

Customer Satisfaction within the Purchasing Process

A case study for the retailer IKEA

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ABSTRACT

Many retailers have moved toward strategies that use large assortments and/or customization in order to establish a competitive advantage. Large assortment strategies used by category killers can however backfire if the complexity causes information overload that aggravate customers' purchasing decision process. In order to facilitate the purchasing process for customers, retailers can adopt a self-service strategy. This will enable customers to manage their decision-making easier without any help from personnel. Further, retailer can thereby achieve a high level of customer satisfaction at the same time as keeping costs down. However, if a department store uses a self-service strategy, the system needs to function smoothly or the store runs the risk of loosing potential customers. This study investigates three studios at IKEA's two department stores in Gothenburg. It examines the customer satisfaction as well as functionality of the purchasing process within these studios. Earlier results from customer satisfaction surveys at IKEA reveal that customers are not completely satisfied with the purchasing process with regards to the complex product assortments. The customer satisfaction and experience of customers' purchasing process was mainly investigated through interviews. The statistical results in this study indicate that the customer satisfaction and functionality of the purchasing process differ between the studios. Customers are overall satisfied with the studios, but there are some suggestions given in this thesis that IKEA should consider in order to increase customers' satisfaction and improve the purchasing process.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, retailing, purchasing process, decision-making and service level.

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1 Introduction

This section presents the background, purpose and motivation for this research, as well as a problem definition as defined by the case company. An outline of the paper is presented at last.

1.1 Background

Today's retail companies face a rapidly changing environment, intense competition, and increasing consumer demand. Because of the increasing market competition and broadening of marketing channels, customers are becoming even more sophisticated in their information gathering and product searching (Nunes and Cespedes 2003). Companies tend to adopt differentiated and customer-oriented marketing strategies to gain a competitive advantage in the market. The success of a company will depend on the extent to what it is willing to improve the quality and service of what it has to offer so customers' demand is satisfied. (Yuen and Chan, 2010) Furniture stores are faced with intense competition and must therefore understand the importance of the environment and what can be done to influence patronage and purchasing. Consumers' attitudes, perceptions and preferences must therefore be taken into consideration when developing and introducing a competitive retailing strategy. (Hassan et al., 2010)

Many retailers have moved toward strategies that use large assortments and/or customization in order to establish a competitive advantage. These high variety strategies can have negative consequences for the consumer who becomes confused or frustrated in the search process and may find product searching difficult. These frustrated consumers often delay purchasing, or choose not to buy at all. Large assortment strategies such as those used by category killers can therefore backfire if the complexity causes information overload such that a consumer feels overwhelmed and dissatisfied, and chooses not to make a choice at all. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998)

The desirable customer behaviors for department stores would be that customers spend more time in the store, browse more, increase impulse buying and as a result increase the overall spending. (Wirth et al., 2007) Understanding consumers' in-store behavior is thus important for researchers and retailers alike. Researchers are particularly interested in enhancing their understanding of the factors that drive the dynamics of consumers' shopping behavior. Understanding customer response to display, store layout and prices provides important managerial implications regarding design of the retail space and product placement, issues that are of key interest for retailers trying to increase the overall spending in their stores. (Hui et al., 2009) While retailers traditionally look for differential advantages in attributes such as price, promotion and location, store environment has been sited as a competitive edge for market differentiation. (Rajagopal, 2011)

Lack of appropriate external and internal atmosphere of retail stores is a major source of dissatisfaction among consumers when making pre-purchasing decisions. Such negative impact is caused by "avoidance triggers" of the retail environment, and poor product display as well as poor service levels are examples of such triggers, which widen the generally accepted satisfaction variables concerned with merchandise availability, pricing and service. Negative emotions in terms of merchandise choice, store environment, service levels and product display lead to dissatisfaction and avoidance behavior, which retailers cannot afford, given that they are operating in an increasingly competitive and saturated environment. Because these factors are the very foundations of consumer satisfaction, they should be of particular importance to

retailers. An unpleasant retail environment also leaves an impression that is recalled easily. (Otieno et al., 2005).

Recently, customers have become more concerned with service quality received; hence it becomes an important instrument in a competitive retailing strategy. (Chan, 2010) A primary objective of the store layout is to influence customer behavior; store design should therefore attract customers and enable them to locate merchandise of interest easily, and motivate them to make unplanned, impulse purchases. (Levy and Weitz, 2009) The higher the attraction in the retail store, the higher the satisfaction of shoppers and lower the perceived conflicts in the decision process. (Rajagopal, 2011)

Many consumer satisfaction theories are based on analyzing discrepancies between customer expectations and evaluation of those expectations. Meeting normal expectations then results in confirmation and therefore satisfaction. (Otieno et al., 2005) Applying this reasoning implies the retailer, in order to provide a satisfying shopping experience, must make sure to meet visitors expectations in terms of *store layout* (facilitation of navigation and the overview of the assortment) and *service level*. Service level relates to the likelihood of finding products one looks for, the amount of time spent waiting in line, the congestion of the store and the accessibility and attractiveness of the store (Morey, 1980) and thus depends on store layout. Service levels are related to both navigation and choice, as the demand for service increases with poor navigation and poor choice overview. (Sorensen, 2009)

This discussion brings up the questions about what necessary information customers need to be provided with in order to make the buying decisions on their own and at the same time get a satisfying shopping experience that is aligned with their expectations, while maximizing sales and keeping low costs. A case study will be applied on existing literature and in turn result in suggestions of improvements for specified furniture studios at IKEA. Further, the study will investigate customer satisfaction regarding layout of studios and service levels and will be conducted on three studios at both of the department stores in Gothenburg.

1.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION

At IKEA, the studios that sell the product families BESTÅ, GODMORGON and PAX are mainly based on self-service. IKEA strive to limit the personnel costs to be as low as possible, while keeping the service on a level that maximizes sales. As such, the mechanical sales system (self-service system) is required to function very smoothly, or IKEA will loose potential customers. IKEA stresses the importance for visitors to be able to overview the assortments as well as facilitate the search for what they are looking for. Fewer questions to the personnel about the assortment will enable the personnel to not only help visitors that are reluctant to use the mechanical sales system available in the studio, but also to manage their daily work without having to leave customers unsatisfied regarding the service. The company works continuously with the layout of studios to facilitate the shopping. A recent attempt to optimize the mechanical sales system concerns a self-planning computer where visitors can design their own solutions of TV-furniture, bathrooms and wardrobes, as well as print a picking list. The project has recently started its implementation phase and is today implemented on the website and is ongoing in several studios.

By planning the studios in a self-service-oriented way, IKEA wants the customers to be able to make purchasing decisions in the studios, with as little help from personnel as possible. However, the personnel get many questions from visitors which indicates that the mechanical sales system

does not provide sufficient support for visitors in their purchasing decisions. IKEA may therefore loose potential customers that demand more personnel support, more informative displays or better overview of assortments.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to determine the level of customer satisfaction within the departments, and identify factors within the mechanical sales system that can be improved in order for the system to provide sufficient support in a customer's purchasing process.

1.4 Research Question

How satisfied are visitors with the retailing studios at IKEA today?

Which improvements can be made for the retailing studios at IKEA in order to facilitate easier purchasing decision making for visitors?

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

A study of customer satisfaction and preferences of furniture stores is important for several reasons. First, it gives better understanding of the factors influencing customer behavior in a furniture store. Second, it gives better understanding of why consumers shop at a store or not, as the study aims to provide necessary tools to satisfy customer needs and increase purchasing. Third, it gives better understanding of a store's attributes as sought by their customers. This will allow furniture retailers to identify factors that are best to stress in enhancing their retail strategies. The subject in particular has caught our interest among the five years of studies, and it is an upcoming area within the field of Innovation and Industrial management, which is the topic of our M.Sc. degree. The study is directed towards those who are interested in learning more about successful retailing.

1.6 Delimitations

The layouts of IKEA stores in Sweden are similar and the results may therefore be used as a guideline for all stores in Sweden. However due to resource constraints, this study concerns the two department stores in Gothenburg: IKEA Bäckebol and IKEA Kållered. The mechanical sales system supports the purchasing process all the way from the studios, to the self-service storeroom and checkout. This study concerns only the purchasing process that takes place in the studios. It only concerns three product families only. Furthermore, our experimental resources enable us to only test stated behavioral intentions rather than actual behaviors.

1.7 Definitions

Arousal - A psychological state of being reactive to stimuli. Arousal is important in regulating consciousness, attention and information processing.

Category Killer - A large retail chain store that is dominant in its product category and generally offers an extensive selection of merchandise at low prices.

DB - Department Store Bäckebol

DK - Department Store Kållered

Furniture Studio - A specific part of a department at IKEA that shows one product family

HFB - Home Furniture Business area

Mechanical sales system - IKEA's term for the self-service strategy that the company practices.

Range (statistics) - A set of allowed values for a variable, which is the length of the smallest interval that contains all data.

Range presentation - Presentation of a group of products

Showroom - Upper floor at IKEA

Shopkeeper - Department Manager at IKEA

1.8 Outline

Theory

In order to come up with solutions to the research problem, we have chosen to focus on already existing methods of solving problems like the one in this study. Thereafter we have created a modell that will enable us to follow through with the analysis.

Method

This chaptel cencerns the approach used in order to perform the study, how data have been collected, which problems we have come across when performing the study, as well as what have been done in order to certify a high validity and reliability.

Empir

To get an understanding of the problem, interviews have taken place with employees at IKEA and these are presented in this chapter.

Analysis and Results

The results form interviewing visitors are presented together with an analysis of data. They are also applied on presented theories. Thereafter, they are analysed in order to be able to give recommentations to improvements.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In order to facilitate the purchasing process for visitors, some recommendations are given to IKEA together with what can be improved after performin this study.



2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses established theories within the area of customer satisfaction in the retailing environment. It concludes with the presentation of a framework constructed by the authors, which show the relation of theories used in this study.

2.1 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

According to Otieno et al. (2005) customer satisfaction of the retail environment consists of three categories: the first is shopping system satisfaction which includes availability of products and types of outlets; the second is *buying system satisfaction* which includes selection and actual purchasing of products; the third is consumer satisfaction derived from the use of products. Dissatisfaction in any of these three categories can lead to customer disloyalty and loss of sales and market share.

Consumers' in-store experiences seem to be formed by traditional values like behavior of the personnel, satisfactory of product selection and store layout that make the store visit for the consumer easier. Aspects that influence a consumer's in-store experience can be divided into personal and situational variables. The former are characteristics related to the consumers, such as mood whereas situational variables are related to aspects in the store environment, such as the atmosphere. (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006) Wirth et al. (2007) argue that consumer response to retail environments can be described by two dimensions: the degree of pleasantness and the degree of activation or arousal, meaning reaction to stimuli. Rajagopal (2011) tests the validity of this theory in the shopping mall environment, and argue that there is a positive interrelationship among shop size, product assortment, space allocation, and in-store environment in a shopping mall, which increases the arousal effect and the satisfaction, as well as stimulates the buying behavior.

According to Wirth et al. (2007) customer satisfaction should be enhanced when the actual store environment meets the individual's desired arousal, whereas over- or under-stimulation should lead to less positive evaluations. Furthermore, Mattila and Wirtz (2004) argue that adding pleasant environmental cues, such as music and scent, enhances the shopping experience for the customer and increases the impulse-buying behaviors of customers. As proposed by prospect theory, the impact of negative information is generally stronger than the impact of positive information. Wirth et al. (2007) uses this reasoning to argue that the presence of an unpleasant physical environment will most likely overshadow the power of other environmental cues including its arousal-eliciting qualities. The environment thereby becomes the major determinant of consumers' reaction. Consequently, an unpleasant environment leads to low levels of satisfaction, regardless of arousal levels.

2.1.1 PAD MODEL

Donovan and Rossiters (1982) made research on store atmosphere, that is, which store variables that affect shopping behavior. They refer to the MR-model, which is presented by Mehrabian and Russel (1974), and modified by Russel and Pratt (1980). They adapt this model to suit the retailing environment. The model proposes that three emotional ranges mediate approach-avoidance situations in any environment, including that of a retail store. Thus, the emotions that a consumer experience in a retail environment affects the buying behavior. The emotional responses are known as the acronym PAD (Figure 1). The emotional state of the individual can be characterized by the three PAD dimensions:



- *Pleasure displeasure*: The degree to what a person feels satisfied in the situation.
- Arousal nonarousal: The degree to what a person feels stimulated, excited and active in the situation.
- *Dominance submissiveness*: The degree to what a person feels in control of the situation.

Consumer behavior within an environment can be classified as either approach or avoidance behavior. Approach behavior means consumers want to approach, stay in, interact with and explore the environment while avoidance behavior means consumers are dissatisfied, bored and want to leave the environment.



FIGURE 1 Approach and avoidance behaviour.

Source: Mehrabail and Russel, 1974.

How visitors perceive the environment has been examined through analyzing their overall impression of a studio. Further, the aim is to determine weather visitors have a pleasant view of the studio and get stimulated by the information flow available at the studio and thereby feel they are in control of their purchasing process with as little help from personnel as possible.

2.2 Space Management

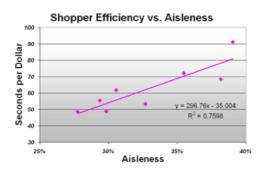
A successful store layout makes customers stay longer in shopping malls, interact in retail stores, experience satisfaction, and make buying decisions. The higher the attraction of the retail store is, the higher the satisfaction of shoppers will be and the perceived conflicts in the decision process will thereby decrease. (Rajagopal, 2011) However, Huffman and Kahn (1998) argue that large assortment strategies such as those used by category killers, can cause complexity and information overload when managed improperly. Consumers may then feel overwhelmed and dissatisfied, and may delay their purchasing decision or choose not to make a purchase.

Different factors influence the way a retail store should be organized; such as the size, form and look of the store space, where the entrance is located, and the emplacement and size of the storage. Stores are organized into primary and secondary aisles. The former is where consumers are mainly moving and if they are looking for something in particular they can also find it in the secondary aisles. However, consumers' purchase differs depending on if it has to do with specialized stores or everyday commodity stores. (Malm et al., 2001) By working with e.g. store layout, signage and location of merchandise categories, retailers can influence the movement pattern of customers in the store and thereby achieve sales potentials. Once consumers have entered the store they are welcomed by displays and graphics that are introducing them into the area. Thereafter, customers will enter the "strike zone" which creates customers' first impression of the store's offerings. This makes the area critical for retailers, which is why they should use it to display their most compelling merchandises in this zone. Impulse products should be placed near the front of the store. These products are bought without any consideration and attract customers into the store. Demand products on the contrary, should be located further back in the store for the purpose of making customers use the entire store. This will force customers to visit the lightly trafficked areas and thereby increasing the probability of noticing other products along the way. (Levy and Weitz, 2009)



2.2.1 AISLENESS

Sorensen (2009) present two generalized empirical shopping laws; the first says that shopper efficiency is inversely proportional to "aisleness", a measure of the extent to what the store is organized into aisles, as a consequence of products and merchandise occupying space that the shoppers cannot occupy at the same time. The second says that shopper efficiency is directly proportional to total store sales; meaning the faster consumers buy, the more retailers will sell. Consequently aisleness is negatively related to total store sales. "Aisleness" is a simple concept based on the observation that more merchandise packed into a store necessarily will create more aisles. Aisles then become narrower, and shopper space is reduced. The definition of aisleness is the percentage of the store to which the shopper does not have access—primarily the area occupied by products and staff. The fundamental of this theory is that aisleness results in visitors taking longer time to spend money, thus reducing the shopper efficiency (Figure 3). The more time is spent on a purchasing decision, the smaller the opportunity for the shopper to add another item to the shopping basket (Figure 2) Consequently, total sales are reduced.



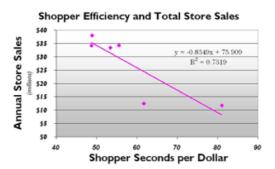


FIGURE 2 Shopper Efficiency vs. Aisleness Source: Sorensson (2009)

FIGURE 3 Shopper Efficiency and Total Store Sales Source: Sorensson (2009)

These shopper-efficiency laws are indeed important for store layout strategies. In the shopper space, the store layout should accelerate sales without increasing shopper's effort. For shoppers, effort largely is reflected in the amount of time it takes to acquire merchandise.

In addition to the two shopping laws Sorensen (2009) points out two general factors that impede shopping as mentioned in section 0 y. An outline of the paper is presented at last.

Background: navigation and choice. The first is related to aisleness. Bad navigation force customers to look for personnel and ask them where they can find what they are searching for. Too many choices, or lack of overview of assortment, decreases shopping efficiency and obstructs shopping. Hui et al. (2009) also describes the relation between time pressure and buying behavior as follows: As a consumer spends more time in the store, she becomes less likely to explore the store and more likely to be in a shopping mode.

2.2.2 LOCATION

When it comes to placement of goods there are different incitements to where retailers choose to locate their products in the store. It can be economical incitements as well as the profile of products that decides the location. Products generating a good profit are often placed on the most important sales areas whereas profile products get an up front position. There are five main principals for the placement on shelves: (Malm et al., 2001)

1. The most frequent and interesting products should be placed up front so they are noticed by customers before other products.



- 2. Smaller products should be placed on the upper shelves while bigger should be on the lower.
- 3. Bigger products should be places to the left of smaller products on the same shelf
- 4. Profile and marginally strong products should be placed in "take height" since it is the location that sells the best.
- 5. The number of "faces" a product has on the shelf also has a big influence on the sales. The more packages are shown on the shelf the better the sales will be.

Figure 4 shows how the placement of products on shelves influences the sales of products. It also demonstrates that the visual field on shelves is the greatest in the "take height" and becomes narrower further up and down the shelves. Further, the arrows are an indication of the impact a replacement of products can have on sales. E.g. by relocating a product from level 4 to level 2, sales can increase by 43 percent.

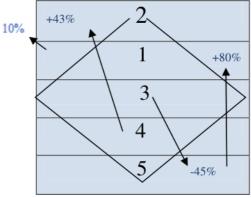


FIGURE 4 The influence of product placement. Source: Malm, Y. Et al (2001)

2.2.3 RETAIL COMMUNICATION

Sorensen (2008) defines in-store media as something that mediates communication between the producers of the media and their intended audience - the shoppers. Allocation of exposures is an important determinant of store success. In a typical 20-minute shopping trip, the shopper only reads 8 to 10 text-type messages. Rather than through words, communication is therefore all about color, shape, and iconic images. (Sorensen, 2008) According to Gardner and Houston (1986) retailers effectively use marketing communications to express information about products and services to potential consumers. Transmission of this kind of store information enables retailers to communicate specific facts and create general impressions to consumers. Transmission can be made through verbal or nonverbal communication channels. The former has until recently been more frequently used as an effective persuasive message. The latter is used to convey information about attributes that are of importance for a consumer when evaluating a retail offer. Comparisons between the verbal and nonverbal aspects to advertising told that learning from pictures is longer lasting than learning from purely verbal material.

What is usually used in furniture stores is the "idea-oriented presentation". Retailers presents a certain idea of e.g. how something could look in customers homes by combining different furniture into room settings. There are also other ways of displaying items, such as through color presentation and price lining. The former is mainly used in cloth stores, the later helps customers find what they are looking for in a certain price range, since retailers use it when offering a limited number of price ranges. (Levy and Weits, 2009) In order for customers to find their way around the store easier, retailers use signage to tell where merchandises can be found. Directional signs can be used to guide consumers around the stores and store guides are used to present an overview of the store to the visitor. Store guides should be located in a place so that it can easily be spotted from the entrance of the store. Category signs are similar to directional signage although they are used within particular areas in the store and have the purpose of facilitating the search for products within e.g. different departments by identifying what products it has to offer. Point of sale information gives consumers detailed information about the products offered and can contain price and special offers. (Levy and Weitz, 2009)



By organizing the layout of a retailing department and using the right form of information, retailers facilitate easier navigation for visitors within the store. Further, how retailers choose to communicate information can affect visitors' willingness of purchasing. We will therefore examine visitors' perspective on navigation and information.

2.3 Service Level

According to Morey (1980) service level relates to the likelihood of finding products of interest, the amount of time spent waiting in line, the congestion of the store and the accessibility and attractiveness of the store. Yuen and Chan (2010) relate service level to the quality dimension of service and thus service level in the retailing industry has to do with the level of personal interaction, reliability and problem solving in the retailing environment. Parasuraman et al. (1994) define service quality as the degree of discrepancy between customers' normative expectations for the service and their perceptions of the service performance.

Organizing the department store so that different departments are distinctively defined and "isolated" from one another creates a comfortable shopping experience that can result in more sales. However, it prevents personnel to cover several departments and thus the demand for personnel increases, thus affecting labor costs. (Levy and Weitz, 2010,) Creative sales practices like computer simulation can decrease the demand of personnel and thus the labor costs, and in addition stimulate the buying process of customers. (Rajagopal, 2011) According to Morey (1980), two basic management options for increasing service levels are: to increase the number of store personnel assigned for each hour of operation and to increase the hours of operation of the store. The lower the current level of service, the more dramatically the store's sales will respond to additional person-months. The return from increasing service level is diminishing; the sales respond at a slower rate as the level of service increases. Stores with a more competitive relative price level are less affected by increased service levels, as are stores with less competitive price levels. Thus, a store offering fewer savings will respond more dramatically to increased service levels. These stores have more potential customers who are not presently shopping there, but who might do so if the level of service is improved. The stores that offer more savings, has fewer such potential customers, as their customers are more willing to tolerate low levels of service.

