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Master Thesis in MSc in Business Administration

"Food retailing system & its influence on customer's behavior and perception of food products"

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ABSTRACT

Customers behavior has been always one of the most important points of the marketing studies. Predicting and understanding how and why customers behave is a great challenge. Besides, there are so many variables involved in the consumption process, that it is not an easy task to establish models to understand it. Human behavior is based not only on personal characteristics, but also on the psychological, environmental, social and cultural environment that they are submitted. Predicting and understanding the behavior and habits of customers in case of food products or their daily intake foods is known to be a great challenge.

However, there are different retailing system that deliver the food products from producers and manufacturer to customers. like in Sweden retailing system is mostly performed by self-service system while in Iran it is mostly based on full-service system. The differences between the retailing system of these two countries brought up the idea that retailing system can also act as a factor which can influence customers behavior, attitudes and perception to food products and their safeties.

Therefore, this research has studied the change in retailing system trends and retailing system in Sweden & Iran. Moreover, by help of sample of customers in these two countries the behavior and habits of them upon food products has been considered and studied. Due to the gathered data and analysis, it seems that the retailing systems and the way that customers could have access to the products can have impact and influences on their behavior and habits upon the food products and food products safeties.

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I would also like to send my love and appreciations to my dearest husband Roozbeh and my family whom without their encouragements, love and supports reaching to the successes was impossible.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Long time ago the food stores were small and were located close to the households neighborhoods, In those days, the grocer/owner knew most of the customers by name and many of their food preferences and needs. (Kjellberg, Hans, and Helgesson, Claes-Fredrik, 2007) The store was probably a family operation and the grocer's family may have lived right in the neighborhood, if not above the store itself. That type of customer intimacy has largely disappeared as large supermarkets replaced grocery stores and supermarket chains have increasingly replaced independent ownership in many parts of the world. (Rod Hawkes, 2002) However, recently, retail trade has tended to become more concentrated, operating through larger and fewer outlets like here in Sweden. This development has been driven both by factors internal to the retail trade and by consumer factors; a few examples of factors affecting the trend are economies of scale, better storage possibilities and increased mobility. Consumer preferences have also contributed to this concentration of the retail trade; more mobile, better-off consumers often prefer the hypermarket, for example, with its large range of stock and reasonable prices, to the neighborhood grocery store. . (Centre for Transport Research on environmental and health Impacts and Policy) The period between 1900 and 1930 was one of marked growth in the numbers of grocery multiples. It was also a time of intense competition and the search for new, efficient ways of creating a high volume of sales. Retailers experimented with new ways of selling and structure changes from full-service retailing to self-service (Gareth Shaw, Louise Curth & Andrew Alexander, 2004). Increasingly, self-service was also advocated as a solution to some retail problems, such as uneven workload, labor shortage and growing labor costs (Hans Kjellberg, Claes-Fredrik Helgesson, 2007 from Borgström, 1948). The idea of self-service retailing had spread from the US to Sweden by 1940. During the war, the Consumer Co-operation conducted two short-lived self-service experiments, whereas the private retailer's attention was limited to a few articles in trade journals (e.g., ICA Tidningen, 1943: 1 and 1943: 7). These articles described central features of self-service in a way remarkably similar to the solution patented by Clarence Saunders. (Hans Kjellberg, Claes-Fredrik Helgesson, 2007 from Henell 1940, 1945, Freeman, 1992, Saunders, 1917)

Although in some countries like Iran self-service retailing system has taken place by establishing the supermarkets and hypermarkets, but still old process of full service retailing and shopping from the independent stores or the stores with specified products is the most popular among customers. However, Iran has combination and varieties of retailing systems like traditional grocery stores, modern medium size supers, specific independent shops and hypermarkets.

Among all the factors that influences changes in food retailing and make it to be performed in various types and structures, the most dramatic factor and change is; the change in consumer demographics and demand preferences. (Judith M. Whipple, H. Christopher Peterson, George Young, David Schweikhardt, 2000) Demographic changes or various demands and perception of the customers concerning the food and food products can or may lead to change in customer's behavior and purchasing decision-making. Consumer behavior is one of the most stimulating areas in marketing studies. First understanding how and why consumers behave is a great challenge. Besides, there are so many variables involved in the consumption process, that it is not

an easy task to establish a model to understand it. Human behavior is based not only on personal characteristics, but also on the psychological, environmental, social and cultural environment that they are submitted. (Marcia Dutra de Barcellos, 2005)

However, in general it can be said that customer behavior is included the technical, economic, demographic, institutional and cultural developments, and thus describes the world the consumers are living in. (Gabriella Vindigni, Marco A. Janssen, Wander Jager, 2001)

Customer's behavior is defined as human being activity focused on the purchasing, consuming and using of the products and services, by making decisions before and after purchasing (Vladislava Bartosevicien, Linas Gudonavicius, Gintaras Šaparnis. 2005 from Engel, Blakwell, Miniard, 1995; Solomon,1999; Pranulis, Pajuodis, Urbonavicius, Virvilait,1999; Urbanskien, Clottey,Jakštys,2000; Stankevicien,2004.)

1.2 Introduction to research

1.2.1 Problem discussion

Differences in retailing systems in Iran and Sweden established the idea to study and compare customer's behavior, their attitudes and perception towards food products and their safety in mentioned countries. Due to the fact that, in modern retailing system the communication between manufacturer or retailer and the customers are mostly trough the products labels, it seems quite interesting to consider this factor while performing the study. However, this research hypothesis is to study, if the varying retailing system can lead to different purchasing behavior, demand or attitudes to food products, besides, factors like demographic, price, quality and product information can influence the customer purchasing decision.

1.2.2 Research questions

All the following questions assumed to be answered by considering and analyzing the behavior and attitudes of groups of customers from Iran and Sweden;

- How can demographic factors like age, sex, education etc. influence the customer's behavior and their purchasing habits?
- What is customer's perception of food safety?
- Does food product label influence customer purchasing decision?
- What are the main factors that attract customers attention to food product labels?
- Can different retailing system in Sweden and Iran lead to different purchasing behavior and habit of customers?

1.2.3 Research aims and objectives

The main objective of this survey is to study the customers behaviors in Sweden and Iran and compare their attitudes by considering their different retailing market, and conclude that retailing system can also be considered as an influencing factor on customer attitudes and behavior beside the factors such as demographic, cultural, social and environmental.

1.2.4 Research structure

This section by explaining the main subjects of each chapters is designed to help the readers having an overview to this thesis. Since we are already in chapter one which touched upon a background and introduction to the research, I would start with chapter two as it comes in follow;

Chapter Two, Changing trend of retailing from full-service to self-service, would explain and summarize the change in retailing system from full-service to self-service, would mention the originality of this trend of change and would compare the traditional and modern system.

Chapter three, Customer behavior & their purchasing attitudes upon food products, would define customer behavior and would point out some factors that would influence customers habit, behavior and attitudes toward food product and purchasing decision making.

Chapter four, Food retailing system in Sweden & Iran, would explain the retailing systems in Sweden and Iran with summarized history and comparison, and finally develops the hypothesis of the probable influence of these various retailing systems on customers behavior and their attitudes to food products and their safeties.

Chapter five, Research Methodology, would talk about the way that research conducted and would point out the questionnaire that have been designed to answer the research questions. The methods and tools that the data and information have been analyzed are summarized too.

Chapter six, Analysis, would carry the analysis with the explanation of the tables and charts and comparison of the results.

Chapter seven, Conclusion, would conclude the whole survey and would point out if the survey hypothesis has been correct and would also carry the answers of the research questions.

Finally the keywords to this research could be; Retailing system, Customer behavior, Sweden retailing, Iran retailing, food products.

1.2.5 Research limitation

The most important problem and limitation which I faced with during my research was “time restriction”. Due to this problem, I had to study the demographic factors and influence of retailing system more general than in details. By the way, in order to have opinions of older customers in Sweden, I planned to translate the questionnaire to Swedish, but during the short period of time, I had to collect the data just by English questionnaire.
Although I believe, I could have more accurate work & research by having bigger sample size of customers, time restriction made me to start analyzing the responses with 30 questionnaires from each country.
I should also mention the difficulties gathering data from Iran, while I wasn’t there and I had to ask someone to distribute the questionnaires and send them back to me.
However, the aim and objective to perform this research is gained, but I wish I could have a chance in future to perform more accurate research with more time and more data to study.

CHAPTER TWO: CHANGING TREND OF RETAILING FROM FULL-SERVICE TO SELF-SERVICE

Food retailers have undergone tremendous change in the last two decades in most of the European area. Several factors have contributed to this change: substantial industry consolidation; globalization; retail format proliferation; alternative delivery options; and threatened profit margins. Above all the changes impacting food retailing, the most dramatic change is; the change in consumer demographics and demand preferences. All these factors have caused the retailers to change from small stores and behind a counter service to big modern supermarkets with self-service. These changes have driven consumers to demand greater convenience, higher quality, more variety, and better nutrition, and more services while maintaining a focus on price. (Judith M. Whipple, H. Christopher Peterson, George Young, David Schweikhardt, 2000)

Shaw, Curth and Alexander state that supermarkets are originated in the United States, although there are differing opinions as to the exact details. What is certain is that changes in store design and selling techniques were products of mass retail distribution brought by the American chain stores. The period between 1900 and 1930 was one of marked growth in the numbers of grocery multiples. It was also a time of intense competition and the search for new, efficient ways of creating a high volume of sales. Retailers experimented with new ways of selling, and one such experiment was by Clarence Saunders in Memphis, Tennessee, who opened his first self-service grocery store in 1916. They brought some key ideas that formed the basis of self-service operations in grocery retailing; a layout that encouraged the circulation of customers throughout the store; the arrangement of products that permitted customers to compare and handle all the items; and a system of checking and recording the purchases made by customers located at the exit, which is checkout system. (Gareth Shaw, Louise Curth & Andrew Alexander, 2004)

James and Hagen insist that from the 1920s to the 1970s, food retailing underwent a profound evolution in the United States. Through industrialization and urbanization, consumers increasingly depended on markets for their food needs and increasingly bought packaged foods. A new type of food retailer (supermarkets - large full- line, self-serve stores) gained considerable market share at the expense of traditional, small, limited- line clerk-service stores. These supermarkets used economies of scale and market power, along with inventory and merchandising technologies to compete for business through price, assortment, advertising, reliability and customer service. (James M. Hagen, 2002)

Recently, retail trade has tended to become more concentrated, operating through larger and fewer outlets. This development has been driven both by factors internal to the retail trade and by consumer factors; a few examples of factors affecting the trend are economies of scale, better storage possibilities and increased mobility. Consumer preferences have also contributed to this concentration of the retail trade; more mobile, better-off consumers often prefer the hypermarket, for example, with its large range of stock and reasonable prices, to the neighborhood grocery store. On the other hand, the concentration of the retail trade on fewer outlets has given problems to other groups of consumers, e.g. the less mobile. Moreover, as a consequence of this concentration, many people now have to travel longer distances in order to shop.(Centre for Transport Research on environmental and health Impacts and Policy)

Kompil and Celik in their study of changing retailing system in Turkey explain that, up to 1950, small or medium size store units dominated the retail sectors almost in the whole part of the world. At the lowest level the neighborhood center, contain the retail units selling mostly food

and immediate household consumption goods and the highest, mono or multi-nuclei city centers including the retail units selling higher level consumption goods such as durables etc. along with service, office, and entertainment units. This traditional structure of retail environment started to change after 1950s primarily in developed nations as a consequence of rising affluence and demand. However, the current transformation process of retailing so called retail revolution has started with the alterations after 1970s and spread over the world. (Mert Kompil & H. Murat Celik, 2006)

Shaw, Curth and Alexander in their study of self service and supermarkets in Britain state that the major trends in British society since the end of the second world war has been the so-called 'Americanisation' of Britain. In early post-war Britain the Americanisation of retailing was very much represented by the coming of self-service methods and especially the development of the supermarket. The concept of the supermarket helped transform the culture of retailing and, with it, the way people shopped. As a result, the consumer's relationship to food and other everyday goods changed dramatically, not only in the way in which they were purchased, but also what was consumed. (Gareth Shaw, Louise Curth & Andrew Alexander, 2004)

Further more, Reardon, Barrett, Berdegue, insist that; as development proceed in a country markets shift from fragmented, local markets such as village markets with wholesale and retail functions, to larger, centralized wholesale markets. This "de-fragmentation" tends to occur first in dry goods such as grains and later in fresh products like fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, eggs, and milk. There is progressive fresh food market integration through the rise of medium/long distance trade and the establishment of specialized production areas, as one would expect from the theory of specialization and comparative advantage. This integration is accelerated by improvements in roads and urbanization, and thus takes place at different rates over regions, countries, and zones. (Thomas Reardon, C. Peter Timmer, Christopher B. Barrett, Julio Berdegue, 2003)

As Kjellberg, Helgesson, Fredrik have mentioned before; long time ago the food store were small ones which were located in close to the households neighborhoods, In those days, the grocer/owner knew most of the customers by name and many of their food preferences and needs. They could give the brief information to the customers about the food product that they are selling, and make the customers feel convinced about buying a product. That type of intimacy interaction between customer and retailer has largely disappeared as large supermarkets replaced grocery stores and supermarket chains have increasingly replaced independent ownership in many parts of the world. Due to this fact, the nature of shopping has changed too. Figures 1.1&1.2 show the different shopping process in full-service stores and self-service supermarkets. (Hans Kjellberg, Claes-Fredrik Helgesson, 2007)

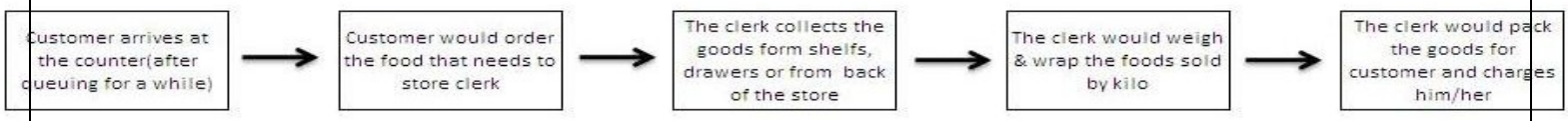

Figure 2.1: Old purchasing process (full-service)

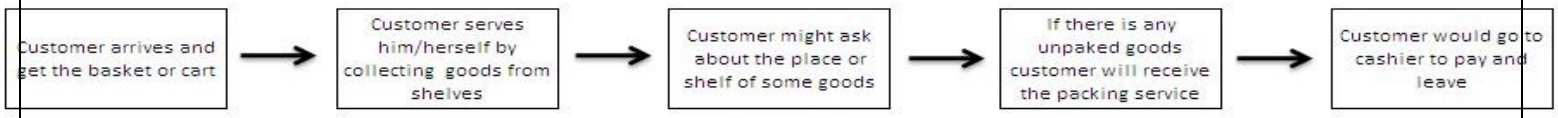

Figure 2.2: New purchasing process (self-service)

at the cashier desk, where customer cannot find a chance to ask about the food products details and the cashier usually is not informed enough to give those information. This is one of the exact and big differences between shopping processes in modern system and the old one. The lack of product expertise, the one who used to convey the confidence about the food product to customer, can be seen in supermarkets now a day. In self-service system of shopping the only knowledge of customers about a product is limited to a small box of ingredients, the stamps that shows the different standards issues on the label of the products as general. In addition, some changes also happened to customers purchasing behaviors, for instance the time that would allocate for shopping is decreased while they are buying their food products from supermarkets, or lower price might affect their purchasing decision of the product rather than quality and etc.

Andre Tordjman insist that due to the tremendous change in Europe food retailing system the proportion of the household budget spent on food has fallen and this relative fall in food spending has been accompanied by the loss of 400,000 grocery stores. This trend is again most advanced in the north of Europe: in 1990 there was one grocery store per 1,000 inhabitants in the UK, and three in Italy, in 1970. However, food retailing in Europe remains marked by differences in consumer behavior, dominant retail formats, own brands, strategies and financial ratios. Tordjman also has categorized the variety of food retailing format in figure 1.3. (Andre Tordjman, 1994)

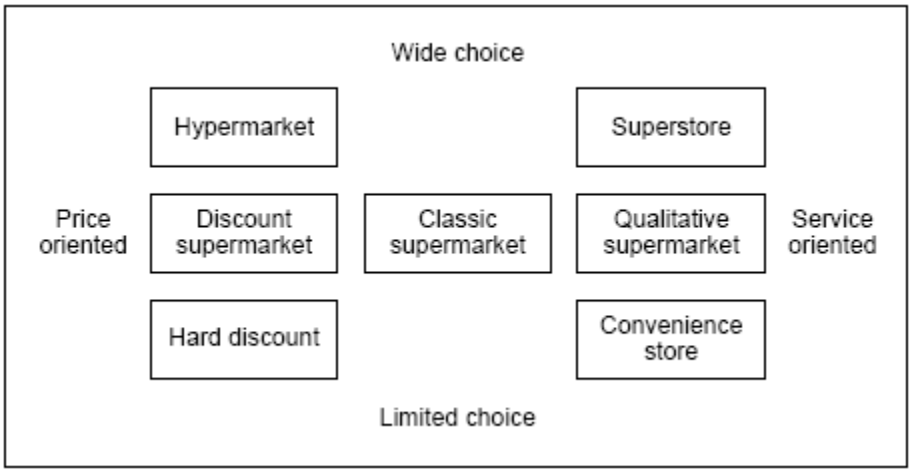

Figure 2.3: Europe food retailing format

CHAPTER THREE: CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR & THEIR PURCHASING ATTITUDES UPON FOOD PRODUCTS

According to Ajzen and Fishbein 1975, behavior is a function of behavioral intentions, which are themselves a function of attitudes and subjective norms. Attitude is defined as an effective evaluation, which is made up of beliefs about the consequences of behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein have suggested a developed attitude-behavior model, which says attitudes and subjective norms affect behavioral intentions, which in turn affect the final behavior. Therefore, behavioral intentions play a mediating role between attitudes and behavior and between subjective norms and behavior. However, Liska 1974, Schuman and Johanson 1976, Ajzen & Fishbein 1977 stated that attitude-behavior consistency or inconsistency can be explained by the effect of certain contingent variables. By the way, researches aimed at identifying and introducing these contingent conditions showed that attitude-behavior consistency depends on environmental characteristics such as social visibility of behavior and on personality characteristics such as self-monitoring and self-reflection. The social visibility of their behavior might push people to comply with the expectations of the spectators rather than with their own attitudes. Olson and Hafer 1990 stated that individuals with high self-monitoring can be expected to show a greater conformity to the social values and expectations of significant others, leading to inconsistency between attitudes and behavior. (Kavak & Gumusluoglu, 2007)

Consumer behavior is one of the most stimulating areas in marketing studies. First understanding how and why consumers behave is a great challenge. Besides, there are so many variables involved in the consumption process, that it is not an easy task to establish models to understand it. Human behavior is based not only on personal characteristics, but also on the psychological, environmental, social and cultural environment that they are submitted. (Marcia Dutra de Barcellos, 2005)

However, in general it can be said that customer behavior is included the technical, economic, demographic, institutional and cultural developments, and thus describes the world the consumers are living in. (Gabriella Vindigni, Marco A. Janssen, Wander Jager, 2001)

Customer's behavior is defined as human being activity focused on the purchasing, consuming and using of the products and services, by making decisions before and after purchasing (Vladislava Bartosevicien, Linas Gudonavicius, Gintaras Šaparnis. 2005 from Engel, Blakwell, Miniard, 1995; Solomon,1999; Pranulis, Pajuodis, Urbonavicius, Virvilait,1999; Urbanskien, Clottey,Jakštys,2000; Stankevicien,2004.)

