Consumers’ experienced value of information sharing

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Sammandrag: Customer information is one of the most important company resources because it enables the design of products and services that are relevant for consumers. Thanks to the increased use of social media channels and data collection technologies, there is more data available than ever before. It is therefore ever more important for companies’ competitiveness to have access to relevant, personal customer information. Customers are, however, becoming increasingly aware of the amount and depth of information businesses collect about them. As a consequence of this, they are taking control over their personal data by requiring value in exchange for their personal information. To ensure access to personal customer information, companies want to support their customers’ information sharing as much as possible. To be able to do that, they need to understand what value consumers get from information sharing.

The aim of this study is to define and analyze different types of value consumers get from information sharing. Based on previous research, a theoretical framework has been defined, where customers share two different types of information – firm controlled and personal – and get four different types of value – functional, social, emotional and economic – in exchange. The aim is answered through qualitative interviews with 6 people under the age of 30 and 6 people over the age of 30.

Based on the empirical study the four different types of values were further categorized in different types of positive and negative value, that people get from information sharing, which resulted in a theoretical framework that broadly describes customers’ experienced value of information sharing. Differences in both how people in different age groups share information to create value for themselves, as well as in how people with different data-sharing mindsets relate to companies’ information collection and usage, were found. The theoretical results can be used by firms to support customers’ information sharing.

Nyckelord: Customer information, data sharing, value, social media, personal branding, customer-dominant logic, customer centricity, data collection
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1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional provider-dominant logic is based on the idea that customer value creation is orchestrated by the service provider and takes place in the control zone of the company. According to this logic, companies are active while customers are seen as targets or receivers of companies’ value propositions (Heinonen et al. 2013). A new perspective on customer value creation is customer oriented – instead of focusing on their products or services, firms should aim at gaining an understanding of what consumers do and need. By creating products and services that answer to customers’ preferred modes of operation and needs, companies can provide added value to them (Heinonen et al. 2010, Grönnroos 2006, 2008).

Hence, value emerges in customer processes and is determined by the customers, not firms (Heinonen et al. 2013). To support customer value creation, businesses should be built on in-depth insight of customer activities, practices, experiences, and contexts, and aim at supporting and getting integrated into these (Heinonen et al. 2010, Grönnroos 2006, 2008). To gain a better understanding on their customers’ motivations and preferences, companies need more information about them.

Many authors state that customer information is one of the most important company resources (von Koskull 2009, Rowley 2002, Drucker 1999, Nonaka 1995, Gebert & Geib et al. 2003). It leads to a better understanding of both existing and prospective customers. By making data-driven decisions, companies can develop offerings that support customers’ processes and are of high value for them (Heinonen et al. 2010, Novo 2011, Kumar et al. 2013). Customer information should therefore be used in organizations for guiding their research and development operations, for developing offerings in accordance to customer needs and demands, for deepening and developing customer relationships, and for predicting future trends (Saarijärvi et al. 2013). This creates benefits for both consumers and firms.

Information technology (IT) has allowed information to be used in ways that were previously impossible or impractical (Culnan & Armstrong 2005). Companies can, for example, record the details of any customer transaction, store vast quantities of data, develop extensive customer databases, and use all this information to offer highly individualized service, and to develop personalized marketing strategies (Culnan & Armstrong 2005). Even though there is an “explosion of data” from various digital sources, customers still have a lot of detailed personal information that they are not sharing. Since customer data is a crucial
factor for business success, it is of utmost importance for companies to understand why people do or do not share information. Understanding this enables them to support their customers’ data sharing as much as possible.

1.1 Research problem
There is more customer data available than ever before (Emerald Group Publishing Limited 2012, Rowley 2002, Park et al. 2003). Traditional data, such as for example data on consumers’ buying behavior, is already widely used by organizations. Thanks to the ongoing digitalization and the increased use of computers, smart phones and other devices, new types of data and new ways of acquiring it are generated (Emerald Group Publishing Limited 2012, Brown et al. 2011, Manyika et al. 2011). For example, Brown et al. (2011) point out that organizations can collect operations data, scan social media, use location data from smartphones and follow internet click streams of individual customers to get information about their preferences and behavior in real time. According to this view, customers are seen as passive parties who do not consider how information of them is used or what its value is for organizations or themselves. Several studies, however, challenge this view and come to the conclusion that instead of passively giving their personal information to organizations, customers are becoming increasingly aware of the amount and depth of information businesses collect about them. As a consequence of this, they are taking control over their personal data by requiring value in exchange for it (Quint & Rogers 2015, Hagel & Rayport 1997).

Companies are using increasing amounts of customer information in their processes. As ever more customer information is generated and can be collected and analyzed, it is becoming increasingly important for organizations’ competitiveness to have relevant individual customer data at their disposal. People, on the other hand, are often willing to share general information but are very sensitive about sharing highly personal data (Quint & Rogers 2015). There is, therefore, an apparent data gap between companies and consumers. Organizations need more personal data on their customers while customers are restricting their personal data sharing due to privacy concerns and the feeling that they are not getting back something of value from organizations (Quint & Rogers 2015). Lupton (2014) points out that in many cases consumers have vast amounts of personal data that they have gathered for example
through self-tracking applications, but the data is kept private or shared only with limited and selected others. To be able to access this highly personal data, organizations need to understand what value they can provide in exchange for it.

The challenge for organizations is to understand what kinds of value information sharing can bring to consumers. Customer value has been broadly researched in value literature, however mostly in product purchase situations (Zeithaml 1988, Anderson et al 1993, Gale 1994). Zeithaml (1988) suggests that value is an assessment of a product’s utility based on what is received and what is given, whereas Gale (1994) sees customer value as market perceived quality adjusted with the relative price of the product. Research can also be found on value in knowledge sharing contexts. Hsu & Lin (2008), for example, research information sharing on social networking sites. They come to the conclusion that information sharing is based on peoples’ belief on obtaining benefits from it. Bock & Kim (2002), in turn, study the concept of knowledge sharing at the enterprise and task-oriented level. They find that the motives for knowledge sharing attitudes are mostly determined by expectations (rewards, social associations, and contributions) and anticipations (extrinsic rewards and reciprocal relationships). While the results of these studies partially explain customers’ general information sharing, there is plenty of room for further research on the topic.

Most of the studies related to customer data sharing do not give a comprehensive view on what value information sharing brings to consumers. Most authors have limited their research on specific contexts of consumer privacy and data sharing and only give fragmented information on why consumers decide to disclose or not to disclose personal data. Today information is one of the key factors affecting company success. At the same time research shows that customers have a lot of information they are not sharing. A conclusion can therefore be made that there is a research gap within this topic. The aim of this study is provide information for filling this gap by analyzing the various types of value consumers experience in different information sharing situations that motivate them to exchange their personal data towards.

1.2 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to define and analyze different types of value consumers get from information sharing. The objective is to gain an understanding of the underlying motivations
for people’s information sharing, in order to fill the gap between organizations increasing need of relevant, personal customer information and customers restricting their personal information sharing.

1.3 Delimitations
The study is limited to only describing and analyzing the value the informants interviewed for this study get from their personal information sharing. The value other people get from personal information sharing is not necessarily the same as the values described in this study.

Since the aim of this study is to define what kind of value people get from their personal information sharing, and since social media is an important channel for that, only informants comfortable with using technologies and to some extent active on social media have been chosen (the prerequisites for the informants are described in the methodology). Therefore the results do not describe the value from personal information sharing for people who are not active online or on social media channels.

1.4 Structure of the study
In this chapter the structure of the study is presented. The study begins with a literature review consisting of existing research related to value and customer information. The aim is to give some background for the study. Thereafter, the theoretical framework consisting of theories related to customer information sharing, data-sharing mindsets of consumers and the value of information sharing is presented.

In the third chapter the methodology describing the empirical study is presented. The empirical part consists of data collected through qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews were chosen as the data collection method because they lead to versatile and descriptive answers on individuals’ experienced value of personal information sharing.

In the fourth part the data from the interviews is analyzed through categorization and coding and the analyzed data is then connected to the theoretical framework. The chapter ends with conclusions of the analysis and results. The last part of the study is a discussion where also suggestions for further research are presented.
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the literature behind the theoretical framework and the theoretical framework are presented. The chapter begins with a description of how value is seen in this study, then different types of customer information are defined, and lastly, a theory of different data-sharing mindsets is presented. The theoretical framework is presented in the last paragraph (2.4). The theoretical framework is used to analyze the empirical data in order to answer the aim of the study, which is to define and analyze customers’ experienced value of personal information sharing.

2.1 Value for customers

For understanding customer information sharing and the value it brings to individuals, it is important to gain insight to how value is experienced and created for people. Different authors have different views on what value is and how it is created. Several of these authors seem to connect value to a product i.e. value is bound to a product and the experienced value depends on the perceived worth of the product and the price of it (Seithaml 1988, Monroe 1990, Gale 1994). Vargo & Lusch (2004) state that previously “marketing inherited a view that value was something embedded in goods during the manufacturing process”. According to another view, value emerges between a customer and a producer after the customer has used a product and found it to provide added value (Butz & Goodstein 1996). Arvidsson (2011) states that companies in general are seen as the producers of value, which means that value formation is orchestrated and controlled by companies that produce and sell the products. These views are all highly company-centric and based on the idea that value creation includes consumers, producers and products and an exchange of a product or a service.

Another view on value creation is the customer-dominant logic according to which individuals orchestrate and dominate value formation, not companies (Heinonen et al. 2013, Carrington & Neville 2016 and Vargo & Lusch 2004). Value emerges through peoples’ behavioral and mental processes when they interpret experiences and reconstruct an accumulated reality where value is embedded (Heinonen et al. 2013). According to this view, value formation takes place in the context of living – before, during, and after experiences, often outside the control zone of the provider (Heinonen et al. 2013, Storbacka & Lehtinen 2001). This means that value is not necessarily related to companies or products – instead it is the customers who create value for themselves in their own lives and contexts.
Value is subjective, which means that people’s value formation processes are based on their own experiences and expectations. These processes can therefore not be dictated by for example organizations and are not similar for everybody. In other words, the same service, product or experience is valued differently by different people. On top of being subjective, value formation processes are also affected by the customer's reality and ecosystem at a specific moment, in a specific situation (Heinonen et al. 2013). This means that it is the customer who finds something valuable in a specific situation, i.e. value is not embedded in products and is not constant (Vargo & Lusch 2004). Customer experiences are affected by the customer’s internal and external contexts, which can be different at different times (Heinonen et al. 2013) i.e. value is dynamic and multidimensional. Emotions, behavior, and attitudes of an individual and the people close to him/her may, for example, influence the value formation process positively or negatively. Customers consciously or unconsciously relate their experiences to their own reality at a specific time and base the value formation on it (Heinonen et al. 2013).

For companies this means that they should find out what the customer is doing or trying to do, and understand how a specific service fits into that (Grönroos 2008, Vargo & Lusch 2004). The role of companies is, hence, to understand the customers’ value creation processes embedded in their practices and contexts i.e. how customers live their lives. Only by doing this are companies able to operate in a way that best supports and gets integrated into their customers' motivations and needs (Heinonen et al. 2010, Grönroos 2006 & 2008, Heinonen et al. 2013, Vargo & Lusch 2004).

In this study value is seen as something people create for themselves in their own lives without necessarily including companies or products. Therefore value is also seen as something highly subjective and conceptual.

2.1.1 Value dimensions

Sheth et al. (1991) present a theory on consumption values explaining why consumers choose to buy or not to buy a specific product. The theory consists of five different value dimensions: functional value, conditional value, social value, emotional value, and epistemic value (Sheth et al. 1991). The five values influence customer choice behavior, and any choice is influenced by one or many of these values. The value dimensions may not be independent, which means that these values may be interrelated (Sweeney & Soutar 2001).
**Functional value** is the perceived utility acquired from capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance. An alternative’s functional value comes from its characteristics or attributes, such as for example reliability, durability, and price. Traditionally functional value was seen as the physical attributes, the quality and expected performance of a product. (Sheth et al 1991)

**Conditional value** is experienced when a certain alternative is perceived as valuable because of the situation or circumstances. This means that there are factors enhancing the value of this alternative that might not be present in another situation. Examples of value enhancing factors are seasonal occasions (related to for example Christmas cards), once in a lifetime events (related to for example wedding accessories), or emergency situations (related to for example ambulance service). (Ibid.)

**Social value** is the perceived utility acquired from association with one or more specific social groups. An alternative brings social value through association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups. This means that an action or a consumption decision is based on the social image evoked, instead of for example functional value. (Ibid.)

**Emotional value** is the perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s capacity to arouse feelings or affective states. An alternative creates emotional value when feelings – positive or negative, strong or mild – are evoked in a person. (Ibid.)