IKEA must provide an appropriate level of service in order to reach the desired level of customer satisfaction. Visitors' view of service levels is therefore addressed, using Morey's (1980) and Yuen and Chan's (2010) definition of service level and Parasuraman's (1994) definition of service quality. The service level in the department will thus depend on the navigation, ability for visitors to handle the purchasing process, and the degree to which IKEA meets visitors' expectations of the service levels.

2.4 Presenting the assortment

The basic concept underlying a constructive view of choice (Bettman and Zins 1979; Bettman and Park, 1980) is that consumers do not use the same decision rules or heuristics every time they make a choice. Rather, the heuristic is constructed during the decision process, from elements of heuristics in the memory. Such elements may be beliefs about alternatives, evaluations, simple rules of thumb and so on. The decision process will therefore be a function of factors such as: what external information is available; the format in which information is presented; the degree to which various pieces of information "stand out" in the environment; and other task-specific factors. Cognitive factors (location, price, variety, quality) may largely affect the choice of the retail store but it is the emotional responses induced by the environment within the store that primary determines weather the consumer fulfills the planned purchasing and the extent to which he or she spends beyond the original expectations (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982).



About 65 percent of purchasing decisions are made, and many more are affected inside the store why the presentation format of the assortment does indeed affect sales. (Nordfält, 2007) Large assortments as provided by category killers have been found to result in consumer confusion (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) and demotivate the consumer in his or her decision making process (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000). Recent research has moved from examining assortment as a dependent variable to examining the consequences of assortment on consumer decision-making (i.e., assortment as an independent variable). Consumer assortment perceptions are affected by the organization of the assortment (Broniarczyk, 2004) and presentation of information such as the size of the display {Broniarczyk et al. 1998). The presentation of the assortment is said to have three purposes (Nordfält, 2007):

- Remind remind the consumer of what she intended to buy
- Affect affect the consumer to buy a specific product or brand
- Inspire inspire the consumer to buy complementary products, or other products

The key to customer satisfaction with the entire shopping interaction is to ensure that the customer is equipped to handle the variety of the assortment. In order to maximize customer satisfaction with the shopping experience, a retailer needs to control both the way the information is presented and the input the consumer provides in the process of learning about the available alternatives and attributes. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) Experiments have shown that by organizing the assortment after different attributes, different results can be achieved. (Simonson and Winer, 1992; Drèze et al, 1994; Simonson et al., 1993) A general conclusion is that when products are organized according to brand the portion of customers choosing the cheaper alternative increases. The rational behind this is that when products are exposed according to other attributes than brand (i.e. size, style), the customer becomes reluctant to choosing the alternative that seems to be of lowest quality, i.e. the cheapest one. This standpoint becomes less apparent when the products are displayed according to brand.

2.4.1 Presentation format: Alternatives and Attributes

Two common ways of presenting a range of products within a category are attribute-based and alternative-based presentations. In the first method, the consumer bases the decision on the preferences he or she has within each attribute (size, color, quality, design etcetera). The consumer then chooses a product from the assortment that matches his or her preferences, or develops a customized product that matches the preferences. In the second method the options are presented by alternatives in a showroom and the customer will then base the decision on formulating preferences for attributes through comparing these alternatives. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998)

Bettman and Zins (1979) argue that the information presentation format affects the way consumers process information, and that two typical information processing methods are brand processing and attribute processing. When practicing brand processing, the consumer evaluates a particular brand, examines several attributes for that brand and then decides to examine several attributes for a second brand and so on. In attribute processing consumers look at a particular attribute and then evaluates the products on this particular attribute, then considers a second attribute and so on. Consumers tend to process information congruent with the presentation, meaning that if the retailers expose the product category according to attributes, the consumers will process attribute evaluation. This notion has important implications for the way in which presentation format interacts with the consumer's decision process. Bettman and Zins (1979) found no evidence that consumers consider choosing a specific presentation format, which may not be surprising considering consumers are seldom exposed to the choice of different formats



and therefore may not consider such choices.

Inexperienced consumers spend more time evaluating different attributes as they try to develop different criteria for choice than consumers with more experience (Bettman and Park, 1980). For consumers that are new to a category, a primary function of search is to familiarize oneself with the range of options in the category (Brucks, 1985). Studies show that consumers often delay purchasing not only because the complexity of the choice is high, but also because they are uncertain as to the set of possible options (Greenleaf and Lehmann, 1995). Purchasing therefore may be delayed if consumers perceive they have not been exposed to all possible alternatives, or if they perceive they are missing information. The information presentation format plays an important role in that sense, since it affects the uncertainty of whether customers feel they have been exposed to all possible alternatives, or have complete information about the options.

The way the retailer presents information about the options may reduce the uncertainty of not having seen a clear overview of the assortment. Huffman and Kahn (1998) argue that for high variety assortments, the attribute-based format reduces perceived complexity, increases satisfaction with the process, and facilitates consumers' willingness to make a choice. Information about the choice set presented to the consumer in an attribute-based format could lead the consumer to assume he or she has seen all possibilities in the choice set. Information presented in an alternative-based format, on the other hand, may leave the consumer wondering if there are other alternatives that he or she has not yet seen. The increased satisfaction with the process that results from presenting information in an attribute-based format relative to an alternative-based format could therefore be due to reductions in uncertainty as to whether all the available possibilities were exposed as well as to improvements in learning within-attribute preferences. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998)

IKEA presents its products according to both methods specified by Huffman and Kahn (1998) Visitors do actually have the choice of different presentation formats as IKEA exposes the products according to alternatives in the inspiration studio and according to attributes in the planning studio. This study addresses which alternative is preferred over the other, and the relative helpfulness of each presentation format.

2.4.2 Complexity of assortment

The frustration and information overload that a consumer may experience from a category killer using a large assortment strategy increases when the retailer tries to provide the consumer with exactly what he or she wants and therefore provides an abundance of different attributes and variety within these attributes. The consumer must then know the attributes, the preferences she has among the attributes and the preferences she has within each attribute. A consumer that is new to a category may not have the knowledge of the attributes and thus may find it difficult finding what he or she wants. Accordingly, a huge number of potential options may be confusing and overwhelming rather than beneficial. Hence, a large variety or customization strategy is not a competitive advantage if the customers become frustrated or dissatisfied with the complexity of the assortment. Research shows that dissatisfaction with the shopping process is attributed largely to the retailer, which can ultimately impact store traffic and the percentage of customers who make a purchase. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998; Rajagopal, 2011) The number of products within the assortment does not necessarily affect sales, according to studies from different trade organizations. Stores in those studies decreased the number of different products within a product group with no effect on sales. Other studies show however that increasing the variety of the assortment has been shown to increase the quantity consumed. (Kahn and Wansink, 2004) Large assortments have also been found to result in consumer confusion (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) and demotivate consumer choice (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000). A disorganized assortment



can make it more difficult for consumers to recognize and appreciate the full extent of the variety. It is thereby not only important to provide a wide assortment, but to organize it in a way so it reduces the perceived complexity and influences consumption positively.

Actual variety is not the only factor affecting the perceived variety of the assortment but the organization of the assortment plays an important role regarding how customers perceive the assortment. If the assortment is perceived as wide and deep, the consumption will increase (Kahn and Wansink, 2004). However, if the assortment is perceived as complex, the consumption will decrease (Huffman and Kahn, 1998). Therefore, the retailer has an important task organizing the assortment so the perceived variety increases consumption. Kahn and Wansink (2004) propose a framework for understanding how assortment structure and variety influence consumption. If assortments differ on more than one attribute, the actual variety of the assortment is likely to become more complex. Actual variety of the assortment is defined as the number of categories and the number of distinct options or subcategories. The options then differ on a few attributes (such as color, size).

It is the perceived complexity and not the actual complexity of the variety that determine the confusion that a consumer experiences with a wide assortment. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) The perceived complexity of a choice set is reduced when a person can direct attention only to relevant information and thus disregard irrelevant information (Bettman and Park, 1980) If consumers have the possibility to direct their attention to the alternatives that are acceptable based on their preferences and easily sort out other alternatives, the perceived complexity becomes smaller and more manageable. Perceived complexity is therefore reduced when consumers better understand the shopping environment and also when they can easily learn their preferences within product attributes. An important tool for the retailer to manage in order to facilitate within-attribute preference learning is thus to manage the way information about the attributes is presented to the consumer. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998)

IKEA's complex product families usually consist of many articles, which differ on five major attributes; color, size, shape, function and price. None of the shopkeepers could answer to how many combinations that can actually be constructed from these articles but the answers were rather like "an infinite number of combinations can be made". The variety of the complex product assortments may therefore be perceived as high.

2.4.3 ATTRIBUTE-BASED PRESENTATION FORMAT FACILITATES PREFERENCE LEARNING

Prior research shows that learning within-attribute preferences from alternatives is difficult. (Hoch and Deighton, 1989; Meyer, 1987). The reason is the consumer must decompose the alterative into its attributes and infer how each attribute contributes to overall evaluation (Meyer, 1987). When alternatives are at least moderately complex and can be described on many attributes, presentation of information by attribute makes the decision process easier for the customer because the information is presented in smaller portions that are easier for non-expert consumers to process. Preference learning is therefore likely to be easier and faster when the information is presented by attribute rather than by alternatives. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) Learning one's preferences in the alternative-based format is subject to numerous biases (Hoch and Deighton, 1989) because the number of attributes that a consumer considers when confronted with a full alternative is likely to be small and the most salient attributes for the product category. Learning in an attribute-based format, on the other hand, is likely to be more comprehensive and thus may result in an improved choice. Therefore, learning one's preferences in an attribute-based format has a positive influence on the satisfaction with the choice, relative

to learning preferences from alternatives.

Since presentation of information by attribute is predicted to facilitate preference learning, it is also predicted to reduce perceived complexity. (Huffman and Kahn, 1998) In addition, because an attribute-based presentation format increases preference learning, it should facilitate information processing, which in turn should increase the possibility of the consumer making a choice and a purchase. This is in contrast to the consumer who, uncertain of her preferences and overloaded by the variety, decides to delay decision-making and walks out of the store without buying. (Greenleaf and Lehmann 1995) There is a counter-argument that suggests that an alternative-based format could be preferred; consumers who learn preferences in an alternative-based format essentially practice evaluating alternatives, which may facilitate later choice processing.

The preferences learning for visitors at IKEA is more difficult in the inspiration section than in the planning section, as the assortment there is presented according to alternatives rather than attributes.

2.5 Framework

The framework (Figure 5) used in this research illustrates the connection between the theories that are presented in this paper. It is a suggestion of how customer satisfaction is affected by the pleasantness of the department, space management, information management, service level, complexity of assortment and presentation format of the assortment. Thus, it is mainly based on the following theories:

- Russel and Pratt (1980) store atmosphere
- Kahn and Wansink (2004) complexity of assortment
- Huffman and Kahn (1998) presentation of assortment

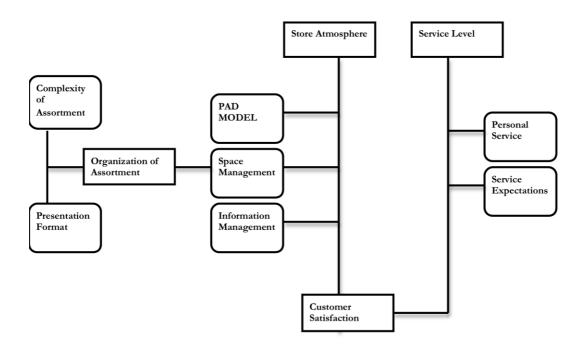


FIGURE 5 Framework of Customer Satisfaction. Source: Brath and Hedengran, 2011.

3 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology used in this research and the reliability and validity of results.

3.1 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The process of this research shows that a deductive approach has been used in order to perform the study. The process of quantitative research, as defined by Bryman and

Bell (2007), has been conducted here, see Figure 6.

3.2 Research Design

According to Yin (2003) a case study design is often the most appropriate when "how" or "why" questions are being posed. It is also a preferred method when studying real life events, such as organizational and managerial processes. This is aligne with our research as it aims to study organizational processes. The design used in this paper is therefore the case study design. What distinguishes the case study from other designs is that the researcher is concerned to clarify the unique features of the case. This is also our intention in the sense that the research is first and foremost applicable to the specific case that is being studied. Furthermore, a case study design is used to study the complexity of a case, such as an organization, a production site, a person or a single event. We aim to study the complexity of the purchasing process within an organization.

3.3 Data collection

The focus on data collection has mainly been on primary data in the form of interviews with managers and shopkeepers at IKEA's department stores and also interviews, based on interview protocols, with visitors at IKEA. We have had the opportunity to have a look at secondary data from previous studies conducted by IKEA that had some similarities to this research. IKEA has provided us with ten most common questions asked by customers at some of the departments. However, since each department concerns a bigger area than the ones that are accurate for this study, questions asked by customers are unfortunately not restricted to just the three research studios. Moreover, as a complement to the interviews, observations have been performed while waiting for potential respondents between the interviews. In such way, we are able to identify areas that are not being visited during a visitor's purchasing path.

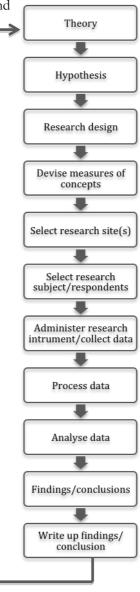


FIGURE 6 The process of quantitative research. Source: Bryman and Bell (2007)

3.3.1 Interviews

In this study a semi-structured approach has been practiced when performing interviews with managers and shopkeepers at IKEA's department stores. Before each interview an interview protocol with a range of question was put together, and sent to the interviewee so he or she could be prepared and thereby keep to the relevant subjects during the interview. The interviewee then had the opportunity to speak freely about each subject, at the same time as the interviewers could ensure the interviewee only talked about relevant issues for the subject. To

avoid asking leading questions and be able to get a better understanding of the source behind the research problem, the interview questions have been conducted and processed a couple of times. Further, the interviews have taken place at IKEA's department stores, which allows us to both perform interviews and also let the shopkeepers show us around in the different studios and give practical examples of different problems that arises for customers during their visit. In order not to miss documenting anything of what the interviewee had said, a tape-recorder was used during the interviews. This did not only make it possible to notice what the interviewee was saying, but also how he or she was saying things. A second tape-recorder was used as a back up in case any problem with the first one would occur and therefore not record anything.

The research question is about facilitating easier purchasing decision making for customers at IKEA's department stores. We therefore felt the accuracy of interviewing IKEA's visitors and see what their opinions were and if they experienced the same problems that IKEA's department managers as well as shopkeepers thought customers had at their visit to the studios. During the interviews with visitors both open and closed questions were asked. The former allowed visitors to respond to questions in their own words and thereby be able to talk about their knowledge and shopping experiences at IKEA. Further, it opened up the chance to identify other problem areas that we were not aware of. However, this type of questions are time-consuming to administer for the interviewee as well as the interviewer and can lead to a lower response rate amongst interviewees, since this person is required to put a greater effort into its answers. (Bryman and Bell, 2007) Well aware of this, we chose to not restrict the interviews to only open questions, but instead to include closed questions as well. These questions restrict interviewees to answer amongst a fixed set of alternatives and are thereby easier to process. The comparability of answers between respondents are enhanced, thus making it easier to both show relationships and compare answers. The downfall of this type of questions is that respondents can interpret the questions differently, hence risk jeopardizing the validity of the question. (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

3.3.2 Sample selection

In order to get valid opinions about visitors' shopping experience in each studio, interviews were performed at the exit of the studio on visitors' leave. To certify that the right people were included in the survey we formed the selection criteria on respondents who had an interest in buying products offered at the department. The first was made by observing visitors if they had an interest in the products and secondly we asked customers who we thought would be relevant for the survey if they had visited the department because of the interest in a piece of furniture or gadgets, or not. Only those with an intention to buy something from the studio became respondents. This ensured they would have a reasonable chance of answering questions and also provide solid responses. In addition, most respondents either spoke Swedish or were Swedes, which was why the interview protocols were designed in Swedish. However, if a potential respondent did not know Swedish, the interview was performed in English.

The response rate at the first approach with visitors was about 70 percent. If the answer to the first question was no, no interview was performed with the visitor. The second selection gave a response rate of 80 percent and a final response rate of 56 percent.



3.3.3 TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRES FOR "BESTÅ"

Bryman and Bell (2007) argues that it is desirable to conduct a test pilot for the concerned questions before administrating structured interviews to a sample. The reason behind these pilots are to ensure that both the survey questions and the instrument as a whole functions well. To certify that the questions asked to visitors were clear and would not be misunderstood, two test rounds of interviews for the "BESTÅ" studios were made. The first round included eight interviews. Examples of changes we did after the first test round was to move the "Demography" section to the end of the form, to avoid respondents' mood and answers being affected by the age and/or household question. We added one question in the beginning to exclude visitors whose primary reason for visiting the department was not related to any interest in the BESTA products. Another question was added to the interview protocol, which concerned how sufficient and clear visitors perceived the information exposed in the studios. The order of the questions asked can influence an interviewee's answer, (Bryman and Bell, 2007) which was noticed in this research. Some changes were therefore made regarding the order of questions, since the researchers had the impression that respondents started to think more critically after a few minutes into the interview. The question about overall impression of the studio was therefore moved from being question one to question 17. In such way respondents could provide a critical answer to what their actual impression of the department was. Further, based on the respondents' reactions to some questions, modifications were made to clarify the uncertainty in the questions that seemed difficult to understand.

The second test round included 10 interviews. To be sure visitors understood the possibility of creating and building their own commodity combination, a question regarding this was asked in both of the test rounds. As all respondents were aware of this, we assumed that the message was clearly communicated and therefore excluded that question in the final interview form. We added some open questions to allow visitors to give comments on some questions, since we noticed they often naturally wanted to give feedback to their answer. We also increased the interval for answer alternatives on two questions. In case a potential respondent would ask how long time an interview would take, time estimations were made during the test round of interviews. It turned out that the approximate time for each interview was seven minutes.

3.3.4 TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRES FOR "PAX" AND "GODMORGON"

Bryman and Bell (2007) say that it can be a good idea to use previously employed questions, since they have already been piloted and will save researcher some time. Before conducting the interview protocols we had a look at previous studies at IKEA that had some similarities to this one, but felt that these had to be reformed in order to be relevant for this study. The protocol for "PAX" and "GODMORGON" were based on the protocol for "BESTÅ", since these questions had already been tested and processed and were to some extent relevant for the other two studios. However, the problems the department managers and shopkeepers had identified differed somewhat between the studios and it was therefore necessary to modify each protocol. After formulating new questions these were tested and modified according to necessity. But this time we only needed to do one test round of interviews since many of them had already been tested in the "BESTÅ" protocol. However, minor changes to a few questions were still necessary to do and since most of the questions were not changed and still going to be used in the study, the results from the test round were included in the study.



3.4 METHOD FOR ANALYSIS

When performing the analysis, we tested the programs SPSS, Excel and Qualtrics and decided to use SPSS and Excel as tools to analyze the data. We made diagrams in order to get a better overview of respondents' answers and analyzed the statistics in order to determine the level of customer satisfaction. We also identified possible improvements that can be made at the studios through analyzing the open questions and observations made at the studios with the support of theoretical framework used in the thesis.

In regards to the interviews, respondent were given a range of alternatives to answer from. For most questions there were five alternatives, but some had fewer or even more alternatives. In most cases the range was "very bad – bad – neither good nor bad - good - very good". Each alternative corresponded to a value between 1 and 5, where 1 equals "very bad" and 5 "very good". In order to get as much feedback from visitors as possible, open questions were also included in the interview protocol. Additionally, notes were taken during the interviews where visitors had comments to the closed questions. Ordinal scales have been used, which describe order but not relative size or difference between the items measured. Mean values can therefore not be used to describe the central tendency. However, it can be used to indicate the relative difference between e.g. the Department store Bäckebol (DB) and the Department store Kållered (DK). The central tendency is otherwise described by the median and mode values. The open questions, and comments to the closed questions, have been analyzed with a qualitative approach through describing important inputs that were given from visitors.

3.5 Reliability and validity

The aim is to perform a study with high reliability and validity, which is possible to replicate. If IKEA is going to be able to measure the impact of the recommendations given in this paper, the tests need to be replicable and thus possible to perform in a later occasion. In such way, IKEA will be able to see if the given recommendations have been of any help or able to improve the studios. With a study of high validity, researchers should be able to guarantee the measure is able to reflect the accurate problem (Bryman and Bell, 2007). In order to do so, the formulated questions have been processed and analyzed before tested to be sure that they actually answer what is desired. The same procedure was performed for the tested questions before they were used for the proper interviews. However, it cannot be implied that this research can be generalized and thereby applied to other studies like this one. The reason is that this research is accurate for a specific case, whose results will most likely not be possible to use for other cases. The questions are also designed to solve problems regarding specified studios at IKEA stores. This research will therefore have low external validity. But the structure of this study may be used as a guideline for other similar studies.

Even though we have had an interview protocol with both opened and closed questions, the way questions were asked could influence how respondents choose to answer. Meaning, researchers have to critically analyze the results while having this in mind. Moreover, in case interviewees believed that we who were performing the interviews were employed by IKEA, their way of answering may have been affected, hence leading them to not answer as critically as they would have otherwise. However, this is nothing we can be certain of, but something we have chosen to have in mind when performing the interviews. Thus, starting the interviews by telling interviewees that we are writing a Master's thesis and performing a survey regarding customer satisfaction and would be grateful to get their input. By doing so, we hope to get a genuine answer from respondents. Nevertheless, the fact that the interview protocols and interviews were



performed in Swedish and thereafter translated into English in order to include them in the thesis can lead to information and results being lost in translation. But, since we who are writing this thesis are quite comfortable with the English language, we do not expect for this to affect the interpretation of the questions and responses significantly.

