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Systembolaget's social marketing

A case study on Systembolaget
from a consumer and employee
perspective.

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Title

Systembolaget's social marketing. A case study on Systembolaget from a consumer and employee perspective

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Abstract

During the 2000s, sustainability and corporate social responsibility have become increasingly popular. Sustainability is commonly used in the sin industry in the form of social marketing to justify the harmful products it produces and serves. One state-owned enterprise in the sin industry that uses social marketing is Systembolaget. The purpose of our study is to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. The sub purpose is to understand how the employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and how they perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. A conceptual model was created based on previous literature on social marketing and decoupling. Two consumer focus groups and two employee interviews were used to collect the empirical data. The findings led to six new insights. First, consumers' perception of Systembolaget's social marketing was positive. Second, employees' perception of Systembolaget's social marketing was also positive but for different reasons. Third, consumers thought that it was their responsibility when purchasing alcohol and they trust Systembolaget's employees. Fourth, the employees thought that selling harmful products did not bother them directly because it was just a job. Fifth, it was shown that some consumers felt a dilemma when Systembolaget's social marketing is different from the in-store practices. Last, Systembolaget does not decouple but there are indications of market-based decoupling. The thesis contributes to social marketing within the sin industry by showing consumer's perspective on social marketing. It also shows how sin industry employees are impacted by the sin industry.

Keywords

Sin industry, Social Marketing, Systembolaget, Decoupling, Six benchmark criteria theory, Upstream social marketing, Downstream social marketing

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1. Introduction

One of the most questioned industries regarding sustainability and ethics is the sin industry according to Sharma and Song (2018). The sin industry consists of tobacco, gambling, alcohol, pornography, and the firearms industry (Sharma & Song, 2018). According to Cahan et al. (2015), the public often views the sin industry negatively because it promotes products that are addictive and can create social consequences. This means that the sin industry does not have social approval for its products in the public eye (Cahan et al., 2015). Dhandhanian and O'Higgins (2021) argued that the sin industry differs from other industries in the way they make their profits, as well as their social, ethical, and environmental standards. The sin industry products and services also differ because they can cause physical, psychological, and social damage to people and society (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). Furthermore, sustainable marketing is often used by organisations to display how they care about people, profit, and the planet (Triple-bottom line) (Sun et al., 2020).

Social marketing stems from sustainable marketing and involves fostering social change (behavioural change), according to Kubacki et al. (2015). Witvorapong et al. (2019) pointed out how social marketing is often used by the sin industry to change damaging behaviour and improve social welfare. Social marketing may not change people's behaviour; however, it positively impacts people's knowledge and beliefs. The sin industry often uses social marketing to justify its harmful products and services. One example is how tobacco organisations put pictures displaying the consequences of smoking on the cigarette package (Appendix 1) (Witvorapong et al., 2019). Other social marketing activities commonly used are media campaigns, where information on alcohol-related harm is provided through mainstream media and community interventions, which are composed of activities aimed at reducing local alcohol-related problems (Witvorapong et al., 2019).

State-owned enterprises (SOE) commonly use social marketing to change consumers' behaviour (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). SOEs are owned by the public and therefore operate politically, hence they must satisfy the government and their consumers (Alexius & Örnberg, 2015). Alexius and Grossi (2018) have pointed out that the conflict between expectations creates pressure from consumers and the government. They continue to mention that SOEs are hybrid organisations with dual complex missions where they both must generate financial and non-financial values. Decoupling is a compromise between competing goals and

expectations and is used by organisations to solve the expectation issue according to Alexius and Grossi (2018). The decoupling strategy could be seen as “*a compromise between multiple stakeholders and interests*” (Alexius & Grossi, 2018, p. 289).

Two examples of social marketing by the SOE Systembolaget (2022) is its advertising of the brochure “Tonårsparlören” (Appendix 2) and its tv-advertisement “don’t buy for a minor”. The purpose of Systembolaget's social marketing is to educate consumers about the health risks of alcohol (Systembolaget, 2022). At the same time, Systembolaget also markets and helps people purchase alcohol. This could be a potential dilemma because it promotes harmful products and, at the same time, aims to minimise alcohol consumption (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). It is important to note that Systembolaget never promotes drinking, however, excessive usage of its services and products could be harmful (Systembolaget, 2022). According to Systembolaget’s sustainability report (2021), there has been a decline in alcohol consumption, but there were still over 40 000 people in 2019 that needed care because of their alcohol diagnoses. At the same time, Systembolaget is the most trusted company in Sweden, according to a trustworthiness study conducted by the MedieAkademin (MedieAkademin, 2022). Systembolaget is operating within the sin industry (Stockwell et al., 2018), which creates tension between the expectations of the government and consumers (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). This might create a dilemma where Systembolaget must achieve financial value while its overall goal is to inform consumers about the risks of alcohol consumption (Systembolaget, 2022).

1.2 Problematization

The sin industry is denounced because it exploits human weaknesses for monetary gain which is one reason why it is heavily regulated (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). For example, in Mauritius, it is not allowed to market alcohol because of the negative consequences for consumers (Newaj & Damar-Ladkoo, 2016). Similarly, in Sweden, Systembolaget is also regulated and is not allowed to encourage drinking (Systembolaget, 2022). Systembolaget needs to satisfy both its consumers and the government, which could create a paradox where Systembolaget must create financial value while using social marketing to reduce consumption of its products (Alexius & Örnberg, 2015; Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021).

There is an ongoing discussion on how social marketing can affect consumers' behaviours, according to Witvorapong et al. (2019). Kubacki et al. (2015) reviewed previous research on

social marketing connected to Six benchmark criteria theory which consist of behavioural change, formative research, segmentation, the use of marketing mix, exchange, and competition. They examined how these criteria reduced problem behaviours. Jones et al. (2017) used the Six benchmark criteria theory in their study on how social marketing can produce positive drinking behaviours and found that social marketing can create positive trends in reducing youth alcohol consumption. Similarly, Kubacki and Szablewska (2019) studied how the Six benchmark criteria theory was reported in social marketing interventions targeting native people. The results revealed that a positive behavioural change is imminent if more benchmarks are used. However, more research is needed in educational and public health settings, according to Kubacki and Szablewska (2019).

Upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing is a social marketing theory used together with the Six benchmark criteria theory according to Gordon (2013). Wood (2019) found that social marketing should not only focus downstream but also consider the impact of social ecology on behavioural change. Meanwhile, Almestahiri et al. (2017) found that both streams can be used and be equally successful. There are two studies (McNeill et al., 2013; Evans et al., 2007) on the effects on smoking behaviour and both studies showed a decrease in smoking after the implementation of upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing according to Almestahiri et al. (2017). In contrast, Gordon (2013) studied how upstream social marketing can affect alcohol consumption in Scotland. The result showed a failure in implementing upstream social marketing, and therefore, alcohol consumption did not decrease. Gordon (2013) also suggested further investigation of social marketing to generate a deeper understanding.

A problem with the sin industry is that it uses social marketing to improve its image and legitimacy (Cahan, 2015; Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). Cahan (2015) studied how the sin industry uses social marketing to improve its image. The result showed that the sin industry reported and marketed more of its sustainable actions, given its negative public image. Similarly, Dhandhanian and O'Higgins (2021) studied how the tobacco and gambling industry used social marketing to legitimise its business and found that almost the whole tobacco and gambling industry mainly used social marketing to improve its legitimacy. However, Dhandhanian and O'Higgins (2021) stated that there needs to be more research on other parts of the sin industry, for example, the alcohol industry. Therefore, it is relevant to study how consumers and employees perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. To the best of our

knowledge, there seem to be studies on how consumers perceive social marketing in the sin industry, but not one directly connected to an SOE. Based on the literature review it could be argued that it is relevant to study how Systembolaget's social marketing might create a paradox for its consumers because Systembolaget is social marketing to reduce alcohol consumption while selling harmful products.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of our study is to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. The sub purpose is to understand how the employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and how they perceive Systembolaget's social marketing.

1.4 Research questions

RQ 1: How do consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing?

RQ 2: How do consumers perceive Systembolaget's employee's legitimacy?

RQ 3: How do Systembolaget's employees perceive its social marketing?

RQ 4: How do Systembolaget's employees experience selling harmful products?

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter there will be an introduction to studies connected to consumers, employees, decoupling, sustainability, and social marketing, in relation to the sin industry. First, the sin industry will be introduced as it is the main part of the study. Second, there will be background about consumers, employees and decoupling connected to the sin industry. Third, sustainability will be introduced because of its relation to the sin industry. Fourth, social marketing will be explained, and two social marketing theories will be explored: the Six benchmark criteria theory and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing. Finally, there will be a conceptual model connected to the Six benchmark criteria theory (Andreasen, 2002), upstream social marketing, downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019) and decoupling (Alexius & Grossi, 2018).

2.1 Sin industry

The sin industry is one of the most controversial industries consisting of alcohol, gambling, tobacco and pornography, according to Cahan et al. (2015). It is viewed negatively because of the negative consequences it brings upon society. The bad public image means that the sin industry will lose financial value (Cahan et al., 2015) and therefore, they try to justify the harmful products and services by, for example, using corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). Dhandhanian and O'Higgins (2021) argued that by utilising CSR reporting the sin industry legitimises its business activities. They give an example of how tobacco companies use CSR reporting to increase their profits which they find is unethical. Similarly, Sharma and Song (2018) argued that the sin industry has a strong incentive to utilise CSR to increase their public perception. They stated that this is a way to rebalance their morals and to hopefully not lose financially. The sin industry is afraid of losing both financial support by investors and consumers according to Cahan et al. (2015).

Chang et al. (2016) studied wine and health perception by gender, age, and ethnic background in the US. They found that American wine drinkers are generally worried about their health and feel that wine is a healthier alcoholic beverage to consume than beer and spirits. The impression of wine as being healthier than beer or spirits is unaffected by gender, age, or ethnicity. Furthermore, the study indicated that millennials (ages 21-37) are more worried about their health than people between the ages 38 and 68 years old, even though health awareness grows with age and that older generations are in general, more health conscious.

Therefore, millennials have a growing interest in healthy lifestyle choices. The study also found that men are more health conscious than women (Chang et al., 2016). In contrast, Weightman et al. (2019) found that women have begun to drink more in the last decade and one of the reasons is the norm of wine consumption. Wine is a more sophisticated drink than other alcoholic beverages and there is a new culture for women where they have “after work drinks” which is why women now consume more alcohol according to Weightman et al. (2019). Despite this, the two studies indicated that consumers are becoming more aware of the health risks of alcohol (Chang et al., 2016; Weightman et al., 2019).

2.1.1 Employees within the sin industry

Employees in the sin industry are frequently perceived as hypocritical when they perform a good deed because of the organisations for which they work according to O’Connor et al. (2020). The good activities can contradict the harm, giving the impression that employees are compensating with their good behaviours. Furthermore, employees working in the sin industry were seen as more hypocritical when their good deeds assisted the same people their organisations hurt rather than people who were not harmed by their organisations. For example, when an individual worked for a cigarette organisation, he earned less acclaim for doing volunteer work to battle tobacco addiction than had he worked for a casino (O’Connor et al., 2020). In contrast, Mordeno et al. (2019) looked at gambling behaviours of employees. The study showed that constant exposure to gamblers, as well as the opportunity to gamble, resulted in employees gambling more. Two ways of ensuring that employees gambled less was through upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing. Upstream social marketing (policies) and downstream social marketing (psychotherapy) were both named as ways to reduce the risks of employees gambling more (Mordeno et al., 2019).

2.1.2 Sustainability

Sustainability research originally focused on the environment according to Urdan and Louma (2020), and corporations were seen as something that existed inside of an economy or ecosystem. Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos (2014) argued that corporations should be examined from their social, environmental, and economic impacts. According to Ukko et al. (2018), social, environmental, and economic dimensions can be defined as the triple-bottom-line of sustainability. However, it can also be defined as people, planet, and profit according to Wilson (2015). Since our thesis focuses on consumers and employees the social dimension will be

explored (people). According to Ahmad et al. (2019), the social dimension focuses on society's common goals and individual needs such as wellbeing, cultural expression, and shelter. It also displays organisations' attitudes towards their employees and consumers (Ahmad et al., 2019). The challenge with the social dimension is to balance the needs of society and individuals, as well as the economic welfare and nature capacities according to Ukko et al. (2018). Similarly, Wilson (2015) pointed out that organisations cannot solve sustainability problems alone but need help from society.

