Secondhand shopping is (not) for all!
- Generation Y’s Consumer Behavior

regarding secondhand shopping

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First we would like to thank each other for our encouragement, support, openness and patience when writing this thesis.

We also want to thank our supervisor Karin Alm for her help and involvement. She has critically reviewed our work and given us valuable comments during the process of this thesis, which has been very helpful and of great value. We also thank Annika Fjelkner for helping us improving the language in our thesis.

Lastly, we would like to thank the students that took their time and participate in our two focus groups. Their thoughts and opinions have been important for us to be able to accomplish the study.

Kristianstad, 2015

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Swedish newspapers and media sites write that secondhand shopping is a growing consumption trend in today’s society. People’s consumer behavior affect their choice of purchasing brands and products, where secondhand shopping is a choice.

The aim with this study is to explore and analyze college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior and attitudes towards subcultures and brand community in secondhand shopping. To conduct the research, we have used a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach.

The research was performed by using a model we called the Modified Identity Prism, which has been constructed and defined by us, based on Kaprefer’s (1997) Brand Identity Prism. With help of the Modified Identity Prism’s different facets, we have been able to understand and interpret Generation Y’s consumer behavior and the drivers for their opinions and attitudes toward secondhand shopping.

The study shows that even though secondhand shopping is a growing consumption trend in the society, the majority of our respondents do not purchase products and brands secondhand. Empirical findings show that different factors affect consumer behavior in different ways, where consumers’ self-identity and the relationship to surroundings are significant key factors influencing consumer behavior. Furthermore, findings show that our interviewed students, overall, have negative attitudes to secondhand products.

We have taken practical and social implications to consideration in our study. Our study contributes to a deeper understanding of college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior to secondhand shopping. Moreover, results of the study aims to be used as guidelines for companies with focus on secondhand consumption.

Key words: Generation Y, consumer behavior, secondhand shopping, subcultures, brand community
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1. Introduction

The following chapter clarifies and describes the background, problem statement, purpose and objectives of the research, research question and limitations of this dissertation. In this section’s ultimate paragraph, an outline of each chapter of this thesis will be presented. This chapter’s aim is conducted in a way to provide an overview of the study.

1.1. Background

The society raises many questions around today’s sustainability (Andersson, 2015; Englund, 2014). Swedish media, such as Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet and Sydsvenskan mention that there are many reasons for consumers to think of the society’s sustainability. Consumers can take different actions to contribute to a better sustainability in the society. The newspapers Dagens Nyheter and Sydsvenskan presents several ways of contribution to sustainability where one among many is secondhand shopping (Englund, 2014; Sydsvenskan, 2015). Today, secondhand shopping is considered to be a growing consumption trend and a discussed area in the Swedish media. For example, the media site Sydsvenskan, mentions that a former store Manager of Cassels, recently opened a secondhand clothes-shop mainly as a reaction to today’s consumer society and the growth of consumption. The manager claims that she is fed up with today’s consumer society, and points out that people consume too much clothes nowadays, and further, the manager also sees a potential growth in secondhand shopping (Sydsvenskan, 2015).

Consumers are continually making choices of what products to purchase, which result in different consequences, positive or negative. The relationship between consumer and product is important in this age of consumerism (Bearden & Hardesty, 2009). Furthermore, consumers’ decisions are very important for companies’ and retailers’ profit and non-profitable causes in the twenty-first century (Cui, Trent, Sullivan & Matiru, 2003). There are different factors explaining consumer behavior (Bearden & Hardesty, 2009). Consumer behavior is crucial, and defined as individuals’ decisions of consumption in consideration to the different affecting factors (Belk, 1975), including individual, situational, cultural, ethnical, geographical, and demographical factors (Bearden & Hardesty, 2009).

There are significant correlations between consumer behavior and brand identification. One part of brand identification consists of needing social satisfaction and belonging to a group. Individuals classify themselves and others into social categories where brand consumption is one of them. A brand community can be defined as a group with a shared enthusiasm for a
specific brand or product, as well as group with similar social identity (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Brand communities are based on a structured set of relationship among admires of a brand, and influence consumers’ actions and perceptions (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

Age cohorts also affect consumers’ decisions of consumption and consumer behavior. An age cohort, called generation, consists of people around the same age in a similar location who experience similar social, historical and life events. Generations, such as Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, can be recognized and defined differently mainly because there are different individuals in each cohort. The individuals of the cohorts have different experiences because of, for instance, different historical events in the cohorts’ year of birth. Nonetheless, the age cohorts’ attitudes, values and expectations towards consumer behavior and consumption differ from each other. Thus, it is important to understand the generations’ factors, which are significant in the research of consumer behavior (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014).

1.2. Problem statement

Becton, Walker and Farmer (2014) state that there are similarities, differences and limitations in each age cohort regarding consumer behavior. In other words, individuals born in the earlier years of a generation might be affected by different factors compared with individuals born in the middle or the last years of the generation (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014). Therefore, it is relevant to analyze the generation subcultures in relation to geographical and demographical perspectives, in order to define the differences and similarities within an age cohort (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014).

For instance, the Baby Boomer generation consists of individuals born between the early 1940s and 1964. This generation tends to be nostalgic and attracted to products which act as reminders (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009). They value the in-store service and retail experience higher compared to Generation Y (Parment, 2013). On the other hand, Generation X, consists of people born between 1965 and 1979. This generation is more family-oriented and values a casual lifestyle compared to the Baby Boomer generation (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014). On the contrary, Generation Y, also called Millennials, tends to be more music-oriented, technology savvy, and fashion conscious than the other two generations (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009). The individuals of this age group are born approximately from year 1980 to 1993, however, previous research regarding the Generation Y’s age group has not determined
an agreed-upon “cutoff” year for this age cohort (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014). Millennials also tends to spend more money than the older generations and purchase an assortment of high prestige brands in a wide price range (Giovannini, Xu & Thomas, 2015). Moreover, Generation Y, in comparison to the other two generation cohorts, is the most culturally diverse generation in the history. The generation consists of individuals that are rated as the most-well educated individuals, which indicates that they have a higher education level, compared to individuals of the older generations. Furthermore, the cultural diversity has made Generation Y exceedingly open-minded toward different perspectives in lifestyle (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009).

In the past decades there have been drastic changes in the different age cohorts (Becton, Walker & Farmer-Jones, 2014). There has also been a growing interest in alternative consumption channels and conventional retailing where secondhand shopping is one of them (Guiot & Roux, 2010), especially in Generation Y. There are several reasons to the growth of secondhand shopping in the age cohort. Previous research implies that consumers have three dimensions that motivates them to shop: the wish to obtain a product, the wish to satisfy needs not linked to the product, and the wish to achieve certain goals independent of the actual purchase. These three dimensions also affect the growth of secondhand shopping in Generation Y (Guiot & Roux, 2010). When secondhand shopping first entered the market, the main purpose was to meet the demand of lower prices on products, especially for consumers in a lower society class. Today, secondhand shopping is desired and common across different classes, and the low price alone, is not the only motivation for consumers to shop secondhand (Xu, Chen, Burman & Zhao, 2014). Earlier studies show that consumers who are shopping secondhand, are motivated by economic and ecological concerns, such as recycling, waste reduction and recreation (Guiot & Roux, 2010). A reason behind the growth of secondhand shopping is the increasing interest and concern young consumers have about the environment. Another reason that made it possible for secondhand shopping to be successful, is consumers’ clothing disposal, where giving away clothes to non-profitable organizations and families are most common (Xu, Chen, Burman & Zhao, 2014). Furthermore, secondhand shopping has become a basic trend among consumers, which makes reselling and recycling acceptable (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Despite the existing research of Generation Y regarding college-aged individuals, there is a theoretical gap within this subject. For instance, previous research focuses on the entire generational cohort, instead of focusing on the college-aged individuals’ motivation and consumption patterns such as attitudes, values and norms.
Therefore, the purpose of our research is mainly to define the college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior, towards secondhand shopping. In other words, it aims to discuss if college-aged individuals within Generation Y are affected by the same factors and attracted to the same products and brands. We will also explore the differences and similarities of Generation Y’s consumer behavior in our study.

1.3. Purpose of research and objectives
The aim with this study is to explore and analyze individuals of Generation Y’s consumer behavior and attitudes towards subcultures and brand community in secondhand shopping.

1.4. Research question
How do individuals of Generation Y approach secondhand markets, and what are the drivers of the consumer behavior attitudes?

1.5. Demarcations
We have chosen to focus our research to Generation Y, mainly because this generation is considered to be a factor for today’s growing consumption (Bearden & Hardesty, 2009) of products contributing to a better environment, such as secondhand stores (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

There is a wide age range in Generation Y, which causes wide differences in consumption in this generational cohort. Because of these differences of consumption in the wide range of age within Generation Y (Noble, Haytko, & Phillips, 2009) we have chosen to demarcate our research to college-aged individuals of Generation Y. Another reason that influenced our choice was the lack of studies of college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior (Ibid.). In our research, we define college-aged individuals as students of Generation Y.

1.6. Outline

Chapter 1: The following chapter clarifies and describes the background, problem statement, purpose and objectives of the research, research question and limitations of this dissertation. In this section’s ultimate paragraph, an outline of each chapter of this thesis will be presented. This chapter’s aim is conducted in a way to provide an overview of the study.

Chapter 2: In this chapter we will present the theoretical framework of this dissertation. We will look into consumer behavior, subcultures and brand communities for a deeper understanding of this research. The Identity Prism model will be introduced and argued for its
relevance to consumer behavior. In the end of this chapter, a conclusion will be presented where we introduce a modified Identity Prism model, followed by determination and clarification of parts relevant for our theoretical framework of this study.

Chapter 3: This chapter explains how the research was conducted. We present and explain the choices made on the basis of theoretical perspectives. The chapter begins by defining and discussing the research philosophy and the research design. Furthermore, the choice of data collection and the sample selection are presented, followed by an explanation of our interview guide and the practice of our focus groups. Lastly, the study’s credibility and transparency will be discussed.

Chapter 4: In this following chapter the empirical results from the participating students’ discussion will be presented. Throughout this chapter, we will analyze the empirical results based on the theoretical framework. Firstly, different facets in accordance with the Modified Identity Prism in the literature chapter will be presented. Consumers’ relationship will be discussed first, followed by reflection, self-image and self-identity. There will also be an added facet called ‘Other factors’, which we consider a relevant facet to determine consumer behavior. Further, subcultures and brand community will be described and analyzed. Lastly, we will define similarities and differences between the students’ statements and the relevant theory about consumer behavior, subcultures, brand communities and our Prism model during the analysis.

Chapter 5: In this chapter we will introduce our discussion based on our research question. The main objective with this chapter is to see whether college-aged students of Generation Y approach secondhand markets and, further, on what basis. In the first section we will present our main conclusions of the study and discuss the conclusions to the analyzed results. The next section consists of a critical review, where we reflect our critical thinking of our study. In the penultimate section, the study’s implications and contribution to others will be introduced. Lastly, suggestions for further research will be presented.
2. Literature review

In this chapter we will present the theoretical framework of this dissertation. We will look into consumer behavior, subcultures and brand communities for a deeper understanding of this research. The Identity Prism model will be introduced and argued for its relevance to consumer behavior. In the end of this chapter, a conclusion will be presented where we introduce a modified Identity Prism model, followed by determination and clarification of parts relevant for our theoretical framework of this study.

2.1. Consumer behavior

The context of consumption is an important key influence to consumers’ attitudes and behavior (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Consumer behavior has long been linked to an individual’s identity and materialistic behaviors, and attitudes are seen as determinants of self-image (McNeill & Graham, 2014). Consumers’ personality and identity vary depending on physiological and social perspectives, where brand and consumption are playing a key role. Physiological perspectives define a person’s identity and form a person’s character with the combination of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Social perspectives reflect people’s identity and self. Self-concept or self-identity is the main content within social perspectives and include thoughts, feelings and imaginations defining who we are. Furthermore, self-concept can be clarified as the beliefs a person withhold (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Consumers purchase and use products that determine, maintain and enhance their self-identity (Hosany & Martin, 2012). In other words, consumers buy products and choose brands that help them to achieve their ideal self. The idea of a stable identity has moved toward a multiplicity of consumers’ identity, which means that people have different aspects of “self” in different situations. This affect consumer behavior and becomes relevant when consumers choose what products and brands to consume (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

Furthermore, external, internal, personal and contextual forces have great impact on consumer behavior (Farr-Wharton, Foth, & Choi, 2014). According to Kotler (2008), both external and internal influences affect consumers’ decisions and their behavior. External influences can be defined as, for instance, subcultures and reference groups, while internal influences are related to consumers’ personalities, emotions, motives and attitudes (Kotler, 2008). People’s motivation to consume arise not only from physiological needs such as the need to sleep, to eat and to drink, but also from the needs of social recognition and a consistency in one’s self-image (Witt, 2010). People are influenced by their perceptions of themselves when they make
decisions around consumption. They want to fit in with other people’s expectations, and choose products and brands after how they would like to be seen. Brand-image should, therefore, strive to be consistent with the consumers’ self-image (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

One type of consumption that provide links between the brand and how consumers define themselves is symbolic consumption, which focus on the meanings attached to products or brands (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The symbolic meaning of products or brands help consumers build and preserve their identities, and, further, express their self-concept. Consumers’ self-concept is actively constructed and preserved through symbolic consumption behavior (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). There is a relationship between symbolic meanings of products and brands, consumers’ self-concept and related people in the society. A consumer choose specific products or brands to achieve self-enhance, and hope that other people who are significant for the consumer, will notice and have the same attitudes toward brands and products (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Therefore, it is important for consumers to know how other people in their social group might interpret the meanings of certain products and brands (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). The usage of symbolic consumption allows consumers to communicate with other people and to build their own self-identity (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

The combination of attitudinal factors, including a person’s values, beliefs and norms, can influence consumer behavior. Attitudes are the deeply held beliefs and evaluations consumers have against something. A key concept, of attitudes, is that it influences people’s behavior and make consumers act in a certain way (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Attitudes can be defined as; what you think, what you feel and what you do, and are something people learn from the society. There are three different components related to attitudes; cognitive, affective and behavioral (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The cognitive component contains consumers’ beliefs about an object, including both emotional benefits and objective features toward a brand. The affective component consists of feelings or emotional reactions to an object (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Those feelings and reactions are often fundamental, which are represented as liking or disliking (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The behavioral component is consumers’ tendency to respond to an object and, furthermore, defined as the action they take. Hawkins et. al. (2010) clarity the actions of the three attitude components in a model. The model starts with that consumers get a stimuli from, for instance products, brands or companies. Thereafter, the consumers evaluate their feelings, thoughts and actions caused by the stimuli, using the three components; cognitive, affective and behavioral.
components. The three components combined creates a specific attitude toward the object. The attitude components are consistent to each other, which means that if one attitude component changes, the other two components change as well (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Previous research discusses different motivations and functions consumers’ attitudes have, where the function of building and defending consumers’ self-image with products and brands is one of them (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Consumers’ attitudes, values and self-identity are relevant factors within subcultures (Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico, & González-Romá, 2014) and, therefore, we will look more into the contributing factors of subcultures.