Observations performed during the interviews have not been made according to any academic research method, but is considered as highly useful when analyzing how visitors are using the studios as well as identifying and suggesting potential improvements. With their help we are able to determine which part of the studios visitors are using.

Our appreciation is that visitors seeming dissatisfied with the studios were more reluctant to participate in the survey, than those who were satisfied with the department. Further, they who spent a longer time in the studios sometimes became tired and frustrated during the time they spent in the studio, and therefore not as willing to participate in the interviews than those who had spent less time in the studio. Consequently, the true level of customer satisfaction may not be represented by the samples, leading results to be biased, in the sense that results from this sample indicates a higher level o customer satisfaction that what is represented by the population. This problem was especially evident in the PAX studio.

Furthermore, some articles are written in the 20th century and may be considered a bit out of date. However, the theoretical findings from these articles are of high importance within the research field of customer satisfaction, and therefore also for our research.



4 EMPIRICS

This section starts with a general description of how IKEA works with range presentation, followed by a description for each of the three studios. A problem description of each studio is also presented in such way it was defined by shopkeepers and managers.

4.1 RANGE PRESENTATION AT IKEA

When a visitor enters an IKEA store, he or she meets a large number of different range presentations all the way from the entrance to the exit of the store. Range presentations invite visitors to see, touch and try products and solutions so they are able to make a purchasing decision on their own. The range presentation is therefore a vital part of the mechanical sales system. Within the sales area there should be a balance in the composition between main- and complementing products and lighting and communication, as this contributes to sending a strong message to visitors. Range presentation must always be kept up to date, so visitors can see the same products in the store as on the website. The showroom, located on the top floor, opens up large areas with room settings, easy accessible furniture and furniture studios. Hot spots are created through turns in the main aisle every 15-18 meters and by using the prolongation of the main aisle efficiently. These are used for sales steering, showing low price profile, presenting new products, big sellers etc. A product should give an attractive visual impression as well as show hidden benefits. The choice of display technique is therefore influenced by the visual characteristics and functional advantages of the product. Display techniques must also contribute to making the mechanical sales system work efficiently. (Inter IKEA Systems, 2007)

4.1.1 FOUR GOALS AND FOUR RANGE PRESENTATION TASKS

Every IKEA store should fulfill four goals:

- Easy and convenient to shop
- Provide ideas, inspiration and smart solutions
- Competent home furnishing specialist
- Pleasant and stimulating shopping experience

In order to achieve the four goals, four range presentation tasks needs to be fulfilled (of which the focus of this research concerns the fourth).

- Present functional and inspiring home furnishing solutions. A buying decision should be stimulated by inspirational and functional solutions as well as customer benefits. To balance the rational and emotional impact it is important to understand people's needs and way of living.
- Demonstrate a clear low price profile. Visitors should be convinced that the offer is a low price offer, no matter which product or solution is chosen.
- Show that the IKEA retailer is in the forefront. Showing and sharing contemporary home furnishing knowledge.
- Activate the IKEA mechanical sales system. Range presentation is a precondition for the IKEA mechanical sales system to work. Every product must be presented and communicated to attract and activate visitors and make it easier for them to buy. (Inter IKEA Systems, 2007)

4.1.2 DEMONSTRATING COMPLEX PRODUCT ASSORTMENT IN THE STUDIOS

The product families of this research are said to be complex product. The reason is that the families are made up of many products, which can be combined in different ways by choosing different frames, doors, drawers, handles, shelves, interior, washbasins etc., depending on the product family. In order to present the possibilities clearly, the complex product families are presented in the furniture studio in two integrated sections called planning section and inspiration section. This is a general rule, however the extent to which it is practiced differs slightly between the various IKEA stores. The specific aim of furniture studios is to help visitors understand the product and its possibilities.

Furniture studios are placed in the showroom in close connection to, or integrated in series of products with the same function. The furniture studio strengthens the name and function of the product family, by extra exposure. It also gives good opportunities for sales steering and add-on sales. The best selling combinations are to be displayed in the inspiration studio and at least one complete offer, the most commercial combination, should be presented to create visual impact and inspiration. The planning studio should provide visitors with a good overview of all parts and all necessary communication enabling them to prepare and make their buying decision. All necessary buying- and planning tools should be available in the planning studio. (Inter IKEA Systems, 2007)

4.1.3 Communication

Visitors are exposed to a lot of information in the complex product families' studios. There are price streamers, pictures of designers, news, new lower price, lowest price, wow-price, customer benefits of the products, technical information, possible use information, information about shelf position and so on. The price tags include information about for example measures, available colors and removable shelves. Hidden advantages that cannot be seen with the naked eye, for example the maximum weight the product can carry, is communicated through highlighting some information at the price tags. (Gunnarsson, 2011). The high information load has a purpose, namely to support the mechanical sales system. (Inter IKEA Systems, 2007) Exposing the necessary information to customers is therefore crucial.

4.2 Bestå

BESTÅ is one of the three product families addressed in this case study and regards TV panels with media storage, TV benches, shelf units and storage combinations.

4.2.1 LAYOUT

The area for the BESTÅ studio is divided into an inspiration section and a planning section. The first is expected to raise visitors' interest as well as ideas and is strategically located as the first part of the studio. The planning section (also called technical section) is located later in the studio. A photo of the disposition can be seen in Figure 7. This section should expose all parts of the assortment in a structured matter, facilitating the overview of e.g. all doors, frames and casters. Visitors should thereby be able to understand all possible combinations that can be constructed within the assortment.



FIGURE 7 The BESTÅ studio in DK. The planning section is located to the left of the wall in the center of the picture.



(Gunnarsson, 2011) In DB the planning section is located in a corner in the middle/end of the studio and in DK it is located at the right hand of the walking lane along a wall.

4.2.2 COMMUNICATION

All products in the inspiration section have price tags attached to them. These tags contain not only the price but also other information such as; benefits, product specific information, dimensions, care advice, environmental information and "good to know" information. However, this information varies between different products. For some products the price tag includes information about color availability (Appendix 1, Figure 28). There are also small tags attached to the products with information about i.e. warranties or hinges (Appendix 1, Figure 29), and streamers hanging from the roof. Both of the shopkeepers Gunnarsson (2011) and Liljander (2011) believe the amount of communication may be too much in the BESTÅ studio at DK and DB. "The problem is that we do not take time to establish what message we actually want visitors to get from this furniture studio. Too many messages with no common thread may seem confusing to visitors, and they may leave the studio without being able to recall any strong message." (Gunnarsson, 2011) Furthermore, Gunnarsson (2011) believes the information signs may lead visitors "not to see the forest for the trees", leading them to ask personnel for questions about information that is not clearly communicated in the studio. She believes they need to be better at communicating the right information in a clearer way, and that it may be necessary to reduce the amount of information.

4.2.3 Presentation of the assortment

Range presentation methods are centrally decided. However, different products may be exposed at different IKEA stores and the decision is generally in the hands of the shopkeeper. The product combinations shown in the inspiration section are supposed to be commercial, and are normally profit generators, products with high turnover, news or low-price products. They are often the same solutions shown in the catalogue or on the website, as those product combinations are already designed and thought through and have high customer demand. This will also make visitors familiar with the assortment. IKEA's low price-strategy should be communicated at strike zones next to the entrance of the studio, if such spots exist. All news must be given a fair chance, as they may become future profit generators. If IKEA manages to increase sales, better prices can be negotiated from higher purchase volumes resulting in reduced prices to customers. However, if a displayed product does not sell, it has to be replaced by a more commercial product. Product combinations should further be displayed in the color of the highest demand. If visitors demand products in black, and they are displayed in white, visitors will not be completely satisfied (Gunnarsson, 2011).

Customer demand varies in different parts of Sweden and the local market therefore affects what products are being presented in the inspiration studio. According to a survey made by IKEA, a greater proportion of the population in Bäckebol live in apartments compared to Kållered, meaning that DB should present smaller product combinations than DK with regards to BESTÅ products. However, keeping the low-price profile is important to IKEA and thus the products exposed are affected, but not decided, by the local market.

A ready-made picking list is provided at each product combination that is displayed in the inspiration section. The slip shows where to pick up the parts for the exact combination. However if visitors would like to change any part of the combination, such as the casters or color of a drawer, he or she must get a new picking list from the personnel.

There are several different frames to choose from and three different materials of the frames. All frames are shown in white and visitors are given information about what other materials of frames that are available. Doors and drawers come in several variants and eight different colors and materials. A brochure called "Buying Help" should be available in she studio, containing all products, measures and prices of the assortment. This brochure is in plain black and white. There is also a brochure called "Smart storage" available, which is colorful and contains some inspiration.

BESTÅ DK shows the different materials of frames through small pieces of wood located on the

wall next to the information about frames. Hinges against a wall line up the doors, so visitors can feel how it is to open the doors and get a good overview. This is also an effective way of showing doors due to space constraints. A T-wall (two walls in the form of a T) is used for showing ready-assembled drawers, in all available colors, see Figure 8. BESTÅ DB shows the materials of frames on a poster on the wall. The doors are displayed in a similar way as in DK, while the fronts of drawers are shown in a corner of the studio, in each of the different colors and sizes. As drawers are not assembled, it is not possible to test them in the planning section. (Appendix 1, Figure 30, 31 and 32.)

The sketching tables and the computer based planning tool should be present in the studio so visitors are able to discuss, make sketches, simulate combinations and print a picking list. The purpose of the tables is to give visitors some space



FIGURE 8 Drawers displayed in BESTÅ DK.

to create their own solution. (Gunnarsson, 2011) All planning studios are to be equipped with a computer based planning tool. However, so far DB is the only store in Gothenburg where it has been installed. The purpose of the planning tool is to make customers do the work of choosing frames, doors, drawers, colors and interior of their product combinations and also print a picking list by themselves. (Liljander, 2011). Gunnarsson (2011) believes the planning tool contributes to increased sales as users get to see product combinations in the color they prefer. Furthermore, as visitors explore the assortment in the system, they discover products they did now know they wanted or existed. It therefore stimulates add-on sales. However, Gunnarsson (2011) believes some visitors prefer personal assistant to help from a computer, and may therefore not use the tool. It is thereby important for personnel to be able to help visitors understand the system; otherwise visitors can have a hard time using it on their own. Hence, it is crucial that the personnel understand and enjoy using the tool. Liljander (2011) believes the majority of visitors do not use the planning tool, since as long as personnel are present, it is easier for visitors to ask for help than try to sort the problems out by the computer. Liljander (2011) means she has little experience with the system herself and that there have been a few problems with it e.g. printing the picking lists. Regarding the question weather the workload of the personnel has decreased after implementing the system, she answers "not substantially".

4.2.4 STAFF

The basic staff rule is to have two people present during opening and closing of the store and three people during daytime. The personnel covers two HFB:s (sofas etc and TV-furniture etc) and preferably one person should always be present in each. In case of sickness or education of an employee, the other personnel must cover. As merchandises in the inspiration studio are

continuously being worn and broken, new modules must be assembled and exposed at the studio almost every day. This causes employees to regularly leave the studio in order to perform such work. One information desk is then being switched off. The personnel have less time for each customer in the weekends than during the weekdays. Liljander (2011) does not believe that the personnel or customers see this as a problem, since she believes visitors' expectations regarding personnel are lower during the weekends. However, sales are lower when personnel are not present at the studio to help visitors in their decision-making.

4.2.5 Problem definition

IKEA wants visitors to see the commercial products and at the same time make sure visitors understands that it is possible to get a product in another color, with different doors, without doors, with drawers etc. (Bergsten, 2011) Adding more personnel to the studio would facilitate the purchasing process. However, this is not the best solution, as such action obstructs IKEA's low price strategy (Segreland, 2011).

Visitors do have the prerequisite to make their purchasing decision on their own if they understand how the system works. However, Liljander (2011) believes that too many visitors do not understand the fundamentals of the system. Some visitors, usually those who have visited the studio before, have prepared their purchase before visiting the studio by looking up information in the catalogue or at the website. Visitors who have not prepared their purchase, regardless of new or frequent visitors, often find it problematic to understand the opportunities of the complex assortment. (Gunnarsson, 2011) The *problem* is thus to deliver the message to the customers about the many possibilities with the complex product assortment (Liljander, 2011), while balancing the trade-off between inspiring- and technical presentation. In order to do so, one must determine the extent visitors understand the possibilities today and what problems that occur during their purchasing process.

The computer based planning tool contributes to facilitating the purchasing process for some visitors. It also occupies space that could otherwise be used for inspiration. Another *problem* is thus to find out to what extent the tool is being used, in the store and at the website, and how much of help it provides.

4.3 GODMORGON

GODMORGON is one of the product families within the bathroom department and the only family within this category that has a computer based planning system.

4.3.1 LAYOUT

The Bathroom department in DK is located on the top floor, in a corner on the left hand side of the walking lane, while in DB it is located on the ground floor in a corner on the right hand side of the primary aisle. The benefit of locating the bathroom department on the top floor is that the floor is characterized by personal selling, while there is more mechanical selling on the ground floor.

The bathroom department includes several product families but GODMORGON is the largest family and has consequently been allocated the most space, and a furniture studio. The studio is splitted into an inspiration section and a planning section. However, the division of the sections is not as evident as with other complex product families. The planning section is given a smaller space in favor of the inspiration section, and is located in the beginning of the studio. The

inspiration section includes, in contrast to studios of other complex product groups, also other product families than GODMORGON.

4.3.2 COMMUNICATION

The shopkeeper for bathroom in DK, Kahnberg (2011), believes that IKEA needs to be better at communicating the fact that it sells bathrooms, as many visitors seem to be unaware of this. She also argues that IKEA needs to improve the communication so that visitors understand that it does not only provide products, but also handicraft- and delivery services. This is now communicated through a flyer, available in the planning studio. Each product in the studio has a POS label attached to it, which includes the price and also product description, benefits, measures and environmental information. There is also a label for each assembled combination of commode and washbasin. (Appendix 1, Figure 33)

PRESENTATION OF THE ASSORTMENT

The assortment is primarily grouped according to product family and secondly to size. Some stores have chosen to present the various product families separated from each other in the department and others have mixed products from different families in the vignettes. Kahnberg (2011) believes that presenting the assortment according to product family makes the assortment look narrow with limited possibilities, and that mixing the assortment will give an impression of a wider product supply. Furthermore, she believes that the possibilities of the assortment are not being communicated in a proper way as it looks today. Kahnberg (2011) has an idea of mixing the vignettes from different product families in the inspiration, thus making the assortment seem wider and express more opportunities.

There are many opportunities with the assortment. Commodes come in totally five sizes. However, three sizes can be chosen depending on weather one prefers to have the two drawers on top or next to each other. It is also possible to get a combination of four drawers with two drawers on top and next to each other. The commodes come in five different materials. There are five different washbasins to choose from, which come in three to four different sizes depending on product family. Four of the five washbasins come with both one and two sinks; the fifth comes in two sinks only. There are a few different casters and nine different taps to choose from. Many combination can be constructed from the assortment, however there are also restrictions.

The commodes are included in the GODMORGON product family, but the washbasins, taps and casters are not. Commodes from GODMORGON, together with taps, casters and washbasins, are shown in the planning section, however not all variants of them. The division between the planning- and inspiration section is not as evident in DK as in DB. The planning

section in DK does not have any computer based planning tool. Instead it has a table, where visitors are able to design their ideas on a piece of paper. All different taps and casters are displayed to choose from in a structured way. Commodes, washbasins and taps are shown in small solutions in the planning section and are constructed from one commode in each of the sizes 60-140 cm, one washbasin (of different brand) for each commode and one mirror for each solution (Figure 9). In this sense, visitors get FIGURE 9 GODMORGON Planning section in DK.



an appreciation of the supply of washbasins and commodes but does not see all variants of them, e.g. that every brand of washbasin come in other sizes or that some of the commodes come in other designs, e.g. with two or four drawers instead of one. There is also a small overview map in the corner of the section, showing all of the sizes of commodes and washbasins (Appendix 1, Figure 34).

The studio in DB is given a larger space. Taps, casters and washbasins are displayed to choose from in a structured way. Different sizes of commodes are showed by displaying the biggest size of the main commodes, and show the various sizes of them by drawing lines above the commode with the other sizes so that visitors can get an idea of how big the other commodes

are. Visitors are also encouraged to look at the big overview map in the planning section Appendix 1, Figure 35). The measures are displayed at the lower end of the board just above the two commodes; one with one drawer and one with two. However, the measures above the commodes do not correspond to the commodes below the measures as e.g. 2 drawers also come in 100 cm length. This is illustrated in Figure 10. In addition, what is displayed on the overview map regarding measurements of FIGURE 10 Measurements for GODMORGON DB. washbasins does not correspond to what is exposed on the price labels in the studio.



Visitors that have seen a combination on the website, may not be able to see the very same combination in the store, since IKEA sometimes choose to display a modified version of it. Visitors can also have a hard time understanding that it is possible to switch a commode/washbasin for another on the displayed solutions in order to construct the desired combination.

Åkesson (2011) is convinced the computer based planning tool should not be included in the studio at the bathroom department, as it is not helping visitors sufficiently in the purchasing process. It has been implemented in some stores, but removed since visitors did not use it frequently. As of today, Kahnberg (2011) does not want the tool in the studio and argues that it needs to be evolved and more inspiring than it is today to make a contribution to the studio. She cannot recall that any visitors has used the tool on the website and prepared a picking list at home. Further, she is satisfied with the overview of the assortment in DK. However, she believes the exposition may be too technical oriented and that the studio may loose customers because the lack of inspiration in the studio. "Any other large bathroom store provides lots of inspiration and we lack competitiveness in this sense", she argues.

A brochure called "Buying Help" should be available in the studio. There is one brochure for each product family within the studio. This brochure is in plain black and white and contains all products within the family, with measurements and prices. There is also another brochure of color that can be found in the studio, but only at the planning table. In this brochure, visitors can get inspired by the shown solutions as well as get an overview of the assortment, since all of the parts are included in the brochure for every product family at the bathroom department.

4.3.4 STAFF

The bathroom department share staff with kids' department. The general rule is to always have one staff present at each department. However, it is not always possible due to reasons such as sickness, education or assembly work and the department does not function optimally in the absence of personnel. The presence of personnel is important for two reasons in particular: the first being the need of observing visitors in the first step of the purchasing process. It is during this phase visitors decide weather it is relevant or not to buy a bathroom solution at IKEA. The personnel therefore need to be available in order to answer questions about e.g. handicraft-, delivery or payment services. If IKEA fails to communicate that it offers "the entire package", visitors may choose another supplier. The second reason is that all products in the GODMORGON family must be collected from the merchandise delivery thus the personnel need to construct a purchase order in order for customers to receive their products. (Kahnberg, 2011)

4.3.5 Problem definition

Shopkeeper Kahnberg (2011) believes too many people are unaware of IKEA selling bathroom and that IKEA must be better in communicating that it provides handicraft services. Many customers arrive at the studio with a finished purchasing list printed from the website. The desired combination shown at the website may not be exposed in the studio, which causes confusion and questions. Visitors that come unprepared experience difficulties in understanding the many opportunities of the assortment. The challenge is therefore to communicate the different variants and sizes of commodes, washbasins, casters and taps, as well as the different ways it is possible to combine them.

4.4 PAX

PAX is the third product family analyzed in this study. The PAX furniture studio is included in the department of wardrobes and regards mainly storage.

4.4.1 LAYOUT

The PAX studio is divided into two parts, one called "wardrobe compact" (inspiration section) where visitors can get inspiration on how to create their own solution and another called "PAX studio (planning section)" where visitors can see the different doors and interior to choose from, as well as the sizes of the frames etc. Visitors have the opportunity to design their own solutions by using the computerized planning tools. However, the shopkeeper in DB, Paulsson (2011), feels the studio is not well designed, since visitors will first see the wardrobe compact for sliding doors when entering the studio, thereafter the planning section followed by wardrobe compact for doors with hinges. The idea is rather that visitors firstly should be inspired through walking around and having a look at the solutions in the wardrobe compact and thereafter enter the planning section and design their combinations. This is what the layout looks like in DK, where the visitor will first see the inspiration section for hinge as well as sliding doors, thereafter the interior, to end with the planning section. But since this is not the case in DB, Paulsson (2011) believes the studio is wrongly designed. He also says that the layout will hopefully be subject to change through a redesign of the studio during next business year.

4.4.2 COMMUNICATION

The information displayed in the studio is mainly centrally directed. Some of the criteria that need to be fulfilled are the exposure of warranties, prices and where products can be found in the storeroom. IKEA also wants to show the different price and quality steps i.e. what you receive if you are willing to pay a little bit more. Cheap products should have an even cheaper solution

displayed next to it and visitors should see the lowest price at the elongation of an aisle. However, at DK this cannot be fulfilled and therefore it is decided to have it along a gable. What is exposed regarding news and expiring products is up to the shopkeepers. (Larsson, 2011) Paulsson (2011) have the impression the information in the studio is not optimal and it is hard to say if the information is enough or if visitors simply choose not to use it. "Here at IKEA we are very good at putting up a lot of information, which can make visitors confused regarding where to look." (Paulsson, 2011) He also feels they have to start from the beginning at the studio and think about what IKEA really wants to communicate to visitors. Visitors are expected to read on the disposal box at the interior display what they can find. But in order for them to do so, IKEA cannot communicate too much of other information and impressions, leading visitors to read that instead. Paulsson (2011) thereby means the information is sufficient but it could be that it is not telling the right things and is consequently not accurate.

A label on the outside of the wardrobe tells visitors about the total price of the frame with only doors included for the specific solution, as well as the total price with interior included. (Appendix 1, Figure 36) Opening up the wardrobe, there is a price tag on every part (i.e. every shelf, box, drawer etc) of the wardrobe showing the part's price, as well as a price tag that specifies every part of the wardrobe and shows the total price. This price should be the total price with interior included that is shown on the outside of the wardrobe. However, these two prices differ quite often. The reason is that some parts of the wardrobe or interior have been changed but both price tags have not been updated.

