



Bachelor Thesis (15pt)

Does Volvo Cars' marketing strategy differ according to consumer behavior in Sweden and in France

A study of how Volvo Cars adapts its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden

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Abstract

There is a great diversity in marketing strategies that brands can use to develop their name, image and products. The selection of the appropriate strategy is the basis of the image a brand wants to present and how it will be perceived by the market it attempts to approach.

However when a brand aims at different segments of a market it has to adapt its marketing strategy to suit better the new segment compared to the first one. Hence in this thesis our interest has brought us to compare Volvo's marketing strategy in Sweden and in France as we study in the first country and we come from the second one. We tried to identify the similarities, the differences, and understand how Volvo manages to evaluate and adapt to the needs and expectations of the different consumers in those two countries

One of the first things we noticed when arriving in Umeå was the number of Volvo cars in the street in contrast to what we are used to seeing in Paris. We understood that the brand was famous and even natural for the Swedes leaving here, whereas it seemed that the French were not truly aware about the brand's products. Thus to comprehend this difference we decided to carry our researches on what defines the brand in the consumer's mind: marketing.

The method we used to conduct this study was based on the objectivist ontological position and on the positivist epistemological assumption combined to a deductive approach – implying a quantitative study in our case. We used secondary data to create our theoretical framework and then we distributed 100 questionnaires in both countries – 50 each.

The observation and the analysis of the results have been divided into two parts in order to elucidate the similarities and differences between the two countries studied. These separated parts then lead to a cross-case observation and analysis.

Our conclusion mostly corroborates our assumptions as we observed that the majority of our Swedish respondents had a good idea of what represents Volvo, whereas it is still seen as an outdated car manufacturer for our French sample which does not spot enough advertisement about the new models of the brand and which is more demanding on design. This is why, among other recommendations, we suggest Volvo to advertise more on certain values like ecology which is not well recognized and to focus more on some channels of communication, depending on the location.

Key words: Marketing strategy, Volvo, Adaptation, Brand image, Consumer perception, France, Sweden.

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1. Introduction

Our study will focus on comparing Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in France and in Sweden. Indeed, from one country to another, people may have different perceptions of a brand and react in different ways to marketing campaigns, but they may also have different expectations. Our purpose is to study Volvo Cars positioning in both France and Sweden and how their potential customers perceive this positioning. Does Volvo manage to impact its potential customers with the marketing strategy it has chosen for each of the two countries or not, how do the targets react, and how does Volvo adapt to their expectations. To begin with, we will introduce Volvo and its marketing strategy in a background section; then, we will present our methodological considerations (2. Methodology chapter) and detail the theories we will use to carry our study (3. Theoretical framework chapter). After having collected our data in both France and Sweden - through self completion questionnaires - and processed it in SPSS, we will present our findings in the Empirical study chapter. Eventually, we will compare our findings with the theories presented in the theoretical framework in order to analyze Volvo Cars' positioning and marketing strategy in both countries, how the brand is perceived, and how well it has managed to adapt to its targets' needs and expectations.

1.1. General background

In this section, we will first present Volvo Cars focusing on the company's history and its values, and then explain briefly how we came with the idea of studying Volvo Cars' marketing strategy.

1.1.1. Volvo Cars: History and values

Volvo Cars is a Swedish upper-scale automobile manufacturer from Gothenburg which was created in 1927 by Gustaf Larson and Assar Gabrielsson (Volvocars.com 2010)¹. Volvo was owned by Ford Motors Company from 28th of January 1999 to the 28th of March 2010 when it was bought by Geely - China's first private automobile manufacturer (LesEchos.fr 2010)². The fact that Volvo now belongs to Geely will allow the Swedish automobile manufacturer to be more visible on the Chinese market (which is a very important one) and maybe finally become profitable again: last year, Volvo made a deficit before taxes of \$-1,465 million USD (Volvo 2008)³. Nevertheless, Geely promised that Volvo Cars' strategy and conception would remain controlled by Volvo AB which has been in charge of the control and protection of the brand's use. The car production should not be delocalized to China either (LeParisien.fr 2010)⁴. Indeed, most Volvo cars are currently mainly manufactured in Belgium (Ghent for the regular models such as the C30 or the S60) and in Sweden (Gothenburg for the bigger models such as the XC 70 and the S80). It is a very important fact that Geely plans to let Volvo remain independent because Volvo Cars' reputation worldwide as a trusted upscale automobile manufacturer would certainly have been impacted if the company had become completely controlled by Geely and if the production had been delocalized to China. So far, this take over does not seem to have affected Volvo sales since Volvo Cars is the automobile manufacturer that has seen its European market share grow the most in 2010 with a progression superior of 35% (European Automobile Manufacturers' Association 2010)³² -

only overpassed by Nissan. This raise is probably to be linked with the renewal of the design of Volvos and to the efficiency of Volvo Cars' marketing strategy: we may indeed assume that they have managed to convey their values (and that these values are perceived as good by the customers) and to promote their products in a way that has convinced customers that Volvo is a good choice for a car.

Volvo's reputation relies on very strong values: quality, safety, ecology and design (Volvocars.com 2010)⁵. Moreover, the Swedish origin of the automobile manufacturer is synonym of quality and security. Safety has always been one of the most important values for Volvo Cars since the creation of the brand and Volvo is seen as a precursor in terms of security: Nils Bohlin, engineer for Volvo invented the three point seat belt and since 1959, and Volvo was the first automobile manufacturer to equip their cars with it. Other examples include the fact that Volvo has also been the first to equip its cars with head rests in the front (to reduce risks of breaking one's neck in case of an accident), the central survival security cell (that protects the passengers even more from the shock) and the seat belts on rear passengers' seats (especially the middle seat). These are only a few examples to illustrate how security is and has always been very important for Volvo Cars, but many other examples can be found on its corporate website in the section dedicated to safety (Volvocars.com 2010)⁶. Moreover, Volvo has also developed a new system to protect pedestrians which will be available in the new S60 model: the car will be able to detect the pedestrian and according to the distance from him or her, either stop or strongly slow down the car increasing by 80% the chances of survival of the victims (DHnet.be 2010)⁷.

The protection of environment is also a very important value for Volvo who has developed new models which have been found to emit very low amounts of carbon dioxide. It is obvious for Volvo that people still need cars, but on the other hand, as an automobile manufacturer, it is aware of the concerns for the environment and the need to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide when driving. Volvo has developed several models which cope with governments' expectations regarding the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. For instance, Volvo's Hybrid models or cars that work with ethanol have been found to release less than 105 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer (Volvocars.com 2010).

Quality and design are the two other main values that are characteristic of Volvo: the Scandinavian design and the high quality of the Swedish steel allow Volvo Cars to lay emphasis on the sustainability of its cars over time and under extreme conditions - Volvo cars have indeed been submitted to the same tests as anti seismic buildings in order to test their quality- (Volvocars.com 2010)⁸. Finally, as mentioned earlier, design is important for Volvo, but according to Volvo's Swedish philosophy, a car which is not practical cannot really be beautiful. This is the reason why it favors sober designs that are both elegant and functional. Nevertheless, being conscious that a car cannot only be practical and that design is an important factor of choice when buying a car (for instance, as we will see it later, it is the first feature that French people consider when buying a car), Volvo has renewed the design of its cars.

1.1.2. Finding an interesting subject for our thesis: How did we come up with the idea of studying and comparing Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in France and in Sweden?

When we arrived at Umeå last August, we have both been struck by the amount of Volvo cars we saw. Indeed, we were expecting to see many Volvo cars because it is a Swedish car manufacturer, but we were surprised to see as many because in France, even though Renault and Peugeot are French, we also have lots of cars from Germany, Japan, Italy, America, Spain and so on.

Moreover in France, few people own a Volvo, and the few Volvo we had seen so far were rather old, big and owned by old people. Besides, in France, Volvo cars have a brand image associated to family, Sweden, quality and safety, but definitely not design. In Sweden, on the other hand, Volvo cars are very popular (they are the most sold cars), and we discovered that some of them actually had a very good design. After having talked with Swedish people and explained them that in France, Volvo were not so well known and do not benefit of a very good brand image, some of them were surprised. They indeed explained us that Volvo cars are among the best cars in the world as far as safety and quality are concerned, and that to them they do not have an image of old unpractical cars, on the contrary, there are cars that are resistant to extreme temperatures and provide a lot of space without having the size of an SUV (Suburban Utility Vehicle). As marketing students we found it interesting to see the differences of perception between France and Sweden on the same brand. We did not know yet that it would soon become the subject of our bachelor thesis.

Indeed, a few months after, we needed to find an interesting subject that would correspond to our field of study. We are both students in marketing and both oriented towards international marketing. We thought that studying the management of a brand internationally would be very interesting and would bring us valuable knowledge for the continuation of our studies.

We came up with several topics involving amongst others Carrefour and its adaptation to the Chinese market, and Volvo, and the adaptation of their marketing strategy in both France and Sweden since we are French students in Sweden. We submitted our different ideas to our supervisor Owe R. Hedstrom who advised us to choose the topic about Volvo Cars' marketing strategy and adaptation according to the different cultural features of the countries. We therefore decided to study this subject for our thesis, and more precisely, we are going to focus on Volvo's marketing strategy and perception of the brand in Paris (where we come from) and Umeå (where we study).

By choosing this subject we expect to find very interesting results knowing that Paris is a big capital city (with more than 2 million inhabitants in Paris itself, and a rather tempered climate) and Umeå a city from Northern Sweden (with a very cold climate most of the year and around 100 000 inhabitants).

Moreover, the two cities present differences of concentration of their population, Umeå being very spread (with a surface of 2.317km² for around 100.000 inhabitants – precisely 112.732 inhabitants (Paris' Official website 2010)²⁹) and Paris being very concentrated (105 km² for more than 2.200.000 inhabitants – precisely 2 201 578 inhabitants (Umeå 's Official website 2010)³⁰). Therefore the needs as far as cars are concerned will be different. Indeed, as Parisians, we can say that when choosing a car, we think about how easy it will be for us to drive and to park it in Paris, because it is always very hard when having a big car to find a

free place to park. Moreover, we do not really need a car within Paris since it would cost us more than the public transportation and probably take longer since we have a metro every 3 minutes and a bus every 5 to 15 minutes.

On the other hand, in Umeå, we realized how useful a car is, especially knowing that the temperature can go down to -30°C in winter and that if you miss your bus, you will have to wait another half hour in the cold for the next one. Moreover, as Umeå is a very spread city, it is more difficult to walk from one point to another if you miss your bus. Finally, we may mention that here, in Umeå, whenever we have taken the car, we have never had any trouble in finding a place to park, therefore, the size of the car might matter less in comparison to Paris, and the ability to resist to extreme temperature might on the contrary be more important. Those factors might probably be part of the explanation of why there are more Volvo cars in Umeå/Sweden than in Paris/France because they influence the consumers' choice of a car.

We wanted to understand how Volvo managed with those differences and how it adapts to these two unlike cultures. Indeed, cultural factors can be added to the ones proper to the country since we suppose that many French people see design as a very important factor when buying a car whereas the Swedes that we have had the occasion to talk to when arriving in Sweden usually give more importance to environmental factors and practicality. We will of course see if those statements are confirmed in our empirical observations in both countries.

The information that we had about Umeå and Paris and the fact that we realized that our perception of Volvo was very different from Swedish people's one definitely comforted us in our choice to study Volvo cars' marketing strategy and adaptation in both France and Sweden.

1.2. Theoretical background

In this sub chapter, we will focus on presenting the different theories that appeared to be relevant for our study and which will help us formulate our problem. We will first deal with brand image, then we will broach consumer perception, and finally, we will speak about adaptation.

1.2.1. Brand image

Brand positioning

In order to position itself in France, in Sweden, or on any other market segments, Volvo has established four main values – quality, safety, environment and design. Indeed, according to Keller (2008), the establishment of strong values is crucial in brand positioning and in creating “brand superiority in the minds of consumers” and showing them “the advantages or points of difference a brand has over competitors” (Keller 2008: 38-39) in order to allow them to classify the brand in comparison to its competitors according to their values and personal images. In this study, we are going to examine if Volvo Cars has the same brand positioning in France and in Sweden, and we will deepen this notion of brand positioning in the Theoretical framework chapter.

Volvo also need to make sure their initial marketing strategy has the expected effects on its target and if they perceive Volvo Cars in the way the brand had aimed to be perceived as when elaborating their marketing strategy. Moreover, Volvo Cars will need to check if their targets are conscious that Volvo Cars focuses on reaching them with its marketing strategy and how they react to it. This relates to Keller's CBBE (customer based brand equity) model which gives a notion of brand equity from the customers' point of view. We will therefore study more in depth this notion of CBBE in our theoretical framework since we are going to observe Volvo Cars' marketing strategy and how it is perceived by French and Swedish potential customers.

In addition to its values, Volvo is identified by its logo and its slogan. Those two characteristics of Volvo Cars correspond to what Keller (2008: 433) names "brand architecture", and as this is an important part of Volvo's marketing strategy, we are going to broach it later in our paper. Moreover, for Volvo Cars marketing strategy to be effective, they need to define their target segment so as to make sure that the values and the image they want to convey correspond to the target customers. Indeed, if Volvo Cars' positioning is well adapted to its chosen market segment – in our thesis, those will be France and Sweden – its marketing strategy will be more effective. As Aaker (2001:46-47) states, "segmentation is often the key to developing a sustainable competitive advantage based on [...] a focus strategy". We will therefore throughout this paper try to explain which segments Volvo Cars targets and how it managed to adapt its marketing strategy to reach them.

Furthermore, we know that in Sweden, Volvo Cars has a very good reputation as a brand and is trusted for producing very safe cars, whereas in France, all the people we have talked about Volvo Cars so far do not really have a good image of the automobile manufacturer, mainly because they associate it with "old/ugly vehicles". We can therefore see from the start that the corporate reputation of Volvo differs between both countries. Yet, if we refer to Souiden, Kassim and Hong (2006: 825)¹, the corporate image plays a role in the consumer's evaluation of the product based on the corporate image he perceives.

Loyalty

In the researches we have carried so far about Volvo Cars, we have noticed that they have developed several forms of loyalty programs which is a very important part of a brand's marketing strategy since loyalty programs create value for both the brand – whose clients will renew their purchase if they are loyal – and for the client – who will be more satisfied with his product since the company will grant him or her with advantages with the intention of increase his or her loyalty. This relates to what Keller (2008) calls personalized marketing or "relationship marketing" (Keller 2008: 194). This is confirm by Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon (2000)² mentioned by Souiden et al. (2006: 832). Hence, we are going to study how Volvo cars have implemented their loyalty programs and how those have been perceived by their customers.

Communication

As we have been able to notice it from the beginning of our researches about Volvo Cars' marketing strategy, the company uses several channels of communication in both France and

¹ Will be referred to as Souiden et al. (2006) when quoted

² Will be referred as Rust et al. (2000) from now on

Sweden. The use of several medias is a good way of building consumer's awareness of the brand (Duncan 2002: 506-507), but it can be very expensive to use several means of communication at the same time. This is why we will study how effective each means of communication has been on Volvo Cars potential customers in order to formulate suggestions on which ones are worth spending money on or not. This relates to Keller (2008)'s argument about the evaluations of costs compared to the efficiency of the communication channels used by a brand (Keller 2008: 234-241) that we will study in detail later.

1.2.2. Consumer perception

Definition of a consumer

According to Malcolm McDonald in his book *Les plans marketing*, 2002 (5th edition), consumers are the people who finally use the goods or services that are bought by the customer. Hence the necessity for us as the authors of this thesis to emphasize the difference between consumer and customer since we are going to use both words: the customer is the person that buys the product or service and the consumer is the one that uses it. Moreover, we would like to clarify that when we write "potential customers", we mean anyone who would be susceptible of buying a Volvo: someone who is old enough to consider buying a car and who could perhaps be interested in buying a Volvo amongst other alternatives if they have the budget to do so.

About the values

In our empirical study, we are going to focus on how Volvo Cars and its values are perceived by the Swedes and the French through specially designed questions of our questionnaire. In fact, consumer's perception is an important feature for Volvo Cars marketing strategy since as stated by Rust et al. (2000) "consumers' expectations and perceptions affect the value of a brand" (Holehonnur et al. 2009: 166)³. Seeing the importance of consumer's perception for a brand, we have collected several theories related to this issue that we will expose in a while.

About the name

According to Gregory and Wiechmann (1999 cited by Souiden et al. 2006: 830), the name of the company influences the consumer's opinion on its products and "strongly affects the corporate image". In our study, we will therefore need to focus on how Volvo Cars' name is perceived by French people in comparison to Swedish people and explain to what values it is linked in their minds.

About the exposure

A good way of knowing about consumers' perception of a brand is to organize events during which marketing agents from the company can be in contact with their clients and evaluate directly their perception of the name. According to Duncan (2002: 145) a brand has to be aware of its perceived image to be able to send adapted signals to the consumers to confirm or change his/her perception.

³ Will be named Holehonnur et al. (2009) when quoted

Through our study, we are going to be able to see how Volvo tries to improve its brand awareness, what the name of Volvo is related to in their mind and we will also evoke the different kinds of events either organized or sponsored by Volvo. Indeed, events are an important point in Volvo Cars' marketing strategy, and they are even more central since according to Taylor and Shanka (2008: 954), events increase brand awareness and the values conveyed by the event are linked to the brand's values by the consumer – which makes them a useful tool of communication for Volvo Cars.

1.2.3. Adaptation

One of the most important aspects of our thesis will be the evaluation of Volvo Cars' adaptation of their marketing strategy to France in comparison to the one they apply to their country of origin: Sweden. Volvo is an automobile car manufacturer and according to Keller (2008: 285-286) the origin of a brand may imply different associations in the consumer's mind hence impacting on his perception of the brand. Consequently Volvo needs to adapt itself as much as possible to the specificities of its targeted market in order to attract and satisfy as many customers as possible – by providing them with products adapted to their needs - hereby increasing sales and revenues. Souiden et al. (2006: 832;840) along with many other researchers have explained the importance of adaptation in a brand's marketing strategy, and we will detail the theories concerning that issue that we found relevant for Volvo Cars in our theoretical framework.

1.3. Research question

Does Volvo Cars' marketing strategy differ according to consumer behavior in Sweden and in France, and how does Volvo Cars adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden?

1.4. Purpose

In order to formulate our problem and our research questions, we started to ask ourselves what we wanted to know about Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in both France in Sweden and what findings would be interesting to show. We went through the differences in Volvo Cars' marketing strategy and brand perception that we had been able to notice by living in both countries -more specifically in Paris and Umeå.

After brainstorming we wrote down all our ideas, and we came up with the following research questions:

- How does Volvo Cars communicate in both countries? What are the external aspects of its marketing strategy? What are the similarities and the differences?
- Has Volvo Cars reached its target in both countries? Has it managed to convey the message it wanted?
- What did the potential consumers perceived? What brand image does Volvo Cars have in France and in Sweden?
- What is to be improved and what is to be kept the way it is?

By answering those questions, our objective will be to understand the impact of Volvo's marketing strategy on both French and Swedish people, and see how the consumers' perception is or is not in equation with Volvo's initial strategy. This will allow us to answer our research question for this thesis.

In this study, we will aim at representing how Volvo Cars' has adapted its marketing strategy in France and in Sweden. In other words, we will try to identify the similarities, the differences (between both countries), and understand how Volvo manages to evaluate and adapt to the needs and expectations of the different consumers in those two countries.

1.5. Scope

We will focus exclusively on Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in Paris/France and in Umeå/Sweden. Therefore, our study will not involve any elements from Volvo Group since it does not include Volvo Cars anymore. Nevertheless, Volvo Group and Volvo Cars still share the same brand name. This is the reason why Volvo Cars' marketing strategy still belongs to Volvo AB; the use of Volvo as a trademark and the marketing strategy have never really been controlled by Ford (during the 10 years when Volvo use to belong to Ford) and will remain controlled by Volvo's headquarter in Gothenburg, Sweden now that Volvo Cars belong to Geely. Indeed, the Swedish aspect of Volvo Cars is its main strength and proof of reliability and Geely is very well aware of this.

Concerning the population sample, in both France and Sweden, we are going to ask people who are old enough to own a car (from 18 to more than 60 year old people) and who ideally have an interest in the car industry.

1.6. Limitations

Financial: As Bachelor's students, we will not be granted with any funds from the university, and we will therefore not be able to carry a research as broad as we would if we had had academic funding. We will for instance only be able to carry a survey distributing quantitative questionnaires. Moreover, the fact that we will only be two people to process the data doesn't allow us to use more than a certain amount of questionnaires since we do not have a lot of time to do so and we cannot afford to pay someone to help us with this task.

Time: We are submitted to a limitation in time and we need to carry this at the same time as our Swedish classes and obligations that we need to fulfill in France for the next steps of our education. This will compel us to leave for two weeks and therefore, shrink our time even more; moreover, we will need to leave Umeå by the end of May in order to pass oral examinations in France which is another important element of time pressure. This is the reason why we decided to organize differently and start our thesis earlier, even though we were following two classes at the same time and that we had to prepare for exams we have to pass in France.

Language: We have planned to carry our survey in both Sweden and France, and, as the rest of our study, our questionnaire will be written in English. This might be a difficulty as far as the response rate is concerned because, even though almost everyone in Sweden is bilingual, they might still be more reluctant to answer to a survey written in English than to a survey

written in their native language. In France, this problem has been even more important since very few people speak fluently English; this is the reason why for some of our respondents, we have had to translate our questionnaire in French.

Replicability of the findings: Our study focuses on the marketing strategy of Volvo Cars in both France and Sweden, and therefore, it would be difficult to use the findings of this study for another topic than marketing strategy, for another company than Volvo Cars and for other countries than France and Sweden.

2. Methodology chapter

In this chapter, we are going to deal with the methodological issues concerning our thesis, and try to explain how our choices are consistent. First, we will focus on how we came with our research questions and how they led us to our main research question. Then we will deal with the methodological assumptions we will follow and determine which ontological and epistemological approaches we are going to use for our study of the Marketing strategy of Volvo in France and in Sweden. We will then explain which research design we have chosen and how it suits to our study. We will also expose which research strategy we have chosen and why, and we will detail what methods we are going to use to collect our data. Finally, we will deal with ethical considerations and how we plan to avoid being unethical.

The quality criteria will not be dealt with in this chapter but it will rather be treated after our conclusions.

2.1. Practical preconceptions

In France, we were both students in marketing and international business. Therefore, even though in Umeå we have studied management, finance and entrepreneurship, our knowledge in marketing is more advanced and this is the reason why we decided to write our thesis in this field. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the study of Volvo Cars' marketing strategy and its adaptation in France in comparison to Sweden appeared to be interesting to us.

After having found our topic, we also wrote the different marketing theories that we could directly link to our research and we decided if we were going to be able or not to carry a qualitative study, a quantitative study, or a combination of both.

We first thought that, according to our research questions, a combination of both would be more appropriate, but our supervisor strongly advised us to focus on either one or the other method. We therefore decided to follow a quantitative research strategy that was the most suitable one regarding our research questions and objectives.

After having exposed our supervisor our final research question/problem - *Does Volvo Cars' marketing strategy differ according to consumer behavior in Sweden and in France, and how does Volvo Cars adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden?* – and the main theories we would like to use, we started our researches mainly at the University library (of Umeå) and on the Internet.

Concerning our research on the Internet, we first carried global researches about Volvo in order to learn more about their history and values, and also to see what current events or news were related to the brand.

We gathered a massive quantity of information – seven pages of Internet links in total – and we then selected the most relevant ones for our study. Our Internet sources have constituted our main source of information concerning Volvo and its marketing strategy, but we have not really found any article or such detailing their marketing strategy per se. Therefore, according to what we have been able to observe on Volvo Cars' corporate websites for both countries

and the from the gathering of the many sources we have found - including videos of Volvo Cars' advertisement, we have analyzed how well they managed –or not- to adapt their marketing strategy in France and in Sweden. Later on, in our analysis, we will also focus on how much the factors that we had been able to notice in our empirical study - about the specific features of consumer perception in each country - had been taken into account by Volvo when adapting their marketing strategy. Furthermore, our internet sources along with the results of our empirical study allowed us to evaluate how well Volvo Cars had communicated on their values resulting or not in a clear perception by their targets of the values conveyed.

On a final note concerning our Internet sources, we may mention that we have chosen to reference them with footnotes (in addition to the USBE standards) in order to make it easier for the reader to check the link that we refer to. Some of the links having been consulted in February or March, we also indicated the date of consultation (in case the webpage would have been updated) and sometimes, we have several links for different section of the same website in order to help the reader finding our source more easily than if he had to go through the whole website to find it. We also believe it is important to mention why we have chosen to use Volvo Cars' corporate website as one of our main sources of information because it is in our opinion a reliable source since it is the company's own website. Moreover, the website has allowed us to evaluate how Volvo Cars market their products and services on the Internet which -we believe- is also an important aspect of a brand's marketing strategy nowadays.

2.2. Methodological preconceptions to come up with our research problem and our research questions

According to, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill⁴ in *Research Methods for Business Students* (2000 : 14), before starting working on a thesis it is very important to chose a field of study that one has an interest in and also in the field in which one would like to work in later in one's career. For us, it was marketing, as it is our main field of study, and more precisely international marketing in which we would potentially be interested in working in later. We first focused on finding topics that would be interesting to study in this area. Bryman and Bell (2007: 82-85) underline the importance of defining a general research area and narrowing it down to find research questions that we will aim at answering in our thesis.

After our supervisor agreed with the idea of studying Volvo's marketing strategy in France and in Sweden, we needed to be more specific and narrow our research field. Indeed, according to Saunders et al. (2007), it is important to narrow the research idea and “turn it into research questions and objectives” (Saunders et al., 2007: 19). To do so, we had to come up with research questions that would lead us to our main research question which would be the topic of our thesis. Also, according to Saunders et al. (2000: 13-14), it is important to know from the start what theories will be worked on and to make sure that one can handle the subject he or she has chosen. Moreover, according to Bryman and Bell (2007: 90), it is important to think about sampling issues and access one might or not have to the data that would allow him or her to answer his or her research questions. Bryman and Bell (2007: 88-89) advise to go through the process of asking oneself the questions “what”, “why”, “how conceptually” and “how practically” (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 87) which respectively relate to what we want to know, why would it be interesting to know for others, how we will use the

⁴ Will be named Saunders et al. when quoted

theories and concepts related to our topic to answer our questions and how we will practically carry our research, with which research strategy. Research questions should also “be linked to each other”, be “neither too broad nor too narrow”, be “clear”, and “be researchable” (Bryman and Bell, 2007: 87).

Taking all those factors into account, we formulated the research questions - exposed previously in this chapter – that will help us answer our main research question and solve our problem in this research: Does Volvo Cars’ marketing strategy differ according to consumer behavior in Sweden and in France, and how does Volvo Cars adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden?

2.3. Methodological assumptions

We have to decide what approach of reality we are going to adopt in our study and how we are going to analyze this reality. This implies that we need to deal with ontological and epistemological assumptions.

“Questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities” (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 22). In other words, ontology deals with what reality is. Scholars have different visions concerning what organizations are: Constructionists asserts that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by Social actors” (Bryman and &Bell, 2007: 23). This statement implies that if we chose to adopt a constructionist position - which advocates the constant change of reality as a result of actions and interactions of individuals- for our study about Volvo, we would consider the company as being a constantly changing entity which would be the result of the actions and interactions of people working for the company. On the other hand, if we chose to adopt an objectivist consideration of reality which is described as an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors [...]” by Bryman & Bell (2007: 22). This means that the reality exists independently from people’s actions, and in our case, this would imply that we consider Volvo as being an established social entity which has its own rules, and hierarchy that define the actions of people who work for Volvo and not the contrary.

In our case, Volvo can be considered as both a social entity that exists independently from the people who work in it and as a social entity that is the result of constant interactions and relationship with people. As it will be mentioned in the section “Research Strategy”, we are going to carry quantitative study which is most of the time linked with the objectivist assumption. Nevertheless, even if Volvo is a social entity that exists with its philosophy, its values, its rules, which all impact on the people working for Volvo, we also think that Volvo has become the company it is today because it has been constructed through the years by the people working for it, who have brought their values to the company, and have made Volvo change progressively to become what it is now. Indeed, the values were not inherent to the company before people started to work for it, before its founder decided that those values had to be the ones for Volvo. It is the choices from people working for Volvo that have made the company what it is today: for instance, the choice to focus their brand image on safety, quality and environment rather than on the power of the engine or the price makes Volvo different from Ferrari who rely on different values because the company has been constructed by different people.

Regarding to our research question, and how does Volvo adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden, we are going to adopt a rather objectivistic point of view as we are going to focus on the external perception of Volvo as its own social entity and its value as a company. More precisely, as we will broach the perception of the brand in both countries which also implies seeing the company as an independent entity, the objectivist approach appears to be more appropriate.

Another important notion that we have to consider in our study is how we are going to study it. In other words, according to what epistemological assumptions we are going to carry our study. Bryman and Bell (2007: 16-21) mention positivism and interpretivism as the two main epistemological assumptions. According to Bryman and Bell (2007: 16), positivism is an epistemological assumption according to which reality should be studied following the methods used for natural sciences and apply them to social reality. In other words, positivism has to do with explaining a phenomenon and find its causes. On the other hand, interpretivism is an epistemological assumption that distinguishes Social sciences from natural sciences and therefore assumes it should be studied in a different way. Bryman and Bell (2007: 19) “an alternative to the positivist [approach]” [...] which “requires the scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social actions”. In other words, they believe that social phenomena cannot be studied as scientific ones. Contrarily to positivists, interpretivists try to understand Human behavior rather than explaining it. They focus on human beings and their behavior rather than on the factors that impact them and cause certain actions. Weber’s *Verstehen* quoted by Bryman and Bell (2007: 18), is one of interpretivism’s “Intellectual Heritage” (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 19). Weber defined *Verstehen* as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at causal explanation of its course and effects (1947: 88)". This notion gathers the explanation and the understanding of a social phenomenon which can be applied to Volvo: indeed, they try to understand how the potential consumers perceived the campaign and the brand in order to explain their reaction (positive or negative). By using Weber’s *Verstehen* to study reality, Volvo might find a causal explanation of the consumer’s reaction to their marketing campaign and understand that they have to change or not, and what they have to change or keep on doing.

As we are going to carry a quantitative study with figured results that are perceived in the same way by everyone and cannot be interpreted, we will employ a positivist approach. Moreover the positivistic method is best suited for our case since we aim at describing and explaining how and why the marketing strategy of Volvo varies and adapts to both the French and the Swedish markets. Indeed, Volvo adapts its marketing strategy according to its own understanding of its potential consumer’s expectations and it wants to understand how the brand is perceived by the consumer in order to adapt itself. For instance if the consumer reacts positively to a marketing campaign Volvo might deduce that its initial assumptions concerning the consumers’ expectations were right, and continue in the same way. On the other hand, if its assumptions were to be proven wrong – that is if the marketing campaign does not have a positive impact on sales - Volvo might reconsider its initial assumptions and modify its marketing strategy.

2.4. Research design

As we are going to focus on the marketing strategy of Volvo in both France and Sweden, we are going to use a comparative design which can – according to Bryman and Bell (2007: 66) -

be used in both quantitative and qualitative research. This is perfectly adapted to our case since we have chosen to carry a quantitative research.

Moreover, we would rather focus on Cross national research. According to Bryman & Bell (2007: 66), that type of comparative design implies data collection for two nations or more, which also suits our case since we are focusing on Volvo's marketing strategy in more than one case -for both France and Sweden. On another note, Bryman and Bell (2007: 66), assert that when using a comparative design, the data is collected following a cross sectional design which implies focusing on more than one case –here, we are focusing on Volvo's marketing strategy in more than one case since we are going to study it for both France and Sweden- and we are going to collect our data rather simultaneously (between the months of February and April). We are going to compare the marketing strategy of Volvo Cars in both countries and explain how and why it differs. By carrying a cross sectional study of the two cases, we expect to bring out their similarities and differences. Moreover, we are going to explain how the particularities of both the French and the Swedish culture impact on Volvo's marketing strategy. As stated by Bryman and Bell (2007: 67), “Cross cultural research in business and management tends to presuppose that culture is a major explanatory variable that exerts profound influence on organizational behavior”.

2.5. Research strategy

As our research concern a large company, Volvo Cars AB, we are looking for a well adapted method to improve the validity and reliability of our findings: the quantitative one.

Indeed, since our research is based on the observation of the established marketing strategies in France and in Sweden it is logical to use a quantitative strategy, whose data are “based on meanings derived from numbers” (Saunders et al. 2007). Moreover we also want to know the potential consumers' perception of Volvo and why they would choose this brand more than another, but we are not going to interview our respondents using a semi structured interview for instance (which is a way of surveying usually associated with qualitative researches): we are going to distribute self completion questionnaires in which the possible answers will be the same for all the respondents, and this method of survey is rather used in quantitative studies.

Last field that interest us there is the way the firm adapt its marketing from Sweden to France. We will consequently use a deductive approach to relate our findings from the theories to the empiricism. In fact we will not produce any theory from our findings and on the contrary will compare these findings to already known theories, it is why we consider employing a deductive method throughout our thesis.

The fact that we are French students living in Sweden who make assumptions about a global brand allows us to observe consumer behavior faced to Volvo's cars and marketing, the advertisement and choices made by the firm and the differences between the two countries with more facility and discretion than if we were researchers writing a book with a special issue about it. It gives us the opportunity to record what Volvo markets and how they have marketed it at different moments in time and places (in previous years until now).

2.6. Specific data collection methods and literature review

2.6.1. Primary data

Of course what we see cannot always reflect what consumer's behavior means and it is why we also plan to use a structured questionnaire in asking persons interested by cars in France and in Sweden, more precisely around Paris and Umeå, to get a convenient sample of who purchases, when and why Volvo or not, and how they perceived the brand. This sample will not be the most representative possible as we are not looking for a generalization of our findings but an explanation of the consumers' attitude toward Volvo and how this brand attracts them and keeps them brand loyal. This information called "primary data" will so be exploited for the first, with as main goal to confirm or infirm the theories collected in the secondary data – which was created in another purpose.

We chose to distribute the survey to 100 persons – 50 in France and 50 in Sweden – which is a minor percentage of our census nevertheless which will be enough for the analysis we want to work on in this study. This questionnaire will give us the reasons about the choice of cars bought and the link with Volvo's marketing operations. With the statistics coming out from the answers we will be able to obtain a consumer profile and to explain the triggers of his/her attraction to the brand and to understand his/her vision of Volvo and his/her choice's criteria. Moreover, we will be able to analyze what is the perception of the brand Volvo in both countries.

2.6.2. Secondary data

As explained previously, secondary data is data available to the public and which is used as complement of the primary data to verify this last one (Saunders et al. 2000). To establish our theoretical framework, we have been looking for different kinds of articles and textbooks that belong mostly to the marketing and management areas of brand strategy, which is our core research topic in this study, and deepening we have established some different links with theory and studies corresponding to more specific areas related to brand marketing and management, adaptation of its strategy and consumer perception.

We have found our set of documents mainly from the news on the Internet and by the electronic database of Umeå University Library – such as EBSCO source premier – defining for this such keywords as "brand marketing strategy", "Volvo marketing", "Volvo strategy" or "automobile industry marketing" among others. Thousands of articles were available for such keywords, even when we reduced the research to a period from 2000 to 2010, however we managed to find the ones who were the most appealing for our thesis. We have also borne in mind in our research some specific articles focused on our research topic such as "The effect of corporate branding dimensions on consumers' product evaluation: A cross-cultural analysis" from Souiden et al., published in the *European Journal of Marketing* in January 2006 or "Increasing shareholder value through building Customer and Brand Equity" written by Bick in the *Journal of Marketing Management*.

Furthermore, we have followed seven textbooks, one of them called "*Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*" written by Kevin Lane Keller in 2008, which deals largely with such issues as brand management, brand positioning

or marketing programs designing. We selected this author as his book was composed of most theories we desired to use in this thesis. Moreover Keller is one of the most famous researchers who have written about management. Another one is named “*Consumer Behavior: A European Perspective*” written by Solomon M., Bamossy G., Askegaard S., and Hogg M.K. in 2007⁵, which is concerned by matters like consumer perception or brand exposure. We used this book as we already knew the author from a previous research we made. Four textbooks published Aaker D. A. between 1991 and 2002 about brand management have been a true help as well to compare and apply the diverse theories. Finally Duncan T. with his researches and *IMC: Using Advertising & Promotion to Build Brands* published in 2002 brought us a further aspect to deal with our assumptions and findings.

We employed as well official statistics from both countries along with secondary data from previous researches.

Our research period extended on several days and weeks, and until the end, we have needed to go through the books and visit the websites again. We found most of our theories in the library and in the books we owned from our research methodology course - that we followed during spring 2010. The main theories we used were related to brand image, consumer perception and adaptation. We chose to deal with theories related to brand image in order to understand how a brand asserts its value and convey them to its target, and how this theory would be applicable to Volvo: this theory would allow us to understand Volvo Cars’ positioning and its way of communicating on its products and values. Theories about consumer perception also appeared to be suited to our study since it is important for us to understand how Volvo is perceived in both countries in order to be able to analyze later how they did or did not manage to adapt to the differences of perceptions - of the brand – and to the expectations of the customers in both countries. Adaptation is the third main theory that we are going to deal with in this study since it is of course very important to understand how a brand adapts its initial strategy – here, the initial strategy will be assumed to be the strategy applied to the Swedish market since it is Volvo’s country of origin – to a new market in order to be able to analyze Volvo Cars’ adaptation to the French market in comparison to Sweden.

2.6.3. Criticism of secondary data

Secondary data is the main knowledge resource in this research. A classical problem with the use of secondary data is the double interpretation. Indeed, the original writer has made an initial interpretation of his/her findings which we then interpret, using them for a special aim. There is therefore a risk that we comprehend the written material in our own way and consequently, differently that the writer had meant originally. For instance the article, quoted in our theoretical framework, written by Taylor and Shanka (2008) had for main goal to speak about Not-for-Profit organizations creating events and the reaction of participants, however we kept in mind our own objective and selected the only parts related to our topic.”

