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A new marketing strategy for Bagaren och Kocken

A study of the Finnish market

Master's thesis in the Supply Chain Management Master's Programme

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Gothenburg, Sweden 2024

www.chalmers.se

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Abstract

Expanding into new international markets within the business to consumer (B2C) segment can be challenging for a foreign company. An international company must consider several aspects to ensure a successful business across all its markets. This thesis digs into the specific challenges encountered by Bagaren och Kocken, a Swedish e-commerce kitchenware company, on the Finnish market. Despite its successful operations in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, Bagaren och Kocken faces obstacles in Finland due to a lack of brand presence and understanding of the local market dynamics, including consumer preferences and behaviors. Therefore, the aim of this master's thesis is to map the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market and based on this develop a new marketing strategy on the Finnish market.

The research methodology comprises three key steps. Firstly, interviews were conducted with Bagaren och Kocken personnel to gain insights into their current operations in the Finnish market. Subsequently, an external situation analysis of the Finnish market was undertaken, where both interviews with industry experts and secondary data was gathered. Finally, integrating the findings from both internal and external analyses, a new marketing strategy was formulated for Bagaren och Kocken's Finnish operations. The strategy includes how the company should develop its position, current product offerings, pricing strategies, distribution channels, promotional activities, and management of customer relationships to cater to the specific needs, behaviors, and competition of the Finnish market.

Considering the company's existing ways of working, some adjustments are necessary to meet and exceed the Finnish customers' expectations. Firstly, the company should aim for a positioning strategy of differentiation in Finland. Secondly, the same product assortment as is offered today should be kept, only incorporating smaller changes, such as adding Miele and Jhula Mokka and increasing the product mix depth of deep-oven dishes and coffee related products. Thirdly, the company should continue to work with competitive-based pricing. Promotional pricing and special event pricing should also be used, however to a limited extent. Fourthly, it is recommended to ensure that all messages and advertisements are tailored towards the Finnish market and correctly written in Finnish. Moreover, social media marketing and email marketing should be incorporated. Opening up pop-up stores in Helsinki is also suggested. Fifthly, the company should keep offering the products online, and offer deliveries with PostNord and Posti. Fossil-free deliveries should also be added. Lastly, Finnish speaking customer service personnel should be hired and a loyalty program developed. It is also important to provide clear information on the website. By aligning strategies with Finnish consumer preferences, Bagaren och Kocken can seize opportunities for market expansion and enhanced sales.

Keywords: Finland, e-commerce, kitchenware, external situation analysis, marketing strategy

Acknowledgements

This master's thesis was conducted during the spring of 2024 at Chalmers University of Technology as the final part of the Supply Chain Management Programme. The thesis was conducted in collaboration with the company Bagaren och Kocken.

Throughout our master's thesis journey, we have been fortunate to work with and get help from a large number of people. Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to Charlotta Svarfvar, CEO at Bagaren och Kocken, for giving us the opportunity to write our thesis with such an inspiring company. Also, we are very grateful for the guidance throughout the project from our supervisors Armin Näsholm and Isac Karlsson at Bagaren och Kocken. Without your invaluable assistance, we would not have had access to relevant company information or interviews, which would have decreased the quality of our work. Secondly, a big thanks to all of our interview subjects who generously took time to help us by sharing valuable information and insights. Without you, we would not have been able to conduct the study. Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor at Chalmers University of Technology, Kajsa Hulthén. We have deeply appreciated all feedback and guidance during the spring as it has enabled us to put this thesis together.

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1. Introduction

The background section introduces the case company Bagaren och Kocken, along with the challenges the company currently faces on the Finnish market. Based on the background, the aim of the thesis is presented.

1.1 Background

The thesis is performed on behalf of the Swedish kitchenware company Bagaren och Kocken. The company operates in the business to consumer (B2C) sector and holds a market position as a category expert in the kitchenware market (Bagaren och Kocken, 2024a). The company is mainly an e-commerce company, except for one physical store in Gothenburg, Sweden. Via the company website, Bagaren och Kocken offers high-quality kitchen products from different premium brands with a focus on cooking, home decor and dining area. Since the year of 2005, the company has established its business in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. One of the company's focus areas is to strengthen its position on the Nordic markets.

As the company operates in different international markets, it must take multiple aspects into consideration to ensure successful business across all markets. According to Totonchi and Kakamanshadi (2012), e-commerce expansion into a new international market within the B2C segment can be challenging for a foreign company. Local companies' resources such as local distribution channels, service infrastructure, local knowledge and strong brand names may give local companies competitive advantages in their home markets (Totonchi and Kakamanshadi, 2012). Furthermore, cultural aspects must be taken into consideration when a company expands into a new country (Dalby et al., 2014). A company entering a new geographical market needs to understand how the different countries' cultures affect customer behaviors and preferences, in order to design a viable global marketing strategy (Kotler et al., 2017).

Today, Bagaren och Kocken experiences challenges on the Finnish market. Since entering the Finnish market in 2018, little to no effort has been put into increasing the company's presence in Finland. Comparing the different markets' revenue shares, the Finnish market represents the smallest (Bagaren och Kocken, 2024a). Furthermore, the company experiences a lack of knowledge of the Finnish kitchenware market, including customer preferences and behaviors. Therefore, the company wants to learn about the characteristics of the Finnish kitchenware market to provide a decision basis for the company's future strategy in the country.

1.2 Aim

When entering new international markets, multiple challenges occur as a company needs to adapt its strategy depending on local market conditions. Bagaren och Kocken is a company facing these challenges. Due to a lack of knowledge about the Finnish market, the company currently lacks an appropriate marketing strategy in Finland. Therefore, the aim of this master's

thesis is to map the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market and based on this develop a marketing strategy on the Finnish market.

2. Bagaren och Kocken in its context

To approach the aim and answer the research questions, it is of importance to understand the business and the industrial context of Bagaren och Kocken. To gain a broader understanding on how a company with similar resources can operate and succeed in the Finnish market, the sister company Outnorth has also been included as a mini-case study below. The information provided in the following sections is based on internal presentations and interviews with personnel¹ at Bagaren och Kocken and Outnorth².

2.1 Company background

Bagaren och Kocken is a kitchenware retailer founded in 2005. In 2007, the company's physical store opened in Gothenburg, Sweden. The company was family owned until 2014 when it was acquired by Egmont. Egmont is a Nordic media group working within business areas such as TV, magazines, film, books, games and e-commerce (Egmont, 2024a). Bagaren och Kocken is part of the e-commerce business area together with other online retail brands such as Outnorth, Jollyroom and RoyalDesign (Egmont, 2024b). According to the Strategy director at Egmont (personal communication, March 13, 2024), Egmont's core markets are Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Egmont's e-commerce companies can decide for themselves which market to enter and prioritize. Hence, Egmont is decentralized and the individual companies in Egmont's portfolio have their own decision power. Bagaren och Kocken's CEO³ pointed out that the connection to Egmont can bring beneficial synergies and advantages concerning centrally managed issues, such as, for example, supplier negotiations and legal resources.

In 2014, Bagaren och Kocken was acquired by Egmont and the company also expanded their business to Norway. In 2016, the expansion continued to Denmark, followed by Finland in 2018. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the sales increased more than expected, leading to an 87 % increase in revenue. In 2022, the company had a revenue of over 1 billion SEK. Over the years, the company has gone from being an entrepreneurial startup company to becoming a midsized Swedish retailer. Bagaren och Kocken's head office and warehouse are located in Gothenburg where the main part of the staff works. Additionally, the company still has their physical store in Gothenburg and four to five people working in Herning, Denmark with the Danish customer service. In Sweden and Norway, the company name is Bagaren och Kocken and Bakeren og Kokken, while in Finland and Denmark the name is KitchenOne. When comparing the revenue across the four different Nordic markets in 2023, Sweden has the significantly largest revenue share, followed by Norway and Denmark. In contrast, Finland contributes to the smallest share in revenue, notably smaller than all other markets. A goal for the company is to grow on the Finnish market, however not at all costs.

¹ The interviewees are only referred to as their titles. See Table 3 for more detailed interview information.

² Outnorth is a sister company to Bagaren och Kocken, both owned by Egmont.

³ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the CEO unless else is stated.

Bagaren och Kocken positions themselves as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware, focusing on cooking, home decor, and dining area. The company has a wide assortment, placing it in competition with businesses within three distinct industries: home electronics, home decor, and grills. Nevertheless, within each category, the company specializes in premium and high-quality products. With a diverse product catalog consisting of around 21 000 active items, divided into multiple assortment categories, it can offer premium, high-quality kitchenware in a one-stop shopping experience to their customers. This creates a competitive advantage in the market. Bagaren och Kocken mainly focuses on selling external brands, complemented by their own brand. However, their own brand stands for a small share of their total sales.

2.2 Customers

The CMO and Head of Sales⁴ explains that Bagaren och Kocken's customers generally are around 35 years and above. The customers are often households with high incomes, making them a financially robust target group. In the future, a trend can be seen where the age range broadens to include younger customers.

Bagaren och Kocken categorizes their target customers into three segments. These segments⁵ are based on personal characteristics, age, and income. The first segment is named "Chef-Knut", including self-taught experts and gadget enthusiasts. This group typically spans from 30 to 60 years old with mid to high-level income. The second segment, "Brand-Vanja", refers to individuals deeply interested in cooking, viewing it as a fundamental part of their identity. Customers in this segment range from ages 30 to 40 years, with mid-low to mid-level incomes. The final customer segment, "Everyday-Veronika", refers to individuals for whom food is important but is not an intense passion. Customers in this category fall within the 40 to 60 age range with a mid to high-level income.

2.3 Products

According to the CPO⁶, the company mainly sells external brands, but has recently introduced its own brand, however on a limited scale. The product assortment is categorized into different groups. These are small kitchen appliances, kitchen utensils, cookware and frying pans, knives, tableware, home decor, grills and large kitchen appliances. See Table 1 for examples of products within each group. Within the groups, the product assortment is continuously developed. A few examples of external brands are KitchenAid, Siemens, Smeg, Scanpan, Georg Jensen, Iittala, Electrolux, Lavazza, Caffè Mauro, Rörstrand, Bosch, Marimekko,

⁴ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the CMO and Head of Sales unless else is stated.

⁵ The segments have been translated from Swedish to English.

⁶ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the CPO unless else is stated.

Fiskars, Melitta, Moccamaster, Global, Arabia, and Weber (Bagare och Kocken, 2024b). Given the large number of brands, the company has around 200 suppliers.

Regarding product characteristics, quality is an important aspect of the products. The company is unable to live up to its category expert position without quality products. However, there are different levels of quality. The company views quality from the perspectives of product safety, product quality and responsible production. Product warranties comply with national regulations.

Table 1. Product examples based on product assortment on the company website

| Product groups | Product examples |
|--------------------------|---|
| Small kitchen appliances | Toasters, coffee brewers, waffle makers |
| Cookware and frying pans | Frying pans, pots, oven dishes |
| Tableware | Plates, glasses, cutlery |
| Knives | Kitchen knives |
| Kitchen utensils | Whisks, turners |
| Grills | Grills, outdoor cooking appliances |
| Large kitchen appliances | Fridges, freezers, ovens, stovetops |
| Home Decor | Vases, candles, lamps |

2.4 Distribution

According to the Head of Logistics⁷, Bagaren och Kocken offers different delivery options to its customers. The company collaborates with PostNord in Sweden, Finland and Denmark to deliver their products. The customers can also choose Budbee as a transport provider in Sweden. In Norway, Bring is used. The company offers delivery via pick-up point (service points and parcel lockers), home delivery, and office delivery. See Table 2 for information regarding delivery options in the different geographical markets. Additionally, the delivery options may vary within the different markets due to various geographical and cost aspects. For example, it is unfeasible for the company to offer delivery on pallets for grills to certain Norwegian postal codes due to the high delivery cost. According to internal company data, the company's delivery costs per order has over the last twelve months been lower for orders to Denmark and Sweden, compared to higher costs for orders to Finland and Norway. Regarding delivery time, Finland, Norway and Denmark all have a delivery time of one to four days. In Sweden, the company offers standard delivery within three days and faster express delivery

⁷ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the Head of Logistics unless else is stated.

within the regions south of the Swedish city Bollnäs. A vast majority of all customers get their products within two days, excluding the time period right after the “Black Friday” period. Based on Bagaren och Kocken’s local websites in the different markets, the company offers free delivery at different order values depending on the geographical market. In Sweden, free delivery is offered to orders with a total price above 499 SEK, while in Norway, Denmark, and Finland, the free delivery limits are at 599 NOK, 500 DKK, and 60 EUR respectively.

The company has around 21 000 ‘active’ products in the assortment. Three to four percent of the products are delivered via drop shipments, i.e. when a product is sent directly from the original supplier to the end-customer. In this case the product is never physically handled by Bagaren och Kocken. This mode of delivery is relevant for large products belonging to the large kitchen appliances category. The rest of the products are kept in the warehouse in Gothenburg. The company has a goal of having an inventory turnover rate of four times per year. At the warehouse, the incoming orders are packed using manual order picking combined with automated or manual packing. Each order is placed into a secondary packaging (a box) bearing the company’s names Bagaren och Kocken, Bakeren og Kokken, and KitchenOne. During the packaging process it is hard for the packing personnel to see which geographical market the parcel is directed to. Therefore, the company has chosen not to send anything extra with the orders to the customers, such as flyers. Furthermore, the company faces a challenge within the packing area, as the boxes often contain a large portion of excessive ‘air’. Today, only two different box sizes are used. Both of these fit into parcel lockers but mainly the larger sized lockers. As the transport providers’ parcel lockers mainly consist of smaller compartments within each parcel locker, this is an issue if Bagaren och Kocken wants to offer parcel lockers as a delivery option for their customers. Moreover, the company faces a challenge where approximately 0.5 % of all delivered orders display issues such as missing or damaged products.

Table 2. Transport providers and delivery options on the different geographical markets

| Geographical market | Transport providers | Delivery options |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Sweden | PostNord, Budbee | Pick-up point Pick-up point express Home delivery Office delivery Pick-up at warehouse |
| Finland | PostNord | Pick-up point Home delivery Office delivery |
| Denmark | PostNord | Pick-up point Home delivery Office delivery |
| Norway | Bring | Pick-up point Home delivery |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| | | Office delivery |
|--|--|-----------------|

2.5 Pricing

According to the Price and Business Analyst⁸, Bagaren och Kocken sells products ranging from around 20 SEK to almost 100 000 SEK. The company uses a pricing tool to price the products. The pricing tool can behave differently based on predetermined factors such as profit margins and competitor prices. Regarding pricing, the company works daily on its pricing to ensure that each product is priced correctly. The margins are important to consider when setting the prices. The different sales volumes are also important to keep track of in order to detect different sales patterns. The Price and Business Analyst's role is to ensure suitable price strategies and evaluate how the pricing can be ameliorated and adapted. The products can be categorized into several different groups, each with a specific pricing strategy.

The pricing process of Bagaren och Kocken's products is as follows. The pricing tool gathers data from the company's own ERP-system for information regarding costs, prices and campaigns of the products. The pricing tool then fetches data from competitors online by matching Bagaren och Kocken's products with those of competitors. Depending on which pricing strategy the product has, the company has set predetermined rules. The tool then compares these predetermined rules with the relevant competitors' prices and sets a price for the products at Bagaren och Kocken. The setup of the pricing process looks the same regardless of which pricing strategy the product follows. However, the rules and demands within each strategy differ.

2.6 Marketing communication

According to the CMO and Head of Sales⁹, the marketing communication strategy strongly prioritizes communicating Bagaren och Kocken's vision to customers, which is "We help you succeed in the Kitchen". The company's goal is to position itself as an expert for the customers, serving as a kitchen one-stop shop enriched with inspiring content. The goal is to be a trendsetter, boost the customers image and create memories in the kitchen. Today, Bagaren och Kocken engages with their customers through diverse marketing communication channels. To ensure effective communication across all markets, the company uses local freelancers to translate information into Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish.

Bagaren och Kocken uses social media, primarily in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are used to reach out to customers. Instagram, being their main social media channel, is used for engaging stories, reels, and live-streaming sessions.

⁸ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the Price and Business Analyst unless else is stated.

⁹ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the CMO and Head of Sales unless else is stated.

The live-streams serve as a way for Bagaren och Kocken to inspire customers, sustain engagement, and enhance their position as kitchen experts. Collaborations with influencers are a key aspect of their strategy, emphasizing the importance of associating with trustworthy individuals rather than just famous influencers. Certain influencers serve as ambassadors, involving deeper relationships and restrictions against working with competitors. YouTube is another channel Bagaren och Kocken uses. YouTube has the advantage of targeting specific demographics and interests. However, the marketing team needs to create new content specifically for YouTube which requires additional resources.

In addition, Bagaren och Kocken uses Google paid advertising, constituting almost half of the website traffic. The heavy dependence on Google as well as the high costs makes the company vulnerable. Therefore, Bagaren och Kocken tries to identify alternative marketing communication channels to attract potential customers. The marketing team consistently considers search engine optimization (SEO) when crafting text, images, and videos. This approach ensures visibility in the search field without incurring costs. The position in the search results is determined by the frequency of the clicks on the link.

TV commercials are mostly used together with marketing packages or during the Christmas season. By investing in a marketing package, both a supplier and Bagaren och Kocken jointly contribute to the expenses of a marketing campaign. In the campaign, the supplier is featured in Bagaren och Kocken's commercials. Depending on the type of marketing package, the size of the investment and the extent of commercial channels featuring the supplier differ. Moreover, by leveraging Egmont's resources, Bagaren och Kocken features in magazines primarily in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. However, the absence of relevant Egmont magazines in Finland hinders the utilization of such resources in that market. Bagaren och Kocken also works with different campaigns. In Finland, the focus primarily revolves around price campaigns, whereas in other markets, Bagaren och Kocken additionally engages in inspirational, informational, and branding campaigns. Email is a marketing communication channel used to reach customers in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, providing information on offerings, inspiration, and knowledge about the products. Bagaren och Kocken also uses SMS on the same three markets mentioned above to boost campaigns and rebuys.

2.7 Customer service

According to the Team Leader Customer Service in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland¹⁰, Bagaren och Kocken offers customer service via email and phone. Emails are answered during the weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm. Phone calls are also answered during the weekdays, but between 9 am and 5 pm. However, during busy periods between October and December, the hours are prolonged. The customer service personnel get all types of questions. These can range from helping a customer to choose a product or compare multiple products, to products which

¹⁰ All information in the following sections is based on the interview with the Team Leader Customer Service (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland) unless else is stated.

have been damaged during transport, returns, or which products that are available in stock. It is of high importance for customer service staff to be knowledgeable of the company's extensive product range as the company highly values helping their customers and aims to create a safe environment for them to shop in. Their expert knowledge leads to increased sales, so it is of importance for the company to keep the personnel up to date and well informed.

The company has one team responsible for the customer service in Sweden, Norway, and Finland. The Danish market is handled by the local team in Denmark. Today, the company offers customer service in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and English. Currently they do not offer customer service in Finnish. For Finnish speaking customers, Swedish or English is used. This is a problem due to a low level of knowledge of English and Swedish among their Finnish customers. If an email is in Finnish, the company uses a translator program to understand the customer's needs. The language barrier makes it harder for the company to offer the same level of service to their Finnish customers compared to the other markets. Regarding questions across the markets, there is no perceived significant difference regarding types of questions between geographical markets. Some products are more frequently asked about within certain markets, but nothing noteworthy regarding Finland due to the limited customer engagement with these customers.

2.8 The sister company Outnorth's operations

Based on interviews with the Performance market manager and Market specialist at Outnorth¹¹ seen in Table 4, Outnorth mainly sells outdoor and training products to customers who are between 30 and 50 years old and want to perform outdoor activities. The company offers a wide assortment of products from multiple different brands. Due to the company's focus on high quality products, Outnorth does not usually offer the cheapest prices. The customers can buy the company's products online via regional websites in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Germany. Outnorth combines the regional websites with an international website for the rest of the world and two physical stores in Sweden. Regarding customer service, the company offers service via email and telephone in Swedish, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian, German, and English. The customer service personnel have extensive experience and good product knowledge which enables personalized customer service. Sweden is Outnorth's largest market and Finland is the smallest based on sales. However, the Finnish market is not significantly smaller compared to the other markets. Finland is relatively small primarily due to its smaller population compared to the other countries that the company operates in. In the future, Outnorth foresees Finland as a growing market for the company.

Focusing on the Finnish market, customers from Finland commonly ask questions regarding the return process when contacting the customer service. The company offers deliveries in Finland via PostNord and Budbee and the delivery options are pick-up points and home

¹¹ All information in the following sections is based on the interviews with the Performance market manager and Market specialist at Outnorth unless else is stated.

delivery. Today, Outnorth offers free deliveries for purchases above 99 EUR in Finland and above 499 SEK in Sweden. Google, Facebook, Instagram, and price comparing sites are used for advertising in Finland, where Google is the marketing communication channel which gives the highest result regarding sales and visits on the website. Facebook is seen as useful in Finland as it enables the company to work in Finnish and adjust the marketing directly towards the Finnish market. It is also perceived that social media is effective in Finland, suggesting that investing in it could be beneficial for a company aiming to expand its presence on the Finnish market.

Outnorth has many returning customers on the Finnish market. Reasons for this trend are fast deliveries, Finnish and Finnish speaking customer service personnel, a wide assortment, and suitable price levels. Investments in Finnish speaking customer service personnel has likely contributed to the company's growth in Finland over the last few years as Finnish customers appreciate being served in the Finnish language. Since Finnish customers tend to be relatively patriotic they expect the company to provide customer service in Finnish if the company's website is in Finnish. Furthermore, Finland is a suitable market to sell outdoor products in as the country's population appreciates being outdoors. Moreover, Outnorth has invested more into marketing communication channels compared to previous years which may also be a reason for the company's growth in Finland. Over the last few years, the company has developed newsletters, social media marketing and digital marketing towards the Finnish customers. Also, the company has worked with the timing of the marketing campaigns. For example, when the running season has started in other Nordic countries due to the warmer weather, people in Finland have still been skiing due to the colder conditions. Therefore, it has been important to delay some of the spring campaigns in Finland to align with the seasonal activities within the country. Furthermore, the website has been improved which could potentially explain the success in Finland. The Finnish language regarding returns and purchase conditions has been improved and the information on the website has been clarified. As mentioned, the language is important for the Finnish customers and if it is incorrect the customers will become suspicious. Moreover, Finnish customers appreciate fast deliveries. It is also important that the delivery information is clear on the website for the customer to get the right expectations. Today, Outnorth uses a combination of the transport providers PostNord and Budbee in Finland. Previously, the company used Bring and Posti. At the time, Bring transported the parcels from the company's warehouse in Sweden to Posti in Finland, who then transported the parcels to the end-customers. This set-up was not smooth and it was not an alternative to only use Posti due to their high prices. Using Posti may however be beneficial in Finland as the transport provider is the largest transport provider and it offers return codes which enables easy returns for the end-customers.

