To Gift or not to Gift?
Reciprocity at a Durable Goods Retailer

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Preface
We would like to give a big thank you to our supervisor, Lars Witell, for his help and useful advice throughout the course of the thesis. We would also like to give a special thank you to the case company. Without you, the experiment would have been impossible to conduct. Additionally, we would like to thank the students and supervisors who have given us valuable comments and great constructive criticism during seminars. Lastly, we would like to thank each and every one who has been there supporting us throughout the semester.

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Abstract

Title: To Gift or not to Gift? - Reciprocity at a Durable Goods Retailer
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Problematisation: Due to intense competition, retail stores are today forced to come up with exciting new sales promotional ideas to remain a relevant choice for customers. Gift giving is a sales promotional tool which has previously demonstrated to increase customer satisfaction and spending - an ideal situation for any retailer. However, gift giving has only been researched and confirmed for retailers that offer consumable goods. It has yet to be measured in a context where it is of greater difficulty for the customer to spend more than planned. This research fills that void by conducting a field experiment at a retail store offering durable shopping products.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect gift giving has on gratitude, obligation, satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending at a retail store offering durable shopping products. Through a field experiment, the study tests the effect on these variables of both small and large gifts and explore whether customer spending increases alongside the gift’s monetary worth.

Method: To complete the purpose of the study, a case company representing a durable shopping products retailer was selected. A field experiment was setup with two experimental groups and one control group. The results from the manipulation were collected through questionnaires which included questions pertaining to the study’s five variables. The collected data was then analysed through the statistics program SPSS.

Conclusion: The only emotion that is affected from providing gifts in this retail environment is obligation, a negative emotion, which in turn decreases customer satisfaction. Since giving a gift only evokes negative emotions, it is concluded that a durable goods retailer should not use gift giving as a sales promotional tool. Additionally, when given a large gift, customer spending decreases considerably. This could imply that gift giving does not work in this retail environment, or that an extraneous variable affected the experiment’s outcome.

Search terms: Durable goods retailer, reciprocity, gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, spending, gift giving, sales promotion, field experiment.
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1. Introduction
1.1 Background
Companies giving out free gifts to claim higher rewards is nothing new to the world of business; it is something that has been going on for years (Raghubir, 2004). In fact, the tactic of using sales promotion to increase sales in the short run has long been implemented within retailing (van Waterschoot & van den Bulte, 1992; Raghubir, 2004).

Due to intense competition, retail stores are today forced to come up with exciting new exciting sales promotional ideas to remain a relevant choice for consumers, especially with the increasing consumer preference for online stores (Perrigo, Hardman & Hodson, 2018). Firms try to retain customers through different sales promotional tools such as vouchers, gifts, and discounts (Nagar, 2009). One relevant question then is: do these sales promotional tools actually work? Previous studies have shown that not all sales promotions are as effective as one might initially believe (Alonzo, 1997). Vouchers, which are being used by retailers on a regular basis, have shown to be as effective as not offering any sort of promotion at all (Alonzo, 1997), which of course is not the intent of the firm. In fact, sales promotion is more often than not a difficult tool to comprehend for managers of a firm, who often misjudge how much or what type to use (van Waterschoot & van den Bulte, 1992).

However, one in-store marketing tool has shown to be effective in both increasing short-term sales as well as providing customer satisfaction: gift giving (Strohmetz et al., 2002). Providing customers with gifts as a kind gesture to induce the feeling of gratitude or obligation towards the company will ultimately result in increased spending by the customers (Strohmetz et al., 2002; Regan, 1971). Previous studies have shown that even when giving a customer a gift of low-to-no value, their spending increases (Strohmetz et al., 2002; Regan, 1971). Strohmetz et al. (2002) found that when providing customers at a restaurant with one piece of candy, tips would increase by 18%. When the server would offer two pieces, tips would increase by an incredible 21%. This shows that when implemented well, gift giving can lead to an increase in the firm’s revenues.

This increase in spending can be explained by the theory of reciprocity; that people like to reward effort (Morales, 2005). People always want to repay what others have paid them;
paying kind acts with kindness and bad acts with unkindness (Moreno-Okuno & Mosiño, 2017). The reason why gift giving has stronger implications on sales than promotional discounts comes from the emotional core of reciprocity: feelings of gratitude (Emmons, 2004). Gratitude can then lead to increased customer satisfaction, which promotes customers to return to the store (Hasan et al., 2017).

Being able to increase customers’ spending, while developing greater customer satisfaction is undeniably an ideal situation for retailers. With a simple and relatively cheap solution such as gift giving, retailers can increase customers’ spending. This is particularly interesting for retailers to implement during periods when consumption is relatively low.

1.2 Problematisation
Businesses who are solely operating within the brick-and-mortar field are seeing a decline and stagnation in sales (Perrigo, Hardman and Hodson, 2018). The current market trends are not seemingly prominent for brick-and-mortar retailers, mainly due to the introduction and development of e-commerce (Ibid.), which is changing “the rules of the game” (Burt & Sparks, 2003). With new cultural behaviour and a new generation that is more accustomed to the Internet, sales are slowly shifting from physical to online stores. Some even go as far as predicting the end of physical stores overall (Perrigo, Hardman and Hodson, 2018).

The increasing competition from online stores poses a threat to brick-and-mortar retailers, especially those who have yet to set up an online platform (Perrigo, Hardman and Hodson, 2018). Brick-and-mortar businesses need to increase the customers’ tendency to return to their physical stores to stay relevant on the market, and to compete with the overabundance of e-commerce retailers (Ibid.). By offering customers great service quality, a business can develop relationships with customers based on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Service quality is an important component that retailers must attend to and manage with care if they want to develop customer loyalty and secure new customers through means of positive word-of-mouth (Ibid.). For brick-and-mortar retailers, it is imperative to have a continuous flow of customers visiting the store, and now, more than ever, it is important to get a higher customer retention rate of the
customers entering the store (Martinelli & Balboni, 2012). This is where gift giving and reciprocal behaviour become relevant.

The theory that gift giving elevates consumption has previously been researched (e.g. Cialdini, 2007). Gift giving has been tested at businesses that handle a large amount of customers who are prone to spend more than planned in their set environment (Strohmetz et al., 2002; Friedman & Herskovitz, 1990). As stated by Beltramini (2000), gifts are a sales promotional tool for a firm to influence the attitudes and increase intended purchase behaviour of potential customers, to maintain or increase existing customers’ purchases, and to convey an act of gratitude of past purchases made by existing customers. The act of gift giving has proven to be an efficient method in grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants (Strohmetz et al., 2002; Friedman & Herskovitz, 1990; Fombelle et al., forthcoming), i.e. retailers selling consumable goods.

According to Fehr and Gächter (2000), many customers find it difficult to accept gifts without making a purchase. People tend to start developing feelings such as gratitude and feelings of obligation to repay when being given a gift, feelings that are rooted in reciprocity (Ibid.). By giving customers gifts, a business can influence customers to spend more, and thus increase the firm’s sales (Cialdini, 2007).

As stated earlier, there are several studies that confirm that gift giving has a large impact on consumer spending (Strohmetz et al., 2002; Friedman & Herskovitz, 1990), however, this has only been researched and confirmed for retailers that offer consumable goods (food and medicine). It is relatively easy for customers dining at a restaurant to give a larger tip for the server. Likewise, it is easy for customers at a grocery store to purchase more food than originally planned, seeing as they are consumable goods that will be consumed within a short time span. It gives way for consumers to be more frivolous when shopping and allows for consumption to easily increase. However, gift giving has yet to be measured in a context where it is of greater difficulty for the consumer to spend more than planned. This research fills that void by conducting a field experiment at a retail store that offers durable shopping products, where unplanned purchases are limited and perhaps even difficult to make.
Durable products are products that are used over a long period of time, as opposed to non-durable products which are consumed relatively immediately. Furthermore, there are three types of consumer products: convenience products, shopping products, and specialty products (Kotler et al., 2005). Previous research has tested gift giving at a retailer offering non-durable convenience products. This study will conduct a field experiment in a real market setting to test whether gift giving is able to influence gratitude, obligation, satisfaction, impulsive buying, and customer spending at a retailer offering durable shopping products. Shopping products are products for which consumers spend a considerable amount of time and effort during the pre-purchase stage (i.e. seeking information and comparing alternatives). They are, in other words, products which desire greater planning (Kotler et al., 2005). The question then is: will the effects of a gift be as strong at a durable shopping products retailer as it is for non-durable convenience products retailers?

1.3 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study is to examine the effect that a gift has on gratitude, obligation, satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending at a retail store offering durable shopping products. The study will, through a field experiment, test the effect on these variables of both a small and a large gift, and explore whether customer spending increases alongside the gift’s monetary worth.

1.3.1 Research Questions
Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions have been formulated:

- What effect does gift giving have on gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending?
- What impact does the monetary value of the gift have on gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending?

1.3.2 Contributions of the Study
This study will contribute to marketing research by testing gift giving’s effect in a never before researched retail environment. Results, gathered from a field experiment conducted at a local store, will be connected to already conducted experiments and existing theories on the subject. This, in turn, will bring relevant views on consumers’ shopping behaviour and how, and if, retailers selling durable shopping products can
implement gift giving as a sales promotional tool to increase customer satisfaction and sales.

1.4 Limitations
The study’s purpose is to measure the effect of gift giving on customer attitudes and customer spending at a durable products retailer. The timeline of the research is to be conducted over a span of 20 weeks, which is why this study limits itself to one retail store in Linköping offering durable shopping products.

The gifts handed out during the field experiment were products which were sponsored from the retail store’s manager. The number of gifts were limited (around 250 items for each gift condition, i.e. 250 toffee candies and 250 “Rub-It”s) which in turn limited the sample size of the study; everyone who entered the store received a gift, and only a few were willing to participate in the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself was designed to be as short as possible so that customers would be willing to respond, however, for the questionnaire to be more reliable, more questions for each studied variable would have been preferred.

1.5 Terminology
The definitions below are based on the theoretical frameworks used in the thesis and are presented to facilitate the reading experience.

- **Durable shopping products retailer**: Retailer offering products that are used over a long period of time, which desire greater planning (Kotler et al., 2005).
- **Reciprocity**: “...to repay, in kind, what another person has provided...” (Cialdini, 2007. P 17).
- **Gratitude**: The positive emotional reaction we have when being on the receiving end of an exchange, which then prompts us to give back to the other party (Palmatier et al., 2009; Komter, 2004; Emmons & Crumpler, 2000).
- **Obligation**: A feeling of indebtedness from a favour which results in a negative and uncomfortable state for the recipient (Goei et al, 2003).

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1 The small gift in the field experiment was a toffee candy. The large gift was a “Rub-It”, which is a spaghetti measurement tool and ginger/garlic grater all in one.
• **Customer satisfaction**: “A customer’s evaluation of their purchase and consumption experience with a product, service, brand or company” (Johnson, 2001, p. 2).

• **Impulsive buying**: “... a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately.” (Kim, 2003, p.57)

• **Spending**: The amount of money consumers spend to meet their daily needs (OECD, 2018). In this study, spending refers to the amount of money spent by the respondents at the case company.
1.6 Outline
Below is a figure describing the outline of the study’s seven chapters, including a short
description of what each chapter comprises.

- The first chapter introduces the reader to the concept of gift giving as a sales promotional
tool and the research problem at hand. The purpose of the study, the research questions,
as well as the study’s contributions are explained. The chapter ends with the limitations of
the study as well as a terminology list.

- The second chapter explains the methodology used in the study. It begins by explaining
the study's research philosophy, followed by the study's argumentative method. It
continues with an explanation of the usage of a quantitative study, as well as the
research design. The chapter ends by explaining and motivating the secondary data used
in the study, as well as a critique of it.

- The third chapter describes previous theoretical frameworks of the studied variables:
sales promotion, reciprocity, gift giving, gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction,
impulsive buying, and spending. The chapter ends by presenting the study’s analytical
model.

- The fourth chapter treats the study’s two operational designs: experimental design, and
cross-sectional design. The field experiment’s procedure, as well as the study's
questionnaire are explained. The chapter ends by explaining the statistical methods used
to analyse the data collected in the study.

- The fifth chapter explains the results of the primary data collected in the study. It begins
by presenting the descriptive statistics from the questionnaire, followed by an
aggregation of the questionnaire's items and a correlation test. It ends by presenting the
data analysis of the analytical model through an ANOVA-analysis and multilinear
regression models.

- The sixth chapter analyzes the results collected in the study in relation to the theoretical
framework. The chapter begins by discussing the hypotheses formulated in the study. The
chapter ends by examining the analytical model as a whole.

- The seventh chapter concludes the study by answering the two research questions at
hand, followed by the study's final contribution. The chapter ends by discussing what
future research within the subject should focus on.

Figure 1: The study’s outline
2. Method
The following chapter explains the reasoning behind the selection of the used methodology, which is motivated by the purpose of the study. It begins by explaining the study’s research philosophy, followed by which argumentative method is used. The chapter continues with an explanation of the use of a quantitative study, as well as the study’s research design. The chapter ends by explaining and motivating the secondary data used in the study, as well as a critique of it.

2.1 Research Philosophy
A study’s research philosophy says a lot about the way the researcher views the world and the research at hand. Furthermore, it is chosen based on the research question(s). Most importantly, the chosen research philosophy is the researcher’s view of the relationship between knowledge and the process by which it is developed. There are four research philosophies: positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) define two ways of thinking about research philosophy: ontology and epistemology. Ontology regards the researcher’s assumptions of how the world operates and the nature of reality, which could be either objective or subjective (Ibid.). An objective standpoint defines reality as absolute, whereas a subjective standpoint implies that reality is ambiguous, dependent on the perceptions and actions of other social actors within the reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Epistemology concerns what comprises acceptable knowledge in a field of study and is the basis for the chosen research philosophy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Based on the research purpose and research questions at hand, this study follows a positivist research philosophy. A positivist research philosophy means that the researcher works with an observable reality and that generalisations can be drawn from the finished research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Positivism implies that only observable phenomena will create credible data. It implies that the data collected is based on previous theories which generate hypotheses to be tested to derive conclusions which can be generalised (Ibid.).
2.2 Deductive Research

An argument allows people to explain, interpret, defend, challenge and explore meaning (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). There are two types of arguments that researchers find important: deduction and induction. Deduction is the most common research method used for quantitative research, whereas induction is most commonly used for qualitative research (Ibid.)

Deduction is a form of argument that strives to be conclusive. The conclusion must be derived from a reason and this reason should point towards the conclusion and represent proof (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). For a deductive approach, a theory and a hypothesis are developed. Thereafter, a research strategy is designed to test the hypothesis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). To develop an understanding of the effect of gift giving on customer attitudes and spending, this study reviewed existing theoretical frameworks and previous experiments on the subject. These were later used as a basis for developing appropriate hypotheses to determine whether gift giving has an effect on customer attitudes and spending in the researched retail environment. For that reason, a deductive research method is deemed suitable for the study. A deductive approach to research is usually linear. However, sometimes theory needs to be added in retrospect. This could be, for example, if different theoretical aspects are deemed relevant only after the data has been collected or when the data does not fit the original hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which was the case for this study.

In inductive research, a conclusion is drawn from one or more facts or bits of evidence. The conclusion should explain the facts, and the facts should support the conclusion (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). However, the conclusion is only a hypothesis, meaning that there might be other conclusions that also explain the facts (Ibid.). For an inductive approach, theory is developed as a result of the data analysis; hence, data is collected first (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). An inductive research method was deemed unfitting for this study. The reason for this is that the hypotheses in the study are based on previous theories, and not the collected data.
2.3 Quantitative Research
A study can be either qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research is when a study captures the experiences and interpretations made from observations and interviews. It puts an emphasis on words rather than numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

On the other hand, quantitative research collects data that can be translated and statistically analysed through mathematical terms; it involves the collection of numerical data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In business research, quantitative research usually measures consumer behaviour or attitudes (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Furthermore, the relationship between theory and research is deductive rather than inductive. For quantitative research, it is imperative for the data to be reliable and true (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Otherwise, there can be concerns about the validity of the results. It is crucial to find the causality behind the results; it does not suffice to only describe how things are. Rather, the results must be explained and examined to find the causes behind it (Ibid.). It is also important that a quantitative study can be replicated (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This emphasises the importance of making the study’s procedures easy to follow, so that any future researcher can replicate the experiment (Ibid.).