**Epistemic value** is acquired when an alternative arouses curiosity, provides novelty, and/or satisfies a desire for knowledge. This type of value can be acquired by new experiences or by doing something in a new way. An alternative may be chosen if the consumer is bored with a current brand, is curious or has a desire to learn. (Ibid.)

Sweeney & Soutar (2001) further developed the value theory to consist of only four different types of value: emotional, social, and two types of functional value – price related and performance related. The emotional and social values are the same as in the model by Sheth et al. (1991). Functional value related to price means that value is received due to long term or short term price reductions, i.e. the person gets economic benefits (Sweeney & Soutar 2001). Functional value related to performance means that a person benefits from the perceived quality and expected performance of a product (ibid.).
2.2 Customer information

Many researches see personal data as the most important resource of the 21st century (Drucker 1999), the new gold, the new oil (Maude 2012). Roeber et al. (2015) support these views and state that data, especially personal data, is becoming a critical asset in more and more industries. Data enables improvement of existing products and processes and helps organizations to develop and deepen their customer relationships (Roeber et al. 2015, Saarijärvi et al. 2013). Access to more data also enables the development of high quality services and products and organizational innovation (Salomann et al. 2005, Vuori 2012). By having access to more customer information, companies learn about the needs and future desires of their customers as well as about ever changing trends (Davenport et al. 2001, Gebert et al. 2003). Customer information is regarded a superior tool for companies to differentiate themselves from competitors as well as a major driver of economic growth (Roeber et al. 2015).

Over the past few years, the volume of customer data available has exploded (Brown et al. 2011, Roeber et al. 2015). Consumers use computers, smart phones, and other devices for their personal purposes and are active on different social media channels (Roeber et al. 2015). Due to this, a huge amount of personal information of different degrees of form, validity, and accessibility is generated about consumers (Emerald Publishing Limited 2012, Brown et al. 2011, Manyika et al. 2011, Roeber et al. 2015). As a consequence, companies will have to become more selective about the information they collect, and focus on what is essential for them to know in order to understand and support their customers’ needs (Hagel & Rayport 1997).

Companies also need to understand that consumers are varyingly sensitive about different types of personal data. Quint & Rogers (2015) found that consumers make distinctions between personal identifying information (PII) as compared to other types of information. PII includes name, address, mobile phone, date of birth, and email. Other types of information are for example website or purchase history and lifestyle information (Quint & Rogers 2015). The degree of sensitivity about certain types of information does not, however, go hand in hand with how willing people are to share information with organizations (Quint & Rogers 2015, Roeber et al. 2015). This means that even information categorized as highly sensitive or personal by consumers is not necessarily kept private. Instead it can be shared in exchange for something of value.
Based on existing literature, two different types of customer information have been found: firm initiated customer information and personal customer information. These information types are described in the next paragraphs.

2.2.1 Firm controlled data

Firm initiated customer information is created when customers are in contact with companies, or through technologies that are managed or orchestrated by companies and related to their products or performance. Examples of data created in customers’ contacts with a company are data on consumers’ buying behavior, and information about company performance and products gathered through focus groups, structured interviews, unstructured interviews, surveys, experiments, observations and product reviews (Kumar et al. 2013). Traditionally this type of data was gathered offline, but nowadays digital technologies are often used. For example product reviews are available and interviews, surveys and experiments often done online.

Many organizations also have loyalty programs that track customer purchase behavior. These programs often work through loyalty cards – every time a loyalty card is used, the consumer’s purchase is recorded to the company’s database (Berman 2006). By being a part of loyalty programs and using loyalty cards consumers, consciously or unconsciously, share information about their demographics, purchase history and buying behavior as well as trends related to purchases, repurchases, related purchases, usage of multiple channels, and time between repurchase (Berman 2006). Companies often save this information in customer data bases and use it to approach individual consumers with targeted offers. The information is also used for communication, inventory management, pricing, promotional planning, and personalized mailings (Berman 2006).

Nowadays companies also use tracking technologies and analytics programs for example to track search engine queries and clickstream data. Search engine queries are key words used to search for services or products. Clickstream data refers to information about the clicking behavior of website visitors. It includes information about the number of page views, visit frequency and duration as well as characteristics of items viewed. (Moe & Fader 2004, Kumar et al. 2013) These programs also gather information about people’s opinions on a company and experiences from its offerings, products and company contact points (Kumar et al. 2013).
Cookies are one type of tracking technology used for online profiling and targeting. Cookies follow the traces of online users and collect large amounts of personal and usage data. Cookies are sent to a user’s hard drive via the browser while a user visits a cookie-using website. They track the behavior and preferences of users and collect website statistics. Two different types of cookies are generally used: session cookies, that are automatically deleted when the user closes the browser, and persistent cookies that remain on the user’s computer until the user deletes them. Information collected by tracking technologies is used by organizations for behavioral advertising and personalized services. (Eijik et al. 2012)

Most websites use privacy notices to inform users about cookies or tracking technology, and in many countries companies are required to ask for the consumers’ consent to be tracked. Some websites require acceptance for cookies in order for a person to get access to the website. Despite of these measures, big problems related to tracking technologies still remain. Even when privacy notices are used, these technologies are often very complex and therefore their use and purpose are difficult for consumers to understand. Eijik et al. (2012) for example found that users are often not familiar with the existence of cookies or have limited knowledge concerning the usage - let alone the removal - of them. Consumers might, therefore, give consent to something they do not fully understand, or for purposes actually hidden from them. (Eijik et al. 2012)

2.2.2 Personal customer information

The introduction of digital and social media channels has contributed to the emergence of customer information sharing that is not directly related to companies. Different social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, and different discussion groups, are used by people for interaction, information sharing and retrieval, pastime, entertainment, relaxation and communication (Whiting et al. 2013). On these channels people share thoughts, pictures, comments, links to articles, videos and other types of user generated content. Since the usage spectrum of these channels is so broad, they give detailed insight into people’s lives (Baird & Parasnis 2011). The content shared provides information about who the people engaged in sharing are, how they live, what motivates them and what their likes and dislikes are. Also information on the demographics and networks of the participants and on market trends can be extracted from information found on social media channels. (Baird & Parasnis 2011, Schlack 2010) As mentioned above, this information can be related to companies, but is often related to people’s personal lives and interests.
Self-tracking data is a new form of digital data that has dispersed rapidly into multiple social domains (Lupton 2014). Self-tracking means that digital technologies, such as mobile devices, are used to voluntarily monitor and record specific features of a person’s life. Self-tracking can be done on one or many features for different time periods, and it can be for personal use only or shared publicly. (Lupton 2014) Self-tracking can, for example, be done with applications downloaded to a smartphone. Almost all smartphones include sensors such as GPS, gyroscopes, and accelerometers that can be employed for self-tracking (Lupton 2014).

The range of things that can be tracked is broad. Examples include geolocation, health, fitness, weight, sleep, diet, mood or feelings, meditation practices, television watching, computer use, driving habits, financial expenses, time use, beneficial habits, work productivity, progress towards learning and the achievement of personal goals (Quantified Self guide to self-tracking tools 2014). Self-tracking can be extended beyond the scope of the individual body – people can, for example, use sensor based technologies to monitor the habits, bodies and behaviors of their intimate others and animals, as well as environmental conditions such as air temperature, humidity, light conditions, gases, air quality and pollution and their home’s use of energy (Lupton 2014, Lupton 2013).

People have different reasons for self-tracking. Some do it to collect information about themselves as a way of remembering and recording aspects of their lives. Others have a more goal-oriented approach, and analyze and reflect upon the information they get to achieve self-awareness and optimize or improve their lives (Lupton 2014). Self-tracking technologies usually organize, analyze, interpret, and present data so that it easily can be of use for the users (Lupton 2014). It is up to consumers if they want to share their self-tracking data with others. This means that consumers using self-tracking technologies have large amounts of highly personal information that organizations cannot automatically access.

2.3 Customer data-sharing

Roeber (2015) found that nearly all consumers (99.9% of the sample in the study) want to share personal data if the benefits and terms suffice their needs. Consumers can either share data actively or passively. Active sharing means that consumers take action such as for example write a comment or review or file a form to share their data. By doing this, the consumer is in control of what data is shared (Roeber et al. 2015). Passive sharing means that consumers are passive, but provide organizations with data by for example allowing
them to profile or track themselves (Roeber et al. 2015). The difference between active and passive is subtle but has to do with controlling what is shared. In active sharing, the customer is in full control while in passive sharing he/she is not. Consumers are much less sensitive for the collection of actively shared data than passively shared data (Roeber et al. 2015).

Tracking technologies have enabled the collection of highly personal and usage data online (Eijik et al. 2012). This is problematic because consumers are sometimes unconsciously sharing personal data. For example cookies are used by organizations for online profiling and targeting in the contexts of online behavioral advertising and the personalization of services (Eijik et al. 2012). For consumers this means that just by using the Internet, going on different sites, communicating online, and using different online technologies they disclose personal information to the organizations or entities hosting the cookies. Another example of this phenomena are online technologies that collect clickstream data or location data (Winer 2001). Some companies provide users with clear information about the placing and purpose of cookies or other tracking technologies, as well as ask for their consent (Eijik et al. 2012). Eijik et al. (2012) found that the majority of companies neither inform consumers about cookies, the purpose of processing the collected data, and the measures to remove the cookies, nor would they require consent from consumers before using cookies. After Eijik et al.’s (2012) study the laws regarding the usage of cookies and transactional technologies have become stricter in many countries. Companies are now required to inform their customers about their usage of tracking technologies. Despite this, many consumers share personal information unconsciously or involuntarily.

2.3.1 Data-sharing mindsets

People are relatively savvy and in control over their personal data sharing behavior. Quint & Rogers (2015) present a theory where people are grouped in different mindset groups according to their defensiveness towards data-sharing and willingness to share data. Based on these two parameters four different data sharing mindsets are distinguished: “defenders”, “resigned”, “savvy and in control” and “happy go lucky” (Quint & Rogers 2015). These mindsets are displayed in figure 1 below.

The defenders are highly defensive and not happy to share their personal data, the resigned are low defensive and not happy to share, the savvy and in control are highly defensive and happy to share and lastly, the happy go lucky are low defensive and happy to share. Being defensive does not mean that the people do not want to share their data. Instead it means
that they take precautions in their data sharing and consider carefully what to share and what not to share. (Quint & Rogers 2015).

![Diagram showing different data-sharing mindsets]

**Figure 1** The Data-sharing mindsets of consumers (Quint & Rogers 2015)

### 2.4 Theoretical framework

The aim of this study, which is to define and analyze different types of value that consumers get from personal information sharing, is researched with a theoretical framework consisting of two parts: the first part is based on data-sharing mindsets, and the second part is a theory developed on the basis of the literature review on the value of information sharing presented in paragraphs 2.1-2.3. In this chapter the theoretical framework is presented and clarified through an image.

#### 2.4.1 Part 1: Data-sharing mindsets

In paragraph 2.3.1, a theory about different data sharing mindsets was presented (figure 1 above). According to the theory, people can either have a low-defensive or defensive attitude towards information sharing and either be happy to share information or not happy to share information. Based on these parameters, people can be categorized in four different groups:
resigned, defenders, savvy and in control or happy go lucky. These data-sharing mindsets affect people's information sharing. In the results and analysis of this study, data-sharing mindsets and value of information sharing are analyzed separately. The theory on data-sharing mindsets is included to get a general overview of where the informants of this study stand regarding data sharing, not to define how people with different mindsets get value from sharing information. For this reason, data-sharing mindsets are displayed separately from the theoretical framework on the experienced value of information sharing.

2.4.2 Part 2: Experienced value of information sharing

In paragraph 2.2, two different types of customer information were described: firm controlled and personal. People can either share firm controlled customer information or personal customer information and get value in return. These are, however, not separately looked at in the empirical part of this study. Instead, the focus is on a broad range of customer information.

As pointed out earlier, customer-dominant logic is based on the idea of the customer orchestrating and dominating value formation. Value emerges through customers’ behavioral and mental processes when they interpret experiences and reconstruct an accumulated reality where value is embedded (Heinonen et al. 2013). It can be stated that information sharing is a behavioral process that creates value for people i.e. customer information sharing is driven by value.

Sheth & Gross’s (1991) and Sweeney & Soutar’s (2001) theories, where different values that influence customer choice behavior were presented and explained in paragraph 2.1.1. The values used in this study were interpreted in the basis of Sheth & Gross (1991) and Sweeney & Soutar (2001). Four different values, that were considered relevant in this context, were chosen: functional, social, emotional, and economic value. The identified values are used to better understand why individuals decide to share personal information. The four different types of value in the context of information sharing are described next.