A brochure called "Buying Help" should be available in the studio, one for wardrobes with sliding doors and one for hinge doors. The brochure contains all products, measures and prices of the assortment, and is in plain black and white. Paulsson (2011) mentions that IKEA has at previous occasions worked with picking lists, but has decided to stop doing so due to environmental reasons, as it generated a lot of paper. However, visitors find picking lists helpful so decisions have been made to reinstall them again, and so they have for some products, but the ambition is to do it for all of them. Larsson (2011) says that when IKEA had picking lists together with displayed solutions, many customers did not understand they could change the interior. But in some way they knew they could design their own solutions and thereby wanted to change something about the displayed solutions. This resulted in printing of new picking lists and even more paper. Paulsson (2011) says that visitors can find it difficult to read out the picking lists since they contain a lot of information. E.g. if a visitor finds a solution that is in total three meter wide, this frame might consist of four 75 cm frames, since there are no single frame of three meter. For each frame you will find a different picking list, which Paulsson (2011) means will leave visitors with a lot of paper. On the other hand, if IKEA used one single paper to explain the entire three meters solution it would be a lot for visitors to interpret and it would take time to understand. Not to forget, many visitors do not want to buy the sizes exposed on the area, which means the picking list will be inaccurate for them. What Paulsson (2011) argues for instead is a brochure where all different parts from PAX are described and where visitors have the opportunity to mark the products they are interested in. The brochure would also show where they could find each product in the storeroom. However, the placement of products in the storeroom change frequently and the brochure would therefore have to be updated quite often.

4.4.3 Presentation of the assortment

IKEA wants to show a width of the assortment and the articles offered at the studio. Directions are given regarding what should be exposed at the studio. There are also guidelines for what products to promote. Furthermore, IKEA chooses to expose products it wants to sell and what

customers want to buy. But first and foremost, DB shows the mixture of the cheap, middle priced and expensive assortment. What DB also would like to do is to show visitors the different sizes of sliding doors, while the ultimate would be to only show 150 cm solutions and not 300 cm solutions, since it allows visitors to see a wider range of different solutions next to each other. (Paulsson, 2011) In DK the assortment is ranged according to function i.e. doors and the most important articles. (Larsson, 2011) Paulsson (2011) says that IKEA should expose more products at the studio that are shown in the catalogue and on the website. The reason is to make visitors recognize what they have seen before coming to the stores. This is something he feels DB can do better than today, because a solution that a visitor has seen in the catalogue or at the website may today be found in the studio to a different price. The reason could be that IKEA has chosen to display that product in a different size.

When it comes to displaying hinge doors, there are three ways of doing so. PAX at DB has chosen to use the model "grandfather clock", which means that the doors are shown on frames. (Appendix 1, Figure 37) (Paulsson, 2011) DK on the other hand display doors on walls that are angled. (Appendix 1, Figure 38) (Larsson, 2011) The third alternative is to just display doors directly on walls, and the method depends on how much space there is available in the studio. (Paulsson, 2011) In both studios, the sliding doors are both exposed on complete solutions as well as along a wall, which Larsson (2011) believes should be quite clear to visitors. In both DB and DK, the mirror doors are located along one part of the wall with the sliding doors it can be combined with. Next to them, visitors can also see the other alternatives they can get the sliding doors in. Paulsson (2011) informs that IKEA is better at displaying sliding doors than hinge doors, and he is not completely satisfied with the department, especially when it comes to the "PAX studio". His impression is that the steps 1,2 and 3, that show which part the visitor should start with when designing a wardrobe solution, is confusing, particularly since they are spread out. Also, one does not necessarily have to follow the steps in order to be able to create a wardrobe. Paulsson (2011) therefore believes the steps can be removed from the studio since customers are rather making their decisions according to size and not these steps. What he on the other hand thinks could help customers is if they displayed signs where visitors can find doors, interior and frames.

Regarding how visitors find the overview of the assortment Paulsson (2011) have the impression that it is very good when it comes to the hinge doors, where IKEA have chosen to show all white doors along one and a same wall and the others on a different wall in DB. Although, he says that it can be somewhat difficult to understand the different heights of the doors. Here visitors have to read on the price tags in order to straighten that out. Sliding doors are bought in pairs with fixed solutions. It is not possible to combine the doors however one would like to, especially not the mirror doors. These doors are very popular, but can only be combined with a wooden door and not with e.g. a white door. Larsson and Paulsson (2011) believe that it is difficult to communicate this message to visitors so that these questions will be avoided. In DB they shown three out if the four doors that can be combined with the mirror doors.

Paulsson (2011) mentions that the planning system IKEA used before was much more complicated to work with than today's system. However, the negative thing about the new system is that you can only build a wardrobe solution and not place a solution in a room setting with other furniture and thereby get an idea of how it would look like. With the old system, it was possible to do so, but it was more difficult to work with. Further, another downside with the new system is that it does not get updated, which means that inaccurate furniture remain in the system. The upside is that the personnel have gotten fewer questions from visitors, since they are

using the system more frequently. (Paulsson, 2011) At PAX in DB there are four planning computers and Paulsson (2011) do not feel there is a need to install more computers due to the amount of users, but rather to make people notice them better. Larsson (2011) has the impression those customers who are using the planning tool do so at home. The estimation is that one out of ten are using it at the studio. Even though, there is a benefit of having it at the studio, since it allows visitors who want to use it in the store to do so. As soon as visitors start using the tool they are appreciating it.

4.4.4 STAFF

The manning of the department is decided mainly according to how sales were at the same time previous year. However, after working at the department for a while the shopkeepers have learned which days are peak days where more personnel are needed. It is difficult to say how many that is really manning the wardrobe department, since it is joint with other departments as well. "When the department is not manned we do not sell as much as when it is manned, but the average IKEA visitor do not need any help" (Paulsson 2011). Larsson (2011) on the other hand argues for the importance of personnel being present at the department in order to obtain additional sales; "The mechanical sales system works well, but the purpose of the personnel should not be to be an order receiver but rather a seller". The aim, he argues, is therefore to catch visitors before they have made their purchasing decision and see if they need any help, since the system can be very difficult for some people and easy for others. The consequence of not doing so can be that customers leave the store either without buying anything or buying the wrong components, thus returning products. The mechanical sales system is a support for the personal selling, by enabling release of resources, but Larsson (2011) mean the wardrobe department is in need of personal selling. (Larsson, 2011)

4.4.5 PROBLEM DEFINITION

There are some problems visitors can come across when visiting the studio. One example is the restrictions of sliding doors that can be combined with the mirror doors. Many visitors do not understand how these can be combined. Another example is that visitors need to know that in order to assemble a wardrobe at home with sliding doors, the height of the ceilings need to be at least 2,40 meters, otherwise the space between the ceiling and frame will be too small for it to be possible to hang the doors onto the frame. (Larsson and Paulsson, 2011) When customers are buying a wardrobe with hinge doors it is also important for them to understand that they need three hinges for the lower and four hinges for the higher wardrobe. Even if IKEA is showing costumers this by displaying three hinges on the lower frame and four on the higher, how easy is it for visitors to understand this type of information? Not to forget, IKEA also needs to communicate to visitors that hinges are not included in the price, when buying hinge doors. One of the reasons for excluding them in the purchase is because customers are able to choose what kind of hinges they would like with their doors. Further, since the hinge doors are 50 cm wide it is not possible to use a frame that is 75 cm wide. Some customers do not realize this until they arrive at the "merchandise delivery" and cannot be bothered going back to the studio to change their purchase decision, thus leaving the department store without buying anything from PAX. Even if most customers understand that it is possible to design an own solution, it is a frequently asked question. (Larsson, 2011)

When it comes to the most common questions asked by visitors at the wardrobe department, Paulsson (2011) says they concern questions about the size of the products and sliding doors. Many customers ask if it is possible to attach the doors to the ceiling and the floor since they



would like to create their own solutions, but this is nothing IKEA offers. Instead the doors are attached directly to the frame.

The general problem with the PAX family is thereby the same as for the BESTÅ- and GODMORGON families, thus to communicate the many opportunities with the complex product assortment.



5 Analysis and Results

Following section will discuss the empirical material and results from interviews with visitors. The analysis is based on what Otiento et al (2005) call the buying system satisfaction, and will enable to determine the level of customer satisfaction within each studio and give recommendations to IKEA with regards to possible improvements within each studio. Each one of them will be discussed in turn.

5.1 Bestå

A total amount of 94 interviews were performed at the BESTÅ studios. 48 of the interviews were made in DB and 46 in DK. The interview protocol for the BESTÅ studios consisted of 21 questions, see Appendix 5.

5.1.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the respondents 44 percent were men and 56 percent women. 47 percent were also 35 years old or younger, 43 percent between 36 and 60 years old and 10 percent more than 60 years old. 58 percent lived in an apartment and 42 percent in a house. The main difference between the departments is thus that visitors in Bäckebol are younger and live more commonly in apartments, than in Kållered. The response frequency is equally divided between men and women in DB, while more women than men have responded to the interviews in DK.

5.1.2 Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the studio was addressed through analyzing the pleasantness of the studio, the overview of the assortment and the easiness of navigation within the studio. The pleasantness of the studio was addressed in the interview by simply one question; "What is your **overall impression of the studio**"? The results showed a range of answers equal to three, since none of the visitors thought of the environment as "very bad". As can be seen in Figure 11, 71 percent of the respondents in total have a "good" or "very good" impression of the studio and none of the visitors thought of the

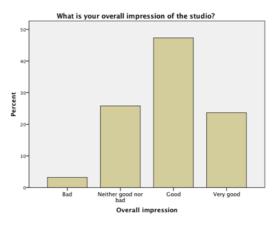


FIGURE 11 The overall impression of the studio.

environment as very bad. The pleasantness of the studios is therefore not bad, but is subject for improvement. The dispersion is lower in DK, where 54 percent of the respondents think the overall impression of the studio is "good", 40 percent think of it as "good" in DB. Relative to DB, DK have slightly more visitors with a bad impression of the studio. The two main reasons why visitors were dissatisfied with the studio are because they thought it was *messy*, and *lacked inspiration*.

Levy and Weitz (2010) argue that organizing a department store so different departments are distinctively defined and "isolated" from one another creates a comfortable shopping experience that can result in more sales. A visitor in DK commented on the overall impression of the assortment as: "It does not seem well thought-through. First storage, then shelves from the product family LACK, then storage again behind the shelves, and suddenly comes all drawers. There seem to be no system." Another visitor said: "The department is messy and you think it ends where there is a wall or a lane, but then there is more things on the other side." Visitors

seem to think there is no common thread in the department, and that it is difficult to understand where the department begins as well as ends. It seems as if visitors do not fully understand the size and scope of the studio and seem to have a difficult time differing the product families BILLY and LACK from the BESTÅ studio as well as understanding where the studio begins and ends. This is partly because there are walls that divide the studio in different sections, but in order to build room settings, walls are needed. However, visitors should not need to be confused by other product groups within, or in very close connection to, the BESTÅ studio.

With regards to inspiration, many visitors would like to see more inspiration in terms of complete solutions, and preferably put in room settings. This will be discussed further under the section "Inspiration Section".

Next area concerns visitors' opinion of the overview of the assortment. Modemedian values equals 4 and 62 percent are satisfied. Looking at the extremes (Figure 12), we see that 2.1 percent are "very dissatisfied" and 23.4 percent are "very satisfied". Satisfaction with the overview of assortment is indicated to be somewhat higher in DK compared to DB, as mean values are 3.83 and 3.60 respectively (As described earlier mean values can not be used to describe the central tendency of ordinal scales however can be used for indicating samples. between Values explained by the great share of visitors in DK

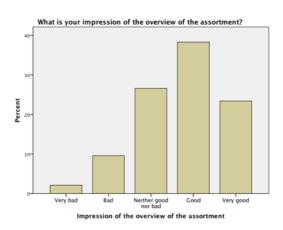


FIGURE 12 The impression of the overview of the assortment.

who think the assortment overview is "very good", namely 30 percent as compared to 17 percent in DB (Appendix 2, Table 11). 33 percent of the respondents in DB believe the overview is "neither good nor bad", as compared to 20 percent in DK.

A cross tabulation of the two variables "overview of assortment" and "time spent in the studio" indicate that the more satisfied visitors were with the overview of the assortment, the less time they spent in the studio (Chi square-test show this finding not to be statistically significant). Sorensen (2009) suggested that more aisles reduce shopper efficiency because visitors take longer time to spend money. We assume that shopper efficiency decreases because more aisles reduce the assortment overview and the finding is therefore consistent with the "aisleness theory". Shopper efficiency at BESTÅ therefore increases with better overview of the assortment as the more satisfied a visitor is with the overview of the assortment, the less time is being spent in the studio.

The next question analyzing the atmosphere concerns the **navigation** and visitors are asked how easy they thought it was to find what they looked for within the BESTÅ studio. The results are shown in Figure 13. Median- and mood values both equals 4 and 63 percent are satisfied. Mean value is slightly higher in DK, equaling 3.72 compared to 3.63 in DB, indicating that it is somewhat easier to find products in DK than in DB. There is no correlation between the easiness of finding products and time spent in the department.

Visitors mean that the inspiration section is unstructured which makes it difficult to navigate in the studio. Some mean that there is too much walking around in order to see all products and that it is difficult to compare similar products because they are dispersedly placed. Visitors have also suggested organizing the furniture in a more structured way such as lanes or against the wall, so they do not need to walk around as much in order to get a perspective of the overview of the assortment. Visitors clearly understand that it is possible to design a combination, but have problems understanding how. There is also a tendency about worrying

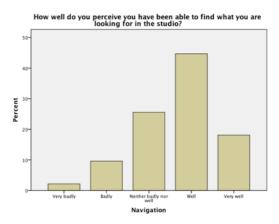


FIGURE 13 The ability of finding what visitors are looking for.

about choosing products that do not match functionally or visually. "I understand that it is possible to build, but it is difficult to understand what fits with what and what colors the products come in" one visitor commented. Visitors also have a hard time understanding that all products in the inspiration studio can be found in other material, colors, shapes and so on. One visitor said: "It is difficult to understand how they fit with one another, and if they actually fit." Another visitor mentions: "The overview is very bad. IKEA mixes TV-furniture from different product families with BESTÅ. It is therefore not clear what can be combined and not."

In order for IKEA to provide a better overview of the assortment, the company must manage to communicate the message that all products within BESTÅ can be combined in different ways. Visitors seem to think it is not totally clear which solutions that are included in the BESTÅ product family. E.g. in DB there are TV function products other than BESTÅ just outside the BILLY studio, BESTÅ-furniture opposite to the BILLY studio and TV-furniture other than BESTÅ (e.g. FOLKVIK) inside the BESTÅ studio. This mixture of product families seems to confuse visitors. This is because a visitor may notice a combination from another product family inside the BESTÅ studio, which is not possible to get in other materials and colors. If the visitor does not understand that this combination belongs to another product family, the visitor may be confused and have problems understanding which products in the inspiration studio of which it is possible to change materials, colors etc. Because BESTÅ solutions also are placed far away from the BESTA studio, visitors have a hard time understanding where the studio begins and ends. In addition, as other TV function products are being placed between the BESTA studio and other areas where BESTÅ solutions are placed, visitors are confused regarding which products are actually included in the BESTÅ assortment, which in turn makes it difficult to understand which products that can be changed. There must therefore be a clearer split between different product families, and the BESTÅ studio must be more clearly separated from other departments in order to stress BESTÅ as a unique product family.

5.1.3 SERVICE LEVEL

The two questions addressing the service level concerns personal service. We start by looking at how well visitors have been able to manage the purchasing process without any help from personnel. What stands out is that 67 percent of the respondents answer that they have been able to manage their purchasing process on their own either "well" or "very well", where "well" stands for 31 percent and "very well" 36 percent (mode value) (Table 1; Appendix 2, Figure 39).

Looking at one department at a time, some interesting results appeared. Visitors have an easier time handling the purchasing process by themselves in How well were you able to manage your decision-

time handling the purchasing process by themselves in DK than in DB (Appendix 2, table 12). All respondents that answered "very badly" in the total sample were actually visitors in DB. This group stands for 10 percent of the respondents in DB and another 10 percent answered "badly". This means that 21 percent of the visitors in DB needs personal assistance in order to fulfill the purchasing process, as compared to 4 percent in DK (of which all answered "badly" as no visitor in DK answered "very badly"). The mean values equals

making at the studio without any help from personnel?						
	Valid Percent Percent					
Valid	Very badly	5,3	5,3			
	Badly	7,4	12,8			
	Neither	20,2	33,0			
	Well	30,9	63,8			
	Very well	36,2	100,0			
	Total	100,0				

TABLE 1 Manage the decision-making.

3.56 for DB and 4.15 for DK, indicating that visitors perceive it to be easier to manage the purchasing process in DK than in DB.

Otieno et al. (2005) argues that a retailer creates customer satisfaction by meeting the normal expectations of visitors in terms of service levels. It results in confirmation and therefore satisfaction. Next question therefore has to do with visitors' expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio; how well IKEA meets visitors' expectations of service levels. 59 percent says IKEA meets their expectations "well" or "very well" and 16 percent are dissatisfied with

how IKEA meets their expectations ("badly" or "very badly") (Table 2; Appendix 2, Figure 40). The results differ at studio level, which gives DK a mean value higher than DB, 3.89 and 3.33 respectively (Appendix 2, Table 13). Two differences stand out: first, visitors that answered "very well" make up 37 percent in DK and significantly lower in DB (17 percent). Secondly, 13 percent answered very badly in DB, as compared to 4 percent in DK.

How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio?

Cumulative

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very badly	8,5	8,5
l	Badly	7,4	16,0
l	Neither	25,5	41,5
l	Well	31,9	73,4
l	Very well	26,6	100,0
	Total	100,0	

TABLE 2 Accessibility of personnel.

A chi square test (Appendix 2, Table 14,15) show a dependency between the variables how well respondents have been able to handle their purchasing process without the help from personnel, and satisfaction with how IKEA meet the expectations of personal service. It means that visitors who have managed to handle the purchasing process "well" or "very well" by themselves are more satisfied with how IKEA meets their expectations of personal service, than those who have managed to handle the purchasing process by themselves "badly" or "very badly". It would however be fair to assume that the first group had less need for personal service and therefore less effort is required from IKEA to meet the expectations of this group. However, there is a risk that visitors who are left with something they cannot manage properly, and without the help that they expected to get, become dissatisfied with the service level and leave the studio without having fulfilled their decision process.

Visitors who have gotten help from personnel are often satisfied with the helpfulness and skills of the personnel. However, many visitors indeed want to have more personnel in the studio and express the need of personnel especially in the end of their purchasing process, to verify that one have made a good choice, to help getting parts together or to show different alternatives.

Visitors are mainly bothered about three things in regards to personal service. *Firstly*, visitors are annoyed when there are no personnel present. *Secondly*, they are annoyed about the difficulty of finding personnel in such big store and that personnel from other departments do not have the skills to help them. One visitor commented: "Before a purchase, when I have an idea of what I

want, I wish to ask personnel about the quality of the product, and where to find it. They are often not present which means I must find personnel from other departments. However, they do not have the expertise to help me. It is frustrating." Thirdly, if personnel are present, visitors are annoyed if the queues are long. Some visitors also would like the personnel to approach them more often. One visitor commented: "A BESTÅ product is a big investment and an important furniture in the home. There is always a question about something, and I want to ask the personnel before I make the purchase. I expect personnel to approach me after having been here for such long time. There was also a long queue. Now I leave without having bought the TVfurniture that I intentionally was going to. I am very disappointed."

5.1.4 Presentation of Assortment

The presentation format plays an important role, since it affects the uncertainty of whether customers feel they have been exposed to all possible alternatives, or have complete information about the different options. Huffman and Kahn (1998) present two methods for presenting the assortment of which IKEA uses both for the complex product series. The third area of investigation therefore regards weather the BESTA studio should present the assortment according to alternatives, as done in the inspiration section, or according to attributes, as in the planning section. It is reasonable to assume that a combination is required for such complex product assortment, and the purpose of this part of the analysis is therefore to investigate visitors' preferences in terms of alternatives and attributes, as well as the satisfaction with the planning- and inspiration section.

As visitors were asked to tell us about their preferences between sections, it turned out that the inspiration section is much more important to visitors than the planning section (Table 3). 66 percent of the visitors answered they preferred inspiration section over the planning section. 24 percent have the opposite preference and 11 TABLE 3 Most helpful studio. percent believe the sections are of equal help. The

Which section of the BESTA studio was of the greatest help during your decision-making?

			Cumulative
		Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Planning section	23,4	23,4
	Inspiration section	66,0	89,4
	Equal	10,6	100,0
	Total	100,0	

results between the different departments are very similar to the overall results.

The fact that the inspiration studio is appreciated is also affirmed by the fact that 38 percent of the visitors changed their mind of what they intend to buy, during the visit in the studio. It would be reasonable to assume that visitors that have not made up their mind before entering the studio are easier affected by the inspiration in the studio, but there is no such relationship. 29 percent answered they knew "well" and 36 percent answered that they knew "completely", what they looked for before visiting the studio but the 38 percent that changed their mind are equally spread over all visitors. Next question regards satisfaction of the sections in the studio and investigates how big of help each part of the department has been to the visitor. We will discuss each section in turn.

Inspiration section

The presentation of the assortment is said to have three purposes according to Nordfalt (2007); remind, affect and inspire the visitors. The studios remind visitors of what they intended to buy through presenting products that are also presented at the website and in the catalogue, affect the visitors to buy a specific brand through emphasizing the product family through a furniture studio and affect the visitor to buy other/complementary products through inspiration.