Regarding customer preferences, the interviewees both identified that Finnish customers appreciate Finnish brands. To demonstrate Outnorth's commitment to the Finnish customers, the company has previously done a marketing campaign on Finnish brands around the occasion of the country's Independence Day. Furthermore, the Finnish customers are price sensitive and commonly buy the cheapest alternatives. High-quality brands are also appreciated. Also,

Finnish customers are critical when purchasing products. The customers carefully consider different alternatives and compare different deals to find the best one.

3. Analytical framework and research questions

To understand a market and formulate an effective local marketing strategy, it is important to conduct an external situation analysis (Hayes et al., 1996). This analysis (see Section 3.1) serves as the initial theoretical model given in the analytical framework in Figure 1. Kotler et al. (2017) also emphasize the importance of understanding the marketing environment. This knowledge helps the company to understand the actors and forces that affect its ability to create and maintain successful relationships with target customers. Hayes et al. (1996) highlight six important factors to consider when describing the context in which the marketing strategy is developed: customers, the market size, industry dynamics, the nature of distribution channels, the product life cycle stages, and the environmental climate which can influence the firm's situation. However, due to Bagaren och Kocken's wide product assortment and the company's priorities of understanding the Finnish kitchenware market from a customer, distribution, industry and market, and environmental perspective, the different product life cycle stages of the products has been excluded from the model.

Moreover, Kotler et al. (2017) describe that once the company has understood the market, it should formulate a marketing strategy. The authors define a marketing strategy as the way by which a company creates profitable and successful customer relationships and customer value. This involves understanding the customers and devising strategies to effectively serve and satisfy their needs. The marketing strategy (see Section 3.2) serves as the second theoretical model given in the analytical framework in Figure 1. Companies operating in multiple countries should evaluate whether marketing strategies should be adapted to local markets or standardized globally. Depending on the local context the company has to decide its competitive positioning strategy in the local market. The positioning strategy alternatives are cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. Then, the next step is to potentially adapt the products, prices, promotions, and places, also called the marketing mix (or the 4Ps), to the local market. This includes considering differences in demand, product preferences, spending power, and shopping pattern across countries. The 4 Ps can be used to influence the demand for the company's products in the target market. Moreover, modern marketing emphasizes the significance of managing customer relationships (Kotler et al., 2017). Hence, to provide a solid basis for decision making for Bagaren och Kocken, Customer relationships has been added as a fifth marketing mix element. The company's internal operations and strategies combined with the first theoretical model will provide a basis for decision regarding the company's marketing strategy in Finland.

Based on the two theoretical models, an analytical framework is developed and presented by the end of this chapter, together with the research questions.

3.1 External situation model

The following sections describe Hayes et al.'s (1996) external situation model, consisting of Environmental climate, Customer, Distribution, and Market and industry. Based on the framework, the first research question is formulated and further divided into sub questions.

3.1.1 Environmental climate

In the external situation model outlined by Hayes et al. (1996), the concept of environmental climate refers to external events influencing both customer and competitor behaviors. Kotler et al. (2017) characterize this notion as the company's macroenvironment which involves different factors. Demographics is an important factor that encompasses looking at various aspects of the human population such as size, location, gender, and age. The importance of demographics lies in its direct connection to the people, and it is the people that are the driving force of the market. For instance, geographic migrations, from rural to urban areas, exemplify how population dynamics influence consumer preferences and purchasing patterns. Another important factor to consider is the economic environment that can significantly impact consumer behavior and purchasing power. Disparities in income levels and distribution across countries can be important to look at when determining market value and attractiveness. Notably, economic fluctuations and shifts in global economic power dynamics can influence industrial sectors and consumer spending habits. Understanding how economic conditions shape consumer decisions is needed to formulate effective marketing strategies, particularly during economic downturns where budget retailers often see increased business. Kotler et al. (2016) highlight that consideration of the ecological environment is crucial, given the growing concerns over environmental sustainability. Lastly, the cultural environment entails institutions and societal forces that shape values, preferences, and behaviors among individuals. Understanding these cultural dynamics is fundamental for tailoring marketing strategies that effectively resonate with target customers.

3.1.2 Customer

When it comes to customers, Hayes et al. (1996) emphasize the importance of understanding the customers' purchasing decisions and buying behaviors in the market. According to Kotler et al. (2017), customers are the most important actors to consider for a company when considering its environment. It is crucial to engage and create strong relationships with customers.

According to Kotler et al. (2016), there are several characteristics influencing consumer buyer behavior. The authors mention that cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors are key factors influencing buying behaviors. A person's wants and behaviors are greatly influenced by their culture. Subcultures such as nationalities, religions and geographic regions often share the same value system as they have similar life experience. These subcultures could work as

market segments that are important to understand when designing marketing strategies. A consumer's behavior is also influenced by social factors such as social networks, families, and status. Additionally, personal characteristics such as age, economic situation and lifestyles can influence. A consumer's lifestyle can involve looking at consumers' activities and interest in for example food or fashion. Consumers do not just purchase products, they invest in products that reflect their values and lifestyles. Therefore, analyzing consumer lifestyles can provide marketers with insights into consumer values and how they influence consumer behaviors. Lastly, psychological factors such as motivation, perception, learning, and attitudes influence buying behavior.

According to Kotler et al. (2016), consumers undergo a decision process including several steps when making a purchase. The first step is need recognition, in which the consumer identifies a problem or need that could be satisfied by a product or service. When the need is recognized, the information search stage begins, where consumers gather information from various sources such as commercial, public, and personal sources. Personal sources, including friends and family, are among the most effective sources for obtaining product information. Increasingly, consumers read reviews and discuss with other buyers online before making a purchase. In the next step, consumers move into the alternative evaluation stage, where they assess different brands or products. They then make a purchase decision, followed by post-purchase decision behavior, where actions are taken based on satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Customer satisfaction depends on the relationship between the consumer's expectations and the product's perceived performance. Therefore, companies should only promise what their offerings can deliver to ensure customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is key for building profitable relationships with consumers, as satisfied customers are likely to repurchase products and recommend them to others. Conversely, dissatisfied customers can spread bad word-of-mouth, damaging a company's reputation. Companies should regularly measure customer satisfaction and set up systems to encourage customer feedback to identify areas for improvement.

3.1.3 Distribution

Kotler et al. (2016) describe that companies usually use different intermediaries to ensure that their products reach the market and end-customers. This entails creating a distribution channel where independent organizations help the company reach the consumer by making the product available for consumption or use. The members of the channel add value by bridging gaps of place, time and possession which otherwise creates issues for the end-customers who want the goods. One type of channel member is the retailer. The retailer commonly engages in retailing, which includes the direct sales of products to the final customer for their personal use, along with related activities. For retailers to succeed, the location of the store needs to be adapted to reach the target market. According to Kotler et al. (2017), many consumers go to a physical retail store to buy their products. However, online retailing via digital websites and mobile apps is an alternative which has been growing faster than physical store retailing over the last years. Based on the definition of e-commerce by Babenko et al. (2019), online retailing is a form of e-commerce. The definition is the purchase and sales of services and goods over the Internet, leading to financial transactions when money transfers are made.

Kotler et al. (2017) describe the importance of analyzing the consumer needs in the market regarding for example how consumers buy products. According to Hayes et al. (1996), it is also important to understand the established distribution structure on the market, e.g. the type of distribution channels and availability of various kinds of intermediaries. One of many key functions of distribution channel members is to transport and store the goods via physical distribution. According to Kotler et al. (2016), companies need to decide how they should store, move and handle their goods in order to ensure that the right assortment of products reach the customers at the right place and time. If the logistics are efficient, it can ameliorate the company's competitiveness and profitability by generating lower company costs and higher customer satisfaction. Therefore, one important choice that each company has to make is the choice of supplier of transport services. The transport provider has a direct effect on the customer satisfaction as it affects the delivery performance, the price of the products and in what conditions the goods are delivered in. According to DHL (2023), delivery time and delivery cost also influences the customer satisfaction level. Additionally, Bring (n.d.) mentions the level of sustainable transport provided by the transport provider also influences the customer's satisfaction. Kotler et al. (2017) also mention the importance of identifying which major alternatives the company can choose from regarding number and types of intermediaries, including transport providers.

According to Lim et al. (2018), the last part of a parcel delivery service from a business to a consumer is called last-mile logistics. The last-mile logistics takes place from the point where the customers' have the ordered products uniquely assigned to them, to the final point of destination of the customer's choice. According to Lagorio and Pinto (2020), the rapid growth of e-commerce is a reason for last years' developments and changes regarding last-mile deliveries. Two alternative last mile delivery options are the use of pick-up points and parcel lockers. At the pick-up points, the customers can go to retrieve their goods from attended shops that are used as delivery points. The parcel lockers are unattended delivery points in the form of lockers where the customers can retrieve their goods, that are stored for a limited amount of time, via a reference code that is connected to the order. A third last-mile delivery option is home delivery, where the goods are delivered directly to the customer's home, often requiring the customer to be at home to receive the goods.

3.1.4 Market and industry

Hayes et al. (1996) suggest that the marketing strategy needs to consider the characteristics of the industry and market in which the company operates. According to Kotler et al. (2017), the consumer market refers to a market where individuals buy goods or services and use it for personal consumption. In an international market context, consumers are located in other countries. Today, it is important for companies to expand their focus beyond domestic markets, as many industries operate on a global scale. Firms seek a global presence to enhance brand awareness and recognition. The characteristics of an industry include being aware of current trends. According to the Queensland Government (2022), it is important to identify and analyze market trends for the company to adapt and change the business to keep up with and ahead of

the industry. That way, the company can continue to grow in the future. Furthermore, Freedman (2023) highlights the importance of investigating the market's projected growth when understanding a market.

Moreover, Hayes et al. (1996) mention the importance of understanding the overall size of the market in which the marketing plan is to be implemented. According to Shaw (n.d.), a market's size plays an important role in guiding a company's assessment of its potential. By understanding the market potential, the company can gain insight into how pricing and marketing strategies should be formulated, as well as campaigns and distribution channels. The market size can be determined by assessing the total revenue generated by the specific market in one year.

According to Kotler et al. (2017), it is also important for the company to understand its competitors and their offerings on the market. A first step is to identify the company's competitors. One definition that can be used for competitors is businesses that provide the same products or types of products. This definition is broad and leads to inclusion of companies who offer the same, or similar, products as the company, but at different price ranges and to different customers. Once the competitors have been identified, they can be sorted into groups in order for the company to better understand the different competitors' strategies. These groups are defined as categories of businesses in an industry where each category's businesses have similar strategies. One important aspect of the strategies is the type and width of product assortment.

3.1.5 Research question 1

Based on the aim and the external situation model, the following research question will be answered.

RQ1: What characterizes the e-commerce and kitchenware market in Finland?

In order to answer RQ1, the question has been divided into the following sub-questions.

Environmental climate

- What characterizes the environmental climate?

Customer

- What characterizes the food culture?
- What are the customers' buying behaviors?
- How do customers engage with different marketing communication channels?

Distribution

- To what extent and for what reasons are products purchased online rather than through physical retail stores?
- Which last-mile options are preferred?

- What potential transport service providers can be identified?

Market and industry

- What industry trends can be identified within e-commerce?
- What are the main characteristics and trends of the kitchenware market?
- What main competitors can be identified and what assortment do they focus on?

3.2 Marketing strategy model

The following sections describe the second part of the analytical framework, the marketing strategy model, consisting of Positioning, Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and Customer relationship. Based on the model, the second research question is formulated and further divided into sub questions.

3.2.1 Positioning

Kotler et al. (2017) mention different positioning strategies which a company can choose from in a market. The first one is overall cost leadership, where the company focuses on cutting distribution and production costs to offer lower prices to the customers compared to its competitors. That way, a company with an overall cost leadership strategy can win market shares when customers choose their products due to the affordable offers. The second positioning strategy is called differentiation. With differentiation, the company offers unique propositions, including differentiated products and marketing plans, to create a position as the frontrunner on the market. Given that the price is not too high, but still within a premium range, many customers would appreciate owning products from this brand. The last positioning strategy is focus, where the company only serves a smaller part of the market and targets its efforts on only this limited market. According to the University of Cambridge (n.d.), the focus strategy can be combined with either a cost leadership strategy or differentiation, within the specific niche market.

According to Kotler et al. (2017), it is important for companies to pursue a clear positioning strategy as it offers the best opportunity to make the most profits. Without following a clear strategy, and instead attempting to excel in all strategic areas, the company may end up not being good at anything and thereby lose customers to competitors.

3.2.2 Product

According to Kotler et al. (2016), product entails the combination of goods and services offered to target customers. Product involves factors such as variety, quality, design, feature, brand name, and packaging. According to Kotler et al. (2017), quality is the attributes of a service or product that impacts its capacity to satisfy buyer needs. One dimension of quality is performance quality, which refers to the product's capacity to fulfill its intended functions. This dimension includes for example how long the product can last. Customer value and satisfaction is directly linked to quality, as it can enhance or diminish product and service performance.

Kotler et al. (2017) describe that a company's product mix consists of several different product lines. A product line includes items closely associated with each other due to similar functionality, price ranges, distribution channels, and/or target customer groups. According to CFI (n.d.), a product line may consist of multiple sub-product lines. The products within a sub-product line are then even closer associated with each other. Kotler et al. (2017) mention that the product mix has a dimension of width, referring to the company's number of product lines. The length of the product mix is a second dimension which describes how many products the company sells to its customers within each product line. Additionally, the number of varieties that the company offers for every product in each product line refers to the product mix depth. The company's product line can be expanded either by product line filling or by product line stretching. Product line filling entails incorporating more products within the current extent of the line. This alternative may be beneficial to become more resilient towards economic fluctuations. Product line stretching means stretching the current product line by adding lower-end or higher-end products, or both, to the product line. That way, the company may be able to cover larger parts of the market.

Moreover, according to Kotler et al. (2017), managing and building product brands is an important skill for a company to have. A brand serves as a representation of the seller or producer of a product, utilizing a symbol, a design, a term, or a name or a mix of these elements. The brand is a significant aspect of the product from the customer's perspective. Depending on which country an international company operates in, its products and brands are usually adapted to the local markets.

Lastly, Kotler et al. (2017) discuss various strategies which an international company can use to adapt its products to a global market. A company could opt for a straight product extension, where no changes are made to the products, as an initial approach to assess the acceptance of the product among foreign consumers. As this strategy entails no product changes, it does not create new costs for the company in terms of new promotion, or product development. One potential drawback with this approach is that the company fails to meet their customers' demands across the different global markets. Alternatively, the company could adapt the product to local requirements or create something entirely new for the foreign market.

3.2.3 Price

Kotler et al. (2017) define price as the amount of money a customer needs to pay for the product. According to Kotler et al. (2016), the price involves factors such as the listing price, discounts, allowances, and payment terms. Kotler et al. (2017) describe that a company can use competition-based pricing to price their products. Competition-based pricing entails taking competitors' prices, costs, strategies, and marketing offerings into account when setting prices. This pricing strategy is based on the assumption that the consumers' perceived value of a product is based on competitors' prices for similar products. When determining prices, the company should evaluate whether the customers regard their products or services as having higher value compared to those of competitors. If this is the case, the company can charge

higher prices compared to the competitors. The company needs to ensure that the customers perceive a superior value for the product or service compared to what they pay, no matter the price they pay.

Kotler et al. (2017) mention multiple external factors which a company needs to take into consideration when setting its pricing strategy. These include the company's suppliers, the local government, and social concerns. Additionally, the economic conditions are an external aspect that will affect the company's pricing strategy. Consumer spending and the company's production costs are affected by factors such as inflation, recession, and interest rates. After a recession, multiple consumers become more value conscious and price sensitive. A company can meet these demands by offering discounts and cutting prices. When products are temporarily priced below their original listing price it is called promotional pricing. Promotional pricing is used to make consumers excited to buy products and create a sense of urgency. Discounts are a promotional pricing tool where a company can increase its sales in the short-term perspective and reduce its inventories. Special-event pricing is an alternative tool used during a certain season, such as TV commercials at Christmas, to attract buyers. However, in the long run, lower prices inflict lower margins and may cheapen the brand image. It is therefore important for a company not to overuse promotional pricing tools but develop long-term strategies which can endure tough economic times as well. An alternative to promotional pricing is for the company to adapt their product mix by adding cheaper product lines. Nevertheless, price is not the only factor that consumers take into consideration when buying products and services, even when the economic times are tough. Therefore, it is important to focus on the value which the consumer receives when purchasing a product or service, such as convenience and technical support.

Kotler et al. (2017) also mention that international companies must take a decision regarding the product prices in different countries. One alternative is to set the same price for all markets. However, it is more common to adjust the prices depending on the local markets' conditions. Multiple considerations should be taken into consideration when setting the local prices, such as the economic conditions, customer preferences and perceptions, and the competitive situation, to ensure a successful global and local pricing strategy. When establishing international prices for products, companies must also consider additional costs such as transportation, tariffs, and importer margins. The additional expenses might result in the need to establish a higher price for international markets. However, in today's digital age, making global price differences will be more obvious and forcing companies into a more standardized international pricing.

3.2.4 Promotion

Kotler et al. (2016) refer to promotion as activities involving communicating the product quality and convincing customers to buy the product. The marketing communication mix includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct and digital marketing. It is important for companies to adopt an integrated marketing communications approach, where the different communication channels are integrated and coordinated to deliver a clear and

consistent message to customers. This entails recognizing and ensuring that each interaction the customer has with the company consistently delivers a positive message.

According to Kotler et al. (2017), advertising involves the use of paid means to non-personally present and promote ideas, products, or services. This could be facilitated through mediums such as broadcast, print or online advertisements (ads). When developing an advertising strategy, the initial step involves creating the message. Here, companies can identify customer benefits to shape the right message, followed by creating a creative concept to ensure the ad is distinctive and memorable. The second step in the advertising strategy is to select the appropriate media considering factors such as each medium's impact, message effectiveness, and costs. Companies can do both pre- and post-evaluations of the communication effects. Before placing an ad, a preview with a sample audience can be done to ensure the message is effectively communicated. After the ad runs, the company can measure its impact on consumer recall, product awareness, and preferences.

Kotler et al. (2017) introduce sales promotion as a marketing communication channel which involves short-term incentives to encourage purchase of a product. While offering significant promotional discounts may seem tempting to boost sales, it is crucial for companies to design sales promotion tools effectively. Consumer promotions can entail various strategies aimed at incentivizing purchases. One example is price packs, offering savings off the regular price, which can be applied to related products such as a toothbrush and toothpaste bundle. Premiums are another tactic, providing products for free or at a reduced price to enhance the incentive to buy a product. Lastly, another approach is to arrange contests, offering customers the opportunity to win prizes.

Kotler et al. (2017) also mention direct and digital marketing, which entails engaging directly with targeted individual customers or customer communities to build strong relationships. This approach involves media such as websites, email, and social media marketing, enabling companies to interact with consumers anytime, anywhere, through the customer's digital devices. A first step in online marketing is establishing a user-friendly website to facilitate purchases. To attract customers to the website, companies can promote it through advertisements and links on other platforms. An effective website provides comprehensive information, is easy to navigate, and visually appealing. It can also be useful to consider online advertisements such as display ads and search-related ads on platforms like Google or Yahoo, to boost sales on products and attract customers. Email-marketing is another important tool, enabling companies to send targeted and personalized messages to customers. However, the challenge lies in avoiding spam and finding a balance between adding value to customers and being intrusive with the emails sent. Furthermore, social media marketing has emerged as a powerful tool, providing online communities for individuals to connect, socialize and exchange knowledge and ideas. Its advantages include the ability to tailor content to customer communities and the possibility to interact with customers and receive customer feedback. Additionally, social media can be a cost-effective option. Despite initial costs associated with content creation, the use, interaction, and posting on social media platforms can be managed without significant costs. Moreover, social media fosters customer engagement and allows

customers to create and share their product experiences, which can be done through collaborations with social media influencers.

Considering international markets, Kotler et al. (2017) suggest that companies could either choose to use the same communication strategy as in the home market or tailor it to each foreign market. Standardized communication strategies offer advantages such as lower costs, improved coordination, and a globally consistent brand image. However, there are also drawbacks to standardization, as countries can vary greatly in demographics, cultures and economic conditions. Adjusting the communication strategy can be advantageous when foreign markets perceive marketing differently due to cultural distinctions. Therefore, many marketing communicators think globally, but act locally. A challenge global companies often face is the language barrier, where poor translation can lead to communication mistakes and embarrassment. It is crucial to avoid such mistakes when localizing the brand name and message for a new foreign market.

3.2.5 Place

According to Kotler et al. (2016), place refers to activities that make the product available to consumers. Place considers factors such as location, inventory, transport, and logistics to reach the target customers. As mentioned above, Kotler et al. (2017) emphasize how logistics is an increasingly important topic for companies due to its possibility to offer better service to the customers, as well as cost savings for both the customers and company by for example organizing the transports more efficiently. It is crucial for a company to design an effective distribution channel, as members of the channel can add value by bridging gaps of place, time and possession. One important channel member when designing a distribution channel is the transport carrier. The transportation carrier has a direct effect on customer satisfaction as it affects the delivery performance, the price of the products and the condition in which the goods are delivered.

Kotler et al. (2017) explain that multiple aspects need to be taken into consideration when designing the distribution channel. The first aspect to take into consideration is the specific consumer needs on the local market. An analysis regarding how customers would like to buy the product, as well as services such as delivery, should be done. To provide fast delivery and large amounts of diverse services may not be possible in reality as these lead to higher costs for the company and consumers. Therefore, a balance between customer needs and customer price preferences, as well as operational costs, must be found. The second aspect that should be considered is to set the channel objectives regarding which customer service level the company should aim for. Depending on the company's products, existing competitors and environmental factors, the channel objectives and design will differ. The third aspect to consider is to identify available alternatives which the company can choose between, including the number and type of intermediaries. Intermediaries enable the company to distribute, sell and promote its products to the end customers. These include, for example, physical distribution firms, such as transport carriers. The intermediary alternatives should then be evaluated regarding possible economic outcomes, how the company's control will change, and

how adaptable each channel alternative would be. Kotler et al. (2016) describe that when distribution channel decisions are made, these usually involve long-term commitments to different organizations. Therefore, it is not easy to quickly replace these members if the conditions change, which emphasizes the importance of designing the channels and choosing the channel members carefully.