Our intention has been to use scientific sources which allow a certain “safety” of theories and novelty in the current situation. The essential of the information exploited in this thesis has been achieved in a scientific way in intend to minimize inaccuracy. Nevertheless we also obtained plenty of information concerning Volvo, the car events and so on, on the web by mean of articles written by non scientific people but by car specialists or other types of

⁵ Will be named Solomon et al. (2007) when quoted

journalist which are considered as less serious sources however we used them in the historical part and to confirm our ideas. For instance, the presentation of the S60 at the Geneva's motor show and the success the car received there.

Thus we compared various theories and writing about the same subjects connected to our main topic: marketing strategy. We conclude that the authors picked in this theoretical framework agree on their researches. What is mostly stressed is the importance of a reliable positioning, passing by an adapted segmentation of the target market and the meaning of a true beneficial relationship with it; the impact of a good comprehension of the customer's perception which add value to the brand; and the significance of a appropriate adaptation indispensable if a brand seek out different segments. From what we study previously, we concur with the researchers and their findings as it reflect our own thought concerning what should include a brand high-quality marketing strategy to affect its customers and attract new ones in accordance with their values shown and perceived and to the kind of customers aimed.

2.7. Ethical considerations

Dealing with a questionnaire, we will not have to take into consideration problems about the harm to participant – as everything will be anonymous –; the lack of informed consent – people will know the purpose of our research because we will explain it before to begin the filling of the questionnaires –; and deception – as we are not a competitor or anybody trying to get special information –. The only ethical problem that we might encounter would be the invasion of privacy, nevertheless the questions asked will not be about themselves in a private sense but about their habits, their consuming behavior and the way they look at advertisement especially regarding to Volvo's. Moreover we will ask them directly in the street or in public places, a neutral area where they will choose to answer or not to our questions (we will stay next to them to answer any question they would have and if some parts of our questionnaire are not clear enough).

About plagiarism, we do not think that it will be difficult to avoid it as it is a very specific research focusing on an area where not a lot of studies have been done – comparison of marketing in two countries. Anyway looking for similar analyses we will inspire ourselves of the methods used and will not forget to quote them. Many articles or chapters have been written about Volvo, however it often concerns Volvo trucks or the United States market which are not our main topic.

3. Theoretical framework

The chosen theories have been selected predominantly according to our research problem that is based on the question “How Volvo Cars adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden?”. In our search of theories, we have also taken into account different aspects related the brand image, its positioning and the consumers’ perception. Firstly, we are going to focus on different concepts that are closely linked to the positioning of the brand. Then, we will address the effects of this image on consumer perception, followed by an exploration of how to adapt those two previous points in different countries or regions. Finally we will expose our criticisms toward the various hypotheses enunciated.

To figure the organization of the next subparts we visualized it as follows:

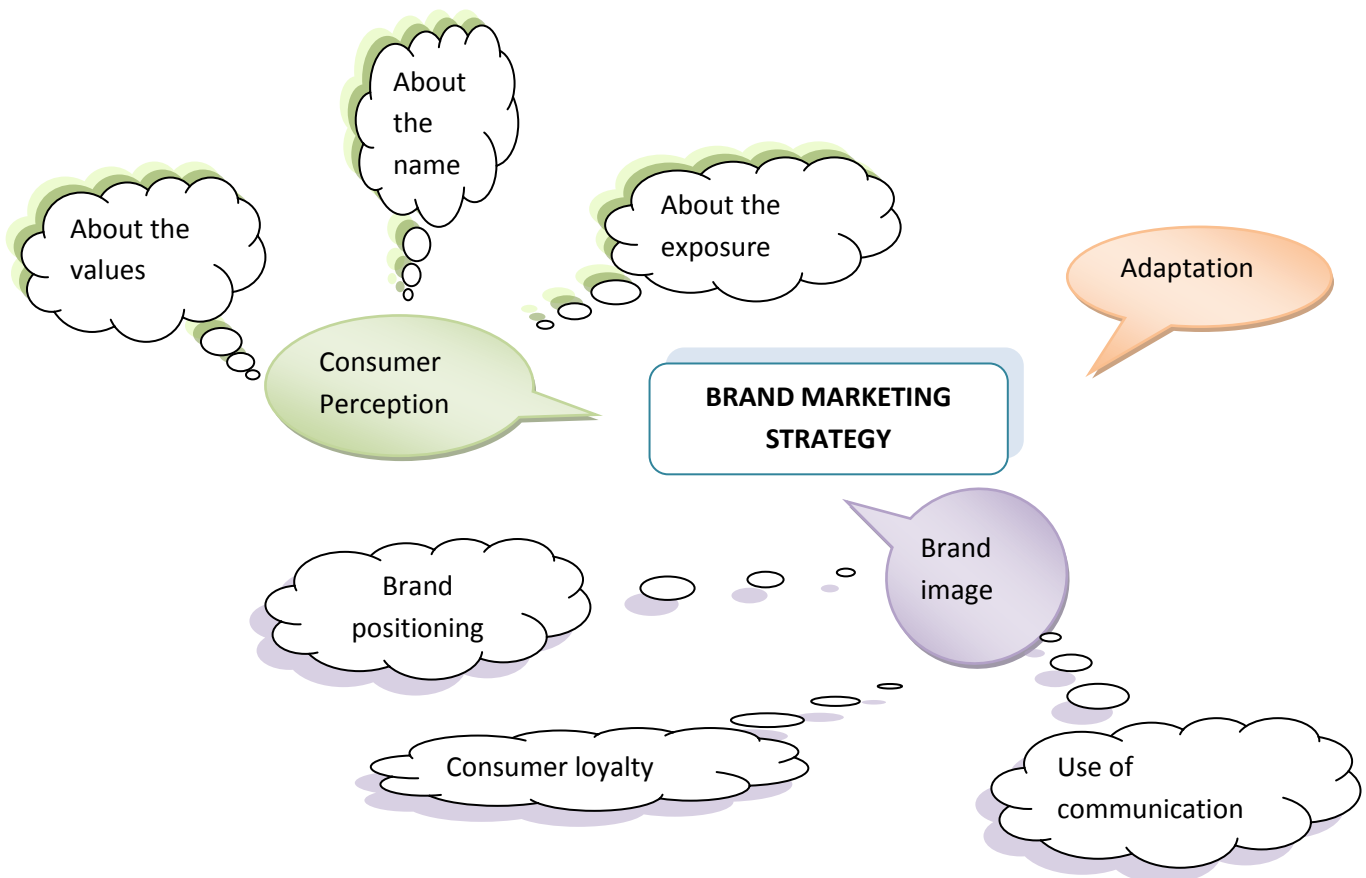


Figure 1: Our theoretical model

3.1. Brand image

3.1.1. Brand positioning

As Keller (2008: 38-41) states, a strategic brand management is the base to position a brand and this goes through a four step process which encompasses “implementing and establishing of brand positioning and values; planning and implementing brand marketing programs; measuring and interpreting brand performance; and growing and sustaining brand equity”. Thus we understand the importance of a good positioning creating “brand superiority in the

minds of consumers” and showing them “the advantages or points of difference a brand has over competitors” (Keller 2008: 38-39) to classify the brand among its competitors according to their values and personal images. For Keller (2008: 38) brand positioning is “at the heart of marketing strategy” and it is why we are examining it, to check if Volvo has the same position in Sweden and in France and the triggers of its strategy.

Bick (2009: 118) cited in his article Aaker (1996) who defines brand equity as follow: “the set of assets (and liabilities) inherent in a brand that add (or subtract) value to a firm and its customers”, as well as Blattberg and Deighton (1996) describe the customer equity as “the sum of the customer lifetime values to the organization” (Bick 2009: 120). In his book Keller (2008: 48-51) emphasizes on the brand equity and on what touches our subject directly: the customer-based brand equity. Indeed this “CBBE model” offers a point of view of what is brand equity from the perspective of consumers. It is defined as “the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand” (Keller 2008: 48). In other words it checks if the consumer is conscious and reactive to the marketing made by the brand at his/her attention. This model is built in four phases which are “ensure identification of the brand in customers’ minds and association with a specific product class; firmly establish the totality of brand meaning in the minds of customers; elicit the proper customer responses to this brand identification and brand meaning; convert brand response to create an active loyalty relationship between customers and the brand” (Keller 2008: 59-60). This model reaches the four categories of brand equity depicted by Bick (2009: 125): “brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations”. Thus, we can affirm these points are the real steps to achieve brand equity as different authors – Bick (2009: 118-138) illustrates his statements with hypotheses formulated by many other researchers – have the same opinion about it. This model suits well our research problem as we want to observe Volvo’s marketing strategy and the perception consumers have about and it will allow us to comprehend better the process seen as a “bridge” (Keller 2008: 49) or link between the brand and the customers.

This identification of the brand is in line with what Keller (2008: 433) calls the “brand architecture or branding strategy”, composed by a brand’s name, logo, symbols and so on, that have the responsibility to clarify what the brand means for the customers – brand awareness – and to motivate them to purchase it – brand image. We will clarify these points in the subsequent subpart, from the consumers’ outlook and we will underline their significance in our analysis, explaining the representation of Volvo’s ones.

Hence the brand should target its market and create a long-lasting relationship with its customers to develop itself successfully following the model. To do so the brand should proceed to a market segmentation to ensure that its values and image are adjusted to the target customers. It exists two kinds of segmentation base: “descriptive or customer-oriented” and “behavioral or product-oriented” (Keller 2008: 98-99). Moroko and Uncles (2009: 182-183) together with Bick (2009: 133) and many other marketers, share the process of “segmentation-targeting-positioning” (STP) as a method target the “good” consumers. Moroko and Uncles (2009: 183) introduce the notion of “taxonomy of segmentation” coming from Bock and Uncles. This taxonomy encompasses five categories of segmentation: “product feature, consumer interaction, choice barrier, bargaining power, and profitability” (Moroko and Uncles, 2009: 183). Each of these types of segmentation corresponds to a certain class of customer and to the relationship the brand would like to create with them. The following figure illustrates the research of Moroko and Uncles (2009: 193) concerning segmentation:

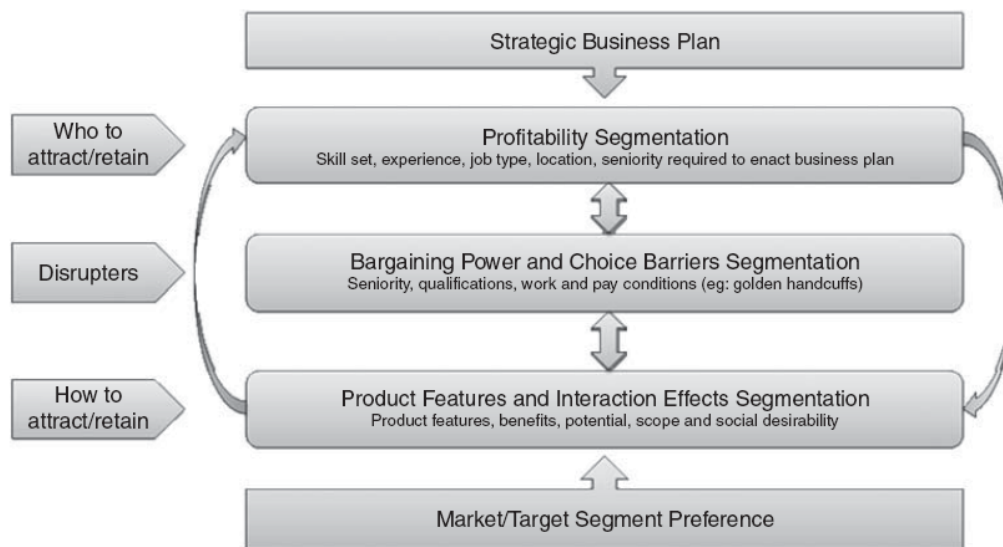


Figure 1: Employer branding segmentation as a strategic lever.

Figure 2: Moroko and Uncles (*Employer branding and market segmentation*, 2009: 193)

With a positioning well adapted to the chosen market, the marketing strategy will be more effective along with advantages to follow only one type of consumers. And according to the author (Keller 2008: 196) we know that a loyal customer cost five times less than to look for new ones, consequently the last step of the model concern particularly brands already on the market akin to Volvo. Aaker (2001: 45-46) quoting a study written by Bain, declares that “a 5 percent increase in loyalty can nearly double the lifetime profits generated by customers in several industries” including automobile service. This point of view concerning the strategy to adopt about segmentation and target is shared by Duncan (2002) who adds that could as well permit a brand to find a “niche” into the market and by Aaker (2001: 46-47) who states that “segmentation is often the key to developing a sustainable competitive advantage based on [...] a focus strategy”. In our case we will examine which segments are targeted by Volvo and how it adapts its strategy to each one, which is precisely our purpose.

3.1.2. Consumer loyalty

Brand loyalty and brand commitment are compared in Sung and Campbell (2009: 99)’s article according to Warrington and Shim (2000) who assert that “brand loyalty implies a behavioral concept whereas brand commitment suggests an attitudinal concept”. These researchers imply that “brand loyal consumers who repeat purchasing the brand without preference are likely to switch to another brand, whereas brand-committed consumers will not” (Sung and Campbell 2009: 99). Thus what are looking for the brands: loyalty or commitment? The answer seems logical nonetheless, as will see just after, most of writers transmit the consumer loyalty’s importance but what about his/her commitment to the brand? For Sung and Campbell (2009: 100) corroborated by Gundlach et al. (1995), commitment is a “key variable” in a successful relationship between the brand and its customers, including issues like “satisfaction, alternatives and investments” that compose this relation as well. However, what about Volvo and its customers? Are they loyal or committed to the brand? There are questions we will answer in our analysis after receiving the opinion of our sample.

In keeping with Keller's (2008) guidelines, we assume that a personalizing marketing can play an important role depending on the brand and its products. Accordingly there are three approaches to personalize marketing: "experiential marketing; one-to-one marketing; and permission marketing" (Keller 2008: 188-193). The first one is the manner to connect the product's features with an experience, for instance sponsoring a sport event. The one-to-one marketing let the customer know his/her importance in an individual relationship and allow him/her to add value to the brand thanks to the information received from him/her after considering this customer in the brand databases. Finally permission marketing is a way to get the customer's loyalty by asking them if he/she wants to receive this or that information or newsletter for example, letting him/her choose the involvement degree he/she wants with the brand (Keller 2008: 188-193). This point is important for us to share as we want to know if Volvo uses this kind of marketing technique in its strategy and how consumers react to it.

Following this idea Keller (2008: 194) speaks about a "relationship marketing" saying that "current customers are the key to long-term brand success". Some benefits are provided like the profits earned by the brand subsequent to their customers loyalty. To do so the brand has three relationship marketing issues: "mass customization, aftermarketing and loyalty programs" (Keller 2008: 196-199). Mass customization is the concept "making products to fit the customer's exact specifications" such as customized products while the aftermarketing emphasizes on "purchase and consumption" to encourage people to repeat their purchase. Eventually loyalty programs aim to "identify, maintain and increase the yield from a firm's best customers through a long-term, interactive, value-added relationships" which means, as described in the previous paragraph, to create value for both the brand and the consumer (Keller 2008: 196-199).

That brings us to the fact that many other writers have discussed about the brand positioning and the consumer's loyalty, and so did Souiden et al. (2006). Throughout their research about the disparities between Japanese and American consumers' perception, they found that "the corporate name had a significant impact on corporate image and corporate reputation had a significant effect on corporate loyalty" (Souiden et al. 2006: 825). "The corporate reputation is also found to be a mediator of the corporate image's effect on consumers' product evaluation" (Souiden et al. 2006: 825). Rust et al. (1995), mentioned by Souiden et al. (2006: 832), demonstrate that "an increase in customers' satisfaction leads to an increase in their loyalty to the firm and that this loyalty leads to an increase in their purchases from the company" (Souiden et al., 2006). Hence, stronger is the relationship between the brand and the customer, more he/she will be inclined to increase or repeat his/her purchase. Iniesta and Sanchez (2002), also quoted by Souiden et al. (2006: 832), assert that "commitment has become a major objective for many corporations since it can be used as a key strategic factor, such as in market segmentation" and so we understand why brands assent so much to this method permitting them to adapt their marketing strategy according to the types of customers. Kassim and Souiden (2004) hypothesize that "both satisfaction and image may have a strong impact on customer retention" (Souiden et al., 2006: 832). In other words, brands must be satisfactory in their "aftermarketing" and throughout the relationship with the customer to increase his/her adhesion and keep his/her loyalty. Once more, this theory is crucial for our comprehension of Volvo's marketing strategy and its relation to the consumers.

Duncan (2002) as well expresses the importance of customer loyalty, using the example of Boots (famous British pharmacy chain) and of its "advantage card loyalty program" (Duncan, 2002: 40-42). In fact, this practice consist in letting know the customer how important he/she is, offering him/her advantages that will attract new/other customers wishing for the same

rewards. Duncan (2002: 49) cites a sentence from *Brands* written by Giep Franzen and Freek Holzhauser which illustrates exactly automobile brands such as Volvo: “Not infrequently people use products – things they buy in a shop – as symbols. They use them in the communication process with other people: friends, partners, colleagues, strangers”. Effectively it is also considered as communication the image the consumer wants to provide of himself/herself through certain values of products.

This Professor introduces a model to preserve the customer loyalty: “The five Rs of Purposeful Dialogue” which embraces “recourse” – the options that can have consumers in case of problem with the product – “recognition” – customers like personalized service/relationship – “responsiveness” – facilities to reach the brand easily – “respect” – not “bombarding” customers with too many mails or messages – and “reinforcement” – after-purchase communication (Duncan, 2002: 148-150). By this channel the brand is assured to hold the customer loyalty according to Duncan, so we will see what it is for Volvo.

3.1.3. Use of Communication

As we know there are several ways of communication principally included in the Mass Medias composed by the radio, the cinema, the television, billboards, the Internet and the press, which are called “awareness builder” by Duncan (2002: 506-507). Consequently, advertising about a brand can be done by one or many of those options and there again Keller (2008: 234) advises to use multiple communications. First a brand must know its marketing communication budget to identify which channel(s) to use and then think about the adaptability of this or these channel(s) to tout about its product’s values. The brand will have to look at features such as the cost, the selectivity, the frequency, the coverage/exposure, the flexibility, the longevity, the time and so on to compare the pros and cons of each medium before deciding (Keller 2008: 234-241). This part of the marketing strategy is essential to convey the desired message to the consumers about the brand image and positioning, consequently we will pay attention to the way Volvo employs communication.

The medium that evaluated a lot during the last few decades is the Internet. Bringing new possibilities of communication, it allows diverse manners of advertisement and product’ socialization as we will behold in the present research paper. Its key characteristics promoted by Duncan (2002: 417) are: “to shift power from companies to customers, to be accessible to the majority of the population, to provide an extensive range of information, to allow for unsurpassed speed and coverage, and to reduce the cost of selling and acquisition”. We suppose that Volvo uses different media to communicate about its brand and products, however we will write later about the ones it uses and the ones that are the most efficient to retain people’s attention.

In his book, Duncan (2002) speaks about the IMC model (Integrated Marketing Communication) and quotes Peter Drucker to explain that the method is used to “build customer relationships which involve a series of interactions between individuals and a company over time, [that] will produce more sales and more profits”. This process will thus enable the brand to add value to what it represents, thanks to a good organization, databases updated, advertising and relationships (Duncan, 2002: 9).

The brand positioning being the base of a brand building and the exposition of the various ways of communication we will now examine how it is perceived by the customers or customers to be, to ensure this fact. To understand Volvo strategy marketing we have to know if the image the brand wants to show is the same as the one perceived by the audience. Consequently we will at present look at the second concept of our figure 1: Consumer perception.

3.2. Consumer perception

3.2.1. About the values

To measure the perception some tests can be made such as a taste description (Keller 2008: 50). In Keller (2008)'s book we can compare the taste perceptions of six beer brands in two different figures in relation to the knowledge or not of the drinker about what he is drinking. We can observe that his/her reactions are really disparate when he/she knows the name of the brand. That would lead us to witness the significance of the brand name and image.

Another way to get consumers' point of view about a brand is to ask them how they perceive the brand personality and values. Indeed, brand personality is described by Keller (2008: 369) as "the human characteristics or traits that consumers can attribute to a brand". It can be determined in various ways although Keller (2008: 369) suggests to "solicit" directly the customer with questions like: "If the brand were to come alive as a person, what would it be? What would it do? Where would it live? What would it wear?" and so on, so far (Keller 2008: 369). Once more here it is question of associations in the consumer's mind facing the image he/she identifies to the brand. In the equivalent approach Aaker (2002: 78-79; 176-177) introduces the "brand identity system" composed by four perspectives of how to classify a brand: "as product, as organization, as person or as symbol". These views of a brand will define as well its consumer awareness. We will not arrange our questionnaire in this manner exactly but we will take these methods into account to create our questions about Volvo's perception by the respondents.

Concerning the product strategy the brand should be careful about its perceived quality and values. This concept is described by Keller (2008: 369) as the "customers' perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service compared to alternatives and with respect to its intended purpose". Following what has been explained about the brand positioning previously, perceived quality and values are the assignment of the brand and its product among its competitors in line with the customer's point of view. As indicated by Keller (2008: 369), not only the quality of the product counts on the consumer's mind but the service around it as well. We will study later on what does Volvo about it.

To help him/her in that way "the brand name, logo, symbol, character, packaging and slogan" are designed and combined each time to the brand marketing (Keller 2008: 374). Several measures can be taken to promote this awareness of brand elements such as "recognition" that "requires consumers to identify the brand under a variety of circumstances and can rest on the identification of any of the brand elements"; or "recall" is the fact to "retrieve the actual brand from memory when given some related probe or cue" by the customers. "Corrections for guessing" – where the marketer is supposed to give a list of different brand name to the consumers and they have, for instance, to tell if they have already heard about them or not – must be effectuated to certify the quality of responses as sometimes mistakes or wrong

associations can be done (Keller 2008: 374-379). These features are crucial for our study of Volvo's marketing strategy and it is why we will study them in later on.

As stated by Aaker (2002: 162-163), perceived quality is a "brand asset" for several reasons: "it has been shown to drive financial performance, it is a major strategic thrust of a business, and it is linked to and often drives other aspects of how a brand is perceived". Hence, it is essential for a brand to cultivate this aspect and we will discuss in a further part – the analysis – how Volvo reflects on it.

In their article Holehonnur et al. (2009: 166) like Keller (2008: 83-84), they present a concept recommended by Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon (2000) concerning the customer equity framework that contains "value equity, brand equity and retention equity". We talk earlier about customer and brand equity, however this subclass of value equity is highlighted from the consumer perception in this article and gives us more details on our subject. Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon (2000) affirm that "consumers' expectations and perceptions affect the value of a brand" (Holehonnur et al. 2009: 166) and it is an added reason to why a brand should consider this part of its image. Holehonnur et al. (2009: 174) conclude that quality and price – especially quality – influence consumer perceptions of value equity, that brand awareness and attitudes create perceptions of brand equity and that both brand and value equity certainly influence a consumer's purchase intentions. Consequently, consumer's perception is a real crucial factor to take into consideration when launching a marketing campaign and it is what we will try to verify about the Volvo case.

3.2.2. About the name

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."
Shakespeare

"Shakespeare was wrong. A rose by any other name would not smell as sweet... which is why the single most important decision in the marketing of perfume is the name."
Al Ries and Jack Trout

The consumer's perception also depends on the knowledge of the brand. For that Keller (2008: 282) exposes three main points: "awareness and knowledge of the entity, meaningfulness of the knowledge of the entity and transferability of the knowledge of the entity". These aspects must be taken as steps where the last one cannot be passed without the resolution of the two first ones in the order. This notion insinuates that "positive judgment and feelings" have to be associated at the first stage, to be evoked with relevance at the second one and to have the possibility to be transferred to the brand at the last step (Keller 2008: 282). In the customer's mind it will be the associated image to the brand and we will spot thanks to our questionnaire the image(s) linked to Volvo by the two parts of our sample.

The brand name recognition is as well approached by Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) who consider it as a measure of knowing "how widely known the corporate brand is and to what extent this familiarity affects consumer product evaluation" and how combined to the product, it will enhance consumer awareness (Souiden et al., 2006). Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002), supported by Aaker (1991) and Keller and Aaker (1997), all quoted by Souiden et al. (2006: 830) note that "the display of the corporate name on the company's products may involve the products' image and consequently have certain influences on consumer evaluation". In other

words, the corporate name influences the consumer's opinion on the products and "strongly affects the corporate image" (Gregory and Wiechmann, 1999 cited by Souiden et al. 2006: 830).

Hence, with these mentioned theories, we will figure out later on how the Volvo name is perceived by consumers and what it implies.

3.2.3. About the exposure

Duncan (2002: 145) conveys the importance of perceptions as well in his book. He declares that "a perception is real, at least for the person who holds it" and that "messages can influence these perceptions". Hence, it is important that a brand is conscious about its projected image to be able to send adapted signals to the consumers to confirm or infirm his/her perception. Hence, is Volvo really aware of what it represents in France and in Sweden?

Going deeper in sensory limits, Solomon et al. (2007: 47) propose that the competition for consumer's attention is steadily increasing with the expansion of exposures to television commercials and other kinds of advertising. It entails that a consumer can experience a feeling of being overwhelmed when he is forced to elect through the requests made by a wide range of competing brands (Solomon et al. 2007: 47). The authors introduce the term "exposure" as the extent to which people discern a stimulus that is found within the scope of their sensory receptors. In this context, they include that consumers do not just concentrate on a cluster of stimuli but only on certain stimuli, coming to unaware of others, and even going out of their way to ignore some explicit messages. Solomon et al. (2007) also deal with the concept of "adaptation" described as "the degree to which consumers keep on noticing a stimulus over time" (Solomon et al. 2007: 48). This factor affecting exposure occurs when consumers do not pay attention to a stimulus, since it is so familiar.

Furthermore, bearing in mind that consumers have a limited brain's capacity when processing information, they are highly selective upon what they pay attention to. By this way, Solomon et al. (2007) refer to "perceptual selectivity" as people's attention only to a small part of stimuli to which they are exposed. Thus the writers explore another factor that affects consumer's perception: "attention" that they determine as the extent to which consumers take notice of stimuli within their degree of exposure (Solomon et al. 2007: 48). It comprises when there is a substantial amount of stimulus but only one will receive the longed attention in so far as it differs from those around it (Solomon et al., 2007: 48). The authors also suggest that stimuli that lead to unpredictable patterns many times draw much attention. Consequently, does Volvo exploit this theory to capture the consumers' attention and stimuli? It is another element that we will examine in the following chapters.

Another way for a brand to build its image in the customers' mind is to participate to events and sponsorships. In fact, brand participation to certain type of events will assent it values connected to the event and it is why a brand should be careful in its selection depending on the image it desires to furnish. It can be a "created event" – when a brand aims to celebrate something around its company or products – "participating events" – participate to an event created by someone else – "trade shows" – more directed towards professionals with demonstration and so on – "sponsorships" – sport ones, cause or mission marketing that facilitate the awareness of the brand and can support a special cause (Duncan, 2002: 636-

646). Taylor and Shanka (2008: 954) reporting their findings about Not-for-Profit organizations creating sport events also agree on the aspect of this kind of events which are used “for revenue generation and to develop awareness and support of the organization’s cause”, and consequently increase the awareness of the brand and its values linked to the supported cause. This aspect is also interesting for our purpose to perceive how Volvo employs the events which it participates and what those bring to its image.

Hence the consumer’s perception is crucial to appreciate the real place of the brand and check if there are disparities between the brand’s desired position and the one in the minds of customers. Nevertheless other triggers can be taken into consideration when diverse populations are targeted like the difference of origin for instance. That is why brands should adapt their marketing strategy when going international, as it might be not perceived in the same way.

3.3. Adaptation

Moroko and Uncles (2009: 181) introduce their article with a vision of segmentation explaining that some brands have “the belief that it is more profitable to treat certain groups of consumers differently than to treat them all alike”. And it is where adaptation comes into sight to accentuate this want to satisfy as much as possible the diverse customers in a way to increase sales and revenues.

We discussed before about the possible associations made by the consumer when it comes to connect a brand to some values or image. Keller (2008: 285-286) explores other elements able to play a role on this: “the country of origin and other geographic areas”. In fact the origin of a brand or a product can generate new types of association related to the consumer’s beliefs. For example Chanel perfumes from France or BMW cars from Germany are guarantee of quality, so we will find to what is linked Volvo (Keller 2008: 285-286).

There is the origin of the product side that we just see but it on the other hand we have as well the cultural aspect coming from the foreign segment. To really fit another market than the first one with a same product some adaptations have to be done. They can be on the product or on the marketing strategy. Actually even in a European market the disparities amid the various countries can be a limitation for the brand expansion and it is why it should be aware of these differences carrying the adaptation out. “Demographic dimensions such as age, income, gender and race, as well as psychographic considerations like shopping behaviors” have to be taken into account in the “customized marketing” adjusted from the original one (Keller 2008: 590). Duncan (2002: 248-258) speaks about “kind of segmentation” to express the same idea. In our case Volvo must adapt its strategy from Sweden to France considering the good features to modify and distinguishing how its image is perceived there.

For that reason the brand – presently Volvo – should organize a global brand strategy encompassing two crucial ideas to “satisfy different market segments”: “identify differences in consumer behavior in each market (how they purchase, their knowledge and feelings about the brand...) and adjust the branding program accordingly through the choice of brand elements, the nature of the actual marketing program and activities and the leveraging of secondary associations” (Keller 2008: 603). This will contribute to the brand equity and so positioning with perhaps certain variations contrasting with the initial strategy. Duncan (2002:

698) affirms that “the degree of cultural difference is often related to the product category” in line with his IMC theory. Consequently, the adaptation will rely on that point as well.

Souiden et al. (2006: 832;840)’s paper also suggests that marketers should think about adapting their corporate branding approaches “to fit each marketing environment and enhance corporate loyalty to reduce the switching behavior of consumers” and prove that “consumers of different cultures do not perceive in the same way the impact of corporate image and corporate loyalty”. Consequently, the researchers show us the importance of a correct adaptation, beneficial for the brand – that will know better the expectations of the numerous parts of the market – and for the customer – who will enjoy a better suited product.

All these theories gave us an idea of what can use Volvo to build its image and to be recognized as it would like by the consumers. We will appreciate now which of them are the most applied by the brand and which features work better on the consumers’ mind.

4. Practical methodology

4.1. Our questionnaire

4.1.1. Conception

The questionnaires have been conceived in English to avoid issues linked to translation which could lead to different/wrong choice of words that would not have exactly the same meaning in French or in Swedish. The questionnaire can be read as a whole in the appendix 1.

We do feel that this was a better solution than using an interpreter in some of the interviews and speaking our first language with some of the respondents. That would have led to a significant dissimilarity in our opinion and it is the reason why we chose to distribute all the questionnaires in English. Not being the mother tongue of any of the respondents, they are hence in the same position to answer our questionnaire.

4.1.2. Administration of the questionnaire and processing of the data

We have selected our convenient sample in both Sweden – mostly in Umeå university – and France – mainly people that we know (friends, family, professors from our school and so on), but with the only criteria that they should be old enough to own a car - and therefore being likely to be more or less impacted by Volvo Cars' commercials.

Before asking the first question and while presenting our questionnaire we ensured that people would be able to answer it in a whole asking them questions such as if they had a car (not mandatory anyway), a driving license or have knowledge about Volvo. We did not pay more attention to males than females and most of the time people agreed to answer.

To collect enough data for our research, both of us distributed the questionnaire in France and in Sweden – 50 per person – and we coded it together to process the data found on the SPSS program.

We have coded our answers differently when the question was a scale question or a nominal ranking question. For question 6, 10 and 11, we have adopted a special coding to separate the variables in order to compare them. For question 13 and 15, we have chosen to divide the criteria in different answers and coded as yes if the respondent had ticked an element and no if they had not. Moreover, when respondents did not answer to a question, and to be able to still take them into account, we coded “no answer” as “0”.

4.2. Main difficulties

First we have to say that we forgot some information in our questionnaire like cars' brands that impact on our coding and thus on our results. Besides, we wrote question 4 in order to understand the factors of their cars' dissatisfaction however nobody was really dissatisfied with it and it appeared that the question was useless for our analysis; hence we did not take it into account while processing our data.

For some of the respondents the difference between space and size was not really obvious and we realized that we should have gathered those two factors under “practicality” as we did for

questions 10 and 11. Furthermore, this would have been more consistent with our other questions since we would have had the exact same factors to compare between the various questions.

We noticed while distributing the questionnaire that we forgot to mention press as a mean of communication in question 15. However this medium has been taken into consideration as part of specialized press when people asked us where they should mention press since we had not written it as a possible answer. Moreover, regarding the generalization of our findings, the age of the respondents – mainly under 30 years old– might affect them.

As far as the clarity of the questions' indications is concerned, we noticed that several people did not understand properly that they had to rank their answers rather than electing only one of them. Therefore we have had to specify it orally for almost all the respondents. Furthermore, for questions 13 and 15, we did not mention that respondents could choose more than one answer, which also made it more difficult for them to respond since they always had to ask us if they could or not elect several ones.

Another limitation has been the translation of some questionnaires or expressions used in it during the distribution in France, because the level of English is weaker there than in Sweden and few persons needed help with it. Last but not least, one of our main difficulties has been that some people were not willing to answer because they thought it would take too long, and we therefore had to try to convince them.

5. Empirical observations

5.1. Volvo Cars' marketing strategy

5.1.1 Global marketing strategy

In this section we will first focus in Volvo Cars' marketing strategy: how the brand has tried to change and modernize its image while still sticking to its fundamental values of safety, ecology, quality and design. We will then focus more precisely on its marketing strategy in France and in Sweden.

Volvo signifies "I roll" in Latin. In 70 years, Volvo has communicated on the safety and the quality of its cars as we comprehended from its website. The company has managed to keep very loyal customers thanks to personalized direct marketing strategies. Indeed, its customers are invited to private events organized by Volvo such as new car models testing and they are even rewarded by gifts if they have brought Volvo a new customer. Moreover, Volvo has asserted its upper scale position as a brand by sponsoring events linked to the industry of luxury such as golf tournaments or sailing - currently, the Volvo Ocean Race, which is a nine month race in extreme conditions and which is seen as a very important race in the world of sailing (Volvoceanrace.com 2010)¹⁰. Volvo has managed to assert its image of upper scale reliable automobile manufacturer –which very often compared to Audi (Turbo.fr 2010)¹¹ (We have found examples such as the C30 being compared with the A3, the S60 with the A4 and the XC60 with the Q5), and has been very profitable until 2007 (Latribune.fr 2010)¹². Nevertheless, despite its wish to remain close to its customers and to provide innovative and safe good quality cars corresponding to contemporary needs – such as environment friendly cars – Volvo has been in deficit since 2007 (Latribune.fr 2010)¹². In order to face this and to get back on tracks, the brand has changed several aspects of its marketing policy. The following illustrations depict a wish from Volvo to be seen as a more dynamic and younger brand while still innovating to remain close to its customers and build a privileged relationship with them. This will to have a younger image might mean that Volvo has associated its losses with its image and that it might have felt that among its targets, its image was becoming old and too centered on the family. We will see later in this chapter how Volvo brand is perceived by the people we have asked and we will then discuss whether or not Volvo had understood the adaptations that needed to be done according to the evolutions of the market and new expectations from the consumers.

Volvo Cars' wish to diversify its target and to adapt its brand image started in 2006, with the launch of the Volvo C30 which was its first actually small car with a size adapted to the traffic of the city and the growing need to consume less fuel –Volvo already had three models of smaller cars, but the C30 was designed to target a more urban and younger customer who would not be attracted by a very big car which represent most of Volvo Cars models.

With the launch of the C30 in 2007 – which has been compared to the Audi A3 and the BMW serie 1 (Caradisiac.com 2010)¹³ –, Volvo had a real will to make its brand image look younger and dynamic. To advertise those smaller cars which are not only dedicated to their usual customers – its core target – such as families, and to try to attract a younger target, it used psychedelic and colorful images (Video from Volvo Cars' commercial 2007 seen on Dailymotion.com 2010)¹⁴. Indeed, when launching the C30, Volvo resorted to 16 short animated movies. With those original and colorful commercials it really aimed at interacting with its targets by soliciting their point of view rather than directly emphasizing the technical

qualities of the car with the motto “That is a point of view, what is yours?” repeated in each short movie. The fact that Volvo emphasizes the importance for one’s own point of view – even if we do not like it – is consistent with the Swedish identity of Volvo: it does not try to impose a point of view for its new car, it asks people for their opinion, and this is for instance what happens in Swedish Universities and in Swedish schools in general (according to Swedish students). With those short movies, the brand aimed at attracting young targets, but it still wanted to preserve its core target; this is certainly the reason why when launching the new version of the C30 in 2009, it adopted a more sober way of advertising the car, still stating the importance on having one’s opinion and one’s way of life – while remaining opened to others – but clearly addressing to both (Video from Volvo Cars’ commercial 2009 seen on Dailymotion.com 2010)¹⁵: in fact, in the commercial we can see on the one hand a young man in an orange car listening to young music and on the other hand, a man in his forties, who looks like a bachelor and who listens to Opera in his grey Volvo C30. This commercial clearly shows the will of Volvo to target new customers, younger, not necessarily married, active, urban and independent.

Another example of the brand’s wish to target younger people is its partnership with the movie Twilight which is very successful among the youth. Indeed, Volvo Cars is used in the movie and a commercial has been made with images from the movie. This commercial is broadcasted in movie theatres and should have an important impact on Volvo Cars’ sales. Volvo has also known how to take advantage of the success of social networks such as Facebook or Twitter: the brand has organized online games with prizes, free trials of new Volvo cars were proposed etc.