Starting with the inspiration section, 52 percent are satisfied and 22 percent are dissatisfied. (Appendix 2, Table 16) The mean value in DK is slightly higher than in DB, indicating the inspiration section to be better in DK. Further, 66 percent of the visitors in DK believe the inspiration has been helpful or very helpful as compared to 40 percent of visitors in DB. 31 percent in DB think the inspiration has been of "little" or "very little" help, compared to 11 percent in DK. The inspiration section in DK therefore seems to be better than in DB. One visitor in DB said: "I like the BESTÅ studio at Kållered much better. They have more inspirations and examples of environments and finished rooms settings with interior design and also examples of how the products can be used". Today the studio in DB presents smaller solutions, as those are more commercial in the area due to the great proportion of the population that live in apartments (73 percent in the DB sample). However, visitors in DB would like to see more inspiration, bigger solutions and put in a room setting. This is something that IKEA works more with in DK than in DB, and it seems to be very appreciated. The fact that DB is presenting smaller solutions, and not many room settings, may be one of the reasons why the inspiration section in DK is more appreciated than in DB (see 1.1.5). The conclusion is that the inspiration section in DK is better than the one in DB, because it has got more and bigger inspiration solutions and room settings, which is indeed what visitors request.

Many visitors demand more inspirational solutions, bigger solutions and more room settings (the last two mainly concerns DB). Respondents are requesting more examples of different environments with interior design as well as inspirations that show the functionality of the product. Visitors also expressed they would like the inspiration section to be more structured. Inside the inspiration section there are a few boxes with small merchandise that creates a somewhat messy visual impression. These however create add-on sales and thereby contribute to the profitability of the department. But, they also make aisles narrower. In DB, where the space is quite small and aisles are narrower than in DK, such boxes may decrease shopper efficiency and contribute to creating a messy visual impression. Many of the solutions shown in DB are small solutions, around 60 cm or so in height. Since they are low and placed on the floor, and since there are many of them placed in rows, they are easily missed by visitors and may therefore not function very well as inspiration. Some solutions could preferably therefore be exchanged by bigger solutions.

Planning Section

Looking at the planning section, 33 are satisfied with the section. (Appendix 2, Table 17.) An interesting point is that 10 percent say that they have not noticed the planning section of the studio, of which all were visitors in DB. What also stands out is that 27 percent of the visitors that noticed the planning section answered it has been of "very little" help, whereas only 7 percent thought of it as "very helpful". Remember that each respondent has answered yes to the question of weather they visited the studio of interest in the products offered there or not. Then the fact that 10 percent of the visitors have not even noticed that there is a planning section, becomes very crucial.

With complex product assortments, consumers often delay purchasing because they are uncertain as to the set of possible options (Greenleaf and Lehmann, 1995). Purchasing therefore may be delayed if consumers perceive they have not been exposed to all possible alternatives, or if they perceive they are missing information. This is a problem at the BESTÅ studio, since visitors find it difficult to understand what colors the frames, doors and drawers come in and thus are uncertain to the set of possible options. The way the retailer presents information about the options may reduce the uncertainty of not having seen a clear overview of the assortment and

Huffman and Kahn (1998) argued that for high variety assortments, the attribute-based format reduces perceived complexity. The problem is however present in both departments, indicating that the assortment is not successfully presented according to attributes. The problem is more evident in DB as the assortment overview is better in DK than in DB according to respondents. Rajagopal (2011) argued that there is a positive interrelationship among shop size, product assortment, space allocation, and in-store environment, which increases customer satisfaction. The studio in DK is greater and lanes are wider. The studio is also designed differently with more inspiration, more room settings and a greater planning section. The results are therefore not very surprising. The departments also differ in the way the assortment is presented according to attributes in the planning section. Drawers and materials are shown in a more perspicuous way in DK. In addition it is possible to feel the materials and test the drawers. We see no reason not to apply the same solutions in DB. Today there is a T-wall that separates the BESTÅ studio from the BILLY studio in DB, which is used for inspiration and a warranty sign. This wall could preferably be allocated to the planning section and thus used for presenting drawers. In this way, visitors that have not observed the planning section will however recognize that there are different colors and materials available. Visitors will also be able to test the drawers and feel the materials.

The material overview is placed in the end of the planning section in DK, which means that visitors first notice it as they are on their way out of the studio. By placing it in the beginning of the planning section instead, there is a greater chance that more visitors will notice the board of different materials.

The planning section in DK is appreciated. However, visitors also request more inspiration. By moving the planning section to the other side of the wall (the wall at which the doors are hanged today), a part of the studio that is very visual to visitors will be allocated to inspiration instead of technical information. The planning section will be allocated a somewhat smaller space, but as our observations are that the planning tables are very seldom used, all except one of these can be removed (keep one for coming planning computer use). In this way, visitors will notice the planning section in an earlier stage and thus be informed of the different options of the assortment. The planning part is not very inspiring and will therefore give room to more inspiration instead. Because the planning part will be placed somewhat behind a wall, a directional sign should be painted on the wall that says "Plan Here" or similar.

5.1.5 PLANNING TOOL

The computerized planning tool has so far been implemented in DB. Questions regarding the planning tool was however asked to respondents in both departments, as respondents in DK may have used the tool on the website. Not many visitors do use the computer based planning tool, and of those 16 percent that do, only 7 percent have used it in the store. Visitors seems to feel it took more time to work with, than they felt it helped them in their decision-making. However, the fact is that few of the respondents in the sample (16 percent corresponds to 15 people) have used the tool, and therefore the results regarding how user friendly it is are not very reliable.

When asking visitors about why they have not used the tool even though they know it exists, the common answers are that they do not like to plan their purchase in beforehand, or that they find it more comfortable to look at the products in the store than on a computer. Not many of those who have used the tool are actually satisfied with working with it. The reasons are that it contains bugs, the login function does not always work and that it is too complex and therefore too time consuming. Further, the assortment is not accurate or up to date.

60 percent of those who have used the planning tool are below 36 years old, 27 percent are between 36-60 and 13 percent are more then 60 years old. 67 percent are women and 33 percent are men (56 percent of the sample are women). The fact that the tool is being used more by the younger population than the older, speaks in favor of the system being more popular in the future, as a greater part of the population will be comfortable with computers then. However, this is not the case today and visitors in both studios have requested more inspiration. Because very few visitors use the tool in the store and because the tool occupies space that could otherwise be used for inspiration, one must evaluate weather the tool should remain in the studio or not. One reason why the tool is not being used in the store may be because visitors do not observe it. IKEA should therefore try to expose it better, and see weather it is used more frequently. The sign above the computer should thus be highlighted and lowered, so that it is in the visual sight of the visitor. Another reason to the low user rate may be that people are reluctant to new technology. It is thereby important, as described by Liljander (2011), that the personnel help the visitors to understand how the system works. Our impression is however that the personnel is not familiar with using the system, hence does not have the skills to teach the visitors. A suggestion is therefore to educate the personnel in the software. However, if the user frequency does not increase, the planning tool within the store should be removed as it occupies valuable space that may otherwise be used for inspiration.

5.1.6 Information

Respondents were asked questions two regarding information: how sufficient they thought the information they receive at the department was, and how clear it was. Generally, respondents were satisfied with both aspects of the information (Figure 15, Figure 14). Respondents are slightly more satisfied in DK than in DB regarding both sufficiency and clarity of information. However, the differences are small and answers are otherwise quite similar in both department stores. A chi square test (Appendix 2, table 18, 19) of the variables "sufficiency of information" and "clarity of information" show a dependency of the variables in the sense that respondents who are satisfied with the sufficiency are also satisfied with the clarity, and vice versa.

Visitors seem to think it is difficult to understand how and where to find products they intended to buy. One visitor said: "It is hard to see where you are supposed to find the products that are displayed at the department, if you should find it at the "self-service storeroom or not". "Another visitor said: "I am missing marking on products regarding where to find it in the "self-service storeroom" and price. I

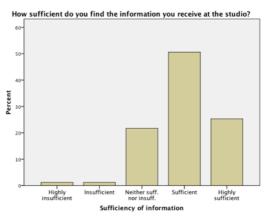


FIGURE 15 Sufficiency of information

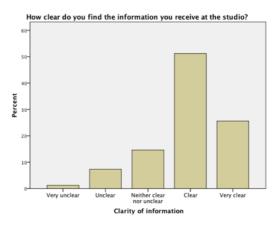


FIGURE 14 Clarity of information.

would prefer if this information were marked on every product." Most often, the price tag has the message "contact personnel" attached to it, because the products cannot be picked up by the



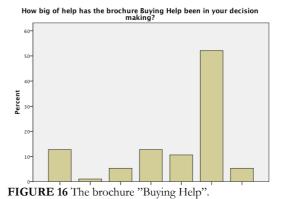
customer in the self-service storeroom but must be picked up from the merchandise delivery, which means an order must be created by the personnel. Otherwise, the products are marked with the accurate position in the self-service storeroom.

Visitors are also troubled with color information; e.g. what different colors products come in; technical information about such things as appliances, price information and eco-labelling. One visitor commented: "I would like eco-labelling on products, because you cannot find this information on the labels, and since the products are so cheap you start doubting that they are eco-labelled".

Some visitors are very satisfied with the information in the department and mean that IKEA generally are very good at providing the necessary information, which makes it easy to manage the purchasing process. Gunnarsson (2011) and Liljander (2011) both had a suspicion of there being too much information in the studio, so that visitors would not "see the forest for all trees" and thus the necessary information is not communicated to the visitors. The suspicion is verified as some visitors think there is too much information, and that the information is confusing, spread out and that too many messages are given. One visitor commented: "All messages confuse me. There are text messages on some products (about different colors, sizes etc.), and on other not. Does it mean that those products without a message do not come in different attributes? I must ask personnel about this." Visitors also seem to be confused over information on the products belonging to a complete solution in the inspiration studio, and lack accurate information about each product in a combination. One reason why the information confuses visitors is because text messages are placed on some products, and other not. This makes visitors confused over weather the message concerns all products, or only the products at which the message is attached. Such an example is given in Appendix 1, Figure 29. In order to avoid such confusion, IKEA must be consistent in the way information is communicated. Regarding the example of hinges, the tag must be placed on all products where hinges are included. However, because hinges are included in all doors, it would be better to communicate this by one single message about the doors, in order to avoid having too many tags up that make the visual impression messy.

The same problem appears with color information. At some price tags it can be read that the product comes in other colors while some price tags does not include this information, even though the product does come in other colors. (Appendix 1, Figure 28). Such inconsistent information creates confusion. In the inspiration section the product combination may be displayed in e.g. white frame, white doors and/or drawers. It is however possible to change the frame to one of the other two materials, and to change the color of doors and/or drawers. Visitors are supposed to understand this by looking into the planning section of the studio where different kinds of frames, doors, drawers etc. are displayed. However, visitors obviously find it very difficult to understand which different colors and materials the products are available in, and especially which of the products in the inspiration section that can be designed differently. The fact is that today the studio does not communicate that the products in the inspiration studio can be designed however visitors would like. In addition, there are some BESTA products of which it is not possible to change the materials or colors, or it may be possible to change it in a limited number of ways (i.e. BESTÅ BURS). The price tag of such products often contains a message such as: "Does also come in black". All other "normal" BESTÅ products do also come in black, or red, or white and so on, but this is not communicated on their labels. The information is therefore inconsistent, which makes it difficult for visitors to understand which of the products that can be designed differently.

Respondents were asked the question of how big of help the brochure "Buying Help" had been in their decision-making. 52 percent of the respondents had not seen the brochure at the studio and another 5 percent had seen it, but not used it (Figure 16). Out of the 43 percent that had seen and used the brochure, 30 percent thought it was of "very little" help, 30 percent thought it was helpful and another 25 percent thought it was "very helpful". This means that the brochure is helpful for about every other person that uses it, which means that the



brochure can be used to a great extent to reduce the number of questions to personnel. The crucial point is that 52 percent of the visitors in the studio have not seen the brochure. If IKEA could manage to expose the brochure better so that every visitor will notice it, the number of questions will most likely be further reduced. The brochure seems to be better exposed in DK than in DB, as 41 percent have not seen it in DK compared to 63 percent in DB.

Visitors have expressed that it is important to keep the brochure updated, and asked weather it would be possible to make it more colorful and attractive. The purpose of the Buying Helpbrochure is to be perspicuous though, and making it more attractive through colors or other effects may hinder this. However, one suggestion would be to introduce an inspiration brochure such as the brochure "Bathroom" for the Bathroom department. According to our study, visitors have appreciated this brochure. The brochure "Smart Storage" that is available at the department today provide some inspiration, but should also include information about all products available in the assortment in a structured matter, as in the brochure "Bathroom".

Product Attributes

We asked the respondents to rank the four attributes color, size, form and price according their preferences regarding the BESTÅ products. The results were analyzed in a weighted-average model where the most important attribute weighs 4 points, the second most important weighs 3 points and so on. The results show that all attributes are almost equally important to visitors. Worth mentioning is that, after weighted theses results, "form" turned out to be the highest ranked with 0.29 out of 1 and price the lowest with 0.20 out of 1. The attributes that were ranked as the second and third most important ware size and color respectively.

5.2 GODMORGON

A total amount of 85 interviews were performed at the GODMORGON studios. 42 of the interviews were made in DB and 43 in DK. The interview protocol for the GODMORGON studios consisted of 22 questions, see Appendix 6.

5.2.1 Demographics

Regarding the demography of the bathroom department in Gothenburg, 40 percent lived in apartments compared to 60 percent that lived in house. When it comes to the response frequency, about 60 percent of the respondents that choose to participate in the survey are women. It is hard to say why the survey got this outcome, and we would not say that there are fewer visitors that are men, but rather that men are more reluctant to participate in a survey like this one. Further, 49 percent of the respondents were of the age 36-60, 38 percent younger and 13 percent older. The same outcome also goes for each department store.

5.2.2 Atmosphere

After analyzing the pleasantness of the studio, we can conclude that many respondents had an **overall impression of the studio** as being "good" since the mode is 4. The same goes for looking at the departments independently (Figure 17). Additionally, none in DK thought of it as "bad" or "very bad", which gives an indication of the bathroom studios being quite pleasant in regards to the impression of it. While, 14 percent of the respondents in DB had thought of it as "bad". But since about 68 percent of the respondents had the impression of it as being "good" or "very good" it can be considered as pleasant.

In order to create a good atmosphere it is also important visitors can get a good **overview of the assortment**. With a mode of 4 many visitors had a "good" impression regarding the overview of the assortment in both DB and DK. 68 percent said they were satisfied (Figure 18). However, some visitors in DK have said they would like to have more room settings in order to get an impression of what environment they can create. Others would like it bigger so they easier can get an overview of what the commodes looked like, since they had the opinion they had to run around a lot to find other examples of bathroom solutions. We also

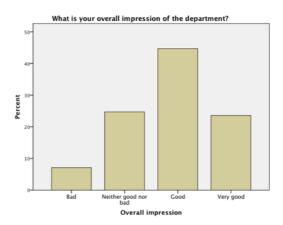


FIGURE 17 Overall impression of the studio.

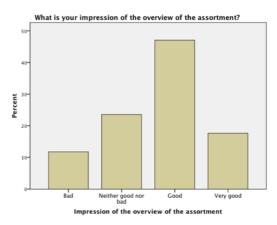


FIGURE 18 Overview of the assortment.

got comments from visitors thinking the department should be more organized in the same way as the kitchen department (with doors, taps, sinks etc. neatly structured). The reason is because they have the opinion of the kitchen department as structured, so that you are able to see the various drawers, colors etc. Further, some felt it was not evident what colors the different commodes are available in; or that the product information was clear, instead they thought of it as messy. The same goes for the information regarding which taps goes with which washbasins or which handles that comes with which commodes. In DB visitors gave comments about the department as being a bit messy, but appreciated that it had a somewhat clear defined planning section, but also in DB there is a demand for more and bigger room settings, so it is possible to see how products are working together. Even if the bathroom studio in DB is larger then the one in DK, some visitors get the feeling that it is too small and that there are too many things on an area that is too small. Just as for the BESTÅ studio, visitors are demanding more personnel at both of the bathroom studios. However, since this is not aligned with IKEA's overall strategy, it is not a solution.

IKEA needs to present the assortment so visitors are able to get an even better overview of the assortment and thereby find their way around the department easier. According to the PAD-model, the degree to what a person feels satisfied in the situation will influence how pleasant they perceive a department. Since visitors wish to get a better overview of the assortment, a

suggestion is to make some sort of overview map where they are able to see the entire assortment as well as how the various products can be combined with one another. As the map would contain necessary information regarding how to combine the assortment, it should preferably be located where it would be easy to notice it. As a suggestion, the overview map should be designed as IKEA's directional signs (the ones showing visitors how the floor is organized) and located in the turn of the primary aisle by the studio in the bathroom department. Malm et al. (2001) are arguing that consumers are mainly moving along the primary aisle and move to the secondary aisles when looking for something in particular. An overview map should be easy to access and something visitors should be aware of quite early in their purchasing path, since it can increase the understanding of the studio before entering it. Or at least, if visitors are facing some difficulties at the studio regarding the assortment they will know where to turn to in order to clear it out.

Moreover, what is also important to analyze is how visitors think IKEA should present the assortment. In order to do so, we examined what visitors perception is regarding the mixture of the families, if they would like the product families clearly separated from each other or if they would like a mixture between the families. About 45 percent of ones responding to that question in DB thought it was "good" as it was today and in DK 30 percent thought the same, which was the most frequent answer to that question. Worth mentioning is that many of the respondents could not give an answer to it, since they had not noticed how IKEA had integrated the various families with each other. (Appendix 3, Table 20) Instead they chose to comment on the question by informing us about how they would like to have the families organized. Most people answered they would like the different families separated from each other so it is easy to see what is included in each product family. And some said they wanted families mixed in the studio in order to see the different styles. Moreover, since many respondents have said they would like to have more room settings and bigger solutions, we think IKEA should consider changing their inspiration section. Huffman and Kahn (1998) argued that presenting the assortment in an alternative-based format may leave the consumer wondering if there are other alternatives that he/she has not yet seen. Visitors in DK thought of the solutions as messy and felt they were missing out on a lot of the assortment because they could not understand what was included. We

therefore stress that IKEA should not mix the different product families since it obstruct visitors from getting a quick and easy idea of what is included in the various assortments.

Regarding the satisfaction of the sections in the studio, most visitors tho ught of the inspiration environment as "good", (47 percent). When looking at the distribution of the answers, as many as 75 percent thought it was either "good" or "very good" while 11 thought it was either "bad" or "very bad". (Table 4) What thereby can be concluded is that more people are content with the inspiration than those who are dissatisfied. When comparing the different department stores the outcome as well as the distribution of the answers appears to be the same in DB and DK as it was for the studios in totality. The impression for the planning sections appears to have a slightly different outcome than the inspiration environment. Here most respondents think of it as "good", but the interesting is that about 12 percent of the

How good do you think the inspiration

	The good do you think the mophicules						
	environment is?						
		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent				
Valid	Very bad	1,2	1,2				
	Bad	10,6	11,8				
	Neither	12,9	24,7				
	Good	47,1	71,8				
	Very good	28,2	100,0				
	Total	100,0					

TABLE 4 Satisfaction of the inspiration section.

How good do	you think	the plann	ing se	ction is?
			_	

			Cumulative
		Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Bad	7,1	7,1
l	Neither	27,1	34,1
	Good	37,6	71,8
l	Very good	16,5	88,2
	Not seen	11,8	100,0
	Total	100,0	

TABLE 5 Satisfaction of the planning section.

visitors have not even noticed that section until pointing it out to them. (Table 5) Of those who had seen it, only 8 percent thought of it as "bad" and no one had the opinion of it being "very bad". The important thing to consider is to expose planning section better, so visitors easily can see e.g. what different colors they can get the products in and also how the products can be combined. By making visitors more aware of this section IKEA can most likely decrease the amount of questions concerning colors, sizes and frames. Amongst those who have seen the planning section, 61 percent thought it was either "good" or "very good", but there is still a proportion of 43 percent that have no opinion about the section, meaning they think it is "neither good nor bad". This indicates that improvements are necessary for this section in order to increase the satisfaction of the studio for visitors. When comparing the two sections more respondents are content with the inspiration section than the planning section. Further, respondents in DB commented that they thought of the inspiration section as boring and would like a more defined separation between the solutions. In DK visitors have the same impression of the assortment and that they do not get a good overview of the assortment. IKEA presents the assortment according to what Huffman and Kahn (1998) argue for; the inspiration section is based on an alternative-based presentation and the planning section on attribute-based presentation. However, instead of mixing the families, as they to some extent are, IKEA should have a more distinct separation between them. The way the studio is organized today rather creates confusion, since visitors get the impression it is not possible to get the solutions in other sizes. What IKEA additionally needs to do, is to give visitors in DK more room settings.

Another way of examining how well the inspiration environment can give visitors an idea of what solutions they could create, is by analyzing how many of the respondent that **changed their mind after visiting the department**. It is therefore interesting to have a look at how many of the respondents that actually knew what they wanted "well" and "very well" and changed their mind after visiting the bathroom department, since it means that even if IKEA was not able to match visitors' ideas perfectly, it was able to inspire visitors to change their idea into something IKEA can offer them. Amongst all respondents, 60 percent knew "well" or "very well" what they wanted before visiting the department. The results are about the same for each department store. Out of these, about 30 percent in DB and 25 percent in DK changed their mind after visiting the department. The reasons behind these changes were e.g. that visitors found something better than what they had in mind; the color they wanted was not available; found more things they wanted to add to their solution; found other designs; got inspired by solutions at the studio. While the reason why people did not change their mind after visiting the department was because they had a fixed idea of what they wanted and were reluctant of

changing their mind; could not find the depth of the sink they demanded; or the products in the right size; or in the material they wanted e.g. washbasins in ceramic s. The fact that they did not change their idea was because they actually found what they were looking for.