Regarding international distribution channels, Kotler et al. (2017) emphasize the importance for an international company to consider a whole-channel view in distribution. This involves examining both international and domestic distribution channels, tracking how the product moves from the market entry point to the final consumers. Channels of distribution can highly vary from country to country in terms of the number of intermediaries and transportation infrastructure. Distribution methods are usually adapted to each local market to meet the customer requirements and the local country's existing distribution structure.

3.2.6 Customer relationships

According to Kotler et al. (2016), an important part of modern marketing is to manage customer relationships. This includes the process of maintaining and building customer relationships by delivering high customer value and satisfaction. To create long-lasting customer relationships, customer-perceived value and customer satisfaction are of importance. A customer is more likely to purchase products from companies that offer high customer-perceived value. Furthermore, the bought product's perceived performance relative to the expectations of the buyer affects customer satisfaction. The more satisfied customers are, the more likely the company is to have loyal customers.

Kotler et al. (2017), mention that a company's services can help to set one retailer apart from another. Some retailers have service representatives either in person, via phone, or email for the customers to be able to ask questions. To effectively satisfy customers, companies must deliver high value and services. Support services contribute significantly to the overall brand experience for customers and introducing added services can further enhance customer relationships. However, while striving for high customer satisfaction is essential, it should not be at the expense of profitability. For example, a company may both lower their prices and expand its services, but this could potentially result in reduced profits. Therefore, companies must balance efforts to enhance satisfaction with maintaining profitability.

Moreover, Kotler et al. (2017) describe that customer relationships can be developed via having a company's salesforce engage and help customers. So-called technical sales support personnel can provide technical information and address customer inquiries. To ensure customer satisfaction and retention, follow-up efforts can be important to address any issues with customers. According to Kotler et al. (2016), the most important talent needed in a salesperson is the ability to build customer relationships.

3.2.7 Research Question 2

Based on the aim and the marketing strategy model, the following research question will be answered.

RQ2: How should Bagaren och Kocken adapt their marketing strategy on the Finnish market?

In order to answer RQ2, the question has been divided into the following sub-questions.

Positioning

- Which positioning strategy should be chosen?

Product

- How should the product assortment strategy be adapted?

Price

- How should the pricing strategy be adapted?

Promotion

- How should the marketing communication strategy be adapted?

Place

- How should the distribution strategy be adapted?

Customer relationship

- How can customer relationships be enhanced?

3.3 Analytical framework

The presented research questions and analytical models are combined and presented in an analytical framework in Figure 1. The Figure shows how RQ1 is answered via an analysis conducted by using the external situation model. Then, Bagaren och Kocken's strategy and processes are combined and analyzed using information regarding Outnorth's business in Finland and the characteristics of the e-commerce and kitchenware market in Finland. Together, these parts provide an answer to RQ2 by using the marketing strategy model (see Figure 1).

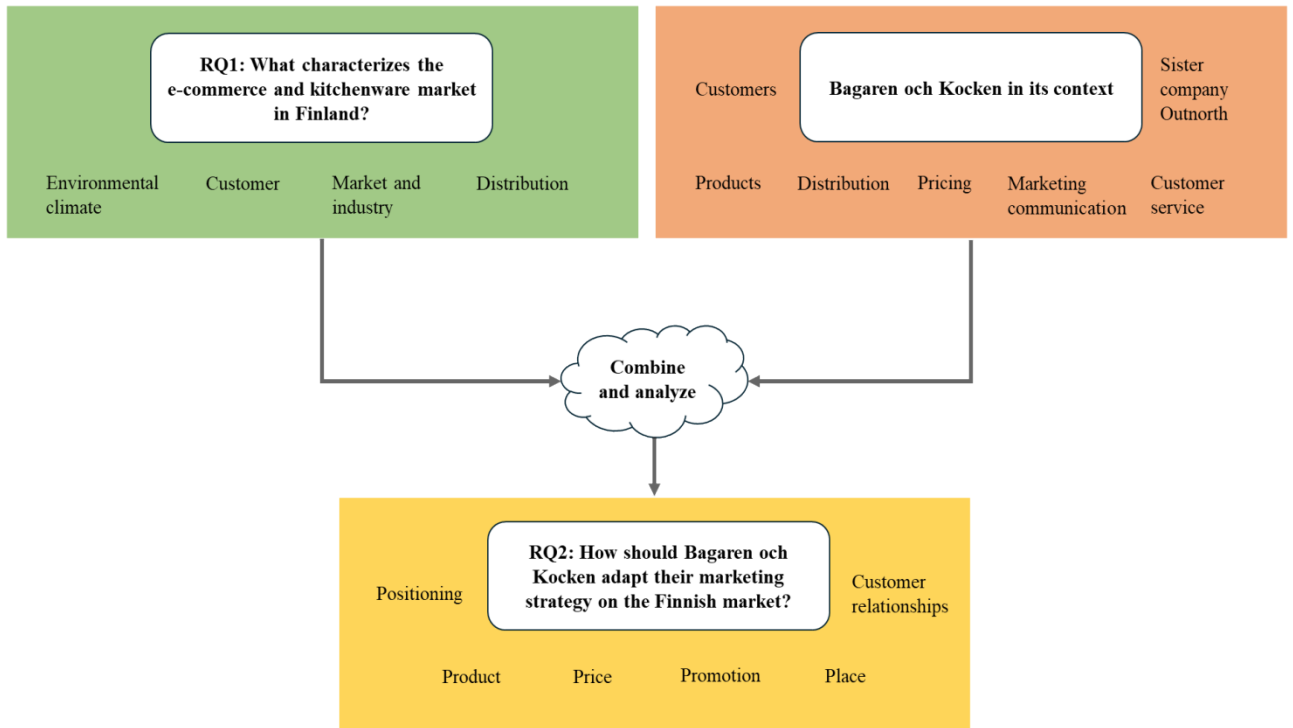


Figure 1. The analytical framework.

4. Method

The following sections describe the method which was used to conduct the research and answer the research questions.

4.1 Research strategy

The study focuses on mapping and understanding changing market environments and therefore a qualitative research strategy has been chosen. According to Bell et al. (2019), a qualitative research strategy focuses on gathering and analyzing data in images and words. When it comes to research design, this research was conducted with a case study design, studying the single organization Bagaren och Kocken. This type of research focuses on the specific nature and complexity of the studied case. Compared to other designs, the case study design is distinguished by only focusing on a limited situation. In this thesis case, the situation is focused on the case company's problems on, and lack of understanding of, the Finnish market.

4.2 Research process

The research was conducted over 21 weeks during the spring of 2024. First, a pre-study was conducted. The pre-study consisted of interviews with eight people at Bagaren och Kocken, each with different roles and responsibilities within the company (see Table 3). These interviews covered the areas of products and suppliers, marketing communication, pricing strategies, finance, distribution, company background, and customer service. The purpose of these interviews was to get a deeper understanding of the company's business to provide a comprehensive foundation to answer the research questions. During the pre-study, secondary sources were also used to understand Bagaren och Kocken, e-commerce, marketing and relevant theoretical models. The next step was then to combine the findings from the pre-study into a planning report. Moreover, the analytical framework was developed by combining the two theoretical models with Bagaren och Kocken in its context. This analytical framework was then included in the planning report, together with the description of Bagaren och Kocken and its context.

During the third process step, data concerning the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market was gathered. This data included, but was not limited to, a literature review within e-commerce, Finnish culture, Finnish customer behavior and Finnish distribution channels. This was then complemented by interviews with relevant actors, such as Egmont companies, transport providers, and Finnish consumers. The main goal of this process step was to gather as much relevant data as possible about the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market, in order to answer RQ1 and give a basis for answering RQ2. When this step was done, the result was analyzed using the external situation model to answer RQ1. The findings were categorized into Environmental climate, Customer, Distribution, and Market and industry, as outlined by the external situation model.

After the empirical data was gathered, additional theoretical literature on the external situation model and the marketing strategy model was added. This process step matches the systematic combining process described by Dubois and Gadde (2002). According to the authors, systematic combining entails that the first preliminary analytical framework is developed over time based on the found empirical data during the research process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). In this case, the detailed parts included in the analytical framework's different categories were adapted and developed based on the empirical data. The last process step was then to combine and analyze Bagaren och Kocken's context, Outnorth's operations, and the external situation analysis by using the marketing strategy model to answer RQ2.

4.3 Data collection methods

The data collection of primary and secondary data was used and is described more in detail below. The procedure of how the gathered data was analyzed is also presented.

4.3.1 Primary data collection

According to Bell et al. (2019), in qualitative studies, interviews is one of the most used methods as it provides a certain flexibility. However, a drawback is that the entire process, consisting of conducting, transcribing, and analyzing the interviews, can be time-consuming (Bell et al. 2019). The primary data in this thesis was obtained through interviews. In this study semi-structured interviews were used. This way of interviewing involves having a series of questions in a general format, but allowing for flexibility where additional questions can be asked based on the interviewee's responses.

The initial round of interviews, part of the pre-study, took place at Bagaren och Kocken's head office, except for one conducted through Teams, as seen in Table 3. All respondents for these interviews work at Bagaren och Kocken in different departments. Therefore, the aim of these interviews was to contribute diverse insights into the company's business and processes. Semi-structured interviews proved to be effective as the interviews provided comprehensive understanding of the company. This format allowed asking additional questions based on the responses received, contributing to more in-depth insights.

Table 3. The title, theme, date, length, and place of the pre-study interviews.

| Title | Theme | Date | Length | Place |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| CEO | Company background and strategies | 24th of January | 60 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |
| Finance Group Manager | Finance | 24th of January | 45 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| CPO | Products and suppliers | 25th of January | 35 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |
| CMO and Head of Sales | Customers and marketing communication | 26th of January | 50 min | Online via Microsoft Teams |
| Head of Logistics | Distribution | 29th of January | 50 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |
| Price and Business Analyst | Pricing strategies | 29th of January | 55 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |
| Team Leader Customer Service (Sweden, Norway, Denmark) | Customer service | 31st of January | 25 min | Head office of Bagaren och Kocken |

The second round of interviews was done with external parties, which are presented in Table 4. All these interviews were conducted online via Teams due to differences in locations. The interviews with external parties aimed to provide a broader perspective on the Finnish market, including the industry, distribution channels, and customers. The interviews were divided into three different themes: Finnish operations, Finnish distribution structure, and Finnish culture¹². The interviews with company representatives from Outnorth, Bagaren och Kocken's sister company, gave insights on the company's ways of working towards the Finnish market. The interviews with company representatives from the mother company Egmont gave insights on the company's role in relation to Bagaren och Kocken and issues to address when developing an international marketing strategy. One interview was conducted with a representative from the transport provider company Posti. This interview gave insight regarding Posti's operations and trends regarding Finnish distribution channels. Lastly, five interviews were conducted with people from our personal network aiming to include Finnish people in different age groups and with different backgrounds. All five interviewees are born and raised in Finland. However, the engineering student and the product manager still live in Finland, whereas the other three interviewees have moved to Sweden. These interviews gave insights on Finnish culture, traditions, food and language preferences. All interviews in this phase followed a semi-structured approach.

¹² Henceforth, the Finnish culture interviewees are referred to as the Finnish interviewees.

Table 4. The title, company name or age, date, length, and place of the interviews with external parties.

| Title | Company | Theme | Date | Length | Place |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Performance market manager | Outnorth | Finnish operations | 1st of March | 40 min | Teams |
| Key account manager | Posti | Finnish distribution structure | 4th of March | 55 min | Teams |
| Market specialist | Outnorth | Finnish operations | 11th of March | 40 min | Teams |
| Strategy director | Egmont | Finnish operations | 13th of March | 60 min | Teams |
| Senior director e-commerce | Egmont | Finnish operations | 13th of March | 30 min | Teams |
| Title | Age | Theme | Date | Length | Place |
| Engineering student | 25 years | Finnish culture | 7th of March | 55 min | Teams |
| Physics student | 23 years | Finnish culture | 7th of March | 40 min | Teams |
| Translator | 55+ years | Finnish culture | 7th of March | 60 min | Teams |
| Translator | 55+ years | Finnish culture | 7th of March | 60 min | Teams |
| Product manager | 25 years | Finnish culture | 11th of March | 30 min | Teams |

The whole interview process was divided into several steps. First, three general interview guides were developed, one for each theme (see Appendix I). The interview questions were formulated to offer flexibility for respondents to answer openly and allowed for additional questions. Secondly, potential interviewees within each theme were identified, contacted via email, and asked to participate in an interview. Thirdly, when the interviewee accepted the interview, a slightly customized interview guide was developed based on the general interview guides. The questions were then sent to the respondents beforehand to enable the interviewees to prepare and gather relevant information before the interview. The interviews were then recorded with permission from the interviewee for backup if clarification was needed afterwards. Felicia Svensson conducted all the interviews while Emilia Sochon took notes. After the interview, a discussion of key takeaways based on the meeting notes was conducted to ensure a mutual understanding. When needed, the recording was used for clarification in this

step. For all the interviews, a summary was then sent to confirm that the answers were understood correctly. The email stated that if no response was received by a certain date, it was assumed that the interpretation was correct.

4.3.2 Secondary data collection

According to Bell et al. (2019), secondary data refers to information collected by other researchers or by other organizations for their own purposes. Collecting all data by yourself can be extremely time-consuming, making the use of secondary data advantageous in research. Secondary data can be used in combination with the primary data which can enable a comparative element in the research design.

In the pre-study, secondary data was collected from Bagaren och Kocken's webpage and PowerPoint presentations to gain a broader view of the business and its products. Later, secondary data was collected with the aim to understand the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market concerning environmental climate, customers, distribution structure, and market and industry dynamics. Keywords employed in the search for secondary sources included, for example: *Finland, e-commerce, consumer behavior, buying behavior, kitchenware market, last-mile, marketing communication, payment methods, Finnish culture*. During this phase, secondary data included market reports from transportation companies such as PostNord and Posti, providing insights into the e-commerce landscape and distribution structures in Finland. Additionally, reports and research on Finnish kitchenware and customer behaviors within e-commerce have been gathered. Government reports from Finland have been collected to understand the 'general' characteristics of Finnish citizens. To understand the Finnish kitchenware market, insights on market shares of household appliances in Finland and the e-commerce landscape in the country have been obtained from the Statista database. To assess the competitive landscape within the industry in Finland, internal data from Bagaren och Kocken was used together with Google searches. Due to confidential information from Bagaren och Kocken the competitors have been anonymized throughout the report.

4.3.3 Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in line with the analytical framework (see Figure 1). Initially, during the pre-study phase, information about Bagaren och Kocken's operational processes was gathered and categorized into company background, customers, products, distribution, pricing strategies, marketing communication, and customer service. This categorization provided a comprehensive overview of Bagaren och Kocken's way of working. Secondly, information of the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market was obtained, compiled, and analyzed through the external situation model consisting of the four main categories: Environmental climate, Customer, Market and industry, and Distribution. This detailed analysis enhanced insights into the dynamics of the Finnish e-commerce and kitchenware market, giving an answer to RQ1.

To answer RQ2, the analysis based on the external situation model, together with the information gathered about Bagaren och Kocken and Outnorth's operations, were integrated

and analyzed using the marketing strategy model. In that way, a new marketing strategy for Bagaren and Kocken in Finland is provided. The strategy includes how the company should develop its position, current product offerings, pricing strategies, distribution channels, promotional activities, and management of customer relationships to cater to the specific needs, behaviors, and competition of the Finnish market.

4.4 Trustworthiness of the research

Lincoln and Guba (2013) discuss trustworthiness when conducting research. Trustworthiness involves assessing whether findings and interpretations can be trusted. The authors divide trustworthiness into four categories.

According to Lincoln and Guba (2013), the first category is Credibility, referring to internal validity and the establishment of confidence in the study's findings and interpretations. Techniques such as peer debriefing and member checks could be used to ensure credibility. In this study, all collected information, from reports to interviews, has undergone thorough discussions to align perceptions. Additionally, there has been a continuous dialogue with supervisors at both Chalmers and Bagaren och Kocken to validate the written material for credibility. The second category is Transferability. Transferability refers to external validity, ensuring that findings are applicable in different contexts or subjects. Transferability is given when ensuring that the reader gets enough information of the context to know if it is applicable in his or her case. The section Bagaren och Kocken in its context in this study offers a comprehensive description of the case company to provide readers insights into the given context. The third category, Dependability, refers to the reliability of the study. It assesses if the findings and interpretations result from a consistent and dependable process. To ensure dependability, a designated person reviews the process for consistency. During this study, supervisors at Chalmers and Bagaren och Kocken have continuously checked and discussed the thesis. Additionally, the research process has been outlined, enhancing the dependability. The last category, Confirmability, refers to a study being objective. This ensures that findings and interpretations of the study are a result of a dependable process of inquiry. As the thesis is a case study done on behalf of a company, objectivity can be challenging to maintain. In order to stay objective, all primary and secondary data has been critically reviewed and multiple objective sources have been used. Throughout the research, information that has been gathered through secondary sources has always been critically reviewed by asking the interviewees regarding the findings. For example, secondary data collected regarding the Finnish food culture was then asked about in the Finnish culture interviews. The interviewees then confirmed the findings from the secondary sources and thereby increased the confirmability of the study.

5. External situation analysis

The following sections describe the empirical findings based on data from primary and secondary sources. The findings are analyzed according to the external situation model into Environmental climate, Customer, Distribution, and Market and industry. This information answers RQ1.

5.1 Environmental climate

According to Utrikespolitiska institutet (2024a), Finland has been a part of Sweden, and then later Russia, before its independence in 1917. During the 20th century, Finland took part in four wars. After the war years, the country's industrialization increased (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 2024a). The country transformed from a farmer society to a modern welfare state and industry nation, and the economy continued to grow (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 2024b). Furthermore, according to Utrikespolitiska institutet (2024c), the majority of the Finnish population was part of the working class and a small part belonged to the upper class up until the 1960s. Unlike Sweden, Finland had almost no middle class. However, these distinctions have become more blurred, but there are still significant differences between high- and low-income earners today. Some of the Finnish interviewees (see Table 3) pointed out the influence of Finnish history on its culture, noting that the country endured poverty for a significant period. The sense of national identity and pride has strengthened since Finland gained independence about 100 years ago.

Finland's economy was in a recession in 2023 (Statsrådet, 2023). According to PayTrail (2023), the country's economic situation impacts the growth of online shopping. According to one of Finland's leading online retailers, Verkkokauppa (2022), the company experienced a challenging year already in 2022 due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine combined with rising inflation. This situation led to a weakening purchasing power amongst Finns. However, according to Statsrådet (2023) the recession is predicted to decrease. The household's relatively good income development will lead to an increased purchasing power for the households. The growth and private consumption are predicted to slowly increase in 2025.

In 2023, the Finnish population was around 5.5 million (Statistikcentralen, 2023). According to Utrikespolitiska institutet (2024d), due to the country's history, Finland's culture is strongly influenced by Russia and Sweden, among other countries. However, the Finnish language and many Finnish traditions still exist, especially in the inland parts of the country. This creates some differences for the people living by the coast, who are traditionally more influenced by Scandinavian culture. The largest minority in Finland is Finnish Swedes, who have strong ties to both Finland and Sweden. According to Utrikespolitiska institutet (2024e), Finnish citizens are obliged to study both Finnish and Swedish at school. According to Väistö (2020), the study of the two languages has been mandatory since 1968. The students who do not appreciate that Swedish studies are mandatory commonly call it "forced Swedish" (Utrikespolitiska institutet, 2024e). The interviewees also described how students are required to learn both Finnish and Swedish in Finland. All interviewees described this requirement as Finnish people being forced

to learn Swedish, with a generally negative attitude toward the language. This feeling is especially evident among individuals from eastern or northern Finland, where there is most often no need for being able to speak Swedish.

5.2 Customer

In the following sections, the food culture, and buying behavior in Finland is explained followed by the marketing communication channels.

5.2.1 Food culture

According to Ahlberg (2019), 25 % of the Finnish people have cooking as a hobby. Coffee, fish, mushrooms, stews, casseroles and soups are among the most popular things to consume in Finland (Otavamedia OMA et al., 2018). Grilling culture is also thriving and is a popular way of cooking due to the interest in outdoor cooking (Statista, 2023d). According to Otavamedia OMA et al. (2018), Finnish people enjoy eating outside in nature. Moreover, the Finns' interest in coffee is evident (Otavamedia OMA et al., 2018; Statista, 2023e; Jones, 2018). Statista (2023m) ranks Finland as one of the world's top coffee consuming nations per capita with an average coffee consumption of 8.9 kilograms of roasted coffee per person in 2022. When comparing coffee consumption volume per capita between Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in 2023, Finnish people consumed most and have done so for the last five years (Statista, n.d.). Besides the country's large coffee consumption, an interest in healthy cooking is growing in Finland (Statista, 2023c).

According to the Finnish interviewees, the primary ingredients in Finnish cooking are potatoes, meat, and fish. All interviewees emphasize that Finnish dishes are not spicy, with salt and pepper being the most commonly used seasonings. As one interviewee stated: "Black pepper provides just enough spice." All interviewees noted that casseroles are highly favored dishes to cook. Casseroles are one-dish, oven-baked meals where various ingredients are mixed and cooked in a deep-oven dish. These casseroles can, for example, include macaroni, ham, potatoes, and carrots. Additionally, other common dishes include various types of soups and stews. A popular bread known as "ruisleipä" is a dark, sour, rye bread. When it comes to coffee, all interviewees emphasized the widespread consumption of drip coffee among the population in Finland. Moreover, a notable trend in the Finnish food culture identified by the interviewees is the increasing influence of international cuisines, reflected in both dishes and spices used. Another trend is an adaptation towards a more vegetarian diet.

The Finnish interviewees described Christmas, Easter, and Midsummer as three of the most celebrated holidays in Finland. During Christmas, it is popular to serve dishes such as carrot casseroles and rutabaga casseroles. For Easter, many people eat "mämmi", a traditional Finnish Easter dessert made from rye flour and malt. Some interviewees also mentioned that Finnish people eat "mignon eggs" for easter, which are real eggshells filled with chocolate. Additionally, on the 1st of May, people drink 'Sima', which is a type of mead, and eat 'munkki', which is a Finnish donut. On the 5th of February, Finland celebrates Runeberg's

Day, during which people also eat “Runeberg’s cake”, a Finnish pastry flavored with almonds and arrack or rum, topped with raspberry jam and icing. During midsummer, Finnish people commonly engage in grilling. Grilling becomes particularly popular as the weather warms up in the country. Finnish people mainly grill sausages, meat, and vegetables.

