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Why are customers leaving Jönköping City core?

Master's thesis within marketing/management

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Abstract

Since the introduction of shopping centers, it has become more and more common that the retail trade is taken over by the shopping centers. The shopping centers can offer the customers indoor shopping with stores, cafés and restaurants under the same roof. This comfortability is a competitive advantage for the shopping centers in comparison with other purchasing areas, such as the city core.

In Jönköping on the 2nd of April 1987 A6, a large shopping centre at this time the largest in the region, had its opening with great festivities. The merchants located in the city core feared that the large shopping centre would drive them out of business. After negotiations the merchants of the city core of Jönköping, the municipality and A6 made peace.

Today the two shopping areas are competing for the same customers, but are they competing on the same grounds? The city core of Jönköping is facing problems with customers leaving, but where are they going? What can be done to attract new customers and gain their old ones?

In this report we will try to find out how the city cores can do to gain, maintain and satisfy the customers. This will be done by a quantitative study of the Jönköping city core and the shopping centre A6. Interviews will be done with respondents at both A6 Centre and in the City core of Jönköping. The material we will gather, will be handed over to the organization 'På Stan', who is an association working with issues regarding the merchants in the city.

Through the interviews with the 200 respondents we accessed three main issues that have an impact on the customer's choice of shopping location. These three are *accessibility*, *range of stores* and *environment*.

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1 Introduction

In this chapter we will discuss the background for our thesis work, present a problem discussion and state the purpose for this thesis.

1.1 Background

The breakthrough of shopping centers started in Europe and matured in North America (Dawson, 1983). The shopping centers offered all kind of products divided in different departments where the idea was to offer a wide range of products at low and stable prices (Falk & Julander, 1983; Bergman, 2003). These centers were situated outside the core of the city where people easily could visit by car or public transporting (Dawson, 1983).

It becomes more and more common that the retail trade is taken over by the shopping centers in many places, also in Jönköping. The focus is turned away from the city cores. Even though the shopping centers becomes more and more popular, the city cores still are going strong in the competition as a market place with its history and architecture (Markham, 1998). The shopping centers can invite the customers to indoor shopping, where all the stores and cafés are under the same roof. This is one competitive advantages and it makes the shopping very comfortable for the customers (Larsson, 1994).

The third January 1984 the local newspaper, Jönköpings Posten¹, wrote an article about a private company, which had bought 1/10 of the A6 area. On this land Sweden's largest shopping mall should be build. According to Holst (1987) estimates every fifth store had to close down, because of the competition with A6. Already in the autumn 1984 boutiques were in queue to get a place at the up-coming shopping mall. The merchants demanded that all trade should be stopped; they believed that it should be a scandal and the trade in Jönköpings City core² would be outclassed by the enormous shopping mall. The only stores they allowed were B&W³, OBS!⁴ and IKEA⁵. The public decision about A6 came during 1984 and a picture was presented which showed the future building. The shopping mall would be build over the E4. The merchant complaints were quiet down, when they got promises about investments and improvements in the inner City. There would be for example reconstructions for several SEK millions. The complaints silenced during 1987, when the merchant accepted the new market situation. Gunnar Stenman, who was the vice president of Jönköpings köpmannaförening⁶ in 1987, claimed that A6 would not be a threat towards the inner City. He believed that the trade would stay in the inner City. According to Stenman the trade breeds trade (Holst, JP, 1987, 1 April).

A6 is a shopping mall located outside Jönköping City. The mall opened on 2nd April 1987 (Holst, Jönköpings Posten, 1987, 1 April). Håkan Karlsson VD in Centrum Invest (1987)

¹ Jönköpings Posten is further refered as JP.

² The shopping area in Jönköping city will furter be refered as Jönköping city or the City

³ B&W was a supermarket, now merged with Obs! creating Coop Forum

⁴ OBS! was a supermarket that later merged with B&W, creating Coop Forum

⁵ IKEA; a furniture store situated all over the world

⁶ Jönköping Citys merchant association

believed that A6 was more than a shopping mall. According to him was A6 also an activity center (Holst, Jönköpings Posten, 2 April, 1987).