Prior research has focused on CSR rather than sustainability (Urdan & Louma, 2020). Urdan and Louma (2020) argued that early CSR research focused on stakeholder versus shareholder management and how corporations had to balance the two perspectives. According to Barauskaite and Streimikiene (2020), the shareholder perspective entails that corporations should maintain their shareholders' economic value and at the same time satisfy their stakeholders (consumers and banks). The overall commitment of CSR is to improve the wellbeing of society (Barauskaite & Streimikiene, 2020). CSR has existed longer than sustainability, however, in the last decade, the two strands have merged as they both focus on how corporations need to take responsibility for society (Urdan & Louma, 2020). Already during 1979 Carroll (1979) highlighted the importance of CSR within organisations. He mentioned that it is important to not only be legal and economical/profitable but also to care about the society and individuals (Carroll, 1979).

2.1.3 Decoupling

Decoupling is a strategy commonly used by the sin industry when they must satisfy both external actors (policies) and internal actors (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). Graafland and Smid (2019) argue that there are two ways of distinguishing decoupling and that is *policy-practice decoupling* and *means-ends decoupling*. Policy-practice decoupling is defined as the relationship between policies and how they are implemented in programs. This means that organisations make a greater effort to communicate their intentions to the public instead of changing something. Means-ends decoupling refers to the relationship between the implementation of programs and the impacts. Graafland and Smid (2019) gives an example of how pharmaceutical organisations sometimes are using means-ends decoupling by donating drugs to developing countries, however, the drugs were past their expiration date.

Alexius and Grossi (2018) argued that there are two other types of decoupling: *market-based decoupling* and *organisational-based decoupling*. They argued that organisational-based decoupling is a strategy formed from the formal organisation by for example creating CSR teams or adopting CSR policies. This means that the formal organisation has the ultimate responsibility, meanwhile, market-based decoupling shifts the responsibility towards their consumers. Alexius and Grossi (2018), gave an example of how Svenska Spel educated consumers about gambling problems which put the responsibility on the consumers instead. Another example was how Svenska Spel shifted its responsibility towards a subsidiary (Playscan Limited) that handles the gambling responsible part instead. Both examples are market-based decoupling. Alexius and Grossi (2018) argued that organisational-based decoupling and market-based decoupling are often used together. For our study we will be using market-based decoupling and organisational-based decoupling because our study is closer connected to these theories.

2.2 Social marketing

Social marketing is a behavioural changing tool that is commonly used to address alcohol-related problems according to Witvorapong et al. (2019). Similarly, Kubacki et al. (2015) have defined social marketing as a tool that can be used to foster social change rather than just to improve a company's image. However, Kubacki and Szablewska (2019) stated that social marketing is being criticised because it can be seen as expensive, unethical, manipulative or a way to socially control people. Social control can lead to consequences, such as social exclusion that might impact individuals' rights and freedom negatively (Kubacki & Szablewska, 2019). In contrast, Jones et al. (2017) pointed out that social marketing is a key factor in achieving positive drinking behaviours in both the short term and long term. Kubacki et al. (2015) agrees with Jones et al. (2017) but also mentioned that social advertising needs to be part of a larger marketing program to be classified as social marketing. In social marketing, there are two common theories: *the Six benchmark criteria theory* and *upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing* (Gordon, 2013), which will be explained in the two upcoming parts.

2.2.1 The Six benchmark criteria theory

One common social marketing theory developed by Andreasen (2002) is the Six benchmark criteria theory. According to Kubacki et al. (2015), the main purpose of the Six benchmark

criteria theory is to create a guideline to make sure that social marketing is being used in a change intervention. A change intervention is when organisations put the consumer in focus to influence them for the better according to Carins and Rundle-Thiel (2014). According to Andreasen (2002) interventions need to focus on all six criteria which distinguishes the Six benchmark criteria theory from other behavioural approaches. Several studies have used Andreasen's Six benchmark criteria theory. For example, Kubacki et al. (2015) wrote a literature review on social marketing and how the Six benchmark criteria theory has been used between 2000 and 2014. Carins and Rundle-Thiel (2014) used the Six benchmark criteria theory to study what ingredients are needed to successfully carry out social marketing. Similarly, Kubacki and Szablewska (2019) used the Six benchmark criteria theory to understand which social marketing interventions can be identified when marketing to native people. Carins and Rundle-Thiel (2014) and Kubacki et al. (2015) argued that the use of all six benchmarks is the most effective way to conduct social marketing. In contrast, Kubacki and Szablewska (2019) pointed out that while not all six benchmarks are required, more than four criterias are recommended when conducting social marketing.

The Six benchmark criteria theory consist of behavioural change, formative research, segmentation, exchange, the use of marketing mix and competition (Andreasen, 2002). According to Carins and Rundle-Thiel (2014) behavioural change focuses on changing a person's behaviour rather than simply educating and informing the target audience about, for example, health risks. Formative research is used by organisations to determine what consumers need and what is needed to achieve behavioural change (Kubacki et al., 2015). Kubacki et al. (2015) pointed out that finding the right segment by doing formative research will lower the cost of the social marketing intervention. Exchange is defined as the effort the target audience must make, for example time and money, to receive the benefit of what is marketed (Kubacki & Szablewska, 2019). Kubacki et al. (2015) argued that the exchange's main purpose is to lower the effort the target audience has to make. The marketing mix consists of product, place, price and promotion and is according to Carins and Rundle-Thiel (2014, p. 1629) a way to “*present holistic solutions that are attractive and valuable, assisting to induce both trial and repeat behaviour*”. Finally, competition is defined as other interventions that divert consumers' attention away from the social marketing intervention (Carins & Rundle-Thiel, 2014). For our study and purpose only behavioural change, formative research and exchange will be relevant. Behavioural change is relevant because we want to understand how

an SOE's social interventions might create behavioural change and how it is perceived by consumers and SOE employees. The formative research criteria will be important when understanding how Systembolaget changes consumers' behaviours and why employees at Systembolaget act in a specific way. Exchange is relevant because we want to understand what consumers have to offer to gain from SOE's social marketing interventions.

2.2.2 Upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing

There are two alternative approaches to social marketing: upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing according to Gordon (2013). Wood (2019, p, 78) have defined downstream social marketing as "*attempting to change the behaviour of individuals by using interventions developed on the basis of consumer insight*". This means that consumer (individual) behavioural change is in focus (Wood, 2019). In contrast, upstream social marketing tries to shape the environmental context of behaviour by influencing policy and regulation (Kennedy et al., 2018). In upstream social marketing, the environmental context is in focus because it acknowledges and works towards changing structures, institutions and systems which then change harmful individual behaviours (Kennedy et al., 2018). Throughout history, downstream social marketing has been the dominant stream studied, however, during the 2000s upstream social marketing has become increasingly relevant according to Mehmet and Simmons (2019). Researchers within the social marketing field have been criticised for neglecting the upstream approach. One reason why there have been few studies on upstream is that it is complex, and it is hard to measure the impact of upstream social marketing (Mehmet & Simmons, 2019). Furthermore, both Kennedy et al. (2018) and Mehmet and Simmons (2019) argued that there needs to be a combination of both upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing because consumers come from a variety of locations. This means that a combination of the streams might improve consumer behaviour (Kennedy et al., 2018).

Wood (2019), Gordon (2013) and Almestahiri et al. (2017) have all discussed in what ways upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing should be used. Wood (2019) argued that social marketing should be used to build resilience to prevent social and health issues. He discovered that society has an impact on people's early development. Therefore, social marketers should adopt an upstream social marketing approach and the goal should be to create a good environment, rather than blaming the individual (Wood, 2019). In contrast, Gordon (2013) argued that downstream social marketing should be used in social marketing to succeed in changing people's behaviours. However, he also mentioned that it is hard to know

when to use which stream. Moreover, Almestahiri et al. (2017) conducted a literature review that found both streams can be used and be equally successful. First, they found eleven studies on downstream social marketing that positively influenced smoking behaviours (Evans et al 2007; Murukutla et al., 2012). However, they also found one study on upstream social marketing that showed a decrease in smoking (McNeill et al., 2013). They also found a study that implemented both upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Lv et al., 2014). The study targeted the environment and behaviour which resulted in a significant decline in smoking (Almestahiri et al., 2017).

2.2.3 Combination

The Six benchmark criteria theory and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing are theories that have been used on their own according to Gordon (2013). He continues to mention that the Six benchmark criteria theory has offered a useful framework for what social marketing should entail. It is also possible to present some guidelines for researchers working in this area by considering principles and issues in relation to each of the Six social marketing benchmark criteria. On the one hand, upstream social marketing has applied some marketing principles but not exchange and formative research. Thus, the Six benchmarks should be used with upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing to make the theory more complete (Gordon, 2013). On the other hand, the Six benchmark criteria theory often ignores the environment of which the individual is in according to Wood (2019). He continues to mention that there is an association between alcohol and deprivation. A deprived individual often smokes and drinks because it offers them a short-term benefit. The individual does not consider the consequences of their actions. Wood (2019) argued that changing specific behaviours while ignoring the environment that has affected the individual is ineffective. Therefore, he suggested that there should be a combination of upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing with the Six benchmark criteria theory because then the interventions should also target the environment (Wood, 2019).

2.3 Conceptual model

The purpose of our study is to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. The sub purpose is to understand how the employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and how they perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. To support our purpose, a conceptual model was developed (Figure 1). The model starts with

Systembolaget and their consumers and employees. The model is based on two key components from the literature. First, it utilises social marketing interventions to connect the three spheres. The social marketing interventions are based on two social marketing theories which are the Six benchmark criteria theory and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Andreasen, 2002; Gordon, 2013). Last, it builds on the SOE Systembolaget within a sin industry and how it is affected by the government (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). The model intends to explore three distinct spheres within the sin industry and how these spheres interact with one another. In addition, the rectangle on the left shows how Systembolaget might be decoupling responsibility towards its consumers (Figure 1).

The first sphere is at the bottom left of the figure and consists of the Systembolaget (Figure 1). Systembolaget is affected by the government through laws and regulations. The government expects Systembolaget to make profit (Stockwell et al., 2018) whilst maintaining its purpose to control and reduce alcohol consumption (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). Systembolaget affects both its employees and consumers through social marketing interventions. Systembolaget is within the sin industry and therefore uses different social marketing interventions to justify its products (Witvorapong et al., 2019).

Three out of the Six benchmark criterion and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing are used towards the consumers in a combination in the conceptual model. In the model, the Six benchmark criteria' behavioural change aims to change consumer behaviour through social marketing interventions. The exchange criteria are what effort consumers must make to gain from the social marketing intervention and formative research explains what knowledge Systembolaget has about the consumers' needs (Andreasen, 2002). Downstream social marketing explains how Systembolaget tries to change consumer behaviour through social marketing interventions. Meanwhile, upstream social marketing aims to change consumer behaviour through environmental changes (policies and regulations) (Wood, 2019). Thus, Systembolaget can use the two social marketing theories to create social marketing interventions to affect consumer behaviour and perception of alcohol.