5.2.2 Buying behavior

According to the International Trade Administration (2023), quality is an important factor influencing buying behavior among Finns. Additionally, Posti (2023) mentions there is an increasing emphasis among Finnish consumers on the environmental impact of their buying behavior. The survey underscores that the primary concerns revolve around the poor quality or disposable nature of products and packaging waste. LloydsBank (2024) notes that Finnish customers also generally like to buy domestic products and brands. All Finnish interviewees mentioned the Finnish individual’s preference for Finnish brands. Additionally, quality was highlighted as a primary reason for choosing domestic brands, by the Finnish interviewees. However, some of the interviewees mentioned that Finnish people appreciate Scandinavian minimalist design. Furthermore, according to LloydsBank (2024), global brands are gaining more traction.

According to Statista (2022a), Finnish consumers generally prefer to buy products and services online from domestic sites instead of large foreign marketplaces. One Finnish interviewee noted that Finnish brands and companies give a sense of familiarity and personal connection that might be lacking when purchasing from foreign brands. One of the interviewees expressed: "When purchasing from large foreign companies, you are supporting a faceless entity." In 2022, 77 % of the Finnish consumers chose to buy from domestic online stores, 44 % bought from foreign online stores within the EU, and 16 % made online purchases from online stores outside the EU, see Figure 2.

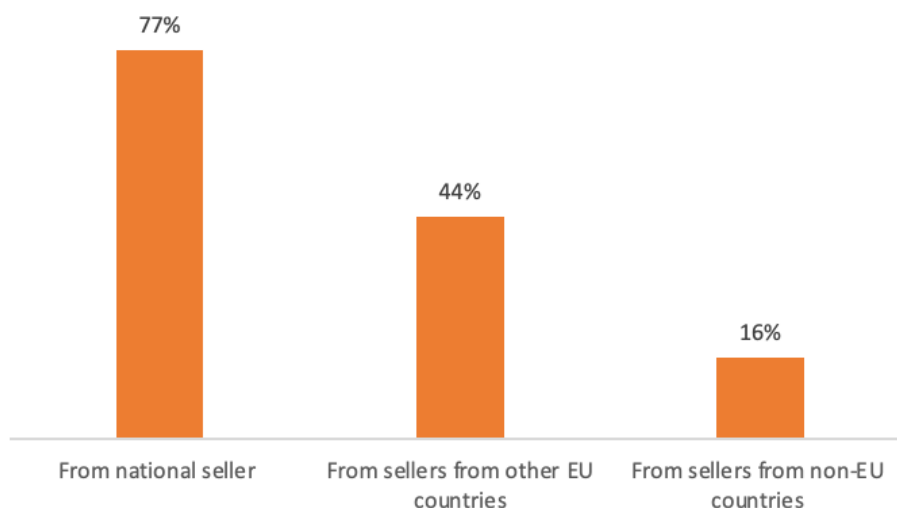


Figure 2. Percentage of individuals who made domestic and cross-border online purchases in Finland 2022. (Statista, 2022a)

According to Paytrail (2023), Finnish consumers choose to purchase from domestic online stores as they wish to support local businesses, finding it more familiar and personal (see Figure 3). Several of the Finnish interviewees emphasized the desire to support their own country's economy and businesses. One interviewee stated: "The reason for supporting Finnish brands and companies is the preferred thought of supporting the locals, and the idea that money spent on Finnish brands and companies comes back to the Finnish people and country."

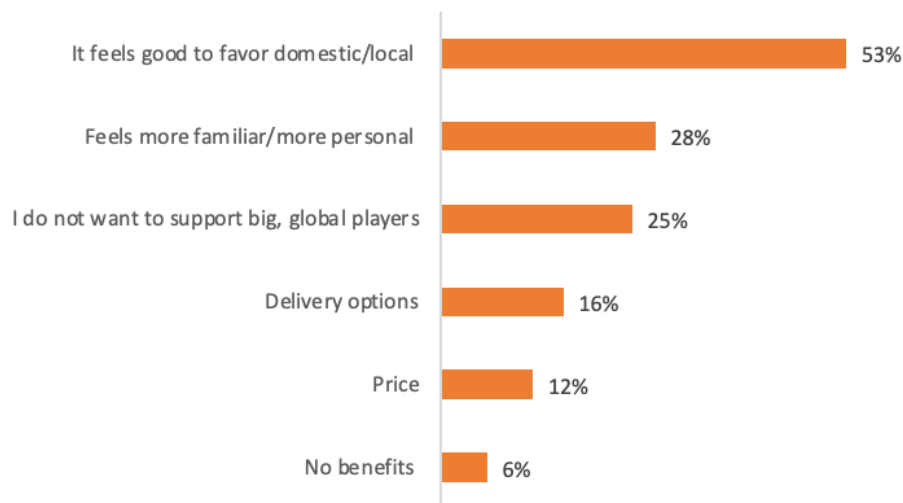


Figure 3. Percentage breakdown of reasons why Finnish individuals prefer to buy from a domestic store. (Paytrail, 2023)

Difficulty in return policies and customs issues are common reasons for not buying from foreign online stores, despite their attractiveness in terms of price and assortment (Paytrail, 2023; Nets, 2022). The Finnish interviewees highlighted clear information and the ability to read recommendations from other Finnish customers as two important factors when making online purchases. According to Sanoma Media Finland (n.d.), Finnish people are information seekers, meaning they will search for information before buying products. The International Trade Administration (2023) reveals that Finnish consumers are more likely to check manufacturers' and brands' websites compared to other Europeans. Additionally, the Posti survey (2023) indicates that 55 % of Finnish consumers check recommendations from shops or others' purchases while shopping online. Some of the Finnish interviewees mentioned that foreign companies may attract Finnish customers if they offer lower prices. According to Posti (2023), prices and shipping costs will be closely considered by the shoppers in the future due to the customers' increased cost awareness. Moreover, according to LloydsBank (2024), it is crucial to ensure good customer service and customer experience to retain Finnish customers. The Finnish interviewees believed that it is preferable for foreign companies to offer customer service in the Finnish language. This would facilitate communication with Finnish customers and would have a positive effect. One interviewee expressed concern that Finnish people might feel offended if customer service is not provided in Finnish, stating: "If a Swedish brand entered Finland and offered Swedish customer service, the attitude could be: Here come the Swedes to conquer us again."

According to Statista (2022b), the most popular payment methods for online purchases in Finland in 2022 were direct payment from a bank account at 30 %, followed by physical debit card at 18 % and physical credit card at 17 %. Swish, Vipps and Mobilepay followed at 13 %, as well as invoice at 10 % and digital wallet at 7 %. As can be seen in Figure 4, Swish, Vipps and Mobilepay were the most popular payment methods at 44 %, 29 % and 31 % in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Furthermore, according to Paytrail (2023), safety, speed and simplicity determine the choice of payment method for the Finns. Payment gateways which are supported and commonly used in Finland are Klarna, Trustly, PayPal, SOFORT, Google Pay and Apple Pay (International Trade Administration, 2023).

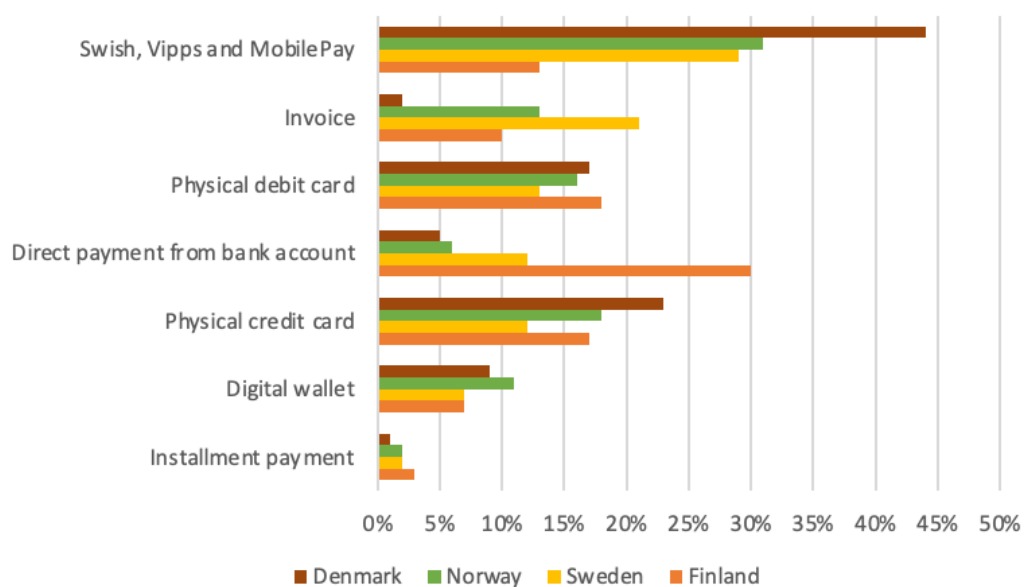


Figure 4. The percentage breakdown of the most popular payment methods for online purchases in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark in 2022. (Statista, 2022b)

5.2.3 Marketing communication channels

According to Statistics Finland (2023), printed and electronic media were used by Finnish individuals across all age groups between 15 and 69 in 2022. As can be seen in Table 5, the Finnish people consume mostly electronic media as it constitutes 90 % of their daily total media consumption, compared to 10 % of printed media. The Internet is the most used media across all age groups, even though it is more used among the younger population. For printed media, newspapers are the most used for the age groups 15 to 24 and 60 to 69. Books are slightly more used by individuals in ages between 45 and 59 years, while newspapers and books are equally popular among 25 to 44 years.

According to the International Trade Organization (2023), digital marketing is experiencing rapid growth in Finland. Approximately half of digital marketing in Finland is through Google and Facebook. Google, with a 91.9 % usage rate, is the most used search engine, leaving others like Bing and Yahoo trailing far behind. Posti’s survey (2022) reveals that Finnish buyers find store-specific off-season sales campaigns in e-commerce more engaging than season sales like

Black Friday. According to Lemmetty (2024), there is high internet penetration in Finland, with 70 % of the population active on social media. As reported by OOSGA (2023), Finland has an estimated 3.81 million Facebook users, with the most active age group being individuals aged 25-34. Instagram has around 2.49 million users in Finland, primarily within the 18-34 age range. TikTok has a user base of approximately 1.4 million in the country.

Peltonen (2024) suggests that businesses can use social media in Finland to reach potential customers and enhance brand visibility. Additionally, cultural relevance, incorporating content with Finnish values, traditions, and humor, is important. To build brand trust and authenticity, using user-generated content and influencer marketing is powerful. Collaborating with Finnish influencers who align with the brand’s values can drive awareness and engagement among their followers. Moreover, providing a Finnish language option helps establish a deeper connection with the local audience. Peltonen’s recommendation is to use a native speaker instead of a translator, as they often capture nuances better. According to the Finnish culture interviewees, accurate translation is crucial, especially when dealing with languages like Finnish where precision is highly valued. Even small errors or inaccuracies can be noticeable and may affect the understanding or perception of the text by Finnish speakers.

Table 5. Shares of use by media in 2022 across age groups in Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2023)

| Media | Age group | | | | | Total | % |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|---|
| | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45-59 | 60-69 | | | |
| | Min per day | | | | | Min per day | |
| Magazines | 13 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 2 | |
| Newspapers (subscribed and paid for newspapers) | 28 | 16 | 14 | 27 | 19 | 3 | |
| Free papers | 14 | 10 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 2 | |
| Books | 25 | 16 | 15 | 23 | 19 | 3 | |
| <i>Printed media, total</i> | <i>80</i> | <i>51</i> | <i>42</i> | <i>68</i> | <i>57</i> | <i>10</i> | |
| Television | 87 | 109 | 155 | 178 | 132 | 23 | |
| Radio | 37 | 56 | 76 | 89 | 65 | 11 | |
| Internet | 476 | 359 | 252 | 196 | 316 | 55 | |
| <i>Electronic media, total</i> | <i>600</i> | <i>525</i> | <i>484</i> | <i>463</i> | <i>513</i> | <i>90</i> | |
| All media, total | 680 | 575 | 526 | 531 | 570 | 100 | |

5.2 Distribution

In the following sections, Finnish preferences concerning buying online are described, followed by the preferred last-mile solutions.

5.2.1 Online purchasing

According to PostNord (2021a), Finland is a country with a high level of digitalization. Historically, elderly Finnish people have been more doubtful about e-commerce compared to the same age groups in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. However, according to Posti (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic caused a permanent shift in the country's e-commerce market landscape. According to Statista (2022a), the shares of Finnish people shopping online in 2022 differed between age groups. The report indicates that individuals aged 25-54 engaged in online shopping the most, whereas the percentage is lower for people over 55 years. This trend is further supported by a survey conducted by Paytrail in 2023, which investigated whether Finnish consumers had made online purchases in the last 28 days. Seen in Figure 5, 93 % of Finnish people aged 18-49 had made an online purchase within the given timeframe, while the percentage was lower for individuals aged 50 and above. Based on the result of a survey made by Nets (2022), individuals in Sweden in ages 50-79 had a greater proportion of online shopping compared to individuals within the same age group in Finland.

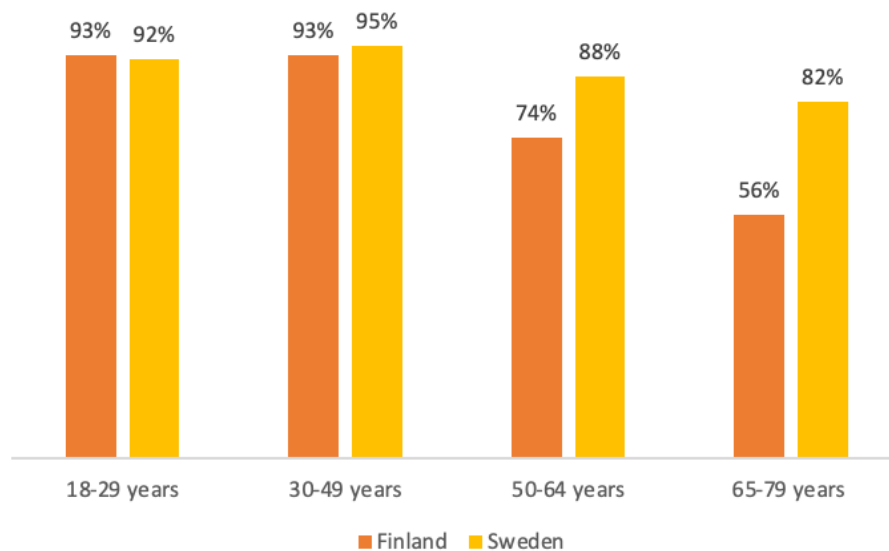


Figure 5. Percentage breakdown of individuals who have shopped online in the past 28 days per age group in Finland and Sweden. (Paytrail, 2023; Nets, 2022)

According to Posti (2022), Finns' reasons for buying online are the wide assortment, the flexibility of shopping at any time regardless of store hours, and the time saved (see Figure 6). Paytrail (2023) reports that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the most common reason for online shopping was to avoid queues and crowds. Now, the importance of price has slightly increased compared to previous years. The rising inflation could be a potential reason for this increase.

Figure 6 shows that lower prices are the second main reason for choosing online shopping (Posti, 2022).

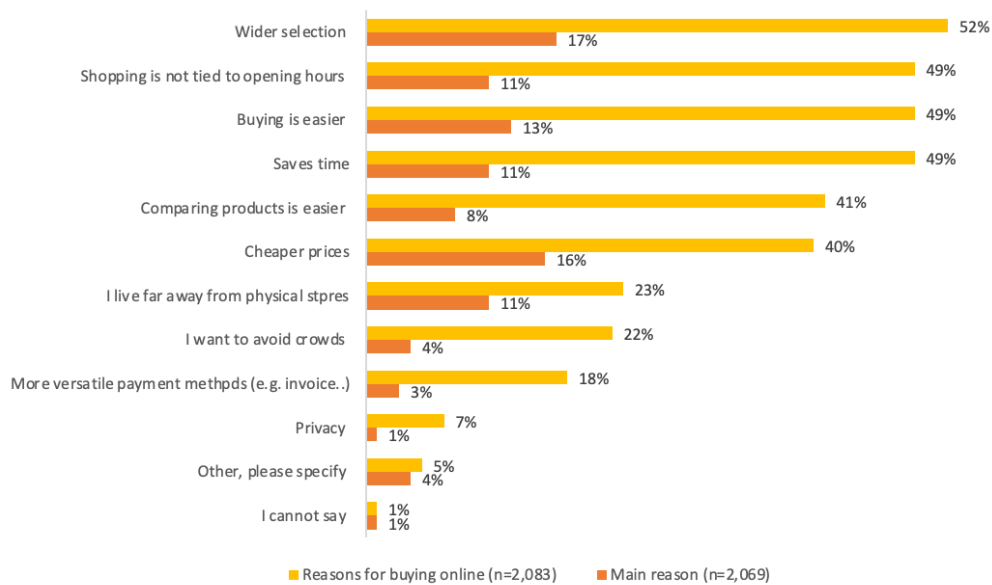


Figure 6. Percentage breakdown of reasons and main reasons for buying online for Finnish people. (Posti, 2022)

Data from Statista (2023b) shows that among household appliances, around 40 % to 50 % of the Finnish sales were made from online purchases compared to offline purchases, which can be seen in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Percentage breakdown of online revenues of large and small domestic appliances in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. (Statista, 2023b)

5.2.2 Last-mile delivery preferences

Regarding last-mile solutions, a notable distinction among the Finns, as opposed to other Nordic countries, is their preference for picking up their ordered parcels from parcel lockers (Posti, 2022; PostNord, 2021a), as seen in Figure 8. According to Posti (2022), 90 % of the surveyed Finnish customers have used parcel lockers for online purchases. Additionally, there is a growing popularity of home deliveries in Finland in the last year, especially for larger products (Posti, 2023).

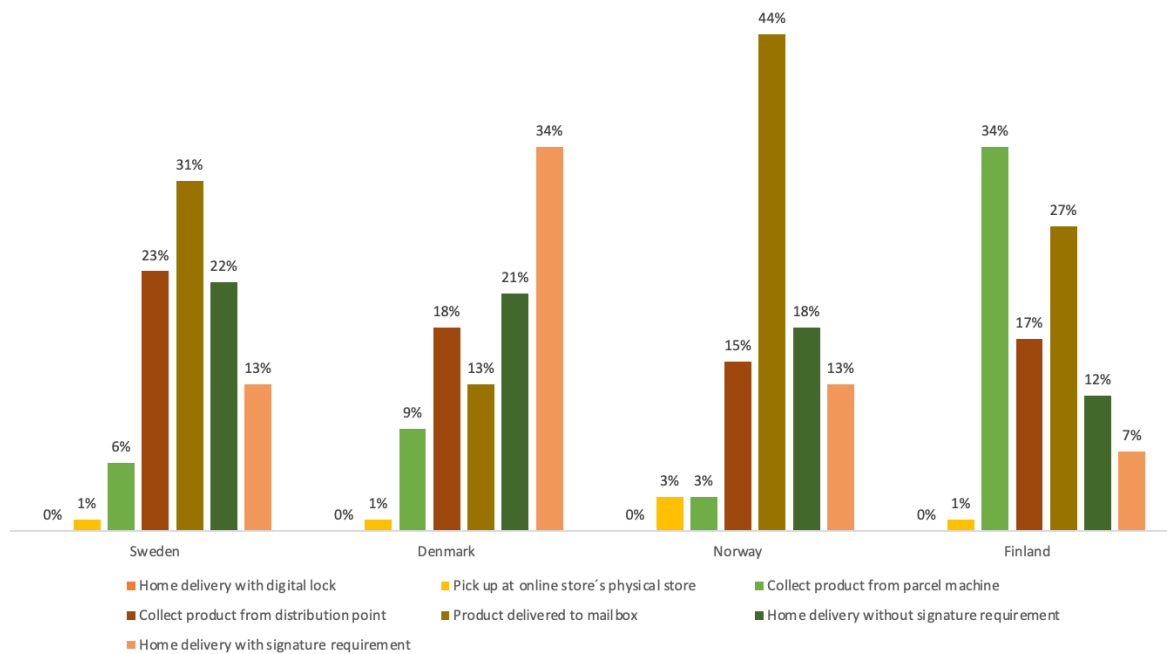


Figure 8. Percentage breakdown of delivery option preferences in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. (PostNord, 2021a)

Moreover, fast deliveries do not hold significant importance for Finnish customers (Posti, 2022; PostNord, 2021a). According to Posti (2022), the majority of retailers aim to deliver most orders the next day after noon or, at the latest, within 2-3 days. However, a vast majority of customers expect parcels to arrive within 2-7 days, as depicted in Figure 9. Predictability about when the parcel is supposed to arrive is an important factor for the Finns. According to Posti 2023, 89 % of the buyers believe that being able to choose delivery day is important. Additionally, according to PostNord (2021a), the ability to choose the delivery location is crucial. It's noteworthy that there is a rising interest for fast deliveries among the younger generations in Finland (Verkkokauppa, 2023).

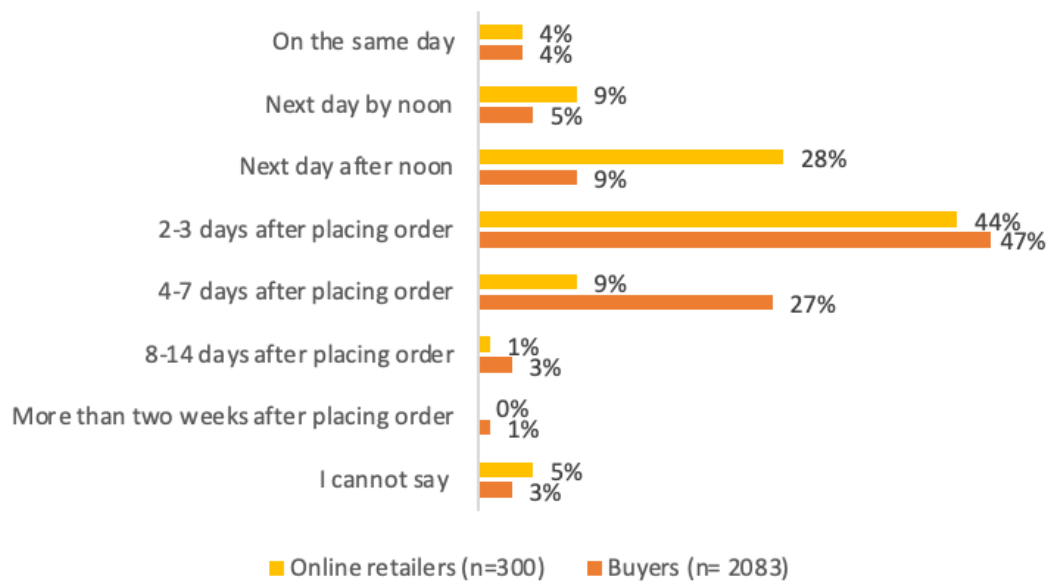


Figure 9. Percentage breakdown of the expected delivery speed if order is placed Monday at 11 a.m. (Posti, 2022)

Posti’s (2022) findings indicate that 55 % of buyers want to be able to choose transport provider at the checkout. The survey also shows that a majority of online retailers offer at least two different transport suppliers to choose from, as outlined in Figure 10. Posti in Finland is the largest transport provider, used by 57.8 % of online stores, according to ECDB (n.d.a). However, there are multiple other transport providers, such as Matkahuolto and PostNord, that hold smaller but significant shares of the market.