The collection of primary data for this study has been through quantitative methods. The reasoning behind the choice of a quantitative approach is that this strategy was regarded as the best option for the study’s purpose. To find causal relationships and to determine if and how gift giving affects customer attitudes and spending in a retail environment selling durable shopping products, a quantitative approach was deemed to be most suitable.

2.4 Research Purpose
There are three types of research purposes of a research study: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

This study is an explanatory study. Explanatory studies determine and show causal relationships between variables. They intend to explain relationships between variables by studying a problem or a situation; to determine whether one variable has a causal impact on another variable. The causal impact is then usually tested through different
When establishing causal inference, there are three commonly cited criteria: temporal sequence, concomitant variation, and spurious association (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). Temporal sequence means that there should be a suitable causal order of events (i.e. the variable assumed to have the causal effect must precede the effect it is supposed to cause) (Ibid.). In this study’s case, this means that the gift had to be given to the customer(s) before observing the effect on their attitudes and spending, which was the case. The second criterion, concomitant variation, is to what extent the presumed cause (the gift) and the presumed effect (change in customer attitudes and spending) occur or vary together (Ibid.). Since customer attitudes and spending changed with the gift condition, it is argued that the second criterion is met. The final criterion, spurious association, entails the possibility that some other variable is causing the effect in the dependent variable (customer attitudes and spending) instead of the hypothesised one (the gift). These are almost impossible to rule out for any researcher (Ibid.), however, as an attempt to minimise such variables, the different treatment conditions were spread out during a three-day period.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a field experiment to examine the effect that gift giving has on customer attitudes and their spending at a retailer selling durable shopping products. Therefore, this study ascertains if one variable (a gift) has an impact on another variable (customer attitudes and spending). An explanatory study is therefore deemed as the appropriate research purpose for this study.

### 2.5 Review of Secondary Data

Secondary data is data which has not been gathered or composed by the researchers themselves, but rather from other researchers preceding them (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Reviewing literature and gathering secondary data is one of the most crucial tasks during a research project. It provides the basis for which a study can justifiably argue its points, develop its research questions, and construct its research design (Ibid.). Nevertheless, it is important to be critical when reviewing secondary data; if the literature is wrongly interpreted, the original meaning can be lost (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).
This study commenced by reviewing literature concerning gift giving and reciprocity to obtain relevant information on the subjects. As more literature was revised, further topics were found to be relevant. This led to the development of the research questions, the structure of the research methodology, and questionnaire. The point of the literature review was also to find new information on the subject, and to identify knowledge gaps, which is an important part of creating a good foundation for the research project (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Secondary data have primarily been gathered through UniSearch, available via Linköping University’s library, as well as through Google Scholar. UniSearch and Google Scholar have links to different databases, such as Scopus, Libris, and ScienceDirect. These are confirmed databases that are viewed as trusted sources to the University of Linköping. Important search words have been: ‘sales promotion’, ‘reciprocity’, ‘relationship marketing’, ‘gift giving’, ‘gratitude’, ‘obligation’, ‘customer satisfaction’, ‘impulsive buying’, and ‘consumer spending’. Relevant books within the researched subject have been found through Linköping University’s physical library. Usage of research publications, articles, and certain Internet websites have been used as well during the course of this study.

### 2.5.1 Critique of Secondary Data
As previously mentioned, it is important to be critical of the literature one reviews in a study, to not misinterpret the meaning or use sources which are not to be trusted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). For this reason, having a critical approach towards data and literature has been a central part in this study when deciding whether to use a source. Scientific articles’ credibility can be determined from, for example, the article’s impact factor (average citations received over a two-year period) or the if the article is peer reviewed (Emory University, 2018). This study has predominantly used articles published in renowned journals who peer review the articles published, hence, the articles used in this study are deemed to be credible.

Throughout the study, an ambition to always use original sources has been prevalent. There are two main reasons for using an original source (Churchill, 2001). First, it shows the general quality of the source, whether the process of the collection and analysis are
well described and executed. Second, an original source is usually more accurate than a secondary source. Using original sources also help to avoid faulty interpretations by referenced authors (Ibid.).

The sources of a study should be up to date and follow current trends in the field (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Most of the latest research studies within the subject of gift giving and reciprocity reference articles dating back to the 1960s, which in some cases might be questionable (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). When using these sources, researchers should be cautious as trends and views on the subject might have changed over time. Nonetheless, the relevance of the older articles was deemed high, and were thus included in the study.

Internet sources have been used as well. These were deemed reliable since they were published by renowned organisations and companies.
3. Theoretical Framework

The third chapter will explain the theoretical aspects of the researched subject. The theoretical framework is the foundation for the entire study, explaining and defining the important variables researched in the study. The following subjects will be covered: sales promotion, reciprocity, gift giving, gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending. The chapter will end by presenting the analytical model of the study, which is based on the previously mentioned variables.

3.1 Sales Promotion

“... most of us know very little about our automatic behavior patterns [...]. They make us terribly vulnerable to anyone who does know how they work” — Cialdini (2007, p. 8).

Promotions have always been an important tool for businesses to elevate their revenues (Raghbir, 2004; Gauri et al., 2017). They come in different forms such as sales, vouchers, coupons, and premiums; all used as an incentive to obtain more customers (Ibid.). Sales promotion should be consumer relationship building; i.e. be able to build long lasting relationships (Kotler et al., 2005). However, there are downsides when a business uses discounted promotions too often. The strategy for firms that use discounts is to get the new customer to return to pay full price (Kendrick, 1998), however, customers might start to associate the discounted price with the real one (Gauri et al., 2017). This can lead to an image of discounting (Kendrick, 1998) and dissatisfied customers when the store returns to its normal prices (Alonzo, 1997). This causes customers to wait for the next sales opportunity, or the next coupon to arrive, before returning to the store to buy the product at its full price (Alonzo, 1997; Kendrick, 1998). This leads to lower customer loyalty than what it would be if they use promotional items and gift incentives (Kendrick, 1998). Alonzo (1997) claims that more often than not, promotional items such as a free gift, are more effective in increasing revenue from customers than discounted promotions, such as vouchers. Generally, vouchers become a trap for firms who use it (Ibid.).

Kendrick (1998) reports that by giving out an equally sized gift as the sales promotion, both increases the customer’s incentive to purchase more, and makes them more inclined to return to the store to buy the products at full price. Discounted promotion is a short-
term strategy for firms to increase sales fast and get a larger customer base. However, gift giving has been proven to be more useful long-term, both when it comes to increasing sales and getting customers to return (Kendrick, 1998). For this reason, this study only tests the effects of promotional items (free gifts) and thereby excludes discounted promotions.

3.2 Reciprocity

“*There is no duty more indispensable than that of returning a kindness*”

— Cicero *(Gouldner, 1960, p. 161)*.

Deeply rooted within all cultures of the world (Cialdini, 2007; Gouldner, 1960), reciprocity is known as the behaviour of humans wanting to pay kind acts with kindness and bad acts with unkindness (Moreno-Okuno & Mosiño, 2017; Hasan et al., 2017; Bagozzi, 1995). Cialdini (2007, p. 17) describes it as the rule for reciprocation, which states that “… *we should try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided us*”. It is the social norm to treat others the same way they treat us (Hasan et al., 2017; Bagozzi, 1995). Cialdini (2007) explains that the rule is overpowering, meaning the desire to reciprocate is far greater than other factors playing a role in our decisions, for example that of liking. Regan (1971) found that people adhere to the rule whether they like the person performing the favour or not. In fact, Fehr and Gächter (1998) find that between 40 to 60% of humans are motivated by reciprocity rather than self-interest, perhaps due to the guilt or negative emotions that would arise when violating the norm (Cialdini, 2007).

When firms put in extra effort and provide favours to individual customers, they will reward the firm (Morales, 2005). This is due to the fact that people want to repay the favours that others have given to them, even when the favours were not requested. People feel a shift in equilibrium, a sense of inequity between the two, when one person performs a favour for the other. The human response is then to restore the equilibrium and repay the other party at a certain cost to themselves (Morales, 2005; Regan, 1971; Huppertz, Arenson & Evans, 1978). The response to repay depends on the social context in which the equilibrium is lost, and the needs of the other party (Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005). In a retail environment, the reciprocal response which the consumer will feel the most appropriate is to spend more money at the store or during their revisit (Ibid.).
Morales (2005) argues that there are two types of reciprocity: general and personal. Personal reciprocity means that the consumer benefits directly from the favour, e.g. receiving a gift. General reciprocity, on the other hand, is part of the attribution theory which states that consumers reward firms for their general effort, even when the consumers themselves are not personally benefited. For example, consumers will reward retailers who, according to the consumer, have used their controllable resources to the fullest (e.g. firms that have organised displays of products). This means that when a store is clean and organised, the customer will reward the retailer (e.g. by spending more money), since they believe that the retailer has done “its job” (Ibid.).

Morales (2005) and Cialdini (2007) demonstrate the fact that when a favour is performed with ulterior motive (e.g., as part of a sales strategy) and with the intent to persuade the consumer to increasing spending, the consumer no longer feels the need to reciprocate and will therefore not reward the firm for the favour. Accordingly, reciprocal sales strategies will only generate increased spending when the consumer feels as though they are not being persuaded to increase their spending.

3.3 Gift Giving

“As a form of reciprocity or exchange, gift giving is one of the processes that integrates a society.” — Sherry (1983, p. 157).

Relationship marketing means building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with customers, something researchers believe is of utmost importance (Palmatier et al., 2009). In today’s retail environment, this is quintessential as more and more consumers think it is of great importance to have relational interactions with their retailers (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001). By building these relationships, customers are more likely to return to the firm, and thereby increasing the firm’s revenues (Palmatier et al., 2009). Kalwani and Narayandas (1995) claim that the firms who are able to have long-term relationships with their customers are able to retain or improve their profitability levels more so than those who focus on a transaction-based approach. Not only does it increase revenues and profitability, but strong customer relationships also increase satisfaction, trust, and commitment (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001; Ganesan, 1994). Palmatier et al. (2009), claim that investments in relationship marketing
also generate feelings of gratitude in the short run, which then drives gratitude related reciprocal behaviours in the long-run. In contrast, Solomon et al. (1985) argue that relationship marketing investments can only be a value-adding process to customers who are already involved in the products that the retailer is selling. They are also the customers who are more likely to reciprocate a retailer’s efforts since they are more likely to develop relationships (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder & Iacobucci, 2001).

According to Sweeney, Soutar and Johnson (1999), retailers are able to build long-lasting relationships since they can apply relationship marketing tactics in a cost-efficient manner. Reciprocity is described by Larson (1992) as one of the key features explaining the longevity and stability of exchange relationships. When a retailer invests time, effort or any other irrecoverable resource, it encourages the customer to stay within the relationship and reciprocate the behaviour (Smith & Barclay, 1997). Enabling reciprocal behaviour is, according to Moon (2000), perhaps difficult in a retail environment since it entails one-on-one interaction with each and every customer for the company.

One relationship marketing tool is gift giving, which Schieffelin (1980) defines as an act of social communication. Schieffelin (1980) argues that the transaction of gifts can be seen as a basic expressive statement of social communication between two parties. Gift giving acts as a carrier of social obligation from the benefactor towards the beneficiary (Ibid.). Sherry (1983) argues that the recipient of the gift must reciprocate to avoid feeling inferior towards the benefactor and to defend his or her reputation. Failure to reciprocate may result in an unbalanced relationship between the two parties (Ibid.).

Gifts have shown to be a means to influence people (Cialdini, 2007). In an experiment conducted by Regan (1971), people who received a gift were more inclined to increase their spending than those who did not receive a gift. Regan (1971) concluded that this is due to the theory of reciprocity; people feel obligated to repay the favour given to them. This shows that gifts have the capacity to evoke a need to reciprocate (Ibid.). Indeed, the underlying motivation of gift exchanges is reciprocity (Sherry, 1983).

Furthermore, there have been several experiments that test what influence gifts have on people. One such experiment was overseen by Strohmetz et al. (2002) who tested the effect of gift giving by handing out candy alongside the bill at restaurants in the United
States. The results showed that those who received one piece of candy would tip 18\% more than those who did not receive any candy. The authors concluded that this was due to the effect of reciprocity; that people feel obligated to reciprocate acts of kindness, even in the cases when the acts of kindness were not desired. Strohmetz et al. (2002) then showed that by increasing the amount of candies, there was another significant increase, by 21\%, in the amount of dollars tipped by the subjects. This implies that there is a positive effect between the value of the gift, and the money spent by the customer.

Another study demonstrating the effect of gift giving is one conducted by Friedman and Herskovitz (1990), who studied the effect of giving a ‘no-strings attached’ gift to customers entering a pharmacy. The gift was a keychain worth 50 cents (USD) which carried no brand or extra value except that of being a keychain. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in spending between the group that did receive a gift and the group that did not. Friedman and Herskovitz (1990) state that the results can be explained by reciprocity which suggests that the receiver of the gift feels obligated to reciprocate. Therefore, in the context of a store, when customers receive a gift upon entering the store, there lies an implied obligation to give something back, which results in increased consumer spending. That being said, some people have difficulty accepting gifts or favours because they cannot handle the feelings of obligation that comes with it (Komter, 2004), which might pose a problem for retailers wanting to use gift giving as a sales promotional tool.

During which visit the customers are willing or able to reciprocate depends largely on when the gift is given. Kendrick (1998) conducted several field experiments on the subject of reciprocity through gift giving. One of the experiments was conducted at a Chinese take-out restaurant in Dallas. The customers received a gift or promotional item at the end of their first purchase as an incentive to come back and spend more money during their revisit. In contrast, another experiment was at the pharmaceutical shop in Boston conducted by Friedman and Herskovitz (1990). The customers received a gift at the beginning of their shopping visit when entering the store. The gift was given at this point for the purpose to increase sales whilst the customers were still inside the store. By promoting the gifts when the customers enter the store, they get influenced by the gift at the beginning, and are therefore more prone to reciprocate when viewing the store for products instead of during their next visit (Ibid.).
Gift giving can be seen as a form of symbolic communication between the giver and recipient (Belk, 1979). The giver wants to encode and convey a message with the gift, and the recipient needs to successfully decode the giver’s intended message. This comes back to the giver as a feedback loop from the recipient. The giver can thereby see if their message was conveyed in the right manner. This lays the conditions for which the gifts are to be set, e.g. how the gift will be distributed and how valuable the gifts will be (Belk, 1979).

![Figure 2: Gift giving as communication model (Belk, 1979)](image)

The meaning of the gift is conveyed through the gift’s features rather than through words. Therefore, there might be encoding and decoding errors (Belk, 1979). Thus, the structural encoding of the gift, the conditions in which it is set, and how the giver uses the feedback they receive from the recipient are important to make sure that the message of the gift is decoded properly (Ibid.).

For firms, gifts are a great way to influence the attitudes of potential customers and increase their purchasing behaviour (Beltramini, 2000). It is also a great tool for maintaining or developing existing customers’ purchasing behaviour, and for customers that have made a past purchase to develop gratitude towards the company (Ibid.). Gift giving keeps customers loyal to the brand, while also increasing the revenue stream for the company (Kendrick, 1998). It is a long-run strategy to keep customers, and to develop trust and loyalty (Ibid.).