The merchants of Jönköping City core and the merchants at A6 Centre made peace 4th April 1987. Both parts then believed that A6 was good for the shopping in the city as well. Because of the great investments at A6, the merchants in the inner City was promised money too being able to renovate and renew in the city (Holst, Jönköpings Posten, 4 April, 1987). During the first four days the shopping mall had 50 000 visitors (Holst, Jönköpings Posten, 6 April, 1987). According to JP A6 was Scandinavia's largest shopping mall. A6 became a great competitor and after four weeks it was a visible decrease in the shopping in Jönköpings City (Holst, Jönköpings Posten, 30 April, 1987).

The area where A6 Center is situated today was from the beginning a military area where the artillery regiment was located, therefore the name A6. The land was bought and on 2nd of April 1987 Smålands largest shopping center had its opening with large festivities. Today over 70 stores are located at A6, providing the customers with a width and breadth in product range, restaurants and cafés. During 2003 A6 went through a renewing period, 20 new stores opened and on 18th of November 2004 the whole shopping mall had a re-opening with new fresh premises (www.a6center.se)⁷.

1.2 Problem discussion

In an open letter printed in the local newspaper of, JP, at the 28th of April 2005, a group of angry storekeepers has demanded better accessibility to the city core to lure customers to the City. The demand includes more parking spaces and according to them, this is the problem why customers are leaving Jönköping City for other alternatives. To solve this problem a group of storeowners, 'Tekniska Kontoret'⁸ in Jönköping and the association På Stan arranged a meeting to look at the options the City have. They point out that the parking spaces is not a problem, the problem is that people are not aware of the locations of the parking spaces. Between the west side of the City and the public library there are 5 107 parking spaces. A campaign has started to make people aware of the location and the parking spaces. But still storeowners recognize another problem; the opening hours of the store located in Jönköping City varies. It is suggested that the stores should reach an agreement on the same opening hours but they have not reached an agreement yet. The article also points out that it is important to look into the future to see what the City core can do to gain customers but most of all, how they can maintain and satisfy the customers that they already have, instead of only focusing on the negative sides (Oldberg, 2005).

1.3 Purpose

We want to investigate what city cores can do to gain, maintain and satisfy old and new customers, as well as look upon what city cores and shopping centres can do to improve their competitiveness. This will be done by a quantitative study of the Jönköping city core and the shopping centre A6.

⁷ <http://www.a6center.se/veta/valveta.asp> downloaded 2004-11-16

⁸ The Technical Department of the local authorities in Jönköping

1.4 Subject selection

We have chosen to write about how the Jönköping City core will be able to gain, maintain and satisfy their customers, because we think that it will provide us with a deeper understanding of peoples decision making in purchasing situations and it will also provide the “På Stan” with information on what they can do to gain and maintain their customers. This is important since it will provide a competition opportunity, and we think that our results can be generalized and adapted in other cities with like worthy problems as them occurring in Jönköping.

1.5 Division

- 1. Introduction** It consists of an introduction to the subject field and a problem discussion, which leads to the purpose of the master thesis. The purpose follows by the selection of the subject, where the reasons why this thesis is interesting for the authors of this thesis as well as for the responsible for the City core in Jönköping and other cities with equal problems.
- 2. Methodology approach** Here the different methodology approaches will be presented along with the approach chosen by the authors.
- 3. Theoretical framework** Presented in this chapter are the theories and models used to further analyze our identified problems.
- 4. Empirical findings** The empirical findings include the results of 200 interviews performed at A6 shopping Centre and in the city core of Jönköping.
- 5. Analysis** Here we will combine the theory in the theoretical framework with the empirical findings, leading up to the result of the report.
- 6. Conclusion** To conclude the thesis we will put forward the results of the reports, suggest further research topics and finish with an end discussion.

2 Methodology approach

The methodology approach will present the tools needed to perform our thesis.