Functional value in information sharing can be seen as information sharing that leads to improved products, services or communication. For example, information sharing that helps organizations provide its customers more differentiated service offerings (Quint & Rogers 2015) such as personalized offers, recommendations, and communication adapted to specific target groups. Another functional benefit of information sharing is getting help to
problems (Lee & Rha 2016). By sharing information about problems concerning for example products, health, or interests, a person can get help from other people to solve these problems. Lastly, information sharing can help people to get more meaning out of their personal data through insights of others and by aggregating data (Lupton 2013).

Social value in information sharing means that information is shared to create beneficial social associations or to get relational benefits (Bock & Kim 2002). Social associations mean that people want to control how other people perceive them or build an online profile that matches their personal identity. This process can also be called personal branding (Kaplan & Henlein 2010, Karaduman 2013). Cooper (2014) argues that individuals are able to enhance their visibility by developing a personal brand by strategic efforts aimed at establishing favorable impressions. Strategic efforts could, for example, be profiles on social networking sites, photographs, design, and layout choices on personal sites (Labrecque et al. 2011). Zhao et al. (2008) distinguish between explicit and implicit identity statements. Explicit identity statements are autobiographic descriptions given by the user, such as for example comments, blog posts etc. Implicit identity statements again can be found in the impressions given off by the users (Zhao et al. 2008). This means that by becoming members of groups, and by selecting what activities or hobbies they are affiliated with online, people can affect what implicit impressions they send out (Zhao et al. 2008). Social benefits are created if these impressions are interpreted by other individuals in a desired manner.

The relational benefits can partially be explained through attachment theory. In communities, attachment emerges through two types of concepts: identity-based attachment and common bond-based attachment (Ren et al. 2007) that affect individuals’ motivations for engaging in information sharing. Identity-based attachment means that a person feels attached to a group as a whole through a common purpose i.e. “[…] an individual’s sense of belonging of social category in the virtual community” (Ren et al. 2007, Chiu et al. 2006, Chung et al. 2015). In these communities, people share opinions and information. They benefit through informative social interactions and through a feeling of connectedness to a group of people that share a common goal (Chung et al. 2015). Common bond, again, means that individuals feel attached to individual members in a group. In this case, motivations for information sharing are affected by interpersonal bonds between members (Ren et al. 2007). In communities like this, individuals have fun together, voluntarily contribute contents, and discuss new ideas. Value is created through developing
relationships between members (Chung et al. 2015). The information shared varies depending on the type of attachment, but the experienced benefits in both concepts are created through social interactions and a feeling of social connectedness to a community, not through monetary compensation.

**Emotional value** is information sharing that arouses feelings – negative or positive – in the individual. Different media channels, such as for example Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, and different discussion groups, are used by people for interaction, information sharing and retrieval, pastime, entertainment, relaxation and communication (Whiting et al. 2013). A person may feel joy by sharing information that helps others, by for example writing online reviews or helping someone in an online community, or if the information sharing enhances their own knowledge (Yan et al. 2014). Being active, sharing content and engaging in discussions may also be found entertaining or fun and create emotional value by arousing feelings of happiness, joy, being entertained etc. Sharing information with organizations about their services or products may also create emotional value by making the person feel important and helpful.

**Economic value** is created when a person gets some kind of economic benefits in exchange for their personal information. Baird & Parasnis (2011) found that getting discounts or coupons actually is customers’ number one reason for interacting with organizations. Examples of offers are cash backs, coupons, location-based discounts, coalition rewards, and special event invitations, to name a few (Quint & Rogers 2015). In practice this means that in exchange for their personal information, people are rewarded with offers (Quint & Rogers 2015) that give economic value to them.

Quint & Rogers (2015) found that the influence of offers depends on two strategic dimensions – how direct or indirect the offer is, and how financial or experiential the offer is. Direct financial offerings, such as cash backs, are more valuable for individuals than indirect experiential offerings such as recommendations, and financial offerings are in general more attractive than experiential offerings (Quint & Rogers 2015). Also Roeber et al. (2015) found that consumers’ willingness to disclose private information is positively related to the amount of financial compensation, aka. financial value offered for the respective information. In other words, the higher the monetary compensation the more valuable the offer is perceived, and the more information people are willing to share.
This study is based on a theoretical framework built on the basis of the literature on customer information and the four different values of information sharing chosen from the literature as relevant for the empirical study. The theoretical framework is displayed in figure 2 below. In the framework, customers share information on different channels and through different ways, and get value (functional, social, emotional and/or economic value) in return. Based on this theoretical framework as well as the theory about data-sharing mindsets, the data from the empirical study is analyzed.

**Figure 2** Theoretical framework: Customers’ experienced value of information sharing


3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research methodology is discussed and the choice of research method is motivated. Thereafter the data collection is described, the questionnaire and the interview guide are presented and the sample is introduced. In the last chapter the quality of the study is examined.

3.1 Choice of method

The choice of method should be based on and support the research question and help the researcher to answer the aim of the study (Saunders et al. 2007). The aim of this study is to research the value of information sharing for consumers and hence, this is an exploratory study. A qualitative research method was chosen and the data consists of 12 interviews with consumers. This method was chosen because it contributes to wide, descriptive, valid and reliable answers (Saunders et al. 2007, Patton 2002). Interviews are often a part of explorative studies because they make it possible for the interviewer to draw conclusions about connections between variables, and enable the interviewer to develop an understanding about the interviewees’ attitudes and values (Saunders et al. 2007, Patton 2002).

There are structured, semi-structured and open interviews (Saunders et al. 2007). In this study the semi-structured interview method was chosen to maximize the amount of collected data and to enable flexibility and adjustments (Saunders et al. 2007). In semi-structured interviews the interviewer bases the discussion on pre-planned themes and focus areas, but is not bound to specific questions or a precise order of questions (Patton 2002). Semi-structured interviews work well in this study because it allows the people being interviewed to speak freely, which maximizes the amount of information generated about the topic, gives room for discussion about unpredicted topics and enables follow-up questions.

Semi-structured interviews are often based on an interview guide that is planned in advance. The interview guide for this study is presented in paragraph 3.3.1.

3.2 Sample

The strategy for choosing the sample should be based on the aim of the study and the objective should be to choose a sample that is as appropriate and informative as possible (Patton 2002). The amount of informants is not relevant in qualitative studies. Instead, the focus should be on the quality and relevance of what the informants are saying (Patton
The aim of qualitative studies is to deeply study cases that give broad information and deep insight into the research topic (Patton 2002). In this study, twelve people were interviewed. Interviews were done until saturation, i.e. until no more information was received through new interviews.

The sample can either be randomly or deliberately chosen. In this study, the sample was semi-deliberately chosen. Two sampling prerequisites were used – age and social media activity. The first prerequisite (age) was that the sample should consist of 50% of people who are under thirty years old and 50% of people who are over 30 years old. This prerequisite was used to enable comparison between two age groups which have been introduced to social media at different ages. A hypothesis was made that people who were introduced to social media at an older age are less knowledgeable in using different social media channels than people who were introduced to it at a younger age. The other prerequisite, social media activity, was relevant for this study because the aim was to understand the value people get from information sharing, and today a large part of information sharing happens through social media channels. The people who do not at all see the value of social media sharing are simply not of interest or relevance for this study. The informants’ social media activity was pre-observed, and only informants that have profiles on at least two social media channels were chosen. Most of the people in the sample are in my personal network or reached through people in it.

The aim of the sample was to get a comprehensive view on how the two age groups, people under 30 and over 30 years old, feel about personal information sharing to be able to analyze the value information sharing brings to them. The sample was expected to increase the validity and reliability of the study since it contributes to general knowledge about the topic. The aim was to find general attitudes regarding personal information sharing in the age group and to find similarities and differences between these age groups. The sampling strategy contributes to an understanding of how people who are familiar with and use social media channels get value from information sharing. The study does not aim to explain what value people who are not familiar with and are not using social media channels get from personal information sharing.
### 3.2.1 The informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Interview location</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>12.9.2016 10.00-10.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>15.9.2016 13.00-13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Café</td>
<td>15.9.2016 10.00-10.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>18.9.2016 9.00-9.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>20.9.2016 13.00-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>21.9.2016 11.00-11.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>13.9.2016 7.00-7.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>15.9.2016 9.30-10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>17.9.2016 16.00-16.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Café</td>
<td>21.9.2016 18.30-19.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3  Data collection
The data collection was done through qualitative interviews and the data used is from primary sources, not secondary. The interview questions are based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2 and the objective was to answer the aim of the study, which is to define how consumers value personal information sharing. The interview guide is presented in paragraph 3.3.1.

3.3.1  The interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answers question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Firm initiated information</strong></td>
<td>Does the person consider firm initiated information sharing as information sharing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of situations when companies collect information?</td>
<td>Does the person regard transactions with organizations as data sharing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 Cookies and tracking technology</strong></td>
<td>Is the person aware of cookies and tracking technology, how does he/she feel about them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know what cookies or tracking technology are and do? (If the person does not know this is explained for them)</td>
<td>Is the person aware of cookies and tracking technology and how they function?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about organizations tracking your behavior online? Why do you feel that way?</td>
<td>Are cookies and tracking technology seen as something valuable and beneficial or as privacy intrusive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 Loyalty programs</strong></td>
<td>Is the person a part of loyalty programs? Why? What kind of value do loyalty programs bring to the individual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a part of loyalty programs offered by organizations?</td>
<td>Does the person have loyalty cards or is he/she a part of any loyalty programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are you a part of loyalty programs?</td>
<td>What kind of benefits do loyalty programs bring to the individual? What kind of value does the person receive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Questions related to personal information sharing</td>
<td>Does the person share information online? Why? With whom? What kind of value does the information sharing bring to the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you share personal information online?</td>
<td>What does the person consider is personal information? What kind of information does the person share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of information do you share?</td>
<td>What kind of value does the information sharing bring to the individual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you share information online?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of factors do you consider before sharing something online?</td>
<td>Does the person feel different about different types of content? (Data-sharing mindset)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your social media profiles open/closed?</td>
<td>Is the person conscious about who sees different types of information? Are different channels used for different purposes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use self-tracking technologies, if yes what do you track?</td>
<td>Does the person use self-tracking technologies? What kind of data does the person gather?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you use the information for?</td>
<td>What value does self-tracking bring to the individual?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you share the information with somebody or keep it private? Why?</td>
<td>Does the person regard the information as private? Does he/she receive value from sharing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data was collected during weeks 37 and 38 through 12 interviews. I met the interviewees in different locations such as cafes, their home, their office or my home, and the interviews lasted between 20 to 45 minutes. The interviewees were informed about the research topic in advance, but did not have access to the theory that the study is based on or the interview guide prior to the interview. The reason for this was that I wanted to avoid distorted, dishonest answers and maximize the reliability of the study. Each interview was recorded and transcribed right after the data analysis.

My role during the interviews varied from being actively leading to slightly leading, somewhat depending on the person being interviewed. By this I mean that some of the interviewees were very passive, and in those cases I asked questions in accordance to the interview guide, however not necessarily in the order they appear in it. In other interviews the interviewees took a more active role and spoke more broadly and responded the questions unknowingly. In these interviews my role was less dominating. Hence, the interview guide was more used as support and guideline. Some of the questions were reformatted and I asked follow up questions based on what the interviewees were saying, which supports the aim of the study to gain a deep insight into the topic.

3.4 Data analysis

The analysis of this study is based on two theories, one about the data-sharing mindsets of individuals and another about the value of information sharing, which both were presented in chapter 2. This is therefore an exploratory research (Saunders et al. 2007). The questionnaire and the interview questions are based on the theory and the empirical material is examined to explain causal relationships between variables (Saunders et al. 2007).

3.4.1 Data-sharing mindsets

The theory about data-sharing mindsets was mostly used for indication of where the informants of the study stand regarding data sharing. In this theory, people are grouped in four different categories depending on whether or not they have a high defensive or low
defensive attitude to information sharing, and whether or not they are happy to share personal information. Since a prerequisite for the sample was that all informants should be at least somewhat active on social media, all of the informants could be excluded from the “not happy to share”-categories (defenders and resigned). Due to the sampling strategy, all of the informants are happy to share their personal information and can be categorized in either the “savvy and in control”-category or “happy-go-lucky”-category.

In the interview guide the questions related to the informants’ data-sharing mindsets are: pre-question 1, part 1 “Are you aware of situations when companies collect information?”, part 1.1 questions “Do you know what cookies or tracking technology are and do?”, and “How do you feel about organizations tracking your behavior online? Why do you feel that way?”, and part 2 questions “Do you share personal information online? What kind of information do you share?”, “What type of factors do you consider before sharing something online?”, and “Are your social media profiles open/closed? Why?”.

To be able to categorize the informants in the two categories, the data from the questions above was analyzed. Informants who were categorized in the savvy and in control category gave answers indicating that they firstly are aware of situations where companies collect information and know how they do it. Secondly, they have an opinion about companies’ information collection, which indicates that they recognize that it is happening as well as have formed an opinion about it. Thirdly, their opinion affects their information sharing in the sense that they are strategic about it, and know what they want to share and what they do not want to share and on which social media channels.