Nevertheless and despite Volvo’s will to reach a younger market segment, it certainly does not forget its core target: families and middle aged people (between 35 and 55) who earn enough money to afford a Volvo. For them, Volvo has launched the S60 in 2010. The Volvo S60 was very expected at Geneva’s world automobile show and Volvo tried to keep it mysterious in order to arouse people’s interest for the car. The S60 is more family oriented, it is definitely consistent with Volvo Cars’ position as upper scale car manufacturer – the S60 has been compared to the Audi A4 (Automobile-enterprise.com 2010, Xelopolis.com 2010, Motorlegend.com 2010)^{16/17/18} – and it also corresponds to one of Volvo’s most emblematic value: security. Indeed, the S60 is equipped with the pedestrian detection system which detects pedestrians when they are less than 25 meters away from the car, and sends a signal to the driver; if he or she does not react, the car automatically activates the brakes - which sensibly slow down the car or stops the car – increasing by 80% the chances of survival for the victims (DHnet.be 2010)⁷. Many websites and/or newspaper have qualified the Volvo S60 as the “best Volvo ever” (Automobile-enterprise.com 2010, Xelopolis.com 2010)^{16/17}.

Innovation for Volvo also means innovation in customers’ relationships (its clients are both companies/professionals and individuals): from the moment when the client purchases a Volvo, the brand aims at creating a cycle of relationship with its customers in order to develop customer’s loyalty with initiatives such as calling the customers three months after they have bought the car - to know how satisfied they are with it, how long they want to keep it etc. – in order to start their data base for each client so that they know how to approach them for further events. Indeed, Volvo invites its clients to events, allows them to try new cars for free, offers them gifts if they have bought them new clients and so on.

Recently, Volvo has even created a sort of social security system for its cars (Autopro.fr)²⁰ with which it aims at reassuring its client and show it still takes good care of them - amongst

other things, it gives advices on how to upkeep and maintain the car, it shows how to use it best, it reminds the customer when to bring it for the annual control and so on – which really give the feeling to the client that the company cares for him/her and that he or she is not another random client. This is also a way for the company to remain aware of their needs and to be able to react and/or send them invitation to special events - nevertheless, Volvo does not want to overwhelm its customers with promotion mails.

5.1.2. Marketing strategy in Sweden

In Sweden, Volvo is very well-known: Volvo is the most purchased car in Sweden – this might be due as in France to the nationality criteria: Swedish people might prefer to buy Swedish cars and French people might prefer to buy French cars. Indeed, the two most sold cars in Sweden in December 2009 were Volvo V70II and Volvo V50 (Bilsweden.se)²⁵.

Therefore, Volvo do not really need to advertise a lot in Sweden since they are very popular and we may assume that in Sweden, people know and trust the brand, its values and the quality of Swedish steel. Furthermore, Volvo Cars are also very practical and emphasize family life – which a very important value of the Swedish culture. With its new brand image, the emphasis is started to be laid on the design and the appearance of the cars, but the main focus remains on other features such as practical aspects, safety, environment - and economies of fuel- (Youtube.com 2010)²⁶, and quality. Besides, on Volvo Cars Swedish Corporate website- and on billboards we have seen in the streets of Umeå- advertisement is centered on safety and the new pedestrian protection system that equips the S60 (Volvocars.se 2010)²⁷. Moreover, we can see that Swedish commercials are humorous (Youtube.com 2010 and Dailymotion.com 2010)^{28/26} and it is also what they have tried to do in France - adding a hint of humor in their commercial- (Volvocars.fr 2010)²³. In fact, most car commercials - especially if it is for upper scale cars like Volvo - tend to be very serious.

5.1.3. Marketing strategy in France

This initiative of Social security system for Volvo cars was recorded for France where Volvo is not very popular. Indeed, according to a report by the Committee of French Automobile Manufacturers (ccfa.fr 2010)²¹, less than 12 000 Volvo cars have been sold in 2009 (versus more than 1 million of French cars with a majority of cars sold from PSA Peugeot Citroën and Renault). This shows a preference to buy French from French people, and it also shows that Volvo is not very popular. One of the main reasons might be because it is not famous enough and therefore, Volvo might need to advertise more in France. This might also be due to the price: indeed, Volvo Cars are in average more expensive than Renault or Peugeot - certainly due to the fact that Volvo Cars also are better quality. In order to increase its popularity, Volvo organizes events in France such as The Viking Classic Auto Show (Autodeclics.com)²² (which emphasizes the fact that Volvo is Swedish, because nowadays, in France, Scandinavia is becoming more and trendier and Sweden is trusted for the reliability and the quality of its products). Volvo also has advertised their C30 in the end of 2009 targeting a young and/or middle age urban and independent customer (Dailymotion.com 2010)¹⁵. Moreover, on Volvo Cars French website it is now possible to see the new commercial for the C70 which shows that Volvo does not forget women (Volvocars.com 2010)²³ emphasizing again on the independence of Volvo owners: their right to change their mind and/or their life if they want to. This aspect of not forgetting women in their marketing

strategy was also present for the S60 with the possibility to buy nail polish assorted to the car's color (Autodeclics.com 2010)²⁴.

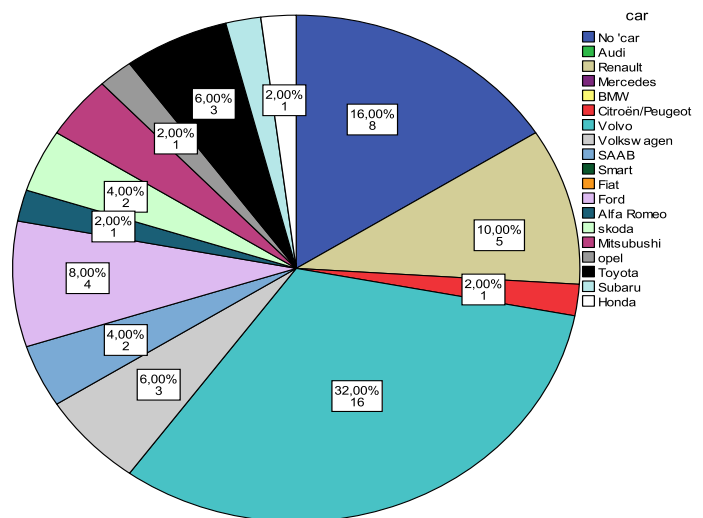
We will come back on the aspects of Volvo Cars' marketing policy in both France and Sweden in our analysis. Thus, after having studied the results from our empirical study, we will be able to make a more in-depth comparison in order to understand Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in both countries-focusing on the similarities and the differences and also understand how Volvo Cars' positioning is perceived by potential clients. How impacted they are by Volvo Cars' marketing strategy and how Volvo Cars has (or not) managed to adapt to each market's specific cultural features and to the expectations of the potential customers in both countries.

5.2. Description of the findings

5.2.1 In Sweden

In our first question, we have used a bipolar scale question asking our respondents to evaluate from 1 to 10 their level of interest for the car industry, 1 being the least interest and 10 the strongest level of interest. Our sample of Swedish population appears to be rather homogenous as 26 people out of 50 answered they had an average interest in the automobile industry (4, 5, 6 and 7 on our scale of 10), 10 answered they had a rather strong interest in the automobile industry (8, 9, 10) and 14 answered they had a rather poor interest (1, 2, 3). The mean for this question was 5.16 out of ten, confirming the tendency for people from our sample to have an average interest in the automobile industry.

We designed question 2 in order to have a picture of the different cars owned in the two different countries as we had already remarked a much more important proportion of Volvo cars in Sweden than in France. In Sweden, the result pretty much confirms what we first assumed with a majority of respondents who own a Volvo (32%), 16% who do not have a car, 10% who possess a Renault, and 8% who own a Ford. The rest of the sample is divided in several small proportions (from 1% to 6%) of other brands such as Volkswagen (6%), Toyota (6%), SAAB (4%), or Citroën (1%).



Then we aimed at evaluate on a scale of 10 how satisfied our respondents were with their cars (1 being the least satisfied and 10 the most). The majority – 15 people – answered 7 which corresponds to rather satisfied, and 16 persons answered 8 or 9 which is very satisfied. A total of 38 persons answered between 6 and 10, giving us a mean of 6.1 out of 10 which indicates that the Swedes from our sample are rather satisfied or very satisfied with their current car, with only 4 persons who answered 3 or 4 (corresponding to rather not satisfied), and no one answering 1 nor 2 (not satisfied at all). Question 4 was supposed to help us understand why people were unsatisfied with their car if they were; but as we did not get enough negative advices regarding the satisfaction with their car, we decided not to deal with this question and

it appeared not to be really relevant for our study about Volvo's marketing strategy in both France and Sweden.

In the following question, people were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 10 how loyal they were to their car manufacturer (1 being "not loyal at all" and 10 being "very loyal"). With a majority of people (27 out of 50) who answered they were rather not loyal (3, 4) or not loyal at all (1, 2), and only 5 who answered 8 or 9, we may then assert that in our sample, people were globally not loyal to their car manufacturer.

To enter our questionnaire in SPSS we have divided questions 6, 10 and 11 in several variables to be able to compare the importance of each variable with the others in both countries. For question 6, the respondents were asked to classify eight factors concerning what was the most important when choosing a car from 1 to 7, 1 being the most important and 7 being the least one. For our Swedish respondents – who have been mainly asked at Umeå University, the two main factors are safety (30% of our respondents put it as the most important factor when choosing a car) and the price (30%), followed by fuel consumption (20%), and design (14%). The other variables do not appear to be prioritized by people from our sample with only 2% - or one person – placing comfort as the most important factor when purchasing a car, 2% placing size as the key factor, and 2% placing space as the most important factor when selecting a car. On the other hand, 66% placed space in sixth or seventh place, 44% placed size in sixth or seventh position and comfort being considered as a factor of average importance with 60% of our respondents placing it in third, fourth or fifth position whereas no one has classified safety as the least important factor – when 6% have rated price with 6 or 7 and 8% have rated fuel consumption with 6 or 7. Therefore, safety appears to be the most important factor.

Afterwards, we wanted to know if our respondents had already had a Volvo, because if they used to have one and no longer do, this gives us information about their loyalty, but also about their satisfaction of their Volvo. The result for our Swedish sample corresponded again to what we thought with 50% of our sample who already had a Volvo and 50% who had never had a Volvo, knowing that among the "no", we include respondents who have never had a car. If people had answered "yes" at this question, they had to estimate their satisfaction with their Volvo on a scale from 1 to 10. Only one respondent answered he had not been satisfied at all with his Volvo. Moreover, 15 persons - among the 25 of our sample who already had had a Volvo -, answered 8, 9 or 10 which means they had been very satisfied with their Volvo, the peak of satisfaction being at 8. Eight respondents answered they were rather satisfied with their Volvo (6, 7), and 2 answered 4 or 5 corresponding to "without a real opinion", "not unsatisfied, but not satisfied either".

Question 9 on the other hand was for the 25 persons who had never had a Volvo, and it was regarding whether they were interested or not in owning one. The answers are rather equally divided between the different numbers of the scale with 11 people answering 8, 9 or 10 (very interested), five who answered 6 or 7 (rather interested), and six who answered 5 (nothing against it but not interested per se), or 4 (rather not interested). 2 people also answered 1 corresponding of being not interested at all.

Question 10 is concerned with the factors that would make people buy a Volvo, and like in question 6, respondents had to rank the different factors from 1 to 9, 1 being the most important one and 9 being the least one. Again, as in question 6, we found the same two factors of choice applied to Volvo, quality being the most significant feature that would

encourage people to choose a Volvo amongst other cars with 56% of the respondents ranking it in either first, second or third position, followed by safety (50% of the respondents ranked it as 1, 2 or 3), and price (28% who ranked them as 1, 2 or 3). We may also notice that no one has ranked comfort nor ecological aspect as the first factor that would make them choose a Volvo, and that those factors along with brand image, Swedish origin, practicality, ecological aspect, and design appeared to be either of average or low importance for our respondent if they were going to purchase a Volvo. Brand image appears to be the least important trigger for people if they were to buy a Volvo with 50% of our sample having classified it in seventh, eighth or ninth position. Surprisingly enough, 32% ranked the factor “ecological aspect” in positions 7, 8 or 9, which allows us to assert that the “ecological image” of Volvo is not strong enough in people’s mind, or at least, is not a distinctive sign that would make them choose a Volvo among other brands. All the other characteristics – comfort, practicality, Swedish origin, design – have been ranked mainly in 4, 5, 6 position which allows us to assume they are considered to be of average importance by our sample.

The next question was more concerned with the perception consumers had of Volvo than with the triggers that would make them buy one. Respondents had to order from 1 to 7 what Volvo evoked to them – 1 being the first thing they think about when hearing of Volvo and 7 the last thing Volvo evokes to them. With 58% of our respondents classifying it in first or second position, safety appears to be the first characteristic that Volvo evokes to them followed by Swedish origin (48% of the respondents classified it in first or second position) and quality (with 36% ranking it as 1 or 2). Moreover, even though 14% people have classified “Swedish origin” in sixth or seventh position, only one person has classified “safety” as 7 (no none in sixth position) and one person has classified “quality” as 6 (and no one in 7) which depicts once more that Volvo cars are perceived as safe and quality vehicles. The ecological factor is here again, the one which is the least associated with Volvo in our sample: 62% have ranked it in sixth or seventh position. Innovation and practicality have mainly been ranked in third, fourth or fifth position with 46% of the respondents who ranked innovation as 3, 4 or 5, and 56% who ranked practicality as 3, 4 or 5. Design has been well divided between 6 and 7 and 3, 4 and 5, with 34% ranking it as the last thing Volvo evokes to them, 36% ranking it as 3, 4 or 5, and only 16% who have put it in first or second position.

Then, in question 12 we also dealt with consumer’s perception of the brand Volvo: the respondents from our sample were asked to qualify what brand segment Volvo belongs to in their opinion. 42% answered that Volvo was an upper-scale car manufacturer – which corresponds to their actual positioning on the market – 30% see Volvo as an upper middle scale car manufacturer and 16% see it as a middle scale car manufacturer. We have been stunned to note that one of our respondents sees Volvo as a low cost car manufacturer and on the other hand, another one sees Volvo as a luxury car manufacturer.

In question 13, we aimed at understanding how do people perceive Volvo, and more exactly, who they think Volvo’s core target is. To code question 13 we took each proposition and separated the responses in two categories: “yes” meaning that respondents ticked the word, and “no” indicating that they did not. Our sample could indicate several answers to this question. 90% of our respondents answered that they saw Volvo as a car manufacturer oriented towards family. The second most quoted answer was “professional” with 18%, followed by “Men” (14%), “Women” (10%) and “Seniors”(8%), youth (2%), and no one who answered Volvo was a car manufacturer oriented towards “singles between 30 and 50”. We may also notice that two people (4%) answered “don’t know” to this question because they could not really say towards who Volvo was oriented. With the answers to this question, we

may deduce that Volvo is mainly seen as a car manufacturer oriented towards family, even though in question 12, we saw that it was also mainly considered as an upper scale car manufacturer who usually do not have families as their core target.

In order to evaluate the brand's exposure, we designed question 14 in which respondents had to say how often they noticed a commercial from Volvo. The majority (42%) answered they noticed it once a week, 34% once a month, 12% once a year, 10% almost every day, and 2% less than once a year. Therefore, in Sweden, the exposure to Volvo commercials can be qualified as satisfying since 66% of the respondents see advertisement for Volvo at least once a month.

To understand more in depth which channels of communication are used by Volvo Cars and more specifically, which ones are noticed by potential consumers, we conceived question 15 that we divided – when we entered it in SPSS – according to all the different channels of communication in a view to be able to compare them and see which one seemed to have been the most used and/or the most seen by our respondents. Here again several answers were possible for this question. 70% of our sample sees Volvo advertisement on television, 24% on the Internet, 22% on billboards, 16% in specialized press, 10% on the radio, 6% at the cinema, and only 2% through events. Those results show that television is either the factor that Volvo uses the most for its commercials or the most efficient one since it is the one through which the majority of consumers remember having seen Volvo advertising campaign.

Finally, our questionnaire ended with personal factual questions such as gender, age or nationality. We had a Swedish sample divided rather equally between men and women: 27 women and 23 men, but less equally divided as far as the age heterogeneity of our sample is concerned since 74% of our respondents (37 persons out of 50) were less than 25 years old, 14% (7 people) were between 26 and 30, 4% (2 individuals) were between 31 and 40, 2% (1 person) between 41 and 50, 4% between 51 and 60 and only 2% (1 person) was more than 60.

The question regarding if the respondent was French or Swedish was also very important since it has allowed us to classify our questionnaires according to the nationality of the respondent in order to be able to enter our data in SPSS, to analyze it afterwards in both countries and make a comparison between our findings in both France and Sweden.

5.2.2. In France

Results of question 1 are mixed in our sample of French respondents. Indeed their interest for the automobile industry is much diversified going from 1 to 10 out of 10 with peaks on 3 and 8 followed by 5 and 7. Hence we can state that most of our respondents are rather interested or rather not which gives us a well spread population.

Then we wanted to highlight the proportion of people having a car and in case of positive answer which brand in particular. We observed that more of 80% of the French respondents possessed a car with a majority of French brands (Renault 28% and Peugeot-Citroën 18%) followed by German ones like Volkswagen (12%), BMW (6%), Seat and Audi (Volkswagen group) or Mercedes and Smart. We also noticed that no one had a Volvo.

About their car's satisfaction, the majority of the people who have a car are highly satisfied (maximum of 9 out of ten succeeded by important results on 8 and 7) and the census answered between 3 and 10 which means that there is not real dissatisfaction and it is why we do not have results for question 4.

On the contrary when it comes to car manufacturer loyalty the results are more homogenous and go from 1 to 9 out of 10 with a majority on 3 ensued by valuable quantity on 5 and 6 and the rest spread almost equally with only 2 persons out of 43 who answered 4. So we can say that they are mostly rather loyal or not very loyal.

After having compared the most important factors ordered by the respondents we obtained a ranking that, in the view of the tables and charts produced, shows that the main elements to choose a car are the design (26% in first position) then the price (24% in each first and second position) for French consumers. Coming after, safety (mix around 15/20% between the second and the fifth position) and comfort (26% in fourth position) are the third and fourth criteria, fuel consumption is the fifth one, space (40% in sixth position) the sixth criterion and size (26% in seventh position) the last one.

46 French respondents out of 50 have never had a Volvo and on the four ones who already had owned one we witnessed that 2 were very satisfied (10 out of 10) and the other half has been rather satisfied (6 and 7 out of 10). Concerning people who never possessed a Volvo we raise the question if they would be interested in owning one and the answers were once again really extended (from 1 to 10 out of 10). Nevertheless the peak being between 5 and 7 we can declare that they are rather interested in acquiring a Volvo with however a restriction as we can see that a quite significant part – a quarter – would not be interested at all (13 respondents out of 46).

Subsequently we were wondering about the main factors that make people choose a Volvo and oddly, 5 persons out of 50 were not able to answer which gives us a smaller sample to analyze. Anyway we found that the main criterion to will a Volvo was quality which received 28% of answers in position 1 and 2. The second feature is safety which concentrates most percentages in the first three places. Comfort and design are respectively the third and fourth criteria of choice, followed by practicality and brand image both in fifth/sixth position (majority of answers for both at the seventh position: 22%). Ecological aspect – with also good results (16%) on the third place – and price are also sharing the seventh/eighth place (respectively 24% and 30% spread among 7 and 8) and finally the Swedish origin as last reason for 24%, the majority in this case.

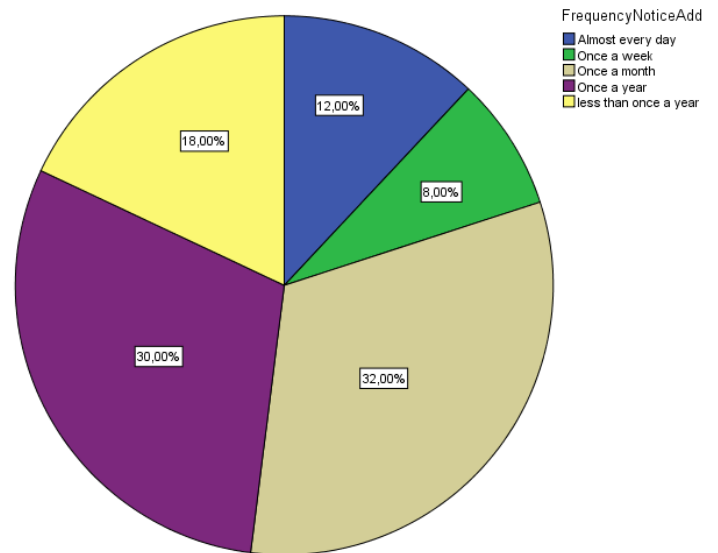
Above the five people – quoted in the previous paragraph – who did not answer to the previous question, we noticed that two others stopped their selection after the fourth criterion and another one after the sixth one, probably not seeing anything more fitting their opinion. Thus the ranking of the criterion evoking Volvo for our respondents is as follows: Swedish origin in first position with 44% of answers at this place, quality is second (30%), safety third (26%), practicality fourth (24%), design fifth (24%), ecological aspect sixth with nonetheless a quite homogeneous repartition – 8% at levels 2, 3 and 4 and 20% at levels 4, 6 and 7 – and innovation at last with 34% at this rank.

After that we desired to call to mind brand segmentation and except 2% of non response the majority answered that Volvo was an upper scale manufacturer or on upper middle market,

the two segments respectively representing 54% and 34%. That gives us a good idea of our sample point of view about Volvo place on the market.

Furthermore we discovered that our French sample essentially thinks that Volvo cars are oriented toward family (72%), but also towards seniors (about 35%) or men (9 persons out of 48 or 18%). Only few people thought the brand aimed at singles – 30-50 years old – (3 persons out of 48) or young people (1 person out of 48). No one replied that the brand was directed toward women or professionals.

Regarding the regularity at which the respondents notice Volvo advertising campaign, 32% answered once a month, 30% once a year, 18% less than once a year, 12% almost every day and 8% once a week. This chart shows us the diversity of people in the sample as, even if some parts are more significant than others, each fraction is important to be taken into account because of the number of people in every portion bringing so a heterogeneous range of responses which will be analyzed later.



We observed as well that 72% of the respondents noticed Volvo advertisement on television, 28% on billboards and specialized press, 16% during events, 14% on the Internet, 10% on radio and only 1 person saw it at the cinema. As we will see later, the choice of media use is crucial and these answers show us where to underline.

To end our questionnaire we asked some personal factual questions which show that there is almost parity in the completion of our questions: 56% of men against 44% of women, and that all age groups have been solicited with a penchant for people up to 25 (32%) and from 41 to 50 (26%). The fraction of 31 to 40 years old people is almost equal to the one from 51 to 60 (18% and 14% each) and only the part from 26 to 30 and over 60 are less represented. However once again, the disparity of the sample is probably a new reason for the gap between answers in certain questions as the frequency they remark Volvo advertisement and by which mean, depending perhaps on their activity (job, studies...) or place they live in.

5.2.3. Comparison of the data in the two countries

About the interest the respondents have for the car industry we can say that this level is rather the same in France than in Sweden with a globally common ranking around their average interest.

On the contrary there are clear differences between Sweden and France as we see that 32% of our Swedish sample own a Volvo whereas no one possesses one in France. Since we noticed that French people have mainly French or German cars, we can assume that individuals are more inclined to buy from their own countries, perhaps because cars are more adapted to their needs are because they trust it more.

The following comparison reveals us that Swedes as French seem satisfied with their vehicle, though this satisfaction implies no loyalty from both parts of our sample. Indeed we distinguish a level of approximately 3 of their loyalty to car manufacturer, maybe due to the fact – as we already explained – that our sample is relatively young and so does not have experience many cars yet.

As we described previously we understand the principal elements of an automobile's choice in the two countries and that shows us that Swedish and French have akin pretensions but not exactly the same. In fact our Swedish sample order safety and price in first position, followed by fuel consumption and design while the French one rank design at the first place, followed by price, safety and comfort. So with one exception, identical assets are looked forward by our whole sample.

Once more we presently underline the disparity between the two countries as half of the Swedes already have a Volvo – embracing the 32% still in possession of one – whereas only 4 persons in France have had a Volvo a while ago. The French sample seemed well satisfied with their Volvo cars – between 6 and 10 out of 10 – as were the Swedish people in their majority – 30% persons grading it between 8 and 10 out of 10 and only one was not satisfied. In question 9 we observed that most of our entire sample was appealed by Volvo with a main part of the Swedish sample gathered around 8 and 10 out of 10 and the French one assembled around 5 and 7 out of 10. Thus we noticed a great satisfaction of using a Volvo and the will to get one – even if it is moderate for the French.

Again when coming to elect Volvo cars' main factors of selection we discern a relative cohesion between the two parts of the sample. Indeed we spotted that the two main triggers were quality then safety. In third position we found that price was important for the Swedes when comfort and brand image were the key ones for the French. This is actually a point of discord among the two groups as Swedish people see brand image at the least crucial factor whereas it is the Swedish origin the last one for our French sample.

Nevertheless, we notice that both parts agreed on the most important characteristic. In fact safety, Swedish origin and quality are the most significant when evoking Volvo's name – in this order for the Swedes and ranked as Swedish origin, quality, and then safety for the French. And if our Swedish sample placed innovation at the fourth position of Volvo's suggestion, it comes at last for the French one as – as stated formerly – most of it keeps in mind older models of Volvo and so do not perceive the brand as innovative.

Our results demonstrate then the harmony in both branches of the sample with 42% of Swedish and 54% of French thinking that Volvo is an upper scale manufacturer, and 30% of the Swedes and 34% of the French according to see it as part of the upper middle market.

About the target market of the brand our samples concur on the family orientation (90% of Swedish and 72% of French) and the men one (14% of Swedish and 18% of French), however the rest of their opinion diverges. Indeed the Swedes consider professionals in second position whereas the French did not elect this segment at all; the same situation is met for the women segment. 35% of our French sample think that Volvo is oriented toward seniors – again most likely because of the “old Volvo cars” image – when not even 10% of the Swedish one think so.

Concerning the frequency at which individuals noticed Volvo advertising campaign we make out that Swedish remark it much more than French: 76% at least once a month against 52% for the same period. When the majority of the French sample is divided between once a month and once a year, the Swedish one is split mostly amongst once a month and once a day.

Approximately 70% in both France and Sweden witness these advertisements on television and 10% each on radio. Billboards are noticed at respectively 28 % and 22%; commercials in press or specialized press are seen at 28% and 16%; and by the mean of the Internet at 14% and 24%. The only real difference is that French people agreed at 16% on the perception of events whereas only 2% of the Swedes did it – perhaps because of the location (Umeå).

Regarding to the gender of our respondents we found a quite equal distribution in both: 54% women and 46% men in Sweden and 44% women and 46% men in France. On the contrary the age medium is not alike in the two fractions of the sample. Almost 75% of the Swedish sample is under 25 years old while “only” 32% of the French one is in this category. The French sample is fairly spread in the various age classes – except in the “more than 60” one, not big neither in the Swedish part. The Swedish consequently at the huge portion of young respondents – as explained beforehand, because of the main distribution inside Umeå University – has not high figures in the other age groups.

Thereby our observations of the data end to make room for their analysis, undertaking the emphasis of our theories compared to our findings in order to answer our main research question.

6. Analysis

6.1. Analysis of the collected data in Sweden

With our questionnaire, we have been able to find out several answers and point out differences about how Volvo is perceived in both France and Sweden.

In the following analysis, we are going to link our findings with the theories we have broached in our theoretical framework. First, we will analyze our findings for both our French and Swedish samples, and we will finally discuss the similarities and differences between the two countries in order to understand how did Volvo adapt its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden.

6.1.1 Brand image and positioning

Brand positioning

According to Keller (2008: 38-41), brand positioning relies on the establishment of brand values and positioning, how the brand is marketed, the measurement of the brand's performances on the market and what are the things that need to be implemented to improve it. As mentioned in our background, ecology is one of the most important values for Volvo and one that they have used to position their brand. Nevertheless, when carrying our empirical study, we realized that among the Swedes that we have asked, ecology has never been the first value associated with Volvo, and when they had to rank what would make them choose a Volvo amongst other cars, the ecological aspect was mostly ranked in position 7, 8 or 9 corresponding to the last factor that would made them chose a Volvo. Therefore, its brand positioning as an environment friendly car manufacturer has not been perceived by people and one of our suggestions will be to increase the communication on this aspect.

Moreover some of our respondents mentioned that we had forgotten to talk about the ecological aspect, which is important for them, when we asked them the main factor that would made them choose a car,. Indeed, Sweden is quoted as an example for its environment friendly policies and the Swedes have the reputation of being really close and respectful towards nature. Therefore, the fact that a car is environment friendly matters to them, but this criterion would not make them choose a Volvo because for many of our respondents, despite being a good quality and safe car, Volkos remain big cars whom are assumed to release a lot of carbon dioxide. But as we have seen in our background, this is not the case and Volvo Cars have even received several prizes for its efforts in terms of environment protection. On the other hand, Volvo has managed to position itself as a safe and quality car manufacturer: when we asked people what would make them choose a Volvo – which was in other words, the distinctive thing about Volvo that differentiate it from other cars – quality and safety have been ranked as the two main factors that would make our respondents choose a Volvo. This relates to what Keller (2008: 38-39) calls “the advantages or points of difference a brand has over competitors” or “brand superiority in the minds of consumers”. Hence the respondents see these two factors as being better than for other car manufacturers. Furthermore, we saw with the answers about what was the most important factor for our Swedish sample when choosing a car that the two main criteria were safety and price. Moreover, when mentioning the factors that would make them choose a Volvo, safety was the second most important element and price was the third. This ad equation between what people from our sample consider as being the main factor when selecting a car and what they said would make them

choose a Volvo is probably the explanation to why the majority of our respondents own a Volvo. Moreover if we refer to Keller's (2008: 48) Customer Based Brand Equity model (CBBE), which aims at pointing out if the customer targeted by the brand actually felt targeted by it, we may say that even though the majority of our sample was under thirty years old and also, did not really feel targeted by Volvo – since they mostly answered that Volvo cars were oriented towards family - we still notice that the majority of our sample owns a Volvo and half of our respondents have already possessed one. Therefore, even if Volvo is still perceived by most of our respondents as a car manufacturer oriented towards family, we may assert that they succeeded in their wish to target not only families but also young people.

The identification of the brand or “brand architecture” as Keller (2008: 433) names it is also a very important factor of brand positioning and in the meaning of the brand for the consumer. As mentioned in our theoretical framework, brand identification includes the name, the logo and the symbols linked to the brand. As stated earlier, Volvo signifies “I roll” or “I go”. Literally, this emphasizes the practical aspect of Volvo cars: they are made for “rolling”, and Volvo cars aim at providing the best conditions to do so - the most important ones being quality and safety that Volvo have clearly managed to convey as being the most distinctive features of their cars. Concerning the logo of Volvo which is the symbol of masculinity, this does not seem to affect people's perception of the brand positioning as far as the gender is concerned. Thus, approximately one fifth of our respondents identified Volvo as being targeting men and almost the same amount identified it as aiming at women.

With their positioning as an upper-scale car manufacturer (indeed, a Volvo costs between 18 000€ to around 50 000€), Volvo's main target is not the youth and has not been perceived as such by our Swedish sample. Moreover, with its values of quality and safety, it aims at attracting people who are more concerned about those factors than by design or power of the engine. This is probably the reason why almost all our Swedish respondents identified the brand as being family oriented.

Consumer Loyalty

Volvo seems to have managed to position on an upper-scale market while conserving its core values that have made its customers so loyal. Indeed, even though Volvo cars are rather expensive ones, the price is reasonable for the quality provided, and Volvo has always remained consistent with this initial positioning. Nevertheless, they are now trying to adapt to the new needs of the market being ecological aspect and also design. By doing so, they aspire at diversifying their target and enlarging the segment they have traditionally been associated with: family. However, trying to reach new customers by using new ways of communication – such as cinema or social networks - does not mean that Volvo cares less about their loyal customers. Therefore, they keep a very well established process of “relationship marketing” (Keller, 2008: 194) by for instance keeping in touch with them in order to either give them advices about the cars they own, or simply send them a newsletter. Volvo of course do not impose those information to their customers and ask their permission whether they want or not to receive it. This is what Keller (2008: 188- 193) qualifies as personal marketing including permission marketing (the agreement from the customer to receive newsletters or not) and experiential marketing (which include for instance, the invitations to events sponsored by Volvo). Nevertheless, among the people we have asked, the majority has declared to be rather not loyal to their car manufacturer. This is probably linked to the fact that they are mostly young people under thirty who might only have had one car and who probably want to test other brands before deciding if they want to become loyal to the brand or not. We may also mention that among our respondents, some who had a Volvo actually

said that they were very loyal to Volvo as they know that they are quality cars that they have trusted for years. Kassim and Souiden (2004) assume that “both satisfaction and image may have a strong impact on customer retention” (Souiden et al., 2006: 832). Indeed, if the image the brand has managed to establish and its ability to be consistent with it is important to keep their customers loyal to their brand-because they still identify with its core values, loyalty is above all linked to satisfaction, and we have been able to see through our questionnaires that Volvo owners were satisfied with their car.

Use of communication

As mentioned in our empirical study, Volvo uses several channels of communication to target a range of people as wide as possible. During our researches about Volvo’s marketing strategy, we found that they use what Duncan (2002: 506-507) calls “awareness builders”: the brand employs several channels of communication among which the radio, television, billboards, the Internet (i.e. social networks, advertisements...), movies, press, specialized press, events, and direct marketing (i.e. e-mailing etc.). We may therefore assert that it followed Keller’s (2008: 234) advice to combine several channels of communication to market one’s product more efficiently. Nevertheless, despite the use of several different channels of communication, the majority of our respondents answered that they see commercials for Volvo on television, followed by the Internet, billboards, press or specialized press, the radio, very few Swedish respondents answered being exposed to Volvo Cars’ marketing strategy at the cinema, only one answered through events (sponsored or organized by Volvo), and no one answered through personal marketing. We may then assert that Volvo’s most efficient way of communication is television, and that they appear to be more visible when using television, the Internet, billboards or press that they should therefore combine together - and potentially increase in quantity - if they want to have an optimal visibility. We may add that their marketing strategy in Sweden as far as the communication is concerned has been rather successful since the majority of our respondents answered they see a commercial for Volvo once a week, one third answered once a month, and one fifth answered almost every day – the rest of our respondents answered seeing a Volvo commercial less than once a month.

6.1.2. Consumer perception

About the values

According to Keller (2008: 369), the perception of the brand corresponds to the values that are associated with the brand by the consumer and what differentiates it from its competitors. The brand perception by the consumer depends on its initial positioning, and if they have managed to convey the positioning they want, both brand perception and positioning should be in ad equation. For Volvo, their positioning according their two fundamental and core values - safety and quality - has clearly been perceived to be so by our Swedish sample. Furthermore, Volvo being a Swedish car manufacturer, family is an important value for the brand and they have obviously managed to convey this image to their potential Swedish customers since almost the totality of our sample answered that Volvo was a car manufacturer oriented towards family – which also emphasizes the practical aspect of the brand who is adapted for a family while being a quality, safe car, considered as an upper-scale car manufacturer due to the quality of their equipments. Nevertheless, if quality and safety have been successfully conveyed, we have been able to see it in our questionnaire that Volvo does not evoke ecology to our respondents – more than half of the respondents have ranked ecology in the two last positions when quoting what Volvo evokes to them -, whereas it is one

of their main values. Design has also been either classified as average or last thing that comes into people's mind when hearing Volvo whereas it is also one of its main values. Volvo has understood that design and ecology have become important triggers for people when buying a car; this is probably the reason why it made them two of its four core values – and also because those values correspond to the brand itself, but apparently people from our sample are not aware of this. This means that Volvo should communicate more on those values since the others are already very well established in people's mind.

About the name

According to Keller (2008: 282), the consumer's perception of the brand depends on "awareness and knowledge of the entity, meaningfulness of the knowledge of the entity and transferability of the knowledge of the entity". Our Swedish respondents have appeared to be very aware of the brand, and in most cases, they were aware of Volvo's main values and positioning. As we have been able to observe, most of our respondents have identified Volvo as an upper-scale car manufacturer. Thus, we may assert that Volvo has managed to position itself as an upper-scale car manufacturer in the majority of our respondents' mind. Nevertheless, almost one third classified Volvo as an upper-middle scale car manufacturer which can be explained by the fact that, for the majority of our respondents, Volvo cars are not too expensive since when we asked "What would make you choose a Volvo", price was the factor quoted in third position. Moreover, seeing the two other main triggers that would make people choose a Volvo - quality and safety – we may suppose that people consider that the price is not that high for the quality and the safety provided by Volvo.

Regarding brand name recognition which is according to Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) "how widely known the corporate brand is and to what extent this familiarity affects consumer product evaluation", we may assume that Swedish people from our sample were familiar with the brand and its values, and that therefore, the name directly evokes a set of values and meanings that are associated with Volvo such as safety and quality. Besides, among our respondents, some even mentioned that Volvo does not really need to advertise in Sweden to sell its cars since many Swedes know the name Volvo as a brand, know the quality of the cars and have been trusting Volvo for years. Some of our respondents also added that they felt loyal to it, not only because it is Swedish, but because they feel secure and because Volvo is a brand they are familiar with since for instance, their parents had a Volvo, and they knew they had it because it was a safe car adapted to family needs and not too expensive for the quality provided. Finally, we may add that the answer about if our respondents would be interested or not in owning a Volvo also gives us information about brand exposure since out of 25 people who have never had a Volvo, the majority would be either rather or very interested in having one. Hence, we may suppose that if they answered that they would like to possess a Volvo, they have quite a good awareness and/or knowledge of the brand Volvo, its values and its products.

About the exposure

For Solomon et al., (2007: 48) "exposure" is the extent to which people discern a stimulus reported by their sensory receptors. Through the answers collected about exposure to Volvo marketing campaign, we may say that our Swedish respondents are quite frequently exposed to those stimuli since they mostly answered to notice a Volvo commercial "once a week", "once a month", and even "almost every day". Moreover, we may notice thanks to the answers to question 15 that those stimuli are mainly visual since most of our respondents saw

commercials for Volvo on television, the Internet, billboards, or press when only five of our fifty respondents noticed Volvo commercials through hearing them on the radio.