Price discounts emphasise price, which in turn leads people to evaluate the amount saved from the purchase. Contrarily, gifts and premiums, take the attention away from the price (Nunes & Park, 2003). With attention directed away from the price, people may not
register the value of the gift they receive. Therefore, the customer’s reciprocal action might not be equal to the gift given by the firm. It is imperative for businesses to have an accurate understanding of how much customers value the gift, to use it to its full potential (Ibid.).

Palazon and Delgado-Ballester (2009) argue that equal reciprocity between the giver and the receiver can be difficult to achieve. The customers who receive the gift have no clear grasp over the gift’s actual monetary value. This can create an unbalanced relationship between the two. Palazon and Delgado-Ballester (2009) also concluded that gift effectiveness at a low benefit level is more effective than discounted promotions of the same economic value. However, at high benefit levels where the economic value is larger, the promotional items of equal value to the discounted promotions are less effective (Ibid.). This can be explained by the monetary savings that are made at a high benefit level, which allows customers to spend the “saved” money on buying more products, creating an unexpected psychological income effect (Heilman, Nakamoto & Rao, 2002) which leads customers to prefer price discounts.

In the case of a strong customer and business relationship, expensive and personal gifts can be perceived as manipulative (Dorsch & Kelly, 1994; Bodur & Grohmann, 2005), causing the customer to realise the gift does not follow the usual agenda of the business. This can result in customers questioning the ethical aspects and real purpose of the gift (Dorsch & Kelly, 1994). Inexpensive personal gifts are seen as much less manipulative since they fit the established relationship between the customer and the business. This means that businesses may achieve their goal of increasing customers’ spending by giving a gift of a relatively low value. Furthermore, perceived manipulation by the customer leads to lower levels of obligation and reciprocal intentions. The stronger obligation the customer feels, the stronger the intentions for reciprocation (Ibid.).

A gift of great personal value, whether it is expensive or not, can lead to an increased feeling of obligation towards the giver (Beltramini, 2000; Cialdini, 2007), increasing reciprocal intention (Organ, 1974). Sherry (1984) states that the value of the gift is in the eye of the beholder, and it is the perception people have of the gift that decides if it is valuable or not. The greater personal value a gift has, the greater the reciprocal behaviour will be towards the benefactor.
3.4 Gratitude

“The sentiment which most immediately and directly prompts us to reward, is gratitude.” — Adam Smith (in Hanley, 2016, p. 179).

Gratitude is defined by Palmatier et al. (2009, p. 1) as “the emotional appreciation for benefits received”, while Simmel (in Komter, 1996, p. 45) describes it as “the moral memory of mankind”. Komter (2004) states that it is the force which motivates us to give in return, whereas Aristoteles (in Roberts, 2004) describes it as a glad acceptance of a debtor position. Emmons and Crumpler (2000, p. 56), simply define it as “an emotional response to a gift”. In short, it is the positive emotional reaction we have when being on the receiving end of an exchange, which then prompts us to give back to the other party.

For people to feel gratitude, there needs to be an intentional gesture that holds some kind of value to the recipient (Lane & Anderson, 1976; McCullough et al., 2001; Roberts, 1991) to a certain cost of the benefactor in providing the benefit (Tesser, Gatewood & Driver, 1968; Okamoto & Robinson, 1997; Trivers, 1971). Even at times when the attempt to do such a gesture fails, people often still feel grateful towards the (attempted) benefactor, albeit not as grateful as they would have been had it been successful (McCullough et al., 2001), showing that the old saying “it’s the thought that counts” actually has truth to it. In successful attempts, it is shown that the costlier the benefits, the higher the levels of gratitude, since emotions of gratitude are sensitive to the cost/benefit ratio of the charitable act. In other words, the beneficiary will feel more grateful the costlier the act is to the benefactor (Trivers, 1971). According to Cialdini (2007), the more gratitude the receiver of a gift feels towards the gift giver, the higher the reciprocal behaviour for that person is. People will express gratitude in the form of small exchanges of benefits since they want to re-establish social balance and reach equilibrium again (Watkins et al., 2006). The beneficiary will also feel more grateful towards a benefactor from whom they had not expected benevolence (McCullough & Tsang, 2004).

Gratitude aids in maintaining and improving strong B2C relationships (Huang, 2015). It is able to promote and maintain relationships (Algoe, Haidt & Gable, 2008). According to Algoe, Haidt and Gable (2008) gratitude is more so about building relationships than it is repaying benefits. Huang (2015) posits that it positively influences customers’
loyalty. Algoe and Haidt (2009) posit that the reason why gratitude improves relationships is because it encourages reciprocal, prosocial behaviour between the benefactor and beneficiary, even when such behaviour is costly to themselves in the short run (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). Bartlett & DeSteno (2006, p. 324) claim that gratitude aids relationships “... by encouraging individuals to accept short-term losses in order to reap longer-term rewards...”. I.e. when someone experiences gratitude towards a benefactor, the beneficiary feels it is necessary to reward the benefactor, even if this might be costly, since they know that they will be rewarded in the long run. This knowledge can be used and potentially abused by those in the know, who can use the power of gratitude and reciprocity to keep the beneficiary indebted by over-reciprocating (Komter, 2004).

However, when the beneficiary feels obligated to feel grateful, e.g. when there is an expectation of the beneficiary to return the favour, it is less likely for the beneficiary to feel grateful (Watkins et al., 2006). In such a situation, feelings of obligation will increase whereas gratitude will decrease. People want to feel like their gratitude is self-motivated and not manipulated by external forces (Ibid.). Gratitude will be felt when the beneficiary has a positive experience of the exchange, whereas obligation will be felt when the exchange is deemed negative in any way for the beneficiary (Tsang, 2006).

3.5 Obligation

“Obligation is an uncomfortable state, made aversive by the restriction of behavioral autonomy and the anticipation of negative social sanctions for choosing not to comply” — Goei & Boster (2005, p. 285)

Mauss (1954, in Zollo et al., 2017) noted that gifts often appear to be generously offered, but that this behaviour originates from obligation and economic self-interest. Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) argue that there are two specific forms of obligation: reciprocal obligation, and ritual obligation. Reciprocal obligation represents giving a gift as part of an exchange of mutual value. For example, in a family setting this can represent Christmas presents; when giving a gift, it is expected to receive a gift as well. Ritual obligation is when the gift exchange does not result in obligation to reciprocate the gift from the benefactor. For example, birthday presents; when giving a birthday present the gift giver does not expect to receive a gift in return (Ibid.).
A person is obligated to give, to receive, and to reciprocate in accordance to the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Obligation is a feeling of indebtedness from a favour, which results in a negative and uncomfortable state for the recipient (Goei et al., 2003). This is the definition of obligation this study will use. When a person feels discomfort they will search for opportunities to reduce their distress (Sherry, 1983). The social imbalance that occurs between the giver and the receiver is a driving force for reciprocal and gift giving behaviour. People want to achieve balance; therefore, they reciprocate to decrease obligation (Ibid.).

Uninvited favours, such as promotional items and gifts, have the capability to create feelings of obligation, urging people to repay the established psychological debt (Gouldner, 1960). They do so by reciprocating something that is of perceived equal value (Palazon & Delgado-Ballester, 2009). To evoke obligation, an uninvited gift must have the capability to create obligation for that person (Cialdini, 2007). It has also been shown that the greater the value of the gift, the greater the obligation towards the benefactor (Beltramini, 2000; Cialdini, 2007; Strohmetz et al. 2002). Additionally, previous research has shown that the feeling of obligation to reciprocate can be extended into the future. However, this is limited. Especially for small gifts, for which feelings of obligation usually fades over time (Cialdini, 2007; Flynn, 2003). An increased feeling of obligation can make people want to repay the socially constructed debt that arises. When implemented by firms as a sales promotion, gifts can lead to increased consumer spending (Cialdini, 2007). This as long as they do not exceed an acceptable limit and make customers perceive it as a manipulative trick (Dorsch & Kelly, 1994).

3.6 The Relationship between Gratitude and Obligation
Some researchers state that gratitude and obligation are connected and that they can be seen as opposite sides of the same coin (e.g. Komter, 2004; Algoe, Haidt & Gable, 2008). Others believe that gratitude and obligation are two independent variables that can lead to different behavioural tendencies (e.g. Goei & Boster, 2005; Huang, 2015). This difference in opinion could be due to gratitude being associated with positive emotions, while obligation is associated with negative emotion (Huang, 2015). Due to this division of opinion, this study does not research the relationship between gratitude and obligation.
3.7 Customer Satisfaction

“What people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences”
— Abbot (in Gillham, Crous & Schepers, 2003, p. 21).

Johnson (2001, p. 2) defines customer satisfaction as “a customer’s evaluation of their purchase and consumption experience with a product, service, brand or company”. There are two views of customer satisfaction: transaction specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Johnson, Anderson & Fornell, 1995). Transaction specific satisfaction is a customer’s evaluation of their experience with a specific transaction (Johnson, 2001), whereas cumulative satisfaction is a customer’s overall experience with a product or service provider to date (Johnson & Fornell, 1991). This study will focus on transaction specific customer satisfaction. It is however important to note that past experiences (including the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages) may have an impact on the customer’s current experience (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Solomon et al. (1985) claim that a key determinant in whether the buyer is satisfied lies in the interaction between the buyer and the seller; something that is more pertinent in a transaction specific situation. In fact, customers experience greater customer satisfaction in a situation where the seller makes a deliberate effort towards them (Baker, Simpson & Siguaw, 1999). Johnson (2001) posits that customers who are treated fairly during a transaction should be more satisfied, particularly when there is a chance of future transactions with the other party. As stated by LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983), customer satisfaction directly influences purchase intentions. According to Fornell, Rust and Dekimpe (2010), consumer spending increases alongside customer satisfaction, since satisfied customers are willing to spend more.

![Figure 3: The disconfirmation of expectations model (Oliver, 1996)](image-url)
The disconfirmation of expectations model is a model explaining that satisfaction is based on one’s expectations and the perceived performance of the product or service. Oliver (1996) posits that when the perceived performance exceeds expectations, satisfaction increases. In the same manner, satisfaction decreases when the perceived performance is lower than expected. Thus, one’s expectations acts as a baseline directly influencing whether the customer is satisfied (Johnson, 2001).

### 3.8 Impulsive Buying

“Impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately.”

— (Kim, 2003, p.57)

Rook and Fisher (1995, p. 306) define impulse buying as “a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically”. Impulsive buyers are more likely to be receptive to unexpected buying ideas and are more likely to experience buying impulses than other consumers (Rook & Fisher, 1995). According to Stern (1962) impulse buying can be divided into different categories called the impulse mix. He identifies four broad classifications for impulse buying, one of which is called pure impulse buying. Han et al. (1991) further develop Stern’s (1962) original categorisations and add planned buying to create a better understanding on the subject of purchases.

Pure impulse buying purchases are purchases that are completely unplanned and where the customer does not have any past experiences with the product (Liao, Shen & Chu, 2009). These types of purchases are caused by a strong and sudden desire to buy the product (Han et al., 1991) and breaks the customer’s usual purchasing pattern (Stern, 1962). Planned purchases are when the customer has already decided on what is going to be bought when entering a store. The customers have created a mental note of the specific products that need to be bought, and then go on to buy them (Han et al., 1991).

Some people tend to buy products impulsively very often whilst others rarely do it (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). Sharma, Sivakumaran and Marshall (2010) show that a customer’s impulsiveness has a strong and positive association with impulse purchases. Moreover, Rook and Fisher (1995) show that impulsive customers tend to make more impulsive purchases. The process of impulse buying starts with the customer
acknowledging and examining the product without an initial intention of purchasing it. After the customer has acknowledged the product, a need and desire to buy it develops which leads to the customer making a purchase decision without further evaluation of alternatives (Kim, 2003). Obligation and gratitude have been linked to impulsive buying and overspending in a consumption context (Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005; Komter, 2004).

Cobb and Hoyer (1986) indicate that price is an important factor for the choice of product for an unplanned purchase. It is more likely that low-priced products are bought on impulse than high-priced products (Kacen, Hess & Walker, 2012). However, even if price is an important factor, it cannot be classified as the main cause for impulse purchases (McGoldrick, 1982). Impulse purchases are also made for high-priced products; any type of product can be bought by anyone at any time (Rook & Hoch, 1985).

A high number of store-visits per month has a significant positive effect on impulse purchases (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Customers who are familiar with the store, which is a consequence of visiting the store often, have the tendency to make more impulsive purchases than those who do not visit the store as frequently (Ibid.). Hence, impulsive purchasing is more prominent with frequent visitors to a business (Hulten & Vanyushyn, 2014).

3.9 Consumer Spending
Consumer spending is the amount consumers spend to meet their daily needs (OECD, 2018), and is extremely important for the general economy (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010). It usually stands for around 60% of a country’s gross domestic product (OECD, 2018). It is therefore a crucial aspect to regard when planning marketing actions (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010). However, since future consumer spending is only a function of current consumption, it is difficult to predict (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010). Therefore, it should be of interest to retailers to influence consumer spending whenever they want to. As previously mentioned, gratitude and obligation increase spending through reciprocal behaviour (e.g. Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005), whereas customer satisfaction increases spending by an increased willingness to pay (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010). It is also proven that a consumer who is more impulsive makes more
impulse purchases (e.g. Sharma, Sivakumaran & Marshall, 2010), which logically would increase spending.

3.10 Analytical Model

![Figure 4: The study’s analytical model](image)

The theoretical framework previously mentioned lays the foundation for the study’s analytical model. According to previous theories, the variables in Figure 4 have been linked together. The model, which was constructed to show the different relationships between the studied variables, was used when formulating the study’s hypotheses which will be described below.

Giving a gift to a customer has previously proven to bring out two immediate emotions: gratitude and obligation (e.g. Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Morales, 2005). They have both been linked to reciprocation, meaning that the evoked feelings also give way for the customers to try to repay the firm giving the gift. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated to test whether gift-giving evokes these feelings in the researched setting:

- **H1:** Customers will feel an increase in gratitude when given a gift.
- **H2:** Customers will feel an increase in obligation [to repay] when given a gift.

According to Trivers (1971), the value of the gift is positively related to gratitude. He states that the greater the value of the gift, the more grateful the customer will feel. Likewise, obligation has been proven to work in the same way: increasing with the value of the gift (Beltramini, 2000; Cialdini, 2007; Strohmetz et al. 2002). In accordance with these theories, the hypotheses stated below were formulated:
H3: The value of the gift is positively related to gratitude.
H4: The value of the gift is positively related to obligation.

Previous studies have concluded that satisfaction is based on whether perceived performance of a product or service exceeds one’s expectations. According to Oliver (1996), satisfaction increases when the perceived performance is higher than expected, and vice versa. According to Hasan et al. (2017), the feeling of gratitude may lead to increased customer satisfaction. It is also stated that feelings of gratitude will arise when a company makes a relationship marketing investment (Palmatier et al., 2009). It is therefore hypothesised that if a customer receives a gift (a relationship marketing investment) they will feel grateful and the perceived performance will be higher than expected (i.e. the service will be better than expected). This will lead to increased customer satisfaction. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H5: Gratitude is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Taking the example of Oliver (1996) again, satisfaction is believed to decrease when perceived performance is lower than expected. Since obligation is considered a negative emotion (Goei et al., 2003), it might evoke a discomfort in the customer. This would lead the customer’s satisfaction to decrease, which is the reasoning for the following hypothesis:

H6: Obligation is negatively related to customer satisfaction.