Informants who were categorized in the happy go lucky category responded more vaguely to all of the questions mentioned above. They firstly, could not clearly define in what situations they think companies collect information or how they do it, and if they did, their response was not correct. Secondly, it was evident that either companies’ information collection or the usage of customers’ personal information does not affect their information sharing behavior or that they had not put thought to it. Thirdly, they gave responses that indicate that their information sharing is relatively spontaneous and not strategic. Lastly, they were not sure if their social media profiles are open or closed.
3.4.2 Analysis of the value of information sharing

The theory about value of information sharing consists of functional, social, emotional and economic value. In the interview guide the questions related to value of information sharing are: pre-questions 1 & 2, “What personal information do you share” and “Why do you share personal information”, part 1.1 related to cookies and tracking technology, “How do you feel about organizations tracking your behavior online? Why do you feel that way?”, part 1.2 related to loyalty programs, “Why are you a part of loyalty programs offered by organizations?”, part 2 related to personal information sharing, “Why do you share information online?” and part 3 related to self-tracking, “What do you use the information for?” and “Do you share the information with somebody or keep it private? Why?”.

The data from these questions was analyzed, and based on the theory about the four values categorized through categorization and comparison (Spiggle 1994). Categorization is practical in situations where the goal is to find patterns in collected data (Spiggle 1994). Categorization means that the interviewees’ responses are categorized based on the four values. In practice this means that different themes related to the four values were recognized in the data. These categories are presented and discussed in chapter 4.

3.5 Validity and reliability

Reliability means that the results of a study are the same if similar measurements are used (Wallendorf & Belk 1989). This means that the study is not affected by the researcher’s personal opinions, interests or thoughts. Validity is the extent to which a study measures what it was intended to measure (Saunders et al. 2007).

The aim of the study is presented in chapter 1.2 and by referring to accurate literature and studies I prove that the topic is current and that there is room for further research regarding people’s attitudes regarding personal information sharing and the value generated to them from it. The importance of having access to relevant customer information is described in the study, as well as the importance of understanding motives for customer information sharing, which both prove that the research questions is interesting and accurate.

Using a relevant theory increases the validity of the study. Two theories were used – one existing one and due to the fact that the topic of the study is relatively new the other theory that was used is a modified version of an existing theory. The theoretical framework consists of relevant, existing research related to value, customer information, and customer
information sharing, which are combined to a theory about the value of customer information sharing. In other words, this means that the theoretical framework is based on academic material and is constructed based on a large amount of relevant and accurate data.

The aim of the study is to gain a deep understanding of what value people receive from information sharing and hence, a qualitative research method is suitable. To catch both general attitudes towards information sharing and to gain deep insight into the topic, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method. The chosen data collection method is well motivated and fit the purpose of the study and hence, increase the validity of the study (Patton 2002). The method is based on the theoretical framework. A well planned interview guide also increases the validity of the study and therefore the questions and the structures are thought trough and relevant (Patton 2002). The interviews, the interview situations as well as my role during the interviews are also thoroughly described, and the reliability of the study is maximized by recording and transcribing the interviews (Wallendorf & Belk 1989).

The sample and sampling strategy have been described and motivated. Since the aim was to get broad insight into the value people get from personal information sharing and since a lot of information sharing is done online, a requirement for the informants was that they are technology savvy and somewhat active on social media. Other informants would not necessarily have contributed to as much data, as the ones chosen for the study.

The data analysis is presented in paragraph 3.4 and the results and the analysis of the results can be found in chapter 4. To avoid repetition, the results are presented and analyzed simultaneously. A lot of data and citations are presented in the result and analysis chapter to prove that the analysis is truthful and based on data, which increases the reliability of the study (Wallendorf & Belk 1989). The aim of the study has been answered through data analysis and the research gap has been filled. Even though the results are based on a somewhat small amount of people, they give insight into what kind of value personal information sharing brings to individuals and can function as indication. Further discussion related to this can be found in chapter 5.
4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The aim of this study is to identify what value personal information sharing brings to consumers. The data from the interviews has been analyzed by categorization and in the following chapters (4.1 – 4.2) the results are presented, the data-sharing mindsets of the informants, and different types of value that information sharing brings are analyzed. The general results and analysis of the value of information sharing are first presented and after that, value of firm controlled information sharing and personal information sharing are analyzed separately.

4.1 Analysis of the data-sharing mindsets of the consumers

Quint & Rogers (2015) distinguished between four different data sharing mindsets: “defenders”, “resigned”, “savvy and in control” and “happy go lucky”. The defenders are highly defensive and not happy to share their personal data, the resigned are low defensive and not happy to share, the savvy and in control are highly defensive and happy to share and lastly, the happy go lucky are low defensive and happy to share (Quint & Rogers 2015). One of the requirements when choosing informants for this study was that everybody should be relatively technology savvy and to some extent use social media. One of the main characteristics of social media is information sharing and therefore none of the twelve informants could be recognized to be defenders or resigned. Even though some informants are high defensive they still share personal information.

Majority of the informants (8/12 people) are savvy and in control over their personal data sharing. There is a clear difference between the different age groups – Five out of six of the younger age group and three out of six from the older age group are in this category. The difference between age groups may be because younger people have grown up with digital technologies whereas older people were introduced to those in an older age. Younger people are simply used to working around these different platforms where personal data is shared and older people are necessarily not.

The savvy and in control group of people know in which situations companies collect data and understand how it is collected. They for example talked about cookies and tracking technologies and clearly understood how these work, as well as understood that by taking part of loyalty programs or by having bonus cards they disclose personal information. They
also mentioned in one way or another that everything that is done online can be tracked with different technologies and that content that is shared is never completely private.

Distinctive for these informants is that they are very much in control over their data sharing: they are clear about what they share and what they keep private and behave in accordance to that. This means that their information sharing, whether it is on status updates, pictures, or content directed to companies or their own networks, is very thought trough. They also make clear distinctions between different media channels and their own behavior on these media channels i.e. understand that different types of things are shared on different social media. It also seems that people with the savvy and in control mindset to information sharing are more positively set towards information collection. They understand that companies need to collect information about their customers to be able to provide them with products and services that match their needs. A conclusion of the analysis of the savvy and in control is presented in table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savvy and in control (8/12 informants)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know in which situations companies collect data &amp; understand how it is collected</td>
<td>Understand cookies and tracking technologies</td>
<td>&quot;Well... companies collect information when you go on their websites, they use cookies for that and gather information about who has visited the website and do targeted marketing based on that information.&quot; (Informant 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand what activities are considered as information sharing</td>
<td>&quot;Yeah I am aware of situations when companies collect information... I notice that trough for example targeted marketing on Facebook or news sites that information about what I have done and shared is used.&quot; (Informant 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Companies collect information all the time... Online companies can track almost everything a person does. And in offline situations you can stay semi private if you use cash, but if you use a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In control of their data sharing</th>
<th>Clear about what is shared and what is kept private</th>
<th>“I am very clear about what I share and what I do not share... I only share information within my own personal limits regarding what I am comfortable with.” (Informant 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make distinctions between different media channels</td>
<td>“I share a lot but also have things that I do not want to share. I would for example never share my exact home address, social security number or things that could be used wrong. I am very strict with certain types of information.” (Informant 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively set towards information collection</td>
<td>Understand that companies need to collect information about their customers</td>
<td>“My information sharing depends a lot on the media and the context. What I share completely depends on the context.” (Informant 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make distinctions between different media channels</td>
<td>“I understand how the ecosystem works – if we want to consume free content online it means that it has to be financed somehow and that is done through ads. And for the ads to work well and to be relevant companies need to collect customer information.” (Informant 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand that companies need to collect information about their customers</td>
<td>&quot;I am a marketing person so I understand how marketing works and if the information is used for targeted marketing I see it more like a service.” (Informant 5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabell 1: Analysis of the informants with a savvy and in control mindset to information sharing
Four out of twelve informants can be put in the happy go lucky category. Three of these four people are from the older age group. People in this group are less aware of data collection technologies than people in the savvy and in control category, and when they were for example asked if they are aware of how organizations collect information about their customers they seemed uncertain or gave vague answers. They also did not seem that aware of what kind of activities actually can be seen as information sharing. One informant for example said that she has noticed that when she googles different things such as vacations or clothes the things she has googled start appearing on advertisements online, but had not put thought to why that happens. Another informant clearly did not think signing up on applications or using applications is personal information sharing.

All of the people in the happy go lucky category are happy to share personal information. They are active on social media, sharing pictures, content, comments, status updates etc. and use bonus or loyalty cards. This does not mean that they would share everything. Instead it means that they are not that worried about how their data is used or whether or not it is collected by different entities. They mostly base their decision to share information on how it is perceived by other people, or how it affects other people’s perception of their personal brand. The reason for this could be that they feel that the things they share are un-sensitive information – i.e. they do not mind if somebody sees it or collects it for different purposes. A conclusion of the analysis of the happy go lucky is presented in table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happy go lucky (4/12 informants)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not aware of data collection technologies</td>
<td>Does not completely understand how companies collect data or in what situations it is done</td>
<td>“Hmmm... Well I have noticed that some ads on Facebook are based on what I have been googling, but other than that... well. I do not know. I mean. I do not think about companies’ information collection that much.” (Informant 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not completely understand what activities can be considered information sharing</td>
<td>“I really do not think about companies’ information collection that much. I mean, I might notice some ads sometimes that appear on my Facebook page and think that wow this was relevant, but other than that I do not”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered about how the content they share is perceived by other people</td>
<td>Not sure if social media channels are open or closed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do think about what other people think about the information shared</td>
<td>“My Instagram is open... and I think my Facebook is closed. Or I do not even know? And Snapchat... I am not sure how that works – can anybody just follow you or?” (Informant 6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Well... I try not to share anything that is completely stupid (laughing). On Facebook I for example have so many friends so I try to give a good image about myself.” (Informant 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I have to admit that yes, I do think about what other people think about me before I post something.” (Informant 2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Tabell 2  Analysis of the consumers with a happy go lucky mindset to information sharing**

All informants are generally less defensive and happier to share personal information if companies are open about their information collection and the purpose of information collection. This means that people feel that information collection is acceptable if the companies inform about when and how it is done and what the information is used for. A conclusion of the analysis of the data-sharing mindsets of the individuals in this study is presented in figure 5 below.
4.2 Value of information sharing

Value is characterized by being highly subjective – what is experienced as valuable differs between individuals. Value is also contextual, which means that the same individual can experience different types of value in similar situations. No general rules or motives, that would apply for all individuals or in all situations, can therefore be defined. It can, however, be stated that in the context of information sharing, value is a result of a contemplation between the positive and negative aspects of it. If the positive aspects weigh more, the result is positive value and information is shared, and if the negative aspects are more dominating information is not shared. Motives for people's information sharing can be described through the four different values, and similarities both in age groups and amongst all of the informants can be found.

Common to all informants is that personal information sharing is often motivated by many of the different types of value (functional, social, emotional and economic). In other words, sharing a piece of personal information brings in many cases value in different forms to individuals. This is also why value formation in this context is complex.

The biggest difference between the younger and the older age group concerns the distinction between a career-self and a personal-self. People in the younger age group do not make big
distinctions in this respect on different media channels. Most of the young interviewees, for example, use their whole social media presence to support their personal image. They put a lot of thought on the content and the overall image, and their profiles are often public. They simply use all kinds of social media channels to build a personal brand and are not afraid to share their personality, activities or thoughts with anybody. One informant, for example, mentioned that she even considers which events on Facebook she shares she is interested in. She is happy to communicate her interest in events that support her personal brand and is hesitant to do so for events that do not.

People in the older age group, again, clearly see different media channels as personal or career oriented. They tend to see LinkedIn as their professional profile that is open, whereas other channels such as Facebook and/or Instagram are private. The content shared on these private channels is less thought through. One informant, for example, said that she quite randomly shares content on her Instagram without considering if the pictures are visually appealing, how the feed looks like or how the captions are formulated. This difference between age groups affects what kind of information people share and what value it brings to them.

The analysis of different types of value that information sharing brings to the informants is presented in a concluding figure on the next page (figure 4). The different values are described and analyzed in paragraphs 4.2.1-4.2.1. The analysis is based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter 2.
Figure 4  Different types of value from information sharing
4.2.1 Functional value of information sharing

Information sharing creates several different types of functional value for individuals. There are however, huge differences in what the informants perceive as functional value and what they do not. Based on the interviews, four different types of positive functional value could be recognized: differentiated service offerings, improved service offerings, enhanced self-knowledge and/or motivation, and beneficial collaboration. The last two could only be recognized in the younger age group. Also four different types of negative functional value could be found: privacy intrusion, irrelevant targeted marketing, irrelevant targeted suggestions and spamming.