According to Patrik Wiberg (Personal communication, March 4th, 2024), Posti is one of the leading transport and logistics providers in Finland, Sweden, and the Baltics. The company provides various services including parcel, freight, and postal services, as well as warehousing and logistics services. Posti has over 2500 parcel lockers spread across the country. They also have service points where customers can pick up and drop off their parcels. Additionally, Posti offers home delivery, which is a slightly more expensive option compared to using parcel lockers or post offices. Posti collaborates with several Swedish companies that have entered the Finnish market.

PostNord (2020a) states to be a leading provider for communication and logistics solutions across the Nordic countries, while also ensuring postal services for individuals and businesses in Sweden and Denmark. In Finland, according to PostNord (2020b), the company offers its services through nearly 2000 pick-up locations. These pick-up locations are placed in various stores around Finland. According to PostNord (2021b), the transport provider has increased its presence of parcel lockers by introducing new parcel lockers called "Lähiboksi" in some cities and PostNord has plans to further expand the parcel lockers to other cities across Finland.

Matkahuolto (n.d.) is Finland’s second largest parcel service provider. Matkahuolto provides 2000 service points nationwide. Parcel lockers are the preferred option for Matkahuolto’s customers, with a network of 1000 parcel lockers located across the country. In Matkahuolto’s press release (2024), they announced their aim to strengthen their presence in the Swedish e-commerce market by partnering with Swedish online retailers. Notable partnerships have been established with major retailers such as Elgiganten and Adlibris for deliveries from Sweden to Finland. In Sweden, Matkahuolto collaborates with Bring for their deliveries.

As mentioned, sustainability is a rising trend among Finnish people (Posti 2023). According to Posti (2022), nearly 40 % of Finnish customers consider environmental friendliness when choosing delivery method. However, the survey indicates that this aspect holds greater significance for women than for men in Finland. Regarding free delivery, 90 % of Finnish customers have added more items to their carts to qualify for free delivery. In confirmation, online retailers offering free deliveries have observed that customers tend to include additional items to meet the free delivery threshold. According to the International Trade Administration (2023), Finnish people are less likely to make a purchase if the delivery costs are too high.

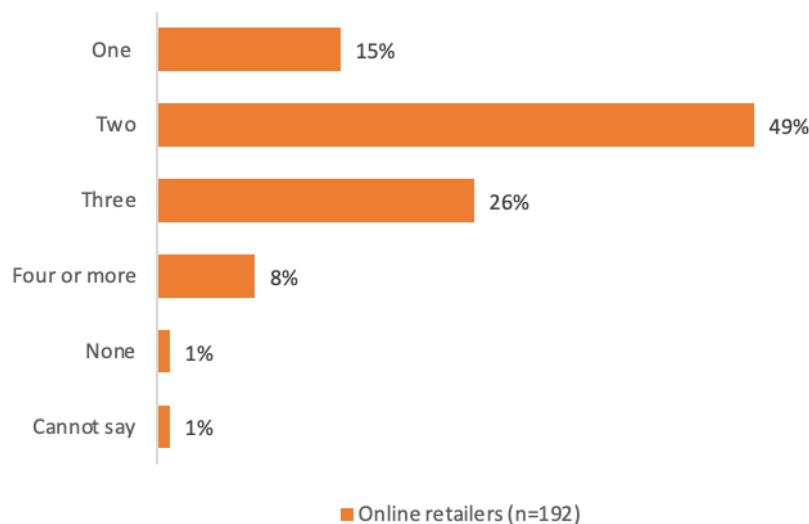


Figure 10. Percentage breakdown of the number of transport providers displayed at online retailer’s check-out. (Posti, 2022)

5.3 Market and industry

In the following sections, the characteristics of the Finnish e-commerce market including trends, the kitchenware market, and the competitors of Bagaren och Kocken in Finland are described.

5.3.1 E-commerce trends

As previously mentioned, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in online purchasing in Finland and according to Posti (2023), the e-commerce growth has only started. In 2023, the e-commerce revenue in Finland was 4.84 billion euros (Statista, 2024a). In Figure 11, the

forecast indicates that there will be a continuous increase in revenue by 2.7 billion euros between 2024 and 2029. As reported by Posti (2023), brick-and-mortar still goes hand in hand with online stores as business areas that consist of both physical stores and online sales channels have the fastest e-commerce growth.

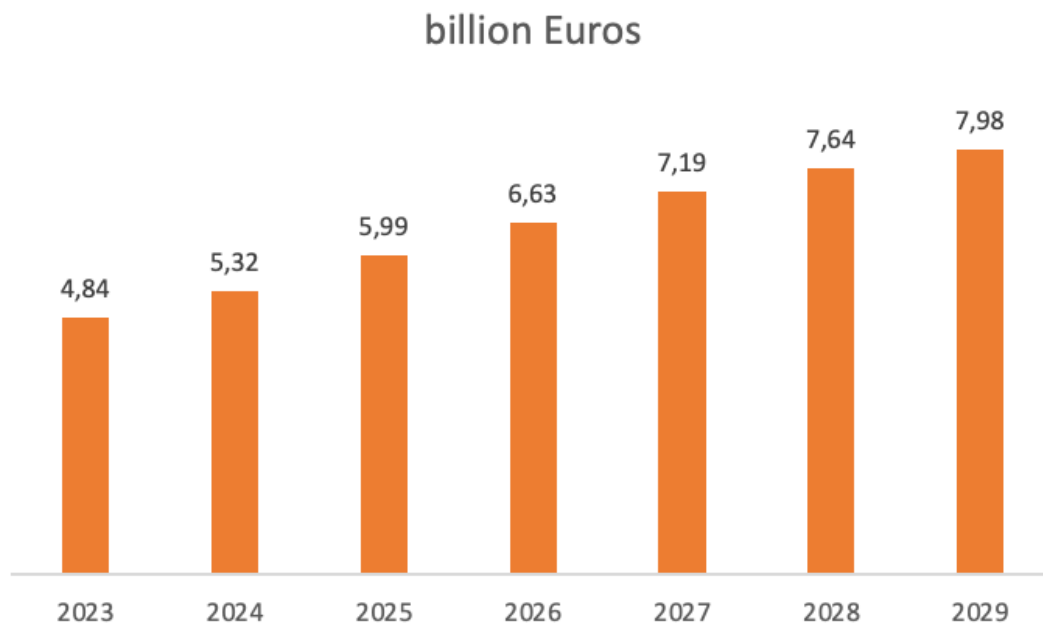


Figure 11. Revenue in billion Euros of the e-commerce market in Finland from 2023 to 2029. Forecasted revenue from 2024 to 2029. (Statista, 2024a)

The Finnish e-commerce market is characterized by purchases from both national and international sellers (Statista, 2023a). According to the International Trade Administration (2023), buying from Finnish sites increased during the pandemic, due to rising environmental awareness regarding the product transports and an increased willingness to support local sites. However, Posti (2023) identifies that products from countries within the EU are increasingly ordered from Finns. As online shopping increases in popularity among Finns, foreign companies also focus more on the Finnish market. Therefore, international e-commerce is expected to grow in the country. Moreover, foreign online stores focus on sustainability to a large extent. Therefore, Finnish e-commerce companies face a risk of losing customers to non-Finnish players who are successful in their sustainability work.

According to Posti (2022; 2023), re-commerce is an increasing trend on the Finnish e-commerce market. Re-commerce, or online second-hand, means that consumers sell used products to other consumers. The shopping trend is growing due to the customers' increased focus on saving money, due to inflation, and making sustainable choices. Posti (2023) indicates that several e-commerce companies are capitalizing on this trend by offering separate marketplaces for second-hand trading. According to Verkkokauppa (2023), Finland is one of the top countries regarding re-commerce purchasing as 60 % of Finnish individuals between 18 and 65 years have bought second-hand over the last 12 months.

5.3.2 Kitchenware market

According to ECBD (n.d.a), the Finnish e-commerce market can be divided into seven markets. These are Hobby and Leisure, Electronics, Fashion, Furniture and Homeware, Care Products, DIY, and Grocery. See Figure 12 for predicted market shares in 2024.



Figure 12. Predicted market shares of e-commerce categories in Finland 2024. (ECDB, n.d.a)

According to ECDB (n.d.b), the category of Electronics can be further divided into Electrical appliances and Consumer electronics. Electrical appliances are predicted to make up 34.5 % of the Electronics category and Consumer electronics for 65.5 % in 2024. Within Electrical appliances, the e-commerce market share for Household appliances is predicted to account for 89.9 % in 2024. Household appliances include cookers and ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, small kitchen appliances, washing machines, and other household appliances. See Figure 13 for the predicted market shares of the categories in 2024.

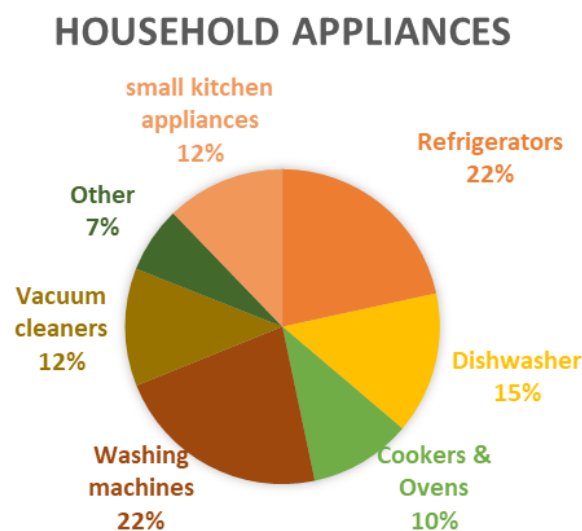


Figure 13. Predicted market shares of product categories within the Household appliance market in Finland 2024. (ECDB, n.d.b)

The Finnish Furniture and Homeware e-commerce market can be divided into Homeware and Furniture, according to ECDB (n.d.c). Homeware is predicted to make up 34.3 % of the category and Furniture 65.7 % of the category. Homeware includes bedding, carpets, curtains and blinds, decorations, lamps, tableware, and other homeware.

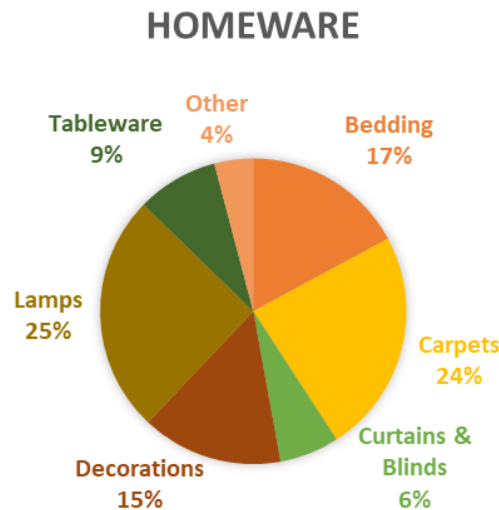


Figure 14. Predicted market shares of product categories within the Homeware market in Finland 2024. (ECDB, n.d.c)

According to the Finnish interviewees (see Table 4), examples of popular kitchenware brands and products are Moomin cups from Arabia, bowls from Marimekko, glasses from Iittala, scissors from Fiskars, coffee from Juhla Mokka, and coffee machines from Moccamaster. Many of these can be found in Finnish households. Based on statistics from Statista, Figures 15 to 24 illustrate additional popular brands found on the Finnish e-commerce market within different kitchenware categories. According to Statista (2023f), the brands' market value shares refer to the total revenues of the brands, including pricing strategies and taxes. In descending order, Electrolux, CANDY, Siemens and LG are the four largest refrigerator brands as they together constitute 46 % of the market share. Miele, Electrolux, CANDY and Siemens are the largest brands on the freezers market, with respective market shares of 16, 13, 10, and 10 % (Statista, 2023g). For dishwashing machines, Miele has the largest market share of 25 %, followed by Siemens at 11 %, and Electrolux and Bosch at 9 % and 8 % (Statista, 2023h). The largest brands on the cookers and ovens market are Flavel, Electrolux, Siemens, and Miele with market shares at 12, 11, 8, and 8 % (Statista, 2023i).

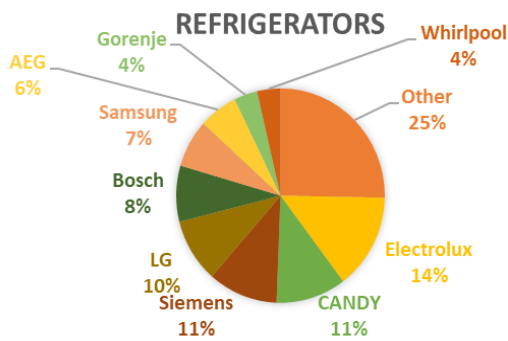


Figure 15. Brand shares on the Finnish refrigerators market. (Statista, 2023f)

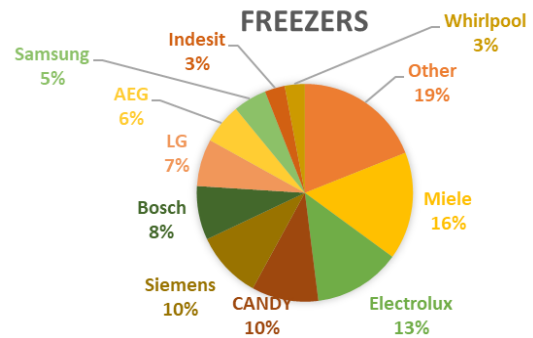


Figure 16. Brand shares on the Finnish freezers market. (Statista, 2023g)

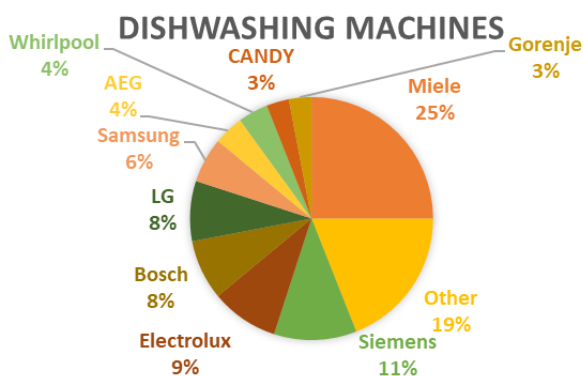


Figure 17. Brand shares on the Finnish dishwashing machines market. (Statista, 2023h)

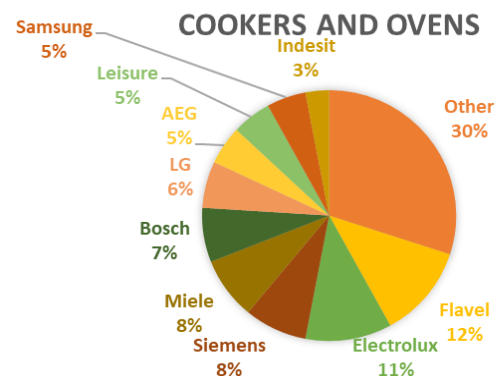


Figure 18. Brand shares on the Finnish cookers and ovens market. (Statista, 2023i)

The small kitchen appliances market's largest brand in regard to market share is Siemens at 13 %, followed by Bosch at 10 %, Toshiba at 5 % and Gorenje at 3 % (Statista, 2023c). Weber is the main brand on the Finnish e-commerce market within Grills and Roasters with a market share of 94 %, followed by Char-Broil and LotusGrill at only 3 and 2 % (Statista, 2023d). The coffee machine market's largest brand in terms of value share is Miele at 29 %, and thereafter DeLonghi at 9 % and Siemens at 7 % (Statista, 2023e). Moreover, there are three main microwave oven brands with similar market shares: Sharp at 21 %, Whirlpool at 19 % and Samsung at 14 % (Statista, 2023j). Sunbeam, Zwilling, Cosori, and Bodym are the largest brands on the electric kettles market at 18, 17, 9 and 7 % (Statista, 2023k). Lastly, the main brand on the toaster market is Tristar with a 45 % market share, followed by Princess at 17 %, Bosch at 9 % and Severing at 8 % (Statista, 2023l).

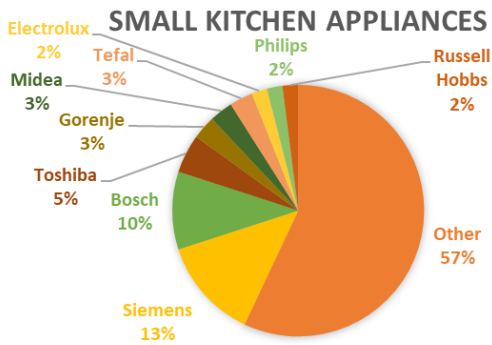


Figure 19. Brand shares on the Finnish small kitchen appliances market. (Statista, 2023c)

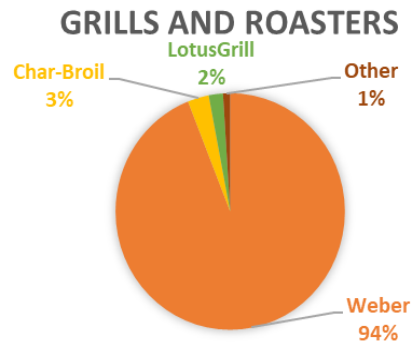


Figure 20. Brand shares on the Finnish grills and roasters market. (Statista, 2023d)

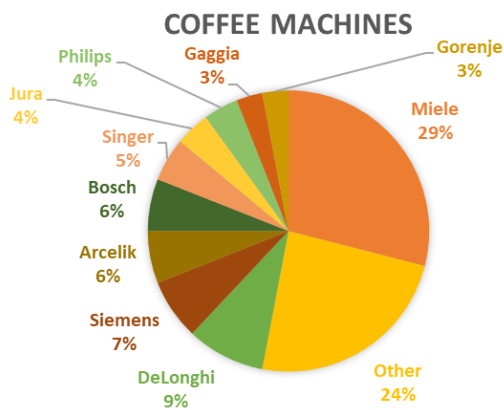


Figure 21. Brand shares on the Finnish coffee machine market. (Statista, 2023e)

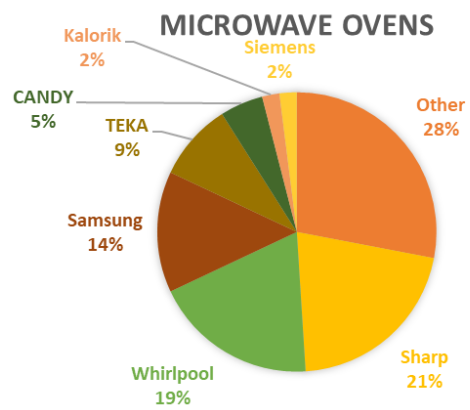


Figure 22. Brand shares on the Finnish microwave ovens market. (Statista, 2023j)

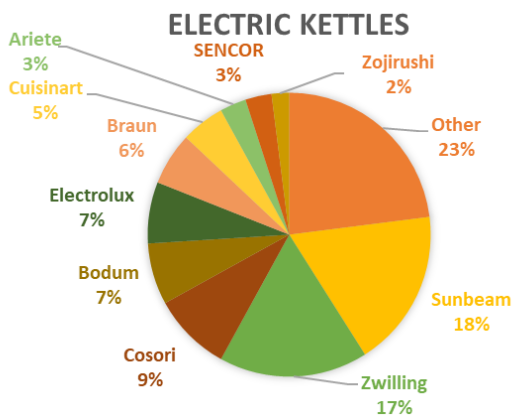


Figure 23. Brand shares on the Finnish electric kettles market. (Statista, 2023k)

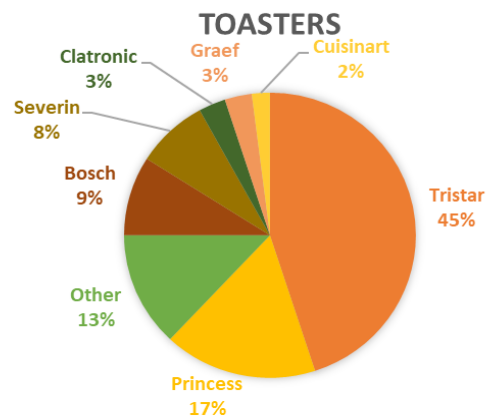


Figure 24. Brand shares on the Finnish toasters market. (Statista, 2023l)

As mentioned above, sustainability is an increasingly important topic for the Finnish e-commerce customers. This trend can also be identified in the kitchenware market. According to Statista (2023b), the demand for household appliances that are energy-efficient has increased rapidly due to the country's focus on eco-friendly living and sustainability. This is reflected in multiple household appliances' markets, such as refrigerators, freezers, dishwashing machines, coffee machines, microwaves, electric kettles and toasters. According to Statista (2024b), the sustainability trend can also be identified within the kitchenware market. The kitchenware market includes table linen, dinnerware, and mugs and teacups, where sustainable products' demands have increased rapidly. Moreover, Statista (2023c) highlights a steadily increasing demand in Finland for small kitchen appliances. This is explained by Finland's increasing enthusiasm for healthy cooking and a lifestyle centered around convenience. Waffle irons, blenders, mixers, food processors, juicers, deep fryers, and egg cookers are included in the small kitchen appliances category. Additionally, Statista (2023d) highlights that grills and roasters experience a growing demand for high-quality products. This trend is a consequence of the Finnish people's appreciation for outdoor cooking. High-quality, and eco-friendly, coffee machines are also trending in the Finnish market (Statista, 2023e).

5.3.3 Competitors

Based on data from Bagaren och Kocken, there are multiple competitors in the Finnish market who sell kitchenware including, but not limited to, home decorations, grills, domestic appliances, and tableware. The top 30 competitors in Finland, based on overlapping assortments with Bagaren och Kocken, can be seen in Table 6 where they are anonymized. In Table 6, competitor 1 has the most overlapping assortment with Bagaren och Kocken and competitor 30 has the least. The table provides information about the main focus of competitors' assortments, their average price levels, and if they have physical and/or online presence in Finland. "Main assortment focus" indicates the primary products each competitor sells based on their website, while "average price level" refers to how each competitor prices its overlapping assortment compared to Bagaren och Kocken's prices. If the competitors have higher average price levels, it means that they are pricing the overlapping assortment higher compared to Bagaren och Kocken.