Impulsive buying is, as stated by Rook (1987, p. 191) “when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately”. This urge can, according to some theorists, be evoked from both gratitude (Komter, 2004) and obligation (Goei et al., 2003), through reciprocity. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H7: Gratitude is positively related to impulsive buying.
H8: Obligation is positively related to impulsive buying.
LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983) argue that customer satisfaction directly influences purchase intentions. Fornell, Rust and Dekimpe (2010) acknowledge the same phenomenon and mean that customer satisfaction can increase spending, since the customers’ willingness to spend more increases with satisfaction. Thereby, the study uses the following hypothesis to examine whether customer satisfaction increases spending:

H9: Customer satisfaction is positively related to spending.

As defined by Kim (2003), impulsive buying comes from an urge to make a purchase without having a previous intention to do so. Usually, consumers make impulse purchases for products with a relatively low price (Kacen, Hess & Walker, 2012). However, regardless of the price of the product, spending will logically increase if a consumer makes an impulsive purchase. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H10: Impulsive buying is positively related to spending.

Spending has, as mentioned before, also been linked to consumers’ reciprocal behaviour; that people like to reward effort (Morales, 2005). Reciprocal behaviour itself is linked to both gratitude (e.g. Algoe & Haidt, 2009) and obligation (e.g. Goodwin, Smith & Spiggle, 1990). According to Dahl, Honea and Manchanda, (2005), the reciprocal behaviour which will be deemed most appropriate is to spend more money at the retailer. Following this, the two hypotheses below were formulated. They were formulated to test whether gratitude and obligation on their own have an additional direct effect on spending, or if they need to pass through satisfaction and impulse to affect spending.

H11: Gratitude is positively related to spending.
H12: Obligation is positively related to spending.
4. Empirical Methodology
The following chapter describes the methodology of choice for collecting the primary data in the study. The study’s two operational designs will be explained. First, the design of the field experiment will be discussed, followed by a reasoning and explanation of the experimental procedure, including a motivation for the use of the case company. Next, the operationalisation of the study’s questionnaire will be explained, including justifications for each researched variable. The chapter will end by explaining the statistical methods used to analyse the data collected in the study.

4.1 Research Design
Bryman and Bell (2011) describe research design as a framework for analysis and gathering of data. The framework is a structure that helps and guides researchers in their work. When choosing the research design, it is important to consider if the gathering of data should be done during one or several occasions, and if the information gathered should be used for the comparison between different variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The choice of the research design also depends on what the researcher sees as their case (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This study uses two types of research designs: experimental and cross-sectional. The two designs as well as the operationalisation of them will be discussed below.

4.2 Experimental Design
An experimental design is used when the researcher wants to find a causal relationship between two or more variables (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). Within the field of business administration, true experiments are rare. They instead typically function as a way to increase the credibility for the causal conclusions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Cooper and Schindler (2014) describe an experiment as an intervention by the researcher in the collection of data. The intervention is a manipulation of one or more variables in a setting. The researcher then observes how these manipulations affected the studied subjects. In an experiment, there is an independent variable (IV), which the researcher tries to manipulate, and a dependent variable (DV), which the researcher observes to examine whether it is affected by the intervention. It is necessary to control and to manipulate the independent variable that is researched, to find if it truly does have an impact on the result (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Usually, a hypothesis is formulated to examine if the independent
variable exerts a causal impact on the other (dependent) variable (Ibid.). There are four factors included in an experimental design (McDaniel and Gates, 2012, p. 252):

1. The independent variable that is manipulated (which could be one or more).
2. The subjects who participate in the experiment.
3. A dependent variable that is measured.
4. A plan or procedure for dealing with extraneous causal factors.

The study’s purpose is to examine the causal relationship of gift giving to customer attitudes and spending. The independent variable is the gift (either small or large) and the dependent variable is customer attitudes and spending. According to McDaniel and Gates (2012), sales are usually the most common dependent variable in marketing experiments.

This study limits itself to use the scientific meaning of causality, i.e. that the results can only infer the existence of a relationship between the IV and DV, not prove that it is with absolute certainty that the changes in the DV are due to the IV (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). To prove the existence of a causal relationship, the researcher needs to show that there is a concomitant variation (a statistical relationship; either positive or inverse) between the two variables. There must also be an appropriate time order of occurrence to prove causality of a relationship. This means that the researcher needs to prove that the IV occurred before the observed change in the DV (Ibid.). In this study, this means that a gift had to be given out before the customer’s shopping experience began, since it was their attitudes derived from the shopping experience and their spending that were being observed.

This study conducted an after-only with control group design (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). This means that there is a random assignment of the subjects in the experiment in both the treatment groups as well as the control group, but that there is no pre-measurement of the dependent variable. See below for a symbolic depiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Experimental design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where (R) = Randomly assigned test units; X = Treatment; O = Observation.

4.2.1 Experimental Procedure

The Case Company

According to Yin (2014), a business needs to be an exemplified case of the large context to be used as a research object. The case company used in this study represents a retailer offering durable shopping products and is a B2C brick-and-mortar retailer within the field of tableware and kitchen equipment. They offer mid-to-high priced products which are meant to endure long term wear and usage. The store at which the experiment was conducted, and the data collected. The store is situated in the city centre of Linköping, with around 200 visitors each day. The store is family owned, and the relationship between the retailer and its customers was described as ‘familiar’ (i.e. that the customers visit the store rather frequently). The name of the company will be excluded from the study and its questionnaire will be referred to as ‘the case company’.

Experimental and Control Groups

Most commonly, there are two groups when conducting an experiment: an experimental group and a control group (Bryman & Bell, 2011; McDaniel & Gates, 2012). In this study, there were two experimental groups and one control group. In total, there were three groups being studied. The experimental group is the group that is being subject to manipulation, as opposed to the control group which is subject to no manipulation (Bryman & Bell, 2011; McDaniel & Gates, 2012). A control group is included to decrease the possibility that the results are due to something other than the manipulated variable; to increase the internal validity of the experiment (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The two experimental groups were both subject to manipulations pertaining to gift giving. One of the experimental groups received a small gift (a toffee candy) and the other group received a large gift (a so called “Rub-It”, a spaghetti measurement tool and ginger/garlic grater all in one, retailing for 79 SEK). The control group did not receive a gift. All three groups were greeted with a welcome phrase when entering the store. When a gift was handed out it was in connection with the welcome phrase. When handing out the gifts, the greeter told the customer that the gift was to thank them for choosing to shop at this specific store. For the customers to believe that it was the store handing out the gift, the person who was handing out the gift or greeting at entry was dressed in store uniform.
This was to ensure that any feelings (gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, and impulsive buying) the customers would have from the experiment would be yielded towards the store and not the researchers.

**Populations and Sample**

In a study, a researcher wants to draw conclusions regarding a set of individuals. The set of individuals is called a population and differs depending on the study’s research question (Wahlin, 2015). This study researched what effect gift have on customers’ attitudes and spending at a retailer of durable shopping products. The population is thus the customers of the case company in Linköping. To draw conclusions regarding the population, a sample is taken by choosing individuals from said population, which are termed \( n \) (Wahlin, 2015). The sample of this study, \( n \), consists of 161 respondents. This study uses a convenience sample, which is a non-probability sample. A convenience sample means that the researcher can choose whomever they find to participate in the study. This study subjected everyone entering the case company to the experiment, therefore, the sample was not chosen in a random manner.

**Field Experiment**

There are two types of settings in which to conduct an experiment: a laboratory setting and a field setting (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When an experiment is conducted in a laboratory setting, it is easier for the researcher to control for extraneous variables. This study conducted a field experiment at a local store, and therefore studied customers’ real market behaviour. In a field experiment, there may be extraneous variables influencing the dependent variable, since they are conducted in a real market environment (Ibid.). This means that the internal validity of a field experiment might be low (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). To control for extraneous variables is the greatest difficulty for experiments conducted within marketing (Ibid.).

A field experiment is conducted in an actual market environment, which makes for greater external validity. This means that the results gathered in a field experiment are able to be generalised (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). However, there are means to control for extraneous variables. One such means is randomisation; to randomly assign subjects to treatment conditions. This is done so that the researcher can assume that the extraneous
variables, if they occur, are represented equally in all treatment conditions (McDaniel & Gates, 2012).

During the field experiment, three people rotated as the role of the greeter. This was done to decrease the so-called Abercrombie & Fitch effect; a person seen as having prominent and dominant features that can affect customers’ purchasing behaviour (Otterbringer et al., 2018). To minimise this effect, the rotation of people conducting the experiment was implemented. While one was enacting the role of the greeter inside the store, the two others were outside the entrance collecting questionnaires for data purposes from anyone exiting the store. The study was designed so that the experimental manipulation would be conducted inside the store, and the results of the manipulation would be checked for in the questionnaire, which was collected outside of the store.

Each day, there were three time slots for conducting each variable. The time slots were as follows: (1) 10.00-11.30, (2) 12-13.30, and (3) 14.30-16.00. Each day a different variable was tested at a different time, and every day all three variables were tested. This was to increase randomisation and to minimise the chances of extraneous variables affecting the results. The following schedule was used when conducting the experiment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Slots</th>
<th>Wednesday 21/03</th>
<th>Thursday 22/03</th>
<th>Friday 23/03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:30</td>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Large Gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-13:30</td>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>No Gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30-16:00</td>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Small Gift</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: The field experiment’s time schedule**

**Ethics**

When conducting a study, it is important to consider ethics, especially when conducting a study using an experiment. According to Vetenskapsrådet (2002), there are four ethical principles. These will be explained below.

A researcher should follow the information requirement (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). This means that the purpose of the study should always be disclosed to the respondent of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). In the introduction of the questionnaire used in the study, it was written that the questionnaires were to be used for a thesis within the field of marketing. It was also written that the questionnaire itself
regarded the respondent’s visit to the case company on that day. While this information was truthful, it was not disclosed that the purpose of the study was to analyse gifts’ effects on the respondents and how much they had spent at the case company. To only tell part of a truth is called deception (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Disclosing the full information would skew the results and invalidate the experiment due to bias, which some argue is a valid reason for deceiving the respondents (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Thus, one can argue that the information requirement was not entirely met, but rightfully so due to potential bias.

The second principle is the requirement of consent, which means that the respondents should understand that participating in the study is completely voluntary and that they are free to end their participation at any time during the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). The respondents were not explicitly told that they were free to end their participation at any time. However, if any respondent would have wanted to prematurely end their participation, the collected data for this respondent would have been deleted. Therefore, it is uncertain whether the requirement of consent was fulfilled.

The third principle is the confidentiality requirement. This implies that the respondents of the study are all anonymous and that their personal information will be treated confidentially (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). It was made clear for the respondents of the study in the introduction of the questionnaire that all answers would be completely anonymous. Additionally, since no personal information could be connected to any physical being, as only information pertaining age and sex were collected, the study is deemed to have followed the confidentiality requirement.

The fourth principle, the utilisation requirement, regards the information collected during the study. It states that the collected data should only be used for the research purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). This study is only going to use the collected data for the study’s intended purpose, and thus fulfils the fourth ethical principle.

Some state that ethical principles should always be followed (e.g., Erikson, 1967). Others claim that ethical standpoints should be taken based on the research at hand (e.g. Goode, 1996). This study follows Goode’s (1996) point of view; that ethical principles cannot
always be followed due to the research questions that are at hand. Since this study researched gift giving’s effect on customer attitudes and spending, the research would add nothing to the field of marketing had the respondents known exactly what was being studied. According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), researchers should inform the respondents of the true purpose of the study after the experiment. However, since the study was conducted during a three-day period, there was a need, for the purpose of the study, to be kept secret even after the respondent had answered the questionnaire.

Reliability, Replicability, and Validity
When business administration research is being assessed, there are three important criteria to consider: reliability, replicability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Reliability means to ascertain whether the results gathered from the research would be the same if the research would be repeated (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This is to ensure that the results are reliable enough and that they have not been affected by random chance. It should show the same results whether the study is conducted only once, or 20 times (Bryman & Bell, 2011; McDaniel & Gates, 2012).

Replicability is a term for whether a future researcher can replicate a study. This is possible when the study they wish to replicate has a detailed explanation of the study’s methodology (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Validity is often seen as the most important out of the three criteria, since it judges whether the conclusions made in the study are consistent (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The most important form of validity is internal validity, which regards causality. It deems whether a conclusion of a causal relationship between two or more variables is reliable or not. It needs to be certain that the independent variable causes the effect on the dependent variable, and that no extraneous variable had something to do with the results from the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). External validity is also an important concept and depicts whether the results from the study can be generalised in another context (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In quantitative research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are important concepts. Credibility is connected to internal validity, i.e. how credible the
results are. Transferability regards external validity and whether the results of the study can be applied to other contexts. Dependability is a concept similar to reliability, that the results are the same no matter what time you conduct the study. Lastly, confirmability is a concept which examines if the researcher has been objective throughout the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4.3 Cross-Sectional Design
A cross-sectional design is applied when the study aims to research more than one case (e.g. more than one individual) at one specific point in time to discover relationships between variables through quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

One way to collect quantitative data in cross-sectional research is to conduct a survey study (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). When doing so, the researcher designs a questionnaire to collect data from multiple entities at a specific point in time to analyse any patterns that may arise between two or more variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Whereas experimental design aids in increasing the internal validity of the study, the usage of a questionnaire aids in increasing the external validity. A survey study is usually conducted without the presence of an interviewer or an administrator (Ibid.). In this study, the questionnaires were collected outside of the case company which meant that there was a need for an administrator to collect the questionnaires, as well as to answer to any questions from the respondents. Using an administrator could be troublesome and could cause the “Interviewer Effect” (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The administrator might affect the respondent’s answers to the questionnaire. The effect is usually most prevalent when the respondent answers questions for which they wish to appear in a more positive light, or perhaps embarrassing or anxious-filled questions (Ibid.).

One main disadvantage when using questionnaires is the increased risk of missing data, errors and skewed results (Bryman & Bell 2011; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). One way to decrease missing data is to offer money or lottery tickets as compensation for answering the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To increase the response rate of this study, lottery tickets (“Mini-Triss”) were handed out to anyone answering the questionnaire.
The two administrators of the questionnaire were standing approximately one meter from the exit of the case company handing out the questionnaire to anyone exiting the store. There were two high standing tables, between which a beach flag with Linköping University’s logotype stood. The beach flag was used to imply that the questionnaires were done by someone from the University, and not the case company itself.

4.3.1 Design of the Questionnaire
One way to decrease the risk of missing data is to design the questionnaire to be as short as possible, to not discourage anyone from answering it (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, unnecessary questions should be avoided (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999). The study’s final questionnaire contained 21 questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to measure the customers’ attitudes, and to see whether there was a difference in attitudes the control group and the experimental groups. The following variables were the main focus of the questionnaire: gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending. Of these, there were at least two or three questions pertaining to each variable. This was done to ensure that if one of the questions would not work, it would still be possible to use the others to support a relationship for the variable. Two control variables were used pertaining to demographics to ensure that the possible differences in attitudes were not due to gender or age. One question was regarding indifference, to see if the respondents answered questions regarding gratitude and obligation ‘correctly’. The final question regarded gifts, to see whether the respondent had been exposed to the treatment condition.

There are two types of question designs in a questionnaire; open-ended or close-ended (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). While open-ended questions might ensure greater information to the researcher (Ibid.), they lead to coding difficulties as well as an increase in missing data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Moreover, they often require the interviewer to probe the respondent to give a more in-depth response than the respondent’s top-of-mind response (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). Therefore, only close-ended questions were used in the study’s questionnaire. Close-ended questions are those where the respondent is presented with a list of options to answer from (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Not only do close-ended questions facilitate coding, they also increase the comparability between the questions (Ibid.). There are three types of close-ended questions: dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions, and scaled-response questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). The first
mentioned is when the respondent has two options to choose from (e.g. “yes/no”). Multiple-choice questions include options to which the respondent can respond with one or more answers. The last mentioned are questions which are “designed to capture the intensity of the respondent’s feelings” (McDaniel & Gates, 2012, p. 352).