### 2.2. Subcultures

A type of brand can form diverse subcultures of consumption and link the individuals with same interests around an activity (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013). The concept of *subcultures of consumption* is defined as a subgroup of society categorized according to individual’s self-selected choices of class, brand or consumption (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico and González-Romá (2014) state that subcultures, on the basis of a participant’s attributes and attitudinal characteristics, influence the forming of subgroups, for example resource-based, identity-based and information-based groups. Resource-based subgroups are formed based on finite resources such as status, power, materials (e.g. capital) and authority (Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico, & González-Romá, 2014). Being authentic with a high status in the subgroup is a central concern among the people in the subcultures (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013). Contrary to resource-based subgroups, identity-based subgroups are formed based on consumers’ shared beliefs and common sense of social self-identity. On the other hand, information-based subgroups, also known as knowledge-based subgroups, are formed on the basis of task-relevant knowledge of the group including technical and life experiences (Meyer, Glenz, Antino Rico & González-Romá, 2014).

The authors, Szmigin and Piacentini (2015), mention that subcultures based on demographic characteristics, also influences the forming of subgroups such as age-based, sex-based, region-based, culture-based, religion- and ethnicity-based subgroups. These groups are formed on the basis of the affiliation with other people linked to the same demographic characteristics (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The age-based subgroups are referring to groups of consumers born at certain key stages of life history. The age-based group, on the premise that individuals
have shared historical and life experiences, are categorized in different age cohorts including Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Becton, Walker, & Farmer-Jones, 2014; Noble, Haytko, & Phillips, 2009; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). On the contrary, the sex-based subgroups are groups considering society’s expectations to consumers’ attitudes, values and behaviors of men and women. On the other hand, region-based, culture-based ethnic-based and religion-based subgroups refer to the similarities of regional, cultural, ethnical and religious identifications (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). In order to distinguish subgroups of society from each other, there are mainly three noticeable factors subgroups consists of (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

Firstly, subgroups have an identifiable social structure which indicates that subcultures are distinguished on the basis of a member’s social identity (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico, & González-Romá, 2014). Therefore, Meyer et. al. (2014) define subgroups as groups of members whose interdependence is independent from other subgroups. Secondly, Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) mention that shared beliefs, norms and values (Cronin & McCarthy, 2011; Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013) are important factors in order to define different subgroups in the society. The shared beliefs, norms and values are also significant to create and maintain social relationships and social interactions among the individuals. Thirdly, unique rituals and manners of symbolic expressions supporting the subgroup’s values and beliefs are relevant to determine a subgroup. The symbolic expressions are used in daily activities and often involve other products or services. For instance, golf is associated with sports, and is distinguished for its unique dress code or outfit. Therefore, a golf player’s clothing provides a symbolic expression (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

However, a participant of an activity who share same interests of a subgroup, does not necessarily need to become associated with the subgroup. Regardless if the person participates in the activity or owns a product or brand, the interpretation of values and commitment of his/her is required in order to become associated with the subgroup (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013). For example, an individual can be attracted to an ethos (i.e. shared values, norms and beliefs) of an activity but does not embrace the ethos. The individuals who do not embrace the ethos are considered as soft-core members of a subgroup. Conversely, the individuals who embrace the ethos are considered as the hard-core members of the subgroup (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013). The hard-core members of the subgroup embracing the same ethos, can sometimes be identified through brand communities, and the members affect consumer behavior (Marzocchi, Morandin, & Bergami, 2013). Based on the
discussion above, we consider it is relevant for our study to define factors forming brand community.

2.3. Brand community
Consumers’ identification with brand has long been linked to consumer behavior (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013), and is similar to the concept of subcultures of consumption (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). However, the focus is more specific and mainly formed by shared appreciation and enthusiasm of a brand (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) identify brand community as a non-geographically bound community with focus on interactions of individuals around an activity, product or brand. In other terms, brand community is formed by consumers’ shared attraction (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010), tradition and self-identity (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013) towards a common interest (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Therefore, an individual’s social identity is important in order to categorize consumers into different brand community groups (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013).

There are three different principles of a brand community; consciousness of kind, rituals and traditions and moral responsibility. Consciousness of kind, or shared consciousness is the connection between consumers in a brand community and differences from those consumers who are not. Conversely, rituals and traditions explain the meaning, history and culture within a brand community. While moral responsibility indicates that consumers who are involved in a brand community feel an obligation to other people and to the brand community as whole (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Consumers derive beneficial influences from brand community, such as improving self-esteem, social interactions and personal values (Ibid.). There are four relationship structures and social interactions consumers focus on within a brand community; the relationship between consumer and the product, the brand, the company and the owners (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). Stokburger-Sauer (2010) explains that these four integrated relationship structures create a relationship between consumers and the brand community.

A first condition of creating a trustworthy and strong relationship between consumers and the brand community (Ibid.) is the loyalty the community may improve (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Loyalty is also relevant to determine whether the community is consistent of a specific cause such as environmental or personal (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Brand loyalty or brand trust consists of three variants; calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust and
identification-based trust. Calculus-based trust is mainly based on statistics of the perceived rewards of the people in the third party. In other words calculus-based trust is based on opinions from people who are indirectly involved in the party arrangement between the buyer and the seller. This is commonly encountered in working environments. Conversely, knowledge-based trust focuses on self-explanatory trust, which indicates the brand loyalty is based on consumers’ previous experiences of the brand. On the contrary, regarded as the highest form of trust, the identification-based trust is mainly define the situation in which two parties interact with each other’s values, expectations and intentions and therefore, co-creating a brand community (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). A second condition to a strong brand community is the importance of an individual’s perception of belongingness to a group, which strengthen and support the co-creation of a brand community (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). A third condition reflecting a strong brand community is the uniqueness of the brand and the image the community mediates. Products and brands tend to have a higher value to consumers when the products and brand symbolize a social relationship with the consumer (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). In other terms, consumers have a higher appreciation for products if brands have a specific cause or value affecting the society and community such as environmental causes (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013).

In order to define consumer behavior of a subgroup or brand community, it is significant to identify factors affecting consumer behavior such as attitudes, values and self-identity (Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico, & González-Romá, 2014; Marzocchi, Morandin, & Bergami, 2013). Therefore, we consider the Identity Prism (Kapferer, 1997) as a relevant model to determine these factors.

2.4. The Identity Prism

The society has gone from brand image, positioning and personality, to the modern age of brand identity. For brands to become or stay strong they need to be true to their identity. The concept of brand image can be both unstable and changing, and with the risk that too much focus is on brand appearance. Instead more focus should be on the essence of the brand. Brand identity is crucial for three reasons; it needs to be durable, send out signs that is coherent and be realistic (Kapferer, 1997).

Kapferer (1997) developed the Identity Prism to describe the identity of a brand. The identity prism is divided in to six different facets; (1) the physical qualities (physique), (2) the
personality, (3) the culture, (4) the relationship, (5) the reflection and (6) the self-image (Kapferer, 1997).

The Identity Prism defines a brands identity as well as its limitations, and it is possible to make changes in the model (Kapferer, 1997). In our study, we use consumer behavior as a theory, which we apply on Kapferer’s (1997) Identity Prism to gain an understanding of consumers’ self-image, attitudes and reflections, when they are choosing and buying products and brands. The brand itself has a significant role for consumers’ attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, brands help consumers to develop their identity, join brand communities and choose products (Kapferer, 1997).

According to Kapferer (1997), brands have the gift of speech and only exist if they communicate with the consumers, which also is the main concept of the Identity Prism. Behind all types of communication there is a sender, and the same applies to brands. Communication also builds a recipient, which is defined as a certain type of person or audience buying or using the brand, and is also the receiver of the massage. The six facets of the Identity Prism are divided into four categories; picture of sender, picture of recipient, externalization and internalization (Kapferer, 1997). The meaning of these categories will be central and crucial when we decide which of the components we will focus on in our analysis.
First, we will explain the three facets, physique, personality and culture, in the Identity Prism, which represent the picture of the sender. Kapferer (1997) mentions that brands have no real sender, but consumers describe the brand’s sender as the person wearing the brand-name and can be defined as a firm or a business (Kapferer, 1997). In our study the brand sender represents retailers of secondhand products. The purpose with our study is to understand differences and similarities in consumer behavior and Generation Y’s attitudes toward secondhand shopping. The main focus will be on how consumers associate to brands; we will, therefore, not include the three facets in the identity prism related to the sender, in our study.

Second, we will define and discuss the three facets; relationship, reflection and self-image, which represent the picture of the recipient. The recipient, in the Identity Prism, is defined as consumers for a specific brand (Kapferer, 1997). The facets’ of reflection and self-image affect consumers’ self-concept and self–identity, as well as influence people to select and enter different brand communities. With focus on consumer behavior and consumers’ attitudes toward secondhand shopping, we will use and implement Kapferer’s (1997) three facets, relationship, reflection and self-image, in our study. Despite certain parts being irrelevant for our study, the whole Identity Prism is described below to give an overall understanding of the model.

2.4.1. Physique

The first facet of the Identity Prism is physique; a brand’s physical qualities. Physique can be described as a combination of either salient objective features or emerging ones, which immediately come to mind when the brand is mentioned. Normally, this is how brands communicate with consumers, with a classic positioning in consumers’ mind. Physique is both the brand’s mainstay and its added value, and without physique the brand will no longer exist. The physical appearance is important for a brand, and one of the main steps in developing a brand is to define its physical aspects, for example; what does it do or what does it look like? The physique for a brand could be; symbols, colors, the shape of the product or the packaging. The physique facet explains how a brand communicates with consumers, and is the first component that is part of the sender in the identity prism, which relates to the retailer of a brand (Kapferer, 1997).

2.4.2. Personality

Brands have their own personality, which is the second facet. A brand’s personality is the way it speaks and it shows what kind of person it would be if the brand was a human, in other terms,
the personality facet builds characters with help of communication. To create a strong brand-personality, companies should give the brand a figurehead or a spokesperson, which will be recognized with the brand. This has been the main focus of brand advertising for the last forty years. Personality is the second component that represents the sender in the Identity Prism (Kapferer, 1997). This facet focuses more on how to develop a strong brand identity rather than the consumers’ attitudes toward the brand that already are designed.

With help of personality, as well as physique that we mentioned earlier, retailers are able to build and develop a brand-identity that consumers will keep in mind (Kapferer, 1997). In order to maintain a strong brand-identity, marketers should strive to make their brand-image consistent with consumers’ self-image (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

2.4.3. Culture
The Identity Prism includes a third facet; culture, where the product becomes the tool for communication and representation of the culture in the media. Culture refers to the set of values that will be the brand’s inspiration, but also the basic principles for the brand’s products and communications to consumers. The culture facet maintains what the brand will symbolize and is manifested not only in the brands, products and services, but also in its way of communicating. To understand differences between a brand and its competitors, the cultural facet plays an important role and can be explained as the key concept. Another thing that culture does is linking the brand to the firm and explain who they are, which helps consumers to select the right brand. Culture is one of the two facets in the brand identity prism that fill out the gap between sender and recipient, where culture has an internalization role (Kapferer, 1997). A brand’s culture is controlled by the retailer, and connect the brand to the consumers. With a strong culture, the brands are able to communicate with consumers (Kapferer, 1997). This differs from the symbolic consumption where consumers communicate with each other with the help of brands (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

2.4.4. Relationship
Kapferer’s (1997) fourth facet of the Brand Identity Prism is the relationship, where the brand stands for a relationship itself. Brands are often the central part and the main reason to transactions and exchanges between people. What the brand stands for and symbolizes create the relationship. Consequently, the relationship creates symbolic meanings of products, brands and consumers’ self-identity (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The facet can take different shapes and have different meanings to consumers depending on what brand they choose. In addition,
relationship is the second facet in the Brand Identity Prism that fills out the gap between sender and recipient, and the facet is considered as an externalization (Kapferer, 1997). Since the theory of the Identity Prism is based on brands, the externalization role that relationship takes can be applied on consumers. In our study, we will explain different shapes of relationships that are formed among consumers when they choose a specific brand, which can be defined as subcultures and brand communities. We will also look at the relationship that is developed between consumers and the brand itself.

2.4.5. Reflection
A brand is also a reflection, which is the fifth facet of the Identity Prism. With help of communication, brands build a reflection or an image of consumers that purchase or use the brands’ products (Kapferer, 1997). The symbolic consumption in terms of specific brands, provides a way of communicating with others in the society (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). A target is defined as the brand’s potential purchasers and users. Confusion between target and reflection is quite common and causes problems. Many managers use advertisements to show targeted buyers as they really are. A consumer of a brand should instead be reflected as he or she wants to be seen after using the brand (Kapferer, 1997), which develop and strengthen the consumers’ self-identity and self-image (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015).

Consumers utilize brands to build their identity and, therefore, it is important for brands to control their reflection and constantly update the reflection after current consumers. Brand reflection refers to who the consumers are to a specific brand, in other words what type of consumers that feel related to the brand (Kapferer, 1997). The reflection facet can be related to consumers’ personality and identity towards a social perspective, which is connected to consumers’ self-concept. Consumers’ self-identity defines who they are (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015), and is strengthen by how consumers are reflected when they select a brand (Kapferer, 1997).

2.4.6. Self-image
Finally, brands affect people’s self-image, which is the sixth facet of the model. Consumers’ attitudes have the function of defining their self-image (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). When consumers use a certain brand, they picture themselves in a specific community or with a self-image that is strongly correlated to the brand. People create an inner relationship with themselves and the self-image works as an internal mirror (Kapferer, 1997). The cognitive, affective and behavioral attitude components, as previous mentioned in the consumer behavior
section, influence how consumers behave and act when they are facing different brands (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Brands give consumers the ability to communicate with others that are using the same brand, but also to prove themselves what kind of person they are. When consumers choose brands they build their self-image (Kapferer, 1997), and develop their ideal “self” (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Consumers’ ideal self or self-identity (Hosany & Martin, 2012), in turns, leads to that they become part of a brand community (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Their choice of brands and consumption can also make them part of a subgroup (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).

2.5. The Modified Identity Prism

Our research consists of three main concepts: consumer behavior, subcultures and brand community. There are different perspectives affecting Generation Y’s consumer behavior in subcultures and brand communities regarding secondhand shopping, such as physiological and social perspectives (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Therefore, it is important to distinguish the perspectives from each other. Previous studies mainly define consumers’ attitudes and behavior separately, however, our research will focus on linking these variables and study the correlation between these factors.