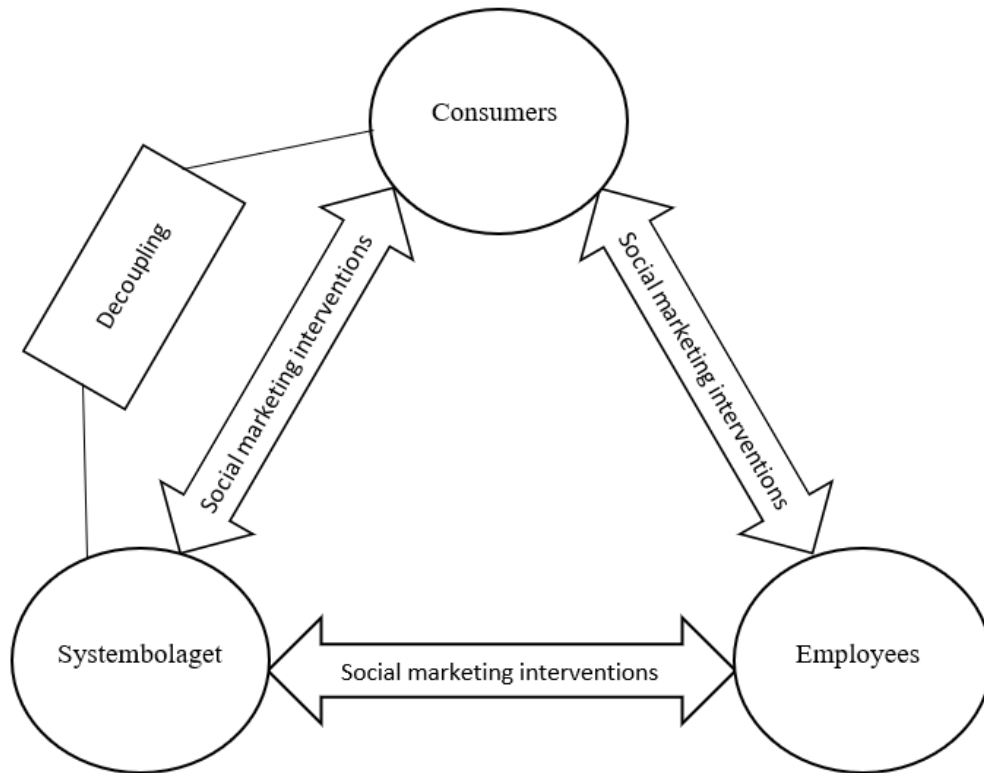
Furthermore, Systembolaget might also use two different decoupling strategies to shift responsibility towards its consumers. Systembolaget might use market-based decoupling to shift responsibility towards the consumers. This is often used with social marketing interventions to affect the consumers and change their behaviour. Organisational-based

decoupling is used to create CSR policies and CSR teams where organisations have the ultimate responsibility (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). This is done by Systembolaget where they have CSR teams. The policies are often implemented and controlled by the government.

The second sphere is to the right of Systembolaget, and it is employees (Figure 1). Employees are affected by Systembolaget and at the same time affect consumers. Employees that work within a sin industry are often seen as hypocritical and the organisation can create a behaviour where the employee consumes more of the sin industry product (Mordeno et al., 2019; O'Connor et al., 2020). Thus, Systembolaget affects the employees through social marketing interventions. The employees then transfer this information into the store where the consumers are affected. This transition is notable within the store, such as, no cold alcohol drinks nor any ad campaigns. The third sphere is located at the top of the model (Figure 1). This sphere consists of consumers which are affected by the employees and directly from Systembolaget. Consumers are affected by social marketing interventions by Systembolaget and its employees to change alcohol consumption behaviour. Systembolaget impacts its campaigns and advertisements meanwhile employees affect consumers in the store. The consumers are also indirectly affected by the government because they set the policies that are then implemented by Systembolaget.

Figure 1

Conceptual model of Systembolaget's social marketing interventions.



3. Method

In this chapter there will be a presentation of the research methods. First, there will be an introduction and explanation for the chosen research philosophy. Second, the research approach will be argued for by combining theory and empirical research. Third, there will be an introduction to the research design and approach which will explain why the chosen methods were used. Fourth, there will be a presentation on how the focus groups were conducted together with why the certain participants were selected. Last, there will be an introduction to the interviews and participant selection.

3.1 Research philosophy

To reach the objective of the study there is a need for a clear research philosophy (Bell et al., 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), there are three research philosophies: positivism, interpretivism and realism. Positivism is about exploring the social world and the researcher can implement an objective view (Denscombe, 2018). The focus is mostly on facts and numbers which is why positivism is connected to quantitative data. Realism is similar to positivism but is based on assumptions about the external reality that influences human perceptions of the world (Bell et al., 2019). The purpose of interpretivism is to develop knowledge and insight into people's beliefs and experiences according to Denscombe (2018). The purpose of this study was to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing and the sub purpose was to understand how employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and perceive Systembolaget's social marketing, therefore interpretivism is the most relevant philosophy. Interpretivism is often used with qualitative data, and it explores differences between people rather than objects. We wanted to understand people and our study is connected to qualitative empirical methods, therefore, interpretivism is the most suitable perspective (Denscombe, 2018). The use of an interpretivist philosophy contributed to a new understanding and explanation of the empirical data.

3.2 Research approach

According to Lind (2019) the research approach involves theory and empirical research. There are three types of research approaches: deduction, induction, and abduction (Lind, 2019). In our study we switched between theory and empirical data which means we used an abductive approach. We have used our literature to understand how to review the empirical data collected and used it to answer our research questions. An abductive approach for theories is used to

explain patterns in the empirical data, which means that an abductive approach can be characterised as development of theory (Lind, 2019). We used an abductive approach because we created and analysed the interview questions using theory. The study also attempted to develop previously existing theories, by use of empirical data.

3.3 Research design and strategy

A research design provides a framework for how data should be gathered and analysed. The choice of design reflects the position of the research process, and it is therefore important to choose a design that aligns with the methodological approach (Bell et al., 2019). This strategy was in nature interpretivist as it focused on understanding human behaviour rather than explaining it. According to Bell et al. (2019) an exploratory research design is needed when a problem is not clearly defined. There are three ways to conduct exploratory research and they are interviewing experts, searching for literature, and using focus groups (Bell et al., 2019). We used all three methods, with Systembolaget employees serving as experts, consumers participating in focus groups, and we used previous literature as a framework. The purpose was to understand human behaviour which further indicated that we needed an exploratory research design.

Research strategies can either be quantitative or qualitative (Bell et al., 2019). A qualitative strategy is used to create theory and often uses a deductive or abductive approach (Bell et al., 2019), therefore, we used a qualitative strategy. A qualitative study is also connected to interpretivism research philosophy which we used (Lind, 2019). According to Lind (2019) a qualitative strategy is preferred when trying to understand and interpret social phenomenon's which is the case of our study. We wanted to understand how consumers and employees of Systembolaget perceive its social marketing which indicates a qualitative study.

3.4 Focus groups

The main data collection methods in a qualitative study are interviews, documents, focus groups and observations according to Denscombe (2018). A part of the purpose of this study was to understand how consumers and employees perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. Therefore, we used a qualitative study in the form of focus groups because it created discussion between consumers. The focus groups were semi structured because they are used to examine perception, attitudes, and feelings on a specific topic (Denscombe, 2018).

The ideal group size for focus groups is between six to nine people according to Denscombe (2018). This group size is large enough to bring out different opinions and open for discussion. For our study, the focus group size was between four to five people from the local area (Table 1). It is not the ideal size according to Denscombe (2018); however, we chose the smaller size as we believed it to be easier to manage and find suitable participants. There are three characteristics that define a focus group. First, the discussion is based on one thing or experience that the participant has the same information about. Second, the moderator's role is to facilitate the discussion rather than lead it. Last, it is important to get a good dynamic and interaction between the participants to gain information (Denscombe, 2018). Based on these three characteristics we chose participants that were consumers of Systembolaget which meant they had similar information about the subject, we did not participate in the discussion, and we chose open minded people. We made sure to be positive and make everyone comfortable to obtain more information. Our study focused on alcohol which is a sensitive subject which is why we chose focus groups instead of interviews for the consumers. Another reason for choosing focus groups is because interviews could lead to a superficial response as the participant may feel offended due to the sensitive subject (Bell et al., 2019).

Table 1

Focus groups

Group	Date	Time	Number of participants
Twenty to twenty-five	2022-05-10	18.00-18.53	4
Teenage parents	2022-05-12	18.00-18.49	5

3.4.1 Selection for focus groups

There were two different focus groups for our study (Table 1 & 2). The first focus group consisted of parents that have teenagers (13-19). The fact that they had children between these ages was significant for our study because the children were not permitted to purchase at Systembolaget. The parents' ages and gender were relevant for the study because it has been shown that alcohol consumption can vary between ages and genders (Chang et al., 2016). For the teenage parents, questions, and statements about “Tonårsparlören” (Appendix 2) and other

social marketing interventions from Systembolaget helped us to answer the purpose of the study. There were no questions regarding how much the participants or participants' children drink because that could have led to an altercation rather than a meaningful discussion. Instead, the participants answered a few questions regarding their basic information (Appendix 4 & 5). The second focus group consisted of consumers of Systembolaget that were between the ages of twenty to twenty-five. The age was relevant in this group because younger than twenty means that you cannot purchase alcohol at Systembolaget and older than twenty-five indicates that you can have children that are closer to becoming teenagers. This group was important because they did not have any teenage children and therefore, could have a different perspective on Systembolaget's social marketing than the parents. The groups could also have different opinions about Systembolaget's employee's legitimacy that might create a paradox. The two different groups were named twenty to twenty-five and teenage parents. Twenty to twenty-five participants were named with the starting letter A and teenage parents' participants were named with the starting letter B (Table 2).

Table 2*Summary of focus group participants*

Group	Gender	Age	Occupation	Participant
Twenty to twenty-five	Male	24	Student	Alex
Twenty to twenty-five	Male	22	Full-time worker	Adam
Twenty to twenty-five	Female	22	Student	Alissa
Twenty to twenty-five	Female	23	Full-time worker	Anita
Teenage parents	Male	48	Full-time worker	Bert
Teenage parents	Female	52	Housewife	Bonnie
Teenage parents	Female	51	Full-time worker	Bodil
Teenage parents	Female	49	Full-time worker	Bea
Teenage parents	Female	45	Full-time worker	Bambi

3.4.2 Focus group guide

The two focus groups were constructed by semi-structured interview guides (Appendix 4 & 5). The focus groups were built on a total of eighteen questions for the teenage parents and seventeen questions for the twenty- to twenty-five-year-olds. In addition, there was one case in each focus group. The focus groups were conducted on zoom because of difficulties in having several people meet at the same time and location. The interview started with us informing the participants about the purpose of our study. They had previously signed a paper including their consent for us to record them as well as explaining that their identity would be anonymous. The first phase of the interview was based on three opening questions. The questions were focused on the participants introducing themselves but also for them to discuss how they perceive Systembolaget in an open manner.

The focus groups moved on towards discussion questions regarding Systembolaget's social marketing. First the social marketing concept was explained and then questions such as "How do you perceive Systembolaget social marketing?" and "What do you think the purpose of Systembolaget's social marketing is?" were asked. The participants then discussed the subject and their personal experience with Systembolaget's social marketing. Moreover, the discussion then moved on to a case where we showed two social marketing videos and the brochure "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2). The participants discussed the social marketing interventions and questions about their behaviour and responsibility were asked. The questions were asked to answer research question one. After the questions about the case the participants were told a situation where a consumer walks into the store and receives help to purchase alcohol from the employees. We then asked questions about their feelings and perception of this situation. Furthermore, the participants were asked about employees at Systembolaget. For example, the questions were "How do you perceive the trustworthiness of Systembolaget's employees?" with the goal to answer research question two. To end the focus groups the participants were asked if they still perceived Systembolaget the same as before and if they wanted to add anything. During the focus groups we made sure to be positive and make everyone comfortable to obtain more information. We then thanked the participants for their time and contribution to our study.

3.5 Interviews

Interviews are used to collect data from participants and usually involve the participants' opinions according to Denscombe (2018). Semi-structured interviews include subjects and questions posed by the interviewer, but they are more flexible, allowing the employees to develop his/her ideas and speak in depth about the subject. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used because it enabled us to understand what the employees think about Systembolaget's social marketing. According to Bell et al. (2019) face-to-face interviews often make participants feel more at ease, allowing them to open and discuss sensitive information. We also wanted to get to know the employees, and because the interviews build trust, the employees were able to discuss the subject (Bell et al., 2019). Another reason for why we chose interviews was because they were easier to organise and analyse with only one participant (Denscombe, 2018). As interviewers we had to be well prepared for the interviews to be able to ask follow-up questions and to seem knowledgeable (Lind, 2019). The interviews were conducted at the participants' workplace or chosen location to make them feel comfortable

which enables us to hopefully get better data. The employees were interviewed to understand their view of Systembolaget's social marketing and how they experience selling harmful products.