Scaled-response questions are typically measured in a 5-point or 7-point Likert scale; an interval scale used to measure a respondent’s attitude (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999). The respondent gives answers to a series of statements on the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement. By using a Likert scale, it is possible to determine the intensity of a respondent’s feelings towards each statement (Burns & Bush, 2014). As stated previously, the questionnaire used in this study comprised of 21 questions, of which 15 used a Likert scale measurement. The remaining six questions pertained to spending, demographics, or treatment condition and used either dichotomous questions (yes/no, man/woman) or a short-answer open-question where the respondent was asked to write their age (year of birth) and how much they had spent in the store (X amount of SEK).

The majority of the questions used in the questionnaire were from previously already tested questionnaires regarding the same subject (gift giving). The book ‘Handbook of Marketing Scales’ by Bearden and Netemeyer (1999) which is comprised of questions that are proven to work for a particular variable, was also used. Using questions that previous researchers have already tested generates different advantages (Bryman & Bell, 2011). One great advantage is that the questions have previously been deemed of high reliability and validity from researchers and are thus of appropriate quality (Ibid.). The questions constructed by the authors of this study were all based on previous questionnaires and were only slightly modified to fit this study.

Demographic questions should be positioned towards the end to minimise missing data (McDaniel and Gates, 2012). Respondents might feel uncomfortable answering questions pertaining to age, which might deter them from completing the questionnaire if such questions were to be positioned in the beginning (Ibid.). Therefore, demographic and spending questions were positioned in the middle of the study’s questionnaire.
4.3.2 Pre-test of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire should always be pretested (McDaniel & Gates, 2012; Burns & Bush, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2011). A pre-test, or a so-called pilot study, is done to both determine whether the questions work as intended, and to ensure the questionnaire’s validity. It allows the researcher to identify the questions that might be irrelevant or difficult to understand, as well as to find out whether the respondent loses interest at any point during the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Ideally, the pre-test should be trialled on the target audience for the questionnaire to get the best possible critique and reaction from the respondents (McDaniels & Gates, 2012). This was not possible due to lack of time before conducting the actual field experiment. Additionally, there was a fear that conducting the pilot study at the actual case company would contaminate the results from the actual field experiment. Therefore, the pre-test used a total of ten people between the ages of 20-60 to find any faults that would need correction. The respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire as if they had been to the case company, and communicate if there were any uncertainties within the questionnaire. By letting the test respondents review the questionnaire, a view of how they perceived the questions was developed. The questionnaire was then edited to its final form which was used in the study (see Appendix 1).

4.3.3 Operationalisation of Questionnaire

This section will explain the different variables which were researched in the study’s questionnaire. In Table 3 below, the questions pertaining the researched variables, as well as the source of the questions are presented. The table includes the questions translated into English. To view the original Swedish wording, please see Appendix 1. The case company’s name has been removed and replaced with ‘the case company’ for the company to remain anonymous.

**Table 3: The study’s operationalisation of the questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researched variable</th>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>21. Did you receive a gift when entering the store today?</td>
<td>Based on Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>3. I feel grateful towards the case company after today’s visit.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>7. I felt that the case company cared about me as a customer today.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>11. Today I felt grateful for the treatment from the personnel at the case company and therefore wanted to show my appreciation to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. After my visit at the case company today, I feel grateful towards the company.</td>
<td>Author’s own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>4. I felt an obligation to make a purchase at the case company today.</td>
<td>Based on Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Today I felt obligated to spend a little extra when shopping at the case company.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. After my visit at the case company today, I feel an obligation towards the company.</td>
<td>Author’s own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>2. I am satisfied with my visit at the case company today.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. I was treated well by the personnel at the case company today.</td>
<td>Based on Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. I want to return to the case company thanks to today’s experience.</td>
<td>Based on Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. After my visit at the case company today, I feel trust for the company.</td>
<td>Author’s own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulsive Buying</td>
<td>1. I am a person who is impulsive when I shop.</td>
<td>Rook &amp; Fisher (1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I made one or more unplanned purchases at the case company today.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. I felt tempted to purchase something I had not planned to purchase today.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Did you spend more than planned at the case company today?</td>
<td>Based on Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>12. Did you purchase anything at the case company today?</td>
<td>Author’s own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>19. After my visit at the case company today, I feel indifferent towards the company.</td>
<td>Author’s own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>15. I, who answers the questionnaire, am a: man/woman.</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. I am born year ____</td>
<td>Fombelle et al. (forthcoming).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gift Giving
The purpose of the entire experiment and collection of questionnaires was to check for differences between the three groups (no gift, small gift, large gift). The gift was, in other words, the independent variable which was manipulated to see if it affected any of the dependent variables. To sort the groups, the last question in the questionnaire was regarding whether the respondent had received a gift upon entry to the case company: “Did you receive a gift when entering the store today?”. There was only a yes or no answer to choose from. This meant that during the experiment and collection of questionnaires, there was a continuous ‘coding’ of dates and times to see who was exposed to which treatment condition. The question was posed last in the questionnaire to not inflict any suspicion from the respondent.

Gratitude
As gratitude has been heavily linked to gift giving (e.g. Trivers, 1971), the study researched the relationship between the two. To research such an ambiguous term, it was established that previously trialled questions were to be used. The questions pertaining to gratitude were: “I feel grateful towards the case company after today’s visit”; “I felt that the case company cared about me as a customer today”; “Today I felt grateful for the treatment from the personnel at the case company and therefore wanted to show my appreciation to them”); and “After my visit at the case company today, I feel grateful towards the company”. Most of the questions used to research gratitude were collected from previous research about gift giving in retail stores. Therefore, as Bryman and Bell (2011) claim, they can be deemed to be of high reliability and validity.

Obligation
Obligation is another variable that has been connected to gift giving (Cialdini, 2007). It was therefore considered to be an important variable to measure in this study. The purpose of measuring the possible feelings of obligation the respondents might have was to decipher whether gift giving might lead to negative feelings; something that retailers most likely would prefer to avoid. Obligation was measured by asking the respondent to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree with three different statements: “I felt an obligation to make a purchase at the case company today”; “Today I felt obligated to spend a little extra when shopping at the case company”; and “After my visit at the case
company today, I feel an obligation towards the company”. As with gratitude, the statements regarding obligation were mostly collected from previous studies.

**Customer Satisfaction**

This study measured the level of satisfaction customers had after their visit to the case company. There are two types of customer satisfaction: transaction specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Johnson, Anderson & Fornell, 1995). This study measured customer satisfaction based on the experience from one specific visit. Therefore, the questions regarding customer satisfaction were all focused on transaction specific satisfaction. “I am satisfied with my visit at the case company today”; “I was treated well by the personnel at the case company today”; “I want to return to the case company thanks to today’s experience”; and “After my visit at the case company today, I feel trust for the company”. To find the level of satisfaction from their visit at the case company on the particular day on which the experiment was conducted, the word ‘today’ was frequently used. The emphasis on ‘today’ was also conveyed to the respondents by the administrator.

**Impulsive Buying**

Retailers usually rely heavily on a customer’s buying impulsiveness to increase sales. There are different types of purchases, such as pure impulse buying (Stern, 1961), and planned buying (Han et al., 1991). This study wants to know whether the customer is buying out of pure impulse behaviour, or if the purchase is planned from the beginning. This was achieved through the questions 1, 5, 9, and 13 in the questionnaire: “I am a person who is impulsive when I shop”; “I made one or more unplanned purchases at the case company today”; “I felt tempted to purchase something I had not planned to purchase today”; and “Did you spend more than planned at the case company today?”.

**Spending**

Previous studies have concluded that giving a gift to consumers will increase the amount of money they spend at an establishment (Strohmetz et al, 2002; Friedman & Herskovitz, 1990). That being said, no previous studies have researched whether this effect is still demonstrated in a retail environment offering durable shopping products, i.e. where it might be difficult to spend more than planned. Hence, spending was including to find out whether gift giving will lead to increased spending in this type of retail environment. The following were the two questions pertaining to spending: “Did you purchase anything at
the case company today?”, and “How much [money] did you spend at the store today?”.
They were designed to control whether the respondent had spent money at the retailer, and if so, how much money they had spent. The reason for these questions was to see if the amount of money spent, or total number of purchases, had increased when the respondents were subject to the experimental treatments.

**Indifference**

The reason for including indifference in the questionnaire was to control for questions 17 and 18. The idea behind the question was that if the respondent indicated a high level of indifference, they would have indicated a low level of obligation or gratitude, and vice versa. I.e. the question was to control whether the respondent had understood the concepts of gratitude and obligation.

**Demographics**

Studies should include data regarding demographic factors, to be used as control variables. Any research that would lack data regarding demographics can be deemed unreliable as the findings in the study could simply be due to demographic factors. Therefore, this study deemed it important to include two questions pertaining to demographic factors; sex and age. It was assumed that the customers of the case company would find it to be crude to ask for information regarding income, since it can be considered a sensitive question (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Accordingly, income was excluded from the questionnaire even if the information would have been interesting for the study.

**Method Criticism**

A questionnaire should consist of focused, brief, and clear questions (Burns and Bush, 2014). Although most questions in the conducted study were of that nature, question 11 (“Today I felt grateful for the treatment from the personnel at the case company and therefore wanted to show my appreciation to them.”) was not. However, since nobody in the pilot study made a remark of that particular question, it was not shortened.

Extraneous variables are those that are outside of the researcher’s control, but which might still influence the study’s dependent variable (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The case company was offering its customers a special deal at the same time as the field experiment
was conducted. The special deal consisted of a 20% discount off a product when signing up to their new loyalty program. However, this pertained to all respondents in the experiment; they were all affected by the loyalty program discount. However, the fact remains that it might have skewed the results, perhaps affecting one researched variable more than another.

The dates for the field experiment (March 21-March 23, 2018) were right before Easter, as well as right before and during payday, which could have had an effect on the results; people might prefer to wait until after the holidays or after payday to shop. However, on March 23 (payday), spending was the lowest of the three days. Hence, it is argued that payday did not have a significant effect on the results. Easter’s effect on the results are uncertain. However, the condition (that Easter was approaching) was the same for all respondents.

The majority of the respondents were older women. This customer demographic might have different shopping patterns than for example younger males. However, this appears to be the case company’s main customer base, it was therefore inevitable for this demographic to be the majority.

Another criticism is that the gifts are within different product categories; the candy is a consumable alimentary product, whereas the “Rub-It” is a kitchen utensil. They could therefore potentially lead to different effects on the measured variables since the customers might value the items differently. The gift’s monetary value might not represent the customer’s evaluation of the gift. However, the gifts used in the field experiment were chosen by the store manager and could not be changed.

4.4 Statistical Methods for Data Analysis
For the study to ascertain whether there were any relationships between the variables studied, statistical methods were used to analyse the data. The following section will treat the statistical methods used in this study.

4.4.1 Preparing the Data for Analysis
The data collected in this study were collected through physical questionnaires. Each questionnaire was given a number in addition to the information regarding dates and times
collected, which had been written when conducting the experiment. After organising the questionnaires, coding of each questionnaire began. In total, 161 questionnaires were collected. The coding began with transforming each response alternative into numbers. They were then inserted into an Excel-file, which was used as a coding base file for the study’s statistical analysis in SPSS. The reason for using SPSS is its efficacy in testing different statistical tests between variables.

**Normal Distribution**

According to the central limit theorem, a sample is considered to be approximately normally distributed when the sample, $n$, consists of at least 30 entities (Wahlin, 2015). The study obtained a total of 161 questionnaires, of these, at least 50 questionnaires pertained to each treatment condition (no gift, small gift, large gift). This implies that even if a sample does not follow the pattern of normal distribution, it can still be considered as such when the sample is greater than 30 (Wahlin, 2015). Accordingly, the study’s sample can be described as approximately normally distributed and can be analysed as such.

**Statistical Significance**

The level of risk for a null hypothesis to be rejected when it is true is called statistical significance (Salkind, 2007). Since there is no way to prove that something is 100% true, there needs to be a level of significance in case of error (Salkind, 2010). In business research, there are three significance levels that are commonly used; 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 (Wahlin, 2015). This means that there is a one, five, or ten per cent chance that the null hypothesis will be rejected when it is in fact true. In other words, there is a one, five, or ten per cent chance that the differences found in the research are due to an unknown reason, and not the hypothesised one (Salkind, 2007; Salkind 2010). It also means that when there is a statistically significant difference, it is with 99, 95, or 90 % certainty that it is due to the hypothesised reason (Salkind, 2010). For this study, it was deemed appropriate to use a statistical significance of 0.10 ($p \leq 0.10$). Therefore, any statistical test in which the statistical significance is below 0.10 can prove that the results are statistically significant.
Standard Deviation

Standard deviation is the average distance from the mean and allows researchers to see to what extent individuals within a sample vary. If the standard deviation is large, it means that the values in the data collected are spread out (i.e. differ to one another). In contrast, the smaller the standard deviation is, the more similar the values are (Salkind, 2007).

Missing Values and Outliers

Missing values are common occurrences in studies using questionnaires. One reason for such faults may be due to a respondent’s unwillingness to answer certain questions (Lohr, 2010), perhaps due to being deemed as a sensitive question (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Imputation is one method to fix missing values (Lohr, 2010). The researcher assigns values, often a replacement value taken by another respondent who is similar otherwise, to the missing data. This is done to decrease the nonresponse bias. This study had what is called ‘item non-responses’ meaning that some respondents, for whatever reason, failed to answer at least one item on the questionnaire (Ibid.). There were unit non-responses since a lot of customers exiting the case company declined to partake in the questionnaire (Ibid.). However, these were not considered since there is a need for a completed questionnaire to deduct a conclusion about the population. Seeing as this study only had missing values on eleven occasions, it was not deemed necessary to assign values to the missing data. Instead, they were replaced by an empty cell, implying that the particular item on the questionnaire was not answered.

Outliers are scores that are more extreme than the majority of scores (Salkind, 2010). The decision of which values to be deemed as outliers is typically a subjective decision made by the researcher (Ibid.). However, there are guidelines of which values can be classified as an outlier. One such guideline is what is called ‘the three-sigma rule of thumb’, which states that 99.7 % of data falls within three standard deviations of the mean, i.e. the z-scores between -3 and +3 (Kazmier, 2003). As per the three-sigma rule, this study removed any z-scores below -3 and above +3. It was decided to only remove outliers within the questions, meaning that if one respondent scored a z-score of below -3 or above +3 on only one of the questions, only the outlier value was removed and not the entire questionnaire.
4.4.2 Aggregating Variables

Factor Analysis

A factor analysis is a variable reduction procedure which indicates how the different variables tested in a study cluster together (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). The main purpose of the analysis is to decrease the number of variables in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Bryman & Cramer, 2005); to find a smaller number of factors that account for most of the variation (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). A factor analysis can assess the extent to which items (i.e. questions in the questionnaire), are in fact measuring the same concept; it enables the researcher to assess the factorial validity (Bryman & Cramer, 1999). If a respondent answers similarly to questions pertaining to customer satisfaction as they do to questions regarding gratitude, the two concepts are seen as the same thing by the respondent (Ibid.).

The decision of which factors to retain and which to dismiss is considered one of the most difficult decisions in factor analysis (Ibid.). One common criterion is called the Kaiser’s criterion. It states that factors with an eigenvalue greater than one should be retained (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). This criterion is accurate when the number of variables is small (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). This study uses 14 variables, which Pituch and Stevens (2016) consider to be small, and consequently only retained those factors with an eigenvalue greater than one. The sample size of the study, $n$, is also an important aspect to consider when conducting a factor analysis since the reliability of the factors depends on it (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). The sample size should be greater than the number of variables (Ibid.). This study’s sample size was 161, which is greater than 14. Therefore, the study can reliably conduct a factor analysis.