Furthermore, Solomon et al. (2007) broach the notion of “perceptual selectivity” to refer to the fact that most people pay attention only to a small part of stimuli to which they are exposed. This applies to our case since we are dealing with commercials on which people are almost never totally focused on: they do other things at the same time, and/or, they do not actively try to understand the message. This might explain why the visual stimuli for Volvo have appeared to be the most efficient ones: people see the cars and depending on if find them appealing or not, they will listen to the commercial or look up for more information, but otherwise, to notice it was a commercial for Volvo, they did not really have to listen nor read the commercial to understand. On the other hand, on the radio, people have to listen carefully if they want to understand what car it is, what are the advantages and so on, but they will not really be able to see the car, to evaluate if they like it or not, if according to its design, it is worth its price and so on and so forth. Thus, if they are not actively searching for a new car and listening carefully to all the commercials about cars, people might just not pay attention at all to a commercial on the radio, or even not noticing what it is about.

According to Duncan, (2002: 636-646), “sponsorships” play an important role in brand awareness. In addition, Taylor and Shanka (2008: 954) assert that when a brand supports a cause, the awareness of the brand and its values linked to the supported cause. Events and sponsorships are a very important part of Volvo’s marketing strategy since they sponsor events that target rather upper class people – being hereby consistent with their positioning as an upper-scale manufacturer - such as the Volvo ocean race or golf tournaments. Volvo increase their visibility for some of their potential upper-class targets, and they also implicitly link themselves to their own values by sponsoring events or sports that are appreciated by those social classes. They also organize their own events – what Duncan (2002: 636-646) calls “created event”, corresponding to a brand’s celebration of something around its company or products - during which they reward their most loyal clients or simply invite their clients to test their new cars. Therefore, the fact that only one of our Swedish respondent has noticed Volvo through events is not a positive point for Volvo since according to Duncan (2002: 636-646), brand participation to certain type of events will help a brand building its image and assert its values. Nevertheless, we shall remind that our sample was mainly constituted by young people of less than thirty years old either working or studying at the University of Umeå where – we assume - they might not have the occasion to be exposed to such events.

Finally, regarding direct marketing exposure, the fact that none of our respondents has answered that he had been exposed to Volvo’s communication through personal mail probably has to do with the fact that Volvo truly are respectful towards their customers and do not force them to receive anything if they do not want to. Consequently, if our respondents have not agreed on receiving any newsletters or information about the company, Volvo might have very well respected their choice and not sent anything to them, and, if, on the other hand, they had accepted to receive something, Volvo do not send too many mails to their customers because they do not want them to feel overwhelmed which could result in them not liking the brand anymore. Moreover, the person might have as well directly erased the mail if he or she was not feeling like reading a mail/email about Volvo when opening his/her mailbox, resulting in him/her, not seeing any communication from Volvo through personalized direct marketing.

6.2. Analysis of the collected data in France

6.2.1 Brand image and positioning

Brand positioning

Despite a great diversity in the respondents' interest and age, we perceived a relatively important cohesion in the answers that brings a global judgment of Volvo by our French population. We first saw that only few people have had a Volvo however no one possesses one currently.

To begin with, Aaker (1996), Blattberg and Deighton (1996), Keller (2008), Bick (2009) and so many other researchers wrote about brand equity and customer equity. As explained in our theoretical framework, brands check by this process the place they have in customers mind and if these ones are reactive to the marketing set up around them. The authors speak about “brand name awareness” and “perceived quality”, and so when we compare the most important factor to choose a car and the one which would made an individual buy a Volvo, we distinguish differences in the order of criteria due to Volvo brand image whereas the first question is asked generally about all types of car. Thus we notice that design which was the most important factor of choice for any car – and which is not surprising as for French people it is essential – drops to the fourth place when it comes to Volvo, price which was second falls until the seventh/eighth position; and on the contrary some other features rise such as safety and comfort that gain a place each coming in second and third position in the Volvo selection, or space and size which were the least decisive factors when opting for a car and which attained the fifth/sixth rank – practicality – in the Volvo range – maybe because in their mind, Volvo is bigger than usual cars and so practicality is more important. We can assert so that indeed brand image and equity influence the way consumers buy or intent to buy as they change their priorities in a view of something special as demonstrated with Volvo.



Regarding the “brand architecture” quoted by Keller (2008: 433) which encompasses among others the logo, we remarked while looking for primary data that Volvo’s logo was shaped from the male symbol which apparently did rather affect the French – or at least our sample – as not even the quarter agreed to say that Volvo is oriented toward men. We will develop this part more in details in the consumer perception chapter.

Consumer loyalty

In our theoretical framework we used the work of Gundlach et al. (1995), Warrington and Shim (2000), Keller (2008) and Sung and Campbell (2009) to emphasize on consumer loyalty. Keller (2008: 188-193) quoted in his book loyalty programs or personalized relationship however we cannot check this part of one-to-one marketing as nobody they hear about Volvo by mean of personal marketing. Consequently we will focus of consumer loyalty on the brands as the theories written by Souiden et al. (2006) pointed out. When we wanted to know if the respondents were satisfied with their car we noticed that the majority was indeed well satisfied. Nevertheless when we asked if they were loyal to the brand we did not spot the equivalent loyalty but we saw that they are rather loyal or not very loyal. So we wondered why, if they are satisfied they are not so loyal? We supposed that other factors have to be taken into consideration and if another brand as a better offer they will most likely grasp it as their relationship with their own car manufacturer is not enough developed and so nothing

retain them to move from brand to brand. Moreover, car industry is a very fluctuant sector and it is pretty difficult to maintain customer loyalty except if a consumer has a special link with the brand – for instance work(ed) for it, buy only cars from his own country and so on.

As we perceived in the answers of the four persons who owned a Volvo, they were very satisfied or rather satisfied. Hence again we witnessed a real satisfaction which had no consequences on the further purchase as they did not renew their commitment to the brand. Souiden et al. (2006: 825) revealed as well that brand reputation influences loyalty and what emerges from the comments people have done when filling our questionnaire is that Volvo built its own good reputation around the steel it use in the car making process and their cars' safety – value that we will explore later on. Nonetheless the few individuals who knew that Volvo has been bought by a Chinese group said that will not trust the brand in the same way, some telling me that they will not even buy Volvo anymore.

Use of Communication

Duncan (2002: 506-507) introduced Mass Medias in his book as “awareness builder” and Keller (2008: 234) recommended using several of them to communicate better about a brand and its products. So does Volvo that exploits diverse channels to broadcast its cars. In fact, the brand employs all the principal means – television, radio, events, press and so on. With our questionnaire we desired to identify the media mostly borne in mind by the respondents and then to see which way works the best. As we know, television is one of the Mass Medias the most used for its ability touching the most people and it is why almost the third quarter of our sample noticed Volvo advertisement campaign by this mean. The two others media that have been cited by the respondents are billboards and specialized press for about a quarter of them. Events, the Internet and the radio are still bringing some awareness around the brand but not so much the cinema. As someone remarked during the distribution of our questionnaire, maybe that Volvo advertisement is not always well situated or not enough powerful because too many people still miss it. Thus publicize on television is still a good idea to keep in mind, however Volvo should perhaps stop trying to communicate with all means, remember the “perceptual selectivity” announced by Solomon et al. (2007: 48) and focus on fewer, remaining with the ones working best in France like billboards and press.

6.2.2. Consumer perception

About the values

In our questionnaire we did not, as Aaker (2002) or Keller (2008) suggested, request people to describe Volvo as a person or to classify it, though we invited them to rank the factors that evoked Volvo to their mind. As we compared the perceived qualities and values described by Keller (2008: 369) we noticed that if the Swedish origin was the least important trigger that would make our sample choose a Volvo, it was indeed the most crucial one in its evocation to the minds. By this fact, quality, safety and design lost one place each, however the first two ones stay still in the very beginning of characteristics bringing to mind the brand name and values associated. This is interesting as Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon (2000) assert that “consumers’ expectations and perceptions affect the value of a brand” and Holehonnur et al. (2009: 174) affirm that quality and price – especially quality – influence consumer perceptions of value equity, so we can state that quality is considered as “real value” of Volvo which is very good for its image and gives it more credit – perhaps even more that the reality

is. Practicality and design have both gained one position in the ranking compared to the one realized about the feature which would make people will a Volvo, which means that those factors are not the most decisive ones in case of selection of a Volvo car but are estimated – especially practicality – as good qualifiers of Volvo values. Not surprisingly for us as French, innovation has been the last criterion quoted to evaluate the Volvo brand, because as we supposed people still have in mind the old types of Volvo cars and are not aware about the new ones which fit more their wants. Hence Volvo should play on this quality and safety image which appears to be the most representative of its values, nonetheless it should also communicate more about its new models created to touch a new segment of the market and which supposedly will attract more the French consumers, as we can see that percentages were rather significant and so that respondents seemed to agree on the Volvo's appraisal.

Most of the respondents set Volvo in the upper scale or on upper middle markets. That has been for some individuals a complex question as they wanted to know for which kind of Volvo cars this question was. The fact is that we wanted to obtain a global idea over the brand name representation and so we got two main impressions. From our opinion we would agree on the first proposition – upper scale market – as we visited a lot of newspapers' websites contrasting diverse Volvo cars with different Audi cars. Therefore we can presume that if Volvo was considered to be on the upper middle market, it is nowadays thanks to its new models on the upper scale market.

In its advertisements, Volvo use a lot the “family image” and it seem to work as a third quarter of our sample assumed that the brand is oriented toward this segment. On the top of this one they also believed that Volvo aims to reach seniors and men as well. The brand name, logo, and slogan, quoted by Keller (2008: 433) to be designed and combined each time to the brand marketing, are triggers playing a role in the distinction of the brand towards its competitors and so the selection of the market, and the target consumers that should understand they are part of the aimed segment

About the name

We also solicited French respondents about their interest to acquire a Volvo car and as we saw previously, answers were fairly well distributed demonstrating the various opinions gathered particularly around the “no” and the “rather yes” responses. Thus we can assume the French population would not be against the idea of owning a Volvo nonetheless with restrictions and with considering the significant part which does not want. But at least all the individuals asked recognize the brand name and had knowledge about it. This part highlighted by a fraction of the researches made by Aaker (1991), Keller and Aaker (1997), Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002) and Souiden et al. (2006), helps us to understand how famous Volvo is. Apparently it is well known in France so time about “brand name recognition and awareness” is over, however as affirmed by Kowalczyk and Pawlish (2002), the brand name weights on the consumer's opinion on the products and hence affects the brand image. Consequently what is clear from the comments received from the respondents is that Volvo still represents the old, big cars in their mind as we observed in their answers. We will give some advices to alter these prejudices in the recommendations.

About the exposure

As Duncan (2002: 145) states, it is crucial for a brand to be aware of its projected image in the consumers' mind to be able to send appropriated signals in line with or infirming their

perception. As French we are not absolutely sure that Volvo understood what the brand name means for French consumers and a study could be done about it as we observed that the French market is not really conscious of Volvo's new projects.

We found out that the majority of our sample spotted Volvo advertising campaign only once a month or once a year, which is not enough to tempt people to consume the brand. Concerning people who detected advertisement almost every day it is probably because of the last events – for instance the Geneva Motor show which took place last March – and the communication around them. This is a satisfactory point for Volvo as we can say that broadcasting this kind of event is effective for its brand and new cars awareness. Without falling in the overwhelming of consumers by too much advertisement and competition with the other brands as Solomon et al. (2007: 48) stated, Volvo should take advantage of events linked to it and communicate especially at those moments. In addition except on its website, we do not hear a lot about its sponsorships and that could be another aspect to underscore.

6.3. Adaptation: discussion about Volvo's Marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden

According to Moroko and Uncles (2009: 181) some brands believe that “it is more profitable to treat certain groups of consumers differently than to treat them all alike”. In other words, a brand sometimes has to adapt to different groups of people to remain profitable. In our case Volvo cars, Swedish car manufacturer, needs to adapt to French people if it wants to attract and satisfy them as customers who have different expectations than the Swedish ones.

Therefore, if Volvo does not need to modify its products to adapt to the French market, the way of reaching the French potential customers might vary due to their different priorities when buying a car. This is the reason why Volvo must spot the differences in consumer behavior in order to adjust its initial marketing strategy to the country, and modify it according to whether the first results of these adjustments are positive or negative.

In this section, we are going to focus on the adaptation of Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden, and analyze what are the similarities and differences.

6.3.1. How did Volvo adapt to France compared to Sweden?

Brand Positioning

One of the most striking results of our study is that in both France and Sweden, Volvo has managed to position as a quality car manufacturer, quality and safety being the two main values associated to Volvo by our respondents. Their positioning as an upper-scale car manufacturer is also well established in our respondents mind, even though in France, more respondents have classified Volvo as an upper-scale car manufacturer whereas in Sweden, the results are spread between upper-middle class manufacturer and middle class manufacturer. This is not due to the fact that Swedish people do not know the brand well, on the contrary, Swedish people are so familiar with the brand Volvo that to them, it is rather associated with a car many people can have access to and afford since the majority of our participants own a Volvo or have already owned one.

On the other hand, in France, very few people possess a Volvo – no one currently owns one in our sample and only four people had already had one in their life. Hence people are not very familiar with the brand, even though they can classify it as an upper-scale car manufacturer because they have certain knowledge of the price range that they consider as being more expensive than the average French car (being Renault or Peugeot). Furthermore, as far as their two other values – ecology and design - are concerned the positioning is less clear in both countries – at least, for our respondents. Indeed, in both France and Sweden, Volvo has obviously not managed to position itself as an environment friendly car manufacturer since this characteristic was quoted amongst the last when we asked “what does Volvo evoke to you?” and “what would make you choose a Volvo?”.

Some of our French respondents even told us that they perceived Volvo vehicles as big cars which consume a lot of fuel and which are consequently not environment friendly. Design on the other hand is not one of the main factors that would make people from our Swedish sample choose a Volvo, but they are aware of design as one of the brand’s values whereas in France, people see Volvo as a car manufacturer that does not prioritize design at all and many of our French respondents think that Volvo have not modified their design since the eighties: “I do not like the design of Volvo, those are big cars with the design of a tank, and on top of that they are unpractical to park in a city like Paris where it is already so hard to find a free parking place” is one of the comments one of our French respondents has made and that we find interesting to quote in our thesis to illustrate the French’s opinion on Volvo cars. This is not a positive point for Volvo, especially knowing that design is the most important criteria of choice for French people – is can matter more than quality for instance, whereas in Sweden, in cities such as Umeå with very low temperatures, quality is very important.

Finally, concerning the logo and the slogan we may assert that the first one is the same in both countries – the male symbol - and has had an impact somehow on people’s perception of the brand. In fact, even if in both countries, Volvo is mainly seen as a car oriented towards family, our respondents positioned it as being more oriented towards men than women – with a particularly striking difference in France with a fifth positioning Volvo a men oriented and no one positioning it as women oriented. The slogan – as used in their marketing campaign - slightly differs between France and Sweden. The French one, “La vie offre bien plus qu’une Volvo, c’est pourquoi vous en possédez une” can be translated to “Life offers much more than a Volvo, that is why you own one”, whereas the Swedish one “Det finns mer i livet än bilar, det är därför du äger en Volvo” can be translated as “There is more in life than cars, that is why you own a Volvo”.

Both those messages are used on their French and Swedish websites to communicate on their values and their cars characteristics. If we take the example of the C30 for instance, Volvo communicate on innovations and also on their four core values among which they do not forget design - “There is more in life than cars that is why you can show all your sides with the new C30 R design” (as translated from the Swedish version)/Life offers much more than a Volvo that is why the new C30 flaunts itself from every angle” (as translated from the French version) - or environment – “Life offers much more than a Volvo (translation of the French slogan)/There is more in life than cars (translation of the Swedish slogan) that is why our C30 DRIVE® can go up to 1333 km with only one tank”. The French slogan mentions Volvo as something that is not, “the only thing in life” which supposes that there are other important things in life than a Volvo, but not necessarily other cars, whereas the Swedish one includes all cars which is in our opinion a better way of conveying the message to the consumer since they feel that every cars are concerned, not only Volvo, whereas in the French one, the

consumer might unconsciously be tempted to think “if there are more things in life than a Volvo, then why own one, I will just buy another car”.

Of course, the message might not be perceived like this systematically, by people, but the Swedish slogan seems to be more appealing in our opinion since with this version, the customer – at least, us and several Swedes we asked about this slogan - tends to think that “there are more things to worry about or to enjoy in life than to have to worry about one’s car, therefore, when choosing to have a Volvo, one does not have to think about the problems it might cause him or her and can instead dedicate to other things in life”.

Customer Loyalty

Souiden et al. (2006: 832-840) insist on the importance of adaptation and its benefits for the brand – that will have a better knowledge of the market– and for the customer, who appreciates the efforts of the brand towards him or her, and might see it as suited to him or her – and later, potentially become loyal to it. As we have been able to observe it with our empirical findings, in either countries are customers loyal to their car manufacturers even if they are mostly satisfied with it. We may suppose – as we already noticed – that in Sweden, this might be due to the low average age of our respondents who have not been able to own more than one car and therefore cannot really say if they are loyal or not. In France, we would rather attribute this to the fact that design is quite important and that – as several of our respondents mentioned – the brand does not really matter as long as they like the design of the car and that they are satisfied with its performances.

In France, as mentioned in our empirical research, Volvo has taken several initiatives to develop customer loyalty. Examples of such steps are the “social security” for the car – sending personalized reminders to Volvo owners of the technical controls that the car needs, advices on how to best maintain their car – and/or also invitation to special events organized or sponsored by Volvo. Indeed this is, according to Taylor and Shanka (2008: 954), a very good way to develop customer relationships and loyalty by conveying the brands values through the sponsored event or by personally meeting the customers who have been invited to try out a new car. Brand loyalty is influenced by the reputation of the brand, hence we comprehend the need for a brand to have a good reputation.

In Sweden, Volvo also tries to develop customers’ loyalty by taking initiatives such as services to the customer. If we look at the company website for instance, a header named “Service to a new level” (“service på en ny nivå” in Swedish) appears on their homepage. We may perhaps assert that this is due to the fact that they are conscious that today, customers are less faithful than before to their car manufacturer- especially the youth who seem to be the target they want to reach. Amongst others, Volvo have developed personalized services with personal technicians in Volvo service centers, who can answer questions, give advices or repair Volvo cars, they also have set a 24h telephone assistance, possibility to rent a Volvo car for free while the customer’s car is under repair, or even possibility to store the tires if they do not have enough space at home. In fact in Sweden, people have to change their tires according to the weather and everyone does not necessarily have enough space to store them at home.

Use of communication

In France as in Sweden, Volvo uses several channels of communication such as television, billboards, the Internet, press, cinema and events. In both countries, it appears that

respondents were more sensitive to visual stimuli such as television, the Internet or billboards, regarding the channels of communication through which they notify Volvo marketing campaign. In Sweden, their manner of communicating seems to be rather effective since the majority of people notice it once a week, once a week, or even almost every day, and very few answered they notice it once a year or less. This is the reason why, as mentioned before, Volvo starts developing customer services in order to create customer relationships, which are very important for loyalty. Indeed they already have customers in Sweden and it is why they can begin to advertise their customers services. In France on the other hand their marketing campaign does not seem to have been noticed enough since the majority see their commercials once a year or less, and very few people notice it once a week. We may notice though that almost one third of respondents in Sweden and France notice Volvo marketing campaign once a month.

Moreover, Volvo do not seem to have many customers in France according to our results, which also implies that they cannot adopt the same marketing strategy as in Sweden – with customers' services and such, and they rather have to attract and seduce their targeted customers. To do so, they need to be more aggressive, as illustrated by their current marketing campaign on their French website (on the 6th of May 2010): they ask people if they are evil enough for the “hellish Volvo S60”³¹ (Translation from Volvo Corporate website in France), which seems at first, very far away from Volvo's traditional values of safety and quality. This shows a clear wish to target younger people and at least, to move away from the image they have in France being of “cars for old people” (more than one third of our French respondents answered Volvo cars were for seniors) or families (the majority of our French respondents see Volvos as oriented towards family) who “have not changed their design since the eighties”. Through this striking initiative with reference to evil behavior, Volvo actually aim at attracting the interest of the website's visitor - who, as we have seen previously, has an image of Volvo cars as safe, quality cars. Indeed, one might wonder why, all of a sudden, they are priding of having an evil one, especially the S60 who has won prizes for its innovation safety wise and has been one of the most important release from the brand in the past two years repositioning it as a more dynamic car manufacturer.

By asking the provoking question “are you evil enough for the new S60?” Volvo want to arouse people's curiosity and encourage people to click on the window where they will discover that of course, even if you want to drive your Volvo very fast in an “evil” way (which also emphasizes the power of the engine which has been quoted by one of our French respondents as being the reason why he liked his Volvo 360S) the S60 will be able to stop automatically no matter what if there is an obstacle – such as pedestrian – or bear very sudden and extreme change of direction. On the commercial, the person is asked to increase the speed of the car, and then, can see a video with the car launched at that speed – and more importantly, how efficiently it stops automatically in front a pedestrian with the S60 pedestrian protection system. One month ago, on the Swedish website and in the billboards we have been able to see, for the same car – Volvo S60- with also pedestrian protection as the main axis of the commercial, but not advertised in the same way at all. It was a more traditional way with a pedestrian crossing the road and a Volvo driving with normal speed being able to stop instantly and automatically thanks to the pedestrian protection system. This shows that Volvo do not really need to chock in Sweden, and actually, they do not even need to advertise that much since, as some of our Swedish respondents mentioned “everyone knows and trusts Volvo in Sweden”.

Another similarity between both countries is that they aim at targeting young people without forgetting their core targets – people old and wealthy enough to buy a Volvo, which most of the time equals to families. In France for instance, as we have seen in our empirical study they have advertised the C30 in a very dynamic way targeting young urban people, and the C70 centered around women – knowing that French people do not see Volvo cars as vehicles for women at all - and their possibility to “change their mind” or “change their life” emphasizing again on the independence of Volvo owners. In Sweden, they also use Spotify (a Swedish application where people can listen to music for free provided they are willing to deal with commercials) which targets everyone who likes music and is oriented towards youth. Therefore, by choosing this mean of communication, Volvo – who have even made a special driving playlist on the website – confirm their desire to target the youth and to feel closer to their customers –indeed, conceiving a driving playlist shows an effort from the brand to accompany their consumer on the road and to make them feel comfortable when driving.

Furthermore, on the Swedish website, the car which is put on the welcoming page (at least, on the fifth of May 2010) is a Volvo V50 which are estate cars - very popular in Sweden - with a large trunk at the back, whereas on the French website, they advertise on a coupé which is not considered as a practical car in Sweden – since you cannot really store anything in the trunk - and therefore is not common -at least not in Umeå, whereas in France it is very well seen to own one. Moreover, the commercial which is the same one broadcasted on French television at the moment seems to take place in a rather fancy neighborhood, in the sun, next to tables outside a café. They also advertise on the S60 - which is also one of the cars that illustrates best Volvo’s desire not to remain perceived as a car manufacturer which does not prioritize design and who therefore do not have good design in people’s mind. On both French and Swedish websites, we can also definitely notice a wish to lay emphasis on comfort and innovation for the well being of the driver – with rubrics dedicated to music inside the car, comfort, but also their fundamental values of safety, quality, ecology and design. In both countries, it seems that Volvo definitely have understood what they needed to communicate on to renew their image: they communicate on their traditional values along with innovation in order to be perceived as a dynamic car manufacturer that evolves to adapt to their customers’ needs.

6.3.2. How is Volvo perceived in France compared to Sweden?

Consumer’s perception of Volvo’s values

As we have been able to see it in our empirical study and our analysis so far, either in France or in Sweden, Volvo have managed to convey their core values of safety and quality. Nevertheless, there are some differences: for instance, the value that has been most quoted by our French respondents when asked “what does Volvo evoke to you?” was Swedish origin followed by quality, whereas among our Swedish respondents it was quality followed by safety. Regarding this difference, Keller (2008: 285-286) asserts that the origin of a brand or a product may be the cause of the associations that the customer has with a product.

Through these results, we may observe that in both countries, people are aware of the brand’s main values but have different perceptions of it. We assume that in Sweden, the fact that Volvo is Swedish is so obvious that it is not even the first thing that comes into people’s mind when thinking about Volvo. We may notice that – as mentioned previously- Family is another value that people associate with Volvo in both countries. Nevertheless they have to emphasize

more on their other two values: environment - since in both France and Sweden, ecology is not perceived as being one of Volvo's main values – and design, which is definitely not perceived as one of Volvo's values for our French respondents and not really considered as one of their core values for our Swedish respondents.

The name Volvo

In France, the name Volvo is associated with old fashioned cars with a very poor design, whereas in Sweden, Volvo is rather perceived as a car that everyone can have – men, women, families, young and old people, professionals and so on. Nonetheless in both countries Volvo has mainly been associated with family.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, one third of our French respondents think Volvo cars are for seniors whereas the majority of our Swedish respondents were under 30 years old and half of them have already had a Volvo, which demonstrates that in Sweden, the image of Volvo is not the same as in France since they obviously have managed to reach young people. Furthermore, in Sweden, if the majority of our respondents have answered that they perceive Volvo as an upper-scale manufacturer, an important proportion of our respondents perceive it as an upper-middle scale or middle scale car manufacturer, whereas in France the majority think they are an upper-scale car manufacturer, and only very few of our respondents see it as a middle scale car manufacturer – the percentage of French people seeing it as an upper-middle scale one, being quite similar to the one found among our Swedish respondents. The explanation for this might be that in France, very few people have a Volvo, and those who do are either people who have bought a second hand rather old Volvo - hence the image of old cars - or those who have a high enough income to afford the new ones considered as expensive in comparison to a Renault for instance.

Regarding the issue of price, there are differences between both countries since most French respondent associate the brand Volvo with unattractive prices –about the factors that would make someone choose a Volvo, it was one of the last factors quoted – whereas in Sweden, the price of a Volvo is one of the main triggers of selection. Again, this is linked to the fact that Swedish people are more familiar with the brand and that owning a Volvo is very common whereas in France, it is very exclusive.

Finally, in both countries, the results of our empirical study showed that the name Volvo did not really evoke innovation to our respondents either - which is striking since Volvo Cars have, since the creation of the company in 1927 are at the origin if major innovations, notably safety wise - even if we have noticed that Volvo is perceived as more innovative in Sweden than in France. This is probably due to a better knowledge of the brand and also a better exposure.

The exposure

Our Swedish respondents appeared to be more frequently exposed to Volvo's advertising campaign than our French ones. This means that either Volvo do not communicate enough in France, or that French people do not really pay attention to Volvo's marketing campaigns since it is not a car manufacturer they are familiar with and therefore, they are not particularly interested in it or in knowing if they have released a new car or a new innovation. One of our French respondent even asked “are there Volvo dealerships in France?” which shows the weak exposure to the presence of the Volvo.

Moreover, in both countries, people did answer that they were not exposed to events organized or sponsored by Volvo – or very few- nor any personalized direct marketing initiatives such as mails from Volvo or invitations to events. This is probably because Volvo claim do not want to harass their clients with newsletters - and they obviously do not. Nevertheless, we have been able to see communication about events sponsored by Volvo such as the Volvo Ocean race in French newspapers and on several websites. Therefore, the fact that almost no one has noticed the communication for events is probably linked to the notion of perceptual selectivity broached by Solomon et al. (2007) according to which the brain of each individual selects what it decides to pay attention to.

6.4. Criticism of the method

As humans we possess established prejudices which we need to challenge critically. It is important that we do not look only for answers that confirm our prejudices -in this case concerning the Volvo Cars and its marketing strategy- but that we objectively analyze the given answers. Hence, we have analyzed from our empirical findings and our collected secondary data how Volvo Cars adapts its marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden, trying not to give our own point of view but simply trying to explain our findings and the results of our empirical study.

Moreover, we believe it is important to mention that as French, we had our own vision of Volvo Cars' marketing strategy in France and in Sweden. To help us adopt a Swedish vision of Volvo Cars, we regularly asked some Swedish students and friends about their vision - of certain advertisements for instance - or about a marketing position concerning Volvo Cars.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Findings

One of our main interest when we came with our research question “How do Volvo cars adapt their marketing strategy in France compared to Sweden” was to evaluate the perception of the brand in both countries and to see if Volvo had managed to understand the differences in both countries and how they did adapt to it. From our initial point of view, we were rather sure that we would be facing French people who would not know much about Volvo and who would consider it a car manufacturer that has not been really innovative since the seventies, with a poor design and apart from some exceptions who knew about Volvo Cars and/or who already had owned one, our French respondents confirmed what we thought would be their opinion on Volvo. We ourselves had clichés about the brand before coming to Sweden and it is why we decided to study it. We used to think that Volvo cars were only owned by old people or families who want a practical car without really being concerned about the design.

Through this study we have learnt that it was very different from what we thought: Volvo Cars is and has always been a very innovative car manufacturer especially in terms of safety - but not only since they are now innovating a lot as far as environment is concerned, and also to improve the comfort and the design of their cars. On the other hand, we were pretty sure that Volvo was the most popular car manufacturer in Sweden and that most of our respondents would possess one. This also happened to be confirmed through our study: the majority of our respondents currently own a Volvo – versus no one owning one among our French respondents - and 50% have already owned one – when only four in our French sample have.

Nevertheless, we thought that Swedish people would be more loyal than French one which was not the case since in both countries the level of loyalty to the car manufacturer was rather poor. Yet, this might be due to the age of the people surveyed, the majority being under thirty. We also thought that Volvo would not need to advertise in Sweden since we thought the Swedish population were familiar with the brand and would be loyal to it. But again, our findings were different from what we first thought since we found that Volvo advertise a lot in Sweden. Indeed, our respondents feel to be very exposed to Volvo Cars’ advertising campaign: the majority noticing it once a week or more – which is much superior to what our French sample perceives.

Finally, as we had been able to notice it ourselves and as confirmed by our study, Volvo Cars do not have a very good visibility in France: most of our respondents are not well aware of the brand nor feel exposed to their marketing campaign. Nevertheless, when we went back to France, we started to pay attention to commercials about cars in order to see if we would be able to see one for Volvo, and we did - quite often, especially on television and newspapers. Moreover, after visiting their website, we have noticed that Volvo seem to have well understood that they need to be more aggressive in their communication if they want to attract French people’s attention – whereas in Sweden, they already have clients, so they do not need to attract them and can rather focus on improving their satisfaction with the car and the services related to it in as a way of developing customer loyalty.

7.2. Suggestions

One of our main finding regarding the perception of Volvo in both countries has been that, even if ecology is one of the brand’s main values, it is not perceived as such and Volvo is not

associated with an environment friendly car manufacturer: on the contrary, several people told us that they perceive Volvos as big fuel consuming cars. Therefore, as a suggestion to the brand, we would recommend advertising more on this aspect since quality and design seem to be characteristics already granted to the brand from our respondents' point of view. We may add that this would be a good selling argument since ecology is becoming more and more important for customers as a criterion of choice for a car.

Moreover as far as the French market is concerned, the large majority of our respondents still perceive Volvo cars as "tanks" and are not aware at all that they have renewed their design. Therefore, not only should they communicate more in France to increase their visibility, but they should also lay emphasis on the new design of their cars since, as we saw it in our study, it was the most important factor of choice for our French respondents when choosing a car.

We may add that the size of Volvo cars has been mentioned as an obstacle to buy one by many Parisians since it is easier to have a smaller car to be able to find a parking spot. Therefore, we would suggest Volvo to start developing a range of smaller cars – as they have already started to do with the C30 – following the example of Mercedes (with the class A or the Smart) or BMW (with the Mini Cooper).

Concerning the channels of communication, we saw that people in both Sweden and France were more sensitive to visual stimuli. Therefore, we would recommend advertising on television, on the Internet, but also in free newspapers – in France, in Paris at least, everybody reads them in the metro which makes it a good way for a brand to increase its visibility – and on billboards - in the metro, at bus stops, or in the streets.

Volvo Cars should also communicate more about the events they sponsor since it is a good way of attracting clients and/or developing their loyalty to the brand through identification with its values – as we saw, brands usually sponsor events corresponding to their values and their positioning.

Regarding loyalty precisely, we think they should keep on developing their loyalty programs and customer services linked to their cars – such as, for instance, offering one year of free maintenance for a new car.

Finally, regarding recommendations for further research, we believe it would be interesting to carry the study at a national level in both countries – or even more - which we have not been able to do because of time and financial limitations.

8. Quality criteria

It is very important when carrying a study that it is considered as valid – which includes the extent to which it is replicable - and reliable.

8.1 Validity

According to Bryman & Bell (2007: p.165) validity is the extent to which an indicator measures the concept it is related to. In our case, our indicators - such as the frequency with which our respondents have perceived Volvo marketing campaign or how loyal they are to their car manufacturer – measure the concepts they are related to – here, exposure and customers' loyalty – which allows us to assert that our study responds to the validity criteria.

Moreover, our internal validity – being, (according to Bryman and Bell, 2007: p.58) the establishment of a causal relationship between an independent and a dependent variable – is rather strong since we have been able to find a causal relationship between French or Swedish people's perception of the brand and the adaptation of its marketing strategy: here, the first variable (potential customers' perception in one country) has an impact on the other variable (Volvo Cars marketing strategy).

Nevertheless, we may say that our external validity (Bryman and Bell, 2007: p.58) – the extent to which our it can be generalized – is rather weak since our cross national research was not carried in whole France nor whole Sweden but only in Paris and Umeå, which does not really allow us to assert that our results are valid for whole France nor whole Sweden.

8.2 Reliability

According to Bryman and Bell (2007: p.163), a study can be considered as reliable if the measures of a concept are consistent. Therefore, to assess our reliability, we have to evaluate the stability (Bryman and Bell, 2007: p.162) and the internal reliability (Bryman and Bell, 2007: p.163) of our study. We cannot really assess the first factor since stability has to do with if our measures are stable over time which we cannot really know since we have only administered our questionnaire once in 2010. Yet, our internal reliability is strong: in fact, for each questionnaire, we stood by the respondents in order to answer their eventual questions, to make sure that each answer was consistent with the others - if they were not and we have had to ask them if they were sure of their answers so that they would change the inconsistent ones - or to explain anything that would not be clear enough – for instance, for the ranking questions, we often had to remind them to rank their answers and not only to circle one or several factors.

8.3 Replicability

As stated in Bryman and Bell (2007: p.171), validity is concerned with the replication of the findings, that is, the extent to which other researchers or students would be able to replicate our study and find similar findings. We believe that we have well explained our way of running our study and how we proceeded, which makes it possible for someone who would want to replicate it to do so, or to use our findings in another research on Volvo - even if it

should be borne in mind that we carried our study on Volvo Cars' marketing strategy between February and May 2010.

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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9ky-pS5f1E&feature=player_embedded

²⁷ Volvo Cars Swedish Corporate Website (Last consulted the 29th of March):

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²⁸ Swedish commercial for Volvo which shows –even though it is old- the practicality of the car with a hint of Humor:

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10. Appendixes

Appendix 1: questionnaire and results

Volvo

Hello, we are students at the USBE, and we are realizing a survey for our case study of Volvo's marketing strategy in France and in Sweden. Would you have time to answer to our questionnaire?

- 1) Do you have any interest in the automobile industry? (note from 1 to 10, 1 being the least interest and 10 the most)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No		Rather no			Rather yes			Yes	

Answers:

French:	9	21	18	2⁶
Swedish:	7	20	20	3

- 2) If you have a car, what brand is it?

Audi	Renault	Mercedes	BMW	Citroën/Peugeot	Volvo	Volkswagen
SAAB	Smart	Fiat	Ford	Toyota	Other _____	

Answers:

French:	14 Renault	9 Citroen/Peugeot	6 Volkswagen
Swedish:	16 Volvo	5 Renault	4 Ford

- 3) Are you satisfied with it? (note from 1 to 10, 1 being the least satisfaction and 10 the most) (*Satisfaction*)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not satisfied at all		Not very satisfied			Rather satisfied			Very satisfied	

Answers:

French:	0	3	21	17
Swedish:	0	4	28	10

- 4) If no why?(rank from 1 to 7, 1 being the main factor and 7 the less important one) (*Unsatisfaction*)

Fuel consumption	Safety	Design	Comfort	Cost of maintenance
Size	Space			

⁶ All figures quoted as answers correspond to the number of people who ticked each variable

5) How loyal are you to your car manufacturer? (*Brand loyalty*)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Not loyal at all Not very loyal Rather loyal Very loyal

Answers:	French:	8	17	15	3
	Swedish:	13	25	11	4

6) What is the most important factor when choosing a car? (rank from 1 to 7, 1 being the main factor and 7 the least important one) (*Selection among alternatives/brand image*)

Fuel consumption Safety Design Comfort Price Size
 Space Do not know

Answers:	French:	1 st Design (13)	2 nd Price (12)	3 rd Safety (7)
	Swedish:	1 st Safety and Price (15 each)		2 nd Fuel consumption (14)

7) Have you ever had a Volvo?