In this research, we are going to identify Generation Y’s attitudes, values and norms in the subcultures and brand communities of secondhand shopping. It is also important to identify consumers’ self-concept and self-identity in order to observe Generation Y’s consumer behavior (Kapferer, 1997). Since our study is to define factors affecting consumer behavior of college-aged individuals in secondhand shopping, we need to operationalize and execute mainly three parts of the identity prism: relationship, reflection and self-image. These three parts of the Identity Prism are relevant to consumer behavior and consumers’ attitude, values and norms. The Identity Prism model is a part of the strategic management paradigm, and constructed in a way to describe brands’ identity, with focus on how brand communicates with consumers (Kapferer, 1997). Further, to utilize the Identity Prism and make it a relevant model for our research, we are going to limit and narrow the model and implement it on the consumers’ level instead of focusing on brands.

We reconstructed the model of Kapferer’s (1997) Identity Prism and call it the Modified Identity Prism. The Modified model is constructed in a way to explain consumer behavior of college-aged individuals of Generation Y. To understand the cohort’s consumer behavior, we will focus on three relevant facets from the Identity Prism: relationship, reflection and self-image.
Furthermore, the facets provide us with a greater understanding of the causes of the college-aged Generation Y’s actions within secondhand shopping. The relationship facet describes whether consumers have a relationship to the product, and to other consumers in the society (Kapferer, 1997). With help from the facet, we will explain whether consumers purchase products and brands because of a specific cause or not. The second facet, the reflection, explains whether products or brands reflect consumers when they purchase something (Ibid.). In other words, the facet provides a way for consumers to communicate to others in the surrounding through products or brands (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The self-image facet helps us to identify whether consumers personality is seen in the product and the purchase that is made (Kapferer, 1997). Self-image creates an inner mirror of consumers in the products that help themselves to develop their ideal selves (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The reflection and the self-image in the model has similar aim with focus on consumers’ identity when they select products and brands. The three facets, relationship, reflection and self-image influence each other (Kapferer, 1997), and are linked to consumers’ self-identity. Self-identity in its turn influences and has a relevant part in the three facets. Firstly, the relationship facet helps to create a symbolic meaning to consumers’ self-identity (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Secondly, products and brands which reflect consumers’ personality, strengthens and enhances their self-identity (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Hosany & Martin, 2012). Lastly, the mirror of individuals’ self-image helps consumers to develop their self-identity (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Moreover, self-identity is a great influence to determine the subcultures and brand communities of secondhand shopping (Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico & González-Romá, 2014). Therefore, we consider the self-identity as the forth key facet in the Modified Identity Prism. Since it is rather important for consumers to acknowledge themselves (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013), the purpose of this facet is to define consumers’ preferences. In other words, the self-identity is to define your personality and who you are (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). In our research, the four facets; relationship, reflection, self-image and self-identity are significant to determine consumer behavior. Each facet and each factor influence subcultures and brand communities (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Expressly, subcultures and brand communities in the society are formed on the premise of that consumers share the same interests and experiences, and have the same values of secondhand shopping (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Moreover, we are going to explore, with the help of the Modified Prism, whether brand loyalty is strong within the brand community. The four facets in our modified model act as pillars to define subcultures and brand community within secondhand shopping. Consequently, the four facets combined with
subcultures and brand community are significant to determine college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior in our study, see *figure 2.2*.

*Figure 2.2 The Modified Identity Prism*

(Based on: Kapferer, J.N (1997), Strategic brand management: Creating and sustaining brand equity long term, p. 100)
3. Methodology

This chapter explains how the research was conducted. We present and explain the choices made on the basis of theoretical perspectives. The chapter begins by defining and discussing the research philosophy and the research design. Furthermore, the choice of data collection and the sample selection are presented, followed by an explanation of our interview guide and the practice of our focus groups. Lastly, the study’s credibility and transparency will be discussed.

3.1. Research philosophy

The research philosophy that is selected for our dissertation will strengthen the research strategy, which makes it important to have a clear research philosophy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The two major approaches discussed by Saunders et. al. (2009) and Denscombe (2009) are divided into positivism and hermeneutic. Positivism has a quantitative approach indicating that the analysis is based on hypotheses and numbers which are used to generalize and perceive an overall conclusion within the study. Since our research has a qualitative approach, hermeneutics is more appropriate (Denscombe, 2009).

Hermeneutics is a theoretical perspective that provides a deep understanding of the researched area (Denscombe, 2009), and keeps the researchers open-minded throughout the study (Ödman, 2007). The hermeneutic approach is consistent with the aim of our study, since we want to receive a deeper understanding and gain insight into collaged-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior. Furthermore, we want to perceive the drivers of the cohort’s attitudes toward secondhand shopping. Interpretation and understanding are the hermeneutic philosophy’s mainstay, and the perspective is defined as the process of understanding in relation to the interpretation of a text or an image (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Our research analysis and conclusion will be based on both interpretation and understanding, where the understanding for the selected theory is underpinning our interpretive work within the empirical data (Ödman, 2007). The philosophy brings out the meaning of the text from the authors’ perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Through the hermeneutic approach, we are also able to create a deeper knowledge, which is defined as what we have seen and what we see during our research. Collecting information to gain broader knowledge is a main step in the empirical process, to understand the respondents’ attitudes and behavior.

Our study starts with a general approach and narrows down to become more specific. The research model is developed based on theory related to consumer behavior. We apply the theory
on the empirical data to obtain relevant insight and gain a broader understanding for our subject (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The research’s literature review and empirical data will be gathered in a repetitive process, which indicate that the study has an abductive approach. With an abductive approach the development of theories and concepts moves back and forth (Ibid.). The collected data, together with the theory, will be the basis for the analysis and our conclusions.

3.2. Research design

The choices we make regarding the research’s design is based on the purpose of our study, which is to explore and analyze college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior and their attitudes toward secondhand shopping. Furthermore, the research design will be guided by our research question, as well as our objectives for the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As we mentioned before, the study will have a hermeneutic approach, therefore an exploratory qualitative analysis will be used. To utilize an exploratory qualitative method, we will aim for a deeper insight and understanding of college-aged students’ consumer behavior and their attitudes toward secondhand shopping (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Our choice of method aims to understand consumer behavior, rather than describe it. We intend to understand the collage-aged students’ attitudes, values and opinions in relation to their consumer behavior (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009).

It is important to have in mind that with a qualitative research design, the researchers’ personal characteristics can affect the analysis and the interpretations (Denscombe, 2009). In order to increase the credibility, we assume that our empirical data do not define rights and wrongs regarding the respondents’ attitudes and behavior; instead we want to provide a broader insight and understanding of college-aged consumer behavior concerning secondhand shopping.

3.3. Empirical design

3.3.1. Focus groups as data collection

There are several ways of gathering data. Quantitative data collection include questionnaires and surveys. The main techniques of qualitative data collection consist of focus groups, interviews and observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). To support the qualitative approach that this study is based on, we have chosen to use focus groups to collect our data.

The purpose of our study is to analyze consumer behavior, which motivates us to look at people’s attitudes and perceptions, and also their feelings and ideas. This choice, we believe,
makes focus groups a relevant method. Furthermore, the interaction that occurs within a focus group help us to understand the reasoning behind the respondents’ values and opinions. The discussion in a focus group can get two different results; coherences or differences between the respondents’ opinions (Denscombe, 2009), which both are valuable for our study, since we have a hermeneutic approach. The interaction in a focus group gives the researcher an insight about how and, most important, why people behave in a certain way (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The study do not aim to observe how consumer behave when they purchase products and brands, instead we want to understand their behavior, which is the reason why we do not use observations as the process of data collection.

The data collection in a focus group is based on the social interaction between five to ten respondents, which is optimal for the researcher to manage. The focus groups are selected by us as researchers. Moreover, the discussion in the focus group is based on a specific topic that we will introduce to the respondents. It is important that the participants have some basic knowledge about the topic, to be able to participate in the discussion. As researchers we should encourage the respondents to take part in the discussion and keep the discussion within relevant areas for the study (Denscombe, 2009). The interaction within a focus group depends on the selection of respondents. Therefore, we have chosen respondents that have a relatively good relationship with each other, with a common age range and occupation in order to, hopefully, create a dynamic interaction between the participants (Alvehus, 2013). To achieve a dynamic and honest group discussion it is also important that the respondents have confidence and trust within the group. It is the researchers’ responsibility to create a pleasant environment during the discussion, so that the respondents dare to express themselves (Denscombe, 2009). The purpose of the group discussion is that the respondents shall share, as well as, develop new thoughts and ideas about the topic, which will results in valuable outcomes for our study.

Advantages with using focus groups as a research method is that the researcher can gain valuable insight into the discussions that occur between the persons within a focus group (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Unlike interviews, focus groups bring people into discussion of a specific topic. The interaction that occur between the study’s respondents is more suitable to our research’s purpose, than individual opinions. Furthermore, using focus groups as a research method allows us to estimate agreements and shared perceptions, as well as disagreements among the respondents (Denscombe, 2009) regarding secondhand shopping. Within a focus group the respondents have the ability to develop their ideas and explain their opinions to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Denscombe, 2009). To strengthen the study’s validity the
data has been controlled with more than one source. We have used two focus groups to distinguish similarities and differences as well as recognize conformity between the two discussions. The validity in our study also might increase because we are able to control the data during the collection process (Denscombe, 2009).

3.3.2. Selection of respondents

We have selected six respondents in each of the two focus groups, which are suitable for our research question and the study’s purpose. On the other hand, the amount of respondents in our focus groups we contacted were eight respondents in each group. The reason we contacted sixteen people in total, was in order to keep some respondents as substitutes in case some main respondents were unable to participate. When we collected the respondents for our focus groups, we also had in mind that we would collect half men and half women to the groups. Our objectives with the equally split sexes in each focus group were to get different answers from both genders. However, we had no interests or intentions to compare the differences between men and women. Our focus groups are based on students of Generation Y to connect the cohort’s attitudes with their consumption behavior. Generation Y as a whole cohort represent people in a wide age range. Therefore, we have chosen to narrow it down to college-aged students, which we define in this case as students between 21 and 25 years. Our focus groups were selected through a subjective approach, where we chose our respondents based on their personal characteristics, such as age and occupation. The subjective approach make sure that the respondents are relevant for the investigation, while there is opportunity for a wider variation in illuminating the research question (Denscombe, 2009). Before the focus groups were established, the respondents received information; that the discussion will be recorded. We explained that the recorded material will be fully confidential and that their identity will be anonymous in the dissertation. Therefore, we have not used their real names in our research, instead we have re-coded them with random names. The respondents of the first focus group were named as following; Peter, Calle, Thomas, Louise and Annie. In the second focus group, the respondents were called as following; David, Nicklas, Marc, Emma, Stephanie and Linnea.

When we chose the selection of respondents, we took into account that the people needed to be available and have enough time to be able to participate in the research (Denscombe, 2009). We decided to contact sixteen respondents from two different university cities in Skåne; Lund and Malmö. In order to collect respondents we chose to contact students mainly from Lund University and Malmö University. However, we also contacted students who live in the selected university cities but study at other universities. We considered students that live in the cities
would provide us with relevant information about each city’s trends and norms regarding secondhand shopping. We contacted these respondents via social media, such as Facebook, and flyers, see Appendix 1, to ask if they were willing to participate in our study about consumer behavior. We chose flyers in order to not only select people we know but also individuals that have no relation to us. This was also done in order to save time. With the help of Facebook, we contacted mainly friends and close ones to be a part of our focus groups. Furthermore, we provided an opportunity for selected friends, to contact their friends and ask them to be a part of our focus group. This was done, in order to maintain a good interaction and discussion between the participants, where our main point was to make them feel comfortable with each other. Comfort is essential in forming a flowing discussion around a subject, in this case consumer behavior.

However, there were some trouble and risks we encountered while selecting our respondents. For instance, to find respondents and set up a specific date and time that fit each respondent’s schedule were major issues for our focus groups. To minimize the risks and consider other alternatives, we had two backup plans if we were not able to find respondents for our focus groups. The first backup plan, our Plan B, was to contact the universities’ administrators and teachers to send a chainmail to the students of each university. The chainmail would be a copy of the flyer we intended to give the students of the universities ourselves. The second backup plan, Plan C, was a plan that would only be implemented if none of the other alternatives were able to accomplish. Plan C was to execute the interview-discussion through internet tools such as Skype and Facebook. This way, each respondents would save transport costs and time, and, further, a time suitable for all respondents. Since, our main plan of collecting respondents was a success, which was to contact students via social media and flyers, it was not necessary to execute Plan B or Plan C. Despite the fact that we found respondents for our focus groups, several of them could not attend to the same date and time as the other respondents in the groups. To encounter the issue we formed two Facebook groups, one group for each focus group, which we named; Focus Group Lund and Focus Group Malmö. All respondents were invited including the substitutes to their group. The Facebook groups’ purpose was to achieve a suitable time and place for all respondents. Discussions around consumer behavior, as well as the purpose of our dissertation and focus group, were held in the groups. To prepare the respondents and maximize the outcome of the discussions we uploaded a set of questions from our interview guide regarding consumer behavior.
Unfortunately, there was another problem we encountered after selecting the respondents. Due to personal circumstances, there were some respondents who contacted us the same day the focus group was held, and announced they could not attend the appointed time. The expected amount of participants decreased. This inconvenience affected our meeting scheme and plans negatively, because we were below the minimum limit of our focus groups, which was less than six people. We encountered this type of problem in both Lund and Malmö. To encounter the issue, we contacted the substitutes we earlier were in contact with while select the main respondents. Because of the occurrence, the focus groups ended up with eleven respondents in total, five in one group and six in the other group.

3.3.3. The Interview guide
The interview guide used for our focus groups, see Appendix 2, was designed with semi-structured questions. This made the discussion flexible, and also encouraged the respondents to express their opinions and feelings without being affected by the questions. At the same time, semi-structured questions allowed us to make sure that our topic was discussed and that all respondents interacted within the discussion (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The question asked in our research was based on the theoretical framework, which strengthen the dissertation’s reliability. With standardized questions in both focus groups we were able to compare the two discussions with each other and define common conclusions. We also used follow-up questions to guide the respondents toward the topic for our research. However, some of our follow-up questions differed between the two focus groups, depending on how much their discussions and answers departed from the subject.