Table 6. Top 30 competitors to Bagaren och Kocken in Finland, listed in descending order based on an overlapping assortment.

| Competitor | Main assortment focus | Physical or online store in Finland | Average price level |
|------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Furniture and home decorations | Online | Higher |
| 2 | Furniture and home decorations | Online | Lower |
| 3 | A wide range of different types of | Online | Higher |

| | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|--------|
| | products | | |
| 4 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Online | Higher |
| 5 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Physical and online | Higher |
| 6 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Online | Higher |
| 7 | A wide range of different types of products | Online | Higher |
| 8 | Furniture and home decorations | Physical and online | Lower |
| 9 | Electronic products | Physical and online | Lower |
| 10 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Physical and online | Higher |
| 11 | A wide range of different types of products | Physical and online | Higher |
| 12 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Online | Lower |
| 13 | All products for the kitchen | Online | Lower |
| 14 | Furniture and home decorations | Online | Higher |
| 15 | Furniture and home decorations | Online | Higher |
| 16 | A wide range of different types of products | Physical and online | Lower |
| 17 | Electronic products | Physical and online | Higher |
| 18 | Electronic products | Online | Lower |
| 19 | All products for the kitchen | Online | Lower |
| 20 | Electronic products | Online | Lower |
| 21 | Furniture and home | Online | Higher |

| | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|--------|
| | decorations | | |
| 22 | A wide range of different types of products | Online | Higher |
| 23 | Fashion, beauty, and furniture | Physical and online | Higher |
| 24 | Construction equipment | Physical and online | Lower |
| 25 | Construction equipment | Physical and online | Lower |
| 26 | Furniture and home decorations | Online | Higher |
| 27 | A wide range of different types of products | Physical and online | Higher |
| 28 | Electronic products | Physical and online | Lower |
| 29 | Electronic products | Online | Higher |
| 30 | Construction equipment | Physical and online | Lower |

6. Marketing strategy analysis

In Finland, there is a thriving e-commerce landscape, and many Finnish people are passionate about cooking as a hobby. Additionally, Finnish consumers have a strong preference for high-quality products. This presents numerous opportunities for Bagaren och Kocken to enhance its presence in the market. To seize these opportunities, it's crucial for the company to develop a new marketing strategy. This involves a comprehensive analysis of positioning, product offerings, pricing strategies, promotional activities, distribution channels, and customer relationships. In the section below these aspects are analyzed to answer RQ2.

6.1 Positioning

According to Kotler et al. (2017), understanding competitors in the market is important to be able to find a suitable positioning. The competitors can be identified based on finding businesses offering similar products. Hence, competitors to Bagaren och Kocken have been identified by focusing on companies with the most overlapping assortments. The analysis covers the top 30 competitors, revealing six groups of companies that Bagaren och Kocken competes within. As Kotler et al. (2017) suggest, these groups represent different categories of businesses, which have been named Home Decor, Fashion, Marketplace, Kitchen, Electronics, and Building.

The Home Decor category consists of the seven companies, 1, 2, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 26 (see Table 6). The companies within this category primarily focus on selling furniture, utensils, and home decorations. Similarly, the Fashion category includes the six companies, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, and 23. These companies mainly sell products within fashion, beauty, and home furnishing. The Marketplace category features the six companies, 3, 7, 11, 16, 22 and 27 (see Table 6) and they offer a wide range of products within, but not limited to, furniture, clothing, toys, electronics, books, beauty, garden, and sports. Within the Kitchen category, the two companies 13 and 19 (see Table 6), share a similar focus to Bagaren och Kocken, specializing in kitchen products. Electronics, the fifth category, includes the six competitors, 9, 17, 18, 20, 28, and 29 (see Table 6). These companies specialize in selling electronic products including, but not limited to, microwave ovens, TV-screens, telephones, and freezers. Lastly, the Building category comprises the three companies 24, 25, and 30 (see Table 6). These companies have a main focus on selling construction materials and accessories for the home and garden area.

Furthermore, all competitors have been analyzed based on their pricing compared to their overlapping assortment to Bagaren och Kocken. This analysis can be seen in Figure 25, where the size of the bubbles indicates the extent of the overlapping assortment compared with Bagaren och Kocken. Bubbles positioned to the right of Bagaren och Kocken indicate higher pricing of the overlapping assortment, whereas those on the left signify lower pricing. Presently, Bagaren och Kocken has a central position, with slightly more competitors positioned to the right. This suggests that the case company offers slightly lower prices than a majority of its competitors in the Finnish market.

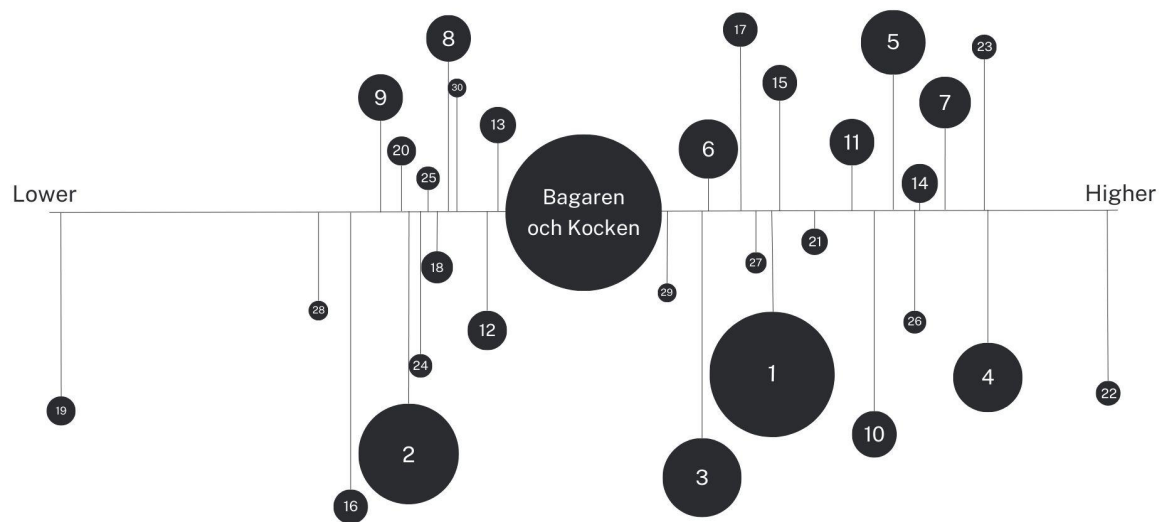


Figure 25. Top 30 competitors to Bagaren och Kocken based on overlapping assortment. The size of the circles represents the amount of overlapping assortment. The competitors are placed according to the average price levels.

The different positioning strategies outlined by Kotler et al. (2017), cost leadership, differentiation, and focus, are important for Bagaren och Kocken to delve into. These can guide the company in determining its competitive edge and market position in Finland. While a cost leadership positioning strategy may seem advantageous, especially given the findings regarding price sensitivity observed among Finns, adopting a cost leadership strategy might require cutting prices even lower. Offering lower prices than competitors may compromise Bagaren och Kocken's profit margins. Additionally, more than half of the top 30 competitors offer higher prices compared to Bagaren och Kocken, indicating a potential for setting higher prices rather than lower ones. Moreover, given the company's established position as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware in their other markets, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, changing to a cost leadership strategy in Finland could introduce confusion and additional work as this would necessitate a new strategic direction.

The second positioning strategy, differentiation, mentioned by Kotler et al. (2017), aligns well with Bagaren och Kocken's existing positioning, particularly in Sweden, where they are recognized as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware. Extending this strategy to Finland could be both feasible and relevant. Kotler et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of a clear positioning strategy to avoid confusion and effectively specialize in the chosen focus area. Therefore, maintaining a consistent positioning strategy across markets, including Finland, could enable the company to excel in its current positioning. Through a differentiation positioning strategy, Bagaren och Kocken can offer a unique proposition in the Finnish market, potentially establishing themselves as the frontrunner on the market, as suggested by Kotler et al. (2017). Moreover, the analysis of the top 30 competitors reveals that none of the competitors

offers the same comprehensive kitchenware assortment as Bagaren och Kocken. Moreover, the company stands out in the Finnish market by operating across all six previously mentioned categories, integrating them into a unified shopping experience. Since the findings show that the main reason for Finnish customers to shop online is the wide product selection it provides, it is relevant for Bagaren och Kocken to continue offering their wide assortment of high-quality kitchenware products. This aligns well with the differentiation positioning strategy, enabling competitive advantage in the Finnish market. Although the competitors within the category Kitchen share a similar kitchenware assortment niche, they lack the breadth of assortment Bagaren och Kocken offers, particularly in large domestic appliances. This underscores the company's ability to stand out compared to their competitors in Finland. Another factor supporting a continuation of the differentiation positioning strategy as category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware is the Finnish consumers' preference for high-quality products. Additionally, Outnorth's business in Finland experiences a high rate of returning customers, whereas one of the reasons could be the perceived high quality of their products. This underscores the potential benefits for Bagaren och Kocken in focusing on delivering high-quality products to Finnish consumers.

The focus positioning strategy suggests only targeting a narrow segment of the market (Kotler et al., 2017). Due to the company's wide assortment, they are able to serve large parts of the Finnish market. Despite Bagaren och Kockeken's main target customers being individuals aged 30 to 60, their broad assortment appeals to all age groups. The company also sees a trend of the age range broadening to include younger customers in the future. Therefore, the focus strategy might be too restrictive, risking leading to missing sales opportunities.

When considering Bagaren och Kocken's market positioning strategies and its expansion prospects in the Finnish market, the company name is an interesting and strategic factor to consider. Today, the company is called KitchenOne in Finland. However, the findings point to the Finnish consumers' preference for familiar and domestic companies when making a purchase. This underscores how important it is for companies to connect with local culture and identity when it comes to how consumers perceive them. Bagaren och Kocken has already demonstrated adaptability by adjusting its name to the Norwegian language in Norway, exemplifying the customization of branding strategies to suit local preferences. Likewise, in Finland, adopting a name that resonates with the native language may enhance the company's appeal and credibility among Finnish consumers, fostering trust and stronger relationships. Given Bagaren och Kocken's current small and relatively unknown status in Finland, the risk of customer confusion or relationship deterioration associated with a name change is small. Instead, this presents an opportunity for the company to establish itself as a new entrant in the market, leveraging a Finnish name to build its brand identity. However, it is noteworthy that Outnorth, despite not adapting its name to the native language, has managed to grow its business in the Finnish market. The choice to either change or retain the name should be decided by evaluating the company's strategic objectives and the potential benefits of aligning towards local preferences against the risks and costs involved in rebranding.

6.2 Product

As Kotler et al. (2017) highlight that the product dimension of a company's marketing strategy includes the product mix offered to the target customers. Bagaren och Kocken provides a diverse product mix to their customers across all markets, consisting of eight different product lines (see Table 1). With 21 000 active items distributed across these product lines, each product line comprises numerous different products tailored to meet the diverse needs of customers. Having a wide kitchenware assortment in Finland can be suitable considering that the findings indicate that 25 % of the Finnish people have cooking as a hobby. Moreover, the findings show that international cooking is an upcoming trend in Finland. This also favors a wide assortment of kitchen products to cater to both present and future customer needs. Furthermore, in line with the positioning strategy of differentiation, a wide assortment is important for Bagaren och Kocken to create a competitive advantage, particularly as local competitors in Finland offer a limited selection of the same products (see Figure 25). However, managing a wide assortment necessitates considerable work for the company to effectively manage different products' demands and pricing strategies.

As outlined by Kotler et al. (2017), quality is an important product attribute which impacts a product's ability to satisfy buyer needs and create customer value. Bagaren och Kocken's product mix consists of high-quality brands and products, laying a solid foundation for delivering customer value. Additionally, the findings show the Finnish customers' appreciation for and interest in high-quality products. Therefore, it could be of importance for the company to maintain a focus on high quality within its product assortment for the market. Moreover, the external situation analysis reveals a growing demand for sustainable products in Finland. This trend is reflected in the markets for kitchenware, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashing machines, coffee machines, microwaves, electric kettles, and toasters. To effectively respond to these demands and market trends, it is important to provide clear and available product information on the website for the Finnish customers regarding for example the product's quality and energy efficiency. This information may convince the customers to purchase the products from Bagaren och Kocken's website, as the findings show that Finnish customers are information seekers. When seeking information, the Finnish customers commonly check recommendations from shops and other customers as well as manufacturers' and brands' websites to a larger extent compared to other Europeans. While the company's website already offers product information, it is important that the information is correctly written in Finnish to ensure accurate translation. By doing so, the chances of creating a deeper connection with the local (potential) customers may increase. The findings indicate that when information is poorly written it can be easily detected and risks having a negative effect on the customers' buying experience. The findings further suggest using a native speaker instead of a translator is recommended, as they can better capture the nuances of the Finnish language.

The company's product brands are also an important aspect to consider (Kotler et al., 2017). The findings from the external situation analysis indicate a preference among Finnish customers for kitchenware from Finnish brands. The findings show that this preference stems from a desire to support the domestic economy. Hence, it would be advantageous for Bagaren

och Kocken to incorporate Finnish brands in their product assortment. Popular Finnish brands include Arabia, Marimekko, Iittala, Fiskars, and Juhla Mokka. Additionally, Moccamaster is mentioned as a popular non-Finnish brand for coffee machines. Bagaren och Kocken offers all of these brands in their product assortment, except for Juhla Mokka. This alignment is positive as the company would not have to integrate multiple new brands into their product assortment to cater to the Finnish customer needs. Therefore, it could be important to maintain these brand offerings in Finland. It could also be beneficial for the company to manage these brands closely to ensure that they can offer the latest product series. On the one hand, this could attract new Finnish customers. On the other hand, managing the brands closely could require more resources from the company compared to today. It would therefore be important to ensure that the benefits outweigh the additional costs. Furthermore, Bagaren och Kocken could add Juhla Mokka coffee to their product assortment. Given that the company already offers coffee from other brands such as Lavazza, Melitta, and Café Mauro, adding Juhla Mokka aligns with their existing product assortment. By incorporating this Finnish brand, the company adapts to the local demand, potentially enhancing the sense of familiarity for their Finnish customers. This could be positive, considering the identified barrier of reluctance to purchase from foreign companies due to a lack of familiarity. Nevertheless, adding a new brand to the assortment requires extra resources which may pose challenges for the company.

The growing preference towards global brands, including Scandinavian brands is an aspect favoring Bagaren och Kocken's current wide assortment, including not only Finnish brands. Data presented in the external situation analysis (Figures 15 to 24) reveal the popularity of multiple non-Finnish brands in Finland. Electrolux holds significant market shares across various categories including refrigerators, freezers, dishwashing machines, cookers and ovens, small kitchen appliances, and electric kettles. Siemens is another important brand in refrigerators, freezers, dishwashing machines, cookers and ovens, small kitchen appliances, microwave ovens, and coffee machines. Additionally, Bosch is popular for refrigerators, freezers, dishwashing machines, small kitchen appliances, cookers and ovens, coffee machines, and toasters. Bagaren och Kocken already offers Electrolux, Siemens, and Bosch products to Finnish customers, aligning well with local demand for these brands. Moreover, the data shows that Weber is the leading brand in the grills and roasters market. Weber is also a brand already offered by the company, which is advantageous considering the Finnish enthusiasm for grilling. Furthermore, a popular brand which the company does not offer today is Miele. Miele's freezers, dishwashing machines, cookers and ovens, and coffee machines are popular in Finland. It could therefore be of interest to add the brand to the product assortment. Nevertheless, before proceeding, it is important to ensure that Miele is a premium brand with high-quality products aligns with Bagaren och Kocken's differentiation positioning strategy. Additionally, it is important to note that despite the growing interest in global brands, the findings still indicate a stronger preference towards domestic brands over foreign alternatives.

Kotler et al. (2017) describe the product lines offered by a company as an important part of a company's product offering. Considering the width of the product mix, Bagaren och Kocken offers a width of eight different product lines to its customers. Moreover, Kotler et al. (2017) mention that a company's product line can be expanded by product line filling. Product line

filling entails incorporating more products within the current extent of the line to e.g. become more resilient towards economic fluctuations (Kotler et al., 2017). Bagaren och Kocken currently offers a wide array of products in the Finnish market of 21 000 active items across various product lines. As the findings show, Finland's economic situation was considered a recession in 2023 and the Finnish consumers' purchasing power is relatively weak. Due to the already existing high variety of products, Bagaren och Kocken may not need to prioritize product line filling as the company could already be relatively resilient towards economic fluctuations. Additionally, adding more products entails more resources needed as it can lead to increased administration for the personnel.

However, as mentioned by Kotler et al. (2017), adding more products to the product lines would potentially make the company even more resilient towards economic fluctuations in the future, presenting a long-term benefit. Moreover, the findings reveal that Finnish people like to cook fish, mushrooms, stews, and soups. Also, casseroles seem to be popular to cook, mentioned by all Finnish interviewees. Given these preferences, it could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken to add more products to the sub-product line of deep-oven dishes, included in the product line Cookware and frying pans. This product mix depth could be increased by incorporating more variants of deep-oven dishes products to further align with local preferences. That way, an increasing sense of familiarity can be gained by the Finnish customers when they visit the company website. Nevertheless, it is important that the new products have high quality and originate from premium brands to align with the company's differentiation positioning strategy. A drawback with developing this category could be the extra resources needed to determine which new products to add. Furthermore, expanding the depth of the product mix, not only for the category of deep-oven dishes but also for preferred Finnish brands like Marimekko and Fiskars, can help ensure the company meets the Finnish customer needs. This also includes the coffee products provided by the company, as the findings show that the Finnish population has a notably high consumption of coffee. Therefore, increasing the depth of coffee machines and coffee accessories, including, for example, coffee cups, could be beneficial. By doing so, the company caters more towards the Finnish customers' demand and thereby enhances customer value. However, a potential drawback lies in the need for extra resources to determine which new products to add and to then handle these.

The findings also indicate that being outdoors and grilling are popular interests among Finns. Products for these activities constitute the product line Grills at Bagaren och Kocken today which is suitable. To maintain competitiveness in this segment, it could be beneficial to manage these products closely and ensure a strong supplier relationship with Weber to ensure having an updated assortment. The same goes for all Finnish brand suppliers, as an updated assortment could increase the chance of fulfilling the local customer needs. Moreover, the product line of small kitchen appliances reflects an identified trend towards more healthy and convenient cooking. To stay competitive in this segment, these products should also be managed closely to ensure availability of products that align with these trends.

Product line stretching is another way of expanding a company's existing product lines (Kotler et al., 2017). Considering Bagaren och Kocken's differentiation positioning strategy as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware, the alternative of adding lower-end products could have a negative impact on the positioning strategy and cheapen the company's brand image. However, the findings indicate that Finnish customers are price sensitive. Therefore, the company could consider adding lower-end products to their assortment, such as cheaper Finnish brands, to attract new customers.

As previously described by Kotler et al. (2017), an international company can have a straight product extension towards markets, i.e. the same product assortment is offered on all geographical markets or adapt the products to the local market (Kotler et al., 2017). Given that Bagaren och Kocken today sells the same products in Finland and Sweden, the company can be considered to have a straight product extension. As mentioned by Kotler et al. (2017), a drawback with this product strategy is the risk of failing to meet the expectations and demands in the local market (Kotler et al., 2017). If Bagaren och Kocken would instead adapt their product assortment to the local market, Finnish consumers' expectations can be met and their needs satisfied. However, it can be costly to adapt the assortment towards local markets since, for example, new relationships with suppliers may have to be established. Therefore, a total product adaptation may not be desirable either. Considering that the findings show a popularity of many brands already offered by Bagaren och Kocken in Finland, keeping the same product assortment and only incorporating smaller adaptations could be suitable for the company. These adaptations could include developing the sub-product line of deep-oven dishes, and increasing the product mix depth of coffee machines and coffee accessories, along with adding Juhla Mokka into the assortment. Such changes could be beneficial to enhance the customer value for the Finnish customers.

6.2 Price

Bagaren och Kocken today prices its products based on profit margins and competitors' prices, employing a competitive-based pricing strategy. This approach, according to Kotler et al. (2017), involves considering competitors' prices, costs, strategies, and marketing offerings when setting prices. Aligning its prices with competitors' pricing could be suitable, given that Finnish customers are price-sensitive and often compare prices on various brand sites.

Analyzing the various product groups offered by Bagaren och Kocken, including Tableware, Grills, Home decor, Knives, Cookware and frypans, Kitchen utensils, Small kitchen appliances, and Large kitchen appliances, reveals different competitors for each group. Therefore, it may be important to understand which competitors to follow based on the product group being priced.

The Tableware group shows significant overlap in assortment with competitors across four business categories: Fashion, Home decor, Kitchen, and Marketplace (see Section 6.1 for category descriptions). Hence, when pricing tableware products, all competitors within these business categories could be considered by Bagaren och Kocken. Companies within Home

decor and Fashion are of particular importance due to their substantial assortment overlap with the Tableware product group. Furthermore, the Grills product group demonstrates the most overlapping assortment for Bagaren and Kocken with the competitors in the Building business category. Although grills are not the main overlapping assortment for other business categories, some competitors in Electronics and Marketplace offer many similar grill products to Bagaren och Kocken and could therefore preferably also be considered for pricing comparison. Moreover, the competitors included in the Home decor and Fashion business categories have substantial overlapping assortments with Bagaren och Kocken's Home decor product group. Therefore, it could be advantageous to include these competitors when pricing Home decor products.

All competitors within the Marketplace, Kitchen, Fashion, and Building business categories offer Knives. Moreover, Cookware and fry pans are sold by competitors in Electronics, Fashion, Kitchen, and Marketplace. As the competitors only have smaller overlapping assortments of Knives, and Cookware and fry pans with Bagaren och Kocken, the company could use these competitors as pricing indicators but also include additional competitors outside the top 30 to ensure competitive pricing. Furthermore, for the Kitchen utensils product group, a significant overlapping assortment can be found among the competitors included in the business categories Fashion, Home decor, and Kitchen. Therefore, these competitors could preferably be followed when determining prices for Kitchen utensils. Moreover, the business category Marketplace has a slightly less overlapping kitchen utensils assortment with Bagaren och Kocken. However, the included competitors in this business category could still be taken into consideration when setting prices to ensure that no competitors are missed. Furthermore, competitors in the Electronics and Marketplace business categories overlap in the product group Small kitchen appliances. Therefore, it is highly relevant for the company to follow these competitors' prices when it comes to small kitchen appliances. Lastly, a significant assortment overlaps in Large kitchen appliances can be found among the competitors in the Electronics business category. Additionally, competitors in the Building business category could be considered for pricing decisions for Large kitchen appliances, given their significant overlapping assortment with Bagaren och Kocken in this product group.