Differentiated service offerings are either targeted marketing or targeted suggestions. Most informants noticed that ads and emails from different companies have at some point been targeted exclusively for them based on their browsing history. Targeted suggestions again, were noticed on for example Netflix or newspaper webpages – on both sites people got suggestions that were based on what they had previously watched or read. People have differing attitudes towards this kind of marketing and suggestions.

The informants with positive attitudes towards differentiated service offerings find it valuable that instead of having to look for alternatives that suit their needs, they automatically get suggestions. In other words, this means that in most cases the informants think the information collection is acceptable if the targeted marketing and offers are relevant for them. Some informants have for example realized that they need something when they have seen an ad targeted for them. Informant 8 pointed out that clothing store ads on Facebook have often led to a purchase for him.

On Netflix and newspaper sites informants also value getting suggestions on movies, television shows or articles that might interest them. Informant 7, for example, says that he enjoys reading articles and news on pages that optimize their first page according to his prior reading preferences. Instead of having to look through all of the new articles on the page every day he can just go to the first page and see everything he is likely to be interested in.

Interestingly, many of the informants who find differentiated service offerings valuable, clearly understand and approve the economic logic behind targeted marketing: online content offered for free has to be financed somehow, and selling advertising space is a way for companies to do that. By tracking peoples browsing behavior, companies can find the
audiences most likely to be interested in their products or services and thus get the best return for their marketing efforts. One informant also points out that since so much data is created all the time, personal data in a way becomes more anonymous.

While many of the informants view differentiated service offerings positively, some feel that they are an intrusion on privacy and therefore not valuable. These informants are uncomfortable about being tracked online and get very annoyed when they notice that this has happened. Some of the informants also feel that the differentiated offerings they receive, such as targeted marketing and targeted suggestions, are irrelevant most of the time. Two informants, for example, mentioned that they started to see ads and get offerings on baby related products when they turned 26, which did not suit their life situation at all.

Another factor that affects the experienced value of targeted marketing and targeted offers is approaching frequency. What an acceptable frequency is, is individual, but many informants say that “spamming” i.e. sending several advertising e-mails or messages make them angry. Informant 8 for example talks about e-mail product offerings and say that every now and then they are ok, but if they are received several times a day or very often they are annoying. There does not seem to be one frequency that would be accepted by all informants, but the joint opinion seems to be that too rarely is better than too often.

For the majority of the informants, the value of differentiated service offerings depends on the situation. Relevant offerings are perceived positively while irrelevant or excessive ones have the opposite effect. One informant, for example, tells about a time he was looking for hotels for a trip abroad. During his search he found the advertising very relevant, but got annoyed when companies kept pushing him hotel offers several weeks after the trip.

By providing companies with information about oneself and one’s opinions and experiences on the company’s products or services, consumers can help companies improve their service offerings. The better companies know their customers’ wishes and needs, the better they can design their products and services in accordance to them. This also applies to customer experiences – if customers share their thoughts on the products or services of a company, the company can modify its offerings in accordance and by doing so create more value for customers. Informant 7 says that he is happy to provide companies with feedback to help them perform better. He sees that it is after all the customers who benefit if companies understand them better.
Self-tracking applications are used to track for example exercises, daily steps, sleep and internet usage in order to enhance the users’ self-knowledge and/or motivation. People sign up on these applications by giving out different types of personal information and permitting the application owners to get their tracked data. In return they get value by increased self-knowledge or motivation. Several informants pointed out that keeping track of their daily step count, they got motivated to walk more and take the stairs instead of an elevator or escalator. Exercise tracking apps are also used as motivation for gradually increasing the amount or intensity of training sessions. One informant uses a sleep tracking application from time to time to become more aware of his sleep. The results do not necessarily affect his behavior in any way. He simply likes to know what has been going on during his sleep. As pointed out earlier only young informants look to enhance their self-knowledge and/or motivation through applications. When informants in the older age group were asked about this, everybody pointed out that they do not have a need to engage in self-tracking activities.

One informant is active in gaming and shares a lot of personal information to get to know the people he is playing with better. In many games, a group of people perform better if they know each other and collaborate instead of playing as individuals. The value of personal information sharing in gaming is, therefore, to benefit by improved collaboration between individuals.

In table 3 below functional value is concluded, described and exemplified through citations from informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differentiated service offerings</strong></td>
<td>Targeted marketing</td>
<td>“I think it is nice if the marketing on for example Facebook is relevant and it is actually very likely that I buy something if the ad displays something that I actually need.” (Informant 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I think it is a service for people that companies are able to target their marketing according to their needs... and then it is also not annoying.” (Informant 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Targeted suggestions</strong></td>
<td>“Business Insider, that I actively read, adapts their first page based on my interests and I love it! I have ten articles daily on the front page that match my interests. So instead of having to look for articles that I am interested in on their page, I get suggestions on the front page.” (Informant 7)</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved service offerings</strong></td>
<td>Products that suit the customer’s needs better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>“I understand that feedback helps companies. Companies can not know how to do better if they do not get feedback so if something went wrong or well and if giving feedback is easy, I usually do it – it is the only way to get better products and services.” (Informant 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services that suit the customer’s needs better</td>
<td>“I do not share that much negative information online but if I do it has to do with for example bad service- or product experiences. Sharing them on social media are a way to inform other people, and also a way to let the companies know that they have to change something.” (Informant 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhanced self-knowledge and/or motivation</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge about exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about nutrition and calories</td>
<td>“I use Fitbit to follow how many times I exercise every week and sometimes if I have eaten unhealthy for a longer time I might track how much I eat and how many calories I burn every day.” (Informant 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about steps</td>
<td>“I use Apple Health to check how many steps I have taken every day.” (Informant 12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about sleep</td>
<td>“On top of steps and exercises I follow my sleep and internet usage because I think it is interesting to know.” (Informant 3)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge about internet usage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beneficial collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Gaming: improved performance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| --- | “In gaming you often come further and are more successful if you collaborate with other people who play the game. This also requires a lot of communication and getting to know one another. So an example would be a group of people with the same goal... to reach the goal there has to be
synergy between the people. And that also means that a lot of time is spent on talking and on getting to know each other.” (Informant 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated service offerings</td>
<td>Privacy intrusion</td>
<td>“I think they (targeted marketing) are a 100 % annoying and creepy. I do not benefit from them in any way, quite the opposite actually – they make me so angry. It annoys me that they invade all parts of my online behavior and my reaction is that leave me alone!” (Informant 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irrelevant targeted marketing</td>
<td>“I do not know what it is but after I turned 26 I started getting so much baby related targeted marketing, and they really are not accurate for me so they are kind of annoying.” (Informant 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irrelevant targeted suggestions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spamming</td>
<td>“I think it is ok to get e-mails from companies with relevant offers or something but some companies send them several times a day, which is just too much.” (Informant 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabell 3  Functional value analysis

4.2.2 Social value of information sharing

By sharing personal information especially online, people create positive social associations amongst other people and get relational benefits, which both can be seen as social value. Based on the interviews, positive social value can be further categorized in four different types in both of the surveyed age groups: relational benefits, value from communication,
personal branding and career related benefits, and negative social value can be categorized in: negative social associations and privacy threat.

Personal information sharing on social media platforms and in communities is a way for people to get relational benefits. Two different types of relational benefits could be recognized through the interviews – common identity attachment and common bond attachment. By sharing personal information and interacting with others in networks or communities that share the same ideas or goals, people get a sense of belonging. This feeling of connectedness (common identity attachment) creates value for them. Informant 7, for example, says that he is a part of a community on Facebook that is solely focused on a game he plays. In this community everybody shares the goal to advance in the game and interactions are mostly related to the game. Common bond attachment means that relationships are built between individual members of a community or group, and these relationships bring value to the individual. Informant 2 explained that going through a rare disease he got a lot of help from a Facebook group of people suffering from the same disease. Over time he built a strong relationship with one of the members who is very similar to him.

Social networking sites are to a broad extent used for communication. People interact with their networks, share pictures from trips and about special events, and write status updates on things they want their networks to know about. Informants 9, 8 and 1, all point out that since they have broad networks, sharing life events publicly is an easy way to keep everybody updated on what is going on in their lives. This communication goes both ways – people share information with their networks as well as follow what their networks are doing. Informant 11 says that it is impossible to personally keep in touch with everybody, and that social media channels are a great tool to stay updated on what is going on.

On social media sites people also communicate and share their problems or concerns to get help or insight from others. In these cases, the value is created from the others’ input. Informants 7 and 8, for example, mentioned that they got a lot of help from Facebook groups when they were moving to a new city abroad and had to find an apartment, and needed tips on different things that are good to know in the cities.

Controlling how other people perceive oneself i.e. personal branding is strongly connected to personal information sharing. People consider carefully what information they share in order to create favorable impressions in other people’s minds. It seems that social media
channels have become the platform for expressing the so-called dream self. Informants 10 and 12 said that they have put a lot of thought to what they share in social media in order to communicate certain qualities or interests. Everything that is shared, in form of pictures, comments, articles, status updates or likes, supports the chosen image. Value is created when others perceive this communication in the desired way. Another clear phenomena is that the overwhelming majority of shared information is positive. All of the informants pointed out that they try to keep their content positive because they feel that nobody wants to share one’s problems or bad feelings. People get value from believing that others perceive their lives nice and exciting.

Personal branding is also done through self-expression. Different social media channels are used to communicate verbal and/or visual skills. Informant 11 says that her Instagram account is a well thought through portfolio of pictures that show who she is, with well-written captions to show her writing skills, which together form a visually appealing overall impression. Another type of self-expression is shared articles and videos. Many of the informants put a lot of thought to what kind of articles or other content they share, and make sure that this content supports their personal brand. They also get social value from creating discussions around topics that interest them.

Many informants mentioned that they try to avoid sharing information that create negative social associations. They however, mentioned that it happens sometimes. Informant 8 for example mentioned that he has sometimes shares party pictures, which he later regrets and deletes to avoid giving other people undesired impressions. Also informant 9 mentions that she avoids sharing anything embarrassing because according to her, it will backfire.

Social value is also created through sharing personal information to create career benefits. Sharing a professional background on LinkedIn is a way to communicate experience and skills that support a professional image and make it public to enable companies and headhunters to find it. One informant said that after optimizing her LinkedIn page, she got contacted by three headhunters for potential jobs. Career benefits are also created through participation on discussions related to certain topics that communicate one’s expertise. This is also a way to stay updated on things that are happening in different fields. Informant 1 for example, says that she actively follows different groups related to her profession on LinkedIn, to stay updated on the latest news, trends and best practices.
Some informants mentioned that privacy concerns are a possible downside of sharing a lot of personal information online. Informant 12 for example has been forced to restrict her personal information sharing by making her profiles private, due to an individual who threatened her. The informants are aware of the fact that their information can be used wrong and keep that in mind when they share personal information. Informant 9 also brought up that she would for example never share her home address publicly, because she heard of a case where a couple had done that and later shared that they going on a trip. When they got back their apartment was emptied.