The opening questions in our interview guide were asked to create a comfortable environment and to get all the participants to interact in the discussion from the beginning. Background questions about themselves help the respondents to feel relaxed and confident, as well as help us to distinguish and compare the respondents’ argument with each other. In this way we were able to analyze similarities and differences in their answers. The next section in the interview guide was based on general questions about consumer behavior, to lead the respondents into the topic for our research. The question within this section let the respondents discuss their own thoughts and experiences, and opened up for a discussion among a relatively broad topic to later focus the discussion on our key questions. The last section in our interview guide consisted of the key questions for our research. The key questions are based on the Modified Identity Prism model that we have created based on the dissertations theoretical framework. The key questions aim to lead to a deeper and more focused discussion about consumers’ behaviors and thoughts.
in different situations. The respondents’ thoughts and opinions, which occur during the interaction, connected with the Modified Identity Prism, will be central for our analysis.

3.3.4. The practice of the focus groups
The first meeting with five college-aged students from Malmö was scheduled 7 May 2015, at 04:30 PM. The focus group’s discussion lasted for fifty-five minutes, and was held in the city library of Malmö, Malmö Stadsbibliotek. To not get disturbed and interrupted in the respondents’ discussion, we discussed in a separated room isolated from other visitors. We refurnished in a way where the respondents faced each other instead of facing us. On the other hand, we sit separated from the respondents but still not too far away. The purpose of separating ourselves from the respondents was to create a discussion between the respondents and keep us uninvolved in the discussion. A Swedish attraction, a form of refreshments called *fika*, was also offered to them. The fika consisted of soda, cupcakes and cinnamon buns, and was offered before the discussion, with in mind that we expected to have a 90 minutes discussion.

One of us acted as a moderator and the other one as secretary. The moderator’s role was to keep the discussion within the right subject, create a safe and pleasant environment and make sure that all the respondents participate and interact in the discussion. Beyond that, the moderator stayed out of the discussion as much as possible. While the moderator accomplished his/her role, the secretary took notes to document non-verbal communication that was relevant to our study. In addition to the notes, we used our phones as sound recordings to document the discussion that occur between the respondents within each focus group. Sound recordings provides almost a complete documentation, which are easy to monitor and control for us, as well for future researchers. The notes and the sound recordings complemented each other, and made it possible to replay the discussions several times, which strengthen the research validity (Denscombe, 2009).

The discussion within each focus group was performed in accordance with our interview guide. We started to introduce ourselves and welcome all the respondents to the focus group. Thereafter, we introduced the overall purpose with our study and the discussions main topic. However, we did not introduce our research question; how do individuals of Generation Y approach secondhand markets, and what are the drivers of the consumer behavior attitudes. The action was done to create a neutral discussion where the respondents were unbiased to secondhand shopping and, further, not adjusting their answers toward secondhand. In other words, the purpose of the action was to see whether the respondents thought of secondhand...
shopping while answering the questions of the interview guide. Moreover, we presented the agenda for the focus group, followed by explaining our role as moderator, and their role as respondents. Before the first session started, we made sure that all respondents greeted each other so they could briefly and quickly get to know each other before the discussion.

The first session started with that all respondents briefly introduced themselves with names, age and occupations aside them being students. It turned out that all of the students in the first focus group study business, which could affect the outcome of our research. The moderator went on with the topic question, to get an overall understanding of the respondents’ consumer behavior. Too ease and not confuse the respondents the moderator clearly presented examples of the question, with a reconstruction of the question’s layout. Thereafter, the moderator moved on to the key questions to guide the respondents to the study’s topic. The moderator also explained that the next questions he/she was about to ask were key questions. Although, each respondent gave us useful information in their answers we encountered repeating issues. Since, we did not present the main topic of the research, it was hard to guide and keep the respondents’ answers within the area of the study. To work around the issue we asked the respondents improvised follow-up questions which were not written in the interview guide. In that way, we got clearer answers correlated to our study. Another way to handle the issue was that we repeated the question with a further explanation to what we meant with the question. The discussion ended with a presentation of the whole purpose of our study and, further, explanation of why we chose not to present the research’s purpose in the beginning. Afterwards, we thanked each respondent with gratitude and served them more fika.

The second focus group was held 10 May 2015, at 12:00 AM, at Campus Helsingborg, which is a part of Lund University. This meeting lasted for sixty-seven minutes, and the discussion took place in a vacant room in the university. The group consisted of six college-aged students from Lund University, who live in Helsingborg/Lund. The selection of students in this focus group turned out to be more mixed than in the first group. The group consisted of two business students, three engineer students and one social work student. The same procedure as the first focus group was applied in the second focus group. However, the improvised follow-up questions were different compared to the first group. The second group tended to spin away more from the subject and, therefore, needed more guidance compared to the first focus group. More follow-up questions were asked to guide the answers from the respondents correlated to the questions’ topic.
3.3.5. Data analysis

After each focus group we sat down and transcribed the recorded material. In this way we still had the discussion fresh in our minds and made sure that we did not miss out on any important data. This was done because the respondents tend to ‘talk over the top of each other’, which means that they were all talking at once. Because we recorded the data we could listen to the discussions again and compare the notes that were taken during the focus group with the recorded material, to not miss any important statement. By reading the empirical data, that was transcribed, several times we were also able to discern important details (Denscombe, 2009). The transcribed material from both focus groups together consist of fifty-seven pages written on the computer, see Appendix 3 and 4. As we read the transcribed material we marked important statements with different colors to facilitate our work with encodes and categories that occur as the next step in our data analysis. We have used six different colors to mark our transcribed data with, where five of the colors stand for the categories that are find in our Prism model. The sixth color we used to mark the students’ important statements is not related to the model, but relevant for the research’s result. In this way we could pick out which quotes from our respondents that would be valuable to use when we encoded our empirical data.

We interpreted the data based on our theoretical framework and the Modified Identity Prism. By identifying common concepts and statements that occurred during the discussions we have encoded the data into different key factors relevant for our study. All key factors were connected with comments by us as researchers. The comments would help us to remember our thoughts correlated to a specific quote and to connect the quote with the theory we discussed earlier in the thesis. The encoded data was in turns categorized into different groups. We decided to categorize the empirical data into six different groups based on the four facets from the Modified Identity Prism; Relationship, Reflection, Self-image and Self-identity. Subcultures and Brand community stand for the fifth category, and the sixth group is a category we named Other factors. We decided to have a sixth group since the key factors in this category did not fit into any of the other categories mentioned above. However, the key factors in this category were mentioned several times during both focus groups and are relevant to analyze to gain a deeper understanding of Generation Y’s consumer behavior and their attitudes to secondhand shopping. Even though the empirical material, from the two focus groups, were transcribed and encoded separately, we have used the same key factors and categories in our analysis, see Appendix 5 and 6. Within the categories themes and connections were found, and on this basis our analysis and conclusions were developed. Identifying themes in the empirical data...
strengthen the validity in qualitative methods. Recurrent themes mean that opinions and ideas are shared among the respondents, and will gain a higher credibility in the investigation (Denscombe, 2009).

The discussions in the focus groups were held in Swedish to make all respondents feel confident speaking and to facilitate to open and deeper discussions. The statements and quotes, relevant for our study and with a strong connection to the key factors, as well as the facets in the Modified Identity Prism, have been translated by us from Swedish to English.

3.3.6. Credibility & Transparency
As researchers we need to stay objective during the focus groups discussions and when we collect our empirical data. This means that the collected data should not be affected by us as researchers. By recording the discussions from both of our focus groups and transcribing what the respondents said during the discussions verbatim, we have tried to stay objective in our research. This means, according to us, that the collected marital has a high credibility. Important to mention is that our analysis is based on what we have interpreted in the respondents’ answers, which means that our subjectivity has played a role for the thesis’ conclusions. To be transparent we can distinguish the methods for our data collection. Transparency means that the reader should be able to distinguish previous research that is mentioned in the thesis and the researcher's own conclusions and ideas. It will display the results of the research. Furthermore, what methods and instruments that have been used for the collection of our empirical data, in other words the theoretical- and technical basis for the research. The thesis transparency also strengthen the reliability and validity of the empirical data that has been collected. The meaning of transparency is to create a reproducibility of the research, which means that future researchers should be able to obtain the same results and outcomes as we have been able to do (Denscombe, 2009).
4. Results & Analysis

In this following chapter the empirical results from the participating students’ discussion will be presented. Throughout this chapter, we will analyze the empirical results based on the theoretical framework. Firstly, different facets in accordance with the Modified Identity Prism in the literature chapter will be presented. Consumers’ relationship will be discussed first, followed by reflection, self-image and self-identity. There will also be an added facet called ‘Other factors’, which we consider a relevant facet to determine consumer behavior. Further, subcultures and brand community will be described and analyzed. Lastly, we will define similarities and differences between the students’ statements and the relevant theory about consumer behavior, subcultures, brand communities and our Prism model during the analysis.

4.1. The Modified Identity Prism model in action

4.1.1. Relationship

In our Modified Prism, we describe the relationship facet as a stage to discover consumers’ relationship to products and other consumers in the society (Kapferer, 1997) and, further, to see whether consumers are shopping secondhand. According to college-aged students from two universities in the south of Sweden, the relationship facet is significant and one of the major parts to analyze consumer behavior, which is coherent with Kapferer’s (1997) explanation of the facet. The students describe how the relationship between the consumer and others influences a purchase. Witt (2010) mentions that consumers pursue a type of confirmation from the surroundings to make them feel good about the purchase and choice they make. Further, consumers need an approval from acquaintances, with whom they seek a relationship of affinity to be satisfied. The approval from others they associate with also makes consumers feel welcomed and a part of the group (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Students in both focus groups confirmed this and with the help from the discussions, we analyzed their attitudes and relationship to secondhand shopping.

There are three key factors the respondents of our focus groups focused on; the relationship to the surroundings, acquaintances and brands. Firstly, the surroundings in the society is a factor affecting consumers’ purchase and decision. The respondents clarify that trends and norms of the society often affect the choices consumers make. Secondly, the association with friends and family and other individuals’ opinions are also great parts of determining why consumers purchase. For instance, someone you look up to, like a celebrity or a fashion icon, are two of many that influence consumers’ action and behavior. The students support this statement in
their discussions. Thirdly, the respondents mention that the relationship consumers have to the products and brands is important. Further, they consider that the relationship with brands and the way the media mediates brands to the society, may be a reason to why consumers purchase the brand. The respondents also mention that the image of how others perceive them are affected by different products, which in turns influence the respondents’ consumer behavior. A person would most likely purchase a well-known brand or product instead of a less-known brand. The three relationships influence on consumer behavior is supported by one of the students who said:

“I think that many people are affected by others around them…and also what kind of trend is now and what is popular and what is not.” – Emma, 22 years

In the citation above she points out that one’s consumption behavior is influenced by other people in the surroundings, and that people follow trends to create relationships between themselves and other consumers. Moreover, the student clarifies that your perception of a brand is influenced by other people’s perception of the brand.

On the other hand, the interviewed students claim that they do not have any links or relationships to secondhand shopping or consumers. As mentioned before, the surroundings and association with friends and family are affecting consumers’ choice and behavior. For that reason, it is rather important that people related to you have a relation to or preference for secondhand shopping. If consumers’ acquaintances do not have any thoughts or relation to secondhand shopping, the consumers would not think or purchase anything secondhand. Based on the students’ discussions, secondhand thinking has not reached the students and their surroundings in a way where purchasing secondhand is an alternative. Therefore, the influence of the two key factors; the relationship to the surroundings and acquaintances are clear factors affecting students’ consumer behavior regarding secondhand shopping. The two key factors are confirmed by Szmigin et. al. (2015) and Witt’s (2010) view on consumer behavior regarding the relationship to other people. This is strengthened by the students and one of them said:

\[1\] Note that the empirical data is originally in Swedish and has, thereafter, been translated freely from Swedish to English in order to gain a better understanding of the sentence. Further, the citations are put in an understanding context in accordance to the discussed subject. To see the real re-coding of transcribed text, see appendix 5 and 6.
“You say ‘No I don’t do if for their sake’, but I bet that you did it for their sake. Maybe you don’t want to confirm it, but it’s the truth...For example, games can make you feel like an outsider. All my friends may play the same game except me, which makes me unable to discuss the game with my friends...” - Calle, 21 years

According to the quote, the student clarifies that the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances may affect the students’ behavior, whether they admit it or not. Calle argues that consumers may not confess to, but that they, occasionally, purchase certain products for others’ sake, even though the act subconscious. He also strengthen this by admitting that he has done so himself, purchased a product in order to fit in the subgroup.

Despite the fact that the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances affect consumer behavior, there were two students who could consider to purchase certain brands and products secondhand. For instance, there are a lot of well-known brands and products in secondhand stores. Antique goods and products are also available in these stores. Kapferer (1997) argue that a relationship to brand and products affect consumer behavior. This was confirmed by two students. They explain that they can identify a relationship between themselves and the goods, and, therefore, may consider to purchase certain items including antique items. One of the respondent’s thoughts regarding secondhand shopping is the following:

“I know many wealthy people who shop secondhand, because it is unique.” – Louise, 22 years

In the citation above, Louise explains that also wealthy people, purchase secondhand products, because the products are special and unique. The student clarifies that an individual’s relationship to the product is significant when purchasing products and brands.

However, based on the respondents’ answers, none of them have a deep relation to specific brands or products and, therefore, the relationship to brands is not a deciding factor to their consumption behavior. The students argue that their preferences and personality are more important than the relationship to products and brands regarding secondhand shopping. According to the students’ discussion, the way consumers’ preferences and personality reflect on brands and products is dominating in determining consumer behavior.

**4.1.2. Reflection**

Reflection constitute the second facet in our Prism model. Kapferer (1997) explains that brand reflection refers what type of consumers that feel related to a specific brand. Furthermore,
different brands and products build a reflection or an image of consumers who use them (Kapferer, 1997). The reflection’s purpose in the Prism, is to explain whether products or brands, that consumers’ purchase, reflect themselves. Reflection is strongly correlated to both consumers’ self-image and self-identity and has, which is seen during our analysis, similar aim for Generation Y’s consumer behavior as self-image and self-identity have. According to the discussions between the students, we could identify three different key factors that are correlated to people’s reflection; the personality, opinions about other people and communication between the consumer and the surroundings.