3.5.1 Selection for interviews

The selection process began with contacting employees of Systembolaget from two different small municipalities that we have had previous relations to (Table 3). Two out of five employees would immediately give us an answer that they could be interviewed. Two of the employees declined to be interviewed immediately due to them feeling that they did not have enough knowledge about the subject. One employee postponed the interview until there was no time left to conduct the interview. Therefore, we interviewed two employees from the same small municipality in Skåne. The employees were informed that the interviews would be recorded. They also signed a paper that gave us the right to record the interview. The employees were informed that their identities would not be revealed because doing so might cause them to answer questions more carefully, reducing the amount of information we could receive. Furthermore, the employees were asked about basic information such as age, gender, work, and experience. To be included in the study the participants needed to fulfil two criteria. Be between the ages twenty to sixty-five and had to have worked at Systembolaget within the past five years. The age criterion was important because someone with more experience probably has a different perspective on Systembolaget's social marketing, meanwhile a younger employee might think differently of it. The employees were named with the starting letter E (Table 3).

Table 3

Systembolaget employees

Gender	Age	Experience	Title	Participant
Male	20-25	4 Years	Store employee	Erik
Male	20-25	2 Years	Store employee	Edward

3.5.2 Interview guide

The two interviews consisted of twenty-three questions with some follow-up questions. The interviews were semi-structured, which means we could ask new questions during the interview to get a different perspective. The interview started with us informing the employees about the purpose of our study. They also signed a paper including their consent for us to record them as well as explaining that their integrity would be anonymously. The first phase of the interview was based on opening questions. These questions were made for the employee to explain some basic information about themselves but also for them to be more relaxed. Following the opening questions, more general introductory questions were asked. The two questions were “What is sustainable drinking for you?” and “How come you work at Systembolaget?” The first question was asked to get the employee to think about the subject, whilst the second question was an icebreaker to make them more comfortable. The interview continued with questions regarding Systembolaget’s social marketing. These questions were connected to Systembolaget social marketing and how it impacts and is perceived by their employees. The questions were also directly correlated to research question three. The questions then moved towards how it is to work at Systembolaget, and they were asked more in-depth questions. For example, we asked, “What is your role to minimise alcohol consumption?” and then we asked the follow-up question “Still, you give the consumers tips on alcohol products?”. The goal was to make the employees reflect about this subject which may have never crossed their mind. The questions were made to answer research question four.

The last part of the interview consisted of questions regarding decoupling and a concluding question. Decoupling consists of responsibility and pressure from society and the state (Alexius & Grossi, 2018), which meant that two questions were formed: “Do you feel a responsibility as an employee at Systembolaget?” and “Do you feel any influence from society or the government?”. The questions were asked to make the employees reflect about the subject and if they had any previous knowledge about it. They were informed about decoupling before we asked them questions about it. Furthermore, the last question was formed so that the employees had the chance to add or change anything from their answers. We then thanked the employees for their time and contribution to our study.

3.6 Data analysis

In the review of the empirical data, a thematic analysis method was used. A thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches in qualitative analysis and is characterised by creating themes and sub themes according to Bell et al. (2019). They stated that there was no clear approach when conducting a thematic analysis which meant that a framework which involves one matrix-based method for compiling and structuring data was created. In this study, a matrix was designed to create structure and clarity (Appendix 3, 4 & 5). In a thematic analysis the researcher focuses on what the participants say and expresses (Bell et al., 2019). The choice of thematic analysis suited the method because of the purpose of this study. Designing themes, subthemes and a matrix, a clear structure was created, which contributed to making it easier to analyse the material (Appendix 3, 4 & 5).

3.7 Trustworthiness & Limitation

Trustworthiness is an important aspect of a qualitative study because the research is often carried out on social phenomena that are hard to measure (Bell et al., 2019). Our data collection method consisted of interviews and focus groups. In addition, the study was reviewed by four students and carried out with good practices which makes the study credible. During our interviews and focus groups we were transparent and tried to not influence the results which makes the study confirmable. To make our study dependable we kept all our data including recordings, transcripts, and interview guides during the research process. Furthermore, to make our study transferable and applicable, we described the method used to collect data for the results. The limitation to this study was that one of the employees postponed their interview for too long which caused us to miss out on one interview. Hence, more employee interviews would be preferred because it could alter the results.

4. Findings

In this chapter, there will be a presentation of the empirical data collected from the interviews and the focus groups. First, consumers' and employees' perception of Systembolaget's social marketing will be presented and the different opinions will be addressed. Second, the consumer and employee relationship will be discussed, including consumers' perceptions of employees' legitimacy and employees' perceptions of consumers. Last, there will be a presentation on decoupling and the shift in responsibility connected to Systembolaget and its consumers.

4.1 Social marketing

During the interviews with the employees (Table 3) and the focus groups with the consumers (Table 2), the participants discussed Systembolaget's social marketing (Kubacki et al., 2015). Social marketing was explained and presented through two different cases (Appendix 4 & 5). During the cases, the participants (Table 2) were presented with three social marketing interventions (Appendix 4 & 5) and asked how they perceived them. The participants' perceptions of Systembolaget's social marketing varied, which created a fluent discussion. The first two subheadings below will present how the focus groups with consumers and employee interviews perceived Systembolaget's social marketing.

4.1.1 Consumers' perception of Systembolagets social marketing

Table 4

Quotes from consumers about their perception of Systembolagets social marketing

It is probably more aimed at the parents' consumption and not at the young people. -Adam (Twenty to twenty-five)

[...] that you should behave when you drink. – Alex (Twenty to twenty-five)

It was probably a couple of years ago, at least as far as I remember that an American came there and would make volume, a lot would be sold, and this would be done, and the employees said this is not how we work. - Bert (Teenage parents)

They have fantastic marketing [...] I am proud of Systembolaget. - Bea (Teenage parents)

The conceptual model (Figure 1) described how Systembolaget's social marketing impacts consumers through Andreasen's (2002) Six benchmark criteria theory and the upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). The two focus groups perceived Systembolaget's social marketing differently. In the focus group twenty to twenty-five, the majority had not heard or seen anything from Systembolaget's social marketing. The only one who knew about it was Anita and she mentioned that you must be twenty or above to purchase at Systembolaget (Appendix 4 & 5). In contrast, all participants in group teenage parents had heard or seen Systembolaget's social marketing. Bodil stated that she had seen it but did not think about it, which was agreed upon by all other group members. Group twenty to twenty-five said that they were unaware of Systembolaget's social marketing because it was not targeted at them. They also stated that the aim of the social marketing is more on parents and teenagers (Table 4). It was clear that group teenage parents were the targeted group for Systembolaget's social marketing. Bea mentioned that when her children turned sixteen, she was given tonrspalören, which had happened to everyone in group teenage parents. All participants in group teenage parents agreed that it was simple to gain access to Systembolaget's social marketing, such as "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2). Bea stated that even though it was

easy to access “Tonårsparlören” it was hard to mediate the content to her children (Appendix 4 & 5).

Questions about the purpose of Systembolaget's social marketing and how consumers perceive its social marketing increase were asked. In group twenty to twenty-five everyone had a similar perception of the purpose of Systembolaget's social marketing. Alex said that you should behave when drinking alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5). Alissa and Anita said that you should be aware of the risks and respectively that you should drink responsibly. In group teenage parents there was a similar response (Table 4). Bea said that the purpose is to make consumers have a good relationship with alcohol. Bonnie agreed and added that the purpose was to not attract consumers to the stores. When group twenty to twenty-five were asked about their experience of Systembolaget's social marketing, there was no clear answer. Anita mentioned an “IQ-check” where people can answer how much they drink and then get feedback on their drinking behaviours. The other three participants in group twenty to twenty-five agreed and mentioned that they also had heard about it but never used it.

In contrast, group teenage parents were positive toward Systembolaget's social marketing and thought it made Systembolaget more trustworthy. Bea said that the marketing videos were amazing and that she felt proud of Systembolaget (Table 4). Bodil added that the social marketing hopefully gets consumers to think about their drinking behaviours and how much they purchase. The groups were also asked how they perceived the increasing amount of social marketing from Systembolaget. Group twenty to twenty-five said that it was positive that Systembolaget is increasing its social marketing to reduce alcohol consumption. Group teenage parents were also positive to the increase in social marketing from Systembolaget but had not noticed an increase in social marketing. The reason for this increase might be because of Covid according to teenage parents (Appendix 4 & 5).

The focus groups were also asked where Systembolaget puts the responsibility when consumers are purchasing and drinking alcohol. Group twenty to twenty-five answered that most of the responsibility lies on the parents but also on everyone who purchases at Systembolaget. Adam mentioned that the whole idea of Systembolaget is that the parents have the responsibility because minors should not be able to access alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5). He also mentioned that consumers who purchase alcohol have the most responsibility. Adam also stated that if the employees at Systembolaget could stop people from purchasing, employees

would have the most responsibility. Anita added that social marketing probably gives some people an eye-opener, and Alissa said that every person that purchases at Systembolaget has a responsibility. Similarly, group teenage parents argued that the responsibility was on the parents and not on Systembolaget (Appendix 4 & 5). Bonnie stated that they are the ones who brought the children into the world and therefore should inform them about the risks of alcohol (Table 4). Bea agreed and added that the responsibility should be on the parents since they are a role model for their children (Appendix 4 & 5).

During the focus groups, the participants were asked if their purchasing behaviour would differ after watching the social marketing videos. Group twenty to twenty-five said that they would not be affected by Systembolaget's social marketing. However, Alissa mentioned that if an individual drinks irresponsible, there needs to be more than a commercial for them to stop (Appendix 4 & 5). Similarly, almost all participants from group teenage parents said that their purchasing and consumption of alcohol did not alter because of Systembolagets social marketing. Bert mentioned that there are different parameters that have affected his alcohol consumption. The only participant that thought more about her alcohol consumption was Bea. She also stated that Systembolagets social marketing made her think more about her consumption and how to relate to alcohol. She said that Systembolagets social marketing constantly reminds her of the dangers of alcohol consumption, particularly when it is associated with minors (Appendix 4 & 5). The groups were later asked if they feel that Systembolaget helps them with alcohol-related problems. There was a consensus among the groups that Systembolaget's social marketing effectively provides consumers with information and assistance regarding alcohol-related problems. However, whilst in the store, the participants in group twenty to twenty-five felt that there was little to no information about alcohol-related problems. Alex said that there was almost no information and that it could be better in the store. In the group teenage parents, Bodil said that Systembolaget has strict opening times and employees that will help you with alcohol-related problems (Appendix 4 & 5).

The two groups were also asked how they feel about Systembolaget's social marketing while employees help consumers to purchase alcohol in the store. Alissa argued that it was good to get help when purchasing alcohol. However, she did not like that there was little information about the risks in the store, and she felt that employees wanted her to purchase something. She felt that it was strange to market something and then do something opposite in the store. Anita also agreed with the statement. The other two group members in group twenty to twenty-five

said that the employees do not try to get the consumers to purchase more alcohol and that the service at Systembolaget is excellent (Appendix 4 & 5). In group teenage parents, there were mixed responses to the question. Bea, Bert, and Bonnie agreed with each other that if the consumer is the one who asks the employee for help, there is no conflict. However, if an employee would just recommend something without the consumer's initiation, they would not appreciate it. The participants' answers changed when asked if an employee would recommend an alcoholic beverage for a seventeen-year-old or an alcoholic. Bodil said that the employees probably know about these consumers and do not recommend alcohol to them. Bea mentioned that she did not know what to answer and simply said that she would not want to encourage someone to drink if they have an alcohol problem. All participants from group teenage parents argued that there is no need for employees to approach the consumers. Employees should instead only help consumers if the consumers approach the employees. Bambi said that she would go and approach the employees if she needed help and that it would be easy to find employees if you needed help. Bea added to the discussion that it is unnecessary to have employees approach consumers (Appendix 4 & 5).