In table 4 below social value is concluded, described and exemplified through citations form informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive value</td>
<td>Commons identity attachment</td>
<td>&quot;I am part of a Pokemon Go community on Facebook, where people share information about the game to do better in the game. So I follow the discussions there, take in information and participate in discussions.&quot; (Informant 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational benefits</td>
<td>Commons bond attachment</td>
<td>&quot;I went through a difficult disease and then I found a group on Facebook where people from all over the world who has the disease were gathered. It felt so nice to talk to people who went through the same thing as I did, and I got a lot of information and support from the group and also became friends with a woman from the group. We still stay in touch – it was and is amazing to talk to somebody who basically has been through all the same things as I have.&quot; (Informant 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value from communication</td>
<td>Keeping personal networks updated on life events</td>
<td>&quot;Facebook is a great channel to spread news to everybody you know, like your whole network at once. (Informant 9)&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping updated on what people in one's network are doing</td>
<td>&quot;I have lived in so many different countries that my network is pretty broad. Therefore, I usually follow what is going on with people and share my big life events on Facebook. This is a good way to keep posted about other people's lives, as well as to keep them up to date about my life without talking to everybody. It would be impossible to talk to everybody.&quot; (Informant 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I think it is nice to follow what people in my network are up to, some people share so much!&quot; (Informant 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get help or insight from others</td>
<td>&quot;When I moved to Germany I joined a Finns in Germany community on Facebook and got a lot of help from there for my apartment hunt and also got information about what is going on in the city.&quot; (Informant 7)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal branding</td>
<td>Creating favorable impressions in other people's minds</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I put a lot of thought to what I share on social media. I have clearly thought of what I want to communicate but I also try to avoid coming across too &quot;collected&quot; – I want to show my personality too. I do not want my social medias to look like they are from a magazine or something.&quot; (Informant 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressing a dream self</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;It is always cool to build an image of oneself that life is going well. All of us do it, we share nice things, and keep bad days and bad experiences private. It is what people want to see and read about. Informant 9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-expression: to communicate verbal and/or visual skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I want people to think that my social media profiles are thought trough and that I have visual eye – it helps my career. Captions are also a way for me to show that I am good at writing.&quot; (Informant 11)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating discussions on topics of interest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;If I share something societal it is always related to something that is important for me and I do it because I enjoy creating discussions around these topics.&quot; (Informant 11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career related benefits</td>
<td>Communicate experience, skills and expertise</td>
<td>&quot;When I share or write something on Twitter I do it to communicate my expertise and what type of things I am currently working with. I also share content that I am proud of.&quot; (Informant 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headhunters</td>
<td>&quot;After I updated my LinkedIn profile with more information I got contacted by three headhunters for job opportunities&quot; (Informant 9)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping updated on things that are happening in different fields</td>
<td>&quot;I am on LinkedIn to show my career history and also to keep updated. In my field the legislation and requirements change, so it is good to follow what people think about and how different people work with these changes.&quot; (Informant 1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative social associations</td>
<td>Information does not support image</td>
<td>&quot;Sometimes when I am out partying I share pictures that I later regret. I do not want to show for example possible employees that I am a crazy party person so I sometimes delete the pictures afterwards.” (Informant 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“You really do not want to share anything embarrassing, it will backfire fore sure.” (Informant 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy threat</td>
<td>Information is used wrong</td>
<td>&quot;I have a crazy ex-boyfriend so I had to make all my social media profiles private and erase him from my friends – you never know what he would do if he for example knew where I was or something.” (Informant 12)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I heard about a case where a couple had posted their exact home location on Instagram and on that same channel they later posted that they were abroad on vacation. When they got back home their house was emptied. That is why I do not share my home address or anything highly personal on my social media profiles.” (Informant 9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabell 4  Social value analysis
4.2.3 Emotional value of information sharing

A large part of the information sharing people engage in is motivated by the emotional value it evokes. The positive emotional value of information sharing mentioned by the informants can be classified in four categories: identity enhancement, entertainment, storage of personal history, and helping others. No radical differences could be recognized between the two age groups. A larger part of the interviewees in the younger age group, however, share information or content to entertain themselves. The negative emotional value is disfavored reactions.

Information is shared on different channels and in different ways to enhance one’s identity. There are many ways of doing this but the common motivator for sharing is to create a feeling of satisfaction of oneself and one’s performance. Many of the interviewees, for example, use applications to track their sports performances without sharing the data with anybody else than the companies that own the applications. They simply get emotional value from reaching their own targets or doing better than before. All of the informants who track their sports performances, however, felt that sharing this information with their networks or publicly would feel like bragging and the information is therefore kept private.

Another identity enhancing factor is getting more followers or likes on shared content. New followers or likes are seen as a confirmation that people appreciate the content. Other people’s reactions are, however, not necessarily required identity enhancement. One informant, for example, mentioned that while she in reality is a workaholic, she likes to communicate her dedication to her family by sharing pictures of her spending time with her children. In this case, just making her family-orientation public creates value for her even if she does not get many likes or followers.

In some cases, information sharing gives concrete benefits that help enhance one’s identity. One informant is a member of a hairdressing salon that works on first come first serve bases. By being a member, the informant gets an appointment before the non-members regardless of who was there first. The informant gets a feeling of satisfaction every time he passes the line.

Personal information or content is often shared because it is entertaining. Fun pictures, videos, and articles are shared with others to evoke feelings of amusement and happiness or simply as a pastime. All of the informants, both in the younger and older age groups, who
use Snapchat use it with the sole purpose of entertainment. They share pictures or videos with their followers, use funny filters, and have fun with the application. Fun content is generally shared also on Facebook. This kind of activity could, however, only be recognized amongst the younger age group. Sharing interesting articles or other content to initiate discussion is also a way to create entertainment value. One informant says she likes to share articles or news related to her interests to create discussion in her network. She enjoys sharing her own thoughts and hearing other people’s opinions on the topics.

In some situations, pictures are shared on different social media channels to store personal history. The pictures are shared for others to see but also as memories, happy or sad, to go back to in order to remember events, situations, moments etc. Informant 3 sees her Instagram as a personal blog where she can go back in time to remember life events.

Helping others by sharing information is also a way to generate emotional value. Personal experiences with companies, brands, and products are shared on public places for everyone to see. The motivation to share comes from a feeling of being important and helpful – good experiences and products are written about to help others make good choices and information on bad experiences and products are shared to help others avoid them. Informant 10 says that he likes to share his restaurant or hotel experiences on pages such as TripAdvisor or Yelp to help others make good choices. He also points out that he always looks up restaurants and hotels on these pages prior to a booking or visit.

Experiences are not only shared for other consumers to see. Many informants understand that negative feedback or improvement suggestions help companies perform better, and that positive feedback is always nice. Providing companies with this information evokes feelings of being important and helpful.

There seems to be a difference on self-initiated sharing and giving information when companies request it. Self-initiated sharing is often motivated by an extreme experience – extremely good or extremely bad – that people want to inform others about. Informant 9, for example, says that she rarely writes reviews but when she does, it is either because an experience has been very good or very bad. The probability of sharing information on the initiative of companies, on the other hand, depends on how easy it is to do it. According to the informants, long questionnaires that take a lot of time and effort are often passed, whereas a simple “how was your experience today?” is more likely to get replies. The motive
behind both types of information sharing is to get emotional value by helping other people or companies. When the sharing is self-initiated people are, however, clearly willing to make a bigger effort than when it is company-initiated.

Sharing experiences and helping others appear also in contexts other than reviews and feedback. Many of the informants participate in different online communities and share personal information in them to help others. Informant 8 is part of a community called Finns in New York. He sometimes answers other people's questions related to something she has been through before. Being able to help others by doing this makes him feel good.

Negative emotional value comes from disfavored reactions from other people. A picture or a status update might not get as much likes or comments as a person might wish, or content that was intended to be funny may not be perceived as funny. Informant 10 mentioned that she sometimes deletes pictures that do not get the kind of attention she wished for. Also informant 7 points out that sometimes content he shares is that is intended to be funny, instead gets negative reactions from his network, which he feels slightly embarrassed about.

In table 5 below emotional value is concluded, described and exemplified through citations from informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Create a feeling of satisfaction of oneself and one's performance</td>
<td>&quot;I like to follow my sports performances to see how I have done – it is nice to see improvements.&quot; (Informant 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting more followers or likes on shared content</td>
<td>&quot;I just like getting more followers or likes... it gives confirmation of that the things I share are enjoyed by other people.” (Informant 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing content that enhances a preferred trait</td>
<td>&quot;I am a workaholic and therefore I like to share content that shows that I am also family-oriented so that people do not think that I only work.” (Informant 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benefits that enhance one's identity</td>
<td>&quot;I am a member of a hairdresser salon and therefore I always get service before the non-members. Passing the line makes me feel...&quot; (Informant 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Entertainment** | Sharing pictures and videos | "I like the filters on Snapchat. I only use the application to take pictures with the filters – they are so funny." (Informant 2)  
"Most of the things I share are a 100% humor based, playing around with friends and funny jokes, articles or videos.” (Informant 7) |
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating discussion</td>
<td>&quot;[...] I enjoy creating discussions around these topics.” (Informant 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Storage of personal history** | Sharing on social media channels to remember memories | "I share something on Instagram almost daily because I sort of see it as a diary... if there is something I want to remember I post it on Instagram.” (Informant 3)  
"I like to go back on my social media profiles to see what I have been doing and to remember fun moments.” (Informant 9) |
| **Helping others** | Sharing experiences and tips on communities | "I recently moved to New York and got a lot of help from the Facebook community Finns in New York. Now that I have been living here for a while I also like to help other people in the community with things they are wondering about or need advice to.” (Informant 8) |
| | Sharing experiences with products and services | "When I had a blog I used to rate restaurants and products. I think I did it because I always go to Yelp or similar places when I need to find a restaurant or something and find it very helpful.” (Informant 10) |
| **Negative value** | **Description** | **Citation from informant** |
| **Disfavored reactions** | Less engagement than wished for | "If a picture I post do not get a lot of likes it is kind of an indication of that my followers..." |
Content is perceived in the wrong way

| did not like the picture and in those cases I often delete the picture.” (Informant 10) |
| “A lot of the things I share are intended to be funny. Sometimes, however, people perceive the shared content wrong and for example get offended. It is a little embarrassing.” (Informant 7) |

**Tabell 5  Emotional value analysis**

### 4.2.4 Economic value of information sharing

Sharing personal information is a way for people to create economic value for themselves. Based on the interviews, two different types of positive economic value could be recognized in both of the age groups: offers and product/service related. In addition to these economic values, 4 out of 6 people in the younger age group mentioned making money on social media profiles as a motivation for sharing personal information. The negative economic value types are also related to offers.

People get economic value by being a part of bonus and loyalty programs where they exchange their personal information towards offers. Information sharing is a prerequisite for becoming a member of a loyalty program. At the point of signing up they require at least name, address, e-mail address and phone number, often also employment information. Additionally, many of them track the members’ purchase behavior. As benefits, loyalty programs offer discounts, cash-backs, coupons, and point systems. Informants 5 and 1 say that they have loyalty cards to grocery stores to get discounts on different products. Informant 7 and 9, again, mention that they have membership cards to hairdressers, which gives them a discount on every visit. Other contexts in which informants mention having received value from loyalty programs are in clothing stores, book stores, restaurants, and airlines.

Generally speaking, the value of offers is highly individual. Offers that are valuable for someone, might be irrelevant for another person. Some informants mention that they
actively use bonus cards to get discounts and to gather points, whereas others think saving a few euros is not relevant for them and therefore find offers irrelevant.

Being loyal to one company in a certain branch is popular amongst the informants. This means that instead of having loyalty/bonus cards to all companies that offer them, it is more common to focus on a few companies. Informant 9 mentions that she has chosen one airline to be a frequent flyer at. By using that airline often, she has been upgraded to a silver member and is entitled to discounts on flights and upgrades to more comfortable classes in flights. Informant 4 focuses all her grocery shopping to one chain to maximize her point collection at that store. The informants feel they get more value if they stick to specific companies instead of having loyalty/bonus cards to several ones.

Interestingly, one informant said that she has several loyalty cards in the same branches, but is not actually that interested in the offers she is entitled to. She knowingly provides companies with information about her purchases but does not require anything in return. She mentions, however, that she gets very happy every time she goes to a specific store and is informed that due to her loyalty and continued shopping at that store she gets a discount on her purchase.

Most of the informants seem to value discounts, cash-backs and point systems higher than coupons. Informant 4 for example mentions that she gets coupons in the mail but that she does not have the time or the energy to go through the coupons. In other words, offers that are easy to use are more attractive than offers that are difficult to use. Some informants also mention that it feels easier if being a member of a loyalty/bonus program does not require a card but that instead, the purchases are registered under their account automatically through their credit card or electronically.

It can be pointed out that amongst the younger age group, direct offers are valued higher than offers that are received at a later point of time. Informant 11, for example, mentions that she usually signs up for loyalty programs at stores that offer instant discounts and says that it is annoying to wait for the “reward”. Informant 7 points out that he signed out of a loyalty program because he felt that it took ages before he could get any value of it. Informants in the older age group seemed to be more patient. Informant 4, for example, points out that she has a large family and by buying all of their groceries at one store whose loyalty card she has, they get a lot of money back every year.
Product/service related economic value means products or services that are received in return for personal information sharing. This type of economic value is also strongly related to being a member of bonus or loyalty programs. Informant 9 mentions that by being loyal to an airline she gets offers on free flights, access to a lounges, and she is always amongst the first to get her luggage. In exchange for being a loyal customer her traveling gets more comfortable. Another example is an informant who books her hotels through a website and by doing that she gets every 10th night free of charge.

The majority of the people in the younger age group share content on social media in order to get more followers to be able to capitalize on their social media. This motive for information sharing was only mentioned by the people in the younger age group. Having a certain amount of followers enables them to collaborate with companies, gives them the opportunity to sell ad-space and gets companies to send them sample products. Informant 10 says that his ultimate goal is to develop with her Instagram page so that he can make money on it. Also informant 11 mentions that she wants her Instagram to showcase her talent and personality in order to attract companies to collaborate. Therefore, personal pictures are shared almost daily with the goal of making money on the profiles. It has to be pointed out, though, that this result most likely do not apply for young people in general. The informants interviewed for this study are particularly active social media users and many of them work in the field of marketing and social media and therefore, this result can be slightly misleading.