5.2.3 Service Level

An indication of the service level is to examine how well visitors have been able to manage their decision-making without any help from personnel. (Figure 19) 62 percent managed it well or very well. Equally many visitors in DB (29 percent) felt they had either been able to

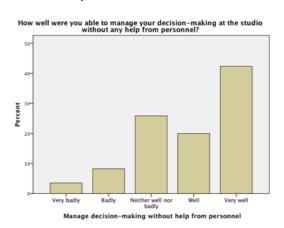


FIGURE 19 Managing the decision-making.

manage their decision-making at the department without any help from personnel or had neither been able to manage it "well" nor "badly". While in DK, as many as 56 percent felt they were able to manage it "very well". (Appendix 3, Table 21) What is interesting to have a look at is, if there is a correlation between the ones that have said they managed the eir decision-making "badly" or "very badly" without any help from personnel to how well IKEA met their expectation regarding accessibility of personnel at the department. Using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient we can conclude that there is no correlation between the answers of the two questions. This means that how well visitors think IKEA meets their expectations regarding accessibility of personnel does not depend on how well they are able to manage their decision-

making at the department. Regarding the question how well IKEA meets visitors expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio most people thought it met their expectations eith er "well" (32 percent) or "very well" (18 percent), (Figure 20). Even if there is no correlations between how well visitors have been able to manage their decision-making and the accessibility of personnel, the conclusions that can be drawn are that out of those who had a hard time managing their decision-making, 50 percent felt the accessibility of personnel met their expectations either "badly" or "very badly" and 40 percent felt it was "well" or "very well".

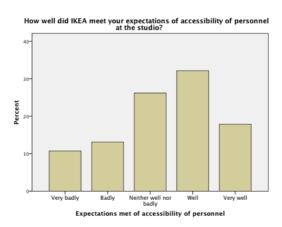


FIGURE 20 Accessibility of personnel.

Amongst those who have managed their decision-making either "well" or "very well", 53 percent felt the accessibility of the personnel met their expectations "well" or "very well" and only 15 percent felt it met their expectations either "badly" or "very badly". The reason behind these differences could be that those who knew what they wanted was more prepared before arriving at the bathroom department, since they did not expect for personnel to be available at the department or that they got the help they needed. While those who had not prepared their purchase before arriving at the department expected to find personnel at the department and get the help they needed while being there. Even if IKEA does not want to increase the amount of personnel, visitors stress the importance of personnel available at the department in order for them to complete their decision-making. Morey (1980) says that a way of increasing the service level is by increasing the amount of personnel. But he also says the return from increasing service level is diminishing i.e. at a certain level sales will not increase at a slower rate as the service level increases. But if IKEA has reached that level yet is not something we have looked into, since IKEA does not want to increase the amount of personnel at the departments. Parasuramna et al. (1994) says the service quality is dependent on the gap between customers' expectations and their perceived service performance. In order to minimize the gap and thereby make the perception correspond to the expectations, we suggest IKEA makes a schedule for the employees regarding when they should be manning the different departments. The schedule should be displayed at the information desk, so visitors are able to see when the desk is being manned. By doing so, visitors immediately know if they should wait around for personnel or if they should turn to another department for help. Hence, they know what to expect regarding the accessibility of personnel.

5.2.4 PLANNING TOOL

The purpose of the computer based planning tool is to allow potential customers plan their own solutions freely and be able to see how their ideas could look like when they are finished. People have the possibility of using the system on the website or in the studio. Even if IKEA has

implemented the tools in the planning section, 49 percent of the respondents have said that they have not seen or for that matter even knew it existed. 42 percent knew that it existed, but have either chosen not to use it because they have not come that far in the planning of a bathroom solution and are only visiting the department to get some inspiration. Others are not using it because they would rather like to see the products live and thereby be able to see and touch them. When comparing the departments it shows that more respondents in DK did not even know the planning tool existed, and that more visitors in DB knew that the tool existed, but had not used it. Since DK does not have a planning tool it is not surprisingly to see this outcome. Worth mentioning is that none of those that have used the tool have used it in the store, and thereby only on the website. Further, when it comes to how well they perceived they were able to work with the planning tool, most respondents have answered that they have been able to do it "neither well nor badly" or "badly". Respondents said they perceived it was difficult to change the solutions they had made with the tool and that the assortment was not up to date in the system, meaning they could find products no longer available for purchase. Visitors also felt it took more time to work with, than they felt it helped them in their decision-making, and because of that they ended up using paper and pen to get a picture of what they wanted. Further comments are that it is easier to work with the planning tool for kitchen and it is a downside that it is not possible to change the room by adding an extra wall. Due to these results, we suggest IKEA removes the system from the studio, or make improvements so it is easier to work with. Developing the tool could thereby decrease the demand for personnel present at the studio.

5.2.5 Information

In order to examine how satisfied visitors are with the information exposed in the studio, questions were asked concerning how clear visitors found the information regarding the price, product, as well as how the different commodes, washbasins and taps could be combined. None of the respondents thought of the information regarding the products or how they could be combined as "very unclear". The most frequent answer amongst these two questions was "clear", while many people thought the price information was "very clear". 81 percent found the price information "clear" or "very clear" (Appendix 3, Figure 39). 69 percent thought of the product information as either "clear" or "very clear" (Appendix 3, Figure 40) and 58 percent thought the information regarding how they can combine the products either "clear" or "very clear" (Appendix 3, Figure 41). What would have been preferred is to see the information about the products and combinations as clear as it is perceived for the price. Some visitors commented and said they thought it was difficult to understand how the various products could be combined. In order to make it clearer, IKEA should have an overview map of how the products can be combined. This has also been demanded amongst a few visitors. If doing so, it would be easier for visitors to know which products to combine without the help from personnel, and they would not have to search for personnel at other departments to clear it out, if there were to be none present at the bathroom department. Further interesting is to have a look at the various studios. When studying the results we can conclude the figures are about the same for each department as it is in totality.

Moreover, after visiting the studio we can conclude that IKEA is not being consistent in their signage of information. E.g. IKEA gives information about the measurements of the washbasins on the POS labels and other measurements for the same products on the overview map for GODMORGON. By doing so IKEA runs the risk of confusing visitors and thereby creates rather than eliminates questions from visitors. It is important to always have accurate and consistent information about the products, otherwise visitors do not know what they can be certain of and might start asking questions about other matters that should be quite clear. In

order for visitors to facilitate the search of what they are looking for we suggest IKEA use more category signage, which Levy and Weits (2009) mentions can make the navigation through the department easier. IKEA should therefore inform visitors through category signage where they can find washbasins, commodes and taps as well as where they can get inspiration, and where the different product families are located.

As a way of making visitors' purchasing process easier, IKEA has provided the studio at the bathroom department with different brochures (Buying Help brochure in black and white and an inspiration brochure in color) and a map with the different sizes and colors concerning the commodes and washbasins, also called overview map for GODMORGON. Surprisingly, most visitors did not see either one of these. As many as 61 percent did not see the Buying Help brochure, 77 percent did not see the inspiration brochure and 79 percent did not see the overview map of the commodes and washbasins displayed on a wall in the planning section.

Of those who have seen the Buying Help brochure, most people found it of very big help in their decision-making. Fewer visitors in DB saw the brochure compared to DK. More people in DK than DB answered they saw the brochure but did not have a look inside. When having a look after the Buying Help brochure of GODMORGON at the bathroom department in DK, neither visitors nor we were able to found it displayed in the department. Since visitors think the brochure is of very big help, we want to stress the importance of always having these displayed in the studio and not just occasionally at one single location. By spreading them out in the studio visitors that do not use the entire space are able to find it wherever they are in the studio. Further, instead of having one Buying Help brochure for each product family, we also think IKEA should consider of forming one single brochure containing information about all of the families. In such way, visitors who are not using the entire area are able to find other solutions in the brochure without having to visit the entire studio, as well as getting an appreciation of the assortment.

When it comes to the inspiration brochure it is difficult to make any statistical conclusions of significance, since only 9 respondents saw the brochure. We can therefore not tell if people are content with it by analyzing the statistics. However, what is interesting to point out is that of those who have seen the inspiration brochure, many visitors said it was very good.

Regarding the overview map for GODMORGON, about equally many visitors had not seen it at either of the studios. Surprisingly, even if a lot of visitors demanded an overview map of products at the studio, most of those who saw the map answered it was of either "little" or "very little" help in their purchasing decision. The reason can be that they do not think it is well performed. But 44 percent in DB said it was of "very big" help. What we therefore suggest is to remove the existing map and replace it with another overview map that can better show visitors the entire assortment as well as how the different products can be combined with one another. This will allow visitors to get a good overview of the assortment at the same time as it will be easier for them to understand how the products can be combined.

Huffman and Kahn (1998) argued that large assortment strategies such as those used by category killers, can cause information overload and consumers may then feel overwhelmed and dissatisfied. Each product within the inspiration section has a POS label attached to it and looking at the vignettes (Appendix 1, Figure 33), it becomes a lot of information for the visitor to take in which may cause a somewhat messy visual impression. One reason why the satisfaction with the information is not complete may therefore be due to visitors feeling overwhelmed.

In addition, IKEA believes the reason why people are not turning to IKEA when planning to buy a bathroom solution is because they do not know about the offer of handicraft service. In order to see if IKEA has got the right impression we asked visitors if they knew that IKEA offered handicraft service and if the supply of handicraft service increased the probability of them buying a bathroom at IKEA. The outcome of this study was that 40 percent knew that IKEA offered handicraft service and that 73 percent said that it did not increase the probability of them buying a bathroom at IKEA. Only 12 percent said it increased their probability of buying bathroom at IKEA. Out of those who said they did not know that IKEA offered handicraft service, 33 percent said it increased their probability of choosing IKEA as their bathroom supplier. However, these figures are quite low, which is why we do not consider the ignorance about IKEA offering handicraft service as a reason behind people choosing another supplier for bathroom. To get a better understanding of what could be the reason, we asked visitors what influenced their choice of bathroom supplier. Most people said that price was the most important factor for them, but there were also many that considered quality and supply as very important. The fourth most common answer was design.

What IKEA needs to promote to potential customers is the offer of high quality and low priced bathrooms. It is important the level of quality is well communicated so people know IKEA can offer something they would consider of buying. Some visitors had the impression of the quality being low and could not consider buying a bathroom from IKEA for their house or apartment, but could consider of doing so when it concerned their summerhouses. Further, since visitors found "price" important in their decision-making, we recommend IKEA organize the product families so they are clearly separated. By doing so, visitors are able to easily find the low priced products, which is the highest demand of visitors. Simonson and Winer, 1992; Drèze et al, 1994 and Simonson et al., 1993 argues that when organizing the assortment according to brands, or in IKEA's case product families, the likelihood of customers choosing the cheaper alternative increases. We do not se this as a problem since most of IKEA's visitors value low price when choosing a bathroom. By organizing the families so they are separated from each other, they who would prefer a cheaper solution would be able to find the solution they wanted more easily.

5.3 PAX

A total amount of 87 interviews were performed at the PAX studios. 46 of the interviews were made in DB and 41 in DK. The interview protocol for the PAX studios consisted of 18 questions, see Appendix 7.

5.3.1 Demographics

Out of all respondents 63 percent were women and 37 percent men. It is hard to say why the survey has gotten this outcome, and we would not say there are fewer visitors that are men, but rather that men are more reluctant to participate in a survey like this one. 51 percent lived in an apartment and 49 percent in a house. When comparing the departments, it can be established that the proportion of gender and form of accommodation is almost equally distributed as in the total sample. The population in DB was generally younger than the one in DK, where 61 percent were of the age 35 or younger (mode value) in DB and 50 percent between 36-60 (mode value) in DK.

5.3.2 Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the studio was addressed through analyzing the pleasantness of the studio, the overview of the assortment and the easiness of navigation within the studio. First thing to investigate was the pleasantness of the PAX studio. It was addressed in the interview by simply one question; "What is your overall impression of the studio?" Median value equals 4, which is also the mode value. 54 percent of the respondents have an overall impression of the studio as being "good", 29 percent "very good" and 2 percent of the visitors thought of the environment as "bad" or "very bad" (Figure 22). Overall, these are very good results. However, comments from visitors who were dissatisfied with the department had the perception of it being messy, boring, uniform and that the studio was not very inspiring. The atmosphere is further addressed through investigating visitors' perspective of the overview of the assortment as well as the easiness of navigation. We start by looking at how visitors perceived the overview of the assortment. Median- and mode values equals 4 (good) and 77 percent are satisfied (Figure 21). The mean value is exactly the same for DB and DK; however DB had 3 percent dissatisfied visitors that thought of the overview as being

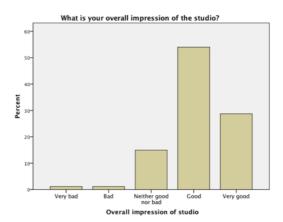


FIGURE 22 Overall impression of the studio.

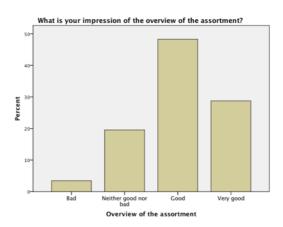


FIGURE 21 Overview of the assortment.

"bad", whereas DK had no dissatisfied visitors. DB also had a slightly greater part of visitors that thought the overview was "very good", compared to DK. Referring to Sorensen's (2008) aisleness theory there should be a relationship between the overview of the assortment (aisleness), and time spent in the department (shopper efficiency). However, no such relationship can be identified for the PAX studio.

The third question analyzing the atmosphere concerns the **navigation** and visitors are asked how easy they thought it was to find what they looked for within the PAX studio. 78 percent are satisfied as can be seen in Figure 23, indicating that visitors generally perceived it was easy to find products within the studio. This is also confirmed by the median- and mode values equaling 4 (good). Looking at the studios separately, the mean values differ only slightly. The studios vary mainly in one aspect; none of the respondents in DK answered it was "difficult" or "very difficult" to find products, whereas 7 percent in DB found that it was.

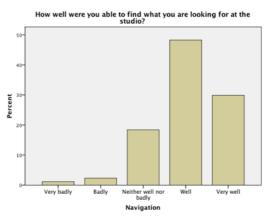


FIGURE 23 Find what visitors are looking for.

Overall, visitors are satisfied with the overview of the assortment and easiness of finding products. One visitor commented: "It is like following a common thread through the studio". Other visitors were dissatisfied with the overview of the assortment because they found the studio messy and sporadically organized; "One must know what to buy before coming here" one visitor commented to the overview of the assortment. Others mean the assortment is too lined up in the wardrobe compacts, and would like to see more vignettes.

During the time of the interviews, we noticed visitors leaving the PAX studio seemed more tired and sometimes exhausted, than those leaving any of the other studios with complex product families within this study. The response frequency was also lower at the PAX studio compared to the other studios, and we believe visitors sometimes were too tired to participate in an interview. This may be do to visitors spending a quite long time in the studio in general (Appendix 4, Table 22) and going through the studio is a long walk, which means going back and forth in lanes. Some visitors say they think it is wearying having to walk a lot and being exposed to many visual impressions during the time in the department. We have got a few comments in regards to this and visitors have suggested arranging the assortment in the compacts according to color, size or price range, in order for them to easier find the product range they are looking for. "I know the price I can pay but it is difficult to understand my options since the products vary so much in price." "It's messy because the sizes are mixed and I have to walk around a lot." "The overview is bad because it is not clearly lined up"

5.3.3 SERVICE LEVEL

The two questions addressing the service level co ncerns personal service. We start by looking at how well visitors have been able to manage the purchasing process without any help from personnel. Median value equals 4, meaning most thought they managed it "well". 72 percent of the respondents said they were able to manage their purchasing process on their own either "well" or "very well", where "well" stands for 36 percent and "very well "37 percent (mode values), (Figure 24). Looking at the two studios in separation from each other, a fair assumption would be to say that visitors in DB

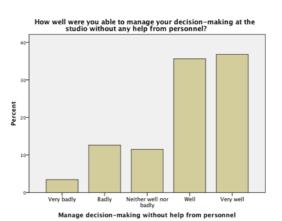


FIGURE 24 Manage the decision-making without the help from personnel.

had an easier time handling their purchasing process by themselves than the ones in DK, since the mean values are indicating this by the values 4.02 in DB and 3.67 in DK. The difference appears because 20 percent of the respondents in DK answer "badly" or "very badly", as compared to 7 percent in DB. What mainly differs between the two departments is the layout. In DK, the idea is that visitors firstly should be inspired through walking around and having a look at the solutions in the wardrobe compacts for both hinge- and sliding doors and thereafter entering the planning section and design their combinations. In DB, the planning section separates the wardrobe compact for sliding doors from the compact for hinge doors which means that visitors do first see the sliding doors, then the planning section, then the hinge doors. This layout seems to be more appreciated by visitors, as the studio is being perceived as more structured (the negative comments about the structure of the assortment have come from DK). Paulsson's (2011) idea of changing the layout of the studio to be more like the one in DK, is therefore not recommended based on the visitors preferences.

Next question has to do with visitors' expectations of accessibility of personnel; how well IKEA meets their expectations of service levels. Median- and mode values equal 4. (Table 6), 54 percent says that IKEA meets their expectations "well" or "very well" and 14 percent mean IKEA meets their expectations "badly" or "very badly". Many visitors did not want to take a standpoint in this question.

How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio?

			Cumulative
		Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	Very badly	2,3	2,3
l	Badly	11,5	13,8
l	Neither	32,2	46,0
l	Well	33,3	79,3
l	Very well	20,7	100,0
	Total	100,0	

TABLE 6 Accessibility of personnel.

To sum up, the overview of the assortment and navigation is overall "good", as nearly 80 percent are satisfied. Just above 70 percent also have managed to handle the purchasing process "well" or very well without the help from personnel. Worse is how IKEA meets the expectations of service levels. Many of the respondents request more personnel to be present in the studio.

Yuen and Chan (2010) relate service level to the level of personal interaction in the retailing environment and the service level from this perspective is perceived as low. Personal selling however does not align with IKEA's overall strategy (Segreland, 2011) but shopkeeper in DK, Larsson (2011), commented on the importance of personal selling within the wardrobe studio and a visitor in DK commented: "There are not many people here but I must still go and address the personnel. They don't send the message that they would like to help." Other visitors were also frustrated after having to wait a long time for help, or look for personnel. Furthermore, a chi square test verifies a dependency between the variables "how IKEA meets the expectation of service level" and "overall impression of department" (Appendix 4, Table 23, 24). This indicates that visitors whose expectations regarding the service level are met, are more pleased with the studio. Therefore, the PAX studio needs to be better at meeting visitors' expectations of service levels in order to increase the overall customer satisfaction. Larsson's (2011) idea of personal selling within the PAX studio may therefore be a good solution in order to meet customer demands better and thus increase customer satisfaction.

A possible bias to our results (as described in 3.5. Reliability and Validity) is that potential respondents, that seemed disappointed with the studio, answered to a larger extent no to the question of weather they would like to participate in the survey, than those who were satisfied with the department. Our appreciation is also that visitors who were dissatisfied were so because they became frustrated during the time spent in the department. If it would be possible to offer those visitors some help during the process, one would possibly avoid loosing potential customers.

5.3.4 PLANNING- VS INSPIRATION STUDIO

The next area of investigation regards weather the department should present the assortment according to alternatives, as in the inspiration studio, or according to attributes, as in the planning studio. This is addressed through investigating visitors' **preferences between sections**. To the question of which section of the department that was of most help during the decision-making process, 70 percent of the visitors preferred the inspiration section to the planning section (Appendix 4, Table 25). 15 percent have the opposite preference and 15 percent believe the sections are of equal help. The results between the different departments are very similar to the overall results.

Next question addresses the **satisfaction of the sections** and regards how big of help each section of the department has been to the visitor. Starting with the inspiration part, median- and

mode values equal 4. 66 percent of the respondents are satisfied with the inspiration, or at least believe it has been helpful or very helpful, and 10 percent are dissatisfied (Appendix 4, Table 26). The inspiration section has been of greater help to visitors in DK than in DB. The inspiration section however proves to do a good job; 43 percent of visitors changed their mind of what they intend to buy, during the visit in the studio. Half of those who said they knew completely what they intended to buy before visiting the department, actually changed their mind during the visit.

Many visitors are not looking for a complete solution, but rather parts of a solution so they are able to construct an "open" wardrobe solution. Visitors have also requested inspiration in terms of a walking closets; "I would not like to buy a complete wardrobe but build a walking closet. I would like more such inspiration"

In regards to the planning section, 16 percent of the respondents have not noticed it (Appendix 4, Table 27). Of those who have noticed it, 25 percent meant it was of "very little" help, 22 percent said it was helpful and 12 percent "very helpful". As many as 32 percent did not want to take a standpoint to the question and the median- and mode values are therefore low; 3 ("not seen the planning section" excluded). Examining the department one at a time, we can conclude that visitors are slightly more satisfied with the planning section in DK (41 percent satisfied) than in DB (29 percent satisfied). Some of those who believe the planning part has been of low importance in their decision making comment that they have planned in beforehand by using the system on the website and are therefore well prepared when coming to the studio.

5.3.5 Information

In regards to information, two questions were asked that addressed the sufficiency and clarity of **information**. Median and mode values for both questions equal 4, and the distribution of answers are similar for both questions, as can be seen in Figure 25 and Figure 26. A chi square test of the variables "sufficiency of information" and "clarity of information" show a dependency of the variables in the way that respondents who are satisfied with the sufficiency are also satisfied with the clarity, and vice versa (Appendix 4, Table 28, 29).