Yes no

Answers:	French:	4 Yes	46 No
	Swedish:	25 Yes	25 No

8) If yes, were/are you satisfied with it? (note from 1 to 10, 1 being the least satisfaction and 10 the most) (*Impact of satisfaction on brand loyalty*)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 No Rather no Rather yes Yes

Answers:	French:	0	0	2	2
	Swedish:	1	2	18	5

9) If no, would you be interested in owning one? (note from 1 to 10, 1 being the least satisfaction and 10 the most) (*Brand perception*)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 No Rather no Rather yes Yes

Answers:	French:	11	14	16	5
	Swedish:	2	6	10	6

10) What was the factor that made you or would make you choose a Volvo? (rank from 1 to 9, 1 being the main factor and 9 the least important one) (*Selection among alternatives/Brand image/Consumer perception*)

Safety Quality Design Comfort Practicality Ecological aspect
 Price Swedish origin Brand image Do not know

Answers:	French:	1st Quality (14)	2nd Safety (10)	3rd Comfort (9)
	Swedish:	1st Safety (13)	2nd Price (9)	3rd Quality (8)

11) What does Volvo evoke to you? (rank from 1 to 7, 1 being the main idea and 7 the least corresponding one) (*Brand perception/Brand image*)

Safety	Quality	Design	Practicality	Ecological aspect
Innovation	Swedish origin	Do not know		

Answers:	French:	1st Swedish origin (22)	2nd Quality (18)	3rd Safety (13)
	Swedish:	1st Safety and Swedish origin (16 each)	2nd Price (9)	3rd Quality (8)

12) According to you, Volvo is (*Brand image/segmentation/Consumer perception*)

A luxury (type Porsche, Jaguar...)	An upper scale car manufacturer (type Audi),
Upper middle market (Peugeot 607, Volkswagen Eos...),	Middle market (type
Renault Clio, Volkswagen Golf...),	Low cost (type Dacia)
	Do not know

Answers:	French:	27 Upper scale car manufacturer	17 Upper middle market
	Swedish:	21 Upper scale car manufacturer	15 Upper middle market

13) According to you, Volvo is a car manufacturer oriented towards: (*Brand positioning//Consumer perception*)

Family	Women	Men	Professionals	Youth	Singles (30/50 years old)
Seniors	Do not know				

Answers:	French:	35 Family	17 Seniors	9 Men
	Swedish:	45 Family	9 Professionals	7 Men

14) How often do you notice Volvo advertising campaign (*Brand exposure/awareness*)

Almost every day	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Less than once a year
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Answers:	French:	6	4	16	15	9
	Swedish:	5	21	17	6	1

15) By what channels of communication do you usually hear about Volvo? (*Brand exposure*)

Radio TV	Billboards	Specialized press	Internet (mails, social networks, advertisements...)
	Cinema	Events (Salons, showrooms, sports events)	
Personal Marketing (Invitations, gifts, private mails, personal advises for your car...)			

Answers:	French:	36 Television	14 Billboards and Specialized press
	Swedish:	35 Television	12 Internet 11 Billboards

Personal factual questions:

16) Are you

French **50** Swedish **50**

17) Gender

Male Female

Answers:	French:	28	22
	Swedish:	23	27

18) Age

Up to 25 26-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 more than 60

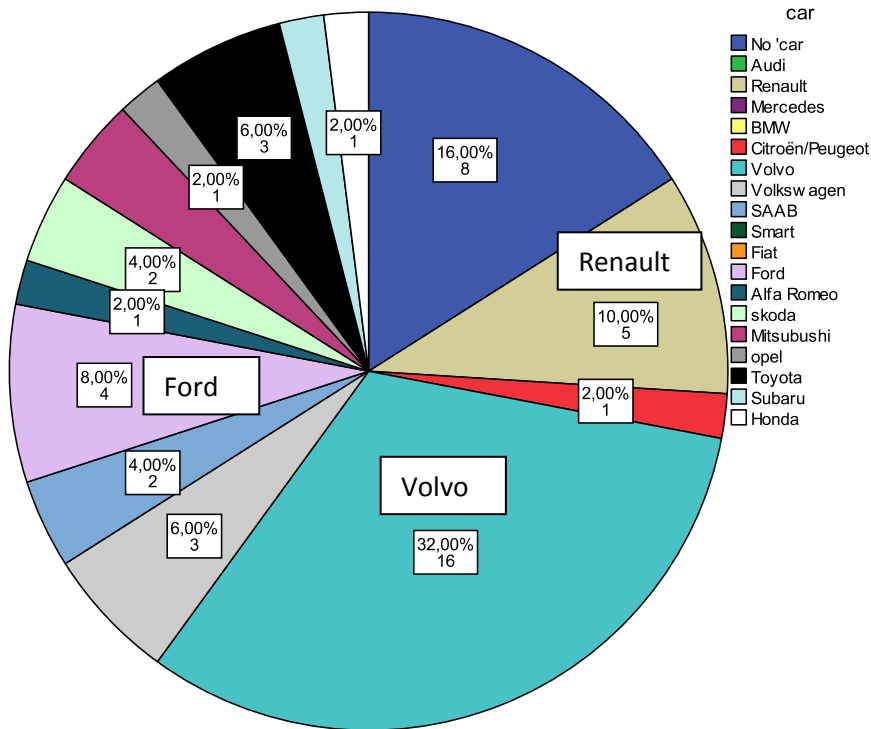
Answers:	French: 16	4	9	13	7	1
	Swedish: 37	7	2	1	2	1

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

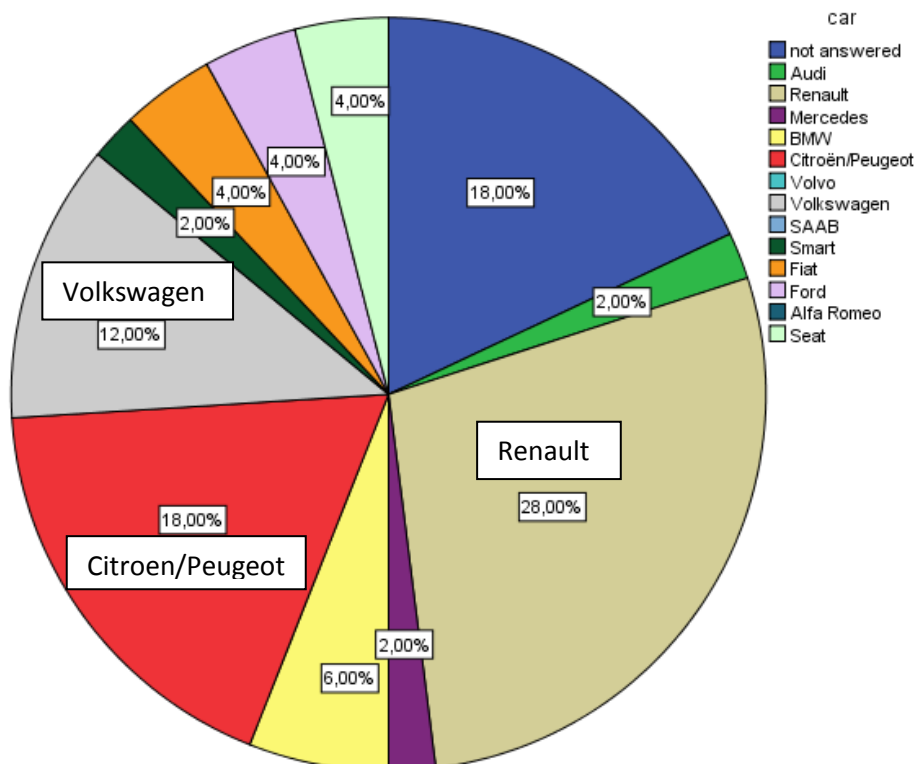
Appendix 2: Charts

Question 2

Swedish car owning

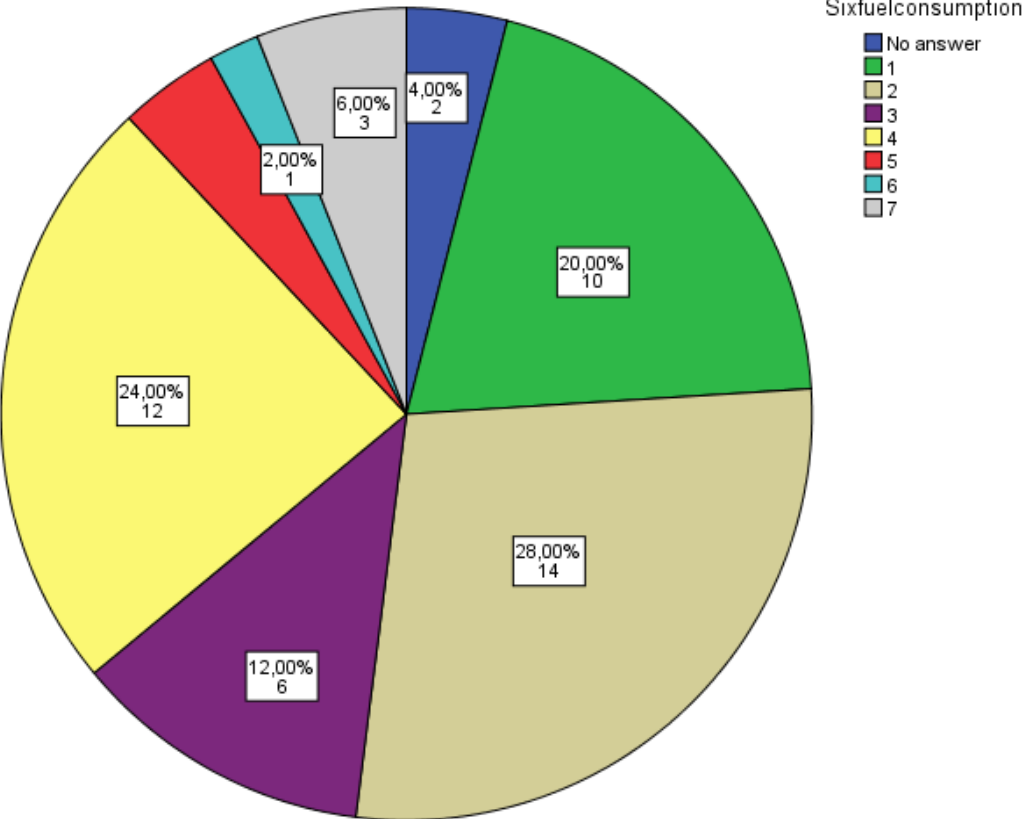


French car owning

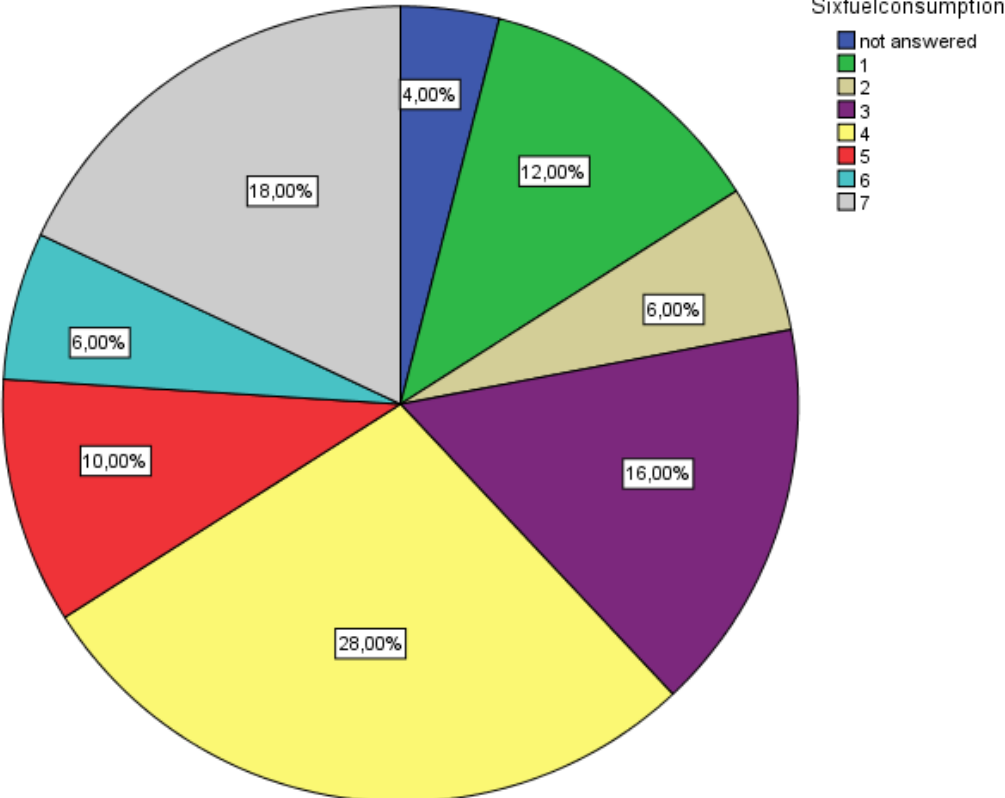


Question 6: Ranking of the factors when choosing a car from 1 to 7 (1 being the most important characteristic and 7 the least)

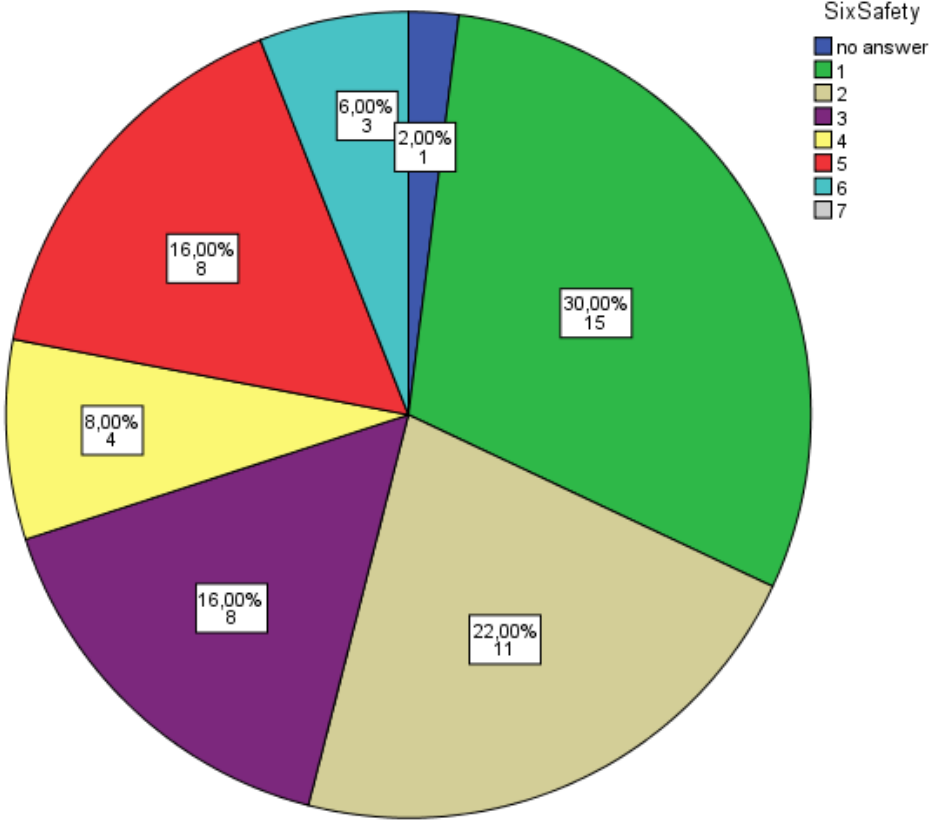
Swedish



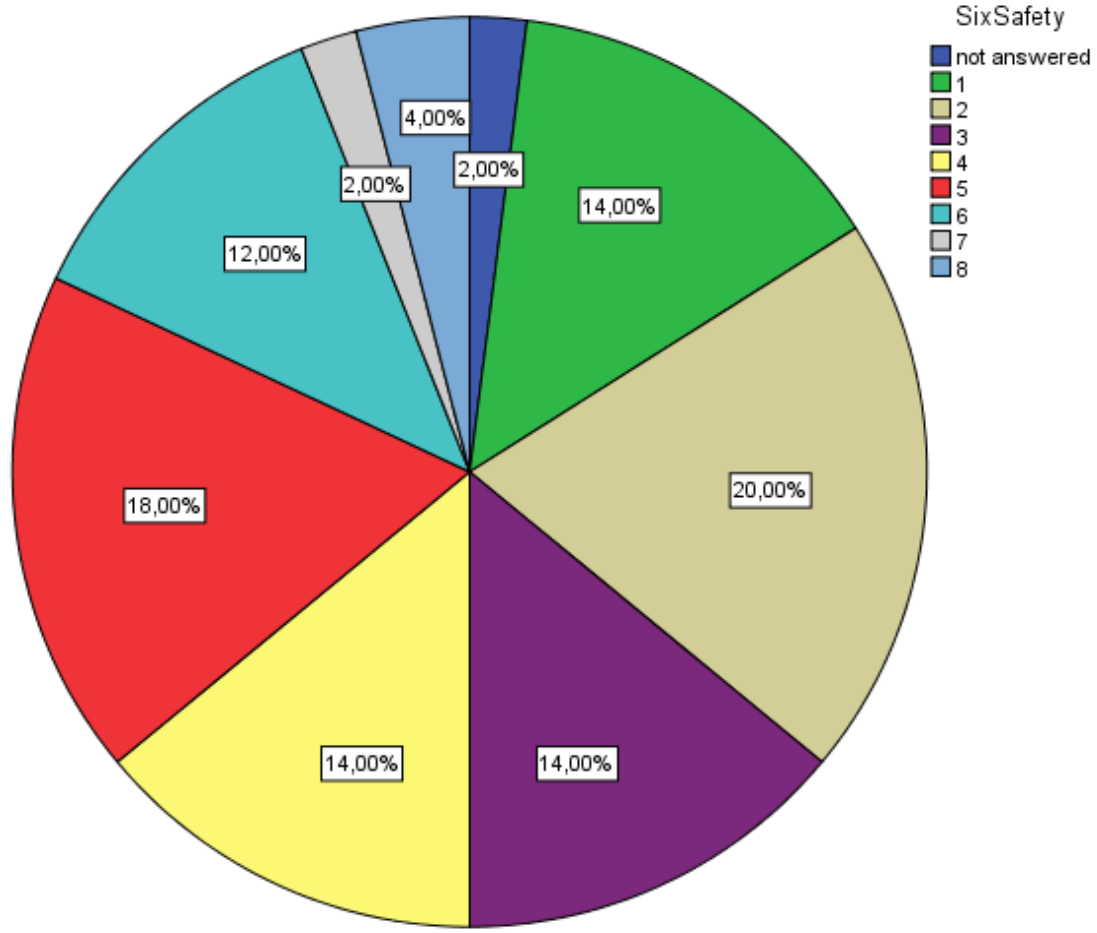
French



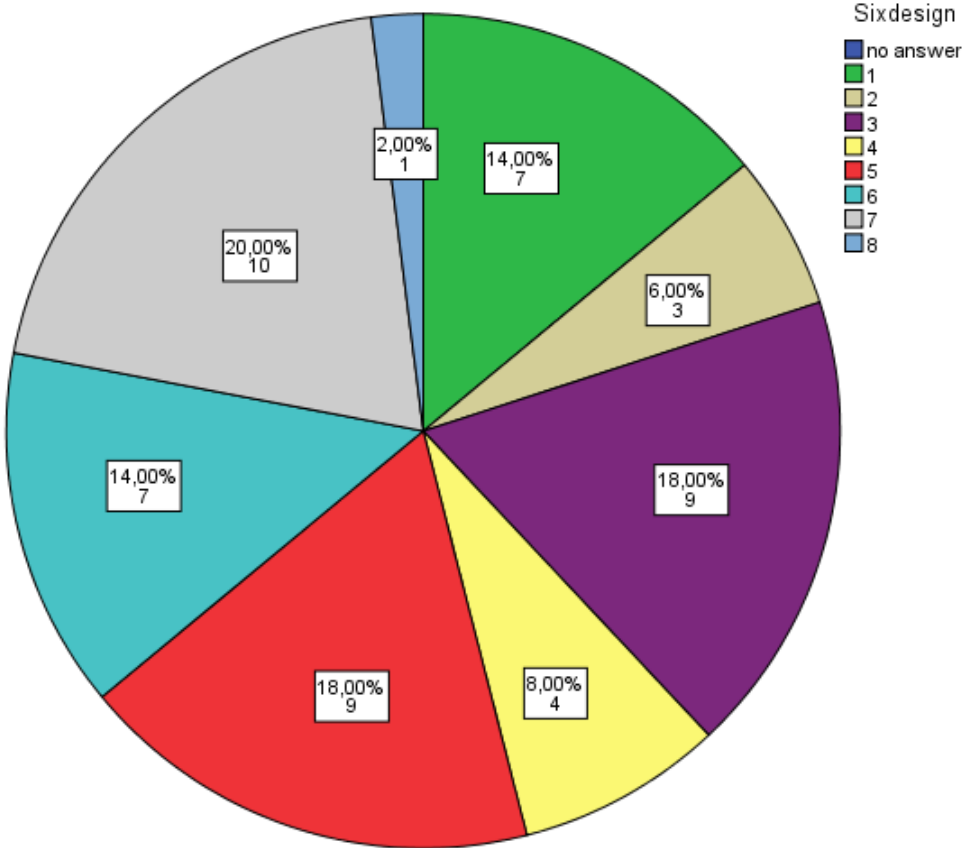
Swedish



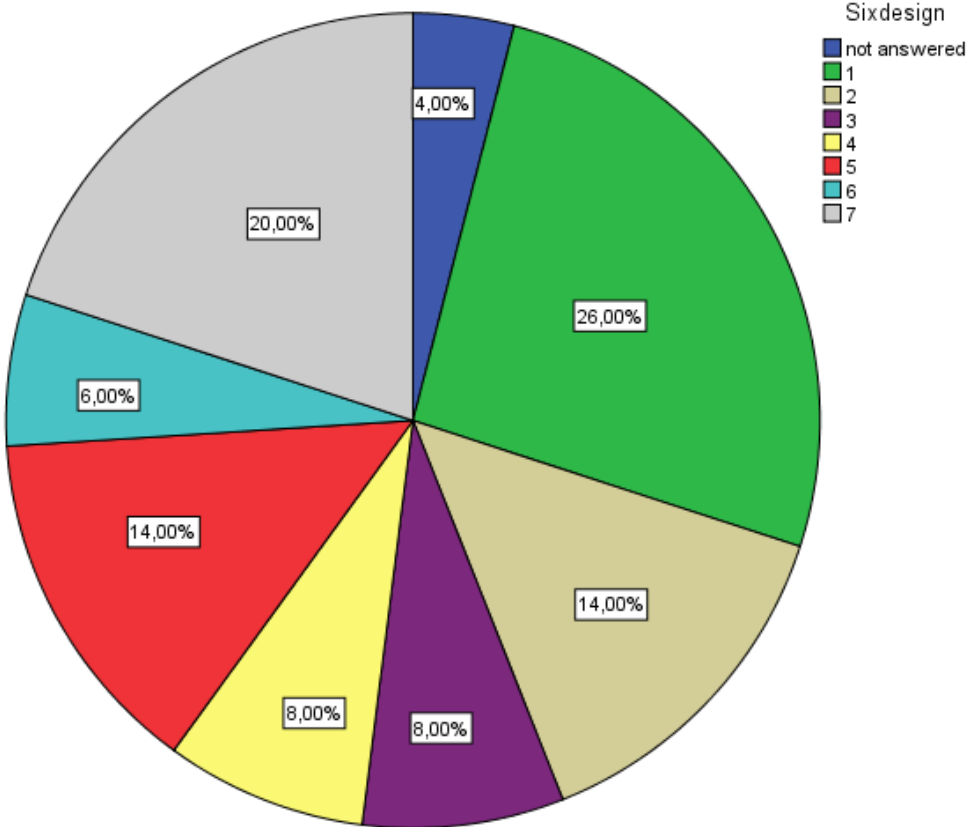
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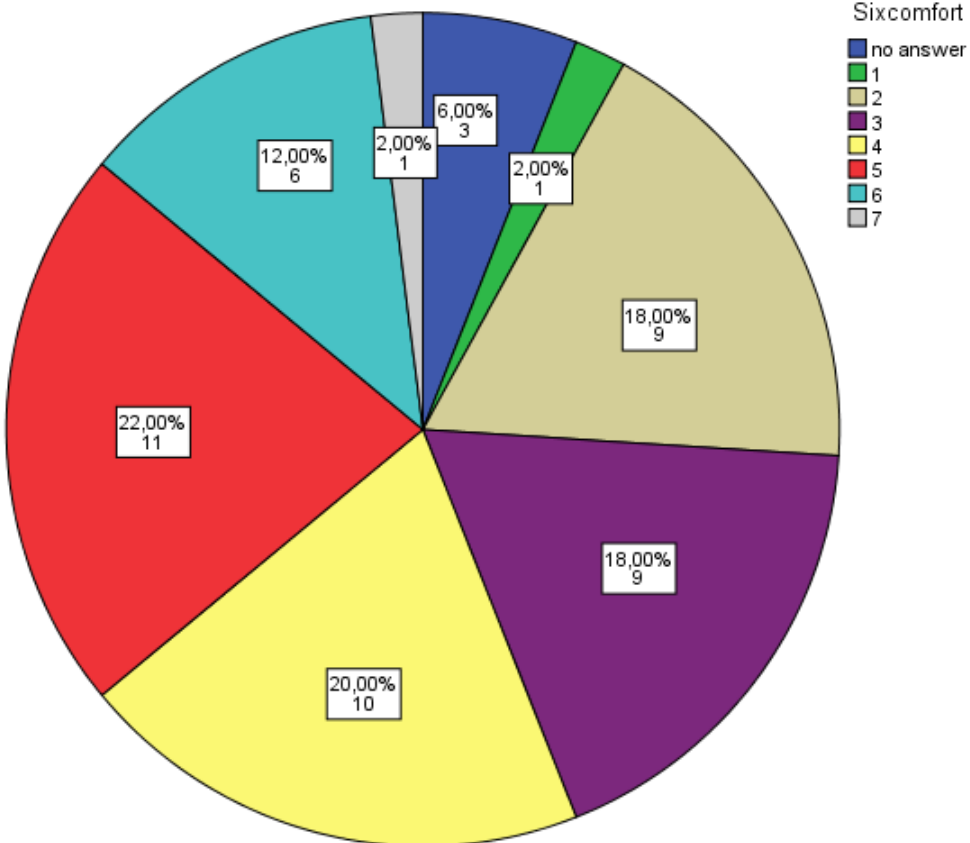
Swedish



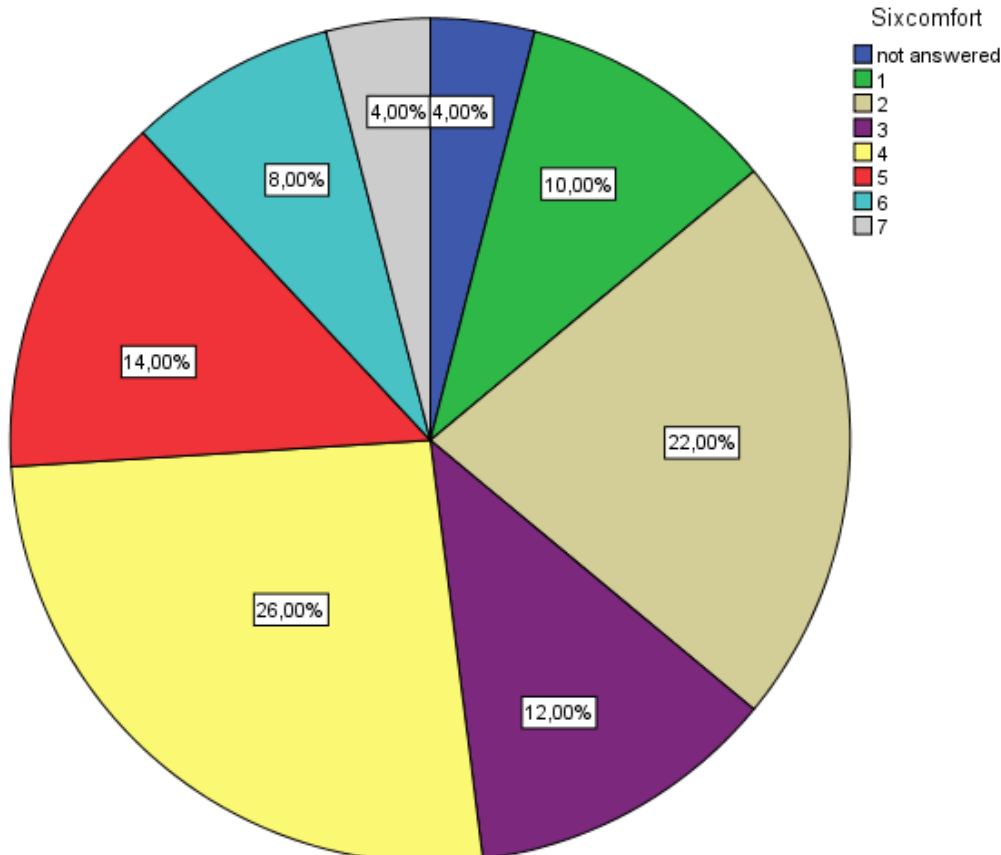
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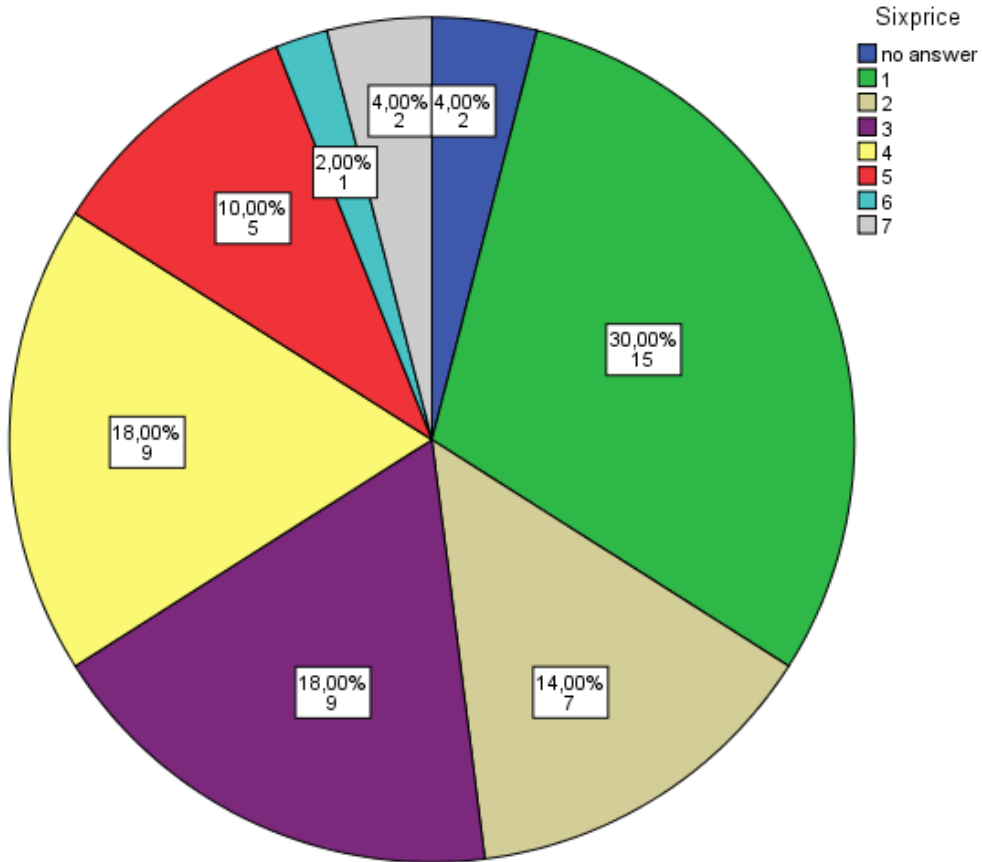
Swedish