In table 6 below economic value is concluded, described and exemplified through citations form informants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic value</th>
<th>Positive value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Citation from informant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offers</td>
<td>Discounts</td>
<td>&quot;I have bonus and loyalty cards because I get discounts when I use them, so in the end I save money.&quot; (Informant 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cash-backs</td>
<td>&quot;With the expenses my family have at grocery stores etc. I get a significant amount of money back every year by using a loyalty card and by focusing my shopping to one chain within a branch.&quot; (Informant 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Point systems</td>
<td>&quot;The only reason for me to have bonus or loyalty cards is that I get economic benefits – the more points I gather the more discounts I get.&quot; (Informant 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Product/service related</strong></td>
<td><strong>Free products</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I am mostly using SAS when I travel and quickly got upgraded to a silver member. Now I get offers on free flights, lounge access and I am always amongst the first to get my luggage.” (Informant 9)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Free services</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;I think the nicest offers are for example lounge access or something that makes your life more comfortable.” (Informant 12)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Increased comfort</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capitalizing on social media profiles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborations with companies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;My ultimate goal is to make money on my social media. I share pictures and try to build a community around my personal brand to get collaborations with companies and to be able to sell ad-space. [...] I have already received some free products thanks to my blog and Instagram but my goal is to benefit even more.” (Informant 10)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Selling ad-space</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Social media has developed to a channel through which I develop my personal brand. I use it to showcase my talent and personality and my goal with it is to be able to profit from it economically at some point.” (Informant 11)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Free sample products</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negative value</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>Citation from informant</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offers</strong></td>
<td>Irrelevant offers</td>
<td>“I get the most irrelevant coupons from K-ketju. They are worth like a few euros and they send them in envelopes that I never open.” (Informant 2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offers that are difficult to use</td>
<td>“I am usually motivated to sign up for bonus programs if I get an instant reward from signing up rather than gathering points for a million years and then get some scarf as a reward.” (Informant 11)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| | Delayed reward | “I had a pins card but I ended it after two weeks after looking through their bonus system. I
noticed that I had to buy for like 100 000 euros to get a non-automatic razor machine so I kind of los interest.” (Informant 7)

Tabell 6  Economic value analysis

4.3 Conclusions of the results and analysis

In this part the chapter is finished by a summary of the most important results. The chapter began with an analysis of the data-sharing mindsets of the informants. Thereafter different types of value that personal information sharing bring to individuals were presented an analyzed based on the theoretical framework.

Most of the informants in this study have a savvy and in control mindset towards information sharing. This result is partially affected by the sampling strategy – the goal was to have informants that are relatively technology savvy and use social media. A difference between the younger and older age group could however be found. Most of the informants in the younger age group are savvy and in control whereas half of the people in the older age group could be categorized in this group. No clear explanation for this difference could be found in the theory, but one explanation could be that young people have grown up with digital technologies and older people have not. Therefore, young people are more used to using digital technologies and therefore also understand how to behave, what kind of information to share or not to share on these channels, as well as are aware of how companies collect information.

In the value analysis the positive values are more dominating than the negative values – more different types of positive values were mentioned and the informants also talked about and described these more than negative values of or sides to data sharing. The reason for this is that the informants chosen for this study are happy to share their personal data and therefore, positive aspects of information sharing weigh more for them in most situations than negative aspects.

The informants experienced both positive and negative functional value from sharing information. Positive functional values could be categorized in differentiated service
offerings, improved service offerings, enhanced self-knowledge and/or motivation, and beneficial collaboration. The negative functional value types are privacy intrusion, irrelevant targeted marketing, irrelevant targeted suggestions and spamming. For the informants the main weigh over regarding functional value, seems to be between getting customized service offerings and marketing and companies’ usage of personal customer information. Most informants find targeted marketing and targeted offers valuable if they are relevant, but in some cases feel that information collection is intrusion on privacy. Companies, however, can not approach their customers with targeted service offerings if they do not collect customer information.

Positive social value could be categorized in relational benefits, value from communication, personal branding and career related benefits. Only one negative social value could be recognized: negative social associations. Social value has a lot to do with how other people perceive the information that is shared. In most cases positive social value is experienced if the piece of information that is shared is perceived the intended way, and negative social value is experienced if it is not. Storage of personal history and helping others are, however, independent from other peoples’ perceptions.

Positive emotional value was more dominating than negative emotional value. Different types of positive emotional value that were found are identity enhancement, entertainment, storage of personal history, and helping others, whereas only one negative emotional value could be recognized – disfavored reactions. Alike social value, also emotional value highly depends on other people’s perceptions of the shared information. In other words, this means that in many situations social value depends on other people and can not be experienced without the existence of or communication with other people.

Regarding economic value offers could bring both positive and negative value to the informants. Another positive value is product/service related. What offers are experienced as valuable highly depends on the individual – offers that are valued by someone are unnecessary for another one. Generally speaking, offers or economic benefits are of higher value if they are instant and easy to use instead of being delayed and difficult to use. Some informants did not mind waiting for their economic rewards, but the majority preferred instant economic benefits.
In almost all situations different types of value motivate information sharing – information sharing was rarely motivated by solely one type of value. No values are seemingly more motivating than others either, which can be explained by the fact that value is contextual – what is perceived as valuable depends on the person and the situation. An important notice is however that people in the young age group use different channels of sharing information in a more versatile way than people in the older age group. Most of the young people create different types of value for themselves by sharing their personal information in a highly thought out way on several channels and platforms. People in the older age group are often are less calculative, more spontaneous, and therefore primarily do not seek to maximize their value creation.

An interesting finding is that people who understand why and how companies collect information about their customers (people in the savvy and in control group) often have positive attitudes towards it. They understand that companies have to know their customers in order to perform well and in order to provide them with valuable offerings. They also understand and approve the economic logic behind targeted marketing. People who are less aware of the importance of information in companies often feel that information collection activities are intrusions on privacy and uncomfortable. They get annoyed at differentiated offerings and/or advertisements instead of experiencing them as valuable. All informants however, point out that companies should be open and honest about their information collection and not try to do it in secrecy.

A big difference between the younger and older age group is also that people in the younger age group do not make big distinctions between their career-self and personal-self on different media channels whereas older people do. This is strongly linked to the previous paragraph – younger people use different kinds of channels for information sharing to build up their career image and get value from it. Older people, again, are stricter and highlight their professional skills on specific channels that are public, and behave in a more spontaneous way on other channels. In a sense, older people do not use all opportunities for value creation and younger people do.
5 DISCUSSION

Companies are collecting more customer data than ever before and using it to approach their customers with personalized marketing and offerings. Customers are noticing this and in turn, restrict their data-sharing due to privacy issues or because they feel that they are not getting anything in return for their personal data. Since an increasing amount of companies are collecting and using customer data in their processes, it has become more important for companies’ competitiveness to have access to relevant, personal customer information. Companies need to understand why customers share their personal information to be able to support this information sharing as much as possible. The aim of this study was to define and analyze consumers’ experienced value of information sharing.

The biggest theoretical contribution that is made with this study is that it connects value with information sharing, which has not been previously done. Customer value has been studied broadly, mostly however in product purchase situations. This study shows that customer information sharing is driven by value, and further identifies four categories of value – functional, social, emotional, and economic – that people get from information sharing. Within these categories different kinds of positive and negative value are identified to further define the categories.

This study increases the understanding of how customers evaluate information sharing situations, i.e. highlights the factors that affect their information sharing activities. The informants chosen to this study are positively set towards information sharing and therefore, many of them find that information sharing in many situations brings more positive value than negative value. By sharing information consumers help companies offer them more relevant products and services, get value from reciprocal communication with other consumers, or simply create value for themselves.

By understanding how consumers look at information sharing and by knowing how value is created for them, companies can support these value creation processes – solve possible privacy issues, educate people about information collection and usage, and get an understanding of the underlying motives that drive people to share certain kinds of information on certain channels. In the end, this is beneficial for both the consumer and the company. Companies can maximize their information collection without making the customers feel uncomfortable or used, and in turn customers get more relevant, targeted,
valuable offerings. The final theoretical framework, that concludes the different kinds of experienced value consumers get from information sharing, is presented in figure 5 below.

![Diagram showing the final theoretical framework](image)

**Figure 5** Conclusion of the value of information sharing
5.1 Managerial implications

This study fills the existing gap between companies’ increasing need of relevant and personal customer information, and customers’ restricting their information sharing. Different types of value that people get from information sharing were presented. In other words, this means that this study explains why consumers share different types of information both online and offline. For companies this information is highly relevant because an understanding of customers’ experienced value of information sharing enables them to find ways in which they can support it and hence, get access to more information that is relevant for them. In the long run this positively affects their competitiveness.

Generally speaking, consumers support transparency in information collection and usage. Central for companies is to understand that honesty is key – most people are happy to share their personal information and accept the collection and usage of it if they are informed about it. Companies need to work on their communication about information retrieval and usage to make people more comfortable in information sharing. This is also related to the finding that people who know about and understand how and why companies collect information, have more positive attitudes towards it. For companies this means that they not only have to inform people about how and why they collect information, but that it is also strategically smart for them to educate people about it to make them more positively set towards it.

The results show that people accept customer information usage, if it is used by organizations to create relevant offers or marketing communication. Irrelevant or excessive offers and marketing communication annoys consumers. This finding highlights the importance of treating customers as individuals and really using resources to find ways in which communication can be individualized. Companies also always have to keep in mind that quality is more important than quantity when they approach customers.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

This study is relatively focused and based on 12 interviews, due to limited resources. The same study could be conducted on a larger group of people, i.e. more people in each of the age groups. Another alternative could be to conduct a study on more and larger age groups to find similarities and differences within age groups and in between age groups. People could also be grouped based on other factors than age – for example people from different countries could be studied and compared, or people who work in different fields.
In this study one prerequisite when choosing informants was that they had to be somewhat active on social media, since a lot of information sharing happens there. A study could be conducted on more different kinds of people – also people who are not active on social media. This study would give deeper insight into different kinds of people’s reasoning behind their information sharing.

In this study two different types of information were mentioned – firm controlled and personal customer information. This categorization of information was, however, not used in the analysis of the empirical data. An interesting study could therefore be to see if people get different types of value when they share firm controlled and personal customer information, and to find out if people think that there are similarities and/or differences between sharing these two different types of information.

In this study the value personal information sharing brings to consumers was studied. An interesting topic for further research would be to study how companies can support this value creation the best way possible. If companies understand what kind of value information sharing brings to individuals and know how to support this value creation, consumers and companies can behave synchronized and value creation is maximized for both parties.

This study shows that people’s knowledge about companies’ information collection and usage highly affect people’s attitudes towards it. The conclusion was made that people who understand how and why companies collect customer information are more positively set towards it than people who are not as knowledgeable. It could be relevant to study how companies can communicate and educate consumers about their information collection and usage the best way possible to minimize the amount of people who are negatively set towards it.
BILAGA 1 SWEDISH TRANSLATION OF THESIS

Rubrik: ”Kundernas upplevda värde av att dela personlig information”

Introduktion till ämnet


Motivering av studien och en syftesformulering

Företag använder en ökande mängd kundinformation i utformningen av sina processer. Ju mera kundinformation som skapas och kan tas fram, desto viktigare blir det för företagens konkurrenscraft att ha tillgång till relevant och personlig kundinformation. Kunderna å sin sida begränsar delandet av sina personliga data på grund av integritetsfrågor och på grund av att de känner att de inte får något av värde tillbaka från organisationerna (Quint & Rogers 2015). För att företag skall få tillgång till personlig kundinformation måste de förstå hurudant värde som motiverar kunderna till informationsdelning.

Syftet med denna studie är därmed att presentera och analysera olika typer av värde som motiverar konsumenter att dela med sig av sin personliga information.

**Presentation av tidigare forskning, val av metoder och material**

Teoridelen byggs upp av tre olika delar: värdelitteratur, litteratur om kundinformation, samt litteratur gällande kundinformationsdelning. En teoretisk referensram baseras på litteraturen. I detta stycke kommer dessa tre delar samt relevanta teorier att beskrivas och presenteras.

**Värdelitteratur**

För att kunna förstå kundinformationsdelning samt värdet som det ger åt människor, är det viktigt att förstå hur värde upplevs och skapas av individer. Som tidigare påpekats är det

Värde är subjektivt, vilket betyder att människornas upplevelser och förväntningar påverkar värdeskapandeprocesserna. Därför kan upplevt värde heller inte dikteras av företag och är heller inte det samma för alla – samma service, produkt, eller upplevelse värderas på olika sätt av olika människor. Värde är också situationsbundet, vilket betyder att hur värdefullt något upplevs beror på kundens realitet och ekosystem i en specifik stund, i en specifik situation. Praktiskt sett betyder detta att utöver att samma service, produkt eller upplevelse kan upplevas av olika människor på olika sätt, kan de också upplevas olika av samma människa i olika situationer. (Heinonen et al. 2013)

Sheth et al. (1991) har tagit fram en modell med fem värdedimensioner som påverkar människornas köpsbeslut: funktionellt värde, sitationsbaserat värde, socialt värde, emotionellt värde och epistemiskt värde.