The relationship between an item and a factor is called a loading (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). A further decision to make is which factor loadings to remove, for which there is no universal standard (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). One threshold value which can be used is 0.4 (Ibid.). This means that any factor loadings with values between -0.4 and 0.4 should be removed.

Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach’s alpha is a commonly used measurement of internal consistency (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is a statistical measurement tool of the internal consistency of individual
questions in a questionnaire (Roberts, Priest & Traynor, 2006). The test, called split-half test, randomly splits up the answers of a question into two sets, and totals the scores of the two to find the correlation between the two sets. The Cronbach alpha finds an average score of all the split-half tests and thus determines the reliability of the quantitative data (Ibid.). The recommended score for research is 0.8, meaning that 20% of the scores’ variability is due to error, and 80% is true (Roberts, Priest & Traynor, 2006). However, a score between 0.5 to 0.7 shows moderate reliability and is generally deemed an acceptable level (Hinton et al., 2004). Since the alpha score is affected by the length of the questionnaire, the researcher can add more questions testing the same variable to increase the alpha score (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

4.4.3 Analytical Methods
The main analytical method used in this thesis has been a multiple linear regression model. As a complement, an ANOVA-analysis, as well as the Pearson correlation test, have been used to analyse the data.

ANOVA
Analysis of variance, more commonly known as ANOVA, is a statistical analysis for testing a hypothesis (Djurfeldt & Barmark, 2009). An ANOVA-analysis can be used to examine the differences in means between three or more groups. When examining the means between two groups, a t-test should be conducted instead (Djurfeldt & Barmark, 2009). An ANOVA is not a test which examines the differences between pairs of groups’ means. Instead, it examines the differences of the entire collection of group means in the population (Djurfeldt & Barmark, 2009). Moreover, an ANOVA-analysis establishes if any significant differences in means between groups exist (Churchill, 2001).

Pearson Correlation Test
This study uses the Pearson correlation test to determine whether there are any correlations between two variables. The Pearson correlation test is used to measure the differences and similarities between variables (Jacobsen, 2002), however, variations between categories within variables cannot be measured, and are therefore excluded when conducting the correlation test (Jacobsen, 2002). The result from a Pearson correlation test is a number between 1 and -1, known as the correlation coefficient, denoted as (R) or |r|. The closer the correlation coefficient is to either 1 or -1, the better the correlation
between the two variables are. Subsequently, the closer it is to 0, the worse the correlation between the variables are. With a negative number, the correlation will be descending, while if it is a positive number, it will be ascending (Wahlin, 2015). To make sure there is a strong correlation, the Pearson correlation number should be examined (Ibid.). A Pearson correlation number below 0.20 means that the correlation between the two variables is very low. 0.20-0.35 describes a low correlation, 0.35-0.65 a moderately strong correlation, 0.65-0.85 a strong correlation, and everything above 0.85 means that the correlation is very strong (Wahlin, 2015).

**Multicollinearity**
A correlation coefficient that exceeds 0.8 should be treated with caution. A large correlation coefficient can indicate that variables are containing similar information (Djurfeldt & Barmark, 2009). This can cause problems when regression analyses are applied since the results from the analysis risk being uncertain. This problem is called multicollinearity (Wahlin, 2015). Multicollinearity is measured through the help of VIF-factors. A VIF-factor that exceeds a value of 2.5 and a tolerance level less than 0.5 indicates that the variable should be excluded from the regression analysis (Djurfeldt & Barmark, 2009).

**Multiple Linear Regression Model**
Within social sciences, regression is the most commonly used data analysis method (Bryman & Cramer, 1999). The regression model is useful “for summarizing the nature of the relationship between variables and for making predictions of likely values of the dependent variable” (Bryman & Cramer, 1999, p. 191). It is used to know how much the dependent variable Y changes when the independent X-variable(s) increases with one unit (Wahlin, 2015). By using a scatter diagram from the chosen data points, a line can be drawn between the swarm of data. This line, depending on its slope, shows what impact one variable has on the other variable and is called the regression line (Wahlin, 2015). The regression line’s slope is called beta value, denoted as β. The beta value shows how much the dependent Y-variable changes from a one unit increase of the independent X-variable (Wahlin, 2015).

A multiple linear regression uses more than one variable to describe the relationship between the variables. The change in a dependent variable can, in a multiple linear
regression, be explained by several other independent variables’ collective beta values (Wahlin, 2015). Moreover, to determine the significance of the correlation in a linear regression, it must be determine how well the linear regression line corresponds with the data. This is done by using the coefficient of determination, denoted as \( r^2 \), which is the Pearson correlation number \((R) \) squared. The coefficient of determination explains how large the variation in the Y-variable is determined by the X-variable(s) in the model (Ibid.). For example, a \( r^2 \)-value of 60 % implies that 60 % of the variation for the Y-variable is determined by the X-variable(s). The coefficient of determination can be considered low if the \( r^2 \)-value is below 30 %, moderate if it is between 30-50 %, high when it is 50-70 %, and very high when above 70 % (Wahlin, 2015). While using SPSS in this study, the univariate analysis was implemented for the purpose of using gift condition as a fixed factor.
5. Empirics and Results
The following chapter explains the empirics and results of the primary data collected in the study. The data was collected through a questionnaire after the respondents were subject to one of the experiment’s three treatment conditions. The chapter begins by presenting the descriptive statistics from the questionnaire. Thereafter, an aggregation of the items in the questionnaire researching the same variable is presented as well as a correlation test. The chapter ends by presenting the data analysis of the analytical model through an ANOVA-analysis and multilinear regression models.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics
The following section describes the results gathered from the study’s questionnaire.

5.1.1 Gift Giving
An important question in the questionnaire was question 21: “Did you receive a gift when entering the store today?”. This question establishes the basis for the entire study’s purpose: to see what effect a gift has on customers at a retailer offering durable shopping products. However, seeing as the question was only designed to answer whether the respondent received a gift or not, it does not give any information regarding the size of the gift. However, since the questionnaires were labelled according to the date and time, it was possible to categorise the respondents to the correct treatment condition. As stated before, three conditions were set for the experiment: no gift, small gift, and large gift. According to the collected data, 51 of the respondents (31,7 %) received no gift, 56 respondents (34,8 %) received a small gift and 54 of the respondents (33,5 %) received a large gift.

![Figure 5: Descriptive statistics for question 21: “Did you receive a gift when entering the store today?”](image)

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5.1.2 Gratitude
There were four questions designed to measure the respondents’ perceived gratitude. All questions used a Likert scale of 1-7. The seventh question was the only question which had a missing value and outliers. The total number of respondents included for this question was thus 153. The missing data (1) was within the group of respondents who received no gift. The outliers (7) which were removed pertained to all treatment conditions. Four outliers were removed from those who received no gift, two from the small gift condition, and one from the large gift condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the questionnaire’s third question, “I feel grateful towards the case company after today’s visit”, the means were similar for each treatment condition. No gift had a mean of 5.06, small gift had a mean of 5, and large gift had a mean of 5.46. Question 7, “I felt that the case company cared about me as a customer today”, received a mean score of 6.39 (no gift), 6.06 (small gift), and 6.21 (large gift). Question 11, “Today I felt grateful for the treatment from the personnel at the case company and therefore wanted to show my appreciation to them”, the mean scores were as follows: 5.16 (no gift), 4.95 (small gift), and 5.67 (large gift). The fourth and last question pertaining to gratitude was question 17, “After my visit at the case company today, I feel grateful towards the company”. The respondents who did not receive a gift had a mean score of 4.12, those who received a small gift of 4.45, and those who received a large gift of 4.69.

5.1.3 Obligation
Obligation was measured by using three questions all designed with a Likert scale of 1-7.
Table 5: Descriptive statistics for obligation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Condition</th>
<th>Mean and n</th>
<th>Q4. Obligation</th>
<th>Q8. Obligation</th>
<th>Q18. Obligation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Mean 1.41</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 51</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Mean 1.61</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>Mean 1.89</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4, “I felt an obligation to make a purchase at the case company today”, showed an increase in obligation alongside the gift and the value of the gift. When receiving no gift, the mean was 1.41, while those receiving a small gift had a mean score of 1.61, and a large gift of 1.89. For the fourth question, two outliers were removed from the small gift condition. Question 8, “Today I felt obligated to spend a little extra when shopping at the case company”, had one missing value within the no gift condition. The mean scores for the eighth question also showed an increase; 1.28 (no gift), 1.53 (small gift), and 1.66 (large gift). The 18th question, “After my visit at the case company today, I feel an obligation toward the company”, had three outliers which all were removed. The respondents who did not receive a gift had a mean score of 1.76, the ones who received a small gift had a mean score of 1.70, and the respondents who received a large gift had a mean score of 2.06.

5.1.4 Customer Satisfaction

Four questions were used to measure customer satisfaction in the study’s questionnaire, all of which used a Likert scale of 1-7 to measure the respondents’ attitudes.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Mean 6.20</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Mean 5.95</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>Mean 5.85</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n 54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first statement measuring customer satisfaction was question 2: “I am satisfied with my visit at the case company today”. One outlier was removed from the no gift treatment condition. On a Likert scale of 1-7, the respondents’ measured satisfaction decreases. The respondents who did not receive a gift had a mean score of 6.20, those who received a
small gift had a mean score of 5.95, and those who received a large gift had a mean score of 5.85. For question 6, “I was treated well by the personnel at the case company today”, the mean scores were similar across the different treatment conditions; 6.54 (no gift), 6.58 (small gift), and 6.55 (large gift). Five outliers were removed from the sixth question. The mean scores for question 10, “I want to return to the case company thanks to today’s experience”, were also quite similar across treatment conditions; 5.37 (no gift), 5.20 (small gift), and 5.70 (large gift). The final question measuring customer satisfaction was question 20: “After my visit at the case company today, I feel trust for the company”. There were two missing values; one from the no gift treatment condition, and one from the large gift treatment condition. For this question, four outliers were removed. An increase on a Likert scale of 1-7 was visible for the mean scores between treatment conditions for this question. Those receiving no gift had a mean score of 5.44, those receiving a small gift 5.53, and those receiving a large gift 5.67.

5.1.5 Impulsive Buying
Four questions were used to analyse the respondent’s buying impulsiveness. The first three used a Likert scale of 1-7 (1 being “I do not agree at all”, and 7 “I agree completely”). The last question used a dichotomous question with a yes or no answer.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for impulse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Condition</th>
<th>Mean and n</th>
<th>Q1. Impulse</th>
<th>Q5. Impulse</th>
<th>Q9. Impulse</th>
<th>Q13. Impulse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Mean 3.82</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n 51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Mean 3.80</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n 55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>Mean 4.09</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n 54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire’s first statement to which the respondent had to take a stance was: “I am a person who is impulsive when I shop”. Of the 161 respondents, 1 did not give an answer. This respondent received a small gift. Due to the missing data, there are only 160 respondents included for question 1. For those who did not receive a gift, the mean answer was 3.82. Those receiving a small gift had a mean of 3.80, and the respondents who received a large gift had a mean of 4.09.
All 161 respondents answered question 5 “I made one or more unplanned purchases at the case company today”. The mean for those who received no gift was 1,96. Those who received a small gift had a mean of 2,11, while the respondents who received a large gift had a mean of 1,89. For question 9, “I felt tempted to purchase something I had not planned to purchase today”, there were no missing data. The means were as followed: 2,75 (no gift), 2,93 (small gift), and 3,37 (large gift).

Question 13, “Did you spend more than planned at the case company today?” was a dichotomous question (yes/no) and was thus not able to be merged with the other questions and was only used individually when being analysed in SPSS. 24 respondents (14,9 %) answered ‘yes’, while 137 (85,1 %) respondents answered ‘no’. The difference was mostly due to the fact that many respondents did not make a purchase, which makes it impossible for them to have spent more [money] than planned. When only including the respondents, who did make a purchase at the case company, 24 respondents (34,3 %) replied ‘yes’, while 46 (65,7 %) replied ‘no’.

5.1.6 Spending
The two questions pertaining to spending were question 12, “Did you purchase anything at the case company today?” and question 14, “How much [money] did you spend at the store today?”. From the sample of 161, 72 respondents (43,5 %) made a purchase while 89 (56,5 %) did not. During the no gift treatment condition, 25 respondents made a purchase and 26 did not. When receiving a small gift, 27 people purchased something
while 29 did not, and of those receiving a large gift, 17 people made a purchase and 37 people did not.

Figure 8: Descriptive statistics for question 12: “Did you purchase anything at the case company today?”

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Condition</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>151.54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>217.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>168.22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>252.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>89.85</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>166.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of money spent at the case company was an important question to tell whether spending differed between treatment conditions. Two outliers were removed, one from the first treatment condition and one from the second. Those receiving no gift spent an average amount of 151.5 SEK, those receiving a small gift spent an average amount of 168.2 SEK (11% increase), and those receiving a large gift spent an average of 89.9 SEK (40.7% decrease).

Figure 9: Descriptive statistics for question 14: “How much [money] did you spend at the store today?”
5.1.7 Indifference
Feelings of indifference were measured to check gratitude and obligation; if indifference was low, then gratitude or obligation should be high. This was checked for during the coding of the questionnaires. The question was therefore not used in any analysis and no mean score was calculated.

5.1.8 Demographics
Demographic factors were used as a control variable and were therefore excluded in the study’s analytical model. Question 15, “I, who answers the questionnaire, am a: man/woman”, was the first question to measure demographics in the questionnaire. One respondent did not state their sex and was therefore coded as a missing value. As such, from 160 respondents, 125 (77.6 %) respondents were women and 35 (21.7 %) respondents were men.

![Figure 10: Descriptive statistics for question 15: “I, who answers the questionnaire, am a: man/woman”](image)

The second question pertaining to demographics was question 16, “I am born year ___. Again, one respondent did not fill in their year of birth, and the sample for this question was therefore 160 as well. The age distribution of the study was as follows: 3 respondents (1.9 %) were aged 19 or under, 27 respondents (16.9 %) were between 20-29 years, 14 respondents (8.8 %) were 30-39 years old, 17 respondents (10.6 %) were between 40-49 years, 19 respondents (11.9 %) were aged between 50-59, 30 respondents (18.8 %) were between 60-69 years old, 45 respondents (28.1 %) were 70-70 years old, and 5 respondents (3.1 %) were aged 80 or over.
5.2 Aggregating Variables

5.2.1 Factor Analysis

The first step in the factor analysis is to see which components explain the greatest variance of the 14 variables. SPSS follows Kaiser’s criterion, which states that only components with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 should be retained (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). Four components had an Eigenvalue greater than 1, which stand for 60.36% of the total variance explained by all variables. These components were then used for the Rotated Component Matrix. In this matrix, one is able to see each factor’s so called ‘loading’. As the threshold value of a factor loading used in this study is 0.4, any values between the range of -0.4 and 0.4 were removed. To see whether a question actually researched the intended purpose (e.g. gratitude), the variables should all be under the same component. As such, any question which had a factor loading on another component than the majority of the same variable were removed. ‘Q7. Gratitude’ and ‘Q10. Satisfaction’ have thus been excluded from the matrix as well as from being used in the
merged variable. ‘Q7. Gratitude’ had measured the respondents’ satisfaction rather than gratitude, while ‘Q10. Satisfaction’ had measured gratitude rather than satisfaction. See Appendix 2 for a step-by-step depiction.

5.2.2 Cronbach’s Alpha

Table 10: Results from the Cronbach alpha test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>0.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Items</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After conducting a Cronbach alpha test, none of the variables have the recommended score of 0.8. However, gratitude is close with a score of 0.780. Obligation has a score of 0.569, impulse a score of 0.610, and satisfaction a score of 0.589. Since a score between 0.5 and 0.7 is deemed acceptable (Hinton et al., 2004) the alpha scores attained in this study are deemed sufficient. Additionally, deleting one of the questions in one of the merged variables does not raise the alpha score, or does so by a limited amount. Therefore, it was decided to keep all questions (excluding Q7 and Q10). The relatively low scores attained might be due to the length of the questionnaire, which was intended to be as short as possible to increase the response rate.