Table 7 provides a comprehensive overview of each product group, with shaded grey boxes indicating significant overlapping assortment with Bagaren och Kocken across the different business categories. The grey-shaded areas highlight the potential business categories which the company could consider when determining prices for each product group.

Table 7. Business categories to follow when determining prices for different product groups.

| Product groups | Business categories | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------|
| | Building | Electronics | Fashion | Home decor | Kitchen | Market-place |
| Small kitchen appliances | | | | | | |
| Cookware and frying pans | | | | | | |
| Tableware | | | | | | |
| Knives | | | | | | |
| Kitchen utensils | | | | | | |
| Grills | | | | | | |
| Large kitchen appliances | | | | | | |
| Home decor | | | | | | |

However, it is important for the company to consider competitors' offerings and strategies to ensure pricing and that the offerings are in line with Bagaren och Kocken's positioning strategy. For instance, the competitors within the category Marketplace have a large overlapping assortment and should be taken into consideration when determining prices for multiple product categories (see Table 7). However, many of these companies offer their products at lower prices, potentially aiming for a cost-leadership positioning strategy. This approach contrasts with Bagaren och Kocken's differentiation positioning as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware. Therefore, it might not be suitable to strictly follow the Marketplace competitors' prices. Another example is the Kitchen category. Conversely, competitors in the Kitchen category, who focus specifically on kitchen products, may offer pricing and strategies more aligned with Bagaren och Kocken's. This could make them a more appropriate benchmark, not only following them from a price perspective but also from a strategic positioning perspective. Therefore, it could be beneficial for the company to delve

deeper into analyzing its competitors, ensuring alignment not only in product offering but also in strategic positioning.

Price is not the only factor in consumer decision-making. Kotler et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of evaluating whether customers perceive the products to offer higher value compared to competitors. As Bagaren och Kocken positions itself as a category expert in premium, high-quality kitchenware, it does not compete solely on price. Instead, the company seeks to provide added value through expert knowledge, exceptional service, high-quality products, and a comprehensive online shopping experience. By delivering superior value to Finnish customers, Bagaren och Kocken can justify higher prices. This could result in a shift towards the right for the company in Figure 25. Outnorth, with a wide online assortment of high-quality products, not offering the lowest prices, is a good example of a successful company in the Finnish market that Bagaren och Kocken can follow. The company would however need to invest more resources in the Finnish market to enhance the perceived value of its products. This entails improving information sharing, ensuring professional service, and providing customer support in Finnish to offer the same level of expertise as in other markets, considering that the company offers customer service in Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and English today. Failure to deliver exceptional service may result in lower perceived value. In such a scenario, it becomes even more crucial to consider competitors' prices, as consumers are likely to compare offerings. Furthermore, Bagaren och Kocken faces a disadvantage as a foreign company, as findings indicate Finnish consumers prefer domestic online stores over foreign ones.

As suggested by Kotler et al. (2017), considering external factors is also important when determining pricing strategies, especially in the context of Bagaren och Kocken's operations in Finland. The findings indicate a challenging economic environment in Finland, with factors such as inflation, interest rates, and recession, which are impacting the purchasing power of the consumers. This economic environment might have heightened price sensitivity among consumers, as shown by the findings. Additionally, some of the Finnish interviewees also mentioned that foreign companies may attract Finnish customers if they offer lower prices. In response to this trend, Kotler et al. (2017) recommend that companies could offer discounts and reduce prices. Hence, it may be advantageous for Bagaren och Kocken to use promotional pricing and special event pricing to increase sales. Leveraging these pricing strategies, particularly on products from Finnish brands, could attract new customers and increase sales. Given the Finnish consumers' preference for domestic brands, this could present a beneficial opportunity for the company to expand its customer base. However, it is important to recognize that these strategies may potentially inflict on the profit margins, a concern that must be taken into consideration, considering the company's commitment to stay profitable. Additionally, the findings also indicate an increased purchasing power in Finland in the near future, which could decrease the Finnish customers' price focus. Moreover, as noted by Kotler et al. (2017) implementing such strategies might affect the company's image, risking to cheapen the brand.

Bagaren och Kocken's approach to base their product prices on local competitors in the Finnish market reflects an adaptation to local market dynamics, as recommended by Kotler et al.

(2017). By considering local market conditions such as price sensitivity among the Finnish consumers, the company can ensure being a competitive and attractive option on the market. With the given economic conditions including the recent recession, competitive pricing could be important. Moreover, the company's online presence facilitates easy comparison of prices by Finnish customers, emphasizing the need to closely monitor local competitors' pricing strategies. However, a potential drawback of adapting to local prices is the risk that customers may compare the company's prices across different markets, such as Bagaren och Kocken's Swedish site. Therefore, it could be advantageous to maintain consistency in pricing across markets to avoid customer dissatisfaction or confusion.

6.3 Promotion

Kotler et al. (2016) refer to promotion as activities involving communicating the product quality and convincing customers to buy the product. One important promotional tool is advertising (Kotler et al., 2016). When developing the advertising message, it is important that Bagaren och Kocken develops a suitable message with correct language by using a Finnish speaking translator. Otherwise, as the findings indicate, the Finnish customer might be offended. To convince the Finnish customers to purchase products, the advertising message could focus on the high quality of the company's products, its coffee machines, and deep-oven dish products. By adapting to the Finnish cultural preferences, the company may convince Finnish customers to buy the products. However, this kind of local adaptation risks demanding more resources for Bagaren och Kocken compared to today as these advertisements may only be useful towards the Finnish market.

Furthermore, the media chosen for the advertisements could preferably be electronic media considering Finnish media preferences in 2022 (see Table 5). This choice of media could suit Bagaren och Kocken well considering that the company already uses electronic media on their other markets via for example Google, Facebook, and Instagram. Additionally, Outnorth uses electronic media in Finland to advertise. Given Outnorth's high number of returning customers in the Finnish market, it could be of interest for Bagaren och Kocken to do the same. A second interesting media alternative is to put advertisements in newspapers in Finland, considering the findings indicating that reading the newspapers is the most used printed media in Finland (see Table 5). However, due to the absence of relevant magazines by Egmont in Finland, this option may be harder and more costly to implement. The company would have to assess which magazines to advertise in, ensuring that they effectively reach the target audience without incurring excessively high costs.

As mentioned above, if using advertisements in Finland, it would be important for Bagaren och Kocken to ensure that the Finnish language and its nuances, together with cultural relevance, are correct. To verify this, the company could do pre-evaluations of the ads. This could be done by showing the advertisement message to focus groups consisting of Finnish people who then provide feedback. Preferably, these focus groups could consist of Finnish people with different backgrounds, including different ages, sexes, careers, and social status, to ensure that no one is offended. However, it may be hard for the company to gather relevant people due to Bagaren

och Kocken's, and Egmont's, lack of local presence in Finland. A suggestion could instead be to perform this task by having Finnish speaking personnel at Bagaren och Kocken doing it. That way, the pre-evaluation can be done without demanding extra resources. Nevertheless, a precondition for this solution is that the company hires Finnish speaking personnel. Moreover, post evaluation could also be an important tool to use in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the advertisements (Kotler et al., 2017). Bagaren och Kocken could advantageously use post-evaluations to see if their Finnish advertisements have attracted new customers and if they should be used again in the future. However, post-evaluation may demand extra resources for the company. But if the company could do this across all their markets, they could ensure that the marketing communication resources are well used.

Another marketing communication channel mentioned by Kotler et al. (2017) is sales promotion. The authors describe sales promotion as short-term incentives to encourage purchase of a product. Based on Bagaren och Kocken's operations, the company uses sales promotions in Finland today by doing price campaigns. On the one hand, considering the previously mentioned Finnish customers' price sensitivity and information seeking behavior, price campaigns are suitable on the Finnish market to attract new customers. On the other hand, Kotler et al. (2017) highlight the risk of cheapening the company's brand image if price campaigns are overused. This does not align with Bagaren och Kocken's differentiation positioning strategy in Finland. Therefore, it could be wise to use price campaigns to a limited extent on the Finnish market. Moreover, the findings indicate that Finnish customers prefer domestic brands. For the company to locally adapt to these preferences, promotional campaigns and contests featuring products from Finnish brands could be implemented. These campaigns could boost sales and attract new customers. Additionally, as mentioned by Outnorth, the timing of promotional campaigns could be an important factor for Bagaren och Kocken to consider in Finland. However, it is important that the chosen products are relevant for the Finnish customers to ensure success and increased sales. Furthermore, another potentially suitable sales promotion could be to offer price packs. For example, a price pack containing a Moccamaster machine and Juhla Mokka coffee beans tailors the promotion towards the local market by taking the customers high consumption of coffee and preferred coffee brands into consideration. By offering this price pack, the customers' sense of familiarity regarding Bagaren och Kocken could increase, leading to more customers. A potential drawback with offering this price pack is its high specificity towards the Finnish market. This could potentially make it hard for the company to offer the same promotion to their other markets and thereby creating more work to cater to a small market's specific demands. Nevertheless, considering that the findings show that Finnish buyers are more engaged in store-specific off-season sales campaigns in e-commerce compared to general season sales like Black Friday, it could be a beneficial idea for Bagaren och Kocken to offer market specific sales.

Direct and digital marketing is also an important marketing communication channel, highlighted by Kotler et al. (2017). By engaging directly with customers, a company can build strong customer relationships. According to the authors, an important tool in online marketing is to have a user-friendly website. Considering that Bagaren och Kocken only sells products to their Finnish customers via their website, it could be extra important for them to provide a user-

friendly experience via the website to attract customers. Additionally, the findings show that digital marketing is experiencing a rapid growth in Finland which underscores the importance of having an attractive website. As the findings indicate, it is also important to provide the right information on the website, on the one hand regarding product quality and functions, on the other hand to ensure correctly stated information regarding return policies, free delivery, payment methods, delivery options, and delivery time. Having these facts clearly stated could be a determining factor if a Finnish customer decides to make a purchase or not. Specifically, the findings show that unclear information about return policies is one of the main reasons why Finnish people do not want to buy from foreign companies. Therefore, as a foreign company, it could be important for Bagaren och Kocken to take this into consideration when adapting the website towards the Finnish market. Furthermore, the information has to be well written with correct language to build trust with the Finnish customers. One potential reason for Outnorth's success in the Finnish market is the improved and clarified information regarding returns and purchase conditions, which underscores the importance further. Moreover, an effective website is easy to navigate and visually appealing (Kotler et al., 2017). This could be achieved by including and clearly showing the previously mentioned sub-product line of deep-oven dishes as well as a category of coffee machines and related accessories on Bagaren och Kocken's website as two tabs. Additionally, the website would then be more adapted towards the Finnish market. However, the company would have to ensure that the company is perceived in the same way across all markets' websites to ensure a consistent brand image.

Kotler et al. (2017) also describe the potential usefulness of using online advertisements on for example Google or Yahoo to attract new customers and increase sales. The findings reveal that Google is one of the main search engines used in Finland, considering that it has a usage rate over 90 %. Additionally, given that approximately half of all digital marketing in Finland is done through Google and Facebook, using Google Ads could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken. Also, Outnorth uses Google today for advertising in Finland and it is the marketing communication channel which gives the highest result regarding sales and visits on the website. Moreover, Bagaren och Kocken already uses Google paid advertising today. Considering the popularity of using Google in Finland and that the company already uses this marketing communication channel, it could be beneficial to keep doing so in the Finnish market to gain customers and enhance the brand's visibility. However, a mentioned drawback is the company's heavy dependence on Google combined with the high costs that this marketing communication channel creates.

Email is another important tool described by Kotler et al. (2017), as it enables companies to send personalized messages to customers. Bagaren och Kocken already uses email marketing today on the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish market, however not in Finland. Given the Finnish preference for information and the lack of inspirational campaigns towards the Finnish market, email marketing could be relevant to incorporate. The emails could be tailored specifically to the Finnish customers, for example during cultural celebrations like Runeberg's Day. A suggestion could also be to highlight products from Finnish brands and incorporate recipes for Runeberg's cake around Runeberg's Day to further align Bagaren och Kocken's marketing communication with Finnish culture, thereby creating a stronger connection with

Finnish consumers. However, this type of inspirational campaigns would not have to solely be used in the email marketing but could preferably be applied in the other marketing communication channels as well. However, as previously emphasized, the language needs to be correct and adapted to ensure a positive response from the Finnish customers.

Lastly, a powerful digital marketing tool identified by Kotler et al. (2017) is social media marketing. Social media marketing is advantageous considering its ability to tailor content to customer communities and the possibility to interact with customers and receive customer feedback, as well as being a cost-effective option (Kotler et al., 2017). In Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, Bagaren och Kocken uses platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to reach out to customers. This indicates that the company possesses the skills to work with social media in the Finnish market as well. To reach many customers in Finland, it could be beneficial to use social media marketing, considering that the findings show that 70 % of the Finnish population are active on social media. Additionally, Outnorth uses social media in Finland and sees it as a good opportunity to reach and engage with Finnish customers. Facebook has been a useful social media channel for Outnorth and might therefore also be a good option for Bagaren och Kocken considering that Facebook has the most users in Finland when comparing different social media channels.

Regarding social media marketing content, the company's existing content could be translated and directly used on the Finnish market to a large extent due to Bagaren och Kocken's current differentiation positioning strategy across all markets. However, it could adjust and create some content specifically to the Finnish market as well to enhance a sense of familiarity and brand visibility towards the Finnish customers. The findings indicate that these adjustments could include incorporating cultural values, Finnish humor, and traditions into the content. Kotler et al. (2017) also describe social media marketing as a cost-efficient option as the content, interaction and posting on social media platforms can be managed without significant costs. If the social media marketing efforts prove successful and begin to attract a growing audience in Finland, it could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken to collaborate with a Finnish influencer. By doing so, the company could increasingly gain trust from the Finnish customers. Additionally, a Finnish influencer could enhance the company's brand awareness in Finland. The findings also show that Finnish customers prefer to read recommendations from other Finnish customers when making online purchases. By having a Finnish influencer testing and recommending the products, there are possibilities for increased sales. Moreover, Outnorth, who is already doing well on social media in Finland, is considering affiliate marketing, which indicates that it could be a relevant step for Bagaren och Kocken as well in the future. However, locating and establishing relevant influencer relationships in Finland may take a lot of resources and it may therefore be of importance to ensure that the company's sales in Finland are profitable before doing this.

As mentioned by Kotler et al. (2017), international companies can either choose to use the same communication strategy as in the home market or tailor it to each foreign market. In order to effectively navigate international markets, Bagaren och Kocken could consider continuing to standardize their communication strategies across markets. That way, the company can

optimize the resources needed, keeping marketing communication costs low and communicate a globally consistent brand image, in line with Kotler et al.'s (2017) argumentation. However, given the findings indicating a preference in Finland for domestic websites due to a sense of familiarity and personal connection, it could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken to adapt their communication strategies to some extent. For example, the findings reveal that Finnish people cook a lot of casseroles, especially around the widely celebrated holiday Christmas. Thus, featuring a carrot casserole in the company's advertising during this time could give a sense of familiarity and resonance with the Finnish customers, potentially enhancing local engagement and attracting the Finnish customers. As Kotler et al. (2017) describe, adjusting the communication strategy can be advantageous when foreign markets perceive marketing differently due to cultural distinctions. Considering the findings regarding Finnish customers' preferences which may differ compared to the Swedish ones, it could be a good idea to adjust the communication. Moreover, a barrier in international marketing communications is the language barrier (Kotler et al., 2017). Based on the findings, the Finnish market is no exception. The difficulty of the Finnish language, together with the importance of its correctness and Outnorth's insights in the Finnish market, all point towards a high sensitivity among Finnish people regarding the Finnish language. If it is incorrect, they will notice it and the company risks missing out on many Finnish customers.

Another potential strategy to enhance the visibility could involve opening pop-up stores, for example in Helsinki, where there probably is a high population density. This could be beneficial, especially for a company seeking to rebrand and enhance its presence in the market. For example, the company could have an event during Easter where customers are invited to the store to participate in preparing and eating Mämmi. However, such an initiative demands resources, and the costs should be weighed against anticipated benefits.

6.4 Place

Kotler et al. (2017) underscore the importance of designing effective distribution channels. Today, Bagaren och Kocken has their inventory located in Sweden, directly shipping products to customers in Finland. The company has not established any physical presence such as brick-and-mortar stores in Finland. Given Finland's high level of digitalization and increasing popularity of online shopping, especially among the 18-49 age group, maintaining an online presence seems to be suitable.

However, solely operating as an online store may be disadvantageous as the findings indicate that companies with both physical and online sales channels experience the most rapid e-commerce growth in the country. Moreover, nearly half of the top 30 competitors in Finland also maintain physical stores. Despite this, acquiring or leasing properties for physical store presence can be costly, combined with the challenge of accommodating Bagaren och Kocken's extensive assortment in a physical setting. However, as discussed in Section 6.3, opening up pop-up stores could enhance Bagaren och Kocken's presence in Finland. Additionally, with this strategy the company could potentially gain the advantages enjoyed by competitors with physical stores.

Fortunately, Finland's growing e-commerce market trend presents opportunities for Bagaren och Kocken's own growth, with projections indicating a growth up to nearly 8 billion Euros by 2029. The increasing trend of online shopping among Finnish consumers has attracted increased attention from foreign companies to operate in the Finnish market. Staying online enables Bagaren och Kocken to keep offering their wide assortment to the Finnish customers at all hours, which are important reasons for why Finnish people buy products online. With 40-50 % of household appliances now being bought online in Finland, the market presents a favorable landscape for the company's ongoing operations. Based on Figure 7, Finland's online purchase share closely resembles that of Norway, where Bagaren och Kocken has been successful, indicating promising growth opportunities in Finland. In Sweden, these numbers are between 50 and 60 % which is higher compared to both Finland and Norway. However, with the predicted growing trend of e-commerce in Finland, and Bagaren och Kocken's success on the Swedish market, this also speaks for the company to keep selling their products through online distribution channels in Finland.

Furthermore, the rising trend of re-commerce in Finland is worth noting. This trend could suggest a shift towards purchasing pre-owned kitchenware at lower prices. This trend appears to be growing due to increasing cost-consciousness among consumers, particularly due to the challenging economic conditions in Finland. By staying informed about emerging trends like re-commerce, Bagaren och Kocken can adapt their strategies accordingly and remain competitive in the Finnish market. This could entail exploring options such as establishing separate marketplaces for re-commerce, a strategy observed in other e-commerce companies, as shown by the findings. Another alternative could be to offer spare parts to the customers, to align the company's offerings with the trend of buying already used products. However, implementing these strategies may require changes in existing strategies and demand additional resources.

At the website's check-out, it is important for Bagaren och Kocken to offer the Finnish customers the option for direct payment from a bank account as this is the most preferred payment option. Furthermore, maintaining Klarna payments is relevant as it's a widely supported and commonly used payment gateway in Finland. However, integrating multiple payment methods can add complexity and increase maintenance efforts for the company.

According to Kotler et al. (2016), it is important for companies to consider the transport and logistics to reach target customers. Logistics is emphasized by the authors as an increasingly important topic for companies due to its possibility to offer better service to the customers (Kotler et al., 2016). When comparing the Nordic countries' preferred way of having an online-ordered product delivered in Figure 8, it is evident that the Finnish customers prefer to collect their parcels in a parcel locker to a larger extent. Hence, it could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken to collaborate with a transport provider that offers this last-mile delivery option. However, it is important to not solely choose transport providers who offer the most parcel lockers in Finland, as there exist more small sized lockers. This is an issue for the company as their parcels mainly fit into the larger sized lockers. A potential solution to this problem could

be to consider adding a third box size, which could fit into the small sized lockers, in the future. That way, the company could be able to cater to the Finnish customer needs further. An identified trend is also a growing popularity of home deliveries of larger products, which entails the chosen transport provider should offer this option as well.

The findings also reveal that the Finnish customers' expected delivery speed is slower compared to the offered delivery speed by the online retailers. Additionally, fast deliveries do not hold significant importance for these customers, as shown in the findings. A more important concern for the Finnish customers is the predictability regarding when the parcel is supposed to arrive. Therefore, partnering with a transport provider known for dependable delivery schedules could be advantageous for Bagaren och Kocken. However, it may still be important to work with a transport provider with fast delivery options as fast deliveries is an identified trend among the younger population. Furthermore, the findings show that the Finnish customers want to be able to choose transport provider at the checkout. Also, a vast majority of the existing online retailers in Finland offers at least two different transport providers for the customers to choose from. By offering at least two transport providers, each with different delivery options, these can complement each other, providing customers with a wider range of choices when placing orders. Thereby, if a company offers at least two transport providers, the customers are able to compare these and select the most suitable delivery option based on their preferences, leading to an enhanced customer experience. It may therefore be relevant for Bagaren och Kocken to include at least two different transport provider options as well, considering that they only offer delivery with PostNord today. Including transport providers such as Posti and/or Matkahuolto, both recognized transport providers in Finland, could be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken as it caters to the Finnish customer needs. It could enhance the feeling of familiarity for the Finnish customers as they could recognize the transport provider options. However, adding transport providers probably takes a lot of resources for Bagaren och Kocken as new relationships have to be established. Additionally, the existing relationship with PostNord may suffer if the company adds a second alternative, given that this could potentially reduce the number of parcels delivered by PostNord to Finland.

When comparing the different transport providers, they all have different advantages and disadvantages. Delivery with Posti could be favorable for Bagaren och Kocken to offer to the Finnish customers considering the transport provider's large market share and its large number of parcel lockers all over the country. Thereby, the company would be able to meet the Finnish customers' demands of last-mile delivery options and give them the choice to choose a transport provider which is probably already known to them. However, according to Outnorth, Posti's services are quite expensive which could make them a less suitable alternative for Bagaren och Kocken who only sends a small number of orders to Finland today. Additionally, the findings indicate that 57.8 % of online stores in Finland use Posti today. This could increase the risk of not being a prioritized customer for Bagaren och Kocken, potentially creating disadvantages in the future.