People often associate consumption-related behaviors with the affective state they are experiencing. Indeed, incidental affect—the affect consumers imbue from their environment in isolation to the task at hand—has been shown to influence in-store shopping and in-home food choice. (Garg, Wansink & Inman, 2007 from Woodruffe 1997 & Hetherington and MacDiarmid 1993) . There are different factors and that would affect the behavior of customers and there are various different aspects to study these behaviors and attitudes. However, some of the factors would be mentioned as follow, which would efficiently influence on the behavior, attitudes and perception of the customers.

Social and environmental issue can affect consumer behavior as mentioned above, that is consumers incorporate social issue into their purchase decisions by evaluating the consequences of their consumption upon society. Consumer who consider environment important will therefore evaluate the environmental consequences associated with the purchase of products. For example and individual concerned about garbage, generated (environmental issue) could consider

the disposal of a product's packaging (environmental consequences) to be important when shopping for products. More over by considering the environmental issues, customer may just purchase an environmentally responsible product. These products not only satisfy customer's immediate needs and wants but also serve to benefit the environment in long term. (Scott B Follows, David Jobber, 2000)

Consumer ethnocentrism is defined as the attitudes of consumers towards purchasing foreign products versus domestic products. The definition can be considered as a factor, which can have a great role in customer behavior and purchasing food habits. Ethnocentrism gives customers and identity or feeling of belongingness, which may give them the habit of not purchasing the foreign-made products, since they think it is harmful for domestic market and economy. (Kavak & Gumusluoglu, 2007)

The country-of-origin effect has been studied also as an option, which could have a direct effect on customer purchasing behavior. That is the effect of a customers knowing or willing to know, where a product was made on his or her evaluation or final purchasing decision of that products. This may also contains of the concept that highly ethnocentric customers have more favorable attitudes and perception about the products from culturally similar countries, therefore there are more willingness to purchase those products. (Watson and Wright 2000 from Kava & Gumusluoglu, 2007)

One of efficient factors that can be mentioned which may change the habit of customers to food products purchasing is rising the household income. Along with rising wages go increased consumer confidence and a trend toward basing purchase decisions on lifestyle preferences rather than price. Although price is still an important consideration among food shoppers, convenience and health consciousness will gain in importance recently. The growing emphasis on a healthy lifestyle will enforce the customer to look for more fresh products. (Accession nations' consumers get selective, Market Europe journal, 2004)

According to Luomala Food and eating, carry a large number of meanings that affect consumers' food choice behaviors. The great diversity and subtlety of these meanings represent a formidable challenge for covering them through conceptual means. When focusing specifically on the role of the origin of food as a source of meanings and as a determinant of choice behaviors, some researchers have divided the effects of 'origin' into cognitive, affective and normative aspects Luomala states that the origin of food influences consumer decision-making (attitudes, evaluation, willingness to buy, choice) in substantial and complex ways.

In regard to attitudes, compared to more collectivistic consumers, the ones who are more individualistic have a more critical attitude towards domestic products. Second, consumers evaluate food products more favorably when a low cultural distance or an interest in foreign cultures prevails, compared to consumers who have a high cultural distance or a lack of interest in foreign cultures. Third, consumers who identify themselves strongly with a given region are willing to pay significantly more for products from that region. Finally, the choice of domestic products relates negatively to consumers perceived costs of helping and positively to internalized responsibility for helping, when helping refers to a feeling of sharing a common fate with fellow citizens and social concern for fellow members of their society. (Harri T. Luomala 2007 from Gürhan-Canliand & Maheswaran, 2000. Juric and Worsley, 1998. Skuras and Vakrou, 2002. Granzin and Olsen 1998) People in different countries by different cultures have various perceptions about food products and cooking them.

Throughout history, the food consumption patterns have been changing continuously. Remarkable changes took place as regards the type of foods people eat (e.g. the introduction of the potato in Europe or the consumption of organ meat). The way food grows (e.g. The

introduction of pesticides, bio-industry). How the food processed (e.g. frozen food, microwaves) and the table manners (e.g. the introduction of the fork in medieval Europe, fast food). All these changes more or less slowly conquered the food consumption habits of the masses, may it be in centuries (the use of the fork) or within a decade (the microwave). Many factors determine the speed and degree to which such changes diffuse through the population. The factors like; innovation in food products, communication channels involved, nature of the social system can have effective influence in change of the consumers habit and behavior. Many behavioral theories, like theories about human needs, motivational processes, social comparison theory, social learning theory, theory of reasoned action and so on, all explain parts of the processes that determine consumer behavior. (Gabriella Vindigni, Marco A. Janssen, Wander Jager, 2001).

Annechen Bahr Bugge (2003) in the research of cooking- as Identity work, explains that preparation of food has been traditionally regarded as a practical and not a theoretical pastime, a manual but not a mental activity, a skill but not an art. In modern aspect of life or even in some countries, they still have the same idea and prefer to just eat their daily food out of home without spending any extra money or time for cooking it. Nevertheless, in some other countries like Iran, domestic cook interpret as an artist, an expert, a professions, a protector of nature, a good mother or a good wife. These interpretations make daily cooking something beyond the routine housework and sometimes it can work as part of self-presentation and identity formation. Therefore, purchasing the food products can receive the additional value and attention, which would lead to spending more time and money to that, because having a nice and lovely meal needs fresh and healthy ingredients. However, shopping food products and cooking them can also turned to be a routine activity which customers would like to finish it as quickly as possible without spending nor time neither money for that. Cultural background, age differentiations and education, can influence a customer and make them have various attributes and translation of food products nature, originality and safety.

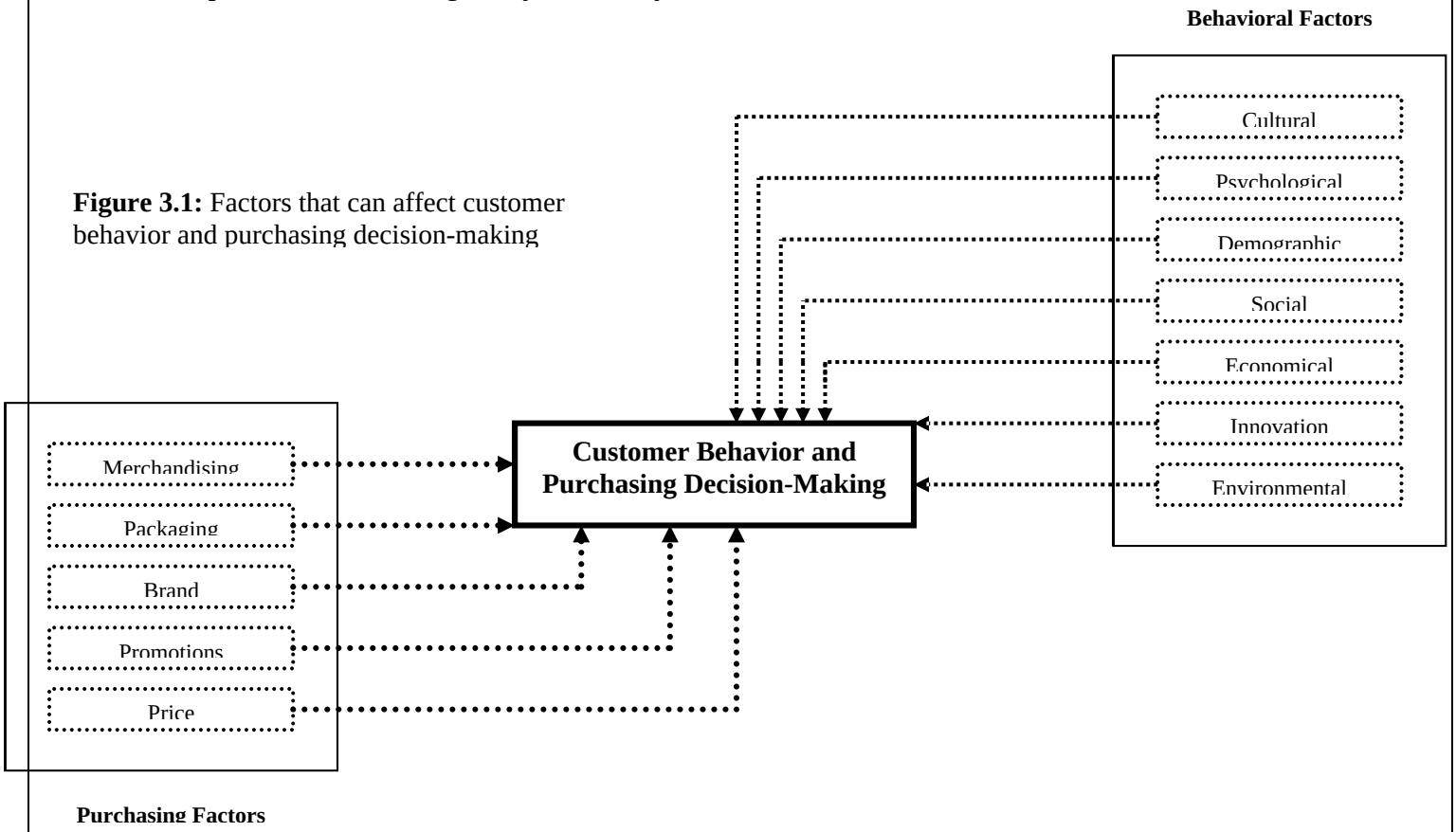

Figure 3.1: Factors that can affect customer behavior and purchasing decision-making

Among mentioned factors that would affect the customers, behavior and purchasing decision there are some other factors that would make customers convince to buy or not buy some food products. These are the influences and options, which would come to the customers while they are entering to the shops, self-service or full-service ones; like, merchandising, brand, price, package, product expertise etc. figure 2.1 has summarize some of these factors while, for sure there might be some other which haven't been mentioned here.
Drichoutis, Lazaridis & Nayga Jr in their research for purchasing behavior state that younger consumers, those with higher education and income who engage in nutritional label use behavior and do not prepare food for their household are more likely to have low involvement with food. Less distinctive characteristics are apparent for the highly involved consumers. Different consumer profiles are also associated with different aspects of food involvement based on importance attached to price, ease of preparation, nutrition, taste, and brand name. They have also summarized the factors that can affect purchasing decision making of customers, in figure 2.2 (Andreas C. Drichoutis, Panagiotis Lazaridis & Rodolfo M. Nayga Jr, June 2006)

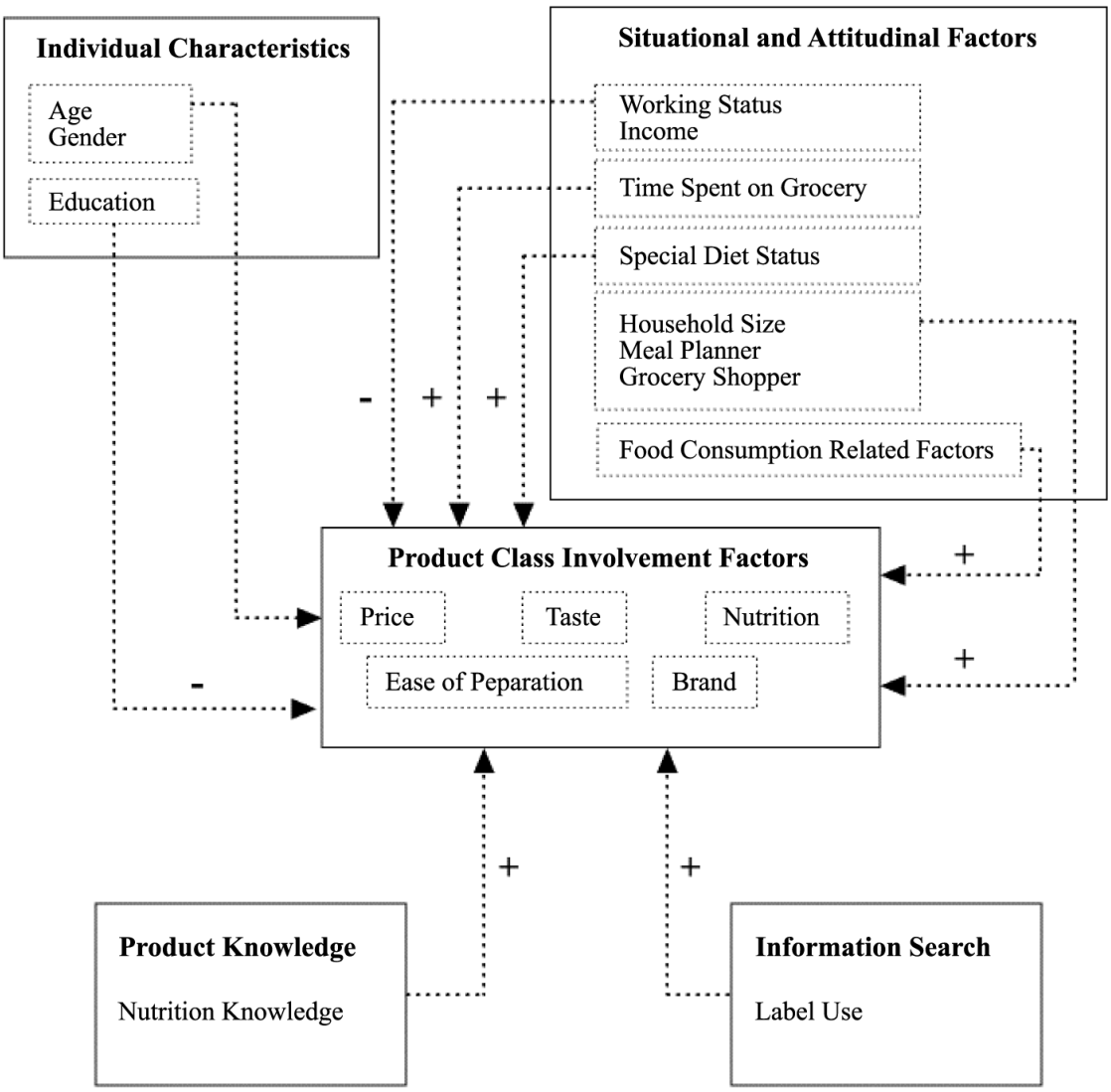

Figure 3.2: Conceptual model and proposed relations

CHAPTER FOUR: FOOD RETAILING SYSTEMS IN SWEDEN AND IRAN

4.1 Sweden food retailing market

The idea of self-service retailing had spread from the US to Sweden by 1940. During the war, the Consumer Co-operation conducted two short-lived self-service experiments, whereas the private retailers attention was limited to a few articles in trade journals (e.g., ICA Tidningen, 1943: 1 and 1943: 7). These articles described central features of self-service in a way remarkably similar to the solution patented by Clarence Saunders. (Hans Kjellberg, Claes-Fredrik Helgesson, 2007 from Henell 1940, 1945, Freeman, 1992, Saunders, 1917)

Generally, consumers' purchasing habits of groceries and daily commodities do not differ from one year to another. The significant change rather concerns localization and type of store when purchasing these products. During the 1970's and the first part of the 1980's, retail stores did not differ much concerning size, type of stores, marketing and pricing. This is, among other things, explained by price regulations and a strictly applied local monopoly. However, lately the food retail market has experienced a structural reformation, resulting in fewer stores; in which shape and store arrangement differ in comparison to earlier structures. (Malin Blank & Anna Maria Persson, 2006, from Konkurrensverket rapportserie 2002:6, " Dagligvaruhandeln – struktur, ägarform och relation till leverantörer", AB Dangårdsgrafiska, Ödeshög, p. 12.)