All of the respondents agreed that personality is one of the main factors when people purchase different products. Reflection is something that has a big influence on people’s choices made during consumption, and because consumers purchase things they like, their personality is automatically reflected in the products they choose. Kapferer (1997) indicates that brands build a reflection of consumers that purchase or use a specific type of products. This leads to that consumers utilize products that reflect their identity. The students also discussed that consumers can make a conscious choice of a certain type of products or brands. The choice is made because he/she wants other people to perceive your personality in a certain way. The statement is in an alignment to how Szmigin et. al. (2015) describe consumers’ decision making. The authors explain that people are influenced by their own view of themselves when they purchase products. Furthermore, they argue that consumers want to fit into other people’s expectations, which make consumers choose brands after how they would like to be seen by the people in the common area (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). This makes it important for consumers to identify other people’s opinions and attitudes to certain products and brands, which also was seen in the analysis of the relationship facet. The students mentioned that a brand could symbolize different things, and by using a specific brand consumers communicate their identity with others. Calle, a 21 year old student said;

“There are brands that symbolize self too, where people recognize you...so I think brands play a big role, they symbolize me now.” – Calle, 21 years

In the citation above, the student is stating that a brand can symbolize a person, and that he has expressed his personality to other people by using a specific brand related to his personality. Piacentini and Mailer (2004) and Szmigin et. al. (2015) confirm that the usage of symbolic consumption helps consumers to communicate with other people, and further, to identify and build their own personality.
The students argue that the reflection of the personality formed by different products do not only describe your own identity, but also that their opinions and views of other people in the community are reflected in the choice of products. A recurring argument that was discussed among the students, is that brands symbolize people’s identity. Piacentini et. al. (2004) and Szimigin et. al. (2015) explain symbolic consumption as the link between brands and consumers’ personality. Moreover, symbolic consumption influences how the personality is perceived, through different brands, by consumers themselves and by other people (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). The students mentioned that they believe that brands, in turns, create the first impression by other people and thus forming an idea of people’s personality even though the impression could be wrong. The students’ opinions about others in the society are mainly based on the reflection that occur when consumers purchase different brands and products.

This is confirmed by what Kapferer (1997) declares in the Brand Identity Prism; that brands build a reflection of the consumers who purchase and use it. The author also states that the reflection is done with help of communication between the consumers and the persons around them (Kapferer, 1997). Therefore, according to the respondents, the reflection of the consumers in the products they purchase is highly important when the students buy a product, so people would not get the wrong idea of their personality. The students have formed an image of people who buy products secondhand, and the students perceive those people’s identity as different from their own. Since people build their own perception based on how consumers are reflected in their consumption, the students do not choose to associate themselves with subcultures and brand communities formed by secondhand shoppers.

The respondents in both focus groups pointed out that if consumers change their purchase from one type of product to another, people’s opinions and views of the person will also change. Consumers will be reflected in a different way of people in his/her surroundings. A majority of the students find that goods which reflect their personality are important to them. Reflection is also formed when people buy a particular product to become part of a group in the society. Consumers’ own identity becomes correlated with the common identity of the group, which means that consumers with same interests form a group in the society (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013). Furthermore, the respondents consider that the choice of products and brands makes it possible for consumers to distinguish social groups in the community from each other.
The students also mentioned that people can become loyal to a brand, which means that they purchase the same brand over and over again. Stokburger-Sauer (2010) claims that brand loyalty makes consumers become part of a brand community, where a strong relationship is formed between the brand and the person who consumes it. Furthermore, Hawkins et al. (2010) state that the loyalty will improve because of the community. The students strengthen this by saying that brand loyalty leads to that a specific brand can symbolize the person who consumes it, which is correlated to one’s self-image. People can see themselves in the products, which in turn leads to that consumers’ personality becomes reflected. In other words, consumers reflect themselves in the brand. Other people can also associate a person with a specific brand, because of brand loyalty. One student gave an example on how brand loyalty has affected his consumption behavior and how the brand reflect his personality, he said:

“Yes, one becomes loyal to brands, especially when it was so good the first time...
So, in this case I think the brand plays a big role. It symbolizes me as well. For example, Android, when no one had it, I had it and I would and will not change it to something else, because it reflect me.” – Calle, 21 years

Conferring to the citation above, Calle 21 years confirm that he is brand loyal. His loyalty affects his choices of products and consumption behavior. He explains that a product that reflects the personality influences his loyalty to the brand.

As the analysis reveals, for consumers to strengthen their personality the reflection of their identity in brands and products, chosen by themselves, is very important. Another reason to why reflection is important for consumers is because others should get an honest opinion of them. Brands and products do not only reflect consumers, but people’s self-image are also developed and defined based on different consumer behavior, which will be further discussed in the next paragraph.

4.1.3. Self-image

When it comes to choosing products and brands, the self-image facet’s aim is similar to the reflection facet (Kapferer, 1997). The self-image is mentioned in our Prism model as the phase that defines people’s personality (Ibid.) and what preferences they have. Further, the facet’s purpose is to identify whether the personality is seen in the product and the purchase consumers make (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The respondents’ answers in both focus groups revealed that the self-image is rather important and relevant to determine consumer behavior. Based on the students’ discussions, self-image is defined by three key factors; consumers’ personality,
self-perception and self-esteem. Products and brands describe what kind of personality one has and how well the person know him- or herself. Kapferer (1997) mentions that one’s personality affect the choices an individual make when purchasing something. The students’ answers and opinions are in an alignment to Kapferer’s (1997) saying, and the respondents emphasize especially on that consumers’ personality is one of the biggest key factor affecting the choice of products. According to the students, most of the time when it comes to select a product that reflects on consumers’ self-image, personality is the key factor that students consider before selecting or purchasing the product. The respondents consider if the product is not mediating their self-image, they would rather choose or purchase other items they can see themselves in. One of the students agrees and expresses himself in the following citation:

“If you buy a blackberry, how much is it You?...My First phone was an HTC Desire, and it symbolizes me in a certain way. I don’t want to switch the HTC, because it matters to me.” – Calle, 21 years

As seen in the citation, the student indicates that he would not switch products that reflect his personality. If he would replace a product that reflect himself to another product that does not, the “new” product would not reflect his personality and self-image, and therefore not explain who he really is. This is confirmed by Kapferer (1997) who describes that self-image is strongly correlated to brands and products.

Besides the personality, the respondents clarify that products and purchases could influence consumers’ perception of themselves. According to several answers from the respondents, products not only symbolize consumers’ personality but also define a person and his/her ideal self. This is strengthened by Szmigin et. al. (2015) who mention that self-image and self-perception help consumers to define and develop their ideal “self”. This leads to that consumers’ self-perception influence their choice of consumption (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The self-perception may change when consumers’ identity reflects over a purchase. A product can get more attractive to a consumer if the image provided through the product may reflect his/her self-image (Ibid.). For instance, one student states:

“It has nothing to do with norms or ideals. You put them on and look at yourself and say ‘I look really good now’...” – Marc, 25 years
In the citation above, Marc explains that products and brands can change people’s perception of themselves. Conferring to the interviewed students and the citation, they agree with Szmigin et. al.’s (2015) statement that brand-image is consistent with consumers’ self-image.

Stokburger-Sauer (2010) explains that a reason to a strong community is because of the uniqueness in brands and products, which is coherent to the respondents’ answers. The respondents mention that images and brands mediate different feelings, for example to feel unique and special when purchasing products. Additionally, products and brands help to distinguish different individuals and groups (Marzocchi, Morandin, & Bergami, 2013; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). According to the students’ answers, consumers may purchase certain products to feel strong and comfortable, which improve consumers’ self-esteem and self-perception. This was strengthened and confirmed by the respondents. The students’ attitudes were reflecting the affective component, which based on Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010), are the arising feelings towards products and brands. The respondents’ discussion pointed out that the affective component is the reason why a purchase strengthens consumers. In other words, consumers’ self-esteem improves when brands and products reflect their self-image. The students indicate that they feel more confident when they purchase something that reflect their personality and their true-self. Consequently, self-image exposes an image of an individual’s satisfaction, which affect consumers’ choices of products. This is strengthened by the students and one of them said:

“There are computers that are as good as Apple’s computers or even better. I think people that purchase Apple’s computers feel more stylish and richer somehow...all brands mediate a feeling when you purchase the product...you choose the feeling and not the product itself.” - Stephanie, 22 years

Stephanie clarifies that certain brands may give you certain feelings, and that these feelings affect consumers’ choices and actions. Additionally, as mentioned above, the feelings will also affect consumers’ identity. Their feelings are correlated to consumers’ strongly hold preferences and will be further analyzed in the next section about consumers’ self-identity.

4.1.4. Self-identity

In the Prism, the three facets analyzed above, relationship, reflection and self-image are linked to consumers’ self-identity. Self-identity is described as the facet to define your personality and preferences (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015), which can be correlated to the other three facets in
different ways. The discussions among the students confirmed that the personality and preferences influence their self-identity, which in turns affect the relationship, the reflection and the self-image that are formed by different products and brands.

According to the students in our two focus groups, people’s self-identity is mainly formed by consumers’ preferences, personal characteristics, attitudes and values. Preferences relate to what consumers like and dislike and are often linked to different types of personality, which is also one of the main concepts for the reflection facet. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) explain that the affective component, which affect people’s attitudes, consists of fundamental feelings such as liking and disliking. The students confirm, that depending on people’s preferences, in other words what people like or dislike, they choose what type of brands and products to purchase. Hosany and Martin (2012) indicate that consumers use and purchase products that are consistent with their self-identity. All of the students agreed that their preferences are highly important for their consumer behavior. The student Emma said:

“I do not think that my surroundings and my friends influence me so much, instead it is mostly my own preferences and what I like.” – Emma, 22 years

According to Emma, her surroundings and acquaintances are not affecting her consumption choices. Instead, she points out that her personal preferences of products affect her consumer behavior the most compared to her surroundings.

The second key factor that form the students’ self-identity is personal characteristics. Personal characteristics influence the decisions that are made when people purchase different products. Characteristics such as confident and unconfident, strong and weak, and impulsive and reflective were mentioned recurrent times during both discussions. All of the characteristics above affect how people select products, and even more important why they prefer to buy one thing over another. Szmigin et. al. (2015) indicate that people’s personality and identity vary depending on physiological perspectives, where consumers’ character is formed based on thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The data shows that the students’ consumer behavior, with focus on self-identity, is primarily affected by their own personality and the relationship that one has to him- or herself. The more confident a person is the less dependent he/she is on ambient opinions when deciding what products to consume.

On the other hand, consumers with insecure personality search for acceptance from others, which affects the personal characteristics and make people change their self-identity to fit into
the society. The respondents believe that consumers with insecure personality gets more influenced by peer pressure and feel a greater need to belong to a specific group in the society. Similarities in people’s self-identity automatically place those people into same categories, where they can feel a connection to other people, for example in a subculture or a brand community. In those groups, the consumers have both a strong relationship to the brand and to other consumers. This is consistent with Marzaocchi et. al.’s (2013) explanation of how a brand community is formed. The authors discuss that groups of society are based on people’s self-identity. Furthermore, Stokburger-Sauer (2010) argues that consumers’ share common interests based on their self-identity which, in turns, makes them part of a brand community.

Based on the students’ discussions, personal characteristics such as strong and weak have similar effect on people’s self-identity as confident and unconfident have. They imply, that consumers with strong personality stands for what they like and select products that reflect their personality without considering opinions from their surroundings. Contrary to a strong personality, the respondents consider that a person with a weak personality is easily affected by peer pressure from media, friends and relatives. The students believe that it is more common that people who have a weak personality ask for advice before purchasing different brands and products. They also discussed the fact that people with strong personality automatically are more confident and independent, and that those persons trust their own preferences. This can lead to that they do not follow growing trends as much as others, instead they create their own style. According to the students, those who are confident and have a strong personality it is more important that brands and products they purchase reflect themselves, rather than to fit and belong to a specific group in the society. This means that those types of consumers may ignore trends that do not match their self-identity, for example secondhand shopping.

According to the students, impulsive and reflective are two other characteristics that affect their consumer behavior. Impulsive consumers buy products after desire, without planning the purchase in advance. However, those kinds of consumers take into consideration that the product should match their self-identity before they make a purchase. Reflective consumers, on the other hand, purchase only when they have the need for something. How often the students buy things and to what extent, are among other things, based on how impulsive and reflective they are as a person.

The third key factor that influences consumers’ self-identity is the students’ personal attitudes and values. Personal attitudes and values, that are not only related to consumption but also
general in life, define which products and brands consumers want. Depending on what type of personality the consumer has, one can consider to purchase different products. Szimigin et. al. (2015) indicate that consumers’ attitudes influence their behavior and make them act in a certain way. The authors define attitudes as deeply held beliefs consumers have against a brand or a product. During the discussions in focus group one, Annie gave an example that people’s attitudes and values can impact other consumers’ consumption behavior, she said;

“I know many people who have a lot of money. They choose to not buy a new car because they think it is unnecessary...I think the personality plays a big role; how you are as a person and how people value things.” – Annie, 22 years

Annie argues that her friends’ attitudes and values are affecting her identity and personality. Consequently, the attitudes influence whether consumers choose to purchase certain products and brands. Personal attitudes and values seem to be crucial factors for the respondents, when it comes to secondhand shopping. The students’ attitudes and values reflect their self-identity which, in turns, affect the choices made by them as consumers. Since the majority of the interviewed students have negative attitudes to products that has been used by other people, they prefer to purchase from regular stores that can offer them new and unused products. Also, the students’ values are not consistent with what they believe secondhand products stands for, such as eco-friendly and cheap.

Hawkins et. al. (2010) explain that consumers get stimuli from products and brands, they evaluate their feelings, thoughts and actions based on the stimuli and build an attitude to the brand or the product in this way. The stimuli that secondhand shopping gives the students make them feel, think and act in a certain way. The students’ attitudes have a negative impact on their behavior regarding secondhand shopping, because many of the students cannot identify their personality with used items. This leads to that the students have difficulty to purchase secondhand products. Piacentini and Mailer (2004) indicate that the symbolic meaning of a brand or a product help consumers build their personality and express their self-identity. The self-identity facet also helps consumers define who they are (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). As a result, consumers tend to purchase and use brands and products that determine, maintain and enhance their self-identity (Hosany & Martin, 2012). According to our respondents, secondhand products are not considered as products that determine, maintain and enhance their identity.
As seen in the Modified Identity Prism, the discussions confirm that self-identity is linked to subcultures and brand communities. This statement is consistent with what Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico and González-RomáBy (2014) imply, that identity influence the forming of a subgroup. Furthermore, the identity-based subcultures and groups in the society are formed based on consumers shared beliefs and their social self-identity. By choosing particular brands or products, people have direct or indirect chosen to belong to a subculture or a brand community. Hawkins et. al. (2010), Schawarzberger and Hyde (2013) and Szmigin (2015) define this as *subcultures of consumption*, which is based on people’s selected choices of brand and consumption.