5.2.3 Total Means and Standard Deviation

In Table 11 below the means and the standard deviation of the mean total of impulse, satisfaction, gratitude, obligation, and spending (in SEK) are presented. Moreover, the table presents the differences in means between gift conditions and the total answers of all respondents. Question 12, “Did you purchase anything at the case company today?”, Question 13, “Did you spend more than planned at the case company today?”, Question 15, “I, who answers the questionnaire, am a: man/woman.”, Question 16, “I am born year ___” and Question 21, “Did you receive a gift when entering the store today?” were excluded from the means table. They were deemed unfitting for the research question and the analytical model at hand.
### Table 11: Total means table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Condition</th>
<th>Mean &amp; Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Means Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Gift</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Gift</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Gift</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean total for impulse measured customers’ impulsiveness. When not being given a gift, the respondents had a mean of 2.84. When receiving a small gift, the mean was 2.93, and when receiving a large gift, the mean was 2.97. The mean total for satisfaction illustrates how customers’ satisfaction was affected by the different gift conditions. For the no gift treatment condition, the respondents scored a mean total of 6.10, for the small gift the mean was 6.02, and for the large gift the mean was 6.02. The mean total for gratitude measures the customers’ level of gratitude. The respondents not receiving a gift had a mean of 4.78, those receiving a small gift 4.80, and those receiving a large gift 5.27. The mean total for obligation measures the customers’ level of obligation. The no gift treatment condition had a mean score of 1.47, small gift of 1.68 and large gift of 1.91. The last step of the model is spending. Those not receiving a gift had a mean spending of 151.50 SEK with a standard deviation of 217.11 SEK. The small gift treatment condition gave an average spending of 168.22 SEK with a standard deviation of 252.83 SEK. Lastly, the large gift treatment condition had an average spending of 89.85 SEK with a standard deviation of 166.98 SEK.

### 5.3 Correlation

A Pearson correlation test was used to find correlation between two variables. The variables that were used in the correlation test were satisfaction, impulse, gratitude, and spending.

### Table 12: Results from the Pearson correlation test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Impulse</th>
<th>Gratitude</th>
<th>Obligation</th>
<th>Spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>0.224</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the Pearson correlation test there are three correlations of low value: satisfaction and spending with an R-value of 0.224; impulse and obligation with an R-value of 0.208; and impulse and spending with an R-value of 0.286. Additionally, there is a moderately strong correlation between satisfaction and gratitude with an R-value of 0.566.

None of the correlation coefficients exceed a value of 0.8 in the Pearson correlation test. The highest value is between gratitude and satisfaction with an R-value of 0.566. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity. Therefore, reliable regression analyses can be conducted. By viewing the table of multicollinearity in Appendix 2, there are no VIF values that exceed 2.5 and no tolerance level that has a value below 0.5.

5.4 The Analytical Model’s Relationships

To conduct the different statistical tests to accept or reject the hypotheses formulated for the thesis, the analytical model was divided into four different parts:

- The first part includes the different gift conditions, as well as gratitude and obligation. To test the relationship an ANOVA-analysis was conducted.
- The second part includes gratitude and obligation and their effect on satisfaction.
- The third part includes gratitude and obligation and their effect on impulse.
- The fourth part includes gratitude, obligation, impulse, and satisfaction and their effect on spending.
The three latter parts all use regression analyses to find if there are any statistically significant relationships. The remainder of the chapter will present the results from these four analyses.

5.4.1 ANOVA
As stated above, the first step in the analytical model is to test the gift’s effect on gratitude and obligation. This was done by conducting an ANOVA-analysis. Below are two graphs depicting the relationship between the gift conditions and gratitude (left) as well as obligation (right).

![Graph 1: ANOVA-analysis of gift - gratitude](image1)

*Figure 13 (left): ANOVA-analysis of gift - gratitude*

![Graph 2: ANOVA-analysis of gift - obligation](image2)

*Figure 14 (right): ANOVA-analysis of gift - obligation*

The ANOVA-analyses for the gift conditions demonstrate whether there are any statistically significant differences in mean values. The left graph shows that gratitude’s mean increases from 4.78 to 4.80 when given a small gift, and from 4.78 to 5.27 when given a large gift. However, although gratitude is shown to increase, there is no statistically significant difference between the gift conditions as determined by the ANOVA-analysis (F=1.782; p=0.172 > 0.10). The right graph depicts that obligation’s mean increases, and it does so more than gratitude. When given a small gift, the mean for obligation increases from 1.47 to 1.69, and when given a large gift it increases to 1.91. The relationship between gift condition and obligation as determined by the ANOVA-analysis is statistically significant (F=2.415; p=0.093 < 0.10). See Appendix 4 for more detailed ANOVA-analysis results.
5.4.2 Multilinear Regression Models
As stated previously, the three last parts of the analytical model used multilinear regression models to find statistically significant relationships. Below, each part’s results will be explained. The multilinear regression models all use gift condition as a fixed factor, meaning the models show the effect that the independent variables have on the dependent variable, while controlling for gift condition.

Gratitude and Obligation’s Effect on Satisfaction
The second part of the analytical model is to statistically test the effect that gratitude and obligation have on satisfaction.

Table 13: Gratitude and obligation’s effect on satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
<td>1.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
<td>0.003***</td>
<td>1.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Condition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above, the relationship between the independent variables gratitude and obligation, and the dependent variable satisfaction is presented. The data illustrates a significant relationship for both gratitude and obligation towards satisfaction. As depicted by the negative beta-value for obligation (-0.164), obligation has a negative effect on satisfaction. The adjusted R² value is 0.350, which means that 35 % of the change in the dependent variable (satisfaction) is explained by the independent variables (gratitude and obligation).
Table 14: Explanation of gratitude and obligation’s effect on satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Beta-Value</th>
<th>The independent variable’s effect on the dependent variable (Satisfaction)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>β=0,338</td>
<td>The regression model shows that gratitude has an effect on satisfaction. This shows that the larger gratitude the customers have, the larger their satisfaction will be. For every increased unit of gratitude, a unit of satisfaction increases by 33,8%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>β=-0,164</td>
<td>The regression model shows that obligation has an effect on satisfaction. The effect is in this case negative. This shows that when obligation increases, satisfaction will decrease. For every increased unit of obligation, a unit of satisfaction decreases by 16,4%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16: Part 2. Gratitude and obligation’s effect on satisfaction

Gratitude and Obligation’s Effect on Impulse
The third part of the analytical model is to statistically test the effect that gratitude and obligation have on impulse.

Table 15: Gratitude and obligation’s effect on impulse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>0,148</td>
<td>0,056*</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>0,253</td>
<td>0,030**</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Condition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0,953</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0,10; **p<0,05; ***p<0,01

In table 15 above, the relationship between the independent variables gratitude and obligation, and the dependent variable impulse is illustrated. The table shows that gratitude and obligation both have a statistically significant effect on impulse. Both variables show a positive relationship to impulse, and the adjusted R² value is 0,043. This
means that only 4.3% of the change in the dependent variable (impulse) is explained by the independent variables (gratitude and obligation).

Table 16: Explanation of gratitude and obligation’s effect on impulse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Beta-Value</th>
<th>The independent variable’s effect on the dependent variable (Impulse)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>β = 0.148</td>
<td>The regression model shows that gratitude has an effect on impulse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When feelings of gratitude increase, the customer will be more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>impulsive. For every unit that gratitude increases, a unit of impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increases by 14.8%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>β = 0.253</td>
<td>The regression model shows that obligation has an effect on impulse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When feelings of obligation increase, the customer will be more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>impulsive. For every unit that obligation increases, a unit of impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>increases by 25.3%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Part 3. Gratitude and obligation’s effect on impulse

Gratitude, Obligation, Satisfaction and Impulse’s Effect on Spending

The fourth part of the analytical model is to statistically test the effect that gratitude, obligation, satisfaction, and impulse have on spending.

Table 17: Gratitude, obligation, satisfaction and impulse’s effect on spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable: Spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>44.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>40.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>-0.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>-13.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Condition</td>
<td>-0.096*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.10; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In Table 17 above, the data from the last multilinear regression model is presented. This analysis shows the effect that gratitude, obligation, impulse, and satisfaction have on
spending. The data show that impulse and satisfaction both have an effect on spending. On the contrary, gratitude and obligation have no direct effect on spending according to the analysis. However, it shows that there is a relationship between gift condition and spending, since the statistical significance is below 0.10. Gift condition has an effect on spending (p=0.096 < 0.10).

*Table 18: Explanation of gratitude, obligation, satisfaction and impulse’s effect on spending*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Beta-Value</th>
<th>The independent variable’s effect on the dependent variable (Spending)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>β=44.198</td>
<td>The regression model shows that satisfaction has an effect on spending. The higher the customer’s satisfaction is, the more they will spend. For every unit satisfaction increases, spending increases by approximately 44.20 SEK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>β=40.641</td>
<td>The regression model shows that impulse has an effect on spending. The more impulsive the customer is, the more they will spend. For every unit impulse increases, spending increases by approximately 40.60 SEK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>β=-0.552</td>
<td>The regression model shows that gratitude does not have an effect on spending. The statistical significance is too high (p=0.968 &gt; p=0.10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>β=-13.627</td>
<td>The regression model shows that obligation does not have an effect on spending. The statistical significance is too high (p=0.431 &gt; p=0.10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 18: Part 4. Gratitude, obligation, satisfaction and impulse’s effect on spending*
6. Analysis

The following chapter analyses the results collected in the study in relation to the theoretical framework. The chapter begins by discussing the hypotheses formulated in the third chapter which are based on the study’s analytical model. The chapter ends by examining the analytical model as a whole, and by discussing what implications the supported effects might have.

6.1 Hypotheses

Based on the analytical model, a total of 12 hypotheses were set up. Below is an analysis of the results described in the previous chapter.

6.1.1 H1: Customers will feel an increase in gratitude when given a gift

Researchers have claimed that for people to feel gratitude, there needs to have been an intentional gesture that holds some kind of value to the recipient (Lane & Anderson, 1976; McCullough et al., 2001; Roberts, 1991) to a certain cost of the benefactor in providing the benefit (Tesser, Gatewood & Driver, 1968; Okamoto & Robinson, 1997; Trivers, 1971). One such gesture is gift giving (e.g. Cialdini, 2007), which is the foundation for the entire study. As shown by the ANOVA-analysis, the mean for gratitude increases from 4,78 to 4,80 when given a small gift, and from 4,78 to 5,27 when given a large gift. This shows that the respondents did indeed feel an increase in gratitude when given a gift. This would confirm previous studies regarding the same subject. However, the results in this study are not statistically significant (p=0,172 > 0,10) which is why the hypothesis cannot be supported and is rejected. It can therefore not be stated that customers will feel an increase in gratitude when given a gift based on the results collected in this study.

\[ H1: \text{Hypothesis is rejected.} \]

6.1.2 H2: Customers will feel an increase in obligation [to repay] when given a gift

Obligation has, like gratitude, been shown to have a relationship with gift giving due to its reciprocal implications. Namely, it has previously been proven that when somebody is given a gift, feelings of obligation arise, and the beneficiary will be inclined to restore the unbalanced equilibrium (Sherry, 1983). It was therefore hypothesised that customers would feel obligated when receiving a gift. This study’s result implies that this indeed is the case. According to the ANOVA-analysis, there is a relationship between receiving a gift and an increased feeling of obligation. With a statistical significance of 9,3 %, it shows that there is a 90,7 % probability that the elevated feelings of obligations are due
to receiving a gift, and not due to any other unknown reason. Since the statistical significance is within the accepted range (p=0.093 < 0.10), the hypothesis is accepted; customers feel obligated when given a gift. This complies with previous theories stating that gifts increase obligation (e.g. Friedman & Herskovitz, 1990; Mauss, 1954; Goodwin, Smith & Spiggle, 1990; Gouldner, 1960).

\textit{H2: Hypothesis is accepted.}

6.1.3 \textbf{H3: The value of the gift is positively related to gratitude}  
As shown in the ANOVA-analysis (see Figure 13), gratitude increases as the value of the gift increases, however, the relationship is not strong enough to be statistically significant. Trivers (1971) states that the costlier the benefits, the more grateful the customer will feel, since emotions of gratitude are sensitive to the cost/benefit ratio of the charitable act. However, the results from the study cannot support Trivers’ (1971) findings and the hypothesis is thus rejected. According to the results in the ANOVA-analysis, the value of the gift is not positively related to gratitude (p=0.172 > 0.10).

\textit{H3: Hypothesis is rejected.}

6.1.4 \textbf{H4: The value of the gift is positively related to obligation}  
The study’s results when conducting an ANOVA-analysis imply that the larger the gift, the greater the feeling of obligation is felt by the customer. As demonstrated in the ANOVA-analysis (see Figure 14), the mean for obligation increases from 1.47 to 1.69 when given a small gift, and from 1.47 to 1.91 when given a large gift. Feelings of obligation increase by 0.44 units (29.9 \%) as the value of the gift increases. These results comply with theories stating that obligation increases as the value of the gift increases (Beltramini, 2000; Cialdini, 2007; Strohmetz et al. 2002). The statistical significance is 9.3 \%, which means that the hypothesis is accepted; the value of the gift is positively related to obligation (p=0.093 < 0.10).

\textit{H4: Hypothesis is accepted.}
6.1.5 H5: Gratitude is positively related to customer satisfaction
According to previous research, relationship marketing such as gift giving will increase customer gratitude, which in turn should give way for a greater sense of customer satisfaction (Hasan et al., 2017; Palmatier et al., 2009). This study supports this, since the results (see Table 13) imply that gratitude is positively related to satisfaction. The multilinear regression analysis demonstrates a significant value below 0.10 (p=0.000 < 0.10). The hypothesis is therefore accepted. The beta value for gratitude is 0.338, meaning that each unit increase for gratitude results in a 33.8% increase in satisfaction. The high beta value implies that firms should try to increase customer gratitude since it increases customer satisfaction.

H5: Hypothesis is accepted.

6.1.6 H6: Obligation is negatively related to customer satisfaction
Solomon et al. (1985) claim that a key determinant in whether the buyer is satisfied lies in the interaction between the buyer and the seller. Oliver (1996) claims that satisfaction is believed to decrease when perceived performance is lower than expected. Therefore, considering that obligation is a negative feeling (Goei et al., 2003), it could cause the customer to feel uncomfortable and could thus affect satisfaction negatively.

Looking at the descriptive statistics, it is visible that obligation increases, while satisfaction more so remains the same for all gift conditions. The results from the multilinear regression analysis strengthen this observed relationship (p=0.003 < 0.10). Obligation does indeed have an effect on customer satisfaction, and it does so negatively. Since the beta value for the relationship is -0.164, for every increased unit of obligation, a unit of satisfaction decreases by 16.4%. This strengthens the study’s belief, based on previous theories, that obligation has a negative effect on customer satisfaction.

H6: Hypothesis is accepted.