In regards to information, visitors are mainly dissatisfied with one aspect – price information. Visitors have commented that they want price information about total prices to the solutions displayed in the inspiration section. However, the total price of a solution is already displayed on every solution located in the inspiration section (see 4.4.2 Communication). We believe it is the inconsistency of the information that confuses visitors. The total price with the interior included for the solution that is shown on the outside of the wardrobe sometimes differ

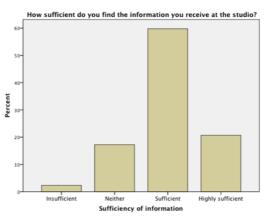


FIGURE 25 Sufficiency of information.

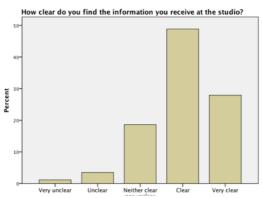


FIGURE 26 Clarity of information.

from the total price with the interior shown on the specified price tag inside of the wardrobe. If the wardrobe is e.g. 300 cm and composed by three 100 cm frames, a price tag will be available on each of the three frames specifying the total price for the specific wardrobe combination. Adding up these three sums should be equal to the total price with interior included on the label on the outside of the wardrobe. However, these often differ. This should not be the case and it may confuse visitors who start wondering what the actual total price is. Paulsson (2011) spoke in favor of reintroducing the picking lists, and since visitors are not completely satisfied with the price information today, it may be a good idea in order for them to get a clear overview of the total price and the price components. In addition, the total price on the label containing a price specification should be highlighted so it stands out among the very many price tags inside the wardrobe.

Visitors would also like more price options; "They give total prices but I would like some options. For example what would the same combination cost if I switch from mirror doors to other doors?" Furthermore, visitors have commented that price tags are missing on some products. With regards to the product information (i.e. technical information about products), visitors are satisfied.

Paulsson and Larsson (2011) worried about visitors having problems understanding the restrictions of sliding doors that can be combined with mirror doors, as well as the number of hinges for different sizes of wardrobes. We asked respondents specifically if they had come across any problems with regards to information about doors, but none of the respondents confirmed any such information problems.

The brochure "Buying Help" is available in two versions, one for sliding doors and one for hinge doors. The purpose of the brochure is to provide technical information (e.g. measures) and price information, so that visitors are to a greater extent able to handle their decision-making without any help personnel. One prerequisite for the brochure to fill its purpose is that visitors are observing it. However, the results show that 62 percent of the visitors have not seen the brochure. Further, 8 percent have seen but not used it. (Figure 27)

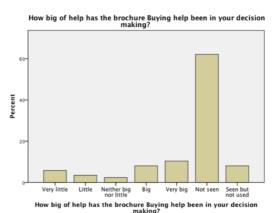


FIGURE 27 The brochure Buying Help.

We analyze the usefulness of the brochure by excluding the respondents that have not seen, or seen but not used, the brochure. The most frequent answer to the question of how big of help the Buying Help-brochure has been is 5, which equals "very big" (35 percent), as can be seen in Table 7. Even though 31 percent of the respondents believe the brochure is not helpful, it still helped at least 62 percent of the visitors that used it, and is therefore a useful tool to unburden the personnel. The results are almost equally distributed in DB and DK.

been in your decision making? Cumulative Valid Percent Valid Very little 19.2 19.2 Little 11,5 30.8 Neither 7.7 38.5 Big 26,9 65.4 Very big 34.6 100,0

How big of help has the brochure Buying Help

TABLE 7 The brochure Buying Help.

100.0

Many of the respondents have not noticed the 1, 2, 3-steps within the planning section in DB. Of those who have noticed it, 78 percent believe it was of "very little" help.



5.3.6 PLANNING TOOL

As many as 29 percent of the respondents have used the computerized planning tool (26 percent in DB and 31 percent in DK), which is far more than for the other complex product families included in this study. 45 percent have not used it but know it exists and another 26 percent does not know it exists.

Paulsson's (2011) estimation that one out of ten of visitors uses the computer based planning tool in the studio is an overestimation as 75 percent of the users used the planning tool on the website, 8 percent in the store and 17 percent used it in both. The tool gets good results in regards to user friendliness; 38 percent think it worked "well" and TABLE 8 Working with the planning tool. 25 percent "very well" (Table 8). 33 percent also mean it has provided "big" help in their decisionmaking, and 8 percent "very big" help. (Table 9)

55 percent of the users are in the age of 30 or younger, 40 percent are 36-60 and the remaining 5 percent are older than 60 years old. Men and women use the planning tool equally, as 37 percent of the users are men and 67 percent are women, which is almost the distribution of the total sample. The results indicate that about 8 percent of the visitors

	How do you find working with the planning tool?					
				Cumulative		
		Percent	Valid Percent	Percent		
Valid	Difficult	4,6	16,7	16,7		
l	Neither	5,7	20,8	37,5		
1	Easy	10,3	37,5	75,0		
l	Very easy	6,9	25,0	100,0		
1	Total	27,6	100,0			
Missing	System	72,4				
Total		100,0				

How big of help has the planning tool been in your decision-

making?						
				Cumulative		
		Percent	Valid Percent	Percent		
Valid	Very little	2,3	8,3	8,3		
	Little	5,7	20,8	29,2		
	Neither	8,0	29,2	58,3		
	Big	9,2	33,3	91,7		
	Very big	2,3	8,3	100,0		
	Total	27,6	100,0			
Missing	System	72,4				
Total		100,0				

TABLE 9 The helpfulness of the planning tool.

use the planning tool in the studio. There is reason to believe that the real figure may be a bit higher, as the visitors that use the tool are often those who spend quite a long time in the department and, as discussed above, the answering frequency is somewhat lower than the average for those visitors.

Users were annoyed about the difficulty of building from scratch. "I could not build from scratch and had to choose doors first." One does not have to choose doors first, however if frame is chosen as the first part, it is not possible to choose doors afterwards. Therefore, it is best to start with the doors. If a user would prefer starting with the frame (which would be quite logical), it becomes problematic in the next step. Users also commented to the overview of the assortment within the planning tool and though it was difficult to get an overview of the assortment without having to go back and forth in the studio. Users also mean the system is controlling in the sense that it presents semi-finished templates. Furthermore, some visitors have experienced problems when trying to save a draft. Some also expressed the desire of being able to draw their own room. Users have also found it difficult to proceed to the next step of the building process. This becomes a problem if the user chooses something else than doors to start with.

The primary reasons why visitors who knew about the tool had not used it, is because they perceived it was difficult to work with and added little value. Further, they wanted to see and feel the products, and were tired of working with the tool from another studio that they could not get to work.



6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper is to determine the level of customer satisfaction within the studios for the complex product families BESTÅ, GODMORGON and PAX, and also to identify factors within the mechanical sales system that can be improved in order for the system to provide sufficient support in customer's purchasing process. We have investigated how visitors perceive the functionality of the studios through the atmosphere of the studio, the service level and organization of the assortment (Figure 5). The conclusions and recommendations to IKEA are presented in this section.

6.1 Bestå

The first research question addressed satisfaction with the retailing studios. Looking at the satisfaction of the studio with regards to atmosphere, 60-70 percent are satisfied. Furthermore, 60 percent are satisfied with the service levels and the satisfaction with the organization of assortment is quite low, as about 50 and 35 percent respectively are satisfied with the inspiration-and planning section. For a summary of the results in numbers, see Appendix 8.

Visitors are dissatisfied with the pleasantness of the department, overview of the assortment and easiness of navigation mainly due to the structure of the studio being messy. Visitors perceive the complexity of the assortment to be great because they could not understand the size and scope of the department. This in turn was partly because of the mixture of product families in the inspiration sections. In order for IKEA to make the studios more attractive, IKEA should:

- Organize the product families so that BESTÅ is clearly separated from BILLY (DB) and LACK (DK)
- Clarify where the studio starts and ends
- Separate different product families more clearly. Display only BESTÅ products within the BESTÅ studio.

In order to determine the service level we examined how well visitors were able to manage their decision making without help from personnel. Visitors were overall good at handling the purchasing process by themselves, but it was easier in DK than in DB. IKEA met the expectations of service levels of only 59 percent of the sample, and again visitors were more satisfied in DK than in DB. Visitors who managed to handle the purchasing process well or very well on their own were more satisfied with how IKEA met their expectations of personal service, than those who managed to handle the purchasing process by themselves badly or very badly. Visitors were mainly dissatisfied with the fact that personnel were not present, difficult to find and that the queues were long. Except from the overall improvements of the mechanical sales system, there was basically one way to solve the problem of dissatisfaction concerning the level of personal service:

Increase the number of store personnel assigned for each hour of operation.

However, Segreland (2011) has expressed this solution to not be an alternative in order to keep the cost level as it is today, neither a solution that corresponds to IKEA's overall business strategy. Consequently, it will not be discussed further. However, worth highlighting is that many visitors ask for more personnel to be present in the studio.

Visitors preferred to have the assortment presented through alternatives over attributes, as the inspiration section is preferred over the planning section by most visitors. About half of the respondents meant the inspiration section was helpful in their decision-making. It was also



perceived as a bit messy, which was one reason why the assortment is being perceived as complex. Many visitors demand more inspirational solutions, bigger solutions and more room settings. The inspiration section in DK gets considerable better results than DB. The reasons are that it is allocated a larger space, but also that DK presents the assortment with bigger solutions, and more vignettes. IKEA should therefore:

- Allocate some space from the planning section to more inspiration (DB)
- Replace small solutions with bigger solutions (DB)
- Display a few larger product solutions (DB)
- Remove boxes of small merchandise at any place where it makes aisles narrow.

Customer satisfaction with the planning section is low, as many visitors mean that it was not of much help. The assortment overview was better in DK than in DB. This is partly due to the greater space in DK than in DB, but also because of how the assortment is presented in the planning section. Drawers and materials are shown in a more perspicuous way in DK, where it is also possible to feel the materials and test the drawers.

- Present the drawers assembled at the T-wall next to the BILLY studio (DB)
- Present the materials on wooden pieces (DB)

Furthermore, in DK, the planning section could be positioned at the other side of the wall where the doors hang today, in order to free more visual space for inspiration.

The crucial fact about the planning section is that 10 percent of the visitors did not notice it. In order for visitors to recognize the planning section, IKEA could highlight it by increasing and also lower the signage "Plan Here" printed above the computer, as the visual field of the visitor becomes narrower further up from the eye level.

Increase and lower the "Plan Here" text at the wall

The planning tool is being used at the website, but hardly in the store. One reason why it is not being used in the store may be that visitors do not observe it. Another thing is that personnel do not have the skills to manage the tool and can therefore not help visitors. Our recommendations to IKEA are:

- Keep the computer based planning tool at the website and enhance it;
 - Keep it updated with the latest assortment
 - Make it possible to create rooms
 - Keep "bugs" out of the system
- Emphasize the planning tool (DB) through exposing the sign better.
- Train personnel to use the planning tool, in order for them to be able to promote the system to visitors.

However, if the user frequency does not increase:

• Remove the planning tool from the studio (DB) and allocate this space to inspiration.

Visitors are generally happy with the sufficiency and clarity of information, but believe the information load is too big, and that many messages make the information confusing. Confusion appears due to information tags being placed on some products within the studio and not on all to which the message is related to, also because the price tags do not show the same kind of information. One of the greatest problems for visitors concerns colors. Many visitors find it difficult to understand which colors the BESTÅ products are available in. Some price tags



include information about colors, others do not. The inconsistency in the information confuses visitors. In order to sort out the problem about materials and colors, the price tags on all BESTÅ products should include color information such as: Available in: white/walnut/black-brown/high gloss-white/-brown/-black/-grey and -red. Because learning from pictures is longer lasting than learning from purely verbal material, the information could preferably also be presented through small color dots at the label.

- Make sure to display information in a consistent way.
- Add availability information in regards to material- and colors to all price tags.

About half of the respondents who have seen the Buying Help-brochure believe that it is helpful in their decision-making. However, 52 percent of the respondents have not noticed the brochure. Some visitors request the brochure to be more attractive, however as the purpose of the brochure is to be perspicuous, it is better to keep it as it is but to also introduce an inspiration brochure. In that way, visitors also get to see more inspiration. Therefore, IKEA should:

- Place the Buying Help-brochure at several places in the studio.
- Introduce an Inspiration-brochure similar to the "Bathroom" brochure.

With regards to preferences of attributes, we can conclude that form, size, color and price are almost of equal importance to visitors.

6.2 GODMORGON

The first research question addressed satisfaction with the retailing studios. Looking at the satisfaction of the studio with regards to atmosphere, 60-70 percent are satisfied. Furthermore, 50 percent are satisfied with the service levels. The satisfaction of the organization of the assortment is high, 75 percent, for the alternative based format but lower, about 55 percent, for the attribute based format. For a summary of the results in numbers, see Appendix 8.

By interviewing visitors at the department we have been able to determine that most of the visitors thought of the studio as either good or vey good. The overview of the assortment is also regarded as good. Although, there are some things visitors would like for IKEA to improve in order to facilitate the decision-making. Visitors think the department should be organized in the same way as the kitchen department, with doors, taps and sinks clearly separated from each other. We do think IKEA are doing a good job when displaying the different colors of the commodes on wooden pieces so visitors are able to feel and see what the colors would look like in real life. However, this is not done in DK. Further, IKEA are not being consistent when displaying information about the products. On the POS labels for washbasins IKEA is saying one measurement and on the overview another measurement for the same product is given. We fear that this confuses visitors and stress the importance of displaying accurate information on all of the signage. Additionally, in order for visitors to get a better overview of the assortment IKEA should not mix the various product families in the studio, since it can confuse visitors and make it harder for them to understand what is included in the different families. They also have to run around in the studio to be able to se different solutions displayed of the families, which can make it even harder for them to get a good overview. Another way of providing visitors with a good overview of the assortment is by displaying an overview map of the assortment also showing how you are able to combine the different products with one another. These maps should be displayed at the turn of the primary aisles in each of the departments in Gothenburg. We therefore have some recommendations for IKEA to consider:



- Define the assortment in a structured way, meaning washbasins, taps and commodes clearly separated and displayed.
- Display the different colors of the commodes on wooden pieces.
- Have accurate signage of information.
- Use category signage to facilitate the navigation through the studio.
- Separate the different product families in the studio.
- Provide the studio with an overview map, displayed in the turn of the primary aisles next to the studio.

IKEA has the impression of the reason behind why people are not turning to IKEA when buying a bathroom solution, as visitors being ignorant to the fact that IKEA is offering handicraft service. But after examining this issue we found the reason to be different. People do not value the offering of handicraft as high, instead they are valuing low price and high quality. IKEA should therefore:

Promote high quality products at a low price.

The studio at the bathroom department is organized into two sections, an inspiration section and a planning section. When analyzing what visitors thought of these section we can conclude that as many as 75 percent thought of the inspiration section as either good or very good. However, even if the response rate is quite high, people have told us during interviews that they thought of the studio as messy and that they were lacking examples of bigger room settings, so they are able to get an idea of how the products could look like together. Visitors also thought there were too many things on a very small area. Although, we believe IKEA has been able to inspire people when visiting the department, since about 30 percent of the visitors that knew either well or very well what they wanted actually changed their idea after visiting the department and could consider of buying something else than they had planned to in first place. When it comes to the planning section, it was surprisingly that 12 percent had not even seen the section, until pointing it out to them. But of those who had seen it, most thought of it as either good or very good. We believe IKEA can increase the satisfaction level regarding the section, first by displaying accurate information of both the price and product. It is also important IKEA display correct information about the measurements they show the commodes in. Because on the overview map you can find all measurements and colors of the products, but the information the measurements that are drawn as a white line above the commodes say something else.

- Display accurate information regarding the price and products.
- Create more and bigger room settings.

In order to determine the service level we examined how well visitors were able to manage their decision-making without any help from personnel. The results show that fewer respondents in DB compared to DK were able to manage their decision-making on their own. However, as many as 50 percent of the respondents thought of the accessibility of personnel as badly or very badly. This indicates that visitors are expecting the personnel to be more present at the department or that they do not have to wait in line before getting help.

 Display a schedule over the presence of personnel at the department, so visitors know what to expect.

As a way of facilitating an easier purchasing process for visitors without any help from personnel, IKEA has implemented a computer based planning tool in the studio. The results of how many



that had used it was surprisingly low. 50 percent of the respondents did not even know such a system existed for the bathroom department and 42 percent knew it existed but chose not to use it because they wanted to se the products live and be able to touch them, but also because they find it hard to work with. Interesting is that no one had used the tool in the studio, but only on the website. If IKEA wants for customers to use the tool it has to be enhanced and improved. It is important to minimize the amount of bugs in the system so that visitors will not find inaccurate products in the system. IKEA must:

- Enhance the computer based planning tool.
- Consider of removing the system from the planning section, since no one is using it in the department.

By removing the tool from the department, IKEA can use this space to display more room settings and inspire visitors in their purchasing process.

6.3 PAX

The first research question addressed satisfaction with the retailing studios. Looking at the satisfaction of the studio with regards to atmosphere, around 80 percent are satisfied. Furthermore, around 50 percent are satisfied with the service levels. The satisfaction with the organization of assortment is about 65 percent for the alternative based format and 30 percent for the attribute-based format. For a summary of the results in numbers, see Appendix 8.

PAX is the department in this study that has gotten the highest results in regards to overall customer satisfaction. The purchasing process in the PAX studio functions very smoothly. However, a few aspects where there is room for improvement are presented below.

Overall, visitors are satisfied with the pleasantness of the PAX studio, the overview of the assortment and the easiness of navigation. Just above 70 percent also have managed to handle the purchasing process well or very well without any help from personnel. However, IKEA met the expectations of service levels of only 54 percent of the visitors and the pleasantness of the studio is proven to be dependent on how well IKEA meet the expectations of service levels of visitors. IKEA must therefore, first and foremost, work on the service levels within the department. Visits in the studio are generally quite long, and visitors who cannot sort out the purchasing process on their own become frustrated, and may leave the department. Personnel must approach these visitors at an earlier stage.

Approach visitors in an early stage of their purchasing process

Visitors prefer to have the assortment presented according to alternatives over attributes, as the inspiration section is preferred over the planning section of most visitors, but the satisfaction of the inspiration section itself can be improved. Visitors have also requested open solutions and walking closets.

About equally many believed the planning section was helpful, as not helpful. However, many of the visitors planned in beforehand and came well prepared. 30 percent meant they knew completely what they intend to buy when visiting the PAX studio. The planning section has therefore in a way been substituted by the IKEA website.

Visitors were overall satisfied with the sufficiency and clarity of the information in the studio. Improvements should however be made to the reporting of price information as visitors had problems understanding the total price and the price components.



- Improve the consistency of the price information by making sure the total price interior included at the outside of the wardrobe equals the total price at the specified price tag inside of the wardrobe
- Highlight the "total price" price tag so that it stands out among the very many price tags inside of the wardrobe
- Reintroduce picking lists for each PAX wardrobe in the wardrobe compact

The Buying Help-brochure is appreciated by about two thirds of those who used it, but it was not appropriately exposed as more than half of the respondents had not seen the brochure.

Place the Buying Help brochure in the wardrobe compacts so that visitors can notice it

Visitors seem to think it was wearying walking around the relatively big studio, which also made the assortment more difficult to overview. One way f making the shopping easier for visitors would be to provide them with a "checklist" with all products in the assortment and check boxes, so visitors are able to mark the products f interest when walking around in the wardrobe compact. This may reduce the perceived complexity of the assortment. The checklist could preferably by integrated in the Buying Help brochure.

Integrate a checklist in the Buying Help brochure

29 percent of the respondents used the computerized planning tool, which was far more than for the other complex product families included in this study. The tool also got good results in regards to user friendliness however there are some aspects in terms of functionality that needs to be developed.

We asked about the 1,2,3-steps in the planning studio in order to investigate the usefulness of such information. Many of the respondents have not noticed it and most of those who have noticed it, mean it was of little help. It can thus be removed for the studio in DB, as has previously been done in DK.

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Gunnarsson, S. (2011). *Interview with S. Gunnarsson on 11th of March 2011*. Kållered. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

Kahnberg, M. (2011) *Interview with M. Kahnberg on 4th of April 2011*. Kållered. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

Liljander, V. (2011). *Interview with V. Liljander on 11th of March 2011*. Bäckebol. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

Pålsson, S. (2011). *Interview with S. Pålsson on 1st of April 2011*. Bäckebol. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

Segreland, F (2011). Interview with F. Segreland on the 20th of January 2011. Helsingborg.

Åkesson, C. (2011) Interview with C. Åkesson on 21st of February 2011. Helsingborg.

APPENDIX 1: EMPIRICS



FIGURE 28 POS Label BESTÅ



FIGURE 29 Information Tag BESTÅ



FIGURE 30 Presentation of materials, BESTÅ DB.



FIGURE 31 Presentation of materials, BESTÅ DK.



FIGURE 32 Fronts of drawers, BESTÅ DB.

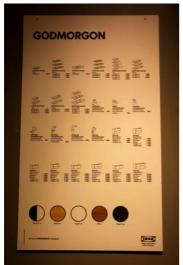


FIGURE 34 GOD MORGON overview, DK.



FIGURE 33 Vingette, GODMORGON DB.



FIGURE 35 GOD MORGON overview, DB.



FIGURE 36 Price label, PAX DK.



FIGURE 37 Hinge doors, DB.



FIGURE 38 Hinge doors, DK.