4.1.2 Employees perception of Systembolaget's social marketing

Table 5

Quotes from employees about their perception of Systembolaget's social marketing

[...] a lot of focus really goes to kids and to like deal and stuff like that you have to actually supplement it with a little healthier drinking for adults too maybe. - Employee Erik

I think it's good, it really stands for the principle that the most important thing is still for the wellbeing of society and that alcohol should not affect society in a negative way. - Employee Edward

In the conceptual model (Figure 1), Systembolaget's social marketing influences its employees based on Andreasen's (2002) Six benchmark criteria theory and the upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). The employees interviewed (Table 3) thought that Systembolaget's social marketing was good but had different arguments for why (Appendix 3). Employee Erik thought Systembolaget's social marketing was good because of

its storytelling and how it creates real-life scenarios, meanwhile employee Edward thought that the social marketing was good because it shows that alcohol should not affect society negatively (Table 5). Employee Edward also mentioned that Systembolaget's social marketing aims to create sustainable drinking behaviour and that the marketing should convince consumers to purchase for the "right reasons". He said that purchasing alcohol at Systembolaget should be an experience rather than just to get intoxicated. Moreover, employee Erik mentioned that there was no huge internal push for social marketing, and the head offices mainly conducted it. The only social marketing the employees did was by brochure, for example, "Tonårsparlören". However, it was nothing they focused on, according to employee Edward (Appendix 3).

During the interviews, all of the employees mentioned that they felt that the main target of the social marketing was on minors and teenage parents (Appendix 3). The reason for this was, according to employee Erik, that there was a huge increase in alcohol consumption and purchasing connected to holidays. He claimed that he frequently saw parents come in to purchase a large quantity of alcohol during these times. Employee Edward also mentioned that there was a focus on teenage parents and minors both in Systembolaget's social marketing and in-store practices. However, he argued that he was not well-versed in Systembolaget's social marketing. Systembolaget's employees were also asked how they thought Systembolaget could improve its social marketing. The employees had different answers to this question. Employee Erik thought that the social marketing should also focus on healthy drinking for adults (Table 5), meanwhile, employee Edward thought that the social marketing should expand to other forums because consumers did not use the current ones. He gave an example of how he had never seen someone take or read their social marketing brochures, for example, "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2 & 3).

4.1.3 Employees legitimacy

Table 6

Quotes from consumers about employees legitimacy

There are always nice employees, and they know their job. - Alex (twenty to twenty-five)

Well, they still identify us, and they still identify those who are 30 years old so it feels like they are damn good at identifying. They'd rather identify too much than too little. - Alissa (twenty to twenty-five)

Of course, you have trust in the employees, but I do not understand why you do not identify every person who buys - Bambi (Teenage parents)

[...] they are very knowledgeable, so it only shows that they have attended education in their profession. - Bert (Teenage parents)

To answer research question two and four, questions about the relationship and responsibility between consumers and employees were asked. The focus groups (Table 1) and the employees (Table 3) thought that the consumers have the ultimate responsibility when it comes to alcohol consumption (Appendix 3). Employee Edward stated that teenage parents are responsible when consuming alcohol near minors. He said they could not reject consumers if they wanted to purchase alcohol. Therefore, it was their responsibility. Similarly, the focus groups stated that they have the ultimate responsibility because they are the ones purchasing the alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5). Employee Erik stated that they have a responsibility as employees when selling alcohol to consumers, such as not selling to intoxicated people or minors. That is why Systembolaget has strict regulations, according to employee Erik (Appendix 3).

Questions about employees' legitimacy were also asked to the consumers in the focus groups (Table 1). The consensus of the groups was that they trust Systembolaget and its employees (Appendix 4 & 5). Adam argued that he trusts the employees and the SOE because the employees do not only want to push the products but offer their expertise to give the best alcohol products. Alex agreed but added that consumers would purchase anyway since the SOE has a monopoly. However, all the participants in group twenty to twenty-five agreed that the

service was something good and increased employees' legitimacy (Table 6). Similarly, group teenage parents argued that employees were legit because they felt knowledgeable. Bea stated that she got identified when she was forty years old, and therefore, she trusted that the employees would identify minors as well. Similarly, Bert said that he trusts that employees will identify minors. However, group teenage parents thought it was odd that not all Systembolaget stores had the same principle when it came to identifying people in groups. Bambi argued that she thinks that everyone entering a Systembolaget store should be identified and that it should not matter who purchases the alcohol. Bert added that Systembolaget's employees should have tests on consumers to see if they are sober or not. These tests could then serve as a basis for whether the consumers should be able to purchase alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5).

4.1.4 How do employees experience selling harmful products?

Table 7

Quotes from employees about their experience selling harmful products

[...] a part of our work is also to inform, and I think it is an important part of my role. - Employee Erik

[...] customers come in and will buy no matter how we stand there. We can influence them to a certain point, they do as they please anyway and then it is better that we help them. - Employee Erik

I do not think it will be such a big dilemma because when someone asks, they will buy something, and it is regardless of whether they want something for dinner or not. [...] maybe they could choose something non-alcoholic, but it is very rare they would have chosen it if we did not recommend it anyway. - Employee Edward

To answer the research question four, questions about how it is to work at Systembolaget were asked (Appendix 3). All the employees thought that it was fun and easy to work at Systembolaget. When they were asked questions about how it is to sell harmful products, they responded that it did not bother them directly because it was just a job. The consensus was that consumers would purchase alcohol either way, and they were just there to help them (Table 7). They argued that by helping them in-store, they could control a bit of what they purchase and inform consumers about health risks when needed (Table 7). Furthermore, they argued that they had to be careful not to insult or reject the consumer because they must sell if the person

is over twenty years old. However, employees Erik and Edward stated that they could reject someone if they believe they will be dealing the alcohol to minors or if a consumer is drunk (Appendix 3).

The employees were also asked about what they feel their responsibility is at Systembolaget (Appendix 3). Employee Erik said that he feels he has a big responsibility when working. He mentioned that he takes on a role when working at Systembolaget. A part of his role is to inform the consumer about health risks and alcohol consumption behaviour (Table 7). Similarly, employee Edward argued that he also feels a responsibility but mostly connected to that they should not promote a negative alcohol behaviour. He said he felt happy living in Sweden because it would be tough to fight the ethical dilemma of selling alcohol if he lived in another country. Furthermore, he mentioned that Sweden's laws and regulations make him feel comfortable with his work practices. Employee Edward also said that he feels a responsibility to not promote purchasing behaviour, especially towards people who are alcoholics. Both employees also felt responsible for not selling alcohol to minors. They also mentioned that according to the law, they must identify people up to the age of twenty-five, but they identify people to the age of thirty to not risk selling alcohol to minors. Employee Edward also argued that he feels that the environment Systembolaget's creates and the policies it has might encourage drinking. He said he feels like it is a "grey area" (Appendix 3).

Questions about how the work has affected their drinking behaviour and view on alcohol were also asked (Appendix 3). The employees said that their work at Systembolaget has affected their drinking behaviour. Employee Erik stated that his drinking had declined both because of his age but also because he has seen how much alcohol people are purchasing. In contrast, employee Edward mentioned that he has not been drinking more or less but is pickier when choosing his alcohol. He also stated that he is more aware of the consequences alcohol brings and people around him seek his advice on alcohol. Employee Erik argued that his toughest combination is that he is a student, which usually means partying and that he is working at Systembolaget (Appendix 3).

4.2 Decoupling

Table 8

Quotes from employees and consumers related to decoupling

I would say the basic idea is that the responsibility lies with the parents. [...]. Systembolaget should not be responsible. - Adam (twenty to twenty-five)

[...] then it is my responsibility and make sure to inform my own children, it is not anyone else's responsibility really. - Bonnie (teenage parents)

[...] after all, they are the consumers, they may have the ultimate responsibility. - Employee Erik

The conceptual model (Figure 1) described how Systembolaget might be shifting responsibility towards its consumer based on market-based and organisational-based decoupling (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). The shift of responsibility was asked about during the interviews and focus groups (Appendix 3, 4 & 5). All consumers (Table 2) and employees (Table 3) interviewed argued that the responsibility of alcohol consumption and purchasing alcohol were on the consumers (Appendix 4 & 5). Adam mentioned that they have the responsibility because they are the ones who purchase it and consume it, and all the other members of group twenty to twenty-five agreed. Similarly, Bodil argued that Systembolaget does not shift responsibility to the consumer because they already had the main responsibility. She also mentioned that Systembolaget does a good job of reminding the parents about the dangers of alcohol and not to deal alcohol to minors. Bonnie agreed but added that it is their children and, therefore, they carry the responsibility for them (Table 8). She also added that their responsibility was to convince their children not to consume alcohol if they are not of legal drinking age (Appendix 4). Similarly, employee Erik (Table 3) said that consumers have the main responsibility (Table 8). However, he felt a personal responsibility when he sold “a lot” of alcohol to a parent with their children in the store. Employee Edward also mentioned that he has a responsibility when he sells alcohol, however, it was up to the consumer to purchase and consume it. All the employees (Table 3) and consumers (Table 2) argued that Systembolaget does not decouple because the responsibility already was on the consumers (Appendix 3, 4 & 5).

5. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, an analysis and discussion of the results of the findings chapter will be presented. First, there will be a discussion about how focus group participants (consumers) perceived Systembolaget's social marketing. A discussion of how the two groups were impacted differently because of the targeting of Systembolaget's social marketing. This will be connected to the Six benchmark criteria theory (Andreasen, 2002) and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). Second, employees' perception will be discussed connected to Mordeno's et al. (2019) study on sin industry employees and the Six benchmark criteria theory (Andreasen, 2002) and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). Third, consumers' perception of employees' legitimacy will be analysed and discussed based on the focus groups. There will also be a discussion based on employees' trustworthiness connected to identification and responsibility. Last, employees' experience selling harmful products will be discussed and connected to upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019).

5.1 Consumer perception of Systembolaget's social marketing

The findings indicated that the targeted consumers of Systembolaget's social marketing perceived it positively. The consumers that were not targeted were not aware of the social marketing interventions. As presented in the theoretical framework, the main objective of social marketing is to change consumer behaviour for the better (Kubacki et al., 2015). However, suppose some consumers are not aware of Systembolaget's social marketing. Then consumers will not change their behaviour which asks the question, why is Systembolaget not focusing their efforts on other groups than teenage parents? One reason for this could be that the younger generation today is more aware of their health rather than the older generation (Chang et al., 2016). Therefore, Systembolaget might choose to market to other groups rather than millennials (ages 21-37). As mentioned previously, consumers affected by social marketing perceived it well. This perception could be because of upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing, according to Wood (2019). Downstream social marketing focuses directly on the individual, whilst upstream social marketing focuses on the environment around the individual (Wood, 2019). Another reason could be that a sin industry often has a bad public image and tries to justify its harmful products through CSR reporting (Dhandhanian

& O'Higgins, 2021). The sin industry often tries to change its bad public image (Sharma & Song, 2018), which Systembolaget has achieved.

The findings indicated that the consumer groups thought that the service and environment at Systembolaget was good. According to employee Erik the service and environment are good because Systembolaget emphasises the environment in the store. Advertisements are another way Systembolaget's social marketing affects their consumers. The advertisements often showed real-life scenarios where a minor and a parent purchases alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5). Group teenage parents felt this connection towards the kid, which affected them. Thus, Systembolaget has advertisements that are targeted at the individual and choose a good environment that might create upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019).

To have an effective social marketing intervention, there is a need for the Six benchmark criteria theory, according to Andreasen (2002). Our study only focused on three out of the six benchmarks. The first benchmark is exchange, and it is used to see what consumers have to offer to gain from social marketing interventions (Andreasen, 2002). The findings indicated that the focus groups did not have to exchange anything to receive the benefit of Systembolaget's social marketing. For example, group teenage parents mentioned that it was fairly easy to receive "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2). The second benchmark is formative research, and it is used to see what research Systembolaget does on their consumers (Andreasen, 2002). Employee Erik said that the aim from Systembolaget is on teenage parents, and he wants Systembolaget to focus on other groups. The focus groups revealed that twenty to twenty-five-year-olds are not a targeted group whilst teenage parents are. However, both the employees and the consumers wanted more social marketing targeting other groups. This revealed that Systembolaget might not have formative research on some of their consumer groups, for example, twenty to twenty-five-year-olds. The last criteria is behavioural change, and it is used to see how organisations use social marketing interventions to create behavioural change (Andreasen, 2002). As mentioned previously, the goal of social marketing is to change behaviour (Kubacki et al., 2015). The findings suggested that even though Systembolaget uses upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing and the Six benchmark criteria theory, it might not change the consumers' behaviour. Only one of the nine consumers said they thought more about their consumption behaviours after watching the advertisements.

According to group twenty to twenty-five, one reason was that they were not the targeted group and had never seen the advertisement.