6.1.7 H7: Gratitude is positively related to impulsive buying
According to Komter (2004), gratitude has a substantial relationship with impulsive buying in a consumption context. The results in this study support Komter’s (2004) finding. The greater gratitude that customers experience, the larger their impulsiveness
will be. Since the relationship can be statistically supported \((p=0.056 < 0.10)\), the hypothesis is accepted. The beta value demonstrates that for every unit of gratitude increased, 14.8\% of the unit impulse increases.

\[H7: \text{Hypothesis is accepted.}\]

6.1.8 H8: Obligation is positively related to impulsive buying
According to Dahl, Honea and Manchanda (2005), obligation has, in a consumption context, been linked to impulsive buying. Since obligation is a negative and uncomfortable state for the recipient (Goei et al., 2003), they will search for opportunities to reduce their distress (Sherry, 1983). The only way to do so is to reciprocate the favour (Gouldner, 1960), and make a purchase (Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005) even though that might not have been what the customer had planned. The results gathered in this study provides the same conclusion: that obligation increases impulsive buying. The hypothesis is therefore accepted \((p=0.030 < 0.10)\).

\[H8: \text{Hypothesis is accepted.}\]

6.1.9 H9: Customer satisfaction is positively related to spending
This study’s results find a significantly positive relationship between customer satisfaction and spending, and the hypothesis is therefore accepted \((p=0.071 < 0.10)\). From the multilinear regression analysis conducted, it is found that the higher the customers’ satisfaction is, the more money they will spend. As demonstrated in Table 17, spending will increase by approximately 44.20 SEK when satisfaction increases by one unit. This result coincides with LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983) as well as Fornell, Rust and Dekimpe (2010) who imply that customer satisfaction leads to increased spending.

\[H9: \text{Hypothesis is accepted.}\]

6.1.10 H10: Impulsive buying is positively related to spending
From the results in this study, a positive relationship between impulsive buying and spending has been statistically supported \((p=0.000 < 0.10)\). The multilinear regression analysis shows that the more impulsive customers are, the more money they will spend. Impulsive customers tend to make more impulsive purchases, which logically increases
spending (Rook & Fisher, 1995). The results gathered in this study allow for the conclusion that impulsiveness is in fact positively related to spending, and therefore the hypothesis is accepted. It is shown in Table 17, that for every unit impulse increases, spending increases by approximately 40.60 SEK.

\[ H10: \text{Hypothesis is accepted.} \]

6.1.11 H11: Gratitude is positively related to spending
That gratitude would be positively related to spending is based on theories regarding reciprocal behaviour, that people like to reward effort (Morales, 2005). Since gratitude motivates us to give in return (Komter, 2004) and that according to Dahl, Honea and Manchanda (2005) the most appropriate reciprocal action in a retail store is to spend more money at the store, it was hypothesised that increased feelings of gratitude would lead to increased spending. According to the results from the multilinear regression analysis, the effect is not statistically significant (p=0.968 > 0.10), and the hypothesis is therefore rejected. It cannot be supported that gratitude itself leads to increased spending. As such, the study’s results do not correspond to the reciprocal behaviour explained by previous researchers (e.g. Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005; Cialdini, 2007). The rejection of this hypothesis supports the mechanism shown in the study’s analytical model: that gratitude needs to pass through customer satisfaction to generate increased spending.

\[ H11: \text{Hypothesis is rejected.} \]

6.1.12 H12: Obligation is positively related to spending
The results from the study indicate that obligation does not have any relation to spending. Previous studies suggest that obligation and spending have a positive relationship. As Morales (2005) states, spending can be driven by reciprocal behaviour, which is linked to obligation (Goodwin, Smith & Spiggle, 1990). In this case, a statistical significance of 0.431 is presented, which shows that obligation does not have a statistical effect on spending (p=0.431 > 0.10). The hypothesis cannot be supported and is therefore rejected. Again, the rejection of this hypothesis supports the analytical model’s mechanism: obligation needs to pass through impulse to generate increased spending.

\[ H12: \text{Hypothesis is rejected.} \]
6.2 The Analytical Model

The analytical model was used to design the hypotheses described previously, to statistically accept or reject different relationships established by previous studies on the subject of gift giving. Above is a visualisation of the relationships that were supported in this study. Three relationships were not able to be supported: gift condition - gratitude, gratitude - spending, and obligation - spending. The three hypotheses pertaining to those variables were thus all rejected. All other relationships follow previous theories regarding gift giving. The fact that gratitude and obligation on their own do not affect spending is an interesting finding in the study. It supports the model’s mechanism that for gratitude and obligation to increase spending, the customers also need to feel either satisfied or to feel an impulsiveness to shop. Therefore, the study was not able to support the theory that gratitude and obligation on their own have an additional effect on spending, but that they need to pass through the variables satisfaction and impulse to affect spending.

The most interesting finding in this study’s case, is that a gift only contributes to feelings of obligation, and not gratitude. As such, it is only the negative emotion of obligation that drives the customers’ behaviour when being given a gift, and not the positive emotion of gratitude. It would be preferable for the retailer to only evoke feelings of gratitude since it is shown to increase satisfaction and impulsiveness, while simultaneously leaving the customer with positive emotions. According to Tsang (2006), gratitude will be felt when the beneficiary has a positive experience of the exchange, whereas obligation will be felt when the exchange is deemed negative in any way for the beneficiary. It is therefore assumed that the gift, for some reason, is deemed negative by the respondent. According to the study’s analytical model, the gift leads to feelings of obligation, which in turn leads to increased impulsiveness and increased spending. According to the descriptive
statistics, spending is shown to increase when respondents are given a small gift. However, spending is shown to decrease when respondents are given a large gift, which contradicts Strohmetz et al.’s (2002) view that the value of the gift is positively related to consumer spending. This study indicates that the respondents who received a large gift, which increases obligation, did not act according to the analytical model (i.e. spend more money at the store).

Since obligation affects customer satisfaction negatively ($\beta=-16.4\%$), gift giving is not an ideal sales promotional tool for a retailer offering durable shopping products. As a retailer, it is imperative to increase customer satisfaction since satisfied customers are willing to spend more money (Fornell, Rust & Dekimpe, 2010) and are more likely to return to the store (Hasan et al., 2017). The results from this study imply that satisfaction has a larger effect on spending than impulsiveness does. The decrease in satisfaction (which leads to decreased spending) negates the positive effect that impulsiveness has on spending. The reason for this is the $R^2$ values of the variables. The $R^2$ values of satisfaction and impulse imply that satisfaction is affected by gratitude and obligation more than impulse; therefore, an increase in obligation will lead to a greater decrease in satisfaction than an increase in impulse. Changes in satisfaction are explained moderately well by the variables gratitude and obligation, with an adjusted $R^2$ value of 35%. However, impulse has an adjusted $R^2$ value of only 4.3% which means that changes in impulsiveness are more likely to be explained by other variables than gratitude or obligation. Changes in impulsiveness could instead primarily depend on the customer’s personality, and not the feeling of obligation. As Verplanken and Sato (2011) state, some people are impulsive while others are not.

All theories regarding reciprocity claim that people want to repay kind acts with kindness (e.g. Gouldner, 1960). However, some researchers claim that customers’ reciprocal behaviour could be delayed to their revisit instead of the visit during which they received a gift (e.g. Dahl, Honea & Manchanda, 2005; Kendrick, 1998). When the respondents of the experiment received the small gift, the toffee candy, they consumed it during their shopping visit. They were able to decode the gift immediately. The results gathered in the study consequently show a peak in spending for the customers receiving a small gift. The customers who received a small gift spent, on average, 11% more than those who did not receive a gift. On the other hand, the large gift, the “Rub-It”, was not consumed directly
in the store, and was thus not able to be decoded directly. The customers who received the large gift spent, on average, 40.7% less than those who did not receive any gift. This difference could be due to encoding errors; the message from the giver could have been misinterpreted by the receiver. This could lead to difficulties for the receiver to decode the true meaning of the gift (Belk, 1979). In this case, a “Rub-It” might have been a gift that is out of context for sales promotion purposes. The receivers might have misinterpreted the gift and become cautious instead of thankful for it. Since spending decreased when customers received the large gift, the gift might not have been conveyed successfully, i.e. the customers decoded the intended message incorrectly. In the customers’ eyes, the large gift was seen as an inferior gift in regard to the small gift. The large gift could, in this case, be considered a deterrent, something that makes people want to spend less. The large gift is perhaps only decoded properly after having been used for its purpose. Thus, the customers’ reciprocal behaviour might be delayed until their next visit, after having used the product and being able to decode the intended message of the gift.

Another plausible reason for gift giving to not have fully worked, is that in this retail environment the larger gift might have been interpreted by the customers as manipulative or as a sales technique. According to Dorsch and Kelly (1994), expensive gifts might be seen as manipulative when the relationship between the customer and the firm is strong, as the case is for the case company. This is supported by Morales (2005) and Cialdini (2007) who both state that when a favour is performed with ulterior motive (e.g., as a part of a sales strategy) and with the intent to persuade the consumer to increase spending, the consumer no longer feels the need to reciprocate. However, as Dorsch and Kelly (1994) state, inexpensive gifts are not seen as manipulative and would thus evoke reciprocal behaviour by the customer. The results gathered in this study support these theories, since the small gift resulted in increased spending while the large gift resulted in decreased spending.

Finally, perhaps there was some extraneous variable which was not noticed (and therefore not measured) that affected the experiment’s outcome. What that extraneous variable could be is impossible to find out. However, one assumption is that the store’s loyalty program offer (with a 20% discount on a purchase) might have affected the customer’s attitudes more so than the gift, skewing the results. Whether the results found in this study
were due to the retail environment or due to some extraneous variable cannot be concluded. It should therefore be investigated in future research.
7. Conclusion

In the concluding chapter the study’s two research questions are answered. Thereafter, the study’s contribution is explained. The chapter concludes by discussing what could be done in future research within the subject of gift giving.

7.1 Research Questions

7.1.1 What effect does gift giving have on gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending?

The study’s results have concluded that gift giving has a statistical significant effect on both obligation and customer spending. Gift giving was shown to have an effect on obligation, which increases impulsiveness and decreases customer satisfaction. There was no effect found between gift condition and gratitude, however, gratitude positively affects impulsiveness and customer satisfaction. It was also shown that gratitude and obligation do not have an additional direct effect on spending; they need to pass through impulsiveness and customer satisfaction to affect spending. Since gift giving only affects the negative emotion obligation, which consequently decreases customer satisfaction, it is concluded that durable goods retailers should not implement gifts as a sales promotion.

7.1.2 What impact does the monetary value of the gift have on gratitude, obligation, customer satisfaction, impulsive buying, and spending?

The study’s results show that the value of the gift increases the customer’s feelings of obligation. Since obligation increases impulsive buying, spending should increase when respondents are given a large gift. However, the study shows that customers spent on average around 40.7% less when given a large gift, which might be due to gift giving not working in this retail environment, or due to an extraneous variable affecting the experiment’s outcome.

7.2 The Study’s Contribution

Previously, research regarding gift giving has only been conducted at retailers offering convenience products, where it is easy to spend more than planned. This study has therefore contributed to a better understanding of using gifts as sales promotion at a retailer offering durable shopping products. It has, as such, filled a gap in research regarding gift giving and can be used as a basis for future researchers who wish to explore the subject. From the study’s results, it can be determined that gift giving at a durable shopping products retailer works similarly to gift giving in other retail environments,
however, the results also show an aversion from previous patterns. Namely, that gift giving in this environment only generates negative emotions in the customer receiving the gift. Hence, it can be presumed that gift giving is not a successful sales promotion for a durable goods retailer such as the case company. This is an interesting finding for marketing managers, to use as a basis for which sales promotion would be appropriate. Below is a list of the study’s contribution, which is based on the study’s analysis and conclusions.

- The study’s results show that gift giving at a retailer offering durable shopping products works similarly to previously researched retail environments. Gift giving in the studied retail environment differentiates itself in the sense that it only evokes negative emotions (obligation) and not both positive and negative emotions (gratitude and obligation) as it does for firms offering convenience products.

- Obligation has a negative effect on customer satisfaction, and a positive effect on impulsive buying. The increased impulsiveness results in greater spending. However, since the gift decreases customer satisfaction, it is not an advisable sales promotion to use in this retail environment.

- When the value of the gift increases, obligation increases. The analytical model implies that the customer should therefore spend more money at the store. However, the results in the study show that spending decreases by 40.7% when customers are given a large gift. This might be due to large gifts not working in this type of retail environment (e.g., they might be regarded as manipulative or the gift might not have been decoded correctly), or due to an extraneous variable affecting the field experiment.

7.3 Future Research
Gift giving has been proven to work at retailers who offer non-durable goods, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and pharmacies. However, this study is one of few, if any, that research the effect of gift giving on customer attitudes and spending at a durable goods retailer. It is therefore of interest that gift giving at this type of retailer be further investigated in future research. This study only used one retailer within the tableware and kitchen equipment industry as a case company. It would be interesting for future researchers to research gift giving’s effect for retailers offering durable goods within
either the same, or a different industry. This study only had a limited amount of gifts, which limited the study’s sample size. Further research would preferably be conducted during a longer period than three days to ensure a larger sample size as well as to limit possible extraneous variables’ effects on the experiment. Future studies regarding gift giving at a durable goods retailer could also give greater insights for marketing managers, who need to decide which sales promotion to use.

This study’s data was collected through questionnaires outside the case company. To ensure a greater response rate, the questionnaire was limited to 21 questions. Future studies should include more questions to ensure the statistical accuracy of the variables researched. This would allow for more detailed insights regarding the effect of the gift.

The study showed that gift condition had a statistically significant effect on obligation, however, the relationship between gift condition and gratitude could not be supported. It would therefore be interesting to conduct a similar experiment in the future, to see whether customers at this type of retailer simply do not respond positively to gifts, or whether this study was affected by an unknown extraneous variable.
8. Bibliography

8.1 Literary Sources


Fombelle et al. (forthcoming). Give and Thou Shall Receive: Consumer Reciprocity in a Retail Setting. [Work in Progress].


### 8.2 Electronic Sources


Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Enkät


Vid eventuella frågor angående enkätens användande kan ni höra av er till antingen Axel Bendes (axebe537@student.liu.se) eller Cecilia Rånman (cecra117@student.liu.se).

Först vill vi att du på en skala 1-7 ska ta ställning till ett par påståenden om din upplevelse på [företaget] idag. Längst till höger (siffran 7) betyder att du instämmer helt i påståendet, och längst till vänster (siffran 1) betyder att du inte instämmer.

1. Jag är en person som är impulsiv när jag handlar…………….. □ □ □ □ □ □ □

2. Jag är nöjd med min shoppingupplevelse idag på [företaget]………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □


4. Jag kände en skyldighet att handla hos [företaget] idag…… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

5. Jag gjorde ett eller flera oplanerade köp idag på [företaget]. □ □ □ □ □ □ □

6. Jag blev väl bemött av personalen på [företaget] idag…… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

7. I dag upplevde jag att [företaget] brydde sig om mig som kund………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

8. I dag kände jag mig tvungen att spendera lite extra när jag handlade på [företaget]………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

9. I dag kände jag mig lockad att köpa något som jag inte hade planerat att köpa………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

10. Jag vill återvända till [företaget] i framtiden tack vare dagens upplevelse………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

11. Jag kände jag mig tacksam över bemötandet från personalen på [företaget] idag och ville därför visa min uppskattning till dem………………………………………………………… □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Enkäten fortsätter på nästa sida, var vänligen och vänd blad →
14. Hur mycket handlade du för i butiken idag?

____________________ kr (Titta gärna på kvittot när du svarar).

15. Jag som fyller i enkäten är:  Man ☐  Kvinna ☐

16. Jag är född år: ____________________

Efter mitt besök på [företaget] idag känner jag:

17. En tacksamhet till företaget...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18. En skyldighet till företaget......................

19. En likgiltighet till företaget......................

20. Ett förtroende för företaget......................

21. Fick du en gåva när du gick in i butiken idag? _______Ja _______Nej

Tack för att du svarade på vår enkät. Vi hoppas att du får en fortsatt trevlig dag!
### Appendix 2 Factor Analysis

**Step 1.**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td></td>
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### Appendix 3 Multicollinearity

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Appendix 4 Mean Values and ANOVA-analyses

**Dependent Variable: Gratitude. Factor: Gift Condition**

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<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
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**Dependent Variable: Obligation. Factor: Gift Condition**

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<th>Sum</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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