mix attributes

When consumers are searching for information and evaluating different options, it is inevitably important how the potential stores' attributes match what consumers find important for their choice of store. Many store choice models in previous research have been developed with a focus on in-store attributes and, as mentioned previously, they have focused on single or a few attributes. There has been an inconsistency in previous research regarding which and how many attributes have been included when studying consumers' choices. This study has therefore taken into account 34 different retail mix attributes mentioned in different previous studies in order to test them all at the same time and gain knowledge about their relative importance. One important contribution in this dissertation is therefore the

creation of a comprehensive set of ten aggregated attributes influencing consumers' choices of stores. The comprehensive set of attributes of grocery stores that were established can be standardized and used in future empirical research.

The results showed that the attributes found to be important for consumers are not the same as the attributes consumers are satisfied with in the store they usually patronage. As seen in Table 2, the results also showed that the attributes that were important for satisfaction differed between supermarkets and convenience stores. How consumers shop was also shown to influence what attributes consumers found important. The results also showed that different attributes became more or less important for the consumers' satisfaction when doing different types of shopping. As seen in Table 2, there are differences in what consumers find important when they are doing fill-in shopping and major shopping. This could be one explanation to why there has been an inconsistency regarding importance of attributes in previous research. Different attributes will also influence consumers' choices of grocery stores depending on style of shopping, store format, and consumer characteristics. Due to the results of this dissertation I argue that what consumers regard as important attributes is situation-based and will vary depending on the situation the consumers are facing.

Consumer segments

One major contribution of the dissertation was to bring forward different consumer groups varying in how and where they shop. This contribution is questioning the traditional view that major shopping is done in supermarkets and fill-in shopping in convenience stores, as well as the traditional way of creating segments. All consumer groups were more satisfied with supermarkets than with convenience stores, which shows that consumers value having everything they need in the same store. Supermarkets are offering a bigger assortment and "everything" under one roof, which is convenient for consumers. Yet, even though all consumer groups were more satisfied with supermarkets, City Dwellers and Pedestrians are still doing most of their shopping in convenience stores. These consumers may for some reason be limited in their choices (e.g., lack of access to a car) and therefore do not have the possibility to shop in a supermarket. In other words, for some reason the consumers are loyal to a store even though they would be (and are) more satisfied with another store. Satisfaction has often been seen to lead to habits. Yet, when it comes to grocery store choice not only satisfaction creates the habit of consumers choices. Consumers are not always satisfied with the store even though they continue to return to the store. This might be due to consumers' being

restricted to specific stores. If consumers find the store acceptable, they will continue to visit the store, and hence create a habit of going to the store even though another store would make them more satisfied. This dissertation therefore shows that habits regarding choice of grocery store can be seen as stronger than satisfaction. Due to this, satisfaction cannot be assumed due to consumers' choice and loyalty to a store.

Cognitive proximity

The dissertation showed that consumers appreciate knowing the store and are reluctant to switch store. For a store to be chosen instead of the consumers' "regular" store, it needs to be better on many attributes in order to overcome the loss of energy a switch would lead to, regardless if the store is situated further away, right beside or closer than the regular store. This dissertation therefore questioned the view of a "good location", arguing that the mental distance – the cognitive proximity – to the store is much more important than the physical location. The importance of the location of a store is bounded to the consumers and where they are at the moment, and not to a specific place. The importance of location is therefore as important as shown in previous research, but what a good location is differs depending on the consumers and the situation the consumers are facing. Hence, location in choice of grocery store should rather be seen as cognitive proximity.

Different situations

As mentioned previously, when consumers are about to switch store, the evaluation of alternative stores will be influenced by what kind of store attribute consumers find important. However, depending on what types of shopping consumers are engaged in, the evaluation of alternative stores will have different outcomes. Hence, different situations are bringing forward different decision rules and choice criteria. Consumers have been shown to be reluctant to switch the store where they do their grocery shopping. When choosing grocery stores, consumers could therefore be seen to be choosing out of habit. What type of shopping consumers are going to be engaging in and whether the grocery shopping is going to be a habitual choice or if the consumers are switching stores, will affect how thoroughly consumers go through the decision stages. When choosing a store out of habit, consumers already have the store information needed in order to make the decision, while if they are switching stores, they will spend more time on gathering information and evaluating the alternatives.

Different situations are bringing forward different habits that need to be accounted for. The consumers are drawn by their habits either because the

store is closest or the consumers know where to find what they need in that store. Also, consumers have different habits depending on what type of shopping they are undertaking. Hence, also consumers' habits are situation-based. When starting to purchase groceries or moving to a new city, consumers may evaluate different options, but once they have started to visit one or a couple of stores, they are not likely to switch stores unless something happens. Depending on where the consumers are, different stores will be chosen. Consumers use themselves as a starting-point and shop "rationally" according to the situation they are facing. If consumers recognize the need for purchasing groceries when they are at home, the choice of store might be different than if the consumers had been at work or out walking. Depending on the situation, consumers will face different outcomes (different stores); hence, grocery store choice is a situation-based choice.