2.1 Method of inquiry

To perform this thesis we have chosen to use interviews with a direction of quantitative research method. At first we will search for suitable theories, and thereafter we will find out suitable questions for the interviews, which we will use to collect data. The authors will interview Inger Molin, who is the former centre leader at A6 and today is working as the managing director at På Stan⁹ in Jönköping. It is good for the authors of this thesis to know what the one who are responsible for tempt customers to visit the city core and the shopping centre, A6, are thinking about why the customers are choosing A6 instead of the city or vice versa. The authors will perform 200 interviews; one hundred in the Jönköping city core and one hundred at A6, because the authors want to have a large selection of customers who make their opinions heard concerning this topic. We believe that 200 interviews will give a fair picture of how the population's opinions about the city core and how the city can do to gain, maintain and satisfy the customers. The questions asked are connected with shopping behaviors and our aim is to detect certain patterns of why people choose one shopping location over another. To detect the patterns we will have to analyze the answers of the questions combining the quantitative research method with a qualitative one. Through this analyze we will notice which areas the customers believe are the most important ones. These areas will we use to create a map, which we will present and use in the thesis analyzing part. The map will symbolize the main categories which the customers believe are of great importance and they want to see improvements in these areas. Persons who will be interviewed are people living in or next to Jönköping, this because the authors want the answers to be reliable. The authors believe that the interviewed persons have to live close to or in Jönköping to be able to have opinions about the Jönköping city core and A6 and what differs between them.

The method chapter will provide the reader with three steps leading up to a result. The first step in this thesis is a choice of selection, where we have chosen to select people in the surroundings of Jönköping since we think they have a reliable opinion on the researched situation. The first step also includes a pilot study to see if the research method we are using is suitable for this thesis. In the second step we perform the actual interviews. Data will be collected from 200 people at two different locations on different days and on different times of the day, this to increase the reliability and validity of the thesis. The last step in the method is the analyzing part where we use the collected data to detect patterns.

2.2 Selection

According to Ejlertsson (2005) is a population the group of people that is the target for the interviews, surveys or observations. Our population are the people who usually make their purchases in the City core or at the A6 centre. We have chosen to do our survey research through a random sample of the persons visiting the city core of Jönköping and visiting the shopping centre, A6. 100 persons will be interviewed in the city and 100 at the shopping

⁹ På Stan is an organisation working in the interest of, and cooperating, with 200 stores, 25 restaurants and 40 real estates owners in Jönköping City

centre. It is important that the random sample is a mini picture and representative for the whole population (Ejlertsson, 2005). We think that this is managed by interviewing totally two hundred persons. Every third person will be interviewed, and then we get a representative sample. This because we do not have the resources to ask the whole population in Jönköping, it would have cost too much and take too much time (Kylén, 2004). Of course the best result would be found if the whole population would be interviewed. Holme and Solvang (1991) suggests that a selection should be made if the population is large, because the concentration will decrease if there are too many people who should be a part of the research and the information gathered would be hard to handle.

2.3 Decline

Before the information will be analyzed, the decline should be considered. It is common that people do not want to participate in an interview or in a survey, or maybe they do not have the time. It is of great importance that the decline is as small as possible. The interviewers shall try to find out the reasons beyond the decline (Holme and Solvang, 1991).

Ejlertsson (2005) states that if a person that includes in the sample do not want to be interviewed and do not want to be a part of the research, is called decline. Decline can also appear when one or several questions are not answer, during the interview for example. The first mentioned decline is called external decline and the second, internal decline. It is most likely that wrong generalisations will be done about the population, if the decline is large. Therefore it is important to keep the decline as small as possible.

2.4 Pilot study

When a person constructs the questions, which will be used in interviews further on, s(he) thinks that it is obvious how the questions should be interpreted. This might not be as clear to the person who will be interviewed. It is common that the questions are interpreted in one way by the interviewer and in another way of the one who is interviewed. A good way to avoid this kind of problem in the real research, the questions which will be used then should first be tested by the interviewer in a pilot study. The purpose of the pilot study is to find out if the questions are interpreted in the same way by the interviewed persons and the one who interviews. This means that the questions will be tested in a trail investigation, which is called a pilot study. By using this kind of test the interviewer can find out if his/her questions are constructed in a good way or not. If all the participants in the pilot study answers almost in the same way, then the questions probably are constructed in the wrong way. When the pilot study is performed, then the interviewers can do corrections needed and then finally construct the final questions for the interviews (Ejlertsson, 2005).