The theoretical framework presents that upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing with the Six benchmark criteria theory is most effective when conducting social marketing (Gordon, 2013). According to Gordon (2013), the theories complement each other and are better used together. The findings showed that Systembolaget is targeting the individual, the environment and uses some of the Six benchmark criterias. However, even though both theories are used, there is still no effect on consumer behaviour. When Almestahiri et al. (2017) did a literature review within the smoking industry, almost all studies that used upstream social marketing, downstream social marketing or the Six benchmark criteria theory showed a decrease in smoking. Alissa tried to explain why Systembolaget cannot change the behaviour of its consumer with an example that irresponsible drinkers will not change their behaviour because of an advertisement. Despite this, Jones et al. (2017) pointed out that social marketing is a key factor in achieving positive drinking behaviours in both the short term and long term. The findings indicated that Systembolaget must do more than just make the consumers perceive the SOE's social marketing as something positive. It also must create social marketing that is effective in changing behaviour. The findings showed that an increase in Systembolaget's social marketing has only been positive in the eyes of the consumers. The focus groups agreed that because social marketing encourages consumers to consume less, increased social marketing cannot be harmful. Systembolaget has put a clear purpose of their social marketing inside the consumer's mind, resulting in a positive perception. This view goes against Kubacki and Szablewska (2019). They stated that social marketing is being criticised because it can be seen as expensive, unethical, manipulative or a way to control people socially. This was not something that the customers considered.

The consumers were also asked if they feel that Systembolaget helps them with alcohol related problems. The findings showed that Systembolaget's social marketing helps consumers with information and assistance. For example, Bodil mentioned that employees will help consumers and that it has strict opening times (Appendix 4). This help and assistance might be connected to upstream social marketing because of the environmental change (Wood, 2019). Systembolaget has provided its consumers with an environment that reduces alcohol consumption according to the focus groups (Appendix 4 & 5). However, group twenty to

twenty-five stated that whilst in the store, there was little information about the risks (Appendix 5).

The consumers were also asked how they felt about Systembolaget's social marketing, and at the same time employees help consumers to purchase alcohol. The two groups responded differently to the question. Alissa and Anita from group twenty to twenty-five were disappointed that Systembolaget marketed something and then did something different in the store. They also mentioned that there was little information about the risks in the store and that the employees tried to push them into purchasing something. This was only a feeling due to the employees mentioning that they are not allowed to get consumers to buy more. One of the reasons for this could be because Systembolaget is only social marketing in advertisements but not in the store itself. Group teenage parents had no problem with employees helping consumers if the consumer initiated the conversation. This difference between the groups could be because health perception differs between ages (Chang et al., 2016). Group twenty to twenty-five are younger and may therefore be more uncomfortable with Systembolaget's absence of social marketing in the store. Another reason could be that the sin industry uses social marketing to legitimise its business (Dhandhanian & O'Higgins, 2021). Furthermore, group teenage parents agreed that they would not appreciate it if an employee would recommend a product without a consumer asking for it. However, the employees mentioned that service is important in their work and that they should approach consumers. Thus, there could be a conflict where the consumer feels pressured by the employee's service. In the findings, group teenage parents argued that employees do not need to initiate a conversation with consumers.

5.2 Employees' perception of Systembolaget's social marketing

Research question three of this study was to understand how Systembolaget's employees perceived Systembolaget's social marketing. According to the findings, the employees perceived it positively. Similarly, to the consumers, the employees (Table 3) thought it was good because of the information the social marketing interventions are trying to mediate. Employee Erik argued that it was good because of the storytelling in the social marketing, meanwhile employee Edward mentioned that the social marketing is trying to create a sustainable drinking behaviour. This might be related to the purpose of social marketing interventions to change consumer behaviour (Andreasen, 2002). Systembolaget's employees

were also asked what role they had in Systembolaget's social marketing. Except for informing consumers who inquire about alcohol problems, all employees stated that they had no instructions or involvement in social marketing. This could be an upstream social marketing approach because Systembolaget is changing the environment around the consumer. For example, employee Edward said that they hand out "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2) and inform consumers about the health risks of alcohol. According to Wood (2019), this should improve consumer behaviour, and allowing employees to distribute social marketing can be viewed as an exchange under the Six benchmark criteria theory (Andreasen, 2002).

As previously mentioned, the employees (Table 3) agreed with the consumers that Systembolaget's target group of its social marketing interventions is parents. Employee Edward, therefore, stated that he thinks Systembolaget should update their forums on how social marketing is delivered. Similarly, employee Erik argued that Systembolaget could improve its social marketing by complementing it with healthier drinks. Both suggestions could improve Systembolaget's formative research and exchange criteria to increase the chances of successful social marketing (Andreasen, 2002).

Employees in the sin industry were more likely to pick up bad behaviour, according to Mordeno et al. (2019). This study showed the opposite. All the employees argued that they either had been drinking less or had not changed their drinking behaviour. This might be because this study was conducted in the alcohol industry, while Mordeno et al.'s (2019) study was conducted in the gambling industry. However, employee Erik argued that he had been drinking less because he had seen all the negative consequences of alcohol and employee Edward argued that he is picky when choosing alcohol. The reason why he is pickier was probably because of the education and training Systembolaget's employees get at Systembolaget. This might also be connected to how Systembolaget uses a combination of upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing. Since the environment around both the consumers and employees is about reducing alcohol consumption and knowing the risks according to the employees, it might impact employees positively (Appendix 3).

5.3 Employees legitimacy

To answer research question two, questions about employee's legitimacy were asked. The findings showed that the consumer groups (Table 2) trust Systembolaget's employees. The

reason for this might be because the consumers felt that the employees do not only want to push the harmful products but also give the consumers the best service. The employees also felt knowledgeable, and the service that is provided increased their legitimacy according to the consumers. The finding was different from O'Connor et al. (2020) study. In that study, the employees were seen as hypocritical when they did something positive. The employees at Systembolaget were not seen as hypocritical, and the consumers trusted them. Systembolaget has created an environment in which employees distribute alcohol consumption brochures to consumers, and the employees are not perceived as hypocritical despite selling harmful products according to the focus groups (Appendix 4 & 5). This could be the use of upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). This social marketing has affected both the individual and their environment resulting in consumers trusting the employees. Another reason could be that exchange in the Six benchmark criteria theory is low, which means that consumers can easily receive the benefits from Systembolaget's social marketing (Andreasen, 2002). The only factor that made consumers question the employee's legitimacy was that Systembolaget had different policies depending on which city they were located in.

The consumers were also asked if they trust employees to identify minors. The result showed that the consumers trust employees to identify minors at Systembolaget. Thus, Systembolaget might have used upstream social marketing through policies and regulations, which has created trustworthiness in the employees (Kennedy et al., 2018). Bambi argued that everyone should be identified at Systembolaget, which would create new policies and regulations. In addition, Bert added that Systembolaget's employees should test consumers if they think they are intoxicated. These suggestions from the focus groups align with organisational-based decoupling and upstream social marketing (Alexius & Grossi, 2018; Kennedy et al., 2018). Thus, Systembolaget could use decoupling and upstream social marketing to change its policies and regulations. This would put more responsibility on Systembolaget and its employees.

A question on whether Systembolaget puts the most responsibility on the consumer was also asked. The results indicated that most responsibility is on the consumer. Adam also mentioned that if Systembolaget can stop people from purchasing, it would have the most responsibility. This means that Systembolaget might have used market-based decoupling to put the responsibility on consumers (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). This is close to Alexius and Grossi's (2018) study, which gave an example of how Svenska Spel educated consumers about

gambling problems which put the responsibility on the consumers instead. Systembolaget could have done something similar where they educate and put out brochures to help consumers. This has created the perception in consumers' minds that they have the most responsibility (Appendix 4 & 5). However, Systembolaget could also use organisational based decoupling to put most of the responsibility on themselves, which could be done by CSR policies or CSR teams (Alexius & Grossi, 2018). For example, Systembolaget could identify every person that walks into a Systembolaget store and reject consumers who purchase too much alcohol. This aligns with what the consumers in the focus group discussed. Similarly, employee Erik said it was hard to see parents purchase large quantities of alcohol. The employees could then be able to reject them from purchasing and minimise the dilemma (Appendix 3).

5.4 Employees experience selling harmful products.

How employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products is an important topic adding to this study. Mordeno et al. (2019) meant that selling harmful products would impact the employees negatively working within a sin industry. However, according to the findings, the employees were not affected when selling the harmful products. The employees thought they were only doing their job and that the consumers would purchase alcohol either way. Employee Edward said that he would like to impact the consumers more, but it is always up to the consumer what they purchase in the end. Furthermore, the employees also argued that they could control a bit of what consumers purchase by offering service. However, employee Edward said that the environment Systembolaget creates around alcohol, with the clean stores and nice employees, might, instead of reducing alcohol consumption, increase it. He said that the environment can be seen as a “grey area” and that Systembolaget’s policies might encourage drinking. This means that maybe the upstream social marketing might create the opposite of what it is supposed to. However, both the employees and consumers thought that social marketing positively changes people's behaviour.

The responsibility of the employees when selling alcohol to consumers was also discussed during the interviews. The findings revealed that the employees felt responsible when selling alcohol. However, it was mostly personal since they could not reject someone to purchase alcohol if they were over twenty years old and not drunk. Their main responsibility is not to

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sell alcohol to minors or drunk people. In addition, they felt responsible for not encouraging drinking behaviour to alcoholist because they already have a bad relationship with alcohol.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, there will be a summary of the thesis and suggestions for future research. First, a summary of the thesis processes will be presented. Second, conclusions to the findings and analysis will be explained. Third, the thesis's theoretical contribution will be uncovered. Fourth, there will be a practical contribution to how academics and businesses can use the thesis. Fifth, a critical review and future research section will be presented.

6.1 Summary of thesis

The purpose of this study is to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. The sub purpose is to understand how the employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and how they perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. To fulfil the purpose and sub purpose of the study an abductive approach was used. A conceptual model was constructed based on the literature review. The conceptual model builds on three important spheres consisting of Systembolaget, employees, and consumers (Figure 1). The conceptual model explained how consumers and its employees perceive Systembolaget's social marketing interventions' impact. The social marketing interventions and perceptions of employees and consumers were then explained by Andreassen's (2002) Six benchmark criteria theory and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). The conceptual model was then used to construct three interview guides, one for the interviews with employees and one for each focus group. The interviews and focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis and then presented in the findings. The study's findings indicated that consumers and employees perceived Systembolaget's social marketing as something good even though it did not change their behaviour. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that Systembolaget's employees do not think they are selling harmful products (alcohol) because they are only doing their job. The findings of the focus groups indicated that consumers trusted Systembolaget's employees. However, they thought Systembolaget's policies about identifying consumers are weird and should be the same all over the country (Appendix 4 & 5).

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study is to understand how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. The sub purpose is to understand how the employees at Systembolaget experience selling harmful products and how they perceive Systembolaget's social marketing. We believe that this study revealed answers to all research questions.

First, it was revealed that Systembolaget's consumers perceive its social marketing interventions as something positive and do not mind if it markets more. This might be because Systembolaget uses downstream social marketing to directly affect the consumer and uses upstream social marketing to change the environment (Wood, 2019). However, according to Kubacki et al. (2015), social marketing aims to change consumers' behaviour which Systembolaget's social marketing interventions did not do according to the consumers (Appendix 4 & 5). Consumers between the ages of twenty to twenty-five had never heard or seen anything of the social marketing interventions, likely because Systembolaget's target audience is parents. In contrast, the teenage parents had all heard of Systembolaget's social marketing interventions, and some had even received "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2), which meant that Systembolaget makes the exchange criteria accessible. Therefore, we argue that Systembolaget is reaching its target audience but might not accomplish behavioural change, which is the purpose of social marketing. Based on the analysis we draw the conclusion that Systembolaget should do more formative research on their consumers.