APPENDIX 2: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS BESTÅ

Department Store 2,1 8,3 10,4 Bad 33,3 43,8 83,3 39,6 16,7 100,0 100,0 2.2 2.2 Very bad 10,9 13,0 19,6 32,6 37,0 69,6 30,4 100,0 Very good

TABLE 11 Overview of the assortment.

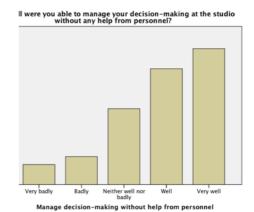
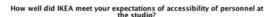


FIGURE 39 Manage the decision-making without the help from personnel.

How well were you able to manage your decision-making at

	ine depui	uncill without	it any neip from personnei?			
Depa	rtment St	ore		Cumulative		
			Valid Percent	Percent		
DB	Valid	Very badly	10,4	10,4		
		Badly	10,4	20,8		
		Neither	18,8	39,6		
	Well		33,3	72,9		
		Very well	27,1	100,0		
		Total	100,0			
DK	Valid	Badly	4,3	4,3		
		Neither	21,7	26,1		
		Well	28,3	54,3		
		Very well	45,7	100,0		
		Total	100,0			

TABLE 12 Manage the decision-making without the help from personnel, at the different department stores.



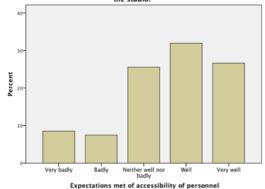


FIGURE 40 Accessibility of personnel.

How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio?

	of personner at the studio?								
Department Store				Cumulative					
			Valid Percent	Percent					
DB	Valid	Very badly	12,5	12,5					
		Badly	8,3	20,8					
		Neither	29,2	50,0					
		Well	33,3	83,3					
		Very well	16,7	100,0					
		Total	100,0						
DK	Valid	Very badly	4,3	4,3					
		Badly	6,5	10,9					
		Neither	21,7	32,6					
		Well	30,4	63,0					
		Very well	37,0	100,0					
		Total	100,0						

TABLE 13 Accessibility of personnel.

How well were you able to manage your decision-making at the studio without any help from personnel? * How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio? Crosstabulation

Count

	How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio?						
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
How well were you able to	Very badly	2	0	0	0	3	5
manage your decision-	Badly	1	0	4	0	2	7
making at the studio	Neither	2	4	6	4	3	19
without any help from	Well	2	1	8	13	5	29
personnel?	Very well	1	2	6	13	12	34
Total		8	7	24	30	25	94

TABLE 14 Cross tabulation between how well visitors have been able to manage their decision-making without any help from personnel, with how well IKEA met their expectations of accessibility of personnel.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30,370 ^a	16	,016
Likelihood Ratio	31,442	16	,012
Linear-by-Linear	4,855	1	,028
Association			
N of Valid Cases	94		

a. 17 cells (68,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,37.

TABLE 15 Measuring the independency of the criteria: Managing the decision-making with accessibility of personnel.

How big of help has the inspiration section been

	in your decision-making?						
			Cumulative				
		Valid Percent	Percent				
Valid	Very little	14,1	14,1				
1	Little	7,6	21,7				
1	Neither	26,1	47,8				
1	Big	30,4	78,3				
1	Very big	21,7	100,0				
	Total	100,0					

TABLE 16 Helpfulness of inspiration section.

How big of help has the planning section been in

	your decision-making?							
			Cumulative					
		Valid Percent	Percent					
Valid	Very little	24,5	24,5					
l	Little	5,3	29,8					
	Neither	27,7	57,4					
	Big	26,6	84,0					
	Very big	6,4	90,4					
	Not seen	9,6	100,0					
	Total	100,0						

TABLE 17 Helpfulness of planning section.

How sufficient do you find the information you receive at the studio? * How clear do you find the information you receive at the studio? Crosstabulation

Count

		How clear	How clear do you find the information you receive at the studio?				
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
How sufficient do you find	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
the information you receive	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
at the studio?	3	0	2	9	6	1	18
	4	0	4	1	32	5	42
	5	1	0	1	3	15	20
Total		1	6	12	42	21	82

TABLE 18 Cross tabulation between the sufficiency and clarity of information.

Chi-Square Tests

om oquare roots							
			Asymp. Sig. (2-				
	Value	df	sided)				
Pearson Chi-Square	69,237 ^a	16	,000				
Likelihood Ratio	62,531	16	,000				
Linear-by-Linear	16,136	1	,000				
Association							
N of Valid Cases	82						

a. 19 cells (76,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,01.

TABLE 19 Measuring the independency of the criteria: Sufficiency and clarity of information.



APPENDIX 3: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS GOD MORGON

How good do you think it is that IKEA mixes product families?
(LILLANGEN, MOLGER, GODMORGON)

	(LILLANGEN, MOLGER, GODINORGON)								
		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent					
Valid	Very bad	2,4	3,1	3,1					
l	Bad	5,9	7,7	10,8					
l	Neither	16,5	21,5	32,3					
l	Good	37,6	49,2	81,5					
l	Very good	14,1	18,5	100,0					
l	Total	76,5	100,0						
Missing	System	23,5							
Total		100,0							

TABLE 20 Mixture of families.

How well were you able to manage your decision-making at the studio without an

			neip noin	personner:		
Depa	artment St	ore	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Very badly	2	4.8	4.8	4,8
1	valid		4	-,-	.,.	
		Badly	7	16,7	16,7	21,4
		Neither	12	28,6	28,6	50,0
		Well	9	21,4	21,4	71,4
		Very well	12	28,6	28,6	100,0
		Total	42	100,0	100,0	
2	Valid	Very badly	1	2,3	2,3	2,3
		Neither	10	23,3	23,3	25,6
		Well	8	18,6	18,6	44,2
		Very well	24	55,8	55,8	100,0
		Total	43	100,0	100,0	

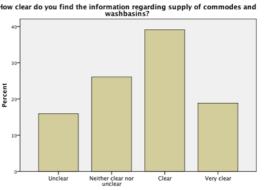
TABLE 21 Managing the decision-making without help from personnel.



FIGURE 39 Clarity of price information.



FIGURE 40 Clarity of product information.



Clarity of information regarding supply of commodes and washbasins

FIGURE 41 Clarity of information regarding how the commodes and washbasins can be combined.



APPENDIX 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS PAX

Time spent at the studio

		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<10	20,9	20,9
1	10-19	37,2	58,1
1	20-29	11,6	69,8
1	30-39	20,9	90,7
1	>39	9,3	100,0
	Total	100,0	

TABLE 22 Time spent at the studio.

What is your overall impression of the studio? * How well did IKEA meet your expectations of accessibility of personnel at the studio? Crosstabulation

Count

Count								
			Expectations met					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
Overall impression of	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	
studio	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	
	3	1	0	4	7	1	13	
	4	0	9	18	11	9	47	
	5	0	1	5	11	8	25	
Total		2	10	28	29	18	87	

TABLE 23 Cross tabulation between the impression of the studio and the expectations of accessibility of personnel.

Chi-Square Tests

			Asymp. Sig. (2-
	Value	df	sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61,272ª	16	,000
Likelihood Ratio	29,097	16	,023
Linear-by-Linear	6,833	1	,009
Association	l		
N of Valid Cases	87		

a. 18 cells (72,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,02.

TABLE 24 Measuring the independency of the criteria: Impression of the studio and accessibility of personnel.

Which section of the PAX studio was of the greatest help

	during your decision- making?						
			Cumulative				
		Valid Percent	Percent				
Valid	Planning section	14,9	14,9				
	Inspiration section	70,1	85,1				
l	Equal	14,9	100,0				
	Total	100,0					

TABLE 25 The section of the most help.

How big of help has the inspiration section been in your decision making?

	in your decision making?						
			Cumulative				
		Valid Percent	Percent				
Valid	Very little	2,3	2,3				
l	Little	8,0	10,3				
l	Neither	24,1	34,5				
l	Big	40,2	74,7				
l	Very big	25,3	100,0				
	Total	100,0					

TABLE 26 The helpfulness of the inspiration section.

How big of help has the planning section been in

	your decision-making?							
			Cumulative					
		Valid Percent	Percent					
Valid	Very little	20,7	20,7					
l	Little	8,0	28,7					
l	Neither	26,4	55,2					
l	Big	18,4	73,6					
l	Very big	10,3	83,9					
l	Not seeen	16,1	100,0					
	Total	100,0						

TABLE 27 The helpfulness of the planning section.



How sufficient do you find the information you receive at the studio? * How clear do you find the information you receive at the studio? Crosstabulation

Count

		How clear	How clear do you find the information you receive at the studio?					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total	
How sufficient do you find	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	
the information you receive	3	0	1	7	5	2	15	
at the studio?	4	0	1	9	34	8	52	
	5	0	0	О	3	14	17	
Total		1	3	16	42	24	86	

TABLE 28 Cross tabulation between the sufficiency and clarity of information.

Chi-Square Tests							
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)				
Pearson Chi-Square	96,423ª	12	,000				
Likelihood Ratio	52,258	12	,000				
Linear-by-Linear	33,473	1	,000				
Association	1						
N of Valid Cases	86						

a. 15 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

expected count is ,02. **TABLE 29** Measuring the independency of the criteria: Sufficiency and clarity of information.



APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL BESTÅ

SERVICE LEVEL

			П			
1)	Did you visit the department because you were interested		⊢ Yes	⊔ No		
	in a piece of furniture/gadgets?		103	110		
2)	How well did you know what you were looking for before					
_,	you visited the department regarding color, form, size and	1	2	3	4	5
	gadgets?	Not at all	Badly	Neither	Well (Completely
3)	Has your idea changed after your visited the department?					
4)	What is your impression of the overview of the	1	2	3	4	5
	assortment in the studio?	Very bad	Bad	Neither (Good	Very good
5)	How well do you perceive you have been able to find					
	what you are looking for in the studio?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very badly	васіу	Neither	well	Very well
	 a) What can be improved in order for you to easier find what you are looking? 					
6)	How well were you able to manage your decision-					
,	making at the studio without any help from personnel?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very badly	Badly	Neither	Well	Very well
7)	How well did IKEA meet your expectations of the	1	2	3	4	5
	accessibility of personnel at the studio?	Very badly	Badly	Neither	Well	Very well
	PRESENTATION OF ASSO	RTMENT				
		П		7 [7 [
8)	Please rank following attributes according to your priority when choosing a product, where 1 is the	1 Color	_			Form
	lowest priority and 4 the highest.	1 00:01		.20 3.		
٥١	MATL: It as all an a Caller Death and a second of the annual action					
9)	Which section of the Bestå studio was of the greatest help in your decision- making?	1 Plann	ing	2 Inspira	ation	3 Equally
	T year and a g	sectio	n	sectio	on	
40\	W 1. Cl. 1. d		П			
10)	How big of help has the inspiration section been in your decision-making?	1	2	3	4	5
	your decision maning.	Very little	_ Little	Neither		Very big
					_	
11)	How big of help has the planning section been in your					
11,	decision-making?	1	2	3	4	5
	<u> </u>	Very little	Little	Neither	Big	Very big
12\	How probable is it that you will:					
12)	a) Buy an already finished combination exposed in	1	2	3	4	5
	.1 . 1: 0	Very unlikely l			Likely	Very likely
	b) Design your own combination?					
		1	2	3	4	5
	,	Verv unlikelv l	Jnlikely	Neither	Likely	Very likely



13)		v big of help has the brochure "Buying help" been our decision-making?	☐ 1 Very little	☐ 2 Little	3 Neith	☐ 4 er Big	5 Very	_
14)	Hov	v can the "Buying help can be improved?						seen
		PLEASANTNESS OF DEF	PARTMENT	Γ				
15)		v sufficient do you find the information you eive in the studio?	Highl Insufficien	1 y In	□ 2 suff.	☐ 3 Neither	4 Suff.	□ 5 Highly sufficient
16)		v clear do you find the information you receive in studio?	Very uncle	1	□ 2 clear	☐ 3 Neither	☐ 4 Clear	□ 5 Very clear
	a)	Comment/What can be improved?						
17)	Wha	at is your overall impression of the department?	Very ba	1	□ 2 Bad N	□ 3 Jeither (□ 4 Good	□ 5 Very good
18)		ase estimate how long time you have visited the artment?						
		COMPUTER BASED PLAN	NNING TO	OL				
19)	(cor	e you used the computerized planning tool nputer where you can simulate different ibination)?	1	Yes	It	but I kno exists question		3 No, I did not know it existed (go to question
	a)	Where have you used the planning tool?	1 On the	=	te 2 Ir	□ n the stu	idio 3	20) □ Both
	b)	How do you find it has been working with the planning tool?	_] 1 ult [□ 2 Difficult	3 t Neith	4 er Eas	□ 5 y Very easy
	c)	How big of help has the planning tool been in your decision-making?	Very lit	□ 1 ttle Li	□ 2 ittle N		1 5 Big V	_
	d)	What would you like to have improved in order to facilitate working with the planning tool?						
	e)	If no, and you know it exists: Why have you not used it?						



DEMOGRAPHICS 20) A) Accommodation 0 Apartment 1 House 0 Man B) Age 1 Woman C) Gender 1) ≤35 2) 36-60 3) ≥61



APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL GODMORGON

SERVICE LEVEL

1)	Did you visit the department because you were interested in a piece of furniture/gadgets?		Yes	s No		
2)	How well did you know what you were looking for before					
۷)	you visited the department regarding color, form, size and	1	2	3	4	5
	gadgets?	Not at all	Badly	Neither	Well	Completely
3)	Has your idea changed after your visited the department?					
٠,	The your twee changes and your vision the department					
		1	2	3	4	5
4)	How well were you able to manage you decision-making	Very badly	Badly	Neither	Well	Very well
	at the studio without any help from personnel?					
5)	How well did IKEA meet your expectations regarding	1	2	3	4	5
•	the accessibility of personnel at the department?	Very badly	Badly	Neither	Well	Very well
	PRESENTATION OF ASS	ORTMET				
6)	How good to you find the inspiration environment?					
		1	2	3	4	5
		Very bad	Bad	Neither	Good	Very good
7)	How good do you find the planning section is at giving	П	П	П	П	П
',	you an overview of the assortment?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very bad	Bad	Neither	-	Very good
8)	What is your impression of the overview of the					
	assortment?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very bad	Bad	_	•	Very good
		very bau	Dau	Neither	doou	very good
۵)						
9)	How would you like the studio organized in order for you to get a good overview of the assortment?					
	you to get a good overview of the assortment.					
10)	How good do you find the mixture of product families in	1	2	3	4	5
	the studio, so you are able to get an overview of the assortment?	Very bad	Bad	Neither	Good	Very good
	assortiment	•				, 0
11)	How big of help has the brochure "Buying help" been					
	in your decision-making?	1	2	3	4	5
		Very little	Little	Neithe	er Big	Very big
12\	How his of halp has the breaking "Dathus an" have !-					
12)	How big of help has the brochure "Bathroom" been in your decision-making?					
	,	1 Very little	2 Little	3 Neithe	4 ar Rig	5 Very hig



13)	How big of help has the overview map been in your decision-making?	☐ 1 Very little	□ 2 Little	☐ 3 Neither	□ 4 Big	□ 5 Very big
	PLEASANTNESS OF	DEPARTME	NT			
14)	How clear do you find the price information?		□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
15)	How clear do you find the product information?	Very unclear	Unclear	Neither	Clear	Very clear □ 5
16)	How clear do you find the information regarding the supply of commodes and washbasins?	Very unclear	_	_	•	Very clear
17)	What difficulties have you come across in you choice of washbasin, commode and tap?	Very unclear	_	_	Clear	Very clear
18)	Do you know that IKEA offers handicraft services?		□ 0 Yes	□ 1 No		
19)	Does this increase the probability of you buying a bathroom at IKEA?					
20)	What is your overall impression of the studio?	_ 1		1 No] [4	5
21)	Please estimate how long time you have visited the department? COMPUTER BASED F	Very bad		Neither G	ood	Very good
22)	Have you used the computerized planning tool (computer where you can simulate different combination)?	1 Ye	s 2 No,	□ but I kno t exists question		3 No, I did not know it existed (go to question
	a) Where have you used the planning tool?	☐ 1 On the we	ebsite 2	☐ In the stu	dio 3	20) Both
	b) How do you find it has been working with the planning tool?	□ 1 Very difficult	□ 2 Difficu	☐ 3 It Neithe	□ 4 er Easy	□ 5 y Very easy
	c) How big of help has the planning tool been in your decision-making?		□ □ 1 2 e Little N	□ □ 3 4 Neither	•	-
	d) What would you like to have improved in order to facilitate working with the planning tool?					
	e) If no, and you know it exists: Why have you not used it?					



DEMOGRAPHICS

221	A) Aggammadation			
23)	A) Accommodation	0 Apartment	1 House	
	B) Age	0 Man	1 Woman	
	C) Gender			
	c) delidel			
		1) ≤35 2) 36-6	50 3) ≥61	



APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL PAX

SERVICE LEVEL

1)	Did you visit the department because you were interested in a piece of furniture/gadgets?		Yes	□ S No		
2)	How well did you know what you were looking for before you visited the department regarding color, form, size and gadgets?	☐ 1 Not at a	2 II Badly	3 Neither	□ 4 Well (5 Completely
3)	Has your idea changed after your visited the department?					
4)	What is your impression of the overview of the assortment in the studio?		_	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
		Very bac	l Bad	Neither	Good	Very good
5)	How well were you able to find what you are looking for in the studio?		_	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
	a) What can be improved in order for you to easier find what you are looking?	Very bac	_	Neither	-	Very good
6)	How well were you able to manage your decision-making at the studio without any help from personnel?		_	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
		Very badly	, Badly	Neither	Well	Very well
7)	How well did IKEA meet your expectations regarding the accessibility of personnel at the department?	1 Very badly	. 2	□ 3 Neither	□ 4 Well	□ 5 Very well
	PRESENTATION OF ASSO	RTMENT				
8)	Which section of the PAX studio was of the greatest help in your decision- making?		□ nning tion	2 Inspir	ation	☐ 3 Equally
9)	How big of help has the inspiration section been in your decision-making?					
		1 Very little	2 Little	3 Neithe	4 r Big	5 Very big
10)	How big of help has the planning section been in your decision-making?	□ 1	□ 2	3	□ 4	□ 5
		Very little	Little	Neithe	r Big	Very big
11)	To what extent did you follow the steps 1, 2, 3?	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5
12)	How big of help has the brochure "Buying help" been in your decision-making?	Not at all	Some		_	Completely
	2	□ 1		□ □ 3 4	5	
		Very little				
						seen 78



13)	Hov	How can the "Buying help can be improved?		
		PLEASANTNESS OF DE	EPARTMENT	
14)		w sufficient do you find the information you eive in the studio?	1 2 3 4 5 Highly Insuff. Neither Suff. Highly Insufficient sufficien	
15)		w clear do you find the information you receive in studio? Comment/What can be improved?	1 2 3 4 5 Very unclear Unclear Neither Clear Very clear	
16)		nat is your overall impression of the department?		
17)		ase estimate how long time you have visited the partment?	Very bad Bad Neither Good Very good	
		COMPUTER BASED PLA	NNING TOOL	
18)	(co	ve you used the computerized planning tool mputer where you can simulate different nbination)?	1 Yes 2 No, but I know 3 No, I did It exists not know i (go to question e) existed (go to question 20)	
	a)	Where have you used the planning tool?	1 On the website 2 In the studio 3 Both	
	b)	How do you find working with the planning tool?	1 2 3 4 5 Very difficult Difficult Neither Easy Very eas	
	c)	How big of help has the planning tool been in your decision-making?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5 Very little Little Neither Big Very big	
	d)	What would you like to have improved in order to facilitate working with the planning tool?		
	e)	If no, and you know it exists: Why have you not used it?		
		DEMOGRAPH	IICS	
19)		A) Accommodation		
		B) Age	0 Apartment 1 House □ □ 0 Man 1 Woman	
		C) Gender	☐ ☐ ☐ 1) ≤35 2) 36-60 3) ≥61	



APPENDIX 8: CONCLUSIONS OF RESULTS

BESTÅ

- 71 percent are satisfied with the studio overall
- 62 percent are satisfied with the overview of the assortment
- 63 percent are satisfied with the navigation
- 67 percent have been able to handle the purchasing process without help from personnel
- 59 percent are satisfied with the service levels
- 66 percent prefer the inspiration section to the planning section
- 52 percent are satisfied with the inspiration section
- 33 percent are satisfied with the planning section
- 16 percent have used the computerized planning tool
- 23 percent are satisfied with the Buying Help brochure, 52 percent have not seen it.

GODMORGON

- 68 percent are satisfied with the studio overall
- 65 percent are satisfied with the overview of the assortment
- 42 percent have been able to handle the purchasing process without help from personnel
- 50 percent are satisfied with the service levels
- 75 percent are satisfied with the inspiration environment
- 54 percent are satisfied with the planning section
- 68 percent are satisfied with the product information, 81 percent with the price information and 47 percent with the information of how to combine products.
- 9 percent have used the computerized planning tool
- 18 percent are satisfied with the Buying Help brochure, 61 percent have not seen it.
- 40 percent know that IKEA offers handicraft services

PAX

- 83 percent are satisfied with the studio overall
- 77 percent are satisfied with the overview of the assortment
- 78 percent are satisfied with the navigation
- 72 percent have been able to handle the purchasing process without help from personnel
- 54 percent are satisfied with the service levels
- 70 percent prefer the inspiration section to the planning section
- 66 percent are satisfied with the inspiration section
- 29 percent are satisfied with the planning section
- 29 percent have used the computerized planning tool, 63 percent of those are satisfied with working with the tool and 38 percent are satisfied with the helpfulness of the tool.
- 18 percent are satisfied with the Buying Help brochure, 62 percent have not seen it.