Limitations and future research

Like all research, this dissertation has limitations even though it also provides a number of theoretical and managerial contributions. Each of the papers included in the dissertation addresses limitations connected to that specific paper but there are also some limitations affecting the dissertation as a whole. These limitations can also be seen as inspiration for future research.

One main limitation of this study was the choice of the research context. The decision-making in regards to choices of stores was examined in physical grocery stores in Sweden. What influences consumers might vary across countries as well as the retail context (other stores such as clothes, electronics and so forth), which could be interesting to study. The online shopping is increasing in regards to grocery shopping, which also may influence consumers' decision-making differently than when purchasing in physical grocery stores. It would therefore be interesting to compare online grocery shopping with the comprehensive set of attributes found in paper 2. The attributes could also be used to test decision-making in other retail contexts and also in other countries.

Another limitation is that the data collection in Study 3 was made on students. Students usually do not have access to a car as often as other consumers, making them less mobile and hence limited in their choices of grocery stores. However, previous research has shown that students' shopping behaviour does not significantly differ from other age and income groups. Still, it would be interesting to investigate whether the results from this dissertation would be the same regarding what makes other consumer groups switch stores.

A final limitation of this dissertation is that it was based on quantitative methods. This dissertation has shown that City Dwellers and Pedestrians are shopping in the convenience store even though they are more satisfied with the supermarket. A suggestion for future research is to use a qualitative method to strengthen the knowledge about why these consumers are not shopping in the store they find more satisfying. All papers relied on self-reported data and the consumers stated their preferences. It may be possible to capture the actual choice and the revealed behaviour of consumers instead of stated preferences or a fictive choice, by doing experiments or by a qualitative method.

Managerial and marketing implications

The dissertation brings forward managerial and marketing implications. Consumers' choices of retail outlets are the basis of many empirical questions in retailing such as pricing, location decisions, storescape, and so forth. Due to the increased competition the retail food sector is facing today with Internet shopping, home delivery, and different food boxes, it becomes even more important to know the consumers in order to stay attractive and keep the consumers. Establishing how consumers respond in their choices of retailers under various circumstances is central to making good strategic decisions. Retail managers would therefore gain from knowledge about their consumers and the consumers they are striving to have, which would help them to understand what store attributes the consumers find important. Marketing managers could then highlight these store attributes in marketing in order to attract the targeted consumer group.

Better store formats

The results of this dissertation showed that the store formats available today might not fit the need of the stores' consumers and their shopping style, since not all consumer groups are shopping in the store format they are most satisfied with. When knowing what kind of consumers the store wants to attract, retail managers should use the information of what that consumer group finds important in order to adjust their store to better serve their potential consumers' needs. For example, consumers may be limited in their choices of store due to difficulties to travel to different stores. Therefore, one criteria that must be fulfilled for the store to be part of the consumers' choice set is that the store is accessible by other means than by car and that it is close to home or work, etc. When marketing managers understand the decision strategies and attributes that are important to consumers, they can use and benchmark these attributes against competitors to ensure that their store is not eliminated by the consumers prior to the selection from within the choice set.

Even though consumers have to purchase food, where and how they purchase food may change due to new competition entering the market. Retailers with traditional store formats, therefore, would benefit from thinking forward and not trust that the consumers will continue to shop in their store even though they are not supplying the consumers with what they actually think is important. For example, convenience stores might be able to find out what would make City Dwellers and Pedestrians more satisfied so that they become more satisfied with the store they purchase in than other potential stores, such as the supermarket. This could also strengthen the loyalty so that the consumers might return to the store even if their living conditions changed. The consumers may for example buy a car and hence they are no longer limited in their choices. If the consumers are satisfied with the store they may stay loyal to the store even though they have more options.

Different store attributes

In previous research, *accessibility by car* was not recognized to be an important attribute. For example, in the meta-analysis by Pan and Zinkhan (2006), attributes such as product range, service quality, product quality, store atmosphere, and price level were more important than accessibility attributes. Other studies have shown that product supply (e.g., Carpenter and Moore, 2006), product quality (e.g., Reutterer and Teller, 2009), and price level (e.g., Mitchell and Harris, 2005) are the most important attributes. However, these authors did not take accessibility into account, which could be one reason why these attributes were considered the most important attributes by the consumers. This dissertation showed that according to the consumers, accessibility by car is the most important aggregated attribute, followed by storescape quality and availability. After these attributes supply range, supply quality, price level, service quality, and accessibility by other travel modes have means above the midpoint of the scale whereas closeness to other facilities had a mean below the midpoint. The least important attribute was child-friendliness.

The attributes *Supply range and supply quality* were less important in this research than found in previous North-American research, possibly because Swedish grocery stores in general have a large supply range and high-quality products. The differences in product quality and product range are therefore not as large between different stores in Sweden as they are in North America. It is also noteworthy that *price level* is not among the most important attributes, which may be a consequence of less price variation in the different store formats in Sweden. Since the differences are slim, these attributes are less important in the choice of grocery store than when the stores differ much more.