PostNord could be a beneficial transport provider for Bagaren och Kocken to have in Finland considering the already existing relationship across multiple markets. Moreover, the transport

provider is increasing its presence in Finland by adding more parcel lockers. This is positive considering the Finnish customers' last mile delivery preferences. Also, PostNord could be a suitable alternative as they offer a short delivery time of one to four days for Bagaren och Kocken's Finnish customers today. This delivery time aligns with, and exceeds, a majority of the Finnish customers' expectations based on the findings presented in Figure 9 and could therefore be favorable for Bagaren och Kocken's local reputation. However, PostNord holds a smaller market share in Finland. This may decrease the sense of familiarity for the Finnish customers when they are to choose a transport provider at the check-out, thereby harming Bagaren och Kocken's local growth. Additionally, not being a Finnish company could entail that PostNord does not keep up with the Finnish customer preferences as fast as Finnish transport providers, also harming Bagaren och Kocken's ability to meet local demands.

A third transport provider option is Matkahuolto. The company, being Finnish and Finland's second largest parcel service provider, is probably known to many Finnish customers. Therefore, by having Matkahuolto as a transport provider alternative, Bagaren och Kocken could increase the sense of familiarity and local adaptation towards the Finnish customers. Moreover, the transport provider provides many service points in Finland, as well as a wide, yet smaller compared to Posti and PostNord, network of parcel lockers. A potential benefit with working with Matkahuolto for Bagaren och Kocken could be that the transport provider has a goal to increase their presence in Sweden. This could create favorable conditions for building a close and long-lasting relationship for Bagaren och Kocken being a Swedish online retailer. However, a drawback with Matkahuolto is the company's smaller market share in Finland, creating a risk that Finnish customers do not recognize the transport provider at the check-out. In such a scenario, Bagaren och Kocken would have introduced a new relationship that needs to be managed without significantly increasing customer value. Also, as mentioned, the company has a lower number of parcel lockers in Finland compared to Posti. This also increases the risk of Bagaren och Kocken not being able to meet the customer expectations.

The findings indicate that sustainability is a rising trend among customers in Finland. Nearly 40 % of the customers consider environmental friendliness when choosing a delivery method. It could therefore be beneficial for Bagaren och Kocken to clearly state information regarding the provided transportation providers' sustainability efforts and impacts. By having multiple transport provider options for the customer to choose between, each transport provider's sustainability efforts can be taken into consideration and compared by the customers when deciding which delivery option to choose. Moreover, it could also be important to offer at least one fossil free delivery option to cater to the Finnish customers' sustainability demand. The findings also show that the Finnish consumers' shopping increased from domestic stores during the pandemic due to environmental cautiousness. This also shows the potential growth opportunities for international companies like Bagaren och Kocken if they are successful in their sustainability efforts.

Contradictory to the identified sustainability trend, the findings show that Finnish customers tend to add more items to their cart to qualify for free delivery, indicating their price sensitivity. Therefore, to attract Finnish customers it could be relevant for Bagaren och Kocken to keep

offering free deliveries when the order exceeds a certain amount. However, the company may consider adjusting the free delivery-threshold in Finland, which currently mirrors the Swedish market's low level. As the Finnish market is small, the company may not be able or want to cover the identified higher transport costs just to please the Finnish customers. For instance, Outnorth offers free delivery but requires Finnish customers to spend double the amount compared to Swedish customers to reach this threshold. An alternative could be to increase the free delivery-threshold from Bagaren och Kocken's 60 euros to 99 euros, just like Outnorth has. A second alternative could be to offer different free delivery thresholds depending on which transport provider the Finnish customer chooses. Both approaches could help balance cost considerations while still catering to Finnish consumers' preferences. However, before the free delivery-threshold is decided it is important that the company ensures the transport costs are covered. Otherwise, it risks having a negative impact on the company's profitability.

6.5 Customer relationships

As mentioned by Kotler et al. (2016), the management of customer relationships is important. Having loyal and happy customers is important for Bagaren och Kocken to ensure that the customers are returning, and the business is growing. Considering that the company's vision is "we help you succeed in the kitchen", with a focus on creating memories in the kitchen, it could be beneficial to prioritize the customer relationships.

To create long-lasting customer relationships, it is important for the company to focus on delivering high customer-perceived value and customer satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2016). The findings indicate that Finnish customers need clear information, a sense of familiarity, and customer service in Finnish to appreciate and consider buying from a company. By ensuring these expectations are met and exceeded, it could lead to a high customer-perceived value, ameliorating the company's relationship with the Finnish customers. Today, the customer-perceived value may instead be disappointing to the Finnish customers as, for example, Bagaren och Kocken does not offer customer service in Finnish. Multiple of the Finnish interviewees also stated that a website in Finnish creates an expectation of being helped in Finnish when they as customers reach out to the customer service department for help. Without the Finnish language option on email and by telephone, the Finnish customers risk losing valuable advice and expertise from the company's highly skilled service personnel. This mismatch could lead to a decreased level of customer satisfaction. It could therefore be beneficial for the company to hire Finnish speaking customer service personnel as these could contribute to higher customer satisfaction levels. Additionally, considering the differentiation positioning strategy where Bagaren och Kocken aims at being category experts within the premium, high-quality kitchenware segment, it could be important to offer the same high level of service and knowledge sharing towards the Finnish customers as the company does towards the other markets. Moreover, Outnorth provides customer service in Finnish which they believe is one of the key factors to why they have returning customers in Finland. This aligns with the findings that reveals it is an advantage for foreign companies to offer customer service in Finnish to retain Finnish customers.

Considering the customer service personnel's product knowledge and expertise, they could be seen as a type of technical sales support, based on the description by Kotler et al. (2017). If customers have questions regarding what they want to purchase, the personnel can guide and help by providing customized advice, potentially leading to a sale. Today, the Finnish-speaking customers can get help by speaking or writing in Swedish or English. However, based on Bagaren och Kocken's own experience, the Finnish customers possess limited knowledge in both English and Swedish. This creates a challenge for the company to offer the same level of expertise, knowledge, and technical information to the Finnish customers as to customers in other markets. Additionally, the findings indicate that there is a generally negative attitude towards the Swedish language, even though the study of the language is mandatory in Finland. This feeling is especially evident among individuals from eastern or northern Finland, where there is most often no need for being able to speak Swedish. By offering customer service in Finnish, the company could enable the Finnish customers to get better help, potentially bridging an important gap towards having closer customer relationships with these customers. However, hiring Finnish-speaking customer service personnel may be challenging for the company as skilled and suitable people preferably could be found near the offices in Sweden or Denmark. Two other alternatives could be to either open a new local office in Finland for the Finnish customer service, or outsource the operations to, for example, a call-center. Either way, these alternatives demand extra resources.

Kotler et al. (2017) also describe that support services contribute significantly to the overall brand experience for customers and enhance customer relationships. In Bagaren och Kocken's case, an important support service could be Finnish speaking customer service personnel. Moreover, another potential support service that the company could offer is a loyalty club. A loyalty club could for example offer personalized offerings and local communities which could increase the sense of familiarity for the Finnish customers as well as enable information sharing regarding products and experiences. This could be suitable for the Finnish market, considering the previously mentioned findings. However, Bagaren och Kocken does not offer a loyalty club on any markets today, which entails that the implementation of one would demand resources that may not be accessible today.

Kotler et al. (2016) also mention the products' perceived performance as an important part of creating successful customer relationships. The findings show that Finnish customers appreciate high-quality products which align well with Bagaren och Kocken's assortment. This alignment gives the company beneficial preconditions for building close customer relationships in the Finnish market. Offering high-quality products in Finland also aligns with Outnorth's assortment which could be a reason for the company's large number of returning customers in the country. Moreover, a product's perceived performance could potentially be enhanced by offering good customer service and help regarding claims and other product problems. Bagaren och Kocken already offers this type of help to their customers, but not in Finnish. This is also a reason for why the company could benefit from hiring Finnish-speaking customer service personnel.

7. Marketing strategy recommendations and conclusion

The following section provides a recommended marketing strategy for Bagaren och Kocken in Finland when it comes to Positioning, Product, Price, Place, Promotion, and Customer relationships. The recommendation is based on the marketing strategy analysis.

7.1 Positioning

Based on the analyzed advantages and disadvantages, it is recommended for Bagaren och Kocken to adapt a differentiation positioning strategy in the Finnish market, with a focus on offering a wide assortment of premium, high-quality kitchenware. This strategy aligns with the company's current positioning strategy in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Maintaining the same positioning strategy across all markets enables the company to offer a consistent brand image. Additionally, by emphasizing the company's unique wide product offering in the Finnish market, Bagaren och Kocken can enhance their competitive advantage towards the top 30 competitors while also catering to the Finnish customer preferences.

Considering the Finnish consumers' preferences for domestic companies who give a sense of familiarity, combined with slightly patriotic characteristics, Bagaren och Kocken is also recommended to evaluate the possibility of changing into a Finnish name. A suggested name is "Leipuri ja Kokki", which is Bagaren och Kocken translated into Finnish. This new name could make the company more attractive and improve its credibility among Finnish consumers. As discussed, there are potential risks and costs associated with rebranding in Finland. However, by adapting the company's name to the local customer preferences, the possibilities to establish stronger relationships with the Finnish customers can increase.

7.2 Product

Regarding product assortment, it is recommended that Bagaren och Kocken mainly keeps the same assortment in Finland, only making smaller adaptations to meet the local market demands. These adaptations include increasing the product mix depth of the sub-product line of deep-oven dishes and coffee related products to attract Finnish customers. Moreover, it is recommended that Bagaren och Kocken continues to offer a wide assortment in Finland. By doing so, the company caters to the diverse needs of Finnish customers, especially taking the popularity of cooking as a hobby and the emerging trend of international cooking into consideration. Additionally, the wide assortment aligns with the differentiation positioning strategy of the company, contributing to its competitive advantage in the Finnish market.

Bagaren och Kocken should also prioritize offering sustainable and high-quality products in Finland due to the local trends and customer preferences. Additionally, Bagaren och Kocken should provide clear and accessible product information on the website regarding energy efficiency and product quality to gain customer trust and drive sales. Furthermore, a recommendation for the company is to keep the Finnish brands Arabia, Marimekko, Iittala, and Fiskars, in the product assortment and ensure availability of the latest product series. By doing

so, Bagaren och Kocken appeals to Finnish consumers' preferences for domestic and high-quality brands. However, it is also recommended that the company adds the brands Miele and Juhla Mokka to the product assortment, as long as these fit with the differentiation positioning strategy of being a category expert premium, high-quality kitchenware in Finland. The additions align with the Finnish customers' preferences and can enhance the company's sense of familiarity towards the Finnish consumers. However, it is important that the company carefully evaluates the resources required and potential challenges associated with adding new brands and increasing the product mix depth. For example, new and existing supplier relationships should be developed and maintained for the company to have an updated assortment including new brands and trending products.

7.3 Price

Regarding pricing, Bagaren och Kocken should continue working with a competitive-based pricing strategy in Finland. It is important to monitor competitors' prices to ensure advantageous price levels. However, the company should not only base its pricing decisions on competitors offering lower prices, especially if it does not align with the company's differentiation positioning strategy.

Bagaren och Kocken should also conduct product category-specific pricing analyses. This entails understanding which competitors to follow based on the product category. Bagaren och Kocken should consider competitors within relevant business categories, ensuring competitive pricing strategies. For exact recommendations regarding which competitors to follow for which product category, see Table 7. Moreover, it is important that the company's differentiation positioning strategy is reflected in its pricing. By focusing on delivering added value, such as expert knowledge and good customer service, beyond just product features, Bagaren och Kocken can enhance its perceived value among Finnish consumers. By doing this, the company can justify charging higher prices for their products.

Promotional pricing and special event pricing should be used by Bagaren och Kocken in the Finnish market to a limited extent. It is recommended to offer discounts and promotions, particularly on products from Finnish brands, as these can attract new customers and expand the company's customer base. However, as has been argued, the company should carefully balance these pricing strategies to maintain healthy profitability and an exclusive brand image.

The company should continuously monitor local market conditions in Finland, such as price sensitivity among Finnish consumers, to ensure that Bagaren och Kocken is an attractive option. While adapting to local market dynamics is important, Bagaren och Kocken should still aim for consistency in pricing across all their markets. Maintaining consistency helps to avoid customer dissatisfaction or confusion, especially as Finnish customers may compare prices across the company's different markets. The prices should therefore not differ too much when comparing different markets.

7.4 Promotion

Based on the analyzed advantages and disadvantages when it comes to promotion, it is recommended for Bagaren och Kocken to develop tailored advertising messages to the Finnish market. It is very important that these messages are written using correct Finnish and cultural nuances to avoid offending Finnish customers. Also, by focusing on high quality and Finnish brands, the local customer preferences are taken into consideration. Given the high usage rate of electronic media in Finland, the company should use electronic media for advertising these messages. It is also recommended to continue using Google Ads on the Finnish market to gain more customers and increase the brand's visibility considering that Google is one of the most used search engines in Finland. Moreover, to ensure the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, Bagaren och Kocken should conduct pre- and post-evaluations of their ads. To do so, the company should create a focus group consisting of Finnish people from different backgrounds who give feedback regarding the language and cultural relevance of the message.

Price campaigns should also be used on the Finnish market. However, as has been mentioned, it is important not to overdo these campaigns as they risk cheapening the company's brand image which does not align with the differentiation positioning strategy. When using price campaigns, it is recommended to feature Finnish brand products to resonate with Finnish customer preferences.

Digital marketing channels should also be used by Bagaren och Kocken. As the company website is the main digital channel, it is highly important that the company ensures its user-friendliness, including having clear information, especially regarding return policies, to cater to the Finnish customers' expectations. Two other important digital marketing channels are email marketing and social media marketing as both give the company possibilities to engage directly with its Finnish customers. Regarding social media, a recommendation is to start using Facebook in Finland due to the high number of users and Outnorth's positive experience. Incorporating Finnish culture, humor, and traditions such as Runeberg's cake on Runebergsdagen, into marketing content can further enhance the resonance with Finnish customers.

Regardless of which marketing communication channel Bagaren och Kocken uses towards the Finnish customers, an accurate Finnish language needs to be prioritized. Otherwise, the Finnish customers may misunderstand and/or be offended, leading to an increased risk of losing customers. It is therefore recommended that the company invests in Finnish-speaking personnel or translators who can ensure that all marketing materials are well-received and overcome potential language barriers. Moreover, to have as effective marketing communication as possible, the company should standardize the campaigns and messages as much as possible across all markets. However, slight adaptations are necessary to convince the Finnish customers to buy their products as it increases the sense of familiarity. Furthermore, Bagaren och Kocken should investigate the potential of opening pop-up stores in Helsinki, as this could facilitate rebranding efforts and enhance visibility.

7.5 Place

When it comes to Place, it is recommended for Bagaren och Kocken to maintain a strong online presence in Finland due to the country's high level of digitalization and the increasing popularity of shopping online. However, considering the rapid e-commerce growth of companies with both physical and online sales channels, the company should explore opportunities to establish physical presence via pop-up stores. Moreover, the company has to stay informed about local trends in Finland. One of these trends is re-commerce. By exploring options such as establishing separate marketplaces for re-commerce and/or offering spare parts, the company can remain competitive in the future as well. Furthermore, the Finnish customers' preferred payment options, such as direct bank transfers and Klarna payments, should be offered to enhance customer satisfaction and convenience.

To ensure growth and competitiveness in Finland, it is important that Bagaren och Kocken can offer delivery with relevant transport providers. These have to offer the last-mile delivery option of parcel lockers, as well as reliable delivery schedules, to cater to the Finnish customers' preferences. Additionally, it is recommended to offer at least two different transport providers at check-out. Therefore, the recommendation is to continue using PostNord in Finland, and add Posti as a second transport provider alternative for the Finnish customers. Keeping PostNord in Finland is a relevant choice considering the company's already existing relationship with the transport provider. Adding Posti is a relevant recommendation since Posti is the largest transport provider in Finland with many parcel lockers. While adding new providers may require additional resources, it will enhance the company's adaptation to local market preferences and thereby increase a sense of familiarity, especially since Posti is the most used transport provider in Finland. As Posti may be an expensive option, a recommendation to decrease the cost is to consolidate the transports to Finland with one or multiple of the sister companies, such as Outnorth and Jollyroom. Moreover, given the rising trend of sustainability awareness among Finnish consumers, it is recommended that Bagaren och Kocken provide clear information about the transportation providers' sustainability efforts. Additionally, the company should offer at least one fossil-free delivery option to enhance brand reputation and attract environmentally conscious customers. Lastly, a recommendation is to adjust the free delivery threshold from 60 to 99 euros to cover the higher transportation costs to Finland and incentivize larger purchases.

7.6 Customer relationships

When it comes to customer relationships, it is highly recommended for Bagaren och Kocken to hire Finnish-speaking customer service personnel to meet the expectations of Finnish customers. This approach ensures that Finnish customers receive the same level of expertise and assistance as customers in other markets, leading to higher satisfaction and closer relationships. Aligning with the differentiation positioning strategy, Bagaren and Kocken should also continue providing customized advice and guidance in their customer service, helping customers to make informed purchasing decisions. However, as previously mentioned, this should be done in Finnish. Moreover, the company should investigate the possibility of

developing a loyalty program. A loyalty program tailored to the Finnish customers can offer personalized offerings and foster a sense of community, further strengthening customer relationships. However, as mentioned, as the company does not offer a loyalty program on any of its markets, this recommendation may require a lot of resources and should therefore be investigated further in the future.

Additionally, the customer relationships can be developed by providing clear information in correctly written Finnish on the company website. It is also recommended for Bagaren och Kocken to emphasize the quality of their products. By offering high-quality products and excellent customer service in the Finnish market, the company can enhance the perceived performance of its products and build trust among Finnish customers.

7.7 Conclusion

The findings presented in the external situation analysis combined with Bagaren och Kocken’s operations and context show that the company should adapt its marketing strategy towards the Finnish market. Considering the company’s existing ways of working, some adjustments are necessary in order to meet and exceed the Finnish customers’ expectations. The sub-questions of RQ2 are answered through the marketing strategy recommendations summarized below in Table 8. Following these recommendations creates opportunities for Bagaren och Kocken to expand and enhance sales in the Finnish market. Additionally, adapting strategies to cater to the specific needs and preferences of Finnish customers is key to building successful customer relationships.

Table 8. A summary of the proposed marketing strategy for Bagaren och Kocken in Finland based on the answers to RQ2’s sub-questions.

| RQ2’s sub-questions | Recommendations |
|---|---|
| Which position strategy should be chosen? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differentiation positioning strategy as category expert of premium, high-quality kitchenware - Have a Finnish company name in Finland |
| How should the product assortment be adapted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer a wide assortment - Offer sustainable and high-quality products - Provide clear product information - Keep offering Finnish brands - Potentially add the brands Miele and Juhla Mokka - Add deep-oven dish products - Add coffee machine and coffee accessory products - Maintain and develop relationships with Finnish brand suppliers |
| How should the pricing strategies be adapted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use competitive-based pricing strategy - Conduct product category-specific pricing |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>analyses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use promotional pricing to a limited extent - Use special event pricing to a limited extent - Monitor local market conditions - Have consistent pricing across all markets |
| How should the marketing communication channels be adapted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop adapted advertising messages for the Finnish customers - Use electronic media for advertising - Use Google ads - Have Finnish focus groups for pre-evaluations - Do post-evaluation of advertisements' effectiveness - Do price campaigns - Ensure user-friendliness of company website - Have email marketing - Have social media marketing via Facebook - Hire Finnish-speaking personnel to always ensure that correct Finnish language is used - Add pop-up stores in Helsinki |
| How should the distribution channels be adapted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain online presence via company website - Add pop-up stores in Helsinki - Stay informed regarding re-commerce trends - Offer direct bank transfers - Offer Klarna payments - Offer parcel lockers as a delivery option - Offer two transport provider options - Offer PostNord as a transport provider alternative - Offer Posti as a transport provider alternative - Provide clear information regarding the transport providers' sustainability efforts - Offer at least one fossil-free delivery option - Adjust the free delivery threshold to 99 euros |
| How can the customer relationships be enhanced? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire Finnish speaking customer service personnel - Offer customized advice and guidance in the customer service - Offer a loyalty program - Emphasize the quality of the products |

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Appendix I

The three general interview guides used in the interviews seen in Table 4 can be found below.

Finnish operations

Background

- Is it okay if we record the interview?
- Can you describe your role in the company?
- Can you tell us about the company and its operations?
- Why did you enter the Finnish market?
- How does your sales in Finland compare to your other Nordic markets?
- How do you generally work towards the Finnish market today?
- Are there any differences in how you operate in Finland compared to your other Nordic markets?

Customers

- Who are your customers in the Finnish market?
- Do you notice any differences between your Finnish customers and customers from other Nordic markets?
- How does customer satisfaction in Finland compare to your other Nordic markets?
- What are your thoughts of Finnish culture and how do you think it affects your Finnish customers?
- What is your relationship like with your Finnish customers?

Marketing communication

- How do you work with marketing communication in Finland?
- Which marketing communication channels perform the best/worst in Finland?

Products

- How do you manage your product assortment in Finland?

- Do certain products sell better/worse in Finland?
- Do you notice any trends in what your Finnish customers are demanding in terms of product characteristics?

Pricing

- How do you work with pricing in Finland?
- How do you perceive Finnish consumers regarding price sensitivity?

Customer Service

- How do you work with customer service in Finland?
- Which language(s) do you offer customer service in?

Distribution

- Which transport providers do you work with in the Finnish market?
- What delivery options do you offer in the Finnish market?
- What do your Finnish customers demand regarding deliveries?

Future

- How do you think the Finnish market will develop over time?

Finnish distribution structure

Background

- Is it okay if we record the interview?
- Can you describe your role in the company?

Distribution market

- What does the transport provider market look like in Finland?
- What do Finnish customers demand regarding deliveries?
- Do you see any trends regarding when customers want their parcels delivered?

- Do you see any trends regarding how customers want their parcels delivered?
- How do Finnish customers view free delivery?

The company's operations

- How does the company operate in the Finnish market?
- How do you work with Swedish customers?
- Do you collaborate with other transport providers?

E-commerce

- Do you see any e-commerce trends in Finland?

Finnish culture

Background

- Can you tell us more about yourself?
- What is your relationship to cooking?

Culture

- How would you describe Finnish culture?

Food Culture

- What characterizes Finnish food culture?
- Could you mention some popular and/or classic dishes that Finnish individuals eat on a regular day?
- Do you see any cooking trends in Finland?
- What holidays do you celebrate in Finland?

Language

- What is the attitude of Finnish individuals towards the Swedish language?
- Which kitchenware brands are popular among Finnish consumers?
- What is the attitude towards foreign companies and cross-border shopping?

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