Since the 1990's retail stores is commonly divided into more specific categories, primarily hypermarkets, traditional retail stores, traffic and service stores, grocery stores and discount stores. Each category represents its own trading concept, with respect to size, product mix, prices, service and geographic positions. Variations among these variables are of great relevance for customer expectations and choice of store, meaning that retailers' choice of store type is fundamental when competing for customers. Figure 3.1 would express these categories easier to understand. (Malin Blank & Anna Maria Persson, 2006, from Konkurrensverkets Rapportserie 2002:6, p.14)

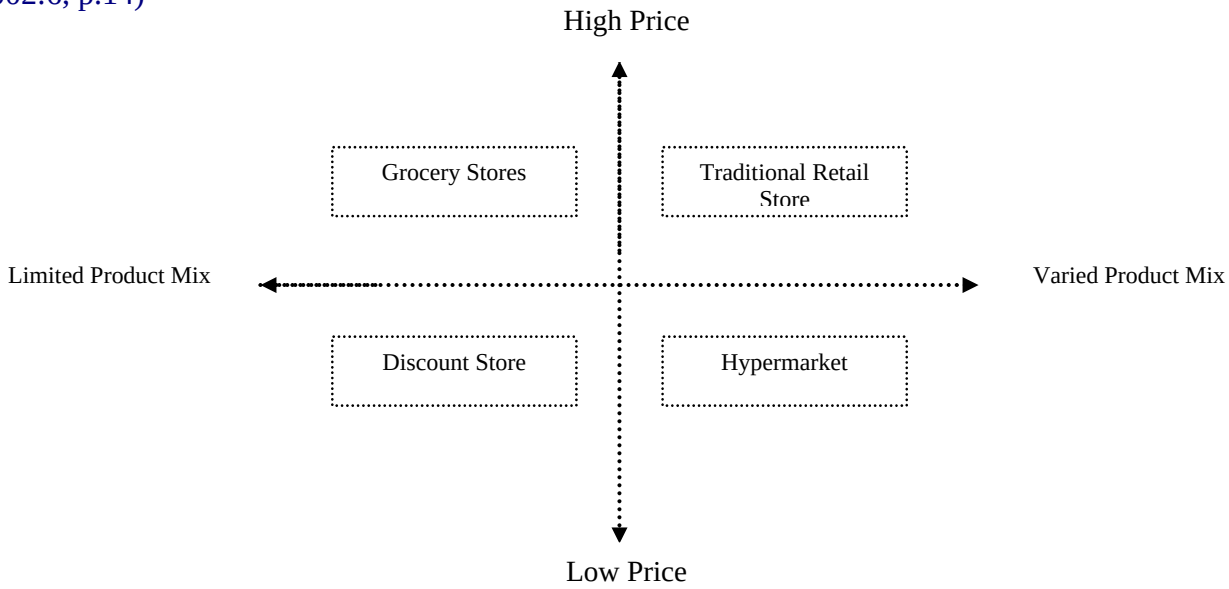

Figure 4.1: Store type in Swedish retail market

- **Hypermarkets;** Hypermarkets are self-service stores with a sales area of no less than 2500 square meters. Self-service dominates which have complete range of product mixes, from food products to home products, cloth and toys and etc. Furthermore, stores are given to having an external geographic position with at least 300 parking spaces.
- **Traditional Retail stores;** Retail stores are traditional stores for retail sales, with fairly varied product mixes. Very often (manual) counters for specific goods, such as cheese, fish, cured meats and provisions, are provided. Services are on a very high level, which is reflected by higher than average prices.
- **Traffic stores, Service stores and Grocery stores;** Traffic stores, service stores and grocery stores offer a very limited product mix at high prices. However, high prices are due to high services and the stores aim to increase their availability for customers by extending opening hours.
- **Discount stores;** There is no exact definition of a discount store, besides that they are characterized as stores with lower price ranges than the average and with limited product mixes. Low prices are maintained through lower service, frugal store decorations and product displays of goods.

According to Malin Blank & Anna Maria Persson, food retailing in Sweden has mainly performed by the affiliation of store chains. For years, three major groupings ICA, Axfood AB and COOP altogether are controlling about 89 percent of total market shares in 2002. ICA has considered as the largest actor who get the 44% of the market share solely. They state that even by entering the foreign discount stores like German Lidl and Danish Netto, those three food retailers still have the main market share in food retailing in Sweden.
Three companies, ICA, Coop and Axfood, together have great role in the Swedish retail market. Coop is adapting to consumer trends and has improved its range of organic[1] and local alternatives. Coop Extra is doing well, while Coop Forum has reported weaker results. Axfood's discount chain, Willy:s, which has generated much of the company's success in previous years, noted weaker development in 2007. Sales for Swedish ICA stores rose by 5.7 percent, and their share of the Swedish food retail market climbed to 36.8 percent (36.5). The average purchase increased. Discounters were quickly gaining ground in the market a few years ago. Price cuts by traditional players have since strengthened their position, however. Price is no longer as decisive to which stores consumers choose; many are more interested in other considerations, such as a wide selection, high quality and green alternatives. During the year, ICA acquired 23 stores or store locations from the discount chain Netto and converted six of them to ICA Nära stores and one to an ICA Supermarket. The rest were sold to third parties. Lidl is adapting to the Swedish market by adding more brands that Swedish consumers are familiar with, as well as products with higher quality. (The ICA Group's annual report, 2007)

ICA Group is one of the Nordic region's leading retail companies, with around 2,250 of its own and retailer-owned stores in Sweden, Norway and the Baltic countries. The Group includes ICA Sverige, ICA Norge and Rimi Baltic. ICA also offers financial services to Swedish customers through ICA Banken. ICA AB is 40 percent owned by Hakon Invest AB (publ) of Sweden and 60 percent by Royal Ahold N.V. of the Netherlands. Through a shareholder agreement, Royal Ahold

[1] Organic foods are the group of foods grown under natural conditions, without the use of inorganic fertilizers, peticides or herbicides, and either not processed or processed without the use of additives. (Oxford reference online)

and Hakon Invest jointly control ICA AB. Royal Ahold is a Dutch retail group listed on the stock exchange in Amsterdam. Hakon Invest, which is listed on the Nordic Exchange, is an investment company specializing in the Nordic retail sector. It is 67 percent owned by ICA-handlarnas Förbund, the member organization for Sweden's ICA retailers. The remaining 33 percent is owned by individual shareholders. ICA Sverige is one of Sweden's leading food retail companies. It is the principal supplier to ICA retailers, who own and manage their stores as independent businesses. In 2007, ICA Sverige posted revenue of SEK 51,438 million. Sales in the 1,382 stores amounted to approximately SEK 80,737 million, excluding VAT[2]. ICA market share, which is based on food sales in Sweden according to the National Accounts and the industry standard has been 36.8% in 2007. Table 3.1 contains the number of ICA stores and sales. (The ICA Group's annual report, 2007)

Store formats	Description	No. of stores	Sales excl. VAT	No. of products
ICA nära	ICA Nära are small, convenient stores with good service, a narrow product range and quality fresh foods. Many serve as pick-up sites for Apoteket and Systembolaget, the state-run pharmacy and alcohol monopolies, and handle sales for ATG, the Swedish off-track betting service.	743	SEK 12,732 m	3,000–5,000
ICA Supermarket	At ICA Supermarket, customers can find most of what they need on a daily basis or for special occasions. Personal service is high, and the stores carry a wide range of fresh foods.	460	SEK 27,695 m	6,000–10,000
ICA KVANTUM	ICA Kvantum stores are designed to be the leading supermarket in their communities, with food for everyday, weekends and special occasions. They offer a variety of fresh food items, anti-allergy foods, healthy, organic alternatives and local products.	119	SEK 20,596 m	10,000–30,000
MAXI ICA STORMARKNAD	At Maxi ICA Hypermarkets, customers will find everything they need at good prices under one roof. In addition to a wide variety of foods, these stores carry books, clothes, housewares, sporting goods and everything for the garden. They have extended opening hours and are conveniently located for customers who drive to the store.	60	SEK 19,714 m	30,000–45,000

Table 4.1: ICA overview

Axfood conducts food retail and wholesale trade in Sweden. The Group's retail operations are conducted through the wholly owned Willys, Hemköp and PrisXtra chains, comprising 221 stores in all. In addition, Axfood collaborates with a large number of proprietor-run stores that are tied to Axfood through agreements. These include stores within the Hemköp and Willys chains as well as stores run under the Handlar'n and Tempo profiles. In all, Axfood collaborates with approximately 500 proprietor-run stores. Wholesale business is conducted through Dagab and

[2] Value added tax

Axfood Närlivs. Axfood is listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange, Nordic Large Cap list. Axel Johnson AB is the principal owner with approximately 46% of the shares. Axfood has a 17% market share in Sweden with SEK 29,189 m (28,808) sales in 2007 increased 1.3%. Table 3.2 gives the general overview about Axfood. (Axfood website)

Store chains:	
Hemköp	79 wholly owned stores 87 franchise stores
Willys	137 wholly owned stores of which are 32 Willys hemma stores 3 franchise stores
PrisXtra	5 wholly owned stores, 1 internetstore
Partihandel:	
Dagab	2 distribution centers 2 cold-storage warehouse
Axfood Närlivs	3 distribution centers 20 cash and carry outlets

Table 4.2: Axfood overview

Coop Sverige operates FMCG[3] shops in chains like Coop Forum, Coop Extra, Coop Konsum, Coop Nära, and Coop Bygg. The consumer cooperative movement is well established in retail trading, with some 700 Coop shops all over Sweden. Coop Sverige accounts for about 55% of all consumer cooperative FMCG turnovers.

Coop Konsum concentrates on top quality fresh produce plus a broad range of other food. The shops also have Sweden's largest range of organic food. The shops are mostly in urban areas and had sales volume of 6,157 million SEK in 167 shops in 2007.

Coop Extra shops focus on low everyday prices across the entire range. They always have multi-buy offers, meaning that customers pay a lower price when purchasing several identical items. The shops are often located on the outskirts of urban areas. The sales amount have been SEK 3,061 million in 36 shops in 2007.

Coop Nära's concept is speed, convenience and simplicity. They are convenience stores with long opening hours and a good range of products. Their sales have been SEK 1,636 million in 98 shops in 2007.

Coop Forum offers everything under one roof. Hypermarkets that offer a broad range, particularly foods, and are often located next to large shopping centre's. Their sales amount has been SEK 10,315 million in 38 shops in 2007. Coop Bygg offers a broad range of goods for home renovation and gardening. The Coop Bygg sales is also included here. (KF annual report, 2007)

[3] The FMCG sector is a market that is highly influenced by the increasingly intense debate about the climate and the environment. Because of the connection between food production and the effect on the climate, the trend towards organic food has accelerated. According to sources such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the food sector is responsible for 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. (Annual report 2007 KF)

Limited number of food retailing actors, indicate the fact that Swedish food retail market is a highly concentrated oligopoly. Table 3.1 by Malin Blank & Anna Maria Persson, 2006 have summarized the market share of the retailer based on their turn over, between 1993-2002.

Owner/year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
ICA	43.8	44.2	43.9	43.6	44.0	44.7	44.1	43.4	43.6	43.9
COOP	25.8	24.9	25.2	25.2	23.9	23.5	22.5	22.3	22.4	22.4
Axel Johnsson	5.7	5.5	5.2	5.1	4.6					
D-group	16.5	17	17.2	17.3	18.0					
Axfood						22.9	22.7	23.3	23.0	22.7
Bergendahls	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.8	2.9
Others	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	7.4	7.1	8.4	8.7	8.2	8.1

Table 4.3: Sweden retailers market share between 1993-2002

Foreign food sector also find a way to come and join in Sweden retail market, In the year 2002 the Danish discount store Netto Marknad, of which ICA owns 50 percent, was established, followed one year later by the German discount store Lidl. In total 30 Netto stores and 51 Lidl stores now exist in Sweden. One interesting thing about these actors is that they emphasize a more pronounced discount concept than that of the Swedish actors. The foreign concept is denoted "hard discount" while the Swedish is considered "soft discount". (Malin Blank & Anna Maria Persson, 2006, from Konkurrensverkets Rapportserie 2004: 2, p.10)

U. Johansson, U. Elg state that Swedish retailer promoting Swedish foods and its campaign for has been future supported by various Swedish food retailers who claim that they sell for instance, only Swedish meat, or at least, that they identify country-of-origin on the consumer packaging. Hemköp, Sweden's largest wholly owned chain and one that is quoted on the Stockholm Stock exchange, is renowned for its stand on environmental and ethical issues. The chain sells only Swedish meat because Swedish meat is better, mainly because animals are treated better in Sweden. The Hemköp chain is no isolated example: nearly all the Swedish food retailers endorse Swedish meat as being better than meat from other countries. Hemköp is doing well on the market, showing increases in volume and profits that have exceeded the market average for several years. (U. Johansson, U. Elg, May 2002). They also insist that Swedish retailers choose Swedish manufacturer for private brand and they try to develop private brands, sparked to a great extent by their relations with foreign food retailers, still involve more Swedish food manufacturers than foreign ones (U. Johansson, U. Elg, May 2002 From Elga & Johansson, 1995). A study carried out in 1998 (Bengtsson, Elg, a Johansson, 1999, 2000) indicates that Swedish food retail stores are often reluctant to extend their relations to new actors, either wholesalers or suppliers, even though the extended network offers this possibility. The preferred strategy is to try to develop relations with existing actors, generally at the national level, rather than trying to explore the extended network for new opportunities. Moreover, Swedish food industry appears to be making it more difficult for foreign companies to enter. (U. Johansson, U. Elg, May 2002)

4.2 Iran food retailing market

The diversity of climate in Iran has provided a good potentiality for producing agricultural and horticultural products such as varieties of flowers and plants, pistachio, saffron, fruits and vegetables in good quality and taste. Low prices of energy and human resources have provided a good chance to produce agricultural or in general food products. Huge amount of fruit and vegetables production yearly in Iran for instance 500,000 tones Sweet lemon, 190,000 tns Peach, 1,970,000 tns Grape, 855,000 tns Dates and etc. by different farmers all around the country give customers the possibility of having fruit products with best quality. The same situation exist for animal based protein too, 725,000 tns Milk per year, Poultry meat 4,538,000 tns, production of 5,000,000 tns per year of Egg, 721,000 head of red meat and 534 units in fisheries industry can be count as a considerable amounts of food product manufacturing. (Center of food and agricultural trade) According to F.A.O. Iran is ranked between first and tenth in producing one third of total world agricultural products. It has a considerable share in production of 15 varieties of fruit out of 25 kinds. (China is in the first position with 17 main varieties and the USA ranks second with 16). (Mohammad Hoseini, 2005)

Retailing system in Iran have been started by traditional Bazaars long time ago. Bazaar is a permanent merchandising area, a market place or a street full of different types of stores and shops with varieties of products from food products, fruits, meat to cloth and other possible goods. Bazaar means a marketplace or assemblage of shops where miscellaneous goods and services are displayed to buy and sell. The word "bazaar" refers to "waazaar", which is an ancient Persian word. This word, bazaar, has been transferred into Arabic countries, Ottoman Turkey, Europe and India and even China through economical interactions between Persia and these countries. A study of the usage of the word "bazaar" since ancient times reveals the economic exchanges between Persia and other countries. Archaeologists have found evidence of bazaars in different parts of Iran. It is certain that the creation of cities was based on not only the growth of the population but also on the increase of production, which brought about the growth of trade and accumulation of wealth. In Iran, together with the growth of the population and joining together of villages, in the fourth millennium, urbanization took shape, and since then, we have witnessed economic growth and trade even with far away lands. The economy of Iran long time ago was based on agriculture and business. At that time they built many stores and caravanserais in some important commercial roads, which were connected to China from the east and into Rome from the west. Based on documents, bazaars were placed in the central regions of the cities. Also bazaar played an important role in change of some village to cities and the urban design. (Iranian agriculture and monuments)

Among those traditional Bazaars in Iran, some of them are still exist, Tehran‘s Grand Bazaar, Bazaar of Tabriz and Bazaar of Isfahan can be mentioned as the existing, active samples. Generally, bazaars are divided into three categories based on the period of usage: permanent, periodical and short time markets. Depends on the various geographic areas and climates these periodical or short time markets can establish. Usually, in the cities which are close to lots of villages, the periodical markets happens to take place therefore the farmers and producers of fruits vegetables and diary products would have a chance to sell their fresh products to the customers. However, by changing the structures and population of the cities the retailing system has also changed. The small grocery stores, the specific shops for bread, meat and fishery

products appeared, and after decades the new modern grocery stores with varieties of services, supermarkets and after a while hypermarkets entered to the food retailing system of Iran as well. Nevertheless, in every section of the city, in neighborhood of the houses at least some of those small, individual stores or modern grocery stores can be found, which made the food product purchasing more easier and more accessible for customers. In addition, the recent food retailing system in Iran can be categorized as follow;

- **Grocery stores or small shops**; which they have limited small size and usually have all necessary food products like diary products, rice, tea etc. The retailing system is full-service but they provide the service for the customers in limited opening hours.
- **Medium modern grocery stores**; which at least one or two of them can be seen in household's neighborhoods, therefore, they know most of the habitants. These modern grocery stores serve customers with full service system and also would provide them delivery system, which customers can make their orders by phone and they would prepare and deliver the orders to the customers no later than thirty minutes. Their opening hours are most often longer than the other stores, which make them so popular among the customers due to the chance of purchasing food products in different free times of the day and night although the price of the products might be little bit higher than the other shops.
- **Independent stores**[4]; which just sell specific products like meat, bread, fruits and vegetables in small or medium size space are providing variety of specific food product to customers via full service system and within a limited time as opening hours. Usually the quality of the products is significantly high and the originality of the products for example meats can be known. In some of these stores, customers may have to pay more for having better and higher quality.
- **Supermarkets**; provide varieties of food products for customers including the dairy, meat, prepackaged foods, some packaged vegetables and fruits. They are bigger in size compare to independent shops and their opening hours is more than the small grocery store but less than modern ones. Their service system is combination of full-service and self-service with nice ordered merchandizing systems. Customers can walk trough the ways and pick some products from the shelves, but they can also receive some behind the counter services as well.
- **Hypermarkets**; the self service stores with a sales area of no less than 2500 square meters, that would provide various types of products to customers. Furthermore, stores are given to having an external geographic position with at least 300 parking spaces. The most important hypermarket in Iran is Shahrvand[5] while other like Refah and Sepah are also exists. (Shahrvand chain stores)

[4] In this research, the modern grocery stores and independent shops are considered as one group.
[5] The first Shahrvand hypermarket has been established in Tehran in 1993

4.3 Research hypothesis: Influence of retailing structure in purchasing food behavior

According to the theories explained in chapter three considering "customers behavior and attitudes", it can be understood that predicting and studying the behaviors, habits and attitudes of the customers has always been a great challenge. However, in case of food products the impact of the factors such as product information & labels, quality, price & demographic variables has been clarified.