For an attribute to play a part in consumers' choice of store, it has to be of importance for the consumers, but also help to differentiate the different options. If all stores have the same price level, this factor will not help the consumers in making their decision. Another possible reason for the difference in results may be that the retail sector has gone through a lot of changes over the years (e.g., Elms et al., 2010), which has changed how consumers shop today compared to earlier. Also, consumers have less time and are more stressed today than previously, making them require the shopping to go faster, which could be one reason why consumers value accessibility and convenience. Also, consumers' increased mobility today (e.g., Marjanen, 1997; Forsberg, 1998; Banister, 2011), makes it easier to travel to a store they like instead of being "forced" to choose the closest store. Hence, it is likely that also what attributes the consumers find important has changed due to changes in shopping behaviour and where consumers are in their lifecycle.

The importance of accessibility attributes (accessibility by car, accessibility by other modes, and availability) was most strongly affected by the socio-demographic characteristics and shopping behaviour, primarily by distance to store, car access, frequency of shopping, and major versus fill-in shopping, while the importance of attractiveness attributes were mainly affected by gender and money spent. There were differences in age and gender; young consumers found availability more important than older consumers did, which is in line with the research by Moschis et al, (2004) which argued that older consumers are not as strongly affected by distance and geographical location as other consumers. One reason for this may be that older consumers who are retired have more time on their hands than young consumers who are still working and having young children. Women found price, storescape quality, and service quality important while men found closeness to other facilities and child-friendliness more important. This indicates that men want the shopping to go smoothly with no distractions, regardless of the price or quality of the products. Instead, they value an easy and fast shopping experience. Also when looking at consumers' satisfaction with the stores they usually patronage, there was a significant effect of gender (women more satisfied than men) and having children (consumers with children more satisfied than those without children). Consumers with children value price and child-friendliness as most important while consumers without children found supply quality, supply range, service quality, and closeness to other facilities important. Still, child-friendliness was the attribute consumers rated as having the lowest impact for their overall satisfaction in both convenience stores and supermarkets.

Importance versus satisfaction

There are both similarities and differences between what consumers find important in order to be satisfied with a store and what attributes they actually are satisfied with in the store they usually patronage (both convenience store and supermarket) as well as which store attributes influence consumers' overall satisfaction with the store. When visiting different store formats, different attributes became more or less important for consumers' satisfaction. In convenience stores, availability, accessibility by car, and accessibility by other travel modes were the most important attributes, while in supermarkets accessibility by car, product range, and storescape were most important.

The results showed that consumers were less satisfied with attributes of convenience stores than attributes of supermarkets except for availability (closeness to store and opening hours) and accessibility by other travel modes, where satisfaction was higher for convenience stores than for supermarkets. When it comes to supermarkets, consumers were most satisfied with accessibility by car followed by supply range. After these attributes came storescape quality, supply quality, service quality, availability, price level, closeness to other facilities, accessibility by other travel modes, and lastly child-friendliness. For convenience stores consumers were most satisfied with availability followed by accessibility by car, accessibility by other travel modes, storescape quality, supply quality, supply range, service quality, closeness to other facilities, price level, and lastly child-friendliness. When looking at the attributes that have a significant effect on consumers' overall satisfaction with supermarkets and convenience stores, supply quality, supply range, price level, service quality, storescape quality, child-friendliness, and availability have an effect. Supply range and price level had a significantly less impact for convenience stores than for supermarkets while service quality had significantly more impact for convenience stores than for supermarkets. Depending on how and where consumers are shopping, accessibility becomes more or less important. The most important attribute was accessibility by car, and this attribute was also what influenced the satisfaction with the supermarket the most, while it was the second attribute for the convenience store, behind availability, which was found on third place of important attributes, and only as attribute number six for satisfaction with supermarkets. These results suggest that the situation the consumers are confronted with influences the consumer.

The frenetic pace of consumers' lives today can often lead to the choice of the most convenient option even though there might be a better option. Sometimes it is lack of awareness or simply lack of options that make consumers choose one thing, even though they know they could make better

choices. But sometimes they are simply just too lazy to invest in finding the better option. Retailers therefore need to make their store so important for the consumers that they overcome the energy loss and want to put in the extra effort to get to that specific store instead of taking the closest store available at the time. Therefore, in order to reach the different consumer groups with marketing it is crucial that the marketing efforts are situation-based instead of based on consumer characteristics. More consumer-group adjusted marketing and offerings would attract the consumers in a better way when using different types of shopping. For example, if the store is focusing on the City Dwellers (fill-in shopping in convenience stores), it may be possible to send the consumers a text with offerings that attract these consumers on their way home from work. It may for example be a good idea to give the City Dwellers an idea of what to make for dinner that evening since it may attract the City Dwellers much more than offerings of doing major shopping, since they are rarely shopping groceries in that way.

The results of this dissertation demonstrate that depending on which consumer groups the store wants to attract and what situation the consumers are facing, different attributes become important for the store to obtain, in order to attract the consumers and fulfil their needs. Hence, the choice of grocery store is a situation-based choice influenced by the consumers themselves, the type of shopping that is undertaken, what type of store the consumers are visiting, as well as consumers' attitude towards different store attributes.

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