Second, this study suggests that Systembolaget's employees perceive its social marketing interventions as something positive. The employees thought the social marketing interventions mediate positive things to the public and encourage sustainable drinking behaviour. Employees were also asked if their own drinking behaviour was impacted either negatively or positively because they work at Systembolaget. According to Mordeno et al. (2019), employees working in a sin industry often pick up bad behaviour from the industry they are working in. However, the employees were only impacted positively by Systembolaget. We conclude that this is because Systembolaget has built an environment with clean stores and no cold drinks to purchase in-store, which might be connected with upstream social marketing (Wood, 2019). Third, the findings indicate that consumers trust Systembolaget's employees. All consumers trusted that Systembolaget's employees would identify minors and reject people that are intoxicated. However, when confronted that Systembolaget's employees have a tough time identifying consumers in groups and that Systembolaget's stores have different policies on how to identify consumers which made the teenage parents sceptical. We draw the conclusion that Systembolaget should check its policies otherwise consumers might lose trust in Systembolaget's employees and the SOE.

Fourth, this study suggests that employees thought it was simple to sell harmful products such as alcohol. The employees argued that they were only doing their job and that consumers would

purchase alcohol either way. The findings indicate that employees wanted to help consumers more but felt restricted by the policies of Systembolaget (Appendix 3). The employees could only offer their expertise in-store, and in that way, they feel they could control a bit of what the consumer purchases. We draw the conclusion that Systembolaget can alter its policies to give more responsibility to its employees.

Fifth, the findings indicate that two consumers felt strange about Systembolaget's social marketing, and at the same time employees helped consumers to purchase alcohol (Appendix 4 & 5). However, all the other participants did not feel this way. They were happy about the help and service from the employees. This might indicate that it is hard to argue that a paradox does exist but the contradiction between actions from Systembolaget creates a dilemma in some consumers' minds. We draw the conclusion that Systembolaget should check its in-store practices so that it does not contradict its social marketing. Last, the findings indicate that consumers are experiencing that the most responsibility is on them. This was because consumers are the ones who purchase and consume the alcohol. However, based on the findings Systembolaget might be using market-based decoupling to shift responsibility to the consumers. For example, they are handing out "Tonårsparlören" (Appendix 2) to teenage parents which could be a form of market-based decoupling. We conclude that Systembolaget does not decouple according to the findings because the responsibility lies on the consumers but there are indications of market-based decoupling.

6.3 Theoretical contribution

Previous literature mainly focused on how organisations use the different social marketing theories to successfully change people's behaviour and how consumers perceive social marketing in the sin industry, but not directly connected to a SOE. Therefore, we argue that the thesis contributes with a new perspective on how consumers perceive social marketing from a SOE. The thesis also gives new insights on how upstream social marketing is an important factor in creating an environment that promotes positive behavioural change. The study contributes with knowledge on how the Six benchmark criteria theory and upstream social marketing and downstream social marketing may not achieve behavioural change as it intends. Moreover, in contrast to Mordeno et al. (2019), the thesis shows that employees in a sin industry may not pick up bad behaviours simply because harmful products surround them.

6.4 Practical contribution

This study contributes to insights on how consumers and employees perceive social marketing interventions. For Systembolaget and other sin industry SOE this study contributes to knowledge on what is important when launching a social marketing intervention. If consumers do not perceive the social marketing interventions well and do not acknowledge it, the social marketing interventions might fail. Systembolaget's social marketing interventions, for example, did not change the alcohol behaviour of the consumers it was attempting to reach, but it did make some consumers think about their behaviour. Demonstrating that organisations must do more than just social marketing to change damaging behaviour. This study also contributes to new insight on how organisations can use upstream social marketing to create a good environment around both employees and consumers to create a positive alcohol behaviour.

6.5 Critical review & future research

This study explored how consumers and employees perceived Systembolaget's social marketing. It also explored employees' legitimacy and how they experience selling harmful products. The study contradicts Mordeno et al.'s (2019) study on employees' behaviour within a sin industry. Therefore, future research could explore in more detail how employee's behaviour changes when working in a sin industry. In addition, this study involved two consumer groups and two employees interviewed. Thus, other employees and consumer groups could give new perspectives on the same study. Future research could also explore if there is a correlation between women, men, and age groups in alcohol behaviour as our study did not have enough participants (Chang et al., 2016; Weightman et al., 2019). We did not have access to Systembolaget's head offices that are controlling its social marketing which could offer a new perspective. Therefore, future research could explore employees working with Systembolaget's social marketing to gain a deeper understanding of what Systembolaget is trying to accomplish. Furthermore, this study showed indications to a potential paradox between Systembolaget's social marketing and its in-store practices. Thus, future research could study how consumers perceive Systembolaget's social marketing and if there is a paradox between it and the in-store practices. Future research could also study if Systembolaget consumers have the main responsibility or if Systembolaget decouples similarly to Svenska Spel (Alexius & Grossi, 2018).

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Appendix 1 - Cigarette package



Source: VOX, (2016). VOX. Downloaded 2022-03-25, from <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/2/11818692/plain-packaging-policy-us-australia>

Appendix 2 - Tonårsparlören



Source: IQ, (2022). IQ. Downloaded 2022-03-25, from <https://www.iq.se/idebank/tema/tonarsparloren-underlag-for-insatser/>

Appendix 3 - Interview guide with employees (Swedish)

Öppningsfrågor

- Presentera dig själv
- Hur länge har du jobbat på Systembolaget?
- Vad är din roll på Systembolaget?

Inledande frågor

- Vad är hållbart drickande för dig?
- Hur kommer det sig att du arbetar på Systembolaget?

Frågor om Systembolagets sociala hållbarhets marknadsföring

- Hur ser du på Systembolagets sociala hållbarhets marknadsföring? (Social marketing)
- Vad anser du Systembolaget gör bra när det kommer till deras sociala marknadsföring?
- Vad anser du Systembolaget skulle kunna göra bättre när det kommer till deras sociala marknadsföring?

Frågor om att jobba på Systembolaget

På Systembolaget finns inga kyllda alkoholprodukter eller kampanjer på alkohol för att minska konsumtionen

- Vad är eran roll i detta?
- Ändå ger ni tips på olika alkoholprodukter, hur känns detta?
- Kan detta skapa ett köpbeteende?

- Har du några direktiv när du "säljer" alkohol?
- Känner du ett ansvar som personal på Systembolaget?
 - Varför, varför inte?
- Vad har du för ansvar för att förändra konsumenters alkoholvanor?
- Anser du att kunden har ett ansvar när det kommer till att köpa alkohol?

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- Varför/varför inte?
- Är detta ett delat ansvar eller var för sig?
- Vad gör du för att underlätta så att konsumenten kan få hjälp av hållbarhets marknadsföringen?
- Känner du att ditt arbete på Systembolaget har påverkat dina alkoholvanor?
 - Varför/varför inte?
 - Agera du annorlunda utanför jobbet?
 - Varför/varför inte?
- Agerar du annorlunda beroende på vilken konsumenten är som vill köpa alkohol?
 - Varför/ Varför inte?
- Hur är det att sälja alkohol när man vet vilka konsekvenser det kan få?

Ni är statligt ägda vilket betyder att ni har ett ansvar mot staten att gå med vinst samtidigt som ni har ett samhällsansvar att sälja mindre alkohol.

- Känner du av någon påverkan från samhället eller staten? Varför?

Avslutning

- Har du något du känner att vi har missat eller något du vill lägga till?

Question	Concept	Reference
Hur ser du på Systembolagets sociala hållbarhets marknadsföring? (Social marketing)	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
Vad anser du Systembolaget gör bra när det kommer till deras sociala marknadsföring?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
Vad anser du Systembolaget skulle kunna göra bättre när det kommer till deras sociala marknadsföring?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
På Systembolaget finns inga kyllda alkoholprodukter eller kampanjer på alkohol för att minska konsumtionen		
Vad är eran roll i detta?	Social marketing Upstream/downstream	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)

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Ändå ger ni tips på olika alkoholprodukter, hur känns detta?	Paradox? Decoupling	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021) Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Kan detta skapa ett köpbeteende?	Paradox? Downstream	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021) Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Har du några direktiv när du "säljer" alkohol?	Upstream/downstream Behavioral change	Gordon (2013) Wood (2019) Andreasen (2002)
Känner du ett ansvar som personal på Systembolaget? Varför, varför inte?	Decoupling	Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Vad har du för ansvar för att förändra konsumenters alkoholvanor?	Upstream/downstream Decoupling	Gordon (2013) Wood (2019) Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Anser du att kunden har ett ansvar när det kommer till att köpa alkohol? Varför/varför inte?	Decoupling	Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Är detta ett delat ansvar eller var för sig?	Decoupling	Alexius and Grossi (2018)
Vad gör du för att underlätta så att konsumenten kan få hjälp av hållbarhets marknadsföringen?	Exchange Behavioural change	Andreasen (2002)
Känner du att ditt arbete på Systembolaget har påverkat dina alkoholvanor? Varför/varför inte?	Sin industry employees	Morden et al. (2019)
Agera du annorlunda utanför jobbet? Varför/varför inte?	Sin industry employees	Morden et al. (2019)
Agerar du annorlunda beroende på vilken konsumenten är som vill köpa alkohol? Varför/ Varför inte?	Formative research	Andreasen (2002)
Hur är det att sälja alkohol när man vet vilka konsekvenser det kan få?	Paradox? Sin industry	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021)
Ni är statligt ägda vilket betyder att ni har ett ansvar mot staten att gå med vinst samtidigt som ni har ett samhällsansvar att sälja mindre alkohol.		

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Känner du av någon påverkan från samhället eller staten? Varför?	Decoupling	Alexius & Grossi (2018)
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Appendix 4 - Focus group guide - Teenage parents (Swedish)

Formaliteter

1. Datum (Någon gång under vecka 19)
2. Välkomna alla deltagare
3. Förklara upplägget och vår roll som moderator
4. Informera angående inspelning. Muntligt samtycke.

Öppningsfrågor

- Vi börjar med att alla presenterar sig själva, berättar hur gamla man är och hur er livssituation ser ut.
- Hur ser ni på Systembolaget?
- Hur tycker ni Systembolaget hjälper er eller informerar er angående alkoholrelaterade problem?

Diskussionsfrågor angående Systembolagets hållbara marknadsföring

Förklaring av social marketing. Social marketing översatt på svenska: social marknadsföring eller hållbar marknadsföring, är något som företag använder för att ändra personens beteende för det bättre. Detta kan exempelvis vara att sluta röka. Vi fokuserar dock på sin industry (synd industrin), mer specifikt på alkohol och Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring.

- Efter förklarat detta begrepp är det någon som känner till Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring?
- Vad tror ni syftet är med Systembolagets marknadsföring?
- Hur upplever ni Systembolagets marknadsföring?
 - Varför/varför inte?

Vi har sett en ökad marknadsföring från Systembolaget under de senaste åren.

- Vad tycker ni om detta?

Case 1: Tonårsparlören och visar båda videorna

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6CDgRp-10>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06x7e9s32_g

Tonårsparlören är en broschyr Systembolaget ger ut till exempelvis tonårsföräldrar där man får hjälp hur man ska agera när det gäller alkohol och tonåringar.

- Hur känner och tänker ni efter att ha sett detta? Skapar detta ett förtroende till Systembolaget?
- Vad tycker ni detta initiativ kräver av er?
- Tycker ni att Systembolaget sätter det största ansvaret på föräldrarna genom denna marknadsföring?
 - Varför/varför inte?
 - Är detta bra eller dåligt?
- Efter att ha hört om Systembolagets sociala marknadsföring skulle detta ändra ert beteende? Varför/Varför inte?
- Tycker ni Systembolaget kunde gjort något mer för att hjälpa er som tonårsföräldrar?

Ni går in i butiken efter att ha fått information om Systembolagets hållbarhet marknadsföring. En i Systembolagets personal kommer fram till er som frågar om ni behöver hjälp med något. Det hela slutar i att ni får ett bra tips på ett gott rött vin som ni sedan köper hem.

- Hur känner ni inför detta efter all information?
- Hade svaren ändrats om det skulle vara någon annan som handlade exempelvis era barn när de var i 17 årsåldern?

Frågor om personal

- Hur ser ni på trovärdigheten på Systembolagets personal?
- Litar ni på att Systembolagets personal tar legitimation på minderåriga?
 - Varför/varför inte?

Avslutningsvis

- Hur ser ni på Systembolaget efter dessa diskussioner?

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- Tycker ni att vi har missat något eller något ni vill lägga till?