The product information has influenced the perceived benefit on customers; therefore, their willingness to buy and use a product may change according to that. The name of the product, its price and its nutritional benefit information had a significant effect on the intention to buy a fat spread. (Marika Lyly, Katariina Roininen, Kaisu Honkapa, Kaisa Poutanen, Liisa Lahteenmaki, 2007 from Bower, Saadat, & Whitten, 2003). Product labels are the chief responsible for conveying the food information to customers. According to Titiana Klompenhouwer and Henk Van Den Belt (2003) the basic motive of legal regulation of labeling and advertising is to inform and protect the consumer therefore customers can make an informed choice.

The food label is a prime marketing tool. It is a key source of information for the purchaser. It is a regulatory control vehicle in respect of consumer protection and fair-trading. It serves to discipline the food chain. (Alan Turner, 1995) Product information may not be effective in influencing the acceptability of foods in all cases. Attitudes and personal motivation define the relevance of the product information to consumers and determine its efficacy. Attitudes may determine the effect of product information on liking and the likelihood of buying a product (Marika Lyly, Katariina Roininen, Kaisu Honkapa, Kaisa Poutanen, Liisa Lahteenmaki, 2007 from Shepherd, Sparks, Bellier, & Raats, 1991)

Quality also includes elements of perception. Consumer knowledge and expectations are huge variables but it is not fully understood what the average consumer understands by quality. It may relate to any or all of the following: nutritional value, taste, health aspects, method of production, preparation and presentation, ethical and social responsibility, authenticity, welfare protection, and environmentally sensitive production systems. However, it can be take into consideration that quality also can be a factor that affect significantly the purchasing decision. (Michael C. Appleby, Neil Cutler, John Gazzard, Peter Goddard, John A. Milne, Colin Morgan, and Andrew Redfern, 2002)

Price cannot be excluded from the factors influencing the willingness to use foods. Price plays a crucial role in the decision of consumers to purchase foods (Marika Lyly, Katariina Roininen, Kaisu Honkapa, Kaisa Poutanen, Liisa Lahteenmaki, 2007 from Ollila, Tuomi-Nurmi, & Immonen, 2004).

Demographic variables such as gender and age should also be taken into consideration in this aspect of the issue of purchasing behavior and decision-making. The consumers possess socio-economic attributes, such as income, sex, age, household size, which frame their consumption habits. The consumption of food is quantitatively limited: While no individual can survive without a minimum of food, one's capacity to eat is finite, regardless of the increase in one's wealth. Therefore, if individuals have a larger budget at their disposal, they will be able to buy goods that have additional value to that of nutrition. Furthermore, factors such as individual preferences, habits, attitudes and lifestyles influence consumer behavior. (Tilman A. Schenk, Günter Löffler, Jürgen Rauh, 2007)

According to Tilman A. Schenk, Günter Löffler, Jürgen Rauh, 2007, consumer behavior is embedded in a triangle consisting of the consumers themselves, the structure of the retail environment and the institutional context of planning and politics, other service infrastructure (e.g. transportation), and the social context, including behavioral rules, social standards and so forth. This triangle is subject to change in time and space, which means that the area of simulation practices is extensive. One way of differentiating individual behavior is to address the locations of the shopping agents by incorporating distance into the decision process. One can group the attributes of the supply side, the stores, in hard and soft ones. Hard attributes may include size, store format, prices, location, accessibility, level of service (product information, opening hours), and the quality of the products. The image of the store chain or operator and the atmosphere of the shop are the soft factors. (Tilman A. Schenk, Günter Löffler, Jürgen Rauh, 2007)

Moreover, retailing systems of the countries can be studied as a variable which could have an impact on behavior and attitudes of customers. In addition, by studying the retailing markets of Sweden and Iran, varieties of food retailing format in both countries have been noticed, both of the countries have several supermarkets, hypermarkets and specific independent shops which sales specific products, while the frequencies of these retailing formats and popularity of them might differ.

However, this research wants to find out and emphasize if the varying in frequencies of retailing system and their popularity can lead to different purchasing behavior, demand or attitudes to food products by considering that all above-mentioned factors like demographic, price, quality and product information can influence the customer purchasing decision.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Customers with different backgrounds, cultures, age, sex, education and occupation might have different attitudes and perception about their daily food intake from shopping the food products to cooking them. The ways that those products would come to their baskets may also have an affect on their perceptions and attitudes. In this research project, the aim is to figure out that, if different retailing system can have a tangible influence on customer's food culture, sociology and characteristics, which would lead to different attitudes toward food products intake and their safety and finally would affect their purchasing decisions of food products.
Nevertheless, demographic factors like gender and age should be studied in different society with different system of retailing in order to have the clear opinion about the hypothesis.
Moreover, studying and exploring the possible influence of retailing system on customer attitude toward food products and demographic factors which would affect this attitudes would lead to exploratory and causal research. Therefore, empirical study by qualitative methods of data gathering via a questionnaire is chosen. However, the research contains of both primary and secondary sources of data including gathered data through the questionnaires and the articles, books and literature reviews. In addition, main part of the research have been performed by literature reviews and the empirical study performed by a questionnaire, including 15 questions, containing open and multiple choice questions, which in some of them respondent had a chance to choose more than one answer.
For receiving some information about customers food safety perception and additional details needed on the products labels, open questions have been used. The questionnaire begins with simple questions like Gender, Age, Education, Occupation[6] and it would follow by the more sophisticate ones, which would carry the concepts of the research.
To find some relation between social, cultural factors that can receive a tangible affect from retailing system, following subjects mentioned and asked in the questionnaire;

- *Shopping frequencies;*

  The responses to this question can carry the customer's attention to food safety and use of fresh natural food, which demographic factors can have an influence in these attitudes of customers. Moreover, the cultural facts also can have an affect in this case.

- *Shopping place preferences; big supermarkets/hypermarkets, individual stores[7] or from individual stores that they know[8];*

  The answers can prove the theory that in Iran despite of the change and restructuring the food retailing system, people still like to purchase their food products from the stores, which they know, and trust on the quality and safety of the products.

- *Customer's perception of food safety;*

  It is so interesting to know the customers perception of food safety, especially for the comparison of customers from two different countries with various food retailing and market.

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[6] Asking about the occupation was to know roughly the economic situation of the customers and having record of the households participating in research. The professional and technical jobs assumed to have good economy situation with higher than average level income, and for clerical and households the assumption is income average.
[7] Independent stores are the ones which at least three or four of them can be found in each household neighborhoods.
[8] The stores which customers knows the owners and usually purchase the needed products from them.

- *Where can customer have access to safer products?! In hypermarkets or in independent stores?!*

The answers would support the theory of preference of shopping in Hypermarkets or individual stores due to safety or quality concerns.

- *What is the important concern for them to read the products label:*

According to the distinction of customers age, gender, education and type of occupation that all together can make their lifestyle, their demand and perception of food and food labeling might differ. Therefore, they may check the labels to find some information, which is close to their life style, or the habits that they are interested in, like general health issue, fitness interest or food allergy issues, etc.

- *The factors that customers mostly check on the food label;*

The outcome would support the result of previous question; in addition, it can point out the options that can influence their purchasing decision, which can be the consequences of demographic, cultural or social influences.

- *If they prefer to buy a cheap food products or more expensive with better quality;*

The answers can carry the customer attention and emphasize on product quality, besides the age, sex, education or gender might influence this decision.

- *State of their agreement about the food products labels;*

As long as the food label is the main point of connection and communication between the companies, food manufacturer and customers concerning food safety and quality issues in self-service retailing, therefore, the answers can carry the facts that if customers are accustomed to the new retailing system and if the products expertise or the knowledgeable shop owners in full-service system have been replace by product labels, efficiently.

- *The most important factor that would influences customers decision to buy specific groups of products;*

The answers would point out the main important concerns of customers about these specific products like dairy, meat and prepared meals, etc

Questionnaire has been distributed among the customers in Iran and Sweden. However, due to the limited time for conducting the survey, sixty responses have been gathers, which Sweden and Iran each has 30 respondents equally. Although, by bigger sample size the result could be more accurate, but due to time restriction and the difficulties of gathering data from Iran, it was almost impossible to have access to more cases of customers to study. However, customers have been asked to fill the questionnaire before or after shopping in hypermarkets like ICA in Sweden and grocery, modern grocery stores and hypermarkets in Iran. In addition, sorting and analyzing the filled questionnaires have been performed by utilizing SPSS 16.0. In addition, for having a clear view about the consequences and results, some frequency tables and cross tabulations have been applied. The results are represented in next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS

6.1 Iran responses analysis

6.1.1 Sample overview

The frequencies of Iranian respondent is shown in Table 6.1I, as it shows there has been 18 female and 12 male participating in this research. Six of the females are in 20-30 range of age and 3 in 30-40 and 6 in 40-50 and 3 older than 50. Six of the male are also in range of 20-30 and then two in each age group.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	18	7.6	60.0	60.0
	Male	12	5.1	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.1I: Frequency table of the genders of respondent

Table 6.2I contains the general information regarding the demographic data of the respondent in Iran.

				Occupation					
Gender	**Education**			professional	Technical	Clerical	Houshold	Student	Total
Female	High School	**Age**	40-50			1	3		**4**
			More			0	1		**1**
			Total			**1**	**4**		**5**
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	2	0	0	0		**2**
			30-40	0	1	0	0		**1**
			40-50	0	0	0	1		**1**
			More	0	0	2	0		**2**
			Total	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**		**6**
	Master	**Age**	20-30	3			0	1	**4**
			30-40	1			1	0	**2**
			40-50	1			0	0	**1**
			Total	**5**			**1**	**1**	**7**
Male	High School	**Age**	30-40		0	1			**1**
			40-50		0	1			**1**
			More		1	0			**1**
			Total		**1**	**2**			**3**
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	0	1	0		2	**3**
			40-50	0	0	1		0	**1**
			More	1	0	0		0	**1**
			Total	**1**	**1**	**1**		**2**	**5**
	Master	**Age**	20-30	1		1		1	**3**
			30-40	1		0		0	**1**
			Total	**2**		**1**		**1**	**4**

Table 6.2I: General demographic information

6.1.2 Shopping frequencies

Table 6.3I shows the shopping frequencies of females and males.

		How often you are shopping food products?			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Total
Gender	Female	7	9	2	18
	Male	6	6	0	12
	Total	13	15	2	30

Table 6.3I: cross tabulation of Gender & Shopping frequencies

As mentioned before the aim of this question was to finding out about different food purchasing habits and concerns about freshness and natural food among female and male. As it shows in Table 6.3I among Iranian women and men this is almost the same but in general women prefer more to shop daily rather than men.
It is interesting to have the result for occupation and its impact of purchasing food frequencies. The result can be seen in Table 6.4I.

		How often are you shopping food products?			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Total
Occupation	professional	3	6	1	10
	Technical	1	1	1	3
	Clerical	2	5	0	7
	Houshold	5	1	0	6
	Student	2	2	0	4
	Total	13	15	2	30

Table 6.4I: Occupation & Purchasing frequencies

The tables say that more people with professional occupation rather to buy their food products weekly, the fact is the same for clerks too. However, households prefers to shop daily, for students or technicians daily and weekly shopping are in the same level of concern. Therefore, it can be said that households are more concerned about food safety and freshness than other groups of occupations.

In addition, as it assumed, customers attention to food safety and freshness would be more in concerns by older customers, while younger prefers to buy more in weekly manner. Table 6.5I shows the results.

		How often are you shopping food products?			
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Total
Age	20-30	4	7	1	12
	30-40	1	3	1	5
	40-50	6	2	0	8
	More	2	3	0	5
	Total	13	15	2	30

Table 6.5I: Shopping frequencies/Age

In order to have a better view of the purchasing food frequencies and demographic factors, Table 6.6I has summarize all the information including the factors such as gender, age, education and occupation.

					How often are you shopping food products?			
Gender	Age	Education			Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Total
Female	20-30	Bachelor	**Occupation**	professional		1	1	2
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	1	2		3
				Student	0	1		1
	30-40	Bachelor	**Occupation**	Technical			1	1
		Master	**Occupation**	professional		1		1
				Houshold		1		1
	40-50	High School	**Occupation**	Clerical	0	1		1
				Houshold	3	0		3
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	Houshold	1			1
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	1			1
	More	High School	**Occupation**	Houshold	1			1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	Clerical		2		2
Male	20-30	Bachelor	**Occupation**	Technical	0	1		1
				Student	2	0		2
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	0	1		1
				Clerical	1	0	0	1
				Student	0	1		1
	30-40	High School	**Occupation**	Clerical		1		1
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	1			1
	40-50	High School	**Occupation**	Clerical	1			1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	Clerical		1		1
	More	High School	**Occupation**	Technical	1			1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	professional		1		1

Table 6.6I: demographic factors & purchasing frequencies

6.1.3 Preferred shopping place

Responses to the preference of shopping place, shows that 50% of the customers are willing to buy their food materials from the independent store that they know. Only 7% will purchase from any individual store and 43% will buy their needed food materials from Hypermarkets or big supermarkets (Table 6.7I).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Big supermarkets	13	5.5	43.3	43.3
	Independent shops	2	.8	6.7	50.0
	Independent shops that I know	15	6.3	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.7I: Customers preference for purchasing food products

It is interesting to study the factors like sex, age and occupation in this case;

		Where do you prefer to shop?			
		Big supermarkets	Independent shops	Independent shops that I know	Total
Gender	Female	7	2	9	18
	Male	6	0	6	12
	Total	13	2	15	30

Table 6.8I: Cross tabulation of Gender and preferred place of shop

As it shows in Table 6.8I, females are more feel like purchasing from the familiar independent store which usually buy food products from than supermarkets and the independent stores that they do not know. For male, it sounds equal to buy from independent store that they know or the supermarkets/hypermarkets but none of them wishes to purchase from independent store that they do not know the owner or never have been there.

The age category can also carry a message for this question. Meanwhile the Table 6.9I shows that younger people are more like to purchase from hypermarkets/ big supermarkets than older ones, this might be resulted of products varieties, access to other products and the modern appearance of the hypermarket.

		Where do you prefer to shop?			
		Big supermarkets	Independent shops	Independent shops that I know	Total
Age	20-30	6	1	5	12
	30-40	0	1	4	5
	40-50	5	0	3	8
	More	2	0	3	5
	Total	13	2	15	30

Table 6.9I: Age and preferred place of shop

6.1.4 Perception of food safety

Different customers with different attitudes have mentioned some explanations about food safety. Table 6.10I has summarized customer's opinions about food safety. Due to the table, the most frequent factors, which would represent the safety of the product to customers, are Expiry date, Natural and Freshness of the products.

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
FoodPerception	Low Fat	4	8.0%	13.3%
	No Color	4	8.0%	13.3%
	Contains necessary vitamins	2	4.0%	6.7%
	Good processing	1	2.0%	3.3%
	Freshness	9	18.0%	30.0%
	Expiry date	14	28.0%	46.7%
	Natural	12	24.0%	40.0%
	Clean package	2	4.0%	6.7%
	High quality	1	2.0%	3.3%
	Sugar free	1	2.0%	3.3%
	Total	50	100.0%	166.7%

Table 6.10I: Customers food safety perception

Table 6.11I would categorize customers perceptions of food safety by gender, which make it easier to find, if there is any difference about females or males impression about safety of the food products.