4.1.5. Other factors

The category *Other factors* has emerged as an empirical finding in our thesis. This means that, in this facet, the theory defining our Prism model will not be discussed in correlation to the key factors that influence college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior. However, we will strengthen our arguments in this part of the analysis with help of the collected data from the discussions in our two focus groups, and the theory about consumer behavior. We consider the category ‘other factors’ relevant and highly important in order to get a deeper understanding of the students’ attitudes and behavior about secondhand shopping. Therefore, the other factors ‘facet’ is seen as an empirical finding in our study. As a result of the discussions, some factors beyond the four facets in the Modified Identity Prism are considered as significant factors to determine our respondents’ consumer behavior and their attitudes to secondhand shopping. The students believe that money, hygiene, environmental awareness, consumers’ self-esteem and products’ uniqueness, in combination with earlier discussed facets, may be the underlying reasons to why some people choose to buy products secondhand and others do not.

Referring to the interviewed students, money is a leading factor to have in mind when purchasing products. Beyond consumers’ needs of a product, money determines if a purchase shall be accomplished or not. The view that our college-aged students have on secondhand shopping, related to money, is that secondhand stores offers used products less pricy to groups in the society who cannot afford products and brands from regular stores. One of the students expressed his opinion about secondhand shopping as following;

“I you ask me, in my opinion, secondhand shopping is only for those who cannot afford other products.” – Calle, 21 years
Calle points out that poor people are reflected in secondhand products and, therefore, people who shop secondhand are associated with the lower-class society. According to the student, this is one reason that prevent him from shopping secondhand, in order to not be associated with ‘poor people’ and the lower-class society. Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico and González-Romá (2014) indicate that subgruops in the socieity can be based on consumers’ identity, which correlates people with shared belifes. Even if the respondents are students and have a limited income they cannot relate themselves to those groups in the society mentioned in the citation, which is one reasons why they normally do not purchase products secondhand. The students do not believe that their identity is in coherence with the identity of people who have short of money.

Another reason to why many students have a negative attitude to secondhand shopping is the hygienic factor. They think it is unhygienic to purchase goods previously used by unknown people. They claim that there is nothing wrong with secondhand products, but not knowing where the product has been before is an intimidating thought for the students. Szmigin and Piacentini (2015) state that products could symbolize different things for consumers, and that symbolic consumption creates a link between the consumer and the product. For the students secondhand symbolizes unhyigenic items. Products should reflect cosumers’ identity which, in turn, will affect how other people percive consumers’ personality (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004). According to the the students, secondhand products do not define who they are. This influence several of the students to not choose secondhand products. Also, Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) discuss attitudes based on three different components; cognitive, affective and behavioral components, which affect consumer behavior. The cognitive component consists of consumers’ beliefs about an object and creates different attitudes (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). This has an impact on how our respondents perceive secondhand shopping.

Based on our interviewed students, those who buy goods secondhand, the type of products play a big role. Too personal items, such as clothes used up-closed to the body and furniture, for example; bed and couch, are unthinkable for them to buy, because of the hygienic factor. While other products, which are not as intimate to people, such as jackets, scarves and interior decoration are, according to the students, more ‘acceptable’ to purchase secondhand. The students were coherent to this opinion and one of them said:
Marc explains that he could consider to buy products that are not too intimate, and if the products’ original prices are expensive. The student consider secondhand products as “cheaper” products which is in an alignment to what ‘Calle’ said in the previous citation.

Beyond the two reasons for students to not purchase goods secondhand, a minority of the respondents, state that secondhand products are not always considered as low-priced goods. They discuss that the prices are dependent on which brands there are or the products’ previous value, and consider the uniqueness that secondhand products has as a main factor to actually purchase items in secondhand stores. Products that are antique or unusual have a high value for some people, and those people can therefore find pleasure in visiting a secondhand store. Once again Szmigin & Piacentini’s (2015) argument about symbolic consumption can strengthen this. Unique products symbolize something special for the consumers who purchase those kinds of products. They communicate their personality with the surroundings (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004) by using products that are unique or antique.

Environmental awareness is considered as the second main factor to buy secondhand, where people’s self-esteem affect the personality and the choices that are made. Szmigin & Piacentini (2015) indicate that consumers choose to purchase and use different brands and products because they want to achieve self-enhance. This means that consumers select products to feel good about themselves and to maintain self-esteem (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The environmental awareness in relation to secondhand shopping is mainly argued as a key factor among those students who do not purchase products secondhand. The students’ environmental consumption and eco-friendly behavior are rare when it comes to their general consumption. The students do not think they get any direct benefits from environmental consumption, and therefore choose other products and brands. At the same time the students believe that people are environmental friendly for the same reason as they donate goods, to achieve a higher self-esteem. Based on the discussions between the students, they concluded that people’s self-esteem drives consumers to purchase eco-friendly product, and to donate and give away used goods to people in need. All of the students had a positive attitude to donate things that they no longer use themselves. One of the students said:

“As long it’s not anything that is very intimate, underwear are quite intimate, as well t-shirts. I wouldn’t buy cheap things in secondhand stores, but I could consider to buy a jacket.” – Marc, 25 years
“If I do not have any use for it, there is certainly other people who need the items, and can use them...if others can benefit from things that I do not need any more why should I still keep them and prevent others to take advantages of the products.”

– Emma, 21 years

Emma indicates that instead of throwing away products that are useable and wearable, she would rather donate or give away the products to other people who could utilize the goods. Based on the respondents’ answers, the majority of the students would advocate the possibility to give away goods to secondhand stores and flea markets, instead of throwing away the products. The students also advocate aid organizations such as the Red Cross, which operates stores to help people in the society, with the product disposal.

4.1.6. Subcultures & Brand community

Based on the students’ discussions, the five categories; relationship, reflection, self-image, self-identity and other factors form subcultures and brand communities. As a result, the facets that form the society groups turned out to affect consumer behavior. Consumers’ association to the relationship facet’s key factors; surroundings, acquaintances and brands influence the forming of subcultures and brand communities. For instance, to form subcultures and brand communities consumers require a sharing of same experiences, choices and attitudes (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). In other words, the relationship between consumers and the factors influence the creation of society groups. Each subgroup in the society consists of different individuals with different personalities, values and attitudes (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Further, it is rather important for products to reflect an image of consumers’ personality (Kapferer, 1997), where the consumer communicate to the society through products and brands (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The way consumers communicate to others creates a bond or link to the subgroup which share the same attractions (Kapferer, 1997). Moreover, consumers’ reflection in products and brands affect how others may perceive them. The link that is created among consumers in the subgroup is reflecting each individual’s self-image (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). The self-image in turns, is reflected in products and brands, where consumers’ self-perception form subcultures and brand communities.

Most of the interviewed students have strong preferences and identities. The consumers’ identity is regarded as an identification-based brand community (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). In other words, a strong identity creates strong values, expectations and
intentions, which in turns, affect consumers’ relationship to the brand community (Ibid.). As a result, the relationship co-creates an intense loyalty among the community’s consumers (Ibid.). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) mention that self-identity is relevant to form brand communities. Conferring to the students, the self-identity’s key factors are the most decisive factors in forming subcultures and brand communities. Based on the answers from the discussions, the students’ preferences, attitudes and values are the determining factors to consumer behavior. This was confirmed by different students while discussing whether surroundings affected their consumer behavior, which is shown in the citation below:

“I think personality matters; how one is and how one values thing...It’s not like I would go and buy something because someone else has it. In order for me to purchase something I must like it.” – Annie, 22 years

Referring to the citation, consumers’ self-identity and values are deciding factors to whether an individual wants to fit in a subgroup. Annie points out that your personality may change the self-identity and values. She argues, for instance, that if her personality makes her act in a certain way, then she would not act another way because it would not be consistent personality.

Beside the ‘five facets’, there are five noticeable key factors the students’ revealed in their discussions. The five key factors; acceptance and confirmation, social ties, belongingness, trends and norms and background and culture were relevant to define subcultures’ and brand communities’ influence on consumer behavior. For instance, consumers’ need of belongingness in a society group distinguish them from other groups (Marzocchi, Morandin, & Bergami, 2013). The respondents confirmed this statement in their discussions, where they indicated that other consumers in the society affect the students’ behavior. The students also argued that consumers are affected by other people in the community, whether the consumers are affected consciously or subconsciously. As mentioned earlier, Kapferer (1997) explain that consumers’ personality and preferences are crucial to determine whether to purchase a product. People’s personality and preferences are factors forming society groups (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Based on the respondents’ discussions, it is rather important for them to fit in a society group and create social ties with others in the subgroup that have coherent personalities and preferences. Further, they argue that it is not crucial for the society group to reflect your personality, but you may adapt the personality to the group because of the need to belong in a group. Moreover, the feeling of belongingness in a group differ based on the person’s personality.
“One wants to belong in a group, especially in Sweden. In Sweden one feels a need to fit in with others and be a part of the group.” - Annie, 22 years

Annie’s citation above is supported by Szmigin et. al. (2015) who argue that consumers want to get accepted and approved by others in the community. This is agreed upon the students’ discussions. They mention that they feel more confident when they get acceptance and confirmation from others in the society. According to the interviewed students, they dress differently in order to fit and blend in the subgroups of the society. In that way, they feel more accepted by surroundings and acquaintance. As Witt (2010) mentioned, the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances influence consumer behavior. However, the majority of the students pointed out that their surroundings and acquaintances do not shop secondhand and, therefore, the students do not purchase secondhand as well. The students are in a different subculture and brand community from those shopping secondhand. In other words, the trends and norms of secondhand shopping are not major influences in the respondents’ choice of secondhand shopping.

On the contrary, a component that affected students’ consumer behavior greatly was their personality. The personality reflect the subcultures and brand communities, and creates an image of who you really are. The society groups reflect your personality, attitude and value (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Consequently, trends and norms affect subcultures and brand communities (Schwarzenberger & Hyde, 2013; Cronin & McCarthy, 2011) that may change a person’s personality. One student support this and said:

“I don’t walk around with sweatpants downtown, but if I could have I would have walked around with sweatpants all the time because it’s so comfortable. But I don’t, because the norms says different.” - Peter, 21 years

Peter states that in order for him to fit into the society and its demanding, he has to adapt his style the society’s trends and norms. For example, if the society claims it is not acceptable to make certain choices or act in certain ways, the surroundings will look down on the person who act against the norm or trend. Therefore, the respondents consider that people follow trends and norms in order to not be seen as an outsider, which in turns, affect consumer behavior.

Conferring to Szmigin et.al. (2015), religion and culture also influence the forming of subgroups. The religion-based and culture-based subgroups consists of people with the same
cultural and religion identifications. Based on the students’ discussions, an individual’s background and culture are factors that may change consumers’ personality and how they act. According to the students; the person’s personality and values are formed by; where the person is raised and how the person has been raised. For instance, a person who has learned to act one way has different preferences compared to another person that has been taught the manner to act another way. In that way, consumers who have different backgrounds and cultures will result as individuals with different values, expectations and personalities. One student strengthen the argument during the discussion, he said;

“I think it’s also a cultural thing. Also how you have been raised.” – Calle, 21 years

As a consequent of the cultural and religious differences, the individuals are separated in subgroups of the society because of their different preferences, values, and attitudes (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010).
5. Discussion & Conclusion

In this chapter we will introduce our discussion based on our research question. The main objective with this chapter is to see whether college-aged students of Generation Y approach secondhand markets and, further, on what basis. In the first section we will present our main conclusions of the study and discuss the conclusions to the analyzed results. The next section consists of a critical review, where we reflect our critical thinking of our study. In the penultimate section, the study’s implications and contribution to others will be introduced. Lastly, suggestions for further research will be presented.

5.1. Secondhand – A growing trend for all or for some?

The aim with this study is to explore and analyze individuals of Generation Y’s consumer behavior and attitudes towards subcultures and brand communities in secondhand shopping. Using the Modified Identity Prism we managed to get useful and relevant empirical data. During the discussion with each focus group, we noticed a pattern of repeated factors that influence consumer behavior. Furthermore, through our results and analysis of the empirical data, we have been able to define four main conclusions for our thesis. The conclusions will combined answer our research question; how do individuals of Generation Y approach secondhand markets, and what are the drivers of the consumer behavior attitudes?

The first main conclusion we have come to recognize throughout this research, it that some facets in our Prism model affect consumer behavior more than other facets. We conclude that self-identity and relationship are the two most influencing factors for students’ consumer behavior, and act as strong drivers for students’ attitudes around different types of consumption. McNeill & Graham (2014) argue that consumer behavior is affected by different things and has long been linked to a person’s identity. Our conclusion is strengthened by Szmigin et. al. (2015) who mention that personality and self-identity have great impact on consumers’ choice of consumption. Based on the students’ discussions, consumers’ personality is the factor that affect the students’ self-identity and, further, defines who they are. Our respondents indicate that the self-identity is a factor that is crucial when it comes to consumers’ choices of products and brands. For instance, one would not consider to purchase a product if the product is not consistent with the individual’s liking. Therefore, how a person is and what personality and identity one has, are significant factors to determine consumers’ decisions and behavior. According to the students, a higher self-esteem and self-perception lead to a stronger personality, which results to a more secure and confident self-identity. In other words, the
students argue that self-esteem and self-perception help consumers identify themselves. Consequently, self-esteem and self-perception affect the students’ consumer behavior greatly. This is coherent to Szmigin et. al. (2015) who state that self-esteem and self-perception affect consumers’ personality and behavior.

Although the respondents of our focus groups state that a greater part of their influence are themselves, their personality and their self-identity, the students mention that the relationship to other people is another factor influencing consumer behavior. As mentioned earlier in this study, the empirical data we obtained from implementing the relationship facet is consumers’ relationship to three key factors; surroundings, acquaintances and brands. Many of the respondents point out that these relationships are influencing the students’ consumer behavior. Even though the relationships to the surroundings and acquaintances can affect a lot in certain situations, the students argue for when it all comes down to choosing products and brands the individual’s personality is the vital factor and seen as the ultimate step before making the choice. Despite the fact that personality affect consumers’ choices of consumption, we consider the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances may affect more than one thinks, whether it is consciously or subconsciously. We conclude this on the basis of that we have discovered repeated patterns of the students’ relationship to subcultures and brand community. The pattern we discovered in this study, was that students who do not shop secondhand only had a relationship to acquaintances who, also, do not have a relationship to secondhand. The same patterns imply for consumers who do shop secondhand. This was also confirmed by two other students from the focus groups, where one of them could consider to purchase secondhand, and another one who actually purchased secondhand. In fact, the person who shop secondhand is also the only person who interact with other people who shop secondhand. Since the surroundings approve and accept secondhand shopping, the person him- or herself feel that it is acceptable to purchase secondhand, and therefore, affect the person’s consumer behavior enormously.