Question	Concept	Reference
Efter förklarat detta begrepp är det någon som känner till Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
Vad tror ni syftet är med Systembolagets marknadsföring?	Social marketing Behavioral change Downstream/upstream	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015) Andreasen (2002) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Hur upplever ni Systembolagets marknadsföring? Varför/varför inte?	Social marketing Downstream/upstream	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Vi har sett en ökad marknadsföring från Systembolaget under de senaste åren.		
Vad tycker ni om detta?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
<p>Case 1: Tonårsparlören</p> <p>Tonårsparlören är en broschyr Systembolaget ger ut till exempelvis tonårsföräldrar där man får hjälp hur man ska agera när det gäller alkohol och tonåringar.</p>		
Hur känner och tänker ni efter att ha sett detta? Skapar detta ett förtroende till Systembolaget?	Decoupling Downstream/Upstream	Alexius & Grossi (2018) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Vad tycker ni detta initiativ kräver av er?	Exchange	Andreasen (2002)
Tycker ni att Systembolaget sätter det största ansvaret på föräldrarna genom denna marknadsföring? Varför/varför inte? Är detta bra eller dåligt?	Decoupling	Alexius & Grossi (2018)
Efter att ha hört om Systembolagets sociala marknadsföring skulle detta ändra ert beteende? Varför/Varför inte?	Behavioral change Downstream/Upstream	Andreasen (2002) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Tycker ni Systembolaget kunde gjort något mer för att hjälpa er som tonårsföräldrar?	Downstream/Upstream	Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)

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<p>Ni går in i butiken efter att ha fått information om Systembolagets hållbarhet marknadsföring. En i Systembolagets personal kommer fram till er som frågar om ni behöver hjälp med något. Det hela slutar i att ni får ett bra tips på ett gott rött vin som ni sedan köper hem.</p>		
Hur känner ni inför detta efter all information?	Paradox? Decoupling Exchange	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021) Alexius & Grossi (2018) Andreasen (2002)
Hade svaren ändrats om det skulle vara någon annan som handlade exempelvis era barn när de var i 17 årsåldern?	Paradox?	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021)
Frågor om personal		
Hur ser ni på trovärdigheten på Systembolagets personal?	Sin industry Legitimacy	Cahan et al. (2015)
Litar ni på att Systembolagets personal tar legitimation på minderåriga? Varför/varför inte?	Sin industry Legitimacy	Cahan et al. (2015)

Appendix 5 - Focus group guide - 20-25 year old's (Swedish)

Formaliteter

- Datum (Någon gång under vecka 19)
- Välkomna alla deltagare
- Förklara upplägget och vår roll som moderator
- Informera angående inspelning. Muntligt samtycke.

Öppningsfrågor

- Vi börjar med att alla presenterar sig själva, berättar hur gamla man är och hur er livssituation ser ut.
- Hur ser ni på Systembolaget?
- Hur tycker ni Systembolaget hjälper er eller informerar er angående alkoholrelaterade problem?

Diskussionsfrågor angående Systembolagets hållbara marknadsföring

Förklaring av social marketing. Social marketing översatt på svenska: social marknadsföring eller hållbar marknadsföring, är något som företag använder för att ändra personens beteende för det bättre. Detta kan exempelvis vara att sluta röka. Vi fokuserar dock på sin industry (synd industrin), mer specifikt på alkohol och Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring.

- Efter förklarat detta begrepp är det någon som känner till Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring?
- Vad tror ni syftet är med Systembolagets marknadsföring?
- Hur upplever ni Systembolagets marknadsföring?
 - Varför/varför inte?

Vi har sett en ökad marknadsföring från Systembolaget under de senaste åren.

- Vad tycker ni om detta?

Case 1: Visar båda videorna och exempel på tonårsparlören

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6CDgRp-10>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06x7e9s32_g

Tonårsparlören är en broschyr Systembolaget ger ut till exempelvis tonårsföräldrar där man får hjälp hur man ska agera när det gäller alkohol och tonåringar.

- Hur upplever ni dessa videor?
 - Varför/varför inte?
- Hade ni handlar mer eller mindre efter att ha sett dessa videor?
 - Varför/varför inte?
- Efter att ha sett videorna vem har ansvaret angående alkoholkonsumtion?

Dessa videon visar tydligt att Systembolaget inte uppmuntrar att köpa alkohol, men samtidigt när ni går in i butiken får ni hjälp med att välja alkohol.

- Hur ser ni på detta?
- Ändrar detta er uppfattning?
- Hur tycker ni Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring ändrar ert beteende?

Frågor om personal

- Hur ser ni på trovärdigheten på Systembolagets personal?
- Litar ni på att Systembolagets personal tar legitimation på minderåriga?
 - Varför/varför inte?

Avslutningsvis

- Hur ser ni på Systembolaget efter dessa diskussioner?
- Tycker ni att vi har missat något eller något ni vill lägga till?

Tack för er tid och ert engagemang

Question	Concept	Reference
Efter förklarat detta begrepp är det någon som känner till Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)

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Vad tror ni syftet är med Systembolagets marknadsföring?	Social marketing Behavioral change Downstream/upstream	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015) Andreasen (2002) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Hur upplever ni Systembolagets marknadsföring? Varför/varför inte?	Social marketing Downstream/upstream	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Vi har sett en ökad marknadsföring från Systembolaget under de senaste åren.		
Vad tycker ni om detta?	Social marketing	Witvorapong et al. (2019) Kubacki et al. (2015)
Case 1: Visar båda videorna och exempel på tonårsparlören		
Hur upplever ni dessa videorna? Varför/varför inte?	Behavioral change Downstream/upstream	Andreasen (2002) Gordon (2013) Wood (2019)
Hade ni handlat mer eller mindre efter att ha sett dessa videorna? Varför/varför inte?	Behavioral change	Andreasen (2002)
Efter att ha sett videorna vem har ansvaret angående alkohol konsumtion.	Decoupling	Alexius & Grossi (2018)
Dessa videon visar tydligt att Systembolaget inte uppmuntrar att köpa alkohol, men samtidigt när ni går in i butiken får ni hjälp med att välja alkohol.		
Hur ser ni på detta?	Paradox? Decoupling	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021) Alexius & Grossi (2018)
Ändrar detta er uppfattning?	Paradox?	Dhandhanian & O'Higgins (2021)
Hur tycker ni Systembolagets hållbarhets marknadsföring ändrar ert beteende?	Upstream/Downstream Behavioural change	Gordon (2013) Wood (2019) Andreasen (2002)
Frågor om personal		
Hur ser ni på trovärdigheten på Systembolagets personal?	Sin industry Legitimacy	Cahan et al. (2015)
Litar ni på att Systembolagets personal tar legitimation på minderåriga? Varför/varför inte?	Sin industry Legitimacy	Cahan et al. (2015)

Appendix 6 - Interview guide with employees (English)

Opening questions

- Present yourself
- How long have you been working at Systembolaget?
- What is your role at Systembolaget?

Introductory questions

- What is sustainable drinking for you?
- How come you work at the Systembolaget?

Questions about Systembolaget's social sustainability marketing

- How do you view Systembolaget's social marketing?
- What do you think Systembolaget does well when it comes to their social marketing?
- What do you think Systembolaget could do better when it comes to their social marketing?

Questions about working at the systembolaget

At the Systembolaget, there are no cooled alcohol products or campaigns on alcohol to reduce consumption

- What is your role in this?
- Still, you give tips on different alcohol products, how does this feel?
- Can this create a buying behaviour?

- Do you have any directives when you "sell" alcohol?
- Do you feel a responsibility as a staff member at Systembolaget?
 - Why, why not?
- What are your responsibilities for changing consumers' alcohol habits?
- Do you think the customer has a responsibility when it comes to buying alcohol?

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- Why / why not?
- Is this a shared responsibility or separate?
- What do you do to make it easier for consumers to get help from sustainability marketing?
- Do you feel that your work at Systembolaget has affected your alcohol habits?
 - Why, why not?
 - Do you act differently outside of work?
 - Why / why not?
- Do you act differently depending on which consumer wants to buy alcohol?
 - Why / Why not?
- What is it like to sell alcohol when you know the consequences?

You are state-owned, which means that you have a responsibility to the state to make profit at the same time as you have a social responsibility to sell less alcohol.

- Do you feel any influence from society or the state? Why?

Finally

- Do you have something you feel we have missed or something you want to add?

Appendix 7 - Focus group guide - Teenage parents (English)

Formalities

- Date: 12th of May 2022
- Welcome all participants
- Explain the structure and our role as moderator
- Inform about recording. Oral consent.

Opening questions

- We start with everyone introducing themselves, telling them how old you are and what your life situation looks like.
- How do you view Systembolaget?
- How do you think Systembolaget helps you or informs you regarding alcohol-related problems?

Discussion questions regarding Systembolaget's sustainable marketing

Explanation of social marketing. Social marketing translated into Swedish: social marknadsföring or hållbar marknadsföring, is something that companies use to change the person's behaviour for the better. This could be, for example, quitting smoking. However, we focus on the sin industry, more specifically on alcohol and Systembolaget's sustainability marketing.

- After explaining this concept, does anyone know Systembolaget's social marketing?
- What do you think the purpose of Systembolaget's marketing is?
- How do you experience Systembolaget's marketing?
 - Why / why not?

We have seen increased marketing from Systembolaget in recent years.

- What do you think about this?

Case 1: Tonårsparlören and shows both videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6CDgRp-10>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06x7e9s32_g

Tonårsparlören is a brochure Systembolaget publishes to, for example, teenage parents where you get help on how to act when it comes to alcohol and teenagers.

- How do you feel and think after seeing this? Does this create trust in Systembolaget?
- What do you think this initiative requires from you?
- Do you think that Systembolaget places the greatest responsibility on the parents through this marketing?
 - Why / why not?
 - Is this good or bad?
- After hearing about Systembolaget's social marketing, would this change your behaviour?
 - Why / Why not?
- Do you think Systembolaget could have done something more to help you as teenage parents?

You enter the store after receiving information about Systembolaget's social marketing. One of Systembolagets employees comes to you and asks if you need help with anything. It all ends with you getting a good tip on a good red wine that you then buy at home.

- How do you feel about this after all the information?
- Had the answers changed if it was someone else who bought it, for example, your children when they were 17 years old?

Questions about employees

- How do you view the credibility of Systembolaget's staff?

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- Do you trust Systembolaget's staff to take identification with minors?
 - Why / why not?

Finally

- How do you view Systembolaget after these discussions?
- Do you think we've missed something or something you want to add?

Appendix 8 - Focus group guide - 20-25 year old's (English)

Formalities

- Date: 10th of May 2022
- Welcome all participants
- Explain the structure and our role as moderator
- Inform about recording. Oral consent.

Opening questions

- We start with everyone introducing themselves, telling them how old you are and what your life situation looks like.
- How do you view Systembolaget?
- How do you think Systembolaget helps you or informs you regarding alcohol-related problems?

Discussion questions regarding Systembolaget's sustainable marketing

Explanation of social marketing. Social marketing translated into Swedish: social marknadsföring or hållbar marknadsföring, is something that companies use to change the person's behaviour for the better. This could be, for example, quitting smoking. However, we focus on the sin industry, more specifically on alcohol and Systembolaget's sustainability marketing.

- After explaining this concept, does anyone know Systembolaget's social marketing?
- What do you think the purpose of Systembolaget's marketing is?
- How do you experience Systembolaget's marketing?
 - Why / why not?

We have seen increased marketing from Systembolaget in recent years.

- What do you think about this?

Case 1: Tonårsparlören and shows both videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJ6CDgRp-10>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06x7e9s32_g

Tonårsparlören is a brochure Systembolaget publishes to, for example, teenage parents where you get help on how to act when it comes to alcohol and teenagers.

- How do you experience these videos?
 - Why / why not?
- Did you shop more or less after watching these videos?
 - Why / why not?
- After watching the videos who is responsible for alcohol consumption.

These videos clearly show that Systembolaget does not encourage you to buy alcohol, but at the same time when you enter the store you get help with choosing alcohol products.

- What do you think about this?
- Does this change your perception?
- How do you think Systembolaget's social marketing changes your behaviour?

Questions about employees

- How do you view the credibility of Systembolaget's employees?
- Do you trust Systembolaget's employees to take identification with minors?
 - Why / why not?

Finally

- How do you view Systembolaget after these discussions?
- Do you think we've missed something or something you want to add?