			Gender		
			Female	Male	Total
FoodPerception	Low Fat	Count	3	1	4
	No Color	Count	4	0	4
	Contains necessary vitamins	Count	1	1	2
	Good processing	Count	1	0	1
	Freshness	Count	5	4	9
	Expiry date	Count	10	4	14
	Natural	Count	7	5	12
	Clean package	Count	1	1	2
	High quality	Count	0	1	1
	Sugar free	Count	1	0	1
	Total	Count	18	12	30

Table 6.11I: Food safety perception by Gender

However, as the tables shows women are so concerned about the expiry date of the products as a safety of the food, while men are so concerned about the product being natural. Almost the same result can be achieved by categorizing the age factor too. (Table 6.12I)

Gender				Age				
				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	**FoodPerception**	Low Fat	Count	2	1	0	0	3
		No Color	Count	2	1	0	1	4
		Contains necessary vitamins	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Good processing	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Freshness	Count	0	0	3	2	5
		Expiry date	Count	4	2	4	0	10
		Natural	Count	2	2	2	1	7
		Clean package	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Sugar free	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Total	Count	6	3	6	3	18
Male	**FoodPerception**	Low Fat	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Contains necessary vitamins	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Freshness	Count	2	0	1	1	4
		Expiry date	Count	3	0	1	0	4
		Natural	Count	3	1	1	0	5
		Clean package	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		High quality	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Total	Count	6	2	2	2	12

Table 6.12I: Food safety perception & Gender & Age

6.1.5 Are safer products in Supermarkets or in Independent stores

According to Table 6.13I, 60% of respondent believe that the products purchased from independent stores are safer.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Supermarkets	12	5.1	40.0	40.0
	Independent stores	18	7.6	60.0	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.13I: Safer products

Both men and women insist that independent stores food products are safer. In addition, younger people in both genders insist that the products from supermarkets are more safer. (Table 6.14I)

Gender			Safer Product		
			Supermarkets	Independent stores	Total
Female	**Age**	20-30	4	2	6
		30-40	0	3	3
		40-50	2	4	6
		More	1	2	3
		Total	7	11	18
Male	**Age**	20-30	3	3	6
		30-40	0	2	2
		40-50	1	1	2
		More	1	1	2
		Total	5	7	12

Table 6.14I: Safer products/ Gender & Age

6.1.5 Factors that attract attention to food labels

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Attract attention to labels	Special dietary requirments	2	4.5%	6.7%
	General health interest	22	50.0%	73.3%
	Fitness interest	4	9.1%	13.3%
	GM/Organic concerns	14	31.8%	46.7%
	Religion	2	4.5%	6.7%
	Total	44	100.0%	146.7%

Table 6.15I: Factors that attract customer s attention too products

One of the most factors that makes people or customers pay attention to food products labels is General health interest, the second important factor is Organic concerns and the third is fitness interests. The other factors are in equal position while “food related allergy” option has never been mentioned. (Table 6.15I)

Gender				Age				
				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	**Food Lable Influence**	Special dietary requirments	Count	0	1	1	0	2
		General health interest	Count	4	2	5	3	14
		Fitness interest	Count	3	1	0	0	4
		GM/Organic concerns	Count	4	1	2	0	7
		Religion	Count	0	1	1	0	2
		Total	Count	6	3	6	3	18
Male	**Food Lable Influence**	General health interest	Count	4	2	1	1	8
		GM/Organic concerns	Count	3	1	1	2	7
		Total	Count	6	2	2	2	12

Table 6.16I: Customer attention attraction/Gender & Age

Younger women are more concerned about fitness and organic issue so these topics would attract their attention to read the food products labels, while older females are more concerned about general health interests. By the way, it seems that younger men read the labels more than the old ones and are more concerned about general health interests and organic issues. (Table 6.16I)

6.1.7 Factors in food labels that influence purchasing decision

According to Table 6.17I, expiry date is the most effective factor that can influence customers purchasing decision-making. The first important factor as it shows in the table is Expiry date, the factor which have also mentioned in defining the food safety by customers. The second important factor is the price of the product. Brand, Ingredients and Fat content are placing in third important options. The attention to Organic issues and storage instruction and other factors are mentioned by few customers as it can be noticed in the table.

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Options influence purchasing decision	Brand/Manufacturer	12	10.5%	40.0%
	Product name	5	4.4%	16.7%
	Price	17	14.9%	56.7%
	Use by date	25	21.9%	83.3%
	Storage instruction	7	6.1%	23.3%
	Ingredients	12	10.5%	40.0%
	Number of calories	5	4.4%	16.7%
	Fat content	12	10.5%	40.0%
	Sugar content	2	1.8%	6.7%
	Processing	3	2.6%	10.0%
	Organic	10	8.8%	33.3%
	Preservatives/Taste	4	3.5%	13.3%
	Total	114	100.0%	380.0%

Table 6.17I: Factors in food labels that affect customers purchasing decision

Gender				Age				
				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	**Options influence purchasing decision**	Brand/Manufacturer	Count	4	2	1	0	7
		Product name	Count	0	0	2	0	2
		Price	Count	5	1	2	0	8
		Use by date	Count	6	3	5	3	17
		Storage instruction	Count	2	1	2	0	5
		Ingredients	Count	2	1	2	1	6
		Number of calories	Count	4	1	0	0	5
		Fat content	Count	1	2	2	2	7
		Processing	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		Organic	Count	3	1	1	1	6
		Preservatives/Taste	Count	0	2	0	1	3
		Total	Count	6	3	6	3	18
Male	**Options influence purchasing decision**	Brand/Manufacturer	Count	4	1	0	0	5
		Product name	Count	1	1	0	1	3
		Price	Count	5	2	0	2	9
		Use by date	Count	3	2	1	2	8
		Storage instruction	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Ingredients	Count	4	0	0	2	6
		Fat content	Count	2	0	1	2	5
		Sugar content	Count	0	0	1	1	2
		Processing	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Organic	Count	1	1	1	1	4
		Preservatives/Taste	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Total	Count	6	2	2	2	12

Table 6.18I: Factors in labels that influence purchasing decision/Gender & Age

In addition to consequences from Table 6.17I, Table 6.18I shows the different options chose by different age and sex of the customers. For female customers as it is clear, the expiry date is the most important factor and it is almost the same for different age groups. However, for male more attention goes to price.

6.1.8 Cheap products or expensive with better quality?!

83% of respondent claim that, they would pay more for having better quality of food products, while 17% claim that they are choosing the cheap products, ignoring the best quality. (Table 6.19I)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cheap products	5	2.1	16.7	16.7
	Good quality and expensive	25	10.5	83.3	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.19I: Good quality & expensive or cheap products

Gender	Education			Are you buying cheap product or good quality and more expensive?		
				Cheap products	Good quality and expensive	Total
Female	High School	**Age**	40-50	1	3	4
			More	0	1	1
			Total	1	4	5
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30		2	2
			30-40		1	1
			40-50		1	1
			More		2	2
			Total		6	6
	Master	**Age**	20-30		4	4
			30-40		2	2
			40-50		1	1
			Total		7	7
Male	High School	**Age**	30-40	0	1	1
			40-50	0	1	1
			More	1	0	1
			Total	1	2	3
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	1	2	3
			40-50	0	1	1
			More	1	0	1
			Total	2	3	5
	Master	**Age**	20-30	1	2	3
			30-40	0	1	1
			Total	1	3	4

Table 6.20I: Expensive and good quality or cheap products/Gender, Age, Education

According to Table 6.20I, age doesn't have a big role to influence customers behavior in this aspect but as it shows more educated customers are more intended to purchase good quality products although it might be more expensive. In addition, it seems that females are more concerned about the good quality but males prefer spend less money for food products.

6.1.9 Are food labels information enough?!

60% of Iranian customers believe that mentioned information on food products labels are enough and contains all the necessary details that they need to know about the products but 40% of the customers still need more information and details. (Table 6.21I)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	7.6	60.0	60.0
	No	12	5.1	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.21I: labels information are enough?!

6.1.10 Customer's statements about the products labels and their information

It has been asked from respondent that, if they can easily receive their required information about products, the way which they should be stored, Nutrition information and manufacturer or producer by help of food labels. 17% of customers are strongly agreed and satisfied with the information about the product itself on the labels, while 37% are just agreed that they can find their needed details and 10% haven't find it easy to get the product information trough the labels and 36% of the customers were just neutral about this issue. Customers opinion, about products nutrition information, storing and manufacturer has been summarize in Table 6.22I.

By food labels it is easy to understand about					
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Products	17%	37%	36%	10%	0%
Storing them	27%	46%	20%	7%	0%
Nutritional information	17%	34%	32%	17%	0%
Food manufacturer or producer	13%	13%	50%	17%	7%

Table 6.22I: By food labels, it is easy to understand some details about product

Following is the general ideas of customers and their attitudes toward food labels. (Table 6.23I) However, it seems that people mostly check the food labels and almost understand the labels. But it seems that they don't trust the manufacturer about the labels on the products, they also need to know more about the ingredients of the foods and finally labels and their information or details about the products are the factors that influence on customers purchasing decision making.

	SA	A	N	D	SD
I find it difficult to understand food labels	20%	13%	37%	23%	7%
Food manufacturers are truthful with their labels	7%	20%	50%	17%	6%
I would read food labels if they were simply written	13%	30%	10%	40%	7%
Ingredients need more space on labels	30%	23%	23%	24%	0%
Food labels don't contain the information I want	10%	17%	36%	30%	7%
I always read the labels on food products	34%	33%	26%	7%	0%
There should be more information on food labels	20%	37%	33%	10%	0%
Food labels influence my decision to buy the product	44%	37%	15%	4%	0%

Table 6.23I: General ideas of customers about food labels

Some of the customers also have mentioned some issues which they need to know about the products such as, conservation process, calories or additional material added to the products to be placed in the labels.

6.1.11 Factor influences purchasing decision

Without considering the specific group of products, 41% of the customers are more caring about the ingredients, 31% about the price and 28% about the processing of the product. Nevertheless, the result for each specific group of products would come in follow.

	Ingredients	Processing	Price
Butter, Margarine and Spreads	57%	16%	27%
Soft Drinks	64%	13%	23%
Fresh Meat	30%	33%	37%
Dairy Products	43%	20%	37%
Prepacked meat	30%	47%	23%
Ready meals	53%	27%	20%
Frozen meat products	30%	40%	30%
Fresh fruit and vegetables	20%	30%	50%

Table 6.24I: Most important factor that affects purchasing

As it can be seen in the Table 6.24I, most important factor to buy butter and margarines for 57% of the customers is ingredients. For soft drink, 64% of customers care about the ingredients which can be sugar content. 37% of people more care about the price while purchasing fresh meat. 43% of customers in case of dairy products care about the ingredients, which can be the fat. For buying Prepacked meat 47% of the customer concern the processing.

For ready meal, 53% of the customers care about ingredients. In case of frozen meat products 40% care about processing and finally for fresh fruit and vegetable 50% of concerns is to price. These percentages or frequencies might change according to different attitudes of men and women, which the result would be clear in next table.

		Ingredients	Processing	Price
Female	Butter, Margarine and Spreads	12	4	2
	Soft Drinks	14	2	2
	Fresh Meat	5	6	7
	Dairy Products	10	3	5
	Prepacked meat	4	10	4
	Ready meals	10	6	2
	Frozen meat products	4	10	4
	Fresh fruit and vegetables	3	8	7
Male				
	Butter, Margarine and Spreads	5	1	6
	Soft Drinks	5	2	5
	Fresh Meat	4	4	4
	Dairy Products	3	3	6
	Prepacked meat	5	4	3
	Ready meals	6	2	4
	Frozen meat products	5	2	5
	Fresh fruit and vegetables	3	1	8

Table 6.25I: Most important factor that affects purchasing/Gender

According to Table 6.25I, frequencies of men and women who are more concerned about those three factors are scattered. Nevertheless, ingredients and processing of products are the most important factors to women in order to make purchasing decision. However, for men the important factors are mostly price and ingredient.

6.2 Sweden responses analysis

6.2.1 Sample overview

The frequencies of Sweden respondent is shown in Table 6.1S, as it shows there has been 18 female and 12 male participating in this research. Seven of the females are in 20-30 range of age and 8 in 30-40 and 1 in 40-50 and 2 older than 50. Six of the male are also in range of 20-30 and then three in range of 30-40, one in 40-50 and two are more than 50 years old.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	18	7.6	60.0	60.0
	Male	12	5.1	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	12.7	100.0	
Missing	System	207	87.3		
Total		237	100.0		

Table 6.1S: Frequency table of the genders of respondent

Table 6.2S contains the general information regarding the demographic data of the respondent in Sweden.

				Occupation					
Gender	**Education**			professional	Technical	Clerical	Houshold	Student	Total
Female	High School	**Age**	20-30	1	0		0		1
			30-40	0	1		0		1
			40-50	0	0		1		1
			More	0	0		2		2
			Total	1	1		3		5
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	1	0	0		1	2
			30-40	0	1	1		0	2
			Total	1	1	1		1	4
	Master	**Age**	20-30	4					4
			30-40	5					5
			Total	9					9
Male	None	**Age**	30-40	1					1
			Total	1					1
	High School	**Age**	20-30	1	0	0			1
			30-40	0	1	0			1
			More	0	0	1			1
			Total	1	1	1			3
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30		1				1
			40-50		1				1
			Total		2				2
	Master	**Age**	20-30	3					3
			30-40	1					1
			Total	4					4
	Other	**Age**	20-30			0		1	1
			More			1		0	1
			Total			1		1	2

Table 6.2S: General demographic information

6.2.2 Shopping frequencies

Table 6.3S shows the shopping frequencies of females and males.

		How often you are shopping food products?		
		Daily	Weekly	Total
Gender	Female	4	14	18
	Male	5	7	12
	Total	9	21	30

Table 6.3S: Cross tabulation of Gender & Shopping frequencies

According to Table 6.3S, Swedish people are more intended to buy their needed food products weekly, this statement has been more emphasized by female respondents.

		How often you are shopping food products?		
		Daily	Weekly	Total
Occupation	professional	2	15	17
	Technical	2	3	5
	Clerical	1	2	3
	Houshold	3	0	3
	Student	1	1	2
	Total	9	21	30

Table 6.4S: Occupation & Purchasing frequencies

As it explains in 6.4S, people with professional jobs (high income) are willing to purchase food products weekly. The interesting result is that households prefer to buy food products daily, and no one chose “monthly”.

		How often you are shopping food products?		
		Daily	Weekly	Total
Age	20-30	2	11	13
	30-40	3	8	11
	40-50	1	1	2
	More	3	1	4
	Total	9	21	30

Table 6.5S: Shopping frequencies/Age

In addition, as it assumed, customers attention to food safety and freshness would be more in concerns by older customers, while younger prefers to buy more in weekly manner. Table 6.5S shows the results.

Table 6.6S gives better view of purchasing food frequencies and would summarize all the information including all the factors such as gender, age, education and occupation.

Gender	Age	Education			How often you are shopping food products? Daily	Weekly	Total
Female	20-30	High School	**Occupation**	professional		1	1
				Total		1	1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	professional		1	1
				Student		1	1
				Total		2	2
		Master	**Occupation**	professional		4	4
				Total		4	4
	30-40	High School	**Occupation**	Technical	1		1
				Total	1		1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	Technical		1	1
				Clerical		1	1
				Total		2	2
		Master	**Occupation**	professional		5	5
				Total		5	5
	40-50	High School	**Occupation**	Houshold	1		1
				Total	1		1
	More	High School	**Occupation**	Houshold	2		2
				Total	2		2
Male	20-30	High School	**Occupation**	professional		1	1
				Total		1	1
		Bachelor	**Occupation**	Technical		1	1
				Total		1	1
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	1	2	3
				Total	1	2	3
		Other	**Occupation**	Student	1		1
				Total	1		1
	30-40	None	**Occupation**	professional		1	1
				Total		1	1
		High School	**Occupation**	Technical	1		1
				Total	1		1
		Master	**Occupation**	professional	1		1
				Total	1		1
	40-50	Bachelor	**Occupation**	Technical		1	1
				Total		1	1
	More	High School	**Occupation**	Clerical	1		1
				Total	1		1
		Other	**Occupation**	Clerical		1	1
				Total		1	1

Table 6.6S: demographic factors & purchasing frequencies

6.2.3 Preferred shopping place

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Big supermarkets	25	83.3	83.3	83.3
	Independent shops	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
	Independent shops that I know	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.7S: Customers preference for purchasing food products

According to the results in Table 6.7S, around 83% of Swedish customers prefer to have their food products purchased from hyper/supermarkets, only 3% willing to shop in independent shops and roughly 13% would like to purchase their food products from the independent shops they know.

		Where do you prefer to shop?			
		Hyper/Super markets	Independent shops	Independent shops that I know	Total
Gender	Female	16	1	1	18
	Male	9	0	3	12
	Total	25	1	4	30

Table 6.8S: Cross tabulation of Gender and preferred place of shop

It is interesting to know that according to Table 6.8S, Swedish customers both females and males are preferring hyper/supermarkets, while just three males and one female are interested to shop from known independent stores. Comparison between the age ranges also shows the same results. (Table 6.9S)

		Where do you prefer to shop?			
		Hyper/Super markets	Independent shops	Independent shops that I know	Total
Age	20-30	10	1	2	13
	30-40	10	0	1	11
	40-50	1	0	1	2
	More	4	0	0	4
	Total	25	1	4	30

Table 6.9S: Age and preferred place of shop

6.2.4 Perception of food safety

Different Swedish customers with different attitudes have mentioned some explanations about food safety. Table 6.10S has summarized customer's opinions about food safety.

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Food safety perception	Low Fat	3	10.7%	15.8%
	No Color	2	7.1%	10.5%
	Contains necessary vitamins	1	3.6%	5.3%
	Freshness	2	7.1%	10.5%
	Expiry date	3	10.7%	15.8%
	Natural	1	3.6%	5.3%
	High quality	1	3.6%	5.3%
	Sugar free	1	3.6%	5.3%
	Originality of the product and info concerning that	3	10.7%	15.8%
	Transportation information	2	7.1%	10.5%
	Important Issue	6	21.4%	31.6%
	Label information	3	10.7%	15.8%
	Total	28	100.0%	147.4%

Table 6.10S: Customers food safety perception

According to the table, there was not many specific interpret for food safety but just mentioning it as "an important issue" which should take into consideration. However, notifying low fat, expiry date, originality of the products and label information are the popular responses to the food safety perception.

Table 6.11S would categorize customer's perceptions of food safety by gender, therefore it would be easier to find, if there is any difference in females or males impression about safety of the food products.