The second main conclusion we identified in this study, is that the outcome of the interviewed students differ from what today’s newspaper says regarding the secondhand consumption trend. Based on the analysis, the majority of the students do not purchase secondhand. On the other hand, many authors announce in today’s newspapers about secondhand shopping and that it is a growing consumption trend today. Several of the leading newspapers in Sweden such as Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter and Sydsvenskan point out that there are different reasons behind the growth of secondhand consumption. Many authors argue in the news articles that the growth
may be because secondhand is acknowledged as good for the environment (Andersson, 2015; Englund, 2014). The Swedish articles also mention that many consumers purchase secondhand because it contributes to a better sustainability in the society (Xu, Chen, Burman, & Zhao, 2014). The environmental reason to the growth of secondhand consumption is in an alignment to the students’ perception of other people who shop secondhand. In other words, the students point out that they believe one reason to that others purchase secondhand products is to contribute to the environment. On the other hand, based on the students’ answers we can draw a conclusion that the environmental reason does not affect the students’ consumer behavior. The students believes that environmental awareness do not benefit them as consumers and in this way they feel no need to contribute to the environment. Furthermore, the secondhand shopping is not a growing trend among the interviewed students. We can conclude that the relationship to brands is the factor that affect students’ behavior the least, compared to the three key factors of relationship that contributes to secondhand shopping.

Conferring to the discussion above, we interpret that different perceptions between the news articles and the students of the focus groups are due to factors such as different relationship to subcultures and brand communities. Analyzing their answers, the students are affected mostly by the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances, whether the students are affected consciously or subconsciously. Another interpretation of the different perceptions between the students and the articles may be due to that previous researchers focus on Generation Y as a whole cohort, while our study focuses on college-aged individuals in Generation Y. This is strengthened by Becton et. al. (2014) who indicate that there are many differences in a same generational cohort because of the cohort’s wide age range. According to the respondents, the secondhand shopping trend differs from place to place, person to person and surrounding to surrounding, which also support the differences between the students’ and the articles’ perception of secondhand shopping.

Despite the second conclusion that the majority of the interviewed students do not purchase secondhand, our third main conclusion is that the college-aged Generation Y’s attitude towards secondhand shopping is negative. There are many reasons behind the negative views of secondhand shopping. As mentioned earlier, most of the respondents had no relationship to surroundings and acquaintances who shop secondhand, which may be one of the most influencing reasons to the students’ negative attitudes. Besides the relationship to surroundings and acquaintances, we have discovered repeated reasons to the students’ negative attitudes in this study such as the hygiene factor. The thought of not knowing where the secondhand
products have been before, makes the students unsecure about the products’ hygiene. The students point out that even though the products have been sterilized and washed thoroughly, the thought of not knowing the owner of the products is, according to the students, disgusting. Therefore, to know who the owner of the product is, and conscious of the person’s hygiene and behavior may reverse the students’ negative attitude to a positive attitude of utilizing secondhand products.

The last main conclusion based on our analysis is that, beside the facets in the Modified Identity Prism; relationship, reflection, self-image, self-identity and subcultures and brand community, Other factors influences how college-aged Generation Y approach secondhand markets. Additionally, the other factors facet influence the drivers of the consumer behavior attitudes. According to the students, the ‘other factors’ we define as; money, hygiene, environmental awareness, consumers’ self-esteem and products uniqueness, affect their consumption behavior and the reasons to why some people purchase secondhand products and others do not. Money is an important factor for students’ behavior and their attitudes to secondhand shopping. This because a majority of the students consider that secondhand products only are for poor people and the lower-class society that cannot afford other products. The reason to why consumers think secondhand shopping is reflecting the lower-class society, is because secondhand retailers focused on lower-class society when they first entered the consumption market (Xu, Chen, Burman & Zhao, 2014). Before students make a purchase they think about how much the products cost and the price differences. They also think about what expensive and cheap products symbolize; how their personality will be reflected if they purchase expensive versus cheap products. In the analysis we describe that most of the students argue that people who shop secondhand can be defined as a subgroup where people’s identity is reflected (Meyer, Glenz, Antino, Rico & González-Romá, 2014). The students claim that money plays a role for how one’s personality is perceived and create different groups in the society.

As discussed earlier, the hygienic factor affect the interviewed students’ attitudes to secondhand shopping. This factor influences the students with negative attitude to secondhand products and, therefore, we consider the hygienic factor’s value and impact relevant for our study, when we analyzed the students’ consumer behavior regarding secondhand shopping. Based on the students’ statement in the analysis we can confirm that secondhand products are symbolized as unhygienic products for the students. As mentioned before, the symbolic consumption makes it able for consumers to communicate with people in the surroundings, where brands or products symbolize consumers (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). This is one of the main reasons to that a
The majority of the students do not purchase products from secondhand stores. The respondents in our focus groups do not want to be symbolized with unhygienic products. At the same time, the symbolic consumption can relate to secondhand products in a different way, where products’ uniqueness plays a big role in consumer behavior. The minority of students who actually shop secondhand purchase secondhand products mainly because they like unique products. This could, in turn, relate to the consumers’ self-image or self-identity, but the fact that products are special and antique, attract consumers to purchase the goods from the beginning.

According to the analysis about the other factors facet, the students believe that environmental awareness is one of the main reasons why loyal secondhand shoppers choose to purchase items in secondhand stores. The students consider that people who are aware of the environment purchase secondhand products to increase the sustainability, but also to achieve a higher self-esteem. Szmigin and Piacentini (2015) argue that different products and brands are chosen by consumers to improve their self-esteem. Self-esteem is also reflected in the choice the students make when they donate things. It does not affect their consumer behavior in a way where the students choose to purchase secondhand. Instead, they argue that they donate things to operations, stores and organizations that aims to help other people, which improve the students’ self-esteem and make them feel as better persons.

5.2. Critical review

The purpose of this dissertation is to get a deeper understanding of college-aged Generation Y’s attitudes to secondhand markets and, further, study their consumer behavior. The empirical data and results show clear patterns of their behavior towards secondhand shopping; what students think of when they choose specific products and brands and what relationship they have to secondhand shopping. A critical reflection of the results regarding the students’ behavior is that the students are all individuals with different attitudes and values. Despite the fact that their consumer behavior were coherent and similar to each other, some attitudes and behaviors for the students are hard to conform and compile.

Another critical reflection is; since this study was made with a qualitative research method and not with a quantitative method, there are no statistically results in the research. Therefore, the students’ behavior cannot be generalized. Furthermore, the respondents were from two university cities in south of Sweden, and thus, the study may only give indications of limited generalizations to college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior.
5.3. Implications – Social & Practical
The aim with this study is to fill up the academic gap, as previous research has shown, in understanding the college-aged Generation Y’s consumer behavior and, further, how the students approach secondhand markets. Previous research has focused on collecting empirical data from Generation Y’s consumer behavior as a whole cohort, while our study focuses on college-aged Generation Y. In addition, little research has been done in students’ consumer behavior to secondhand shopping and, therefore, this study has some academic importance.

According to Swedish newspapers and news sites, the consumption trend of secondhand shopping is growing (Sydsvenskan, 2015; Andersson, 2015). In our study, we have taken social implications to consideration into account, and our study contributes to understand the reasons behind the secondhand consumption growth from Generation Y’s perspective. The results of our research aim to provide useful knowledge to secondhand stores about students’ values and attitudes to secondhand shopping.

Furthermore, this dissertation has practical implications and mainly target companies in secondhand markets. The results of our study aim to be used as guidelines to individuals and companies when driving or starting a secondhand store. Furthermore, the conclusions of this research aim to help the secondhand shop managers to focus on certain affecting factors more than others.

5.4. Suggestion for Further Research
We consider that it would be interesting to further study students with different cultural background than the background our respondents have. The majority of the students in our two focus groups were either Business students or Engineering students which perhaps affect their way of thinking when it comes to secondhand shopping. This was not a conscious choice by us, we suggest that further researchers could select respondents from other groups in the society with different educational background, to see how the trend of secondhand shopping is perceived in other subgroups. It would also be interesting to study consumer behavior regarding secondhand shopping with a selection of students from other university cities than Lund and Malmö, as well as, students who live in smaller towns in Sweden. This to see if students’ consumer behavior and attitudes in relation to secondhand shopping consist of similar patterns or if respondents with a different cultural background gives another result.
Another suggestion would be to do a research based on secondhand retailers instead of consumers. Our research do only study the consumers’ attitudes, behavior and drivers toward secondhand shopping. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how secondhand retailers distinguish their stores. Furthermore, how retailers work to drive consumers to purchase secondhand products, since many students have a negative attitude to secondhand shopping. Further research could also study how secondhand retailers perceive their own consumers, in other words to look at consumers’ identity and relationship from the retailers point of view.
6. References


APPENDIX 1 - Flyers

Har DU starka åsikter om saker och ting?
Bidra med dina tankar och funderingar, få en fika på köpet.

WE WANT YOU!

Vi är två studenter från Högskolan i Kristianstad som just nu skriver vår kandidatuppsats i International business and marketing. Uppsatsens syfte är att undersöka och analysera studenters konsumentbeteende. Analysen kommer bygga på en form av gruppdiskussion, så kallade fokusgrupper, där 6-8 deltagare sitter och bollar tankar, åsikter och erfarenheter mellan varandra.

Datum och tid för fokusgruppen kommer att bestämmas i samråd med deltagarna för att hitta en dag som passar alla. Diskussionen kommer att pågå mellan ca 1-2 timmar med en paus för fika där vi bjuder på kaffe och bullar.

Med hänsyn till respektive deltagare kommer era svar vara anonyma i uppsatsen.

Känner du dig sugen på att förmedla dina tankar och erfarenheter kring konsumentbeteende, samt träffa andra studenter från din universitetsstad är du hjärtligt välkommen att delta i vår undersökning.

Vi önskar svar från samtliga deltagare senats den 1 maj 2015.

Kontakta oss på

Facebook: Duyan Vu & Amanda Åkesson
Mobil: 073-63 58 831 & 073-37 41 747
APPENDIX 2 – Interview Guide
Vi presenterar oss själva och det övergripande syftet med studien. Vidare kommer vi att berätta upplägget för diskussionen, följt av att förklara vår roll som moderater samt deras roll som respondenter.

För att underlätta gruppinteraktionen samt för att skapa en trivsam atmosfär ställs följande frågor.

1. Presentera gärna lite om er själva:
   • Hur gamla är ni?
   • Vad studerar ni?
   • Har ni någon annan sysselsättning utöver studierna? (t.ex. extrajobb)

   Diskussionen kommer att fortlöpa med generella frågor angående konsumentbeteende.

   2. Vad tror ni påverkar människors konsumentbeteende? (i allmänhet)
   3. Hur ser era konsumentsvanor ut? (lösören)
      • Hur ofta konsumerar ni?
      • I vilken omfattning konsumerar ni?
   4. Vad har ni åtanke när ni konsumerar varor?

   Nyckel frågor baserade på studiens modell

   5. ”Slit och släng” kulturen har länge varit en trend, hur ställer ni er till detta?
   6. Vad anser ni vara en miljömedveten konsument?
   7. Hade ni kunnat tänka er att köpa begagnade varor? Varför/Varför inte?
   8. Vilken påverkan tror ni grupptryck har på människors konsumtion?
   9. Hur viktigt tycker ni det är att de varor ni konsumerar speglar er personlighet?
   10. Hur påverkas er uppfattning av andra människor när de köper/använder olika produkter och varumärken?
   11. Tror ni att varor kan påverka hur personer uppfattar sig själva och i så fall på vilket sätt?
APPENDIX 3 – Extract from the transcribed data, Malmö
Fokusgroup 1 - Malmö

Intervjuare: **Ni kan börja med att presentera er själva lite, typ hur gamla ni är (00:18)**

Annie: Ja 22 år gammal

**Och typ vad ni studerar (00:27)**

Annie: Pluggar ekonomi inriktning internationellt företagande och marknadsföring

Peter: Jag är student 21 år gammal, pluggar marknadsföring

Thomas: Ja, student 22 år gammal, läser ekonomi med inriktning internationellt företagande och marknadsföring

Calle: 21, exakt samma som alla andra högskolan i Kristianstad

Louise: 22 år gammal, pluggar också marknadsföring och internationellt företagande, och bor i Malmö

**Har ni någon annan sysselsättning utöver studier, t.ex. jobb (01:06)**

Louise: ja jag jobbar deltid

Calle: ja jag jobbar deltid också

Thomas: jag vetifan om man kan kalla det jag jobbar deltid, visst är i vikariebanken i all a fall och blir typ in ringd kanske en gång i månaden

Peter: jag gör ingenting

Perons 1: ja, deltid

**Vi är då två studenter från högskolan Kristianstad som skall göra ett arbete, en c-uppsats, angående om konsumentbeteende. Så idag skall vi ha en gruppdiskussion om era åsikter och tankar kring konsumentbeteende.**

**Vad tror ni påverkar människors konsumentbeteende i allmänhet, t.ex. vad tror du gör att folk köper saker? (02:06)**

Peter: **personlighet**

Annie: fast jag tror priset spelar en roll

Thomas: **jag tycker mer andra hållet, asså imagnen vissa märken och produkter har, och sen på så sätt kopplat till personlighet**

Calle: det är brett, det finns produkter som man vill ha och produkter som man måste ha

Louise: Ja precis

Calle: Så de, det är en bred fråga.

Louise: Ja jag tycker också det
Calle: Eh, jag tror att ni menar vad som får en att köpa någonting som man egentligen inte behöver i så fall, eller? och då, då är det väl allting om brand om man säger så, jag tror det handlar mycket om varumärket, priset man får vad man betalar för

Louise: asså jag vet inte det är stor skillnad, impulsköp, nödvändiga varor det är ju så brett

Men det är konsumentbeteende i allmänhet, det är ju onödiga saker och nödvändiga saker, allt. (03:26)

Peter: asså det beror på vad man vill ha liksom, går man in i ICA kan det hända att man slänger i några extra produkter som man inte behöver egentligen men ska man gå och handla kläder då vet man vad man vill ha då är det mycket typ såhär brand-image och pris som spelar störst roll eller om man ska köpa en dator då vet man, man gör research på det liksom

Ja okej, hur ser era konsumtionsvanor ut när det gäller lösören, tex kläder, skor, elektronik, saker. Inte mat (04:06)

Peter: kläder och elektronik och hela den biten så är det behovsköp asså, det är typ, det är ibland kläder asså så kanske, kanske typ en t-shirt eller något sånt blir impulsköp, men oftast så är det okej jag behöver ett par nya jeans eller kanske typ dessa skorna ser lite slitna ut jag måste köpa ett par nya liksom utifrån behov.

Calle: förlåt vad var frågan igen

Louise: ja

Asså typ hur ser era konsumtionsvanor ut, vi kan börja med hur ofta konsumerar ni?