Litteratur om kundinformation


Företagsinitierade data bildas när kunder är i kontakt med företag, eller via teknologier som
drivs eller leds av företag. Denna typ av data ger information om hur ett företags produkter eller service tas emot av kunderna – med andra ord vad kunderna tycker om företagets produkter och service. Information om kundernas köpbeteende, data som är samlade via fokusgrupper, strukturerade intervjuer, ostrukturerade intervjuer, undersökningar, experiment, observationer och produktrecensioner är exempel på företagsinitierade data (Kumar et al. 2013). Många företag har också implementerat lojalitetsprogram, med hjälp av vilka de bland annat kan följa med kundernas köpbeteende, få demografisk information, samt följa med trender relaterade till inköp, återköp, relaterade inköp, samt tid mellan återköp (Berman 2006). Teknologiutvecklingen har bidragit till att allt fler företag använder cookies och andra tekniska lösningar för spårning av individers beteende på sina hemsidor. Dessa teknologier samlar bland annat information om mängden sidor som besöks, hur ofta en sida besöks och hur länge konsumenten stannar kvar på sidan, samt vad som besöks på en sida. (Moe & Fader 2004, Kumar et al. 2013)

Utvecklingen av digitala och sociala medier har bidragit till att kunder också delar information som inte är företagsrelaterad. Olika sociala medier som till exempel Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, bloggar och olika diskussionsforum används av människor till interaktion, informationsdelning och samlande av information, som tidsfördriv, underhållning och för avslappning och kommunikation (Whiting et al. 2013). På grund av att användningsområdet för de sociala medierna är så brett, ger de detaljerad insikt i människornas liv (Baird & Parasnis 2011). Information som kan fås från de sociala medierna är till exempel vem användarna är, hur de lever, vad som motiverar dem, vad de tycker eller inte tycker om, demografisk information, information om deras nätverk samt information om trender (Baird & Parasnis 2011, Schlack 2010).

**Kundinformationsdelning**


Socialt värde skapas via sociala associationer, vilket betyder att ett beslut fattas eller en aktivitet engageras i för att den/det väcker önskade associationer bland andra människor (Bock & Kim 2002). I informationsdelning kan två typer av socialt värde identifieras: informationsdelning som skapar nyttiga sociala associationer bland andra människor och relationell nytta (Bock & Kim 2002). Sociala associationer har att göra med att människor vill kontrollera hur andra människor uppfattar dem, vilket kan göras genom att till exempel dela personlig information – profiler, bilder, kommentarer, blogginlägg, medlemskap i grupper – som stöder den identitet som en person önskar kommunicera (Kaplan & Henlein


**Ekonomiskt värde** är den ekonomiska nytan som en människa får från en produkt eller av att engagera sig i en aktivitet (Sheth & Gross et al. 1991). I informationsdelning betyder detta att en människa delar personlig information i utbyte mot någon form av ekonomisk nytta. Exempel på olika sorters ekonomisk nytta är erbjudanden, kuponger och plats-baserade rabatter (Quint & Rogers 2015). Generellt sett korrelerar mängden ekonomisk nytta med mängden personlig information som människor är färdiga att dela med sig (Roeber et al. 2015).

**Redogörelse för genomförandet av undersökningen**

Datainsamlingen utfördes genom kvalitativa intervjuer med tolv stycken informanter varav 6 stycken (50 %) är under 30 år gamla och 6 stycken (50 %) är över 30 år gamla. Intervjufrågorna baseras på teorin och målet är att besvara syftet, dvs. analysera olika typer av värde som motiverar konsumenter att dela med sig sin personliga information. Frågorna gäller företagsinitierad information, cookies och spårningsteknologier, lojalitetsprogram,
kundsSpecifika data och fenomenet att samla in data om sig själv med hjälp av teknologier (eng. self-tracking). Data samlades in under veckorna 37 och 38 och intervjuerna utfördes på kaféer, hemma hos informanten, på informantens kontor eller hemma hos mig, och intervjuerna varade mellan 20 och 45 minuter. Intervjuerna bandades in och transkriberades genast för analys.

**Resultatredovisning**

I detta stycke presenteras de viktigaste resultaten av studien. Data från intervjuerna har analyserats med hjälp av teorierna.

Största delen av informanterna (8/12) är kunniga och har kontroll över sitt personliga datadelande. En tydlig skillnad mellan de två åldersgrupperna kunde dock identifieras – fem av sex av den yngre åldersgruppen tillhör denna kategori, medan endast tre av sex av den äldre åldersgruppen gör det. Det finns ingen klar förklaring till skillnaden, men en orsak kunde tänkas vara att unga människor är vana vid att använda olika plattformar där personliga data delas, medan äldre människor nödvändigvis inte är det. Utmärkande för individerna i denna grupp är att de på ett kunnigt sätt kontrollerar sitt datadelande – de vet vad de vill och inte vill dela med sig, och beter sig i enlighet med sina principer. All information som ges ut är planerad, och människor som tillhör denna grupp förstår skillnaden mellan olika sociala medier.

Fyra av tolv informanter (4/12) är obekymrade över sin personliga informationsdelning. Tre av dessa fyra tillhör den äldre åldersgruppen. Individerna i denna grupp är mindre medvetna om hur till exempel företag samlar data om sina kunder än människorna som är kunniga och i kontroll över sitt datadelande. Människor i denna grupp är heller inte fullständigt medvetna om hurudana aktiviteter som kan räknas som utdelning av personlig information. Alla människor som är obekymrade över sin informationsdelning delar gärna med sig personlig information. De är aktiva på olika sociala medier och använder bonuskort och är medlemmar av lojalitetsprogram. Detta betyder inte att de delar med sig all tänkbar information, i stället betyder det att de inte är oroade för att företag samlar denna information och använder den i sina processer.
På basis av informationen från intervjuerna kunde fyra olika sorters funktionellt värde identifieras: differentierade serviceerbjudanden, förbättrade serviceerbjudanden, ökad självkännedom och/eller motivation samt fördelaktigt samarbete. Differentierade serviceerbjudanden är antingen riktad marknadsföring eller riktade förslag. Flera informanter nämnde att de fått riktad marknadsföring på basis av webbsidor som de besökt och deras aktiviteter på dessa sidor. I de flesta fallen uppfattades denna riktade marknadsföring som värdefull. En informant nämnde också att han ofta läser nyheter online, och uppskattar starkt att en del nyhetssidor optimerar de artiklar de visar enligt det han tidigare läst.

Förbättrade serviceerbjudanden är produkter eller service som utvecklats på basis av kundinformation – många informanter förstår att genom att dela med sig sina åsikter om produkter och service, hjälper de företag att utveckla dessa.

Ökad självkännedom och/eller motivation nämnde informanterna att de får med hjälp av teknologier och applikationer som hjälper dem att samlar in data om sitt eget beteende. De ger teknologierna/applikationerna någon form av personliga data som till exempel namn, ålder, och olika sorters hälsoinformation, och i utbyte får de information om till exempel sitt beteende, idrottsprestationer etc. som bidrar till ökad självkännedom, eller som motiverar till önskat beteende.

En informant spelar olika spel online och nämnade att i många fall är samarbete ett krav för att komma vidare i spelet. Samarbete fungerar bättre ifall de som spelar känner varandra, vilket är motivet till att dela personlig information i spelsituationerna.

Socialt värde kunde på basis av intervjuerna kategoriseras i relationell nytta, kommunikationsnytta, uppbyggande av ett personligt varumärke samt i karriärrelaterad nytta. I teorin presenterades två typer av relationell nytta: identitetsbaserad anknytning och gemenskapsbaserad anknytning. Båda dessa kunde identifieras i data som samlats med hjälp av intervjuerna. En informant nämnande till exempel att han är medlem av en grupp på Facebook som är fokuserad på ett spel som han spelar. Alla gruppmedlemmar har som målsättning att komma vidare i spelet och interaktionerna rör sig starkt kring spelet. Ett exempel på gemenskapsbaserad anknytning är en informant som gick igenom en svår sjukdom och som fick mycket stöd av en individ i en grupp på Facebook. Över tiden utvecklades relationen till en stark vänskap.
Socialt värde från kommunikation har starkt att göra med sociala medier. Flera informanter påpekade att de har breda nätverk världen över och att det är omöjligt att personligen kommunicera med alla dessa människor. De använder sociala medier för att dela med sig stora livshändelser som de vill kommunicera till sina nätverk.


Socialt värde skapas också genom att dela personlig information för att skapa karriärrelaterad nytta. Många informanter delar till exempel med sig sin karriärhistoria på LinkedIn så att företag och andra människor vid behov kan hitta dem. En informant nämnde att efter att ha uppdaterat sin LinkedIn profil blev hon kontaktad av representanter från tre företag som erbjöd henne jobbintervjuer.

**Emotionellt värde** kan klassas i fyra kategorier: identitetsutveckling, underhållning, lagring av personliga minnen samt att hjälpa andra. Identitetsutveckling betyder att information delas för att få en känsla av självtillfredsställelse. Exempel på detta är då människor använder applikationer för att följa med sina idrottsprestationer. De blir tillfredsställda då de presterar bättre än tidigare eller då de når sina målsättningar. En annan identitetsutvecklande faktor som nämndes av informanterna är då de får mera följare på sina sociala media profiler, eller då deras innehåll gillas av flera människor. Dessa ses som bekräftelse av att deras innehåll uppskattas.

I många fall delas personlig information och innehåll för att det är underhållande. Roliga bilder, filmklipp, och artiklar delas med andra för att framkalla nöje, lycka eller helt enkelt som tidsfördriv.

En del av informanterna nämnde att de delar bilder på sociala medier som till exempel Instagram för att komma ihåg sina personliga minnen. I dessa fall delas bilderna för att andra ska se dem, men mest för att komma ihåg både positiva och negativa händelser.

Personlig informationsdelning görs också för att hjälpa andra. Till exempel delas upplevelser
med företag, varumärken, och produkter för att informera andra människor. Bra upplevelser delas för att hjälpa andra att fatta rätt beslut, och sämre upplevelser delas för att hjälpa andra att undvika fatta fel beslut. I flera fall förstår också informanterna att genom att ge feedback hjälper de företagen att presteras bättre.


En del av de yngre informanterna nämnde också att deras målsättning är att tjäna pengar på sina sociala medier, som också kan ses som ekonomiskt värde. Dessa informanter har väldigt genomtänkta profiler på sina sociala medier och får ekonomisk nytta genom att till exempel samarbeta med företag, sälja reklamplatser och gratis produkter.

**Konkluderande avslutning**

Mera data är tillgängliga än någonsin tidigare och allt fler företag använder dessa data i sina processer. Då allt mer data samlas, blir det speciellt viktigt för företagens konkurrenskraft att ha tillgång till relevanta data av hög kvalitet. Kunderna kontrollerar sitt datadelande och därför är det väldigt viktigt för företag att förstå huruandt värde kunderna upplever då de delar sin personliga information för att kunna stöda denna informationsdelning i en så hög grad som möjligt. Genom att göra detta försäkrar företag att de har tillgång till data av hög kvalitet. Syftet med denna studie var att redogöra för huruandt värde människor får av personlig informationsdelning.

Fyra olika typer av värde som människor upplever då de delar personlig information kunde identifieras: funktionellt, socialt, emotionellt och ekonomiskt värde. Ett viktigt fynd är att kundernas beslut att dela med sig personlig information ofta motiveras av flera olika sorters
värde, och att inget värde dominerar över de andra.

Ett annat viktigt fynd är att informanterna från den yngre åldersgruppen använder olika kanaler för att dela med sig information på ett mångsidigare sätt, än människor i den äldre åldersgruppen. De yngre skapar värde för sig själva genom att dela med sig personlig information på ett strategiskt och igenomtänkt sätt i flera olika kanaler, medan de äldre är mindre strategiska, mer spontana och maximerar därför inte sitt värdeskapande. På sätt och vis betyder detta att människor i den äldre åldersgruppen inte utnyttjar all möjligheter för värdeskapande och unga människor gör det.

En annan stor skillnad mellan de två åldersgrupperna är att de yngre informanterna inte åtskiljer sitt karriär-jag från sitt personliga jag på olika sociala medier, medan de äldre informanterna gör det. De yngre informanterna använder alla sociala medier för att bygga upp sitt personliga varumärke – med andra ord är alla deras sociala medier öppna för vem som helst att se. De äldre för i sin tur fram sina karriärrelaterade kunskaper på specifika kanaler som är öppna för alla, och agerar mera spontant på kanaler som är synliga för endast deras personliga nätverk.

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