			Gender		
			Female	Male	Total
Food safety perception	Low Fat	Count	2	1	3
	No Color	Count	1	1	2
	Contains necessary vitamins	Count	0	1	1
	Freshness	Count	0	2	2
	Expiry date	Count	1	2	3
	Natural	Count	0	1	1
	High quality	Count	0	1	1
	Sugar free	Count	1	0	1
	Originality of the product and info concerning that	Count	2	1	3
	Transportation information	Count	1	1	2
	Important Issue	Count	3	3	6
	Label information	Count	2	1	3
	Total	Count	11	8	19

Table 6.11S: Food safety perception by Gender

According to the table, there is no big difference about men and women perception of food safety, while women are more concerned about low fat and originality of the products and men are more caring about freshness and expiry date.

				Age				
Gender				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	Food safety perception	Low Fat	Count	0	0	1	1	2
		No Color	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Expiry date	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Sugar free	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Originality of the product and info concerning that	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Transportation information	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Important Issue	Count	0	3	0	0	3
		Label information	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Total	Count	1	7	1	2	11
Male	Food safety perception	Low Fat	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		No Color	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Contains necessary vitamins	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Freshness	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Expiry date	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Natural	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		High quality	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Originality of the product and info concerning that	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Transportation information	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Important Issue	Count	1	1	0	1	3
		Label information	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Total	Count	3	2	1	2	8

Table 6.12S: Food safety perception & Gender & Age

In order to have more detailed look to the result Table 6.12S has specified them including the ages of the respondent.

6.2.5 Are safer products in Supermarkets or in Independent stores

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Supermarkets	20	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Independent stores	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.13S: Safer products

Due to preferring supermarkets or hypermarket for purchasing the food products, it could have been assumed that 67% of the respondent would consider hyper/supermarkets products safer and 33% believe that independent stores product are more reliable concerning the safety issues.(Table 6.13S) To take a detail look at the result Table 6.14S would consider the age and gender factors.

			Safer Product		
Gender			Supermarkets	Independent stores	Total
Female	Age	20-30	4	3	7
		30-40	6	2	8
		40-50	0	1	1
		More	1	1	2
		Total	11	7	18
Male	Age	20-30	4	2	6
		30-40	3	0	3
		40-50	0	1	1
		More	2	0	2
		Total	9	3	12

Table 6.14I: Safer products/ Gender & Age

6.2.6 Factors that attract attention to food labels

According to Table 6.15S, one of the most factors that makes people or customers pay attention to food products labels is General health interest, the second important factor is special dietary requirements, the third is fitness interests, then attention to organic food, food related allergy and religion are in least groups of attention.

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
label attraction	Special dietary requirement	9	18.8%	30.0%
	General health interest	22	45.8%	73.3%
	Food related allergy	3	6.2%	10.0%
	Fitness interest	7	14.6%	23.3%
	GM/Organic concerns	6	12.5%	20.0%
	Religion	1	2.1%	3.3%
	Total	48	100.0%	160.0%

Table 6.15S: Factors that attract customer s attention too products

It can be interesting to take a look at the results by considering the factors like age and gender, therefore, Table 6.16S has summarized the results including those mentioned factors.

Gender				Age				
				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	label attraction	Special dietary requirement	Count	1	1	1	2	5
		General health interest	Count	5	6	1	2	14
		Food related allergy	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Fitness interest	Count	1	1	0	1	3
		GM/Organic concerns	Count	2	1	0	1	4
		Total	Count	7	8	1	2	18
Male	label attraction	Special dietary requirement	Count	2	2	0	0	4
		General health interest	Count	3	3	0	2	8
		Food related allergy	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Fitness interest	Count	0	2	1	1	4
		GM/Organic concerns	Count	0	1	1	0	2
		Religion	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Total	Count	6	3	1	2	12

Table 6.16S: Customer attention attraction/Gender & Age

Younger women are more concerned about the general health issues facing with the product labels, although men are caring about general health interest but, they are also caring about special dietary requirements.

6.2.7 Factors in food labels that influence purchasing decision

Table 6.17S, compares the factors that can have impact on customers purchasing decision, as it shows the "expiry date" is the most important factor, then the "price of the products" is in highest range of attention, after that in the ascending order the important factors are; ingredients, brand, organic, product name, number of calories,….

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
purchasing influence	Brand/Manufacturer	9	8.5%	30.0%
	Product name	8	7.5%	26.7%
	Price	18	17.0%	60.0%
	Use by date	22	20.8%	73.3%
	Storage instruction	2	1.9%	6.7%
	Ingredients	12	11.3%	40.0%
	Number of calories	7	6.6%	23.3%
	Fat content	8	7.5%	26.7%
	Sugar content	9	8.5%	30.0%
	Processing	2	1.9%	6.7%
	Organic	6	5.7%	20.0%
	Preservatives/Taste	3	2.8%	10.0%
	Total	106	100.0%	353.3%

Table 6.17S: Factors in food labels that affect customers purchasing decision

Table 6.18S would consider the age and gender to be able to have a clear view about the results. According to the Table 6.18S, most of the women are interested to check the expiry date of the products, price and brand, which the result can also be considered the same for men too.

				Age				
Gender				20-30	30-40	40-50	More	Total
Female	purchasing influence	Brand/Manufacturer	Count	3	1	0	0	4
		Product name	Count	2	0	0	1	3
		Price	Count	3	8	1	1	13
		Use by date	Count	5	6	1	1	13
		Storage instruction	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		Ingredients	Count	3	1	1	2	7
		Number of calories	Count	1	1	1	1	4
		Fat content	Count	1	2	0	1	4
		Sugar content	Count	3	3	0	1	7
		Processing	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		Organic	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Preservatives/Taste	Count	0	2	0	1	3
		Total	Count	7	8	1	2	18
Male	purchasing influence	Brand/Manufacturer	Count	2	2	0	1	5
		Product name	Count	1	2	1	1	5
		Price	Count	1	1	1	2	5
		Use by date	Count	4	2	1	2	9
		Ingredients	Count	1	3	1	0	5
		Number of calories	Count	1	2	0	0	3
		Fat content	Count	1	2	0	1	4
		Sugar content	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Organic	Count	1	2	1	0	4
		Total	Count	6	3	1	2	12

Table 6.18S: Factors in labels that influence purchasing decision/Gender & Age

6.2.8 Cheap products or expensive with better quality?!

60% of respondent claim that, they would spend more money for having better quality of food products, while 40% claim that they are choosing the cheap products, ignoring the best quality. (Table 6.19S)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cheap products	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Good quality and expensive	18	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.19S: Good quality & expensive or cheap products

Table 6.20S would consider the age, education and gender to study the preference of buying expensive good quality products or cheap ones. It seems that men are more interested in higher price and better quality than women.

				Are you buying cheap product or good quality and more expensive?		
Gender	**Education**			Cheap products	Good quality and expensive	Total
Female	High School	**Age**	20-30	0	1	1
			30-40	1	0	1
			40-50	1	0	1
			More	1	1	2
			Total	3	2	5
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	1	1	2
			30-40	2	0	2
			Total	3	1	4
	Master	**Age**	20-30	1	3	4
			30-40	2	3	5
			Total	3	6	9
Male	None	**Age**	30-40		1	1
			Total		1	1
	High School	**Age**	20-30	0	1	1
			30-40	0	1	1
			More	1	0	1
			Total	1	2	3
	Bachelor	**Age**	20-30	1		1
			40-50	1		1
			Total	2		2
	Master	**Age**	20-30		3	3
			30-40		1	1
			Total		4	4
	Other	**Age**	20-30		1	1
			More		1	1
			Total		2	2

Table 6.20S: Expensive and good quality or cheap products/Gender, Age, Education

6.2.9 Are food labels information enough?!

77% of the respondent state that, the food label information are enough, while 23% of them claim that they need to have more information on the labels.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	23	76.7	76.7	76.7
	No	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.21S: labels information are enough?!

6.2.10 Customer's statements about the products labels and their information

It has been asked from respondent, if they can easily find their required information about products, the way which they should be stored, Nutrition information and manufacturer or producer by help of food labels. 33% of customers are strongly agreed and satisfied with the information about the product on the labels, while 47% are just agreed that they can find their needed details and 20% of the customers were just neutral about this issue. Customers opinion, about products nutrition information, storing and manufacturer has been summarize in Table 6.22S.

By food label it is easy to understand about					
	SA	A	N	D	SD
Products	33%	47%	20%	0	0
Storing them	40%	30%	23%	4%	3%
Nutritional information	27%	50%	17%	3%	3%
Food manufacturer or producer	23%	27%	30%	17%	3%

Table 6.22S: By food labels, it is easy to understand some details about product

Following is the general ideas of customers and their attitudes toward food labels. (Table 6.23S)

	SA	A	N	D	SD
I find it difficult to understand food labels	7%	12%	21%	40%	20%
Food manufacturers are truthful with their labels	7%	37%	43%	13%	0
I would read food labels if they were simply written	30%	30%	20%	10%	10%
Ingredients need more space on labels	20%	30%	20%	23%	7%
Food labels don't contain the information I want	9%	8%	37%	23%	13%
I always read the labels on food products	41%	6%	17%	13%	23%
There should be more information on food labels	20%	16%	43%	13%	8%
Food labels influence my decision to buy the product	40%	16%	23%	13%	8%

Table 6.23S: General ideas of customers about food labels

According to Table 6.23S, 40% people find it difficult to understand the food labels and 43% are almost agree that manufacturer are truthful with the labels, most of them claim that they would read the labels if they are simply written and the information on the labels seems to be enough for them. 41% of respondent always check the labels and 40% claims that food labels would influence their decision to buy the products. Some of the respondent also mentioned that they would like to receive additional information and details about the originality of the products and the transportation of the products from the producer country.

6.2.11 Factor influences purchasing decision

Without considering the specific groups of products, 42% of the customers are more caring about the ingredients, 37% about the price and 20% about the processing of the product. Nevertheless, the results for each specific group of products come in following table.

	Ingredients	Processing	Price
Butter, Margarine and Spreads	63%	7%	30%
Soft Drinks	44%	13%	43%
Fresh Meat	30%	37%	33%
Dairy Products	53%	20%	27%
Prepacked meat	40%	33%	27%
Ready meals	50%	13%	37%
Frozen meat products	40%	27%	33%
Fresh fruit and vegetables	17%	10%	73%

Table 6.24S: Most important factor that affects purchasing

As it can be seen in the Table 6.24S, most important factor to buy butter and margarines for 63% of the customers is ingredients. For soft drink 44% of customers care about the ingredients. 37% of people care about the processing while purchasing fresh meat. 53% of customers in case of dairy products care about the ingredients. For buying Prepacked meat 40% of the customer concern the ingredients. For ready meal 50% of the customers pay attention to ingredients. In case of frozen meat products 40% care about ingredients and finally for fresh fruit and vegetable 73% of the customers pay attention to price.
These percentages or frequencies might change according to different attitudes of men and women, which we will study in Table 6.25S.

		Ingredients	Processing	Price
Female	Butter, Margarine and Spreads	10	2	6
	Soft Drinks	6	1	11
	Fresh Meat	4	8	6
	Dairy Products	8	4	6
	Prepacked meat	5	8	5
	Ready meals	9	3	6
	Frozen meat products	8	4	6
	Fresh fruit and vegetables	2	2	14
Male	Butter, Margarine and Spreads	9	0	3
	Soft Drinks	7	3	2
	Fresh Meat	5	3	4
	Dairy Products	8	2	2
	Prepacked meat	7	2	3
	Ready meals	6	1	5
	Frozen meat products	4	4	4
	Fresh fruit and vegetables	3	1	8

Table 6.25S: Most important factor that affects purchasing/Gender

According to Table 6.25S, in case of butter and margarines, both females and males are considering the ingredients as the most important factor. However, this priority is different in case of soft drinks while females are more interested in price and males in ingredients. For fresh meat, women consider the processing first and men care about the ingredients or type of the meat. About dairy products, it seems that they both agree upon the ingredients as a most important factor. In addition, the result for rest of the products represented in table.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Comparison analysis

7.1.1 Sample overview

In chapter six, the results of the respondents of two countries, Iran and Sweden were represented individually. Now in this chapter, I would like to compare the outcomes and summarize the results of this survey. Therefore, following charts would give the reader an overview of the data gathered from both countries together.

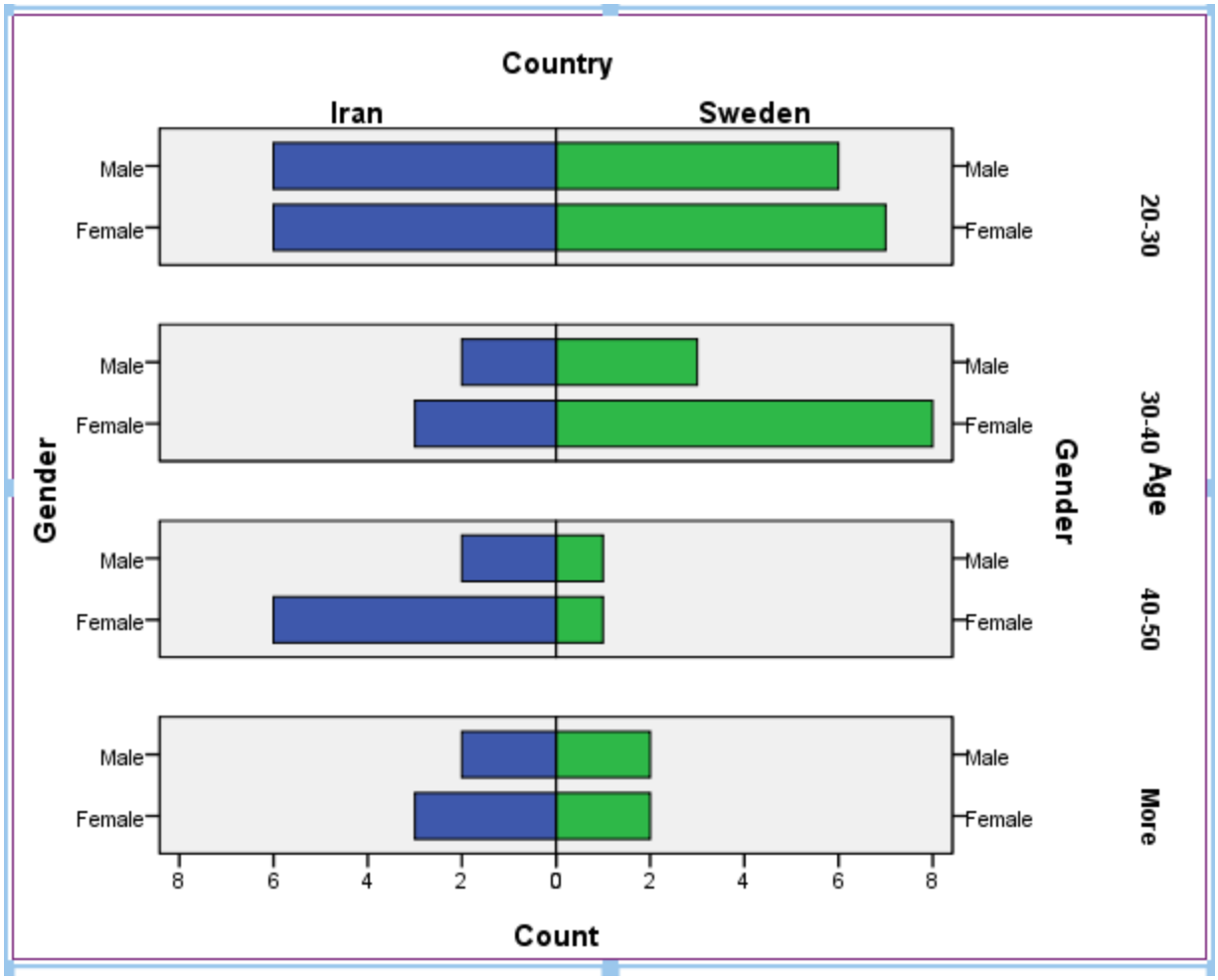

Chart 7.1: General overview to respondents, Gender/Age

Figure 7.1, contains a general overview and comparison of data gathered in Iran and in Sweden by considering the gender and age of the respondents.

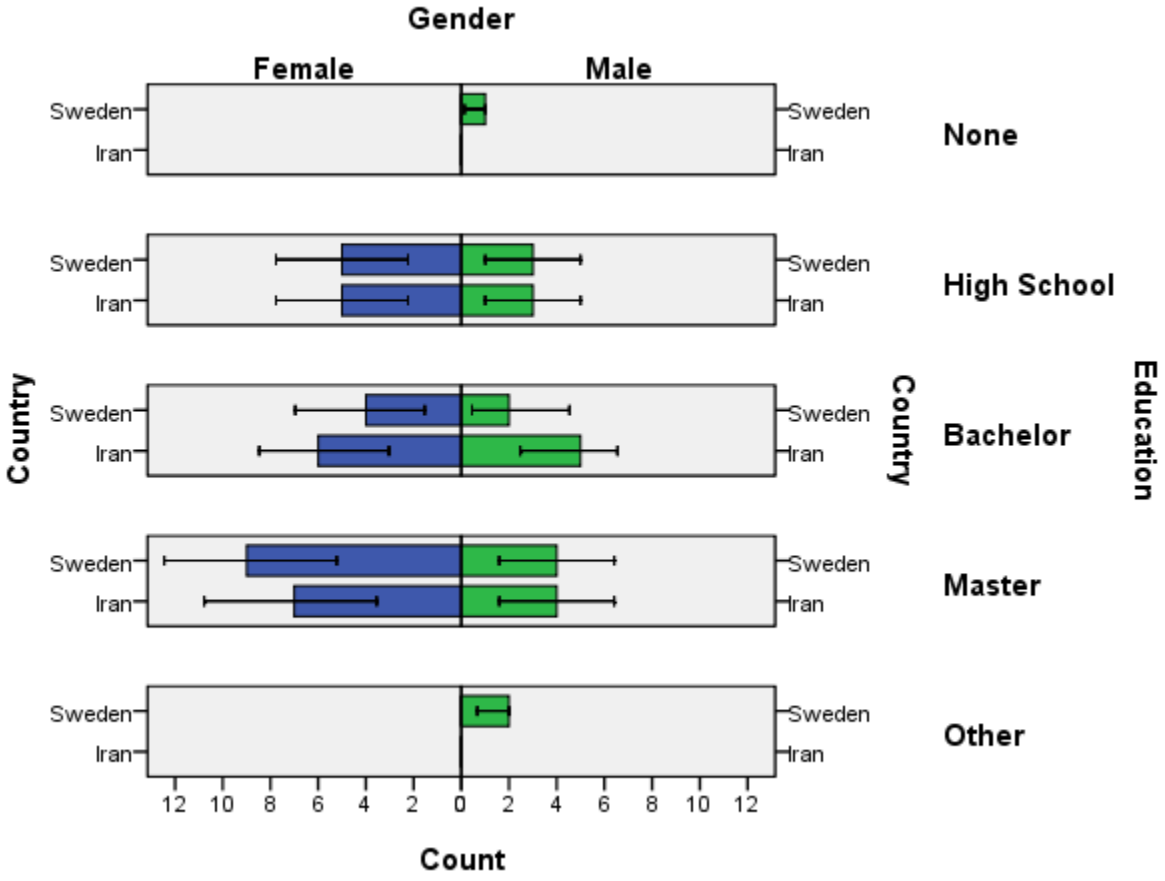

Chart 7.2: General overview to respondents, Gender/Education

As it is obvious, figure 7.2 categorizes the respondents by their sex and education.