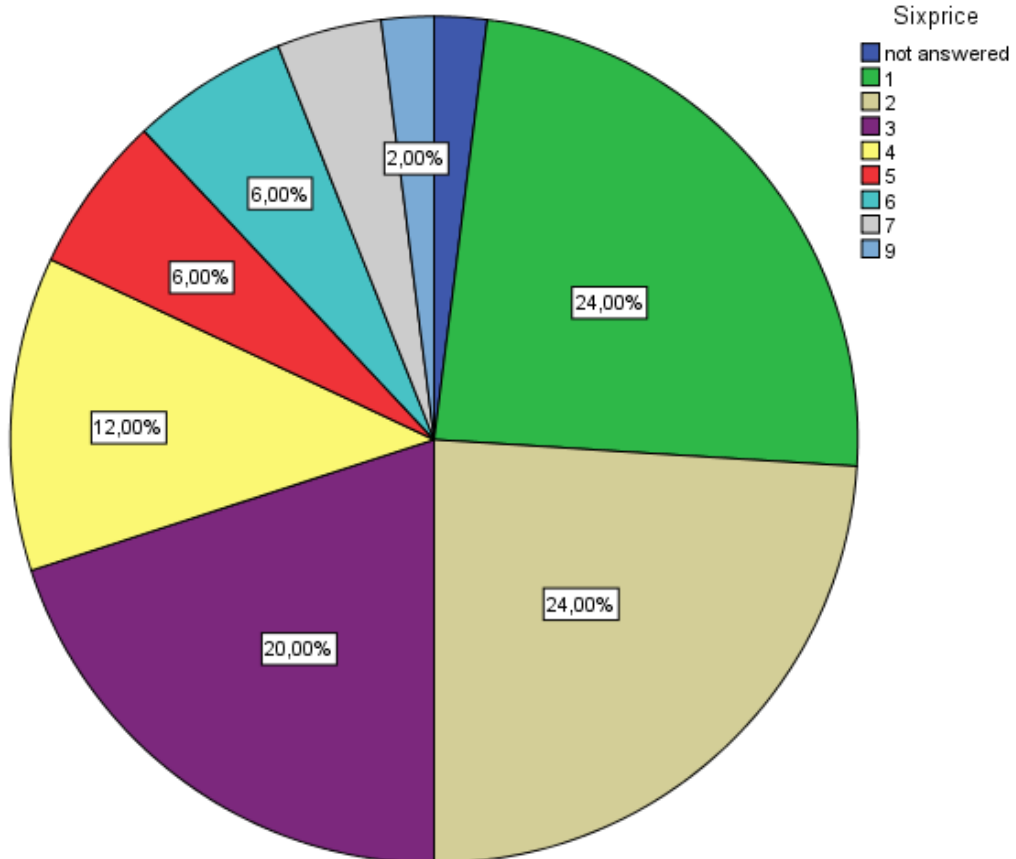
French



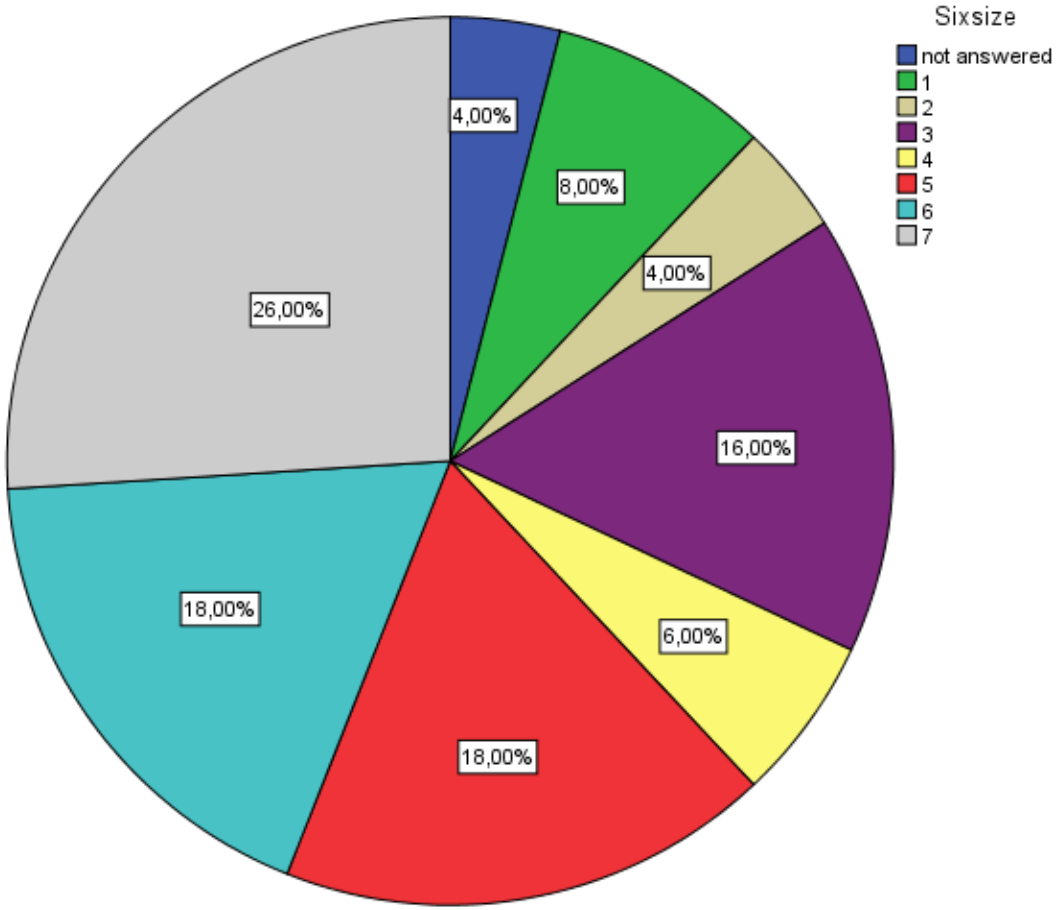
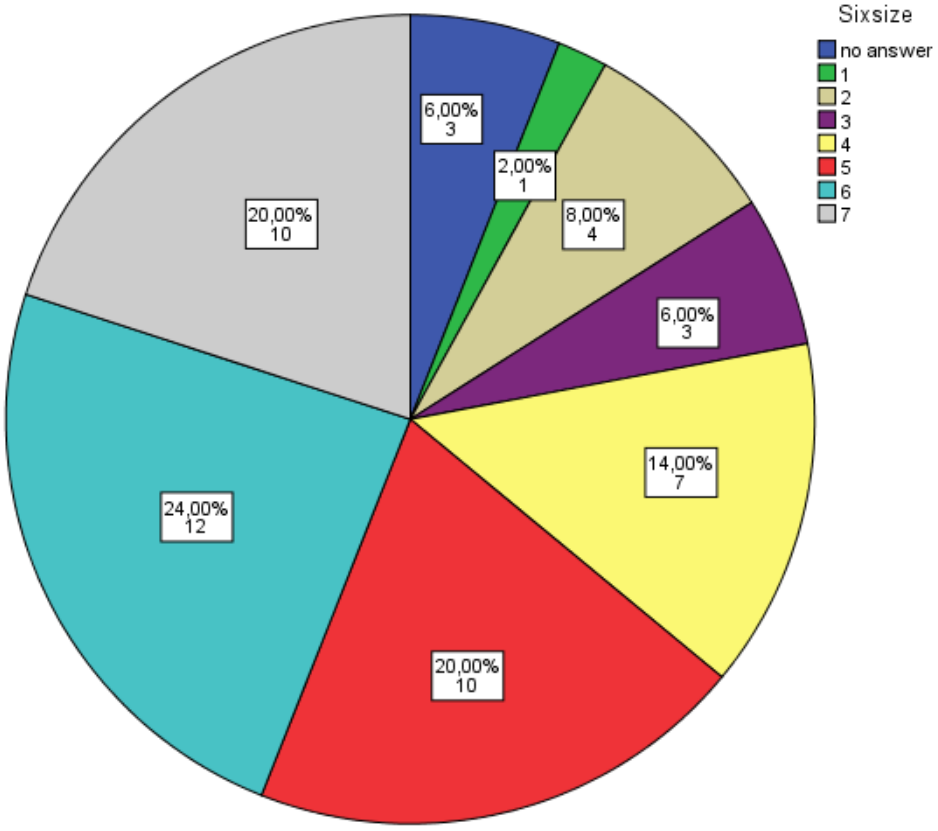
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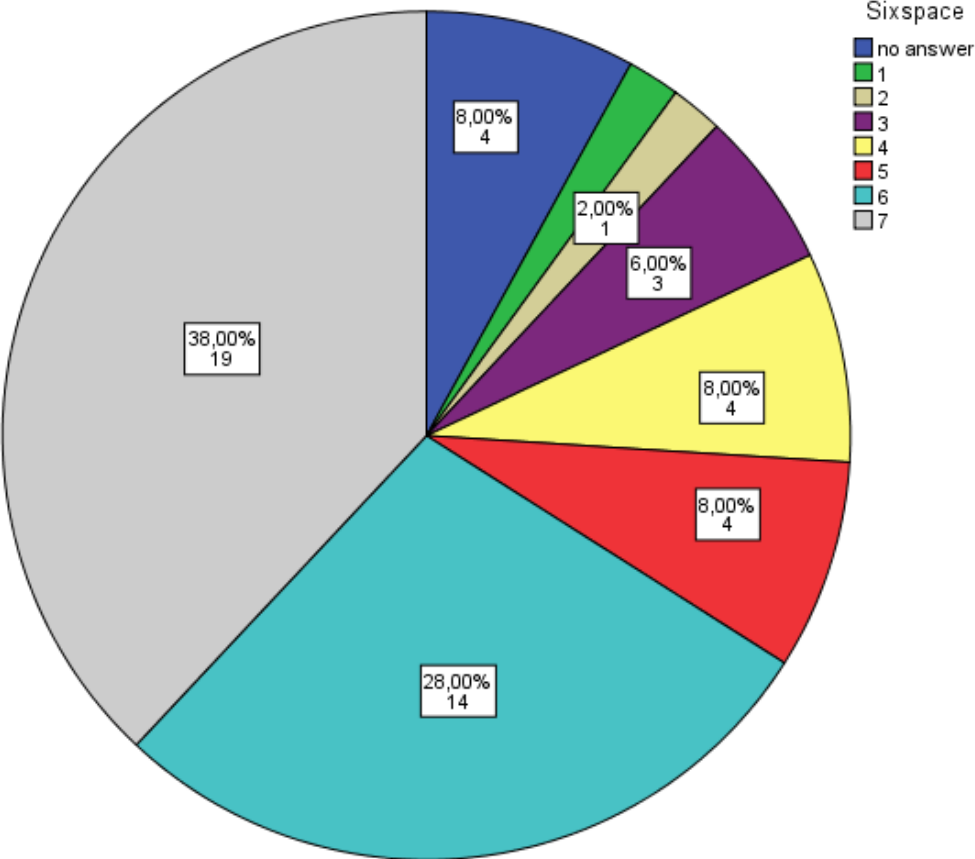
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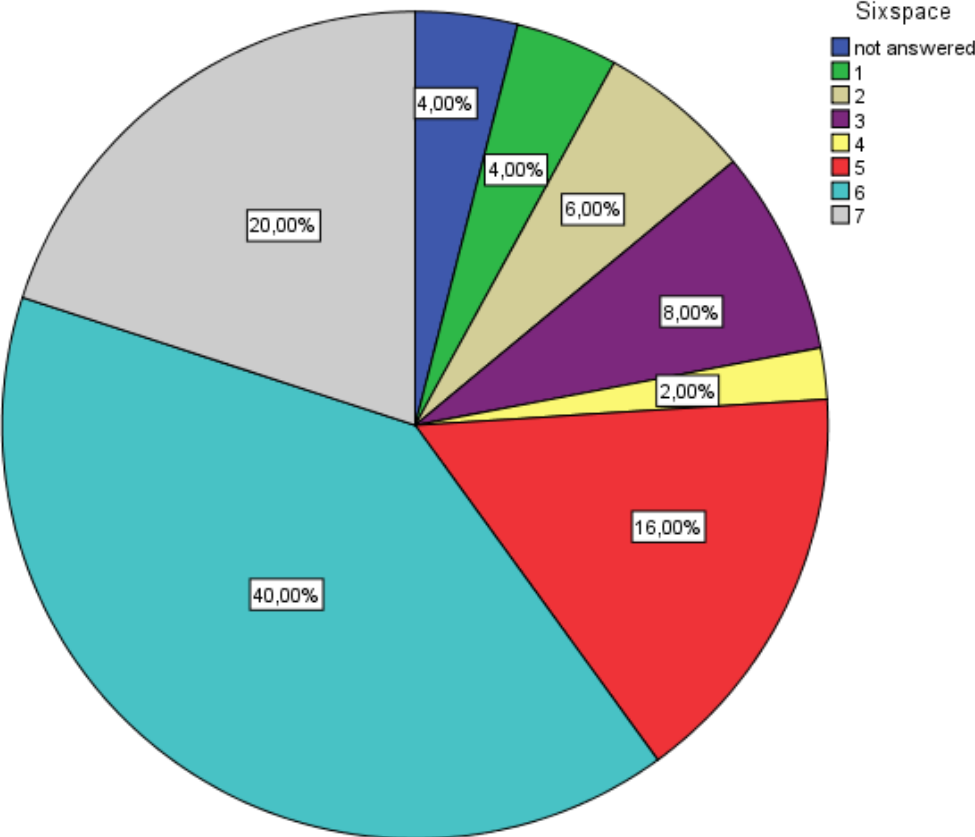
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Swedish

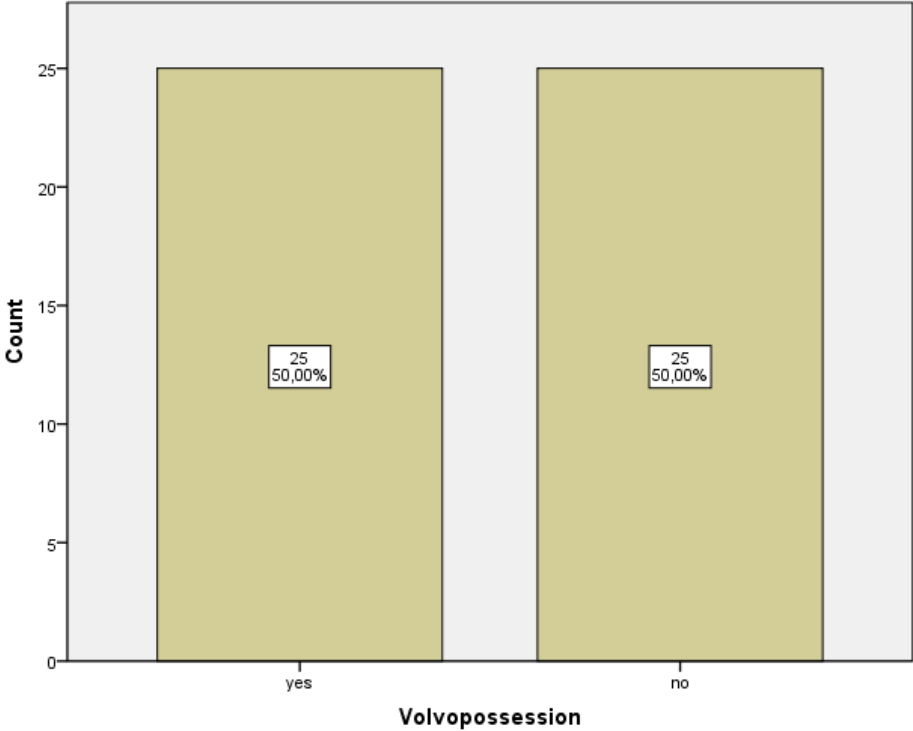


French

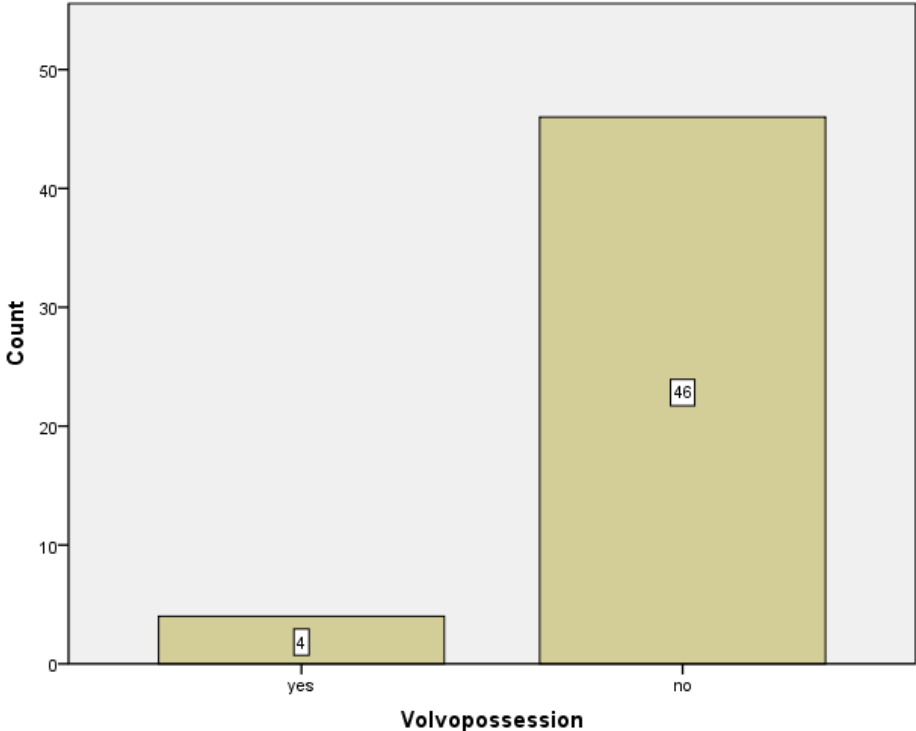


Question 7: Number of people who ever had a Volvo

Swedish

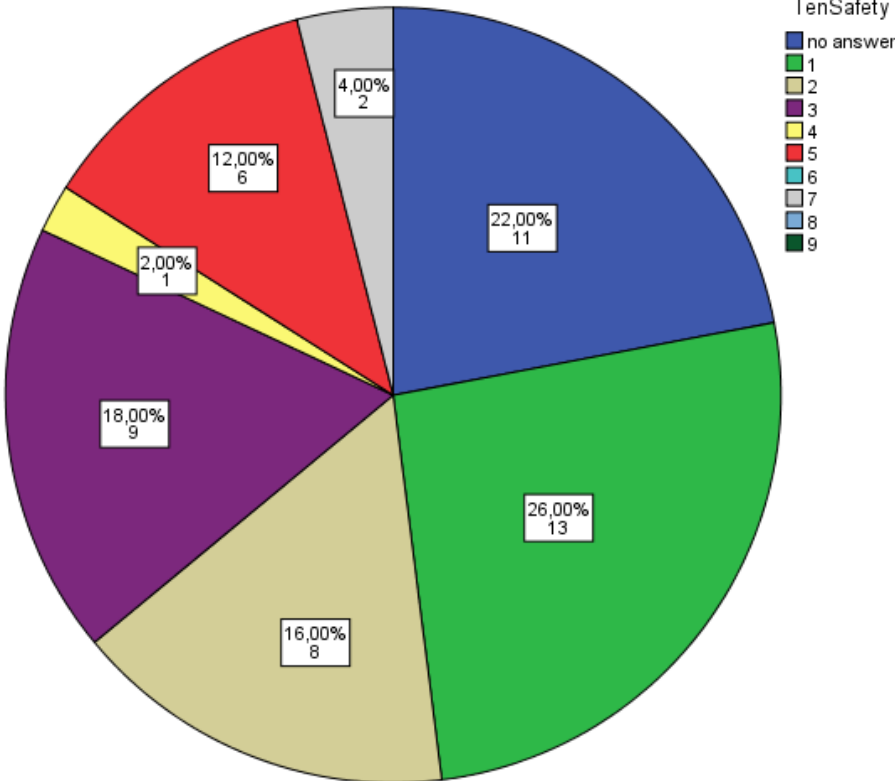


French

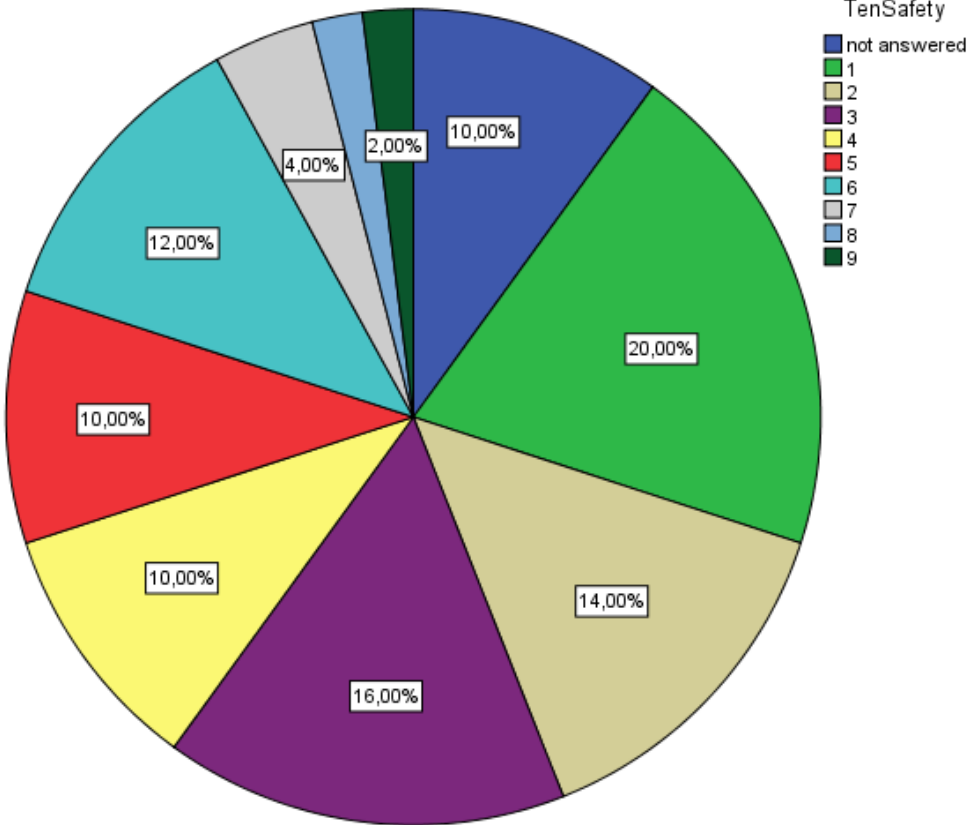


Question 10: Ranking of the factors when choosing a Volvo from 1 to 9 (1 being the most important characteristic and 9 the least)