Louise: Ah, asså det beror ju på. Är det kläder så är det ändå mest impuls oftast om det inte är något verkligt som är nödvändigt. Men när det är typ elektroniska saker och sånt, så är det verkliga när man behöver det går liksom inte att köpa en dator hur som helst så ja.

Andra varor då, inte elektronik. Typ heminredning och kanske smycke, accessoarer

Peter: asså det är mest vid behov, till och med kläder för min del det är inte ofta som jag, asså typ som Thomas sa kanske någon t-shirt så som impulsköp, oftast är det att man behöver ett par nya jeans eller man behöver ett par nya skor.

Calle: Jag råkar alltid ut för dessa affärer som har dessa 10 kronors boxar, där brukar jag alltid tycka vid, och handla med mig något fast jag aldrig använder det, typ en sax, 10 spänn för en sax liksom så jag bara tar den fast jag inte behöver saxen. Det är någonting som, som att jag vet att jag inte kommer använda men den kanske ser så tuff ut så jag måste bara ha den. Sen för en tia så tänker man att det inte spelar det så stor roll. När det gäller kläder det är inte mycket impuls där heller, det är mycket jag behöver detta och sen så går man och handlar, fast sen så handlar man det, så vill man inte heller handla nått som andra har, det är också en stor betydelse för mig

Louise: och sen kan man ju också tänka på till sommaren så handlar man ju också kläder och så till vintern, så det är också olika tillfällen

Peter: ja det är sant

Vad har ni i åtanke när ni konsumerar varorna? Det är typ en upprepning av det ni har sagt men bara mer specifikt (6:43)
Thomas: Asså, när det kommer till kläder och sånt är jag lite där som Calle jag upplever saker som många har, typ även om man kan tycka att något är fint men ser något...ser jag för många med det så typ är det inte lika attraktivt längre, typ folk smutsar ner det om man ska säga det på ett så sätt, fast annars så... det är väldigt mycket typ behov oftast asså typ kläder och hela den biten sen typ nått liksom typ ska jag köpa, behöver jag ett par jeans så inget så det ska
APPENDIX 4 – Extract from the transcribed data, Lund
Fokusgrupp 2

Intervjuare: Ni kan börja med att presentera er själva; hur gamla ni är och vad ni studerar. (00:08)

Emma: Mitt namn är (anonymt) och jag är 22 år och jag jobbar
Stephanie: Ja, jag heter (anonymt) och jag pluggar här på lund
Linnea: (anonymt) pluggar också i Kristianstad
David: (anonymt) 21 år gammal, pluggar ekonomi
Nicklas: (anonymt) 22 år gammal, pluggar högskoleingenjör – elektroteknik och automation
Marc: (anonymt) 25 år gammal, pluggar systemvetenskap

Utifrån det, jobbar ni någonting? (00:40)

Stephanie: Ja
Nicklas: Deltid
Marc: Deltid

Nicklas: Ja, extra, ja deltid

Vad tror ni påverkar ett konsumentbeteende i allmänhet? Vad tror ni påverkar deras beteende när dem köper någonting? (kläder, heminredning, allt förutom mat) (01:01)

Stephanie: Asså vad som helt? Mat? Kläder?
Peron 4: Förutom vad?


David: Jag tror att reklam påverkar mest faktiskt. Asså det är ju reklam typ som utgör trender och allting…

Emma: Mm

Nicklas: Sen beror det också på lite hur attraktiv grejen är..

David: Ja

Nicklas: Och vad det är och så vidare. Så..att..reklam kan göra väldigt mycket, men inte allt.

David: Det är det jag menar

Emma &4: Mm

Marc: Men se, sen så tror jag också mycket påverkas av, som ni sa, omgivningen men också dem man ser upp till, asså någon man vill efterlikna och sånt, det tror jag också faktiskt.

Emma &4: Mm

David: Egna preferenser.

Emma: Mm

Marc: Ibland känner man att vissa människor inte har, dem har inte, eh, någon egen, asså dem vet inte själv hur dem ska till exempel klä sig ibland, och då efterliknar dem någon, någon, typ ser upp till, så det tror jag också.

Stephanie: Modeikoner typ

Emma: Mm

Marc: Ja, till exempel eller, till exempel kändisar och sånt eller.

Stephanie: Ja, men det var det jag menade

Marc: Eller någon vän men har.

David: Ja. Fast dem reklamerar ju oftast asså sina märken, sina egna märken, sina egna kläder, men..ja

Marc: Ja, tror det också kan påverka i alla fall

David: Jag tror också det är en blandning där.

Emma: Samtidigt kan det nog vara mycket också så att man vill passa in eh, och det som du säger(Marc), lite om man inte riktigt vet själv vad man, vad man har sig själv, så umgås man med en viss typ av människor, så försöker man efterlikna dem väldigt mycket och, eh. Så det tror jag också.

Marc: Aa, precis, sociala banden tänker du på då?

Emma: Mm precis.
Marc: Eh, ja absolut, de är. Det är samma sak som att, eh, en som är ute varje helg kommer klä sig på ett sätt och en som sitter och spela dator, datorspel…

Emma: Ja

David: Ja exakt

Marc: asså på ett annat sätt.

Emma &4: Ja
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utdrag från transkriberad text</th>
<th>Kommentar</th>
<th>Nyckelord</th>
<th>Kategori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas: jag tycker mer andra hållet, asså imagen vissa märken och produkter har, och sen på så sätt kopplat till personlighet Calle: asså jag vet inte det finns varumärken som symboliserar en själv också, där folk känner igen dig, folk känner igen dig från ett visst varumärke Calle: Min första var HTC Desire, och det symboliserar mig på något sätt, så jag tar inte bort HTC längre, det spelar roll för mig. För att jag vill bara inte byta längre, det kommer alltid snack om att iPhone är bättre och såhär, då.. Jag vet</td>
<td>Reflektion av personligheten Produkter och varumärken representerar konsumenten Secondhand- söker något specifikt, unika produkter för att reflektera ens personlighet</td>
<td>Personlighet Uppfattning av andra Kommunikativ</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
inte, när man har... Det var min första smartphone och den var riktigt grym. Och även om jag får en dålig generation av smartphonen(HTC), så kommer jag ändå ge den en till chans. Så det spelar också stor roll. Tycker jag.

Calle: ja man blir ju lojal, speciellt när det var så bra första gången så vill man ge dem en andra chans också även om nästa chans inte är lika bra så ger man dom en tredje kanske. Så där tycker jag varumärket spelar stor roll för det symboliserar mig nu liksom, Android när ingen hade det så hade jag det och vill inte byta.

Louise: men det kan också va att man vill ha nått som inte alla andra har, det kan du hitta på tex secondhand det är ingen annan som har det –

Calle: ja klart. Det finns annorlunda gruppträck också Typ som jag sa då att HTC representerar mig

Thomas: ja asså man antar saker även om jag tror att man väldigt sällan antar rätt.

Annie: Snobb

Louise: ja det får man ju

Louise: jag tycker personen är typ lite så unik asså att den kan se ut som den vill

Calle: jag, ja nå, eller ja jag vet inte eller nå, eller ja secondhand ja tyvärr kläder ja. Asså jag vet inte varför men det känns annorlunda i alla fall, det känns annorlunda om

Genom att titta på vad en person köper eller har på sig antar man saker om deras personlighet vilket betyder att en vara reflekterar personen som köper den.

Hur människor kommunicerar sin personlighet med omgivningen genom att välja olika produkter eller varumärken

Annie: ja asså jag vet inte men hon var unik

Louise: ja jag tror också att det är det

Annie: och det var ju inte unikt på ett dåligt sätt
### APPENDIX 6 – Extract from the encoded data, Lund

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utdrag från transkriberad text</th>
<th>Kommentar</th>
<th>Nyckelord</th>
<th>Kategori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Påverkas av omgivningen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationen till samhällets trender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationen till produkten spelar också stor roll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc: Men se, sen så tror jag också mycket påverkas av, som ni sa, omgivningen men också dem man ser upp till, asså någon man vill efterlikna och sånt, det tror jag också faktiskt.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Umgänge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie : Modeikoner typ</td>
<td>Relationen till modeikoner och kändisar, någon man ser upp till</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Eller en vän</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc: Ja, till exempel eller, till exempel kändisar och sånt eller.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Varumärke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc: Eller någon vän men har.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc: för min del i alla fall vid köp av produkter och så, mycket påverkas av min lillebror och familjen och så.</td>
<td>Relationen till närstående</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc: precis, jag definitivt påverkas, jag påverkas av honom (Nicklas), jag påverkas av vänner</td>
<td>Påverkas av vänner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
och liksom sånt, eh, jag just nu mina vänner.

David: Asså jag tror att dem flesta i alla fall, kanske inte alla. Men jag tror att dem flesta påverkas av grupptryck, asså man blir som dem man umgås med till exempel. Så som du sa (Marc), jag vet inte, ni gillar meka med bilar och sånt, så man blir som dem man umgås med

Stephanie: Ja, asså jag tror att hur sto, hur stark personlighet man än har och hur säker men än är, asså. Undermedvetet, inte så att man tänker på det ”Ah, shit dem påverkar mig”, men undermedvetet, så tror jag asså, för man, eh, man förändras ju hela tiden som person

Stephanie: Jag tror man påverkas jättemycket, asså fastän man inte, kanske inte mycket, men på ett eller annat sätt, även om man inte tänker på det.

Marc: Jag, jag tror i slutändan så inbillar man sig själv att eh, man är så, så pass stark att grupp, grupptryck inte påverkar. Men man gör det. Jag är likadan asså, det är inte, det är inte mot dig asså (Emma)

Stephanie: nä men då stämmer det, det är ju lite det där med jag hade inte velat gå tex ut och fika på en lördagskväll med sanna fula kläder asså där för jag hade känt mig som, nä asså inte att självförtroendet försvinner men det är inte riktigt..

Umgänget formar ens personlighet

Påverkas undermedvetet av andra som man umgås och folk i omgivningen

Man förändras som person, anpassar sig till gruppen, umgänget

Relation till andra har en stor influens vid konsumtion och användning

Få bekräftelse från andra, söker en relation till en samhörighet i
| **Marc** | och ni alla andra också där står hon redan när hon var 20 år gammal eh för 20 år sen kanske när hon var liksom 4-5  |
| **David** | Av människor på det sättet typ man hör vänner som åker typ eh, på sån jordenrunt resa eller åker till asien. Ser massa bilder på facebook hit och dit och det får en själv att vilja resa  |
| **Nicklas** | Ja, i alla fall klockor. Asså t.ex. du, du gillar en klockan för femhundra spänn, du, varför, asså man kan ju hitta klockan man gillar under tusen spänn, men ändå går man och köper en rolex för fyrtiotusen  |
| **Nicklas** | Det där är hundra procent gru, grupptryck ju. Asså du gör ju det för att andra komma säga ”wow, vilken klocka”. Det är ju grupptryck.  |
| **Emma** | Ehm, för mig är det väldigt impulsivt. Asså, jag är inte, jag vet inte men jag är typ sån, vill jag ha någonting så kommer jag på det nu och då vill jag ha det nu.  |
| **David** | Nej, jag känner också som tjejerna faktiskt, asså jag, jag är ganska spontan av mig. Jag tänker inte så ”Ah, jag ska gå och handla typ ett par jeans nu” utan det brukar, du vet så, man drar till våla eller någonstans, och så bara ”ah detta är snyggt, jag köper det”  |

| **gruppen/umgången** |  |
| **Relationen till andra, motiverar och avgör beslut/vallet** |  |
| **Val och beslut kommer från att man vill bli uppfattad av andra på ett sätt** |  |

| **Impulsiv** | Personlighet | Reflection |
| **Spontan** | Uppfattning av andra |  |

Emma: ehm asså jag tror inte jag tänker så mycket på det på att det ska spegla min personlighet utan det gör det atoumatiskt tror jag för att om jag gillar någonting så gillar jag det för att jag gillar det det är ju liksom jag som person så det speglar väl atoumatiskt men det är nog inte jag tänker på att men shit jag kan inte köpa denna för det är inte jag så tänker jag nog inte utan det är snarare att köper jag den så är det liksom någonting jag gillar då blir det atoumatiskt en liksom

Emma: jo klart det finns ju så klart tillfällen då man kanske ska tänka igenom en extra gång, men om jag köper någonting så tror jag inte jag tänker så jätte mycket på det, utan jag tror det blir automatiskt du köper saker du gillar och då speglar det ju dig som person, tror jag jag vet inte hur det är för er andra.

Stephanie: vi säger korta såhär magtröjor och sånt som har kommit in nu asså jag kan tycka att det är skitsnyggt och så men jag kan inte köpa för att det är inte riktigt jag.

David: asså jag har också ett konkret exempel jag har en kompis han gillar datorer och du vet såhär teknisk av sig men han är helt besatt av Apple alla hans tekniska produkter ska vara Apple och det tycker jag är lite så typ fjantigt typ lite nördigt kanske om jag ska vara
helt ärlig man får ju en uppfattning.

**David:** Typ för mig i alla fall jag ser en asså man ska ju inte döma någon men man gör ju det nästan helt undermedvetet asså om jag ser någon gå i typ ehh låt säga feta airmac bakåtslickat hår, gelé typ två kilo guld runt nacken jag får ju den uppfattningen han är du vet en riktig råblatte som du vet gillar göra skit Förstår ni han kanske inte är det men man får ju den uppfattningen och så ser man kanske ja nån kille som går runt i eh jag vet inte asså typ chinos, skjorta hit och dit så får man ju den uppfattningen aha han verkar va en som har koll på grejer och du vet så lite så det är den, asså tills man lär känn dem sen kanske det är tvärtom men när man först ser dom så man får ju den uppfattningen

**Marc:** Sen vet jag inte heller om just du sa nån med hoddies och sånt eller vad du sa och så nån med kavaj asså säg att en advokat kommer fram till mig och snackar i kvaj och skit snygg han är fint klädd och så kollar man på honom man bara ja okej han kan sin grej liksom och har lite respekt.

**David:** Du ser en du tror han är brat, men sen så när du går fram och snackar med honom så kanske det inte är någonting

**David:** Det är egentligen ja första intrycket spelar stor roll tror jag, som om du ser skinhead tex det är samma sak liksom du kommer inte tro han röstar särkert på

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viktigt att varan speglar dig själv för att inte vara något du inte är</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflektion spelar en stor roll – får en speciell uppfattning av någon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Första intryck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppfattar en person utifrån varor och köp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
socialdemokraterna nå du tror han röstar på SD, svenska parti man går runt med bomb… och helt snaggad ja

**Marc:** uppfattning beroende på vem det är om jag ser en kille som alltid har Apple, nu har jag ändrat ganska mycket uppfattning om Apple för jag har själv både Macbook, jag hade Iphone och så nu har jag inte det