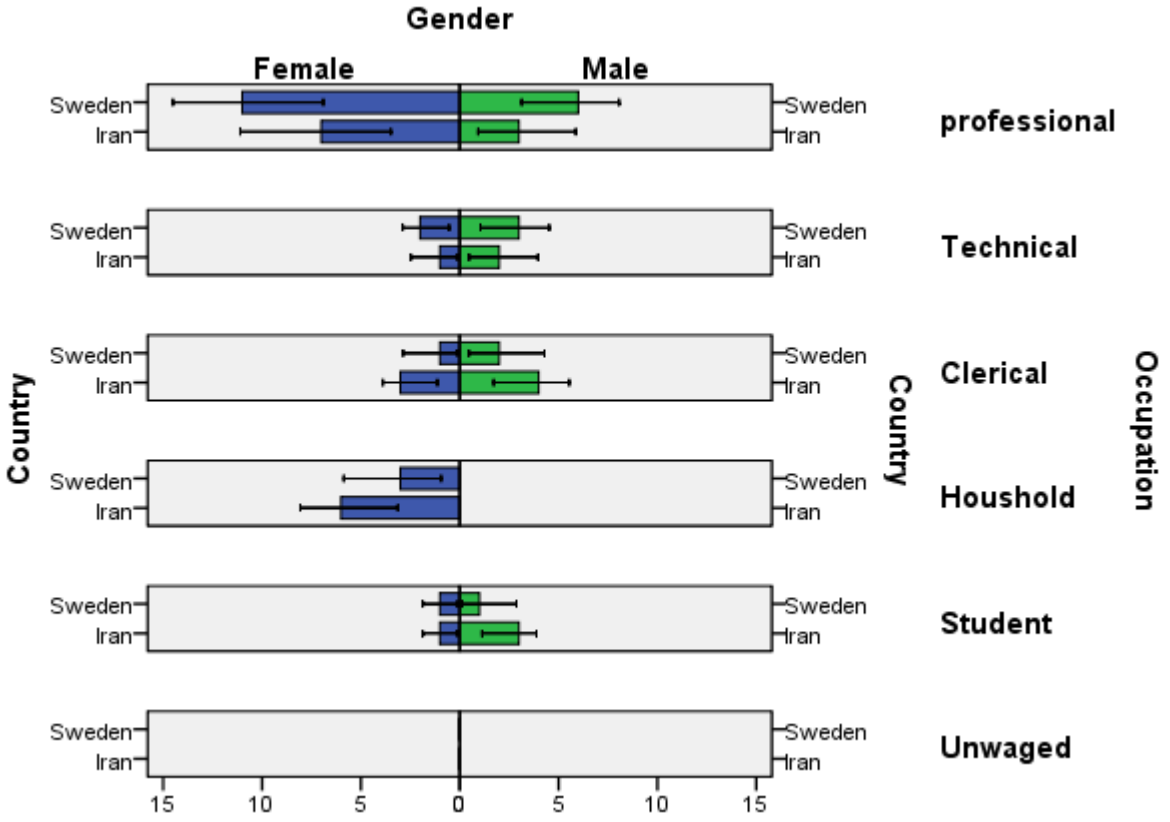

Chart 7.3: General overview to respondents, Gender/Education

Figure 7.3, has categorized the respondent of each country according to their sex and their occupation.
According to charts 7.1, 7.2 & 7.3, responses to the questionnaires include different genders with various ages, educations and occupations, which create the chance to study the influence of these variables on their behavior.

Following charts and tables would represent the comparison of responses to each question in the questionnaire, in order to answer the research questions mentioned in 1.2.2.

7.1.2 Shopping frequencies

According to table 7.1, although most of the respondents in both countries chose "weekly" as their shopping frequencies, but the number of people who chose "daily" option in Iran is very close to the number of people preferred "weekly". However, considerable number of Swedish customers just preferred and chose "weekly" as their willing shopping frequencies.

Country			How often you are shopping food products? Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Total
Iran	Gender	**Female**	7	9	2	18
		Male	6	6	0	12
		Total	13	15	2	30
Sweden	Gender	**Female**	4	14		18
		Male	5	7		12
		Total	9	21		30

Table 7.1: Shopping frequencies of Iran & Sweden

Moreover, it can be assumed that Iranian customers are more concerned to take fresh foods. Outcomes of following questions can support this statements.

7.1.3 Preferred shopping place

As it shows in table 7.2, Iranian customers are more intend to purchase their needed food products from independent shops they know, while Swedish customers prefer to buy the food products from supermarkets or hypermarkets.

Country			Where do you prefer to shop? Big supermarkets	Independent shops	Independent shops that I know	Total
Iran	Gender	Female	7	2	9	18
		Male	6	0	6	12
		Total	13	2	15	30
Sweden	Gender	Female	16	1	1	18
		Male	9	0	3	12
		Total	25	1	4	30

Table 7.2: Preferred shopping place (Iran & Sweden)

According to table 7.2, although number of Iranian respondents insist that they would like to purchase their required products from supermarkets/hypermarkets but still greater number of customers are loyal to the traditional retailing systems and trust the store that they usually purchase there. However, the result for Swedish customers is different. Modern retailing system in Sweden is more popular than the traditional one.

7.1.4 Perception of food safety

According to table 7.3, the most popular perception of food safety between all the respondent is "expiry date" then "natural" products and "freshness" has been considered as safe products. The products with "low fat" and "no additional color" have been considered to be safe after those mentioned above.

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
foodsafetyperception	Low Fat	7	9.1%	14.6%
	No Color	6	7.8%	12.5%
	Contains necessary vitamins	3	3.9%	6.2%
	Good processing	1	1.3%	2.1%
	Freshness	11	14.3%	22.9%
	Expiry date	17	22.1%	35.4%
	Natural	12	15.6%	25.0%
	High quality	2	2.6%	4.2%
	Clean package	2	2.6%	4.2%
	Sugar free	2	2.6%	4.2%
	Originality of the product and info concerning that	3	3.9%	6.2%
	Transportation information	2	2.6%	4.2%
	Important Issue	6	7.8%	12.5%
	Label information	3	3.9%	6.2%
	Total	77	100.0%	160.4%

Table 7.3: Perception of food safety of all respondent

Following table would categorize the food safety perception of the respondent of each country. (Table 7.4)

According to table 7.4, Iranian perception of safe food is a natural and fresh product with valid expiry date. However, most of the Swedish customers just mention food safety as an important issue without any specific definition, but some of them considered the low fat products or a product with good label information and valid the expiry date as the safe products. They insist that having knowledge about the product country of origin would influence considering the product as a safe one.

The main objective of asking question about customers perception of food safety was to compare their attitudes toward food products, due to their different access to food products. However, the different attitude and explanation of food safety can point out their different retailing system. Following outcomes would support this statement.

			Country		
			Iran	Sweden	Total
Food Safety Perception	Low Fat	Count	4	3	7
	No Color	Count	4	2	6
	Contains necessary vitamins	Count	2	1	3
	Good processing	Count	1	0	1
	Freshness	Count	9	2	11
	Expiry date	Count	14	3	17
	Natural	Count	11	1	12
	High quality	Count	1	1	2
	Clean package	Count	2	0	2
	Sugar free	Count	1	1	2
	Originality of the product and info concerning that	Count	0	3	3
	Transportation information	Count	0	2	2
	Important Issue	Count	0	6	6
	Label information	Count	0	3	3
	Total	Count	29	19	48

Table 7.4: Perception of food safety (Iran & Sweden)

7.1.5 Where to buy safer products? Hypermarkets or Independent stores?!

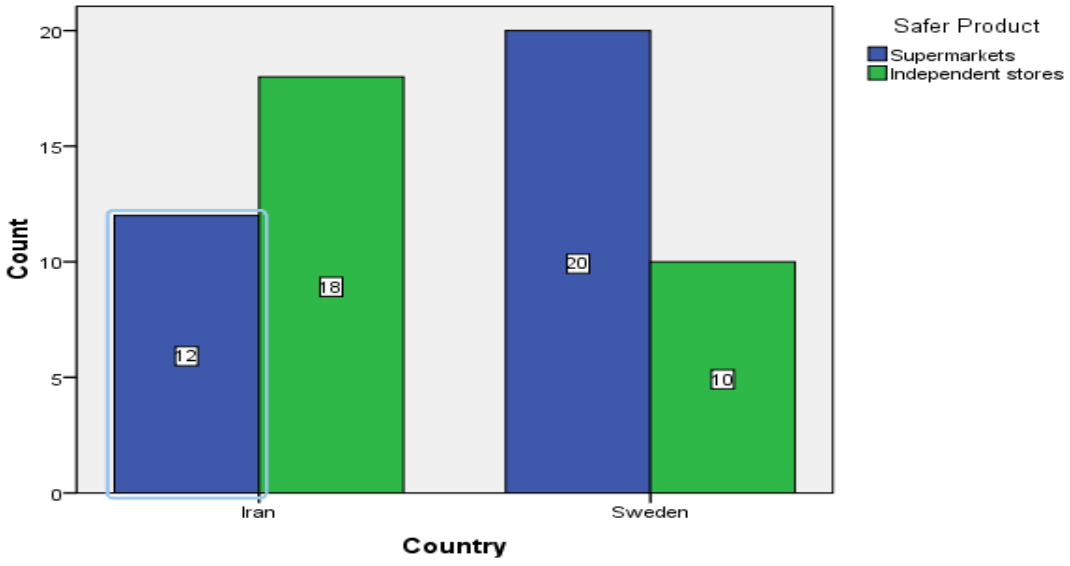

Chart 7.4: Where to find the safer products

As it shows in the chart 7.4, Iranian customers claim that the products they buy from independent stores are safer than supermarkets, the reason can be their access to the shop owner or the product expertise in the store, the one who would provide their required information and

details about the product and its quality compare to the supermarkets that they have to trust and rely on the labels of the products without any other additional information. Moreover, Swedish customers believe that supermarkets products are safer, which shows that they are accustomed to the modern retailing system and they trust the products labels, the main communication tool between retailers or manufacturer and customers.

7.1.6 Factors that attract attention to food labels

			Country		
			Iran	Sweden	Total
Factors that attract attention to Labels	Special dietary requirement	Count	2	9	11
	General health interest	Count	22	22	44
	Food related allergy	Count	0	3	3
	Fitness interest	Count	4	7	11
	GM/Organic concerns	Count	14	6	20
	Religion	Count	2	1	3
	Total	Count	30	30	60

Table 7.5: Factors that attract attention to labels (Iran & Sweden)

According to table 7.5, Iranian and Swedish customers have the same first priority for paying attention to food labels, which is "general health interest". Then, Iranian attention goes to "organic issues" while Swedish would concern "special dietary requirements".

7.1.7 Factors in food labels that influence purchasing decision

			Country		
			Iran	Sweden	Total
Factors that influence purchasing decision	Brand/Manufacturer	Count	12	9	21
	Product name	Count	5	8	13
	Price	Count	17	18	35
	Use by date	Count	25	22	47
	Storage instruction	Count	7	2	9
	Ingredients	Count	12	12	24
	Number of calories	Count	5	7	12
	Fat content	Count	12	8	20
	Sugar content	Count	2	9	11
	Processing	Count	3	2	5
	Organic	Count	10	6	16
	Preservatives/Taste	Count	4	3	7
	Total	Count	30	30	60

Table 7.6: Factors in labels that influence purchasing decision (Iran & Sweden)

According to table 7.6, expiry date is the first important factor that influences purchasing decision of customers from both Iran and Sweden, and second important factor for both is price. Then the factors like ingredients, brand, fat content and organic issue would come into consideration.

7.1.8 Cheap products or expensive with better quality?!

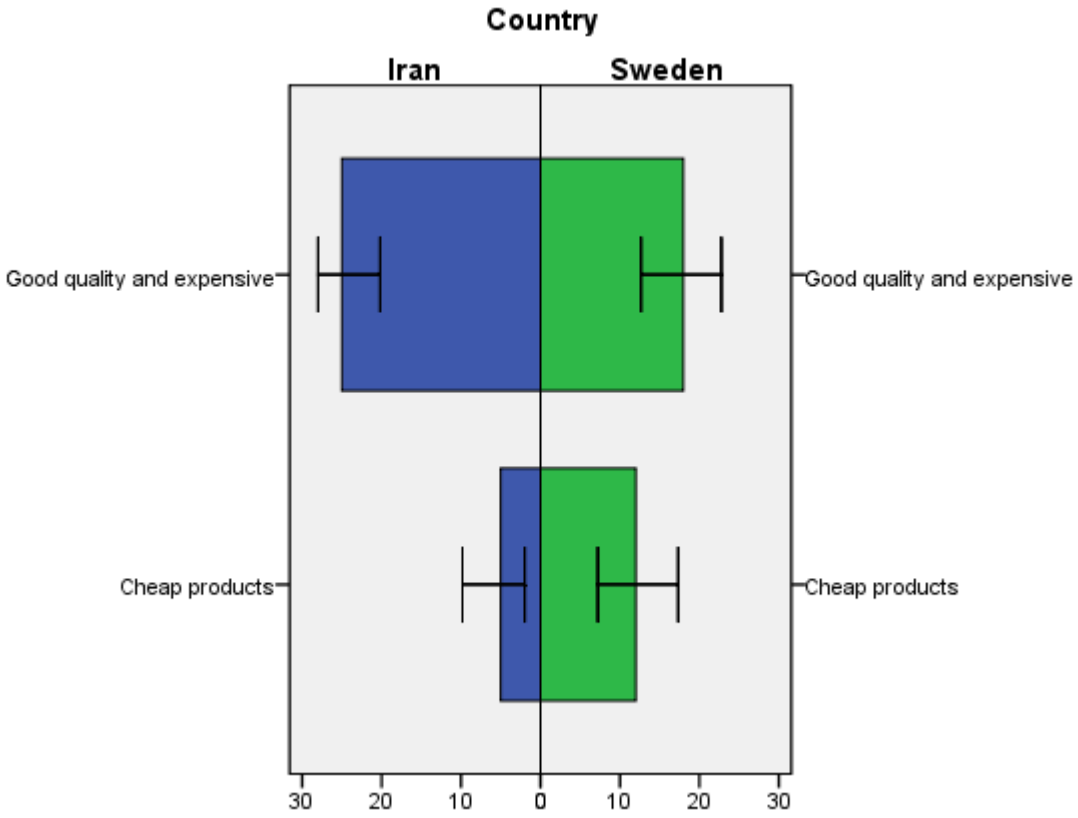

Chart 7.5: Cheap products or high quality and expensive?!

According to chart 7.5 customers in both countries prefer to have high quality food products although they have to pay more for that.

7.1.9 Are food labels information enough?!

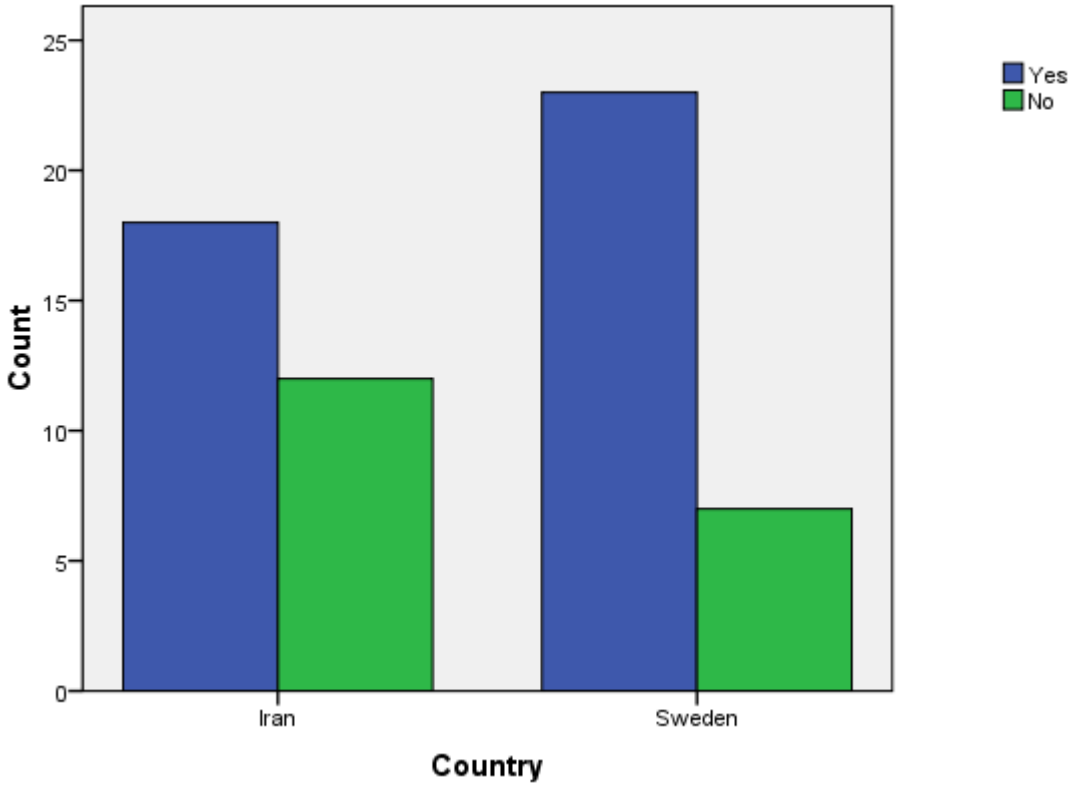

Chart 7.6: More information on food labels?