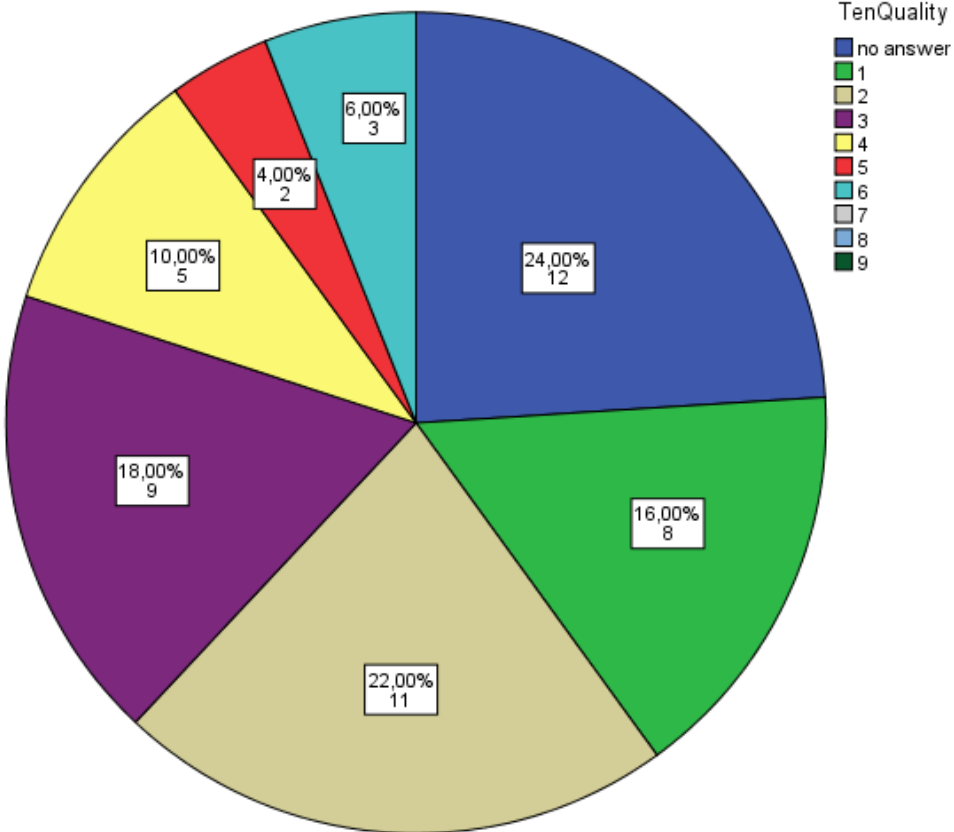
Swedish



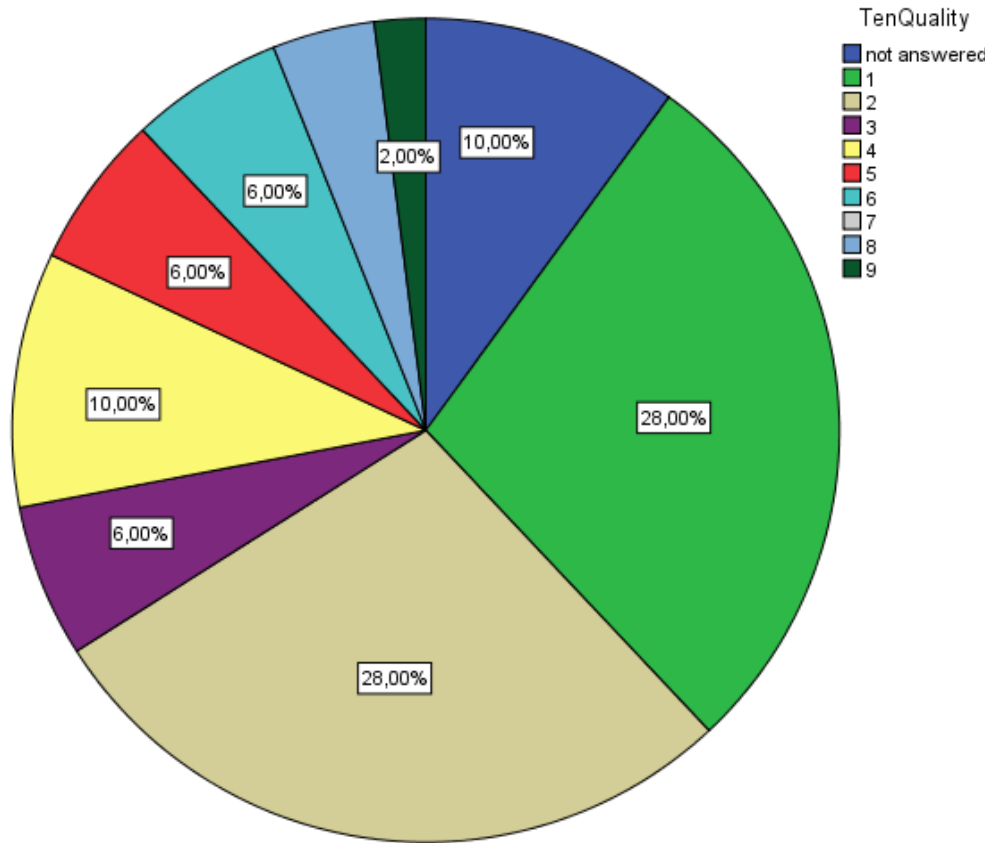
French



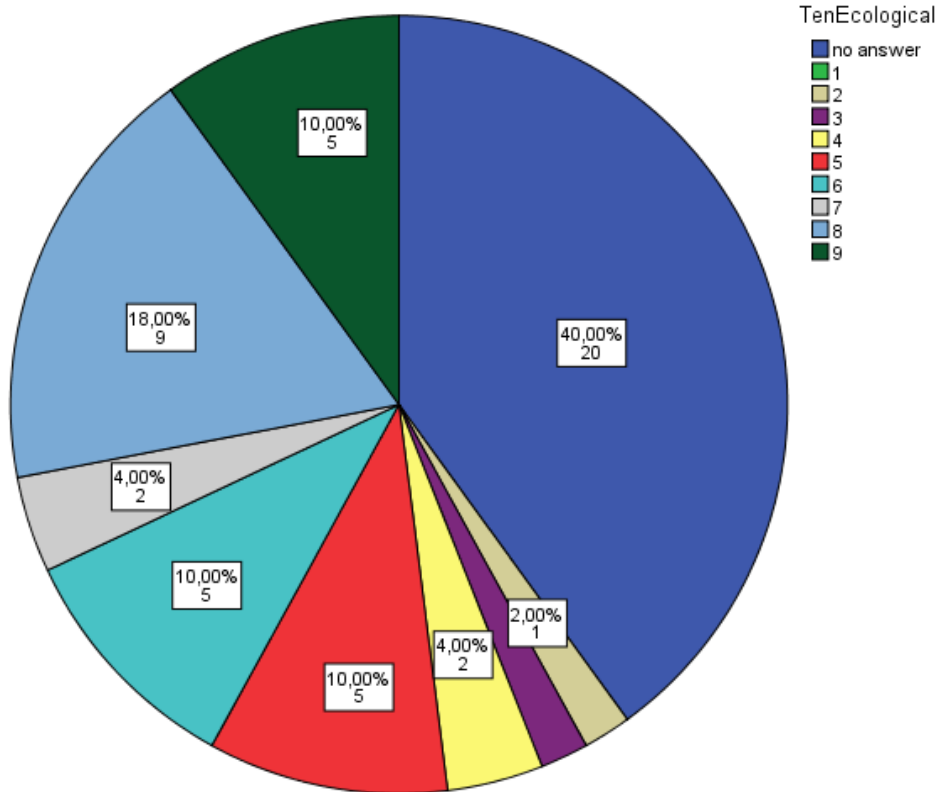
Swedish



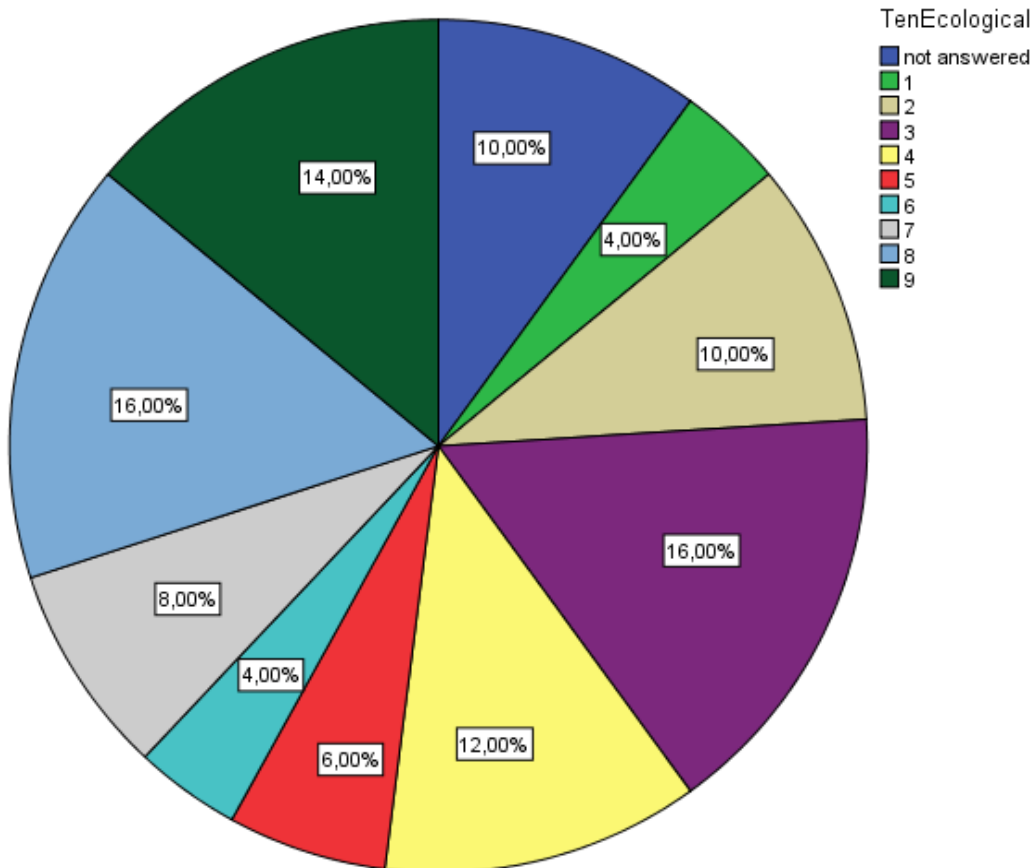
French



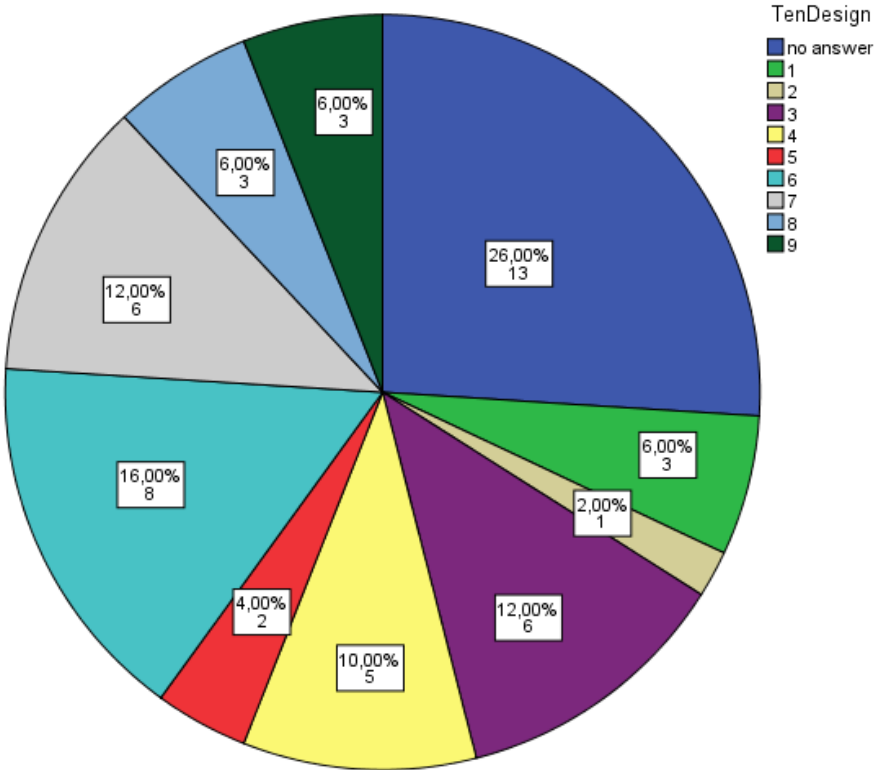
Swedish



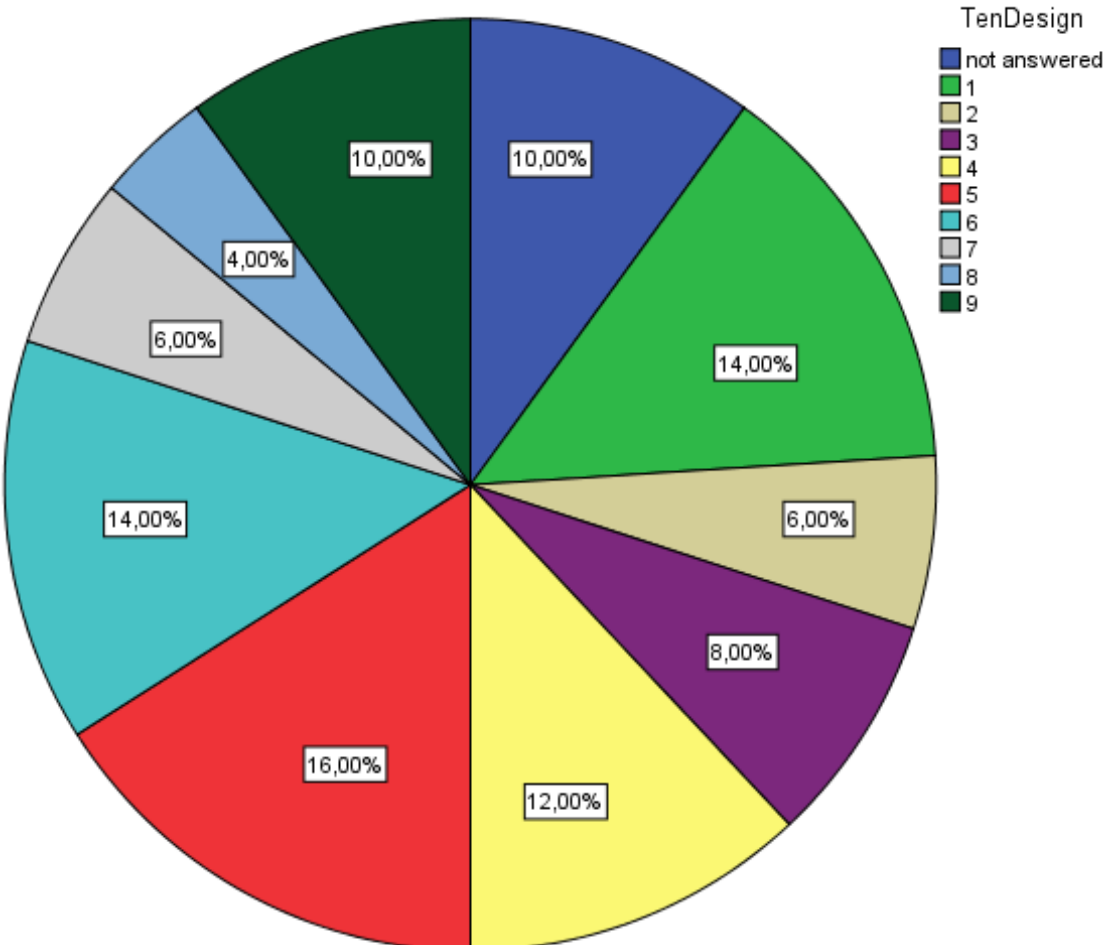
French



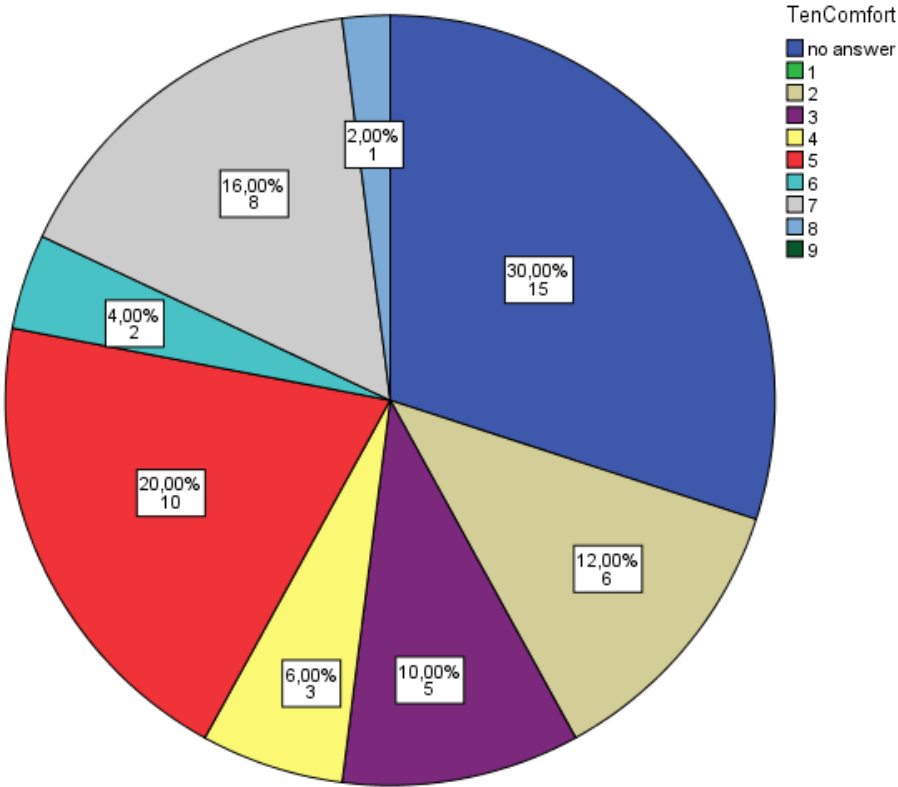
Swedish



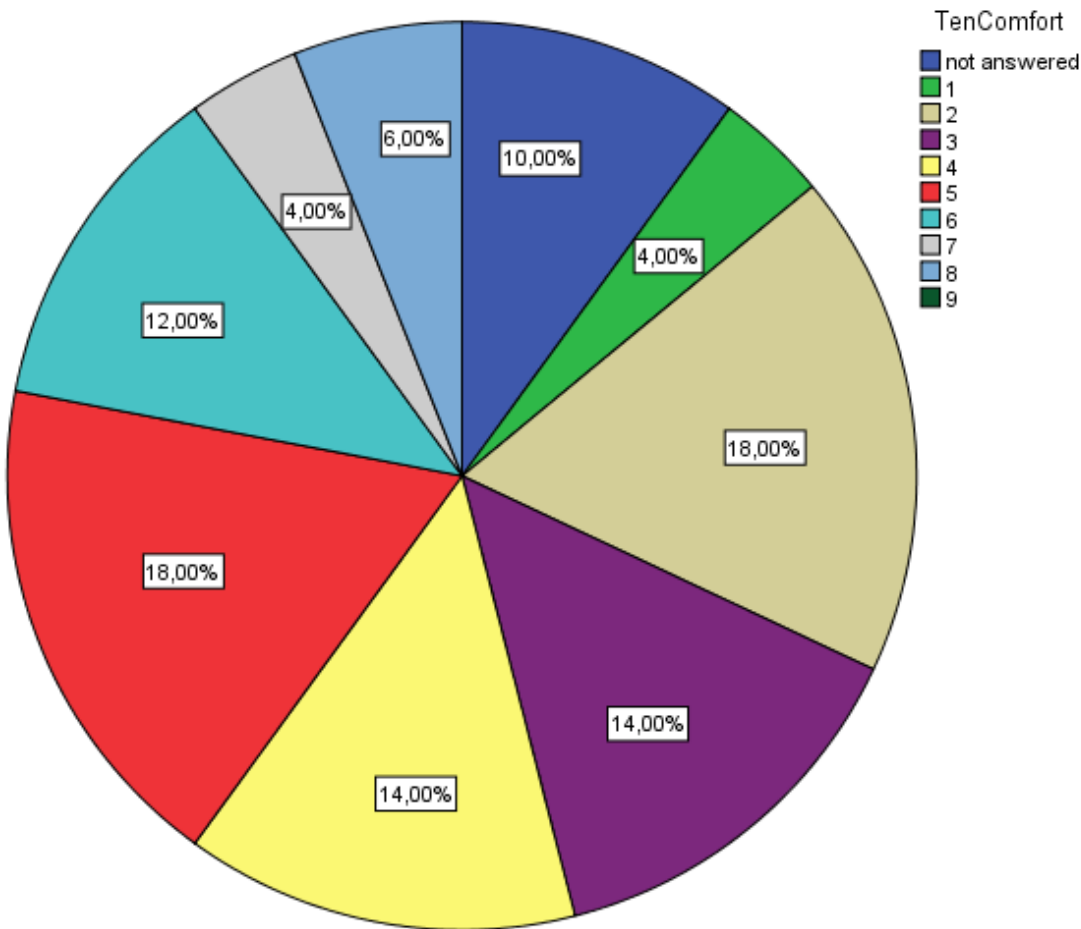
French



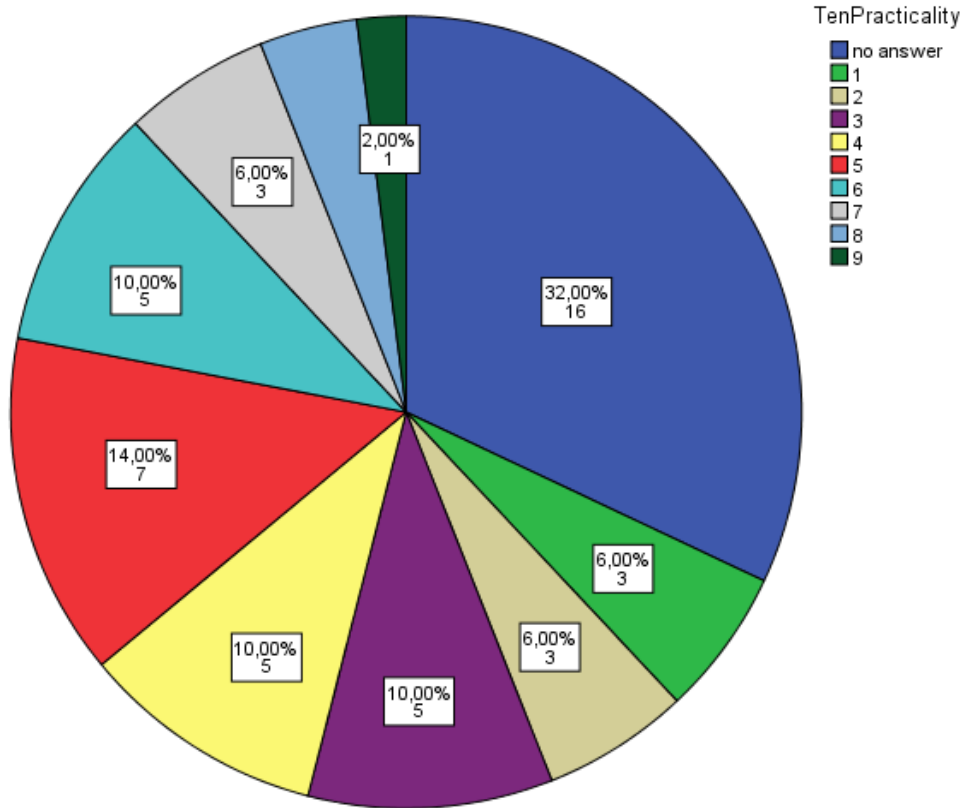
Swedish



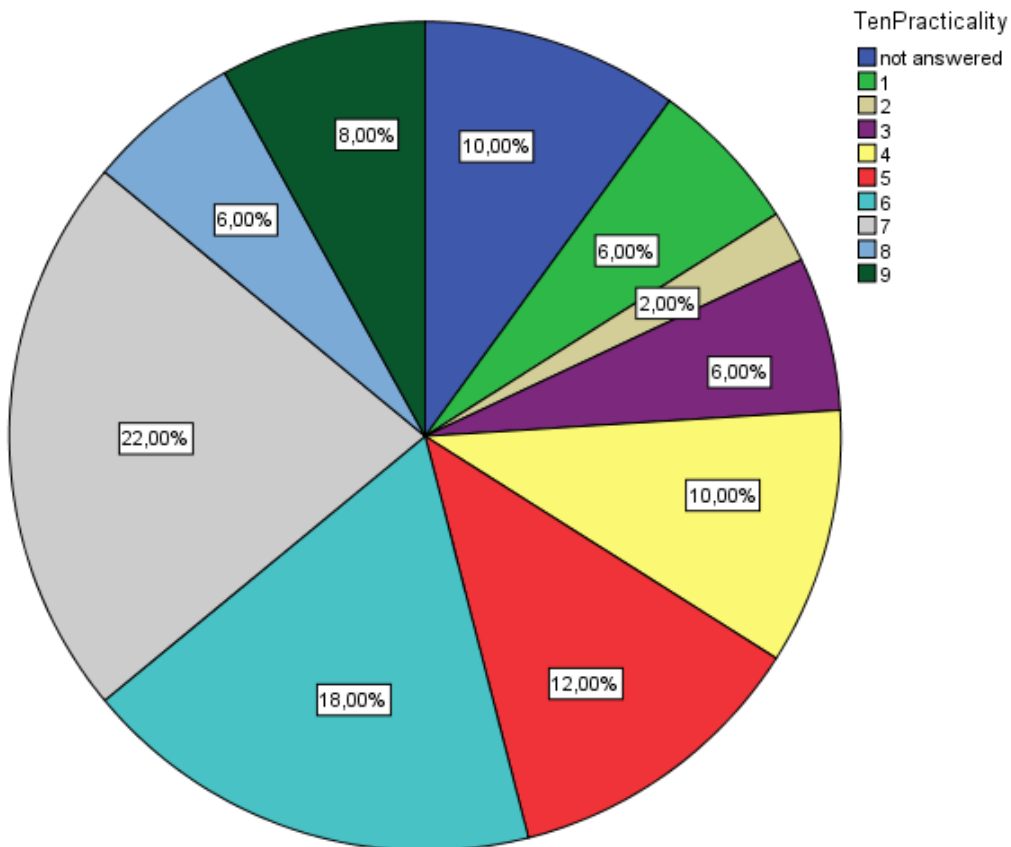
French



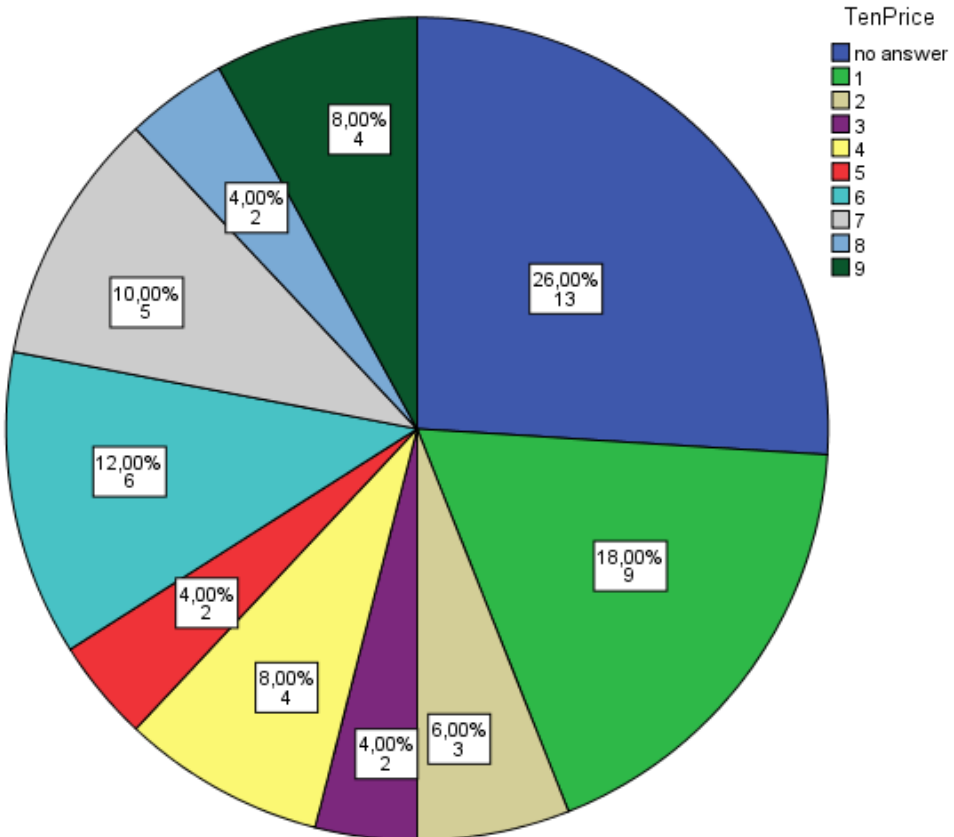
Swedish



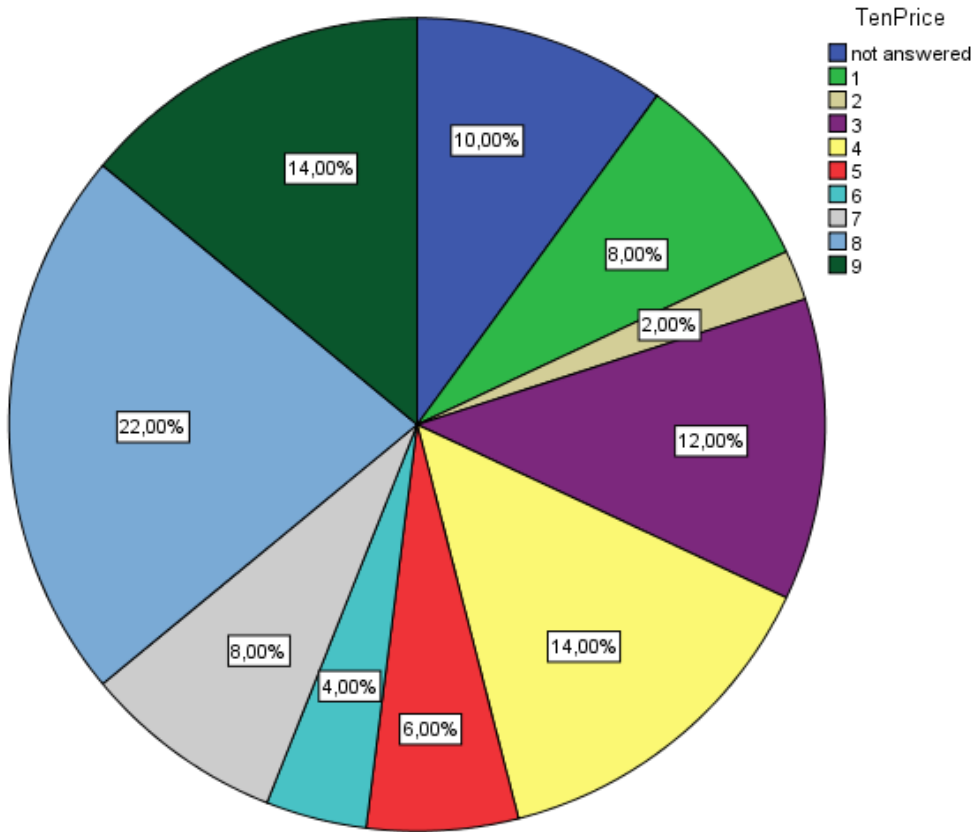
French



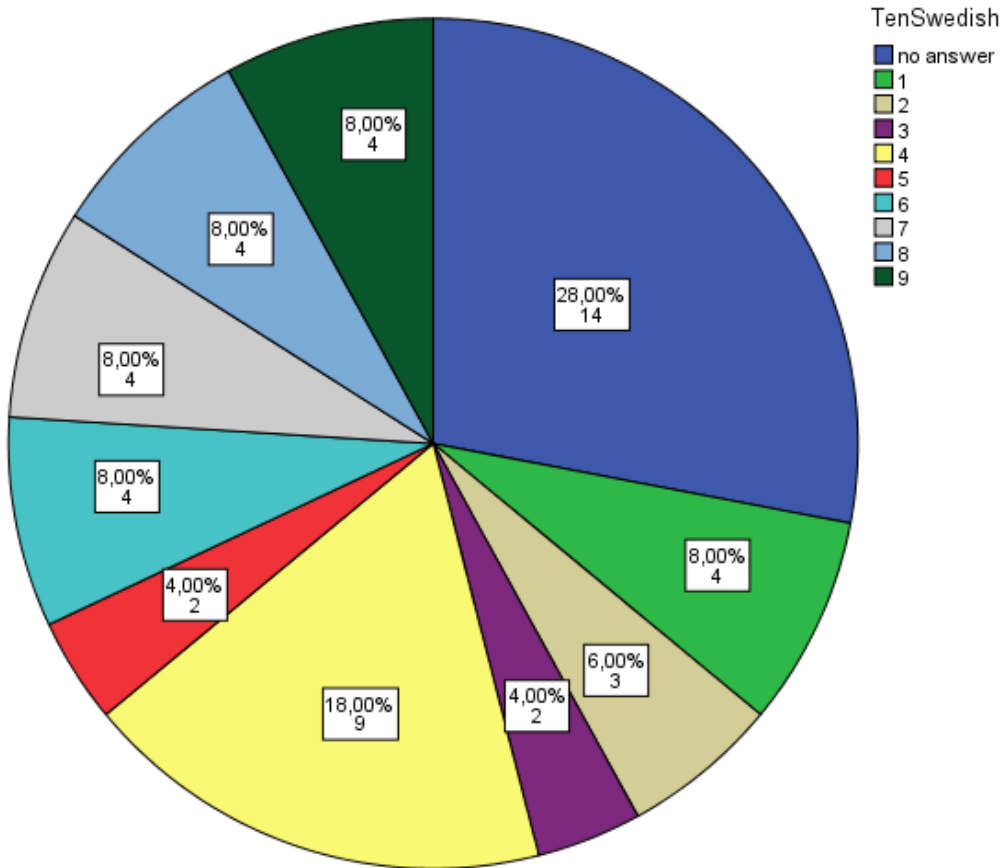
Swedish



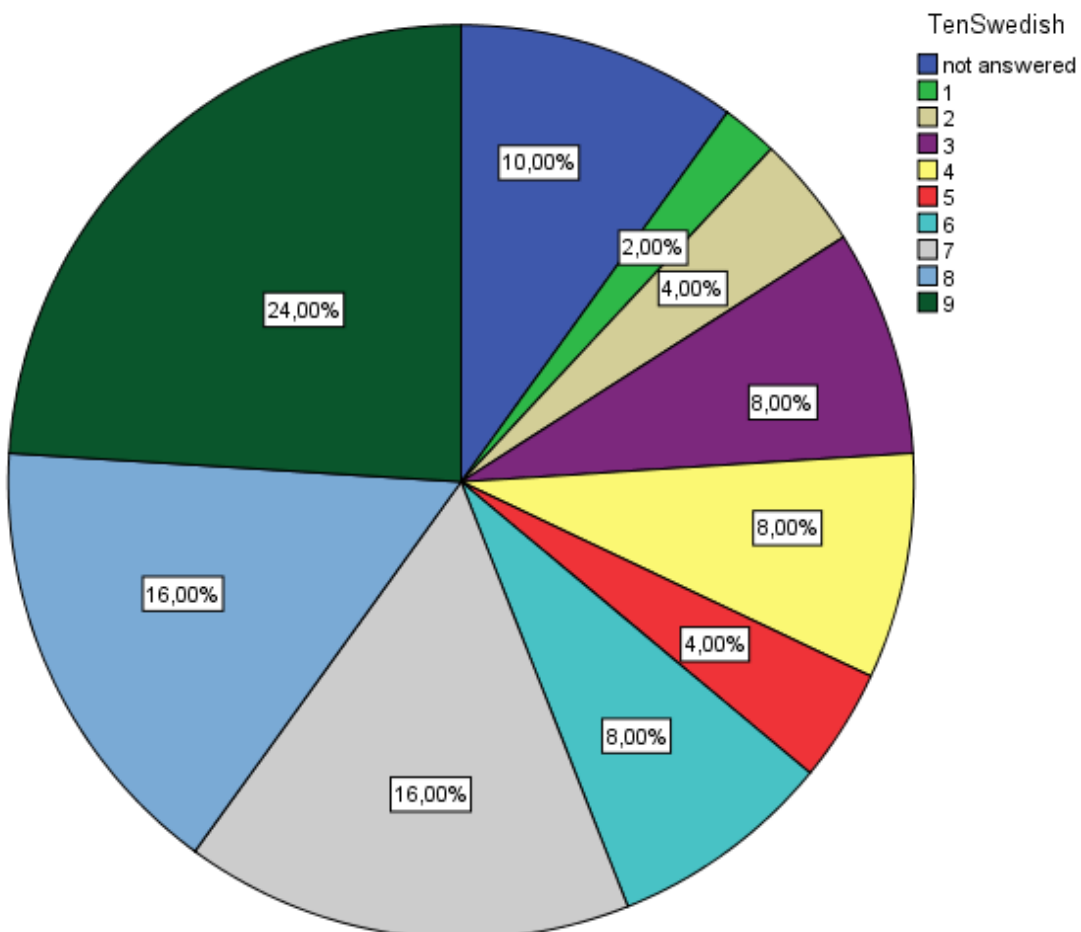
French



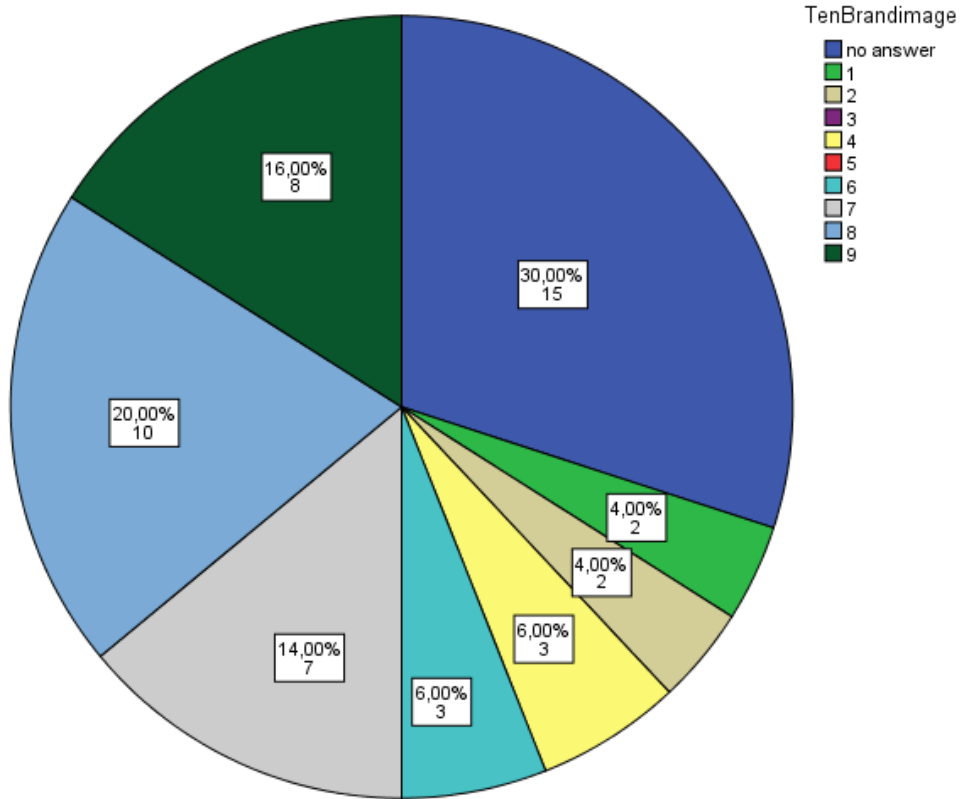
Swedish



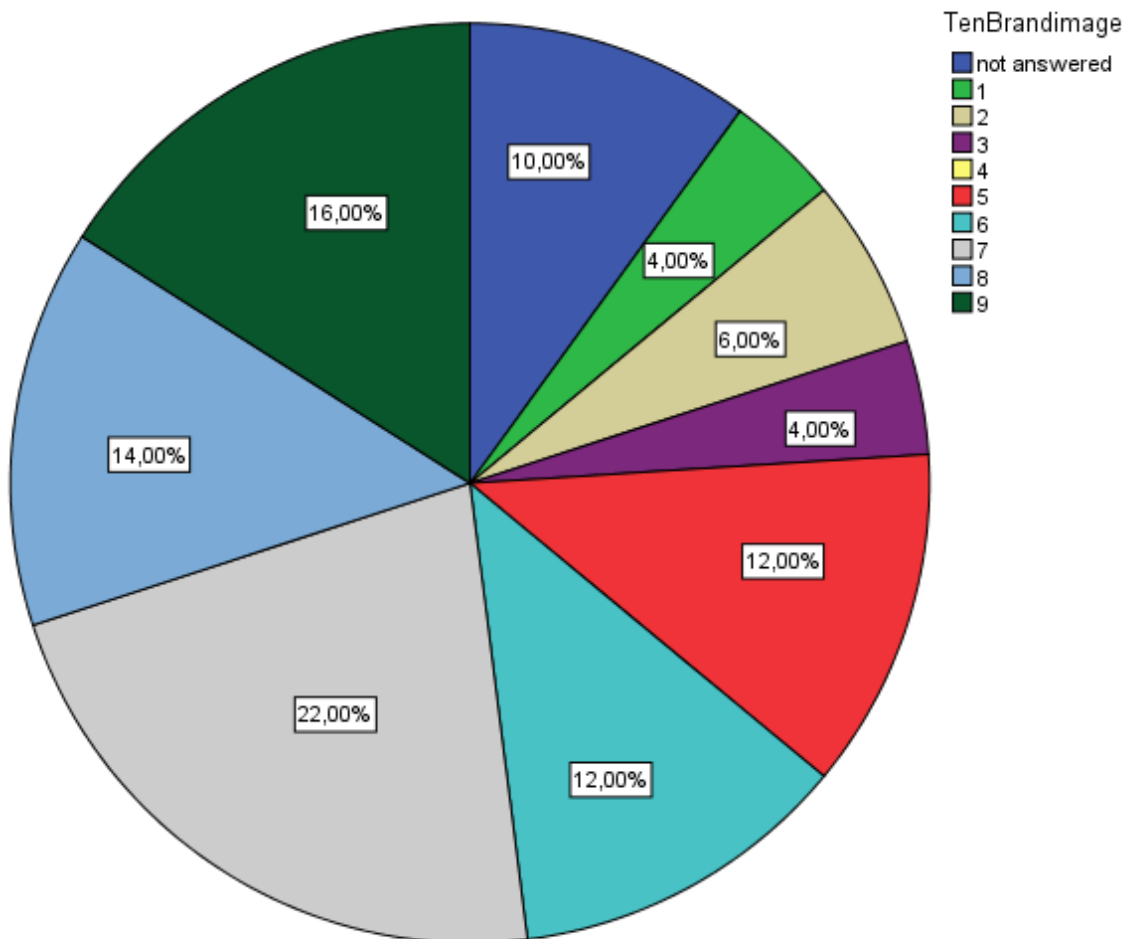
French



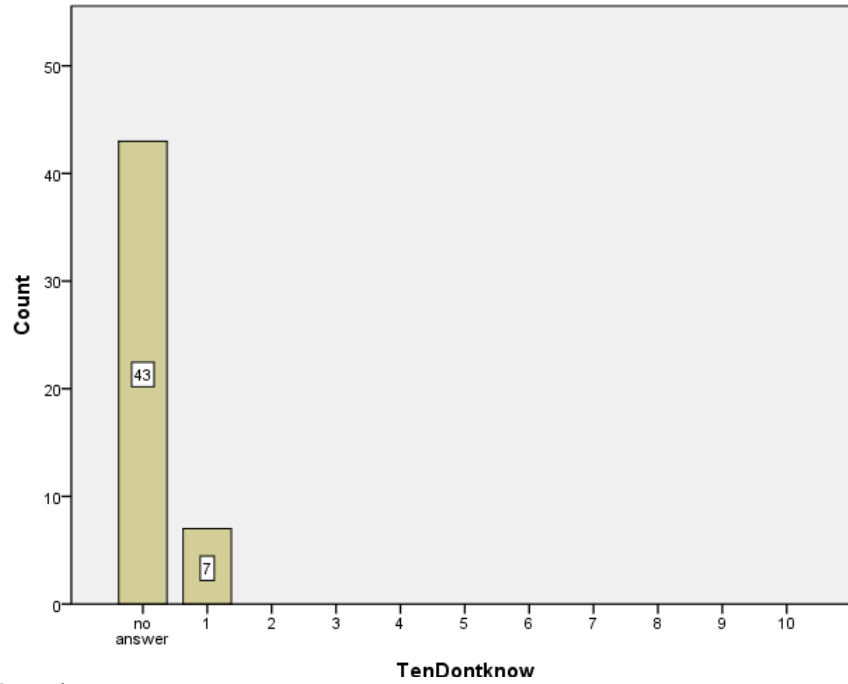
Swedish



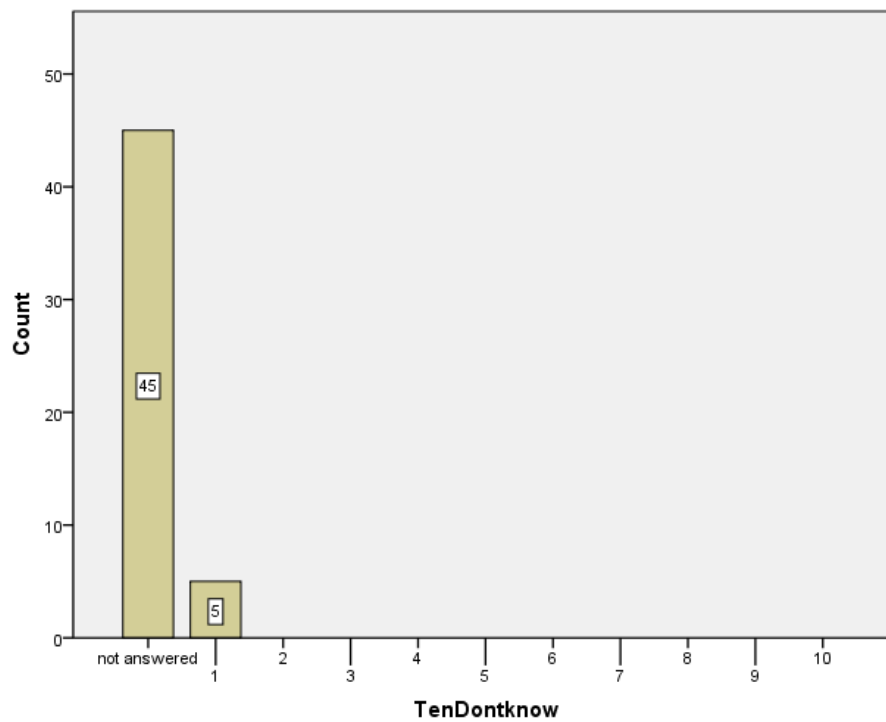
French



Swedish



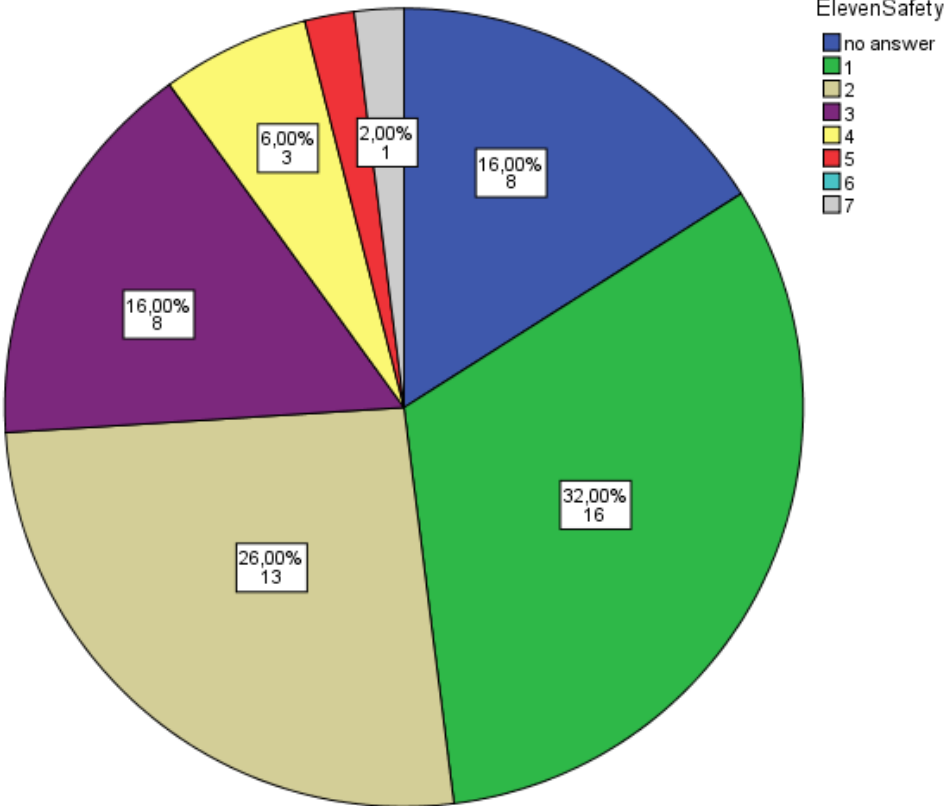
French



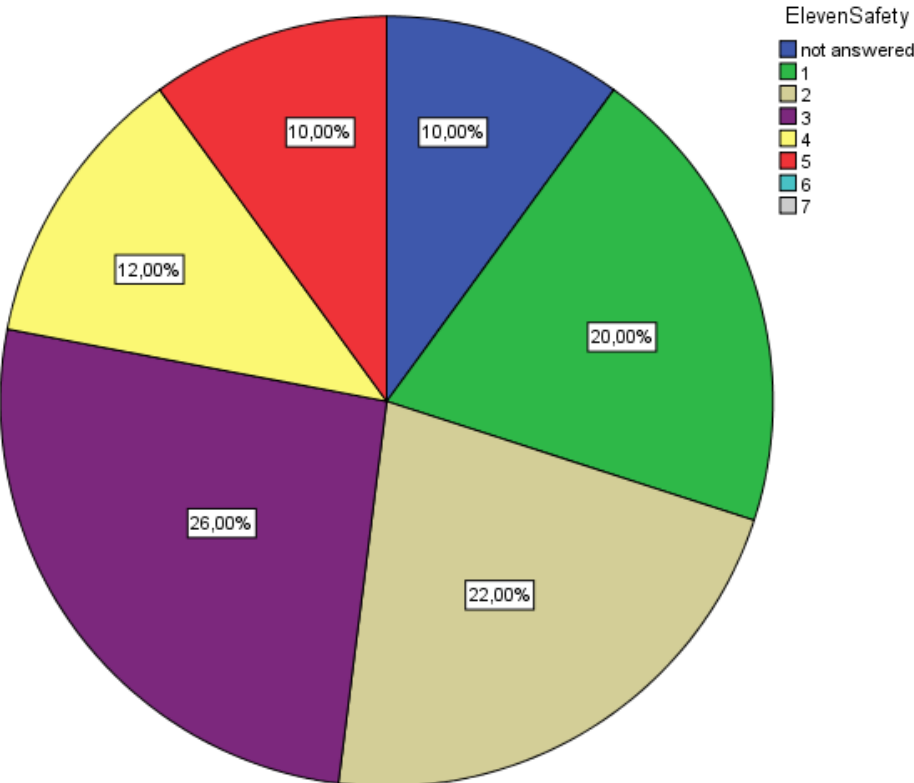
In these bar charts we can see that respectively 7 and 5 people did not know what to answer to this question 10.

Question 11: Ranking of the factors evoked by Volvo from 1 to 7 (1 being the most important characteristic and 7 the least)

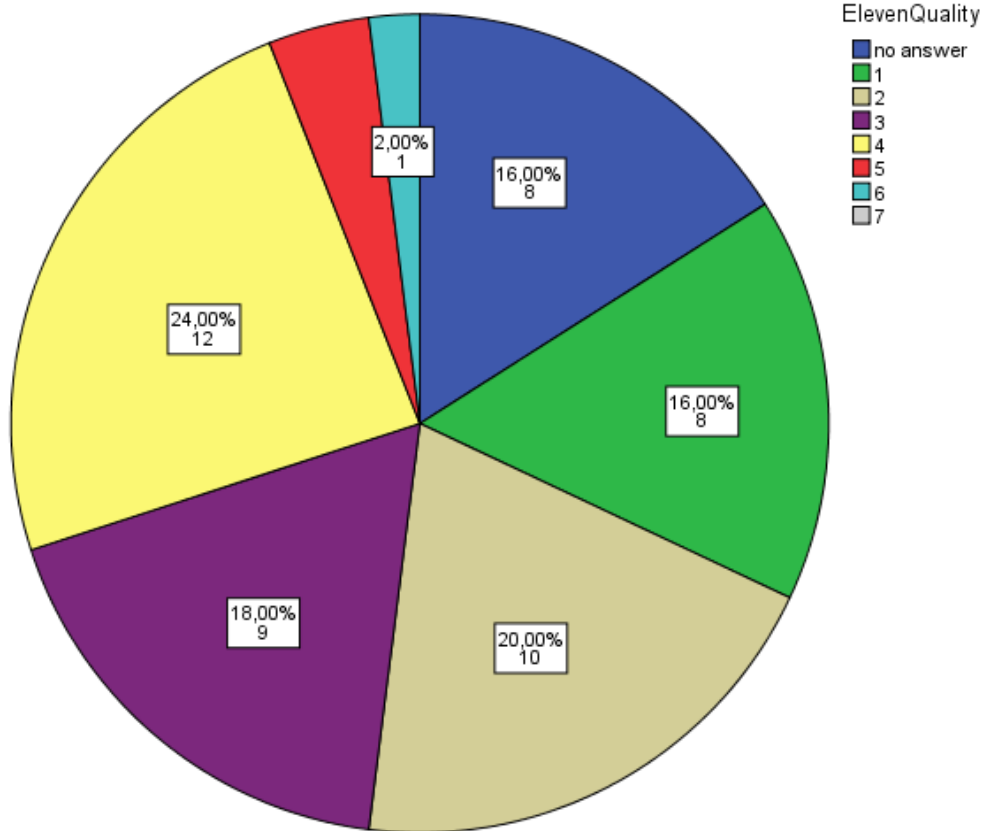
Swedish



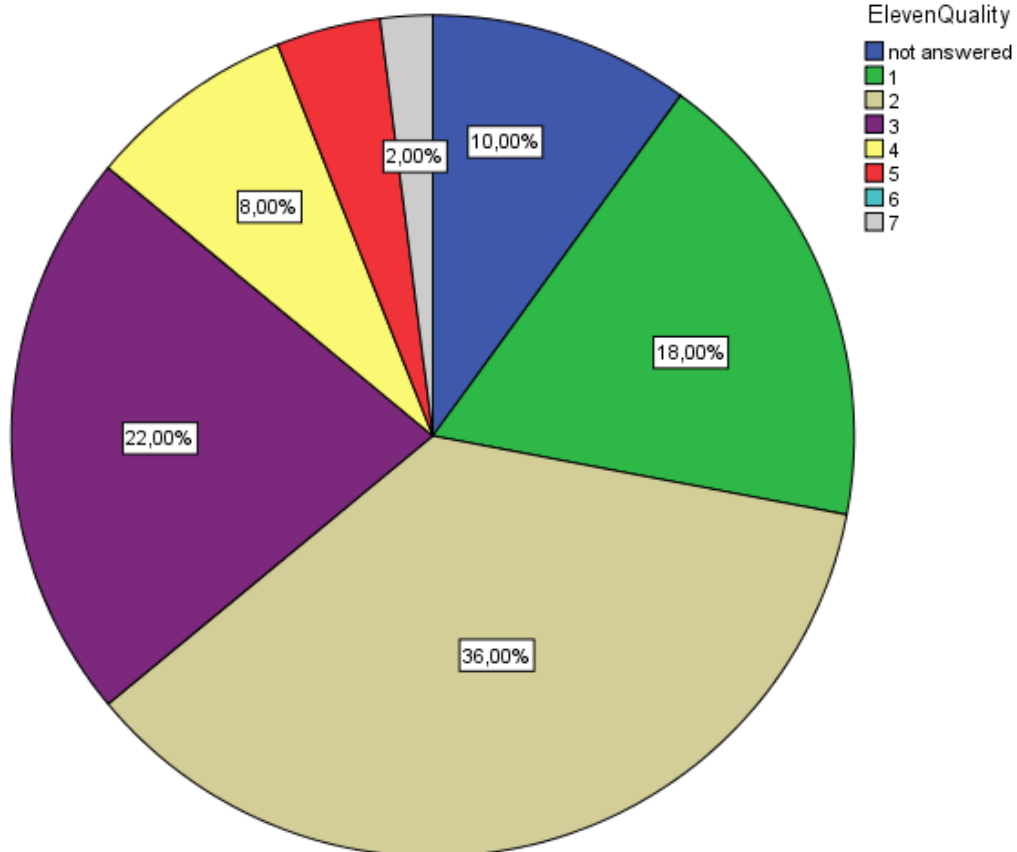
French



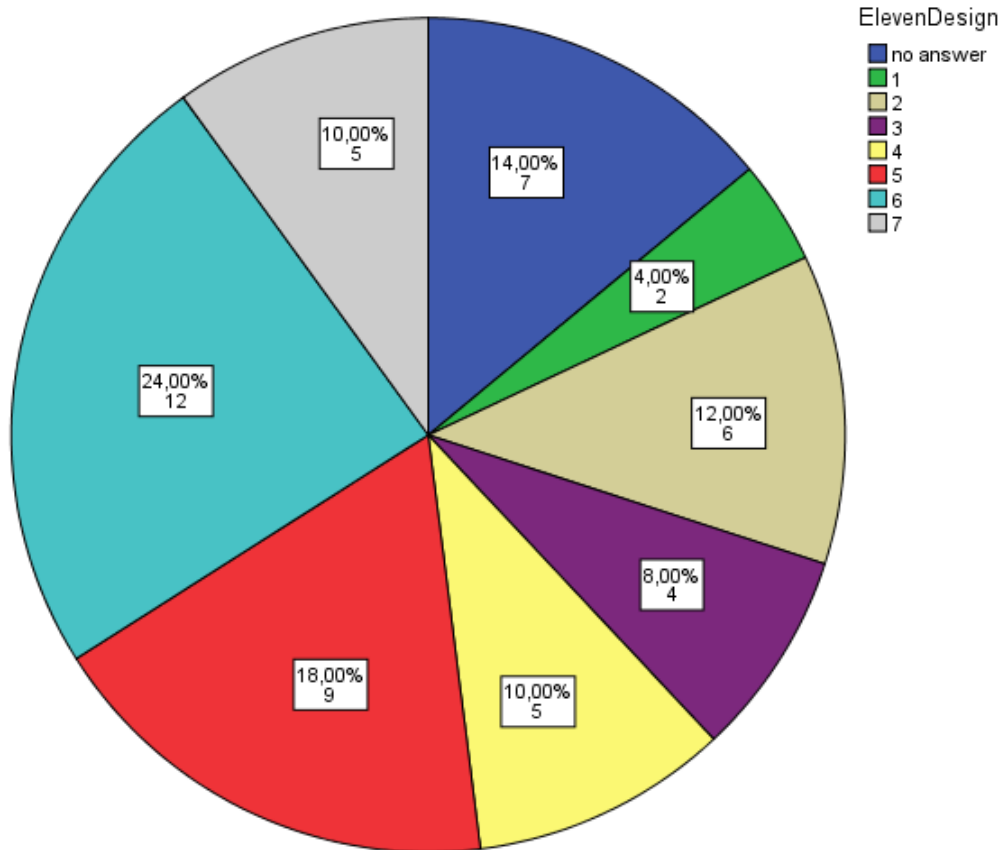
Swedish



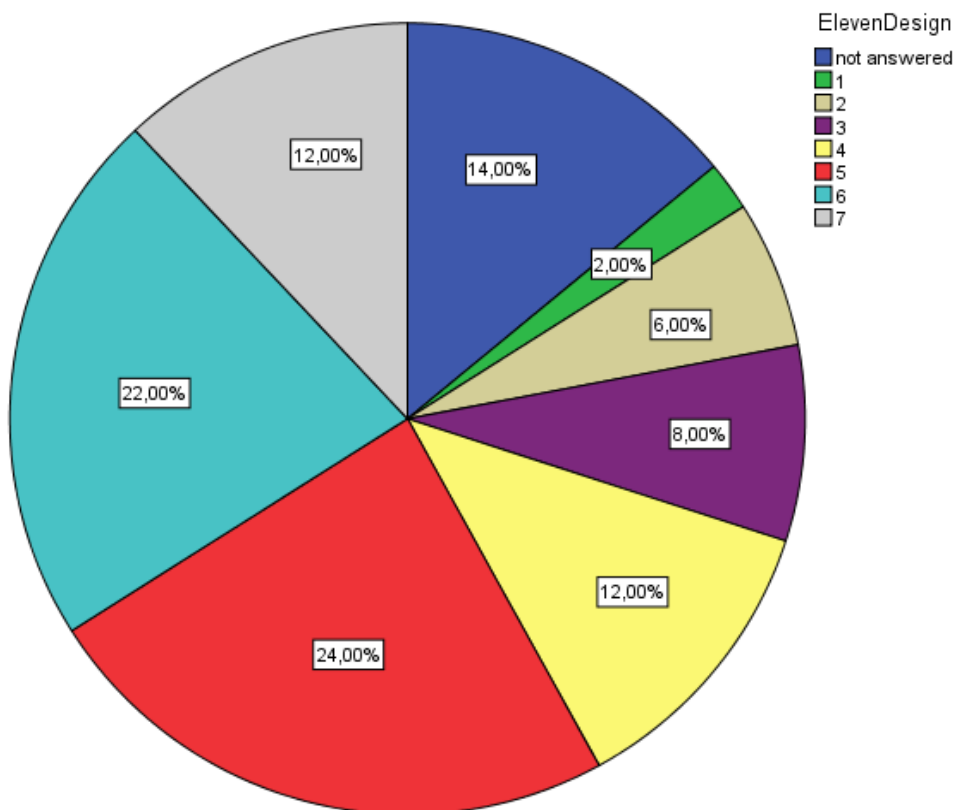
French



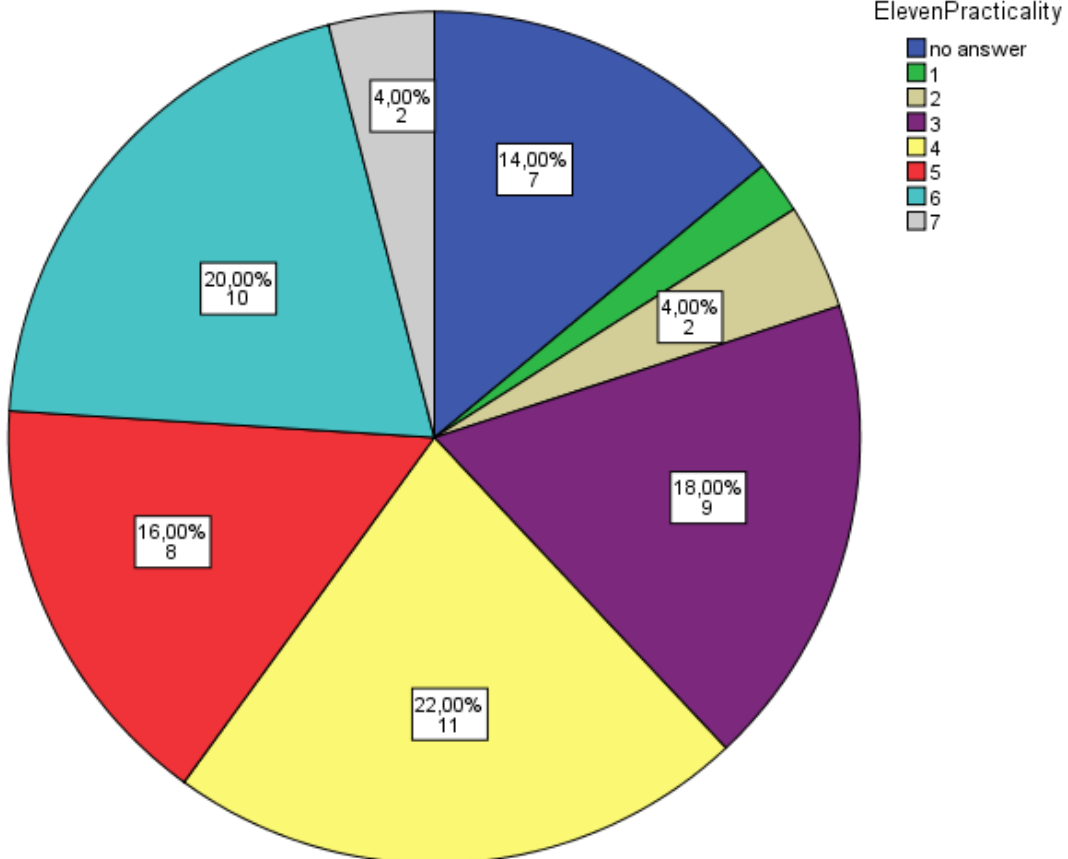
Swedish



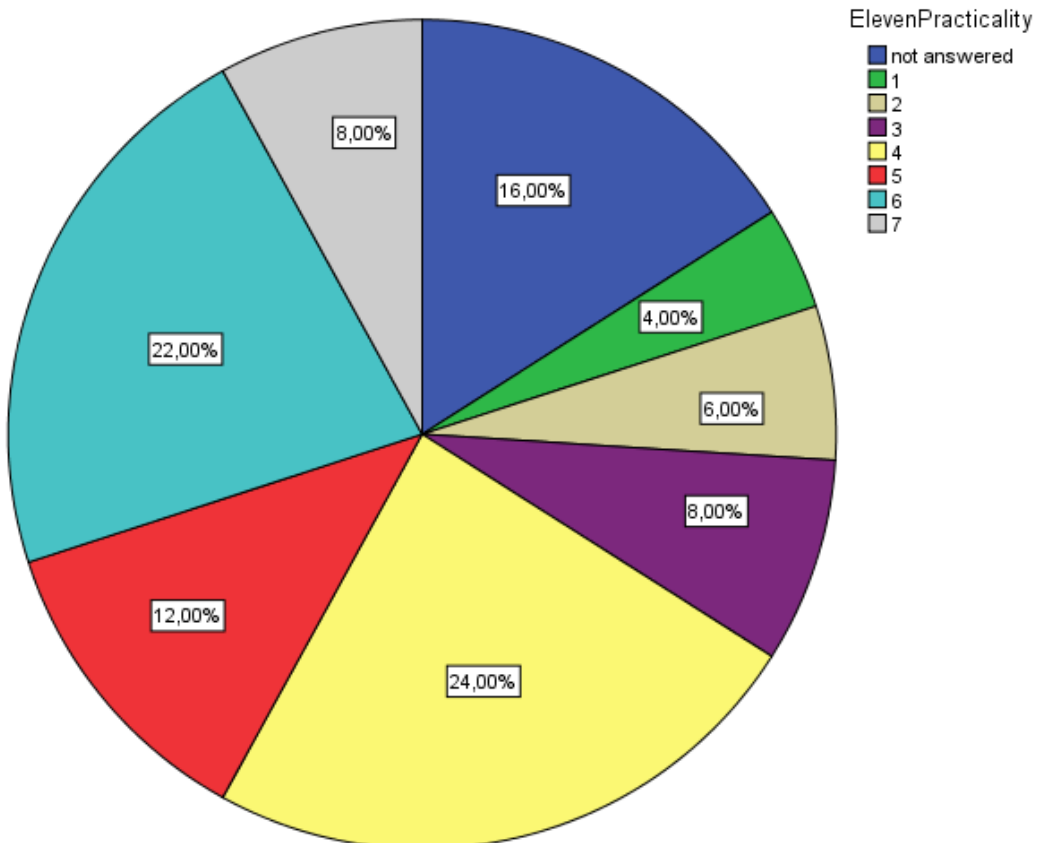
French



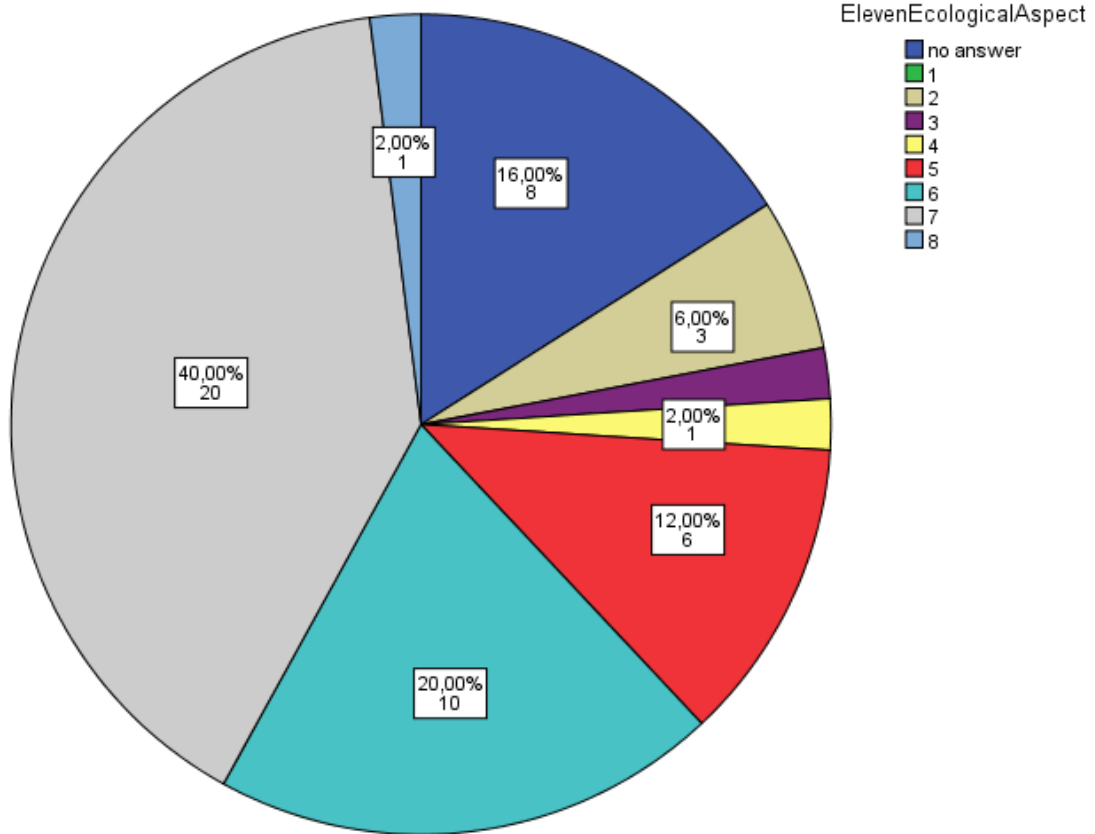
Swedish



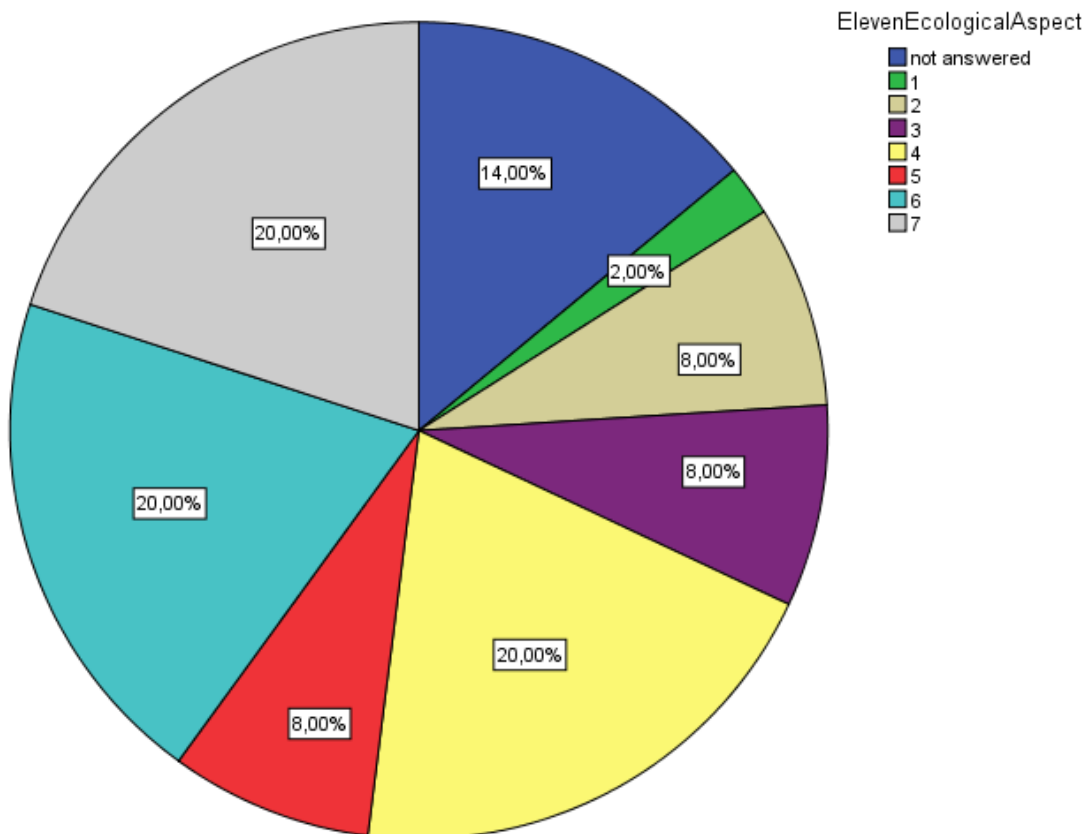
French



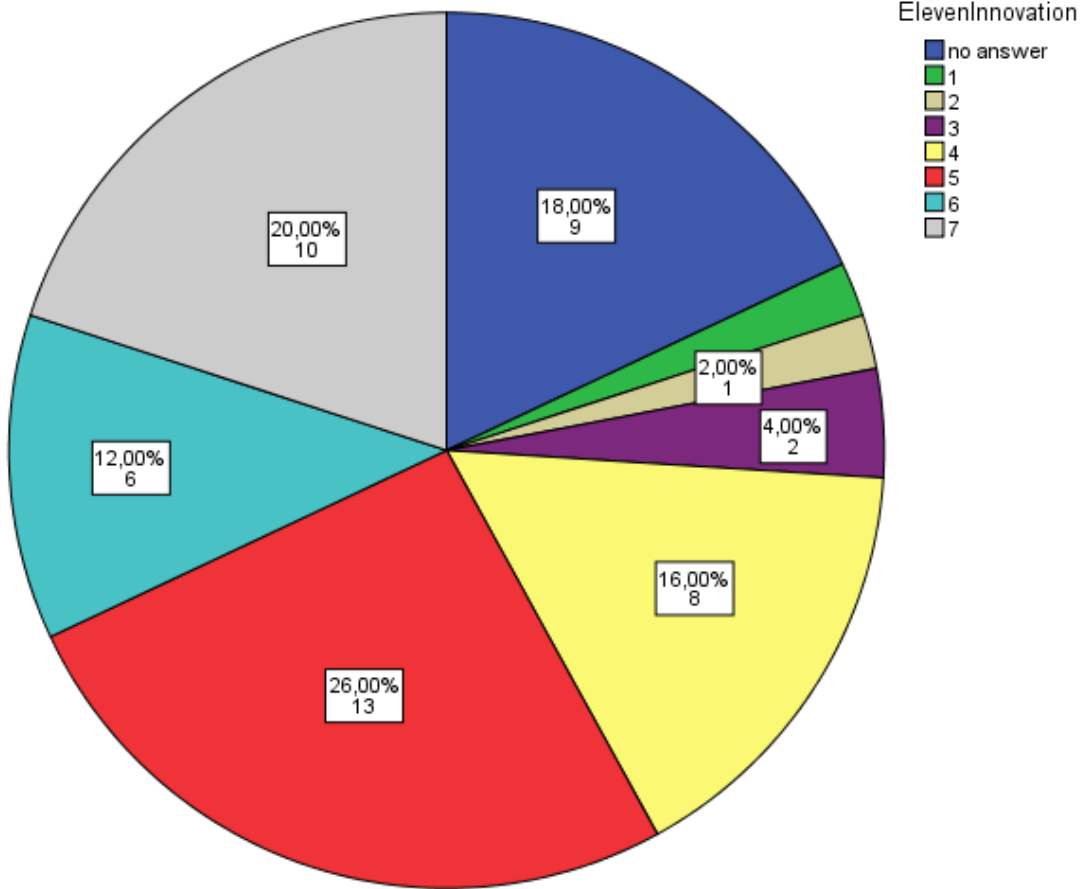
Swedish



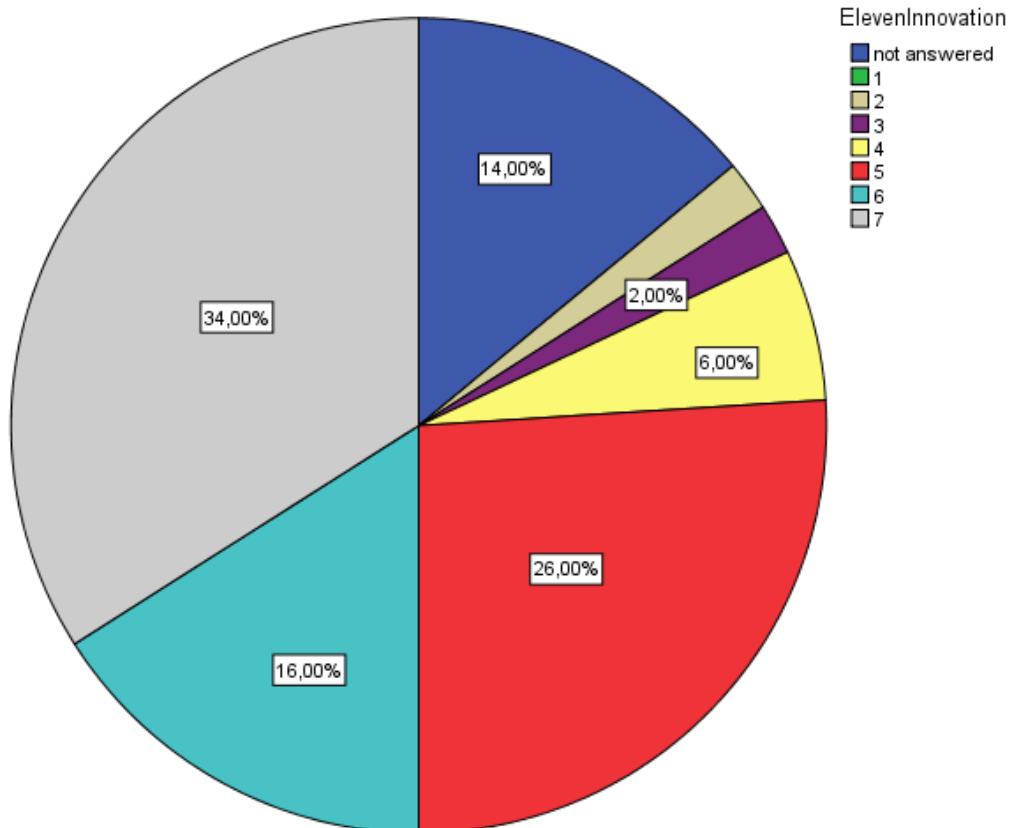
French



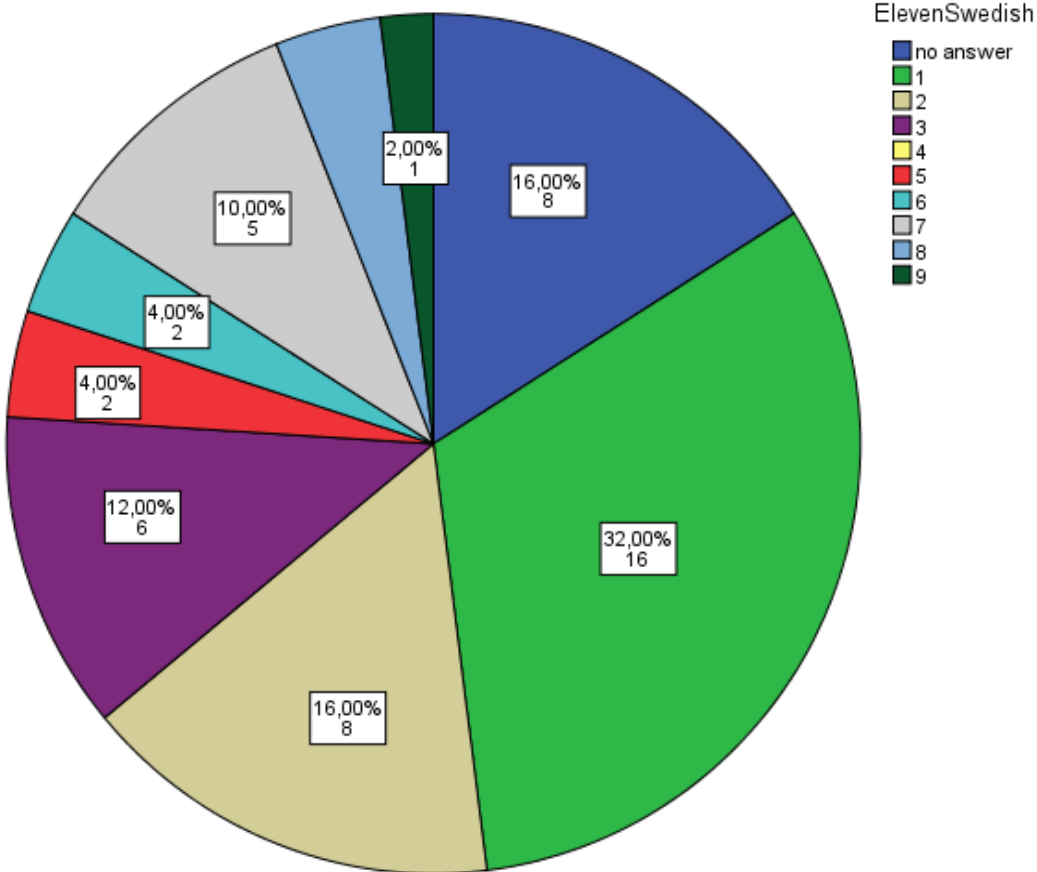
Swedish



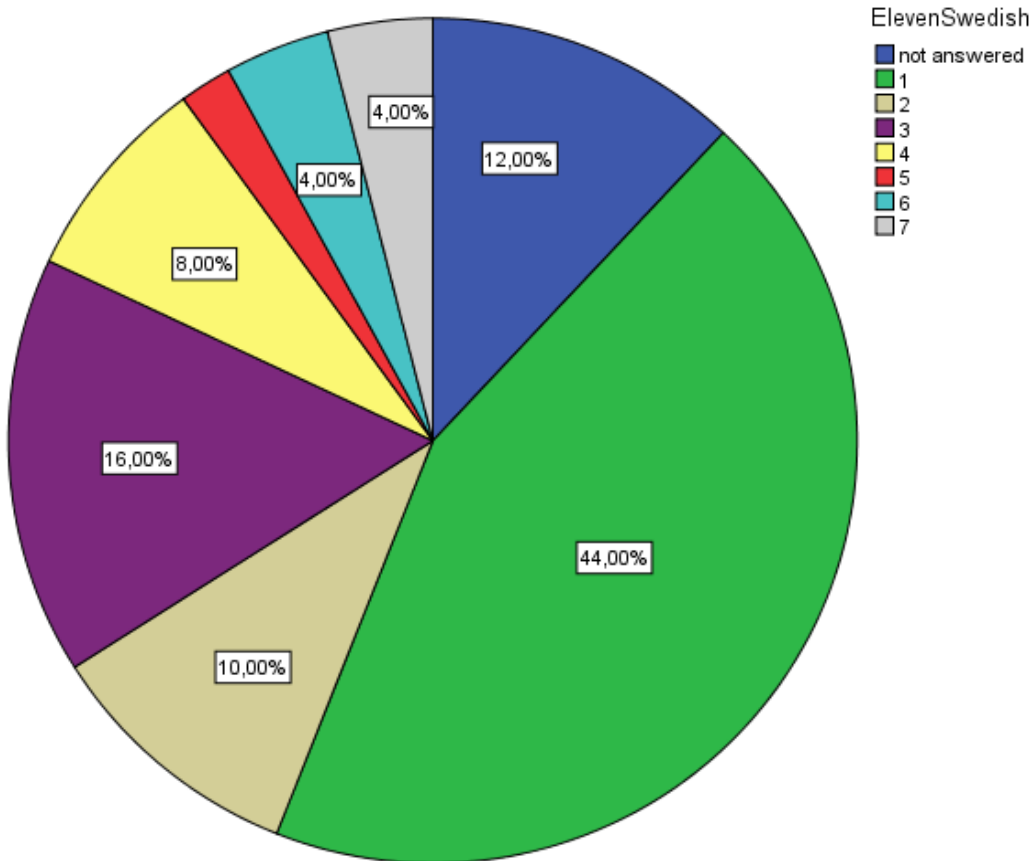
French



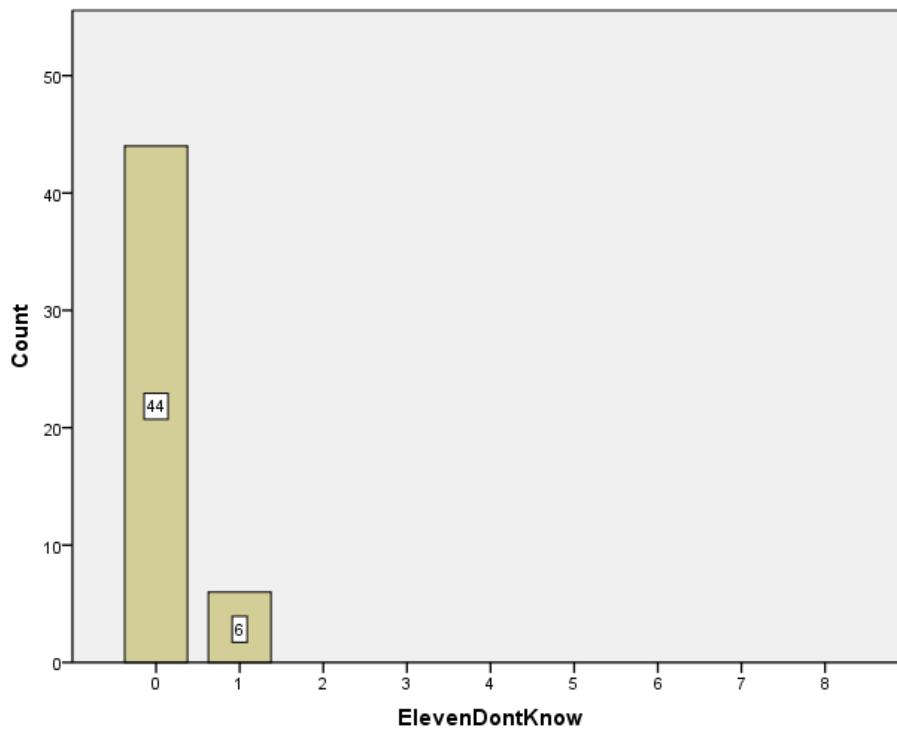
Swedish



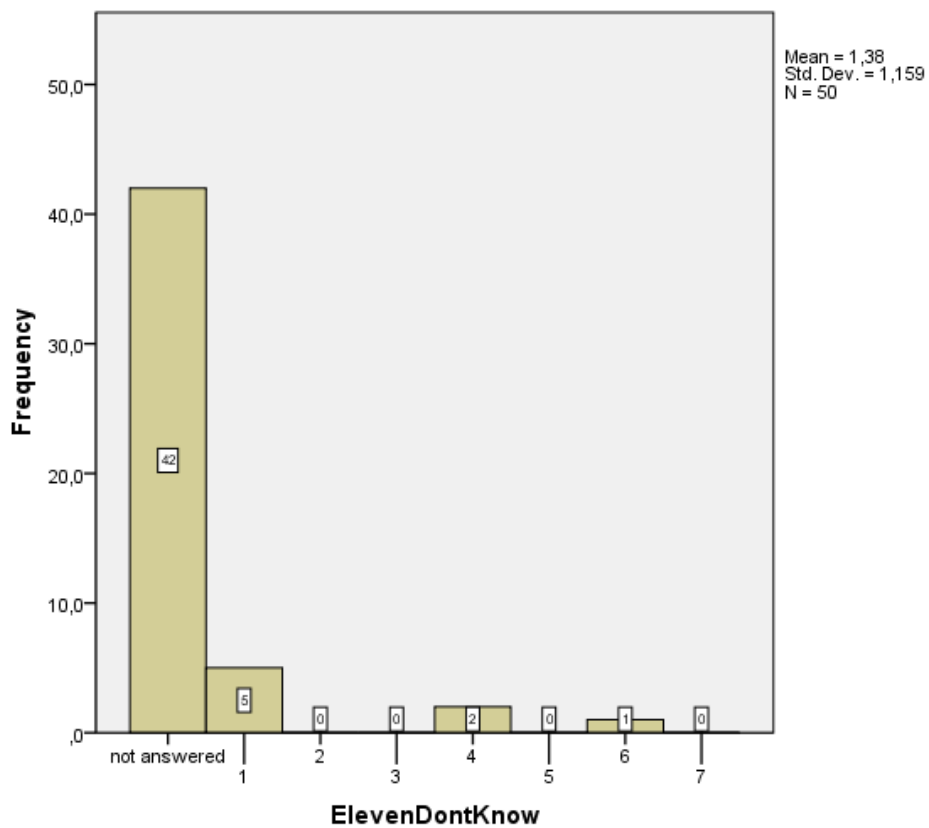
French



Swedish



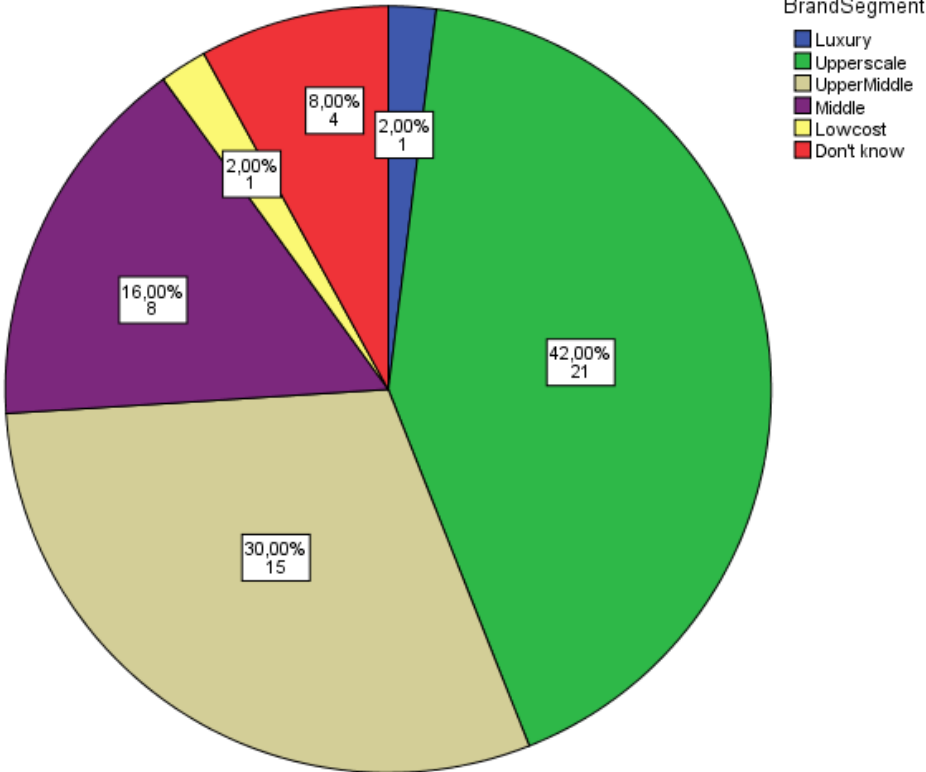
French



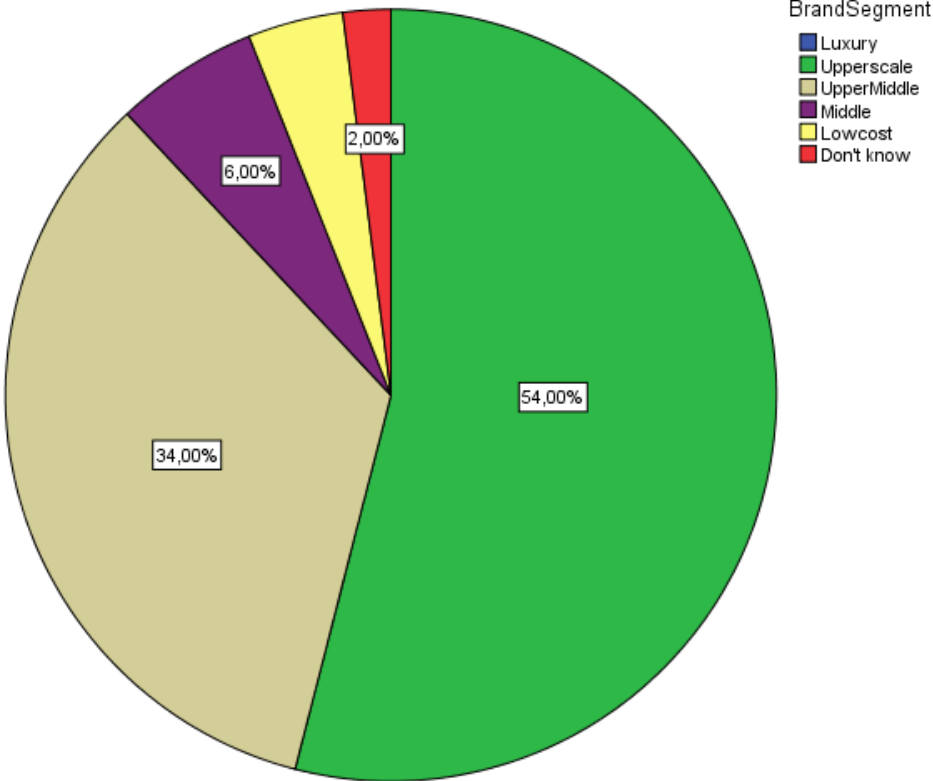
In these bar charts we can see that respectively 6 and 5 then 2 and 1 people did not know what to answer to this question 11.

Question 12: Perception of Volvo's market positioning

Swedish

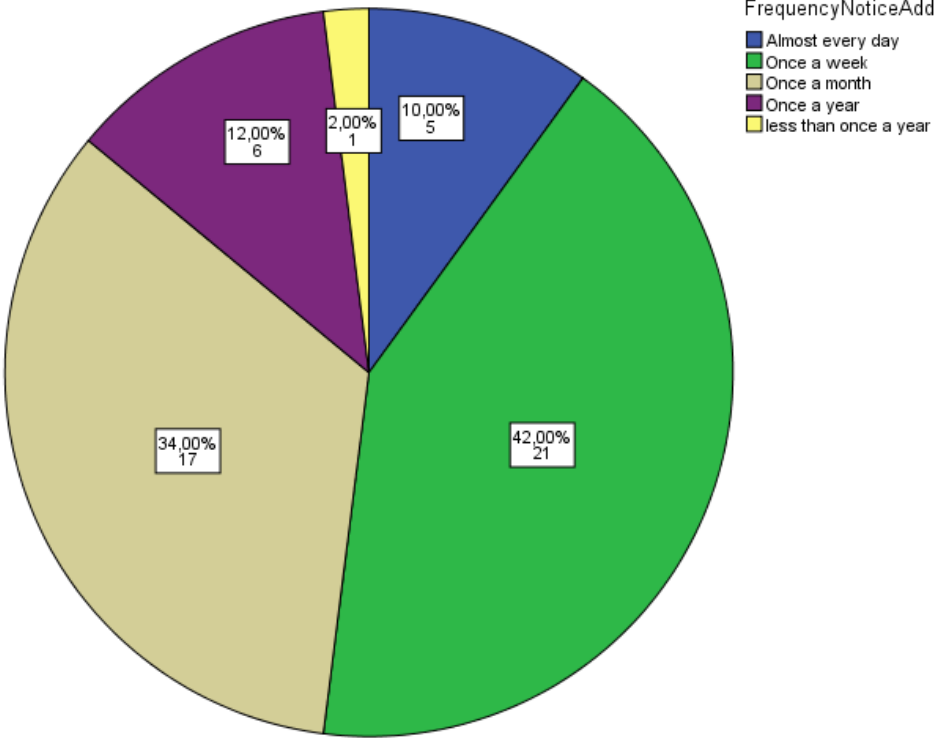


French



Question 14: Frequency of advertisement noticing

Swedish



French