Lantz (1993) recommends that the persons who are participating in the pilot study should be asked for their opinions about the questions and how the arrangement was. These individuals might come up with many helpful solutions for the constructions of the final questions for the real interviews. If the participants are informed of the study's purpose they can examine the interview in a critical way and in that way help the interviewers to find if their purpose are fulfilled and if the questions are interpreted in the same way as they are meant to be.

2.4.1 How the pilot study will be used in this thesis

We will perform a pilot study, because we want to see that our questions are interpreted in the same way that we want to. We will interview five persons at the city core of Jönköping and five persons at A6 centre. After the interviews we will ask for their opinions of the questions and the arrangement of the interview. This will be done, because we want the final interview-questions to be as clear as possible. We will not inform the participants about the purpose of the study, before the questions are asked, because then they might answer in the way they believe we want them too.

Inger Molin, managing director at På Stan in Jönköping, will be interviewed, this because we want to know how she works with gaining, maintaining and satisfying the customers visiting the City. She has been working as the centre leader at A6 as well, therefore we believe that she can give us a good picture of how the shopping centre as well as the organization 'På Stan' are working to gain, maintain and satisfy their customers. The questions, which will be asked, are included in the Appendix 1 and 2. We think that this interview will give us a good ground to stand on when choosing suitable questions for the interviews with the customers in the city core of Jönköping and at A6 centre.

2.4.2 Inger Molin

Inger Molin is the managing director at På Stan¹⁰ Jönköping. Her main tasks are; overarching responsibility for the business, responsibility for the staff and responsibility for the budget. Before Molin got the job as managing director at På Stan, she worked as centre leader at A6 during four years, 2001-2005. Molin has also worked as centre leader at the City of Jönköping during the years 1988 to 1999 (Molin, 2005).

The purpose of Molins occupation is to tempt customers to the City of Jönköping by arranging activities in the City core. To do so, På Stan advertises in the local press as well as using the local radio stations to create awareness about the happenings in the City core (Molin, 2005).

The mix of all the different kinds of stores in the City is one advantage which the City of Jönköping has in comparison with A6 centre. There are also many other kinds of activities for the visitors than just common stores. In the City you can find activities concerning spare time, culture and so forth. There is more space for big events in the City, which is a good way of tempt people to come to the City. The stores take advantages of the different events as well by combining the events with visits to the stores as well. One important thing is that the City core gives a feeling of being in your own living room. På Stan is trying to create cosines for the visitors in the City and also puts pressure on the importance of fresh air and the nice environment in the City (Molin, 2005).

A6 is seen as a competitor to the City of Jönköping with its longer opening hours adapted by all the stores located at the Centre. The centre has a greater purchasing power than the City core and the free parking spaces are one aspect that creates a great advantage for A6. The City of Jönköping has one advantage; it can offer the customers more stores than the centre. Molin believe it is positive that the City and A6 centre is close to each other, and then the customers have the ability to visit both the centre and the City during the same day. About 80 percent of the customers in the City come from the municipality of

¹⁰ På Stan is a interest group working with concerns about the local business

Jönköping. At A6 30 percent of the customers are visitors from municipalities close to Jönköping (Molin, 2005).

According to Molin (2005) there is a certain purchase pattern by the customers who makes their purchase at A6 centre. They have most often already decided what to buy before they come to the centre, for example: shoes to the daughter, a jacket to the father and jeans to the son. Sometimes the customers do not buy exactly what they decided at home, but the money they had decide to spend will be spent during the visit to A6 centre. It is common that people drives up to ten Swedish miles to get to the centre and often combine the visit with a visit to IKEA, since the two are next to each other. Many customers also combine their trip to the grocery store with a visit at A6 (Molin, 2005).

2.5 Survey research

Bell (1993) proposes that the purpose with a survey-research is that the researcher will be able to gather a lot of information. This information can be analyzed and used to make comparisons. When using a survey-research the researchers make a research using a questionnaire or do interviews on a big delimitation group of people. This kind of research will make it possible for the researchers to gather a huge amount of information about a limited number of variables. This method can also be used to collect information about several variables. What, when, where and how are questions commonly used in a survey-research (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

When using a survey-research, the researcher asks the same questions to all the respondents. There are two methods that can be used to gather the information. The researcher can interview the respondent's personally using the questionnaire. The second method is to send the questionnaire by mail to the respondents (Bell, 1993).

Generalization is often discussed when survey-research is used. The one making the research has to consider if the result of the research only will count for the individuals participated in the research. When not all individuals will be in the research, then the researcher has to think of how he will make the decision of who will and who will not taking into account in the research (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

The one making the research has to do a random sample if the whole population cannot be used in the research. A random sample is the group called that the researcher believes is a miniature of the population (Patel & Davidson, 2003). When using a random sampling, all individuals in the population have the same chance to be chosen to participate in the research (Bell, 1993, Porter, 2002).

The researcher has to consider if the result of the research only will count for the individuals participated in the research or if it is applicable in other situations. Since not every individual can or will be in the research, the researcher has to think of how he will make the decision of who will and who will not taking into account in the research (Patel & Davidson, 2003).

2.5.1 Interviews

According to Keats (2000) an interview is a situation where one person asks another person questions. Lantz (1993) choose to describe an interview as an interaction between two persons or more. In this situation the interviewer decides what (s)he and the respondent shall be discussing (Swedner, 1986). One of them asks questions that the other is supposed

to answer, leading to different roles, roles that are not equal. A voluntary is the basis for this interaction (Krag Jacobsen, 1993; Keats, 2000). An analysis will be done on the communication the interviewer and the respondent have had (Lantz, 1993). The interviewer has in beforehand decided in which direction the interview shall go. There are three demands which the interview should fulfill claims. At first the answers from the interviews should be reliable and the results the author gets have to be trustworthy. The second demand is that the results must be valid. The third demand is that other researcher shall be able check the results who the author come up with (Lantz, 1998). The interviewer's purpose is to get as much information as possible from the respondent (Swedner, 1986).

It is of great importance that the respondents feel comfortable during the interview. The interviewer must create a pleasant atmosphere where the respondent feels comfortable with the situation (Keats, 2000), this because the interviewer shall be able to get as much information as possible. If the respondent does not feel comfortable then (s)he maybe not will give totally honest answers. It is up to the interviewer to ask relevant questions so (s)he can fulfill the purpose with the interview (Lantz, 1993).

When the interviewer has a personal interview (s)he has the opportunity to ask the respondent follow up questions where answers are not fully understood by the interviewer. The respondent has the choice to ask the interviewer what is meant by a question if that is not clear. These are two reasons why personal interviews is a good chose of method when collecting data (Keats, 2000).

Interviews are the easiest way of gathering information about a person's feelings for a specific topic the interviewer is interested in or how the person is interpreting it (Lantz 1993). The respondent should give his view of a certain topic and the purpose of an interview is that two persons exchange experiences and knowledge with each other. The interviewer wants to know about the respondent self-knowledge, his attitude to certain problems and what he knows about his own habits (Swedner, 1986).

Asking questions can be a suitable method for systematic data collection in a professional context. The answer the interviewer gets creates the data that will be analyzed to provide some kind of result. Therefore it is important that the respondent's answers are trustworthy, for the interviewer draw the right conclusions. It is also important that the results can be critical examined. Did the person who had the interview asked the right questions? Did the respondent's really state his opinion with his answerers? To think critical is valuable if the interview should be able to use as a method to collecting data (Lantz, 1993).

When using a *partly structured interview* the interviewer ask questions in a