As it shows in chart 7.6 most of the customers both from Iran and Sweden insist that the labels information are enough for them.

7.1.10 Customer's statements about the products labels and their information

Summarized results in tables 6.22I and 6.22S have compared the respondents statements. According to those tables, most of the respondents agree that by food labels they can achieve general information and knowledge about the food products. This statement is also true in case of receiving information about storing the products.
Swedish respondents more than Iranian state that they can receive nutrition & manufacturer details through products labels.

However, Table 6.23I and 6.23S are contains of the general statements about food labels, according to the result, understanding the food labels seems to be more difficult for Iranian customers than Swedish. Results shows that Swedish customers expect the labels to be more easier to understand, while Iranian are not concerning the labels as an important aspects of the products. However, both countries respondents believe that ingredients should have more space on the labels. Meanwhile, Swedish & Iranian respondent agreed mostly that labels contain the information they need to know and they always check the labels which can affect their decision of purchasing a product.
Meanwhile, the fact that Iranian customers are less familiar with labels than Swedish customers can emphasize their popular traditional retailing system which they can receive their required information from expertise/ shop owner whom they trust. But it seems that in modern retailing system the product expertise has been replaced by product labels.

7.1.11 Factor influences purchasing decision

	Ingredients SWEDEN	Ingredients IRAN	Processing SWEDEN	Processing IRAN	Price SWEDEN	Price IRAN
Butter, Margarine and Spreads	63%	57%	7%	16%	30%	27%
Soft Drinks	44%	64%	13%	13%	43%	23%
Fresh Meat	30%	30%	37%	33%	33%	37%
Dairy Products	53%	43%	20%	20%	27%	37%
Prepacked meat	40%	30%	33%	47%	27%	23%
Ready meals	50%	53%	13%	27%	37%	20%
Frozen meat products	40%	30%	27%	40%	33%	30%
Fresh fruit and vegetables	17%	20%	10%	30%	73%	50%

Table 7.7: Most important factor that affects purchasing decision (Iran & Sweden)

According to table 7.7, Iranian and Swedish respondents are agreed that for purchasing butter, soft drinks, ready meals and dairy products the important factor which influences their decision is "ingredients". About Prepacked and frozen meats, Swedish would consider the ingredients and for fresh meats, they are more concern about the processing while Iranian considering processing more in case of Prepacked and frozen food and consider the price for the fresh meats. Concerning the fresh fruits and vegetables, both countries respondents considered the price as the most important factor influencing their decision.

7.2 Conclusion

According to previous studies in chapter three, Customer's behavior can be defined as an activity focused on the purchasing, consuming and using of the products by making decisions before and after purchasing. (Vladislava Bartosevicien, Linas Gudonavicius, Gintaras Saparnis. 2005 from Engel, Blakwell, Miniard, 1995; Solomon,1999; Pranulis, Pajuodis, Urbonavicius, Virvilait,1999; Urbanskien, Clottey, Jakstys, 2000; Stankevicien, 2004)
Customer behavior upon food products and purchasing them can be influenced by various factors and elements. Environmental, social, cultural, psychological (Marcia Dutra de Barcellos, 2005 & Scott B Follows, David Jobber, 2000) and demographic variables which altogether can describe the world that consumers are living in (Gabriella Vindigni, Marco A. Janssen, Wander Jager, 2001).
Cultural developments (Gabriella Vindigni, Marco A. Janssen, Wander Jager, 2001) can be mentioned as one of the most important and effective factors influencing customers behavior, attitudes and perception toward food products. However, it can assume that customers are products of their culture and their social groupings; therefore, they are conditioned by their socio-cultural environment to act in certain manners. (Alladi Venkatesh, 1995) Meanwhile, the influence of demographic factors like gender, age, education and occupation considered in analysis in chapter six, and their impact and influence on customer behavior was obvious and concluded. An example to this statement can be Table 6.9I, "preferred shopping place considering the age of the customers", the table showed that younger customers in Iran prefer supermarkets/hypermarkets or in general modern retailing system, while older customers are loyal to traditional system. In addition, Table 6.20I, showed more educated customers prefer to buy high quality products although they have to pay more for them.

According to chapter four, which explained the retailing systems in Sweden and in Iran, both traditional and modern retailing systems exist in both two countries. Due to chapter four, it has been almost 60 years that retailing system in Sweden has mostly changed from full service to self-service therefore, in long term customers are accustomed to this system. This fact can be notice in their responses to the preferred shopping place, 83% of them prefer to buy food products from hypermarket/supermarkets. However, 56% of the Iranian customers prefer to purchase their required food products from independent store although there are some hypermarkets and new modern supermarkets available, this shows that Iranian are still loyal to the traditional system while in future this habit might change by entering the foreign hypermarkets into the retailing market of Iran, more training about product labels advantages and public relations strategies.
Although studying the sample of 60 customers is not adequate to expand a general theory, but the noticed differences can prove the main hypothesis and goal of this research.
The differences noticed in habits and attitudes of customers toward food products are;

- Preferred shopping place
- Shopping frequencies
- Food safety perception
- Place to buy safer products
- Understanding and perception of food labels

Table 7.8 has summarized the main differences, therefore, it would be easier to compare the results.

Differences	Iran	Sweden
Shopping frequencies	**Daily/ Weekly**	**Weekly**
Preferred shopping place	**Independent known stores**	**Hypermarkets/supermarkets**
Food safety perception	**Expiry date, Fresh, Natural**	**Important issue, expiry, Country of origin**
Place to buy safer products	**Independent stores**	**Hypermarkets/supermarkets**
Understanding and perception of food labels	**Hard to understand / Unimportant issue**	**Easy to understand / Important issue**

Table 7.8: Most important differences in customers attitudes (Iran &

In spit of existence of varieties of retailers from small grocery stores to hypermarkets, both in Iran and in Sweden, different attitudes among the customers have been noticed.

Although younger customers in Iran are willing to purchase their food products from hypermarkets but still majority of Iranian customers are loyal to their traditional retailing system and believe that they can have a safer products with better quality, by purchasing from independent shops and most often from the independent shops they know. However, the majority of Swedish Customers believe that safer and better quality products exist in hypermarkets/supermarkets. These statements of the customers can be more clarified by their attitudes to products labels. Most of the Iranian stated that although they are checking and reading the labels for having information about expiry date or general health interest which would affect their purchasing decision, but they are not comfortable with the labels of the products. The statement can be clarified by considering their preferred shopping place, “Independent store that I know”. Having access to all the information they need from product expertise or the shop owner in the store, make them pay less attention to labels because they already gained what they required to know.

In addition, Swedish customers are more concerning the product labels, because the labels are the main tool for them to receive information about the products. However, they found the labels quite easy to be understood, and they would read and check the labels to have the knowledge about product ingredients, expiry date, general health interests, fitness issue, sugar and fat content, etc. and state that the products they buy from hyper/supermarkets are safe with good standards and qualities.

Although this research hasn’t studied the customers attitudes and behavior in Iran and in Sweden in details but the general study also established the theory that differentiation in retailing system can lead to different habits and attitudes among customers. Therefore, retailing system can be considered as a factor that beside demographic, social, cultural factors can influence customers behavior, attitudes and perception toward food products and food products safeties.

However, in case of Iran, I believe the lack of training about food labels, their advantages, the information customers can receive from and the lack of public relation, might be the reasons that customers are not comfortable with labels, are not trusting the information inside and are not paying serious attention to them. Besides, may be soon in future, by introducing the labels and their advantages to the Iranian customers, and establishing the public relation more seriously, customers would also follow the change in trend of retailing system and move from independent stores to hyper/supermarkets. The changed that had happened in Sweden more than 60 years ago.

7.3 Further Suggestions

Due to the limited time for performing this research, the survey just studied general aspects of retailing systems and their influences on customer behavior, but more detailed research could be establish in this case. The areas which can be interesting to study in future can be categorized as follow;

1. Studying demographic variables more in details or even individually on different aspects of customers behavior and attitudes toward food products, food safety and food quality. Like studying the impact of age in this concern or income and education more in details.

2. Cross cultural studies of customers behavior in different countries can lead to valuable results. The study can also consider the country retailing system.

3. Due to the change in retailing systems and omitting the product expertise who could transfer the information and details of the products to the customers, it would be interesting to study customers opinion about this loss and find the solution to replace this gap between customers and manufacturer by using IT and Web tools.

4. Studying the impact and influence of foreign self-service retailers on customers behavior of the countries like Iran, which full-service system is still leading the market. The probable changes in customers behavior and attitudes is fascinating to study and work on.

5. Finding out the variables and factors in customers attitudes that would change their demands and expectations from retailers which can create and lead to the change in trend of retailing systems. This study can have varieties of answers in different countries with different cultures.

6. Studying public relation activities in emerging markets like Iran and find its impact of customers behavior and attitudes to food products.

The suggestions pointed out above are numbers of topics which are interesting and fascinating to study among thousands of possible titles and ideas about customers behavior and the variables that would have influence on. However, the importance of this subject would make the researchers to emphasize more in this area and perform more accurate and valuable researches which are absolutely time consuming.

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CHAPTER NINE: APPENDICES

9.1 Questionnaire for Swedish customers

Blekinge Tekniska Högskola
Survey of retailing system & purchasing behavior

This questionnaire is part of my master thesis in business administration about food retailing system and purchasing behavior of the customers. Therefore, it would be nice of you to spend a few minutes answering following questions. Thanks in advance.

1. Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐

2. Age: 20-30 ☐ 30-40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ Other ☐

3. Your highest education qualification:
None ☐ High school ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ Other ☐

4. What is the type of work done by the highest wage earner in your household?
Professional ☐ Technical ☐ Clerical ☐ Manual ☐ Student ☐ Unwaged ☐

5. How often are you shopping food products? Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐

6. What is your preference for shopping?
Big supermarkets[9] ☐ Independent shop[10] ☐ Independent shop that you know[11] ☐

7. What is your perception of food safety?

8. In general, do you feel the food products, that you buy from supermarket are safer or the ones you buy from independent stores? Supermarkets ☐ Independent stores ☐

9. Which of the following influences your attention to read food labels?

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[9] Supermarkets or Hypermarkets, self-service, with varieties of products and available parking place
[10] Independent stores, the stores available at each households neighborhoods by specific products like fruit & vegetables, meat or groceries
[11] The independent shops that you usually purchase your needed products from and you know the shop owner

Special dietary requirements ☐ A general health interest ☐
A food related allergy ☐ A specific fitness interest ☐
A specific GM/organic concern ☐ Religion ☐

10. What are the factors that you usually check them in food labels?

Brand/manufacturer ☐ Product name ☐
Price ☐ Use by date ☐
Storage instructions ☐ Ingredients ☐
Number of calories ☐ Fat content ☐
Sugar content ☐ Processing (how the product is made) ☐
GM/organic ☐ Preservatives/taste enhancers ☐

11. Are you buying the cheapest food products or you pay more for better quality?

Cheap food products ☐ Food products with good quality ☐

12. Do you find the information mentioned on the food product's label sufficient or you need to know more about the product? Yes ☐ Need more information ☐

13. Please state your strength of agreement with the following statements using one of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

A. By food labels, it is easy to understand about;	SA	A	N	D	SD
The product	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Storing the product	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nutritional information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food manufactured or processed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B.					
I find it difficult to understand food labels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food manufacturers are truthful with their labels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would read food labels if they were simply written	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ingredients need more space on labels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food labels don't contain the information I want	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I always read the labels on food products	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There should be more information on food labels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Food labels influence my decision to buy the product	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. What is the other information, which you would like to receive about food products?

15. What is the most important factor that affects your purchasing decision about following products!?

	Ingredients	Processing	Price
Butter, Margarine and Spreads	☐	☐	☐
Soft Drinks	☐	☐	☐
Fresh Meat	☐	☐	☐
Dairy Products	☐	☐	☐
Prepacked meat	☐	☐	☐
Ready meals	☐	☐	☐
Frozen meat products	☐	☐	☐
Fresh fruit and vegetables	☐	☐	☐

Thanks for you patience!

9.2 Questionnaire for Iranian customers

Blekinge Tekniska Högskola
Survey of retailing system & purchasing behavior

این پرسشنامه جهت انجام یک پروژه فوق لیسانس است. سپاسگزار خواهم شد که چند دقیقه از وقتتان را صرف پر کردن آن کنید.

1. جنسیت: زن مرد
2. رده سنی: 20-30 30-40 40-50 غیره
3. میزان تحصیلات: متوسطه لیسانس فوق لیسانس غیره
4. شغل:
5. چند وقت یکبار مواد غذایی مورد نیازتان را تهیه میکنید؟

هر روز هفته ای یکبار ماهی یکبار

6. ترجیح میدهید از چه جور فروشگاهی خرید کنید؟

سوپر مارکت بزرگ فروشگاههای مواد غذایی فروشگاههای مواد غذایی که می شناسید

7. چه تعریفی از سلامت مواد غذایی دارید؟(سلامت مواد غذایی از نظر شما چیست؟)

8. به نظر شما مواد غذایی که از سوپر مارکتهای بزرگ خریداری میکنید سالم تر هستند یا آنهایی که از فروشگاههای مواد غذایی که می شناسید تهیه میکنید ؟ از سوپر مارکتهای بزرگ فروشگاههای مواد غذایی که می شناسم

9. کدام یک از عوامل زیرباعث میشوند توجه شما به برچسب روی کالاها جلب شود؟ (Label)

- عوامل مربوط به رژیم غذایی
- اطلاعات کلی راجع به سلامت غذایی
- مواد آلرژی زا
- عوامل مربوط به تناسب اندام
- عوامل مذهبی
- طبیعی بودن غذا (organic food)

10. کدام یک از فاکتورهای زیر را در برچسب کالاها چک میکنید؟

- نام کالا
- شرکت تولید کننده کالا
- قیمت
- تاریخ مصرف
- طرز نگهداری
- مواد اولیه

- تعداد کالری - میزان چربی
- میزان قند - روشی که کالا تهیه شده
- مواد نگهدارنده - طبیعی بودن غذا (organic food)

11. هنگام خرید مواد غذایی ارزان تر را انتخاب می کنید یا بهترین کیفیت با قیمت بیشتر را؟

- ارزان تر - کیفیت بهتر ولی گران تر

12. به نظر شما اطلاعات درج شده در برچسب کالاها کافی است؟ یا به اطلاعات بیشتری نیاز دارید؟

- اطلاعات موجود کافی است -به اطلاعات بیشتری نیاز است

13. موارد زیر را با توجه به میزان اهمیتی که برایتان دارند انتخاب کنید (کاملن موافقم، موافقم، متوسط، مخالفم، کاملن مخالفم)

الف با استفاده از برچسب کالاها، به آسانی می توان کسب اطلاع کرد درباره:

	کاملن موافق	موافق	متوسط	مخالف	کاملن مخالف
- محصول غذایی	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- روش نگهداری محصول	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- اطلاعات مربوط به ارزش غذایی محصول	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- روشهای تولید محصول غذایی	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

ب -

- برچسبهای موجود بر محصولات غذایی به سادگی قابل فهم نیستند	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- تولید کنندگان مواد غذایی، اطلاعات برچسبها را صادقانه می نویسند	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- فقط وقتی برچسب را می خوانم که ساده نوشته شده باشد	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- در برچسبها باید فضای بیشتری به مواد اولیه اختصاص داده شود	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- اطلاعات مورد نیاز من معمولن در برچسبها لحاظ نشده اند	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- برچسبها همیشه برای من سودمند هستند و آنها را می خوانم	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- به طور کلی اطلاعات بیشتری باید در برچسبها درج شود	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- برچسبهای مواد غذایی در تصمیم گیری برای خرید تاثیر می گذارند	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. اطلاعات بیشتری که نیاز دارید در برچسبهای مواد غذایی ذکر شوند را ذکر کنید.

15. مهمترین عامل تاثیر کذار بر تصمیم گیری شما برای خرید هریک از محصولات زیر چیست؟

	قیمت	فرایند تولید	مواد اولیه
کره و مارگارین	☐	☐	☐
نوشیدنی ها	☐	☐	☐
گوشت تازه	☐	☐	☐
لبنیات	☐	☐	☐
گوشت بسته بندی	☐	☐	☐
غذای آماده	☐	☐	☐
گوشت یخ زده	☐	☐	☐
سبزی و میوه تازه	☐	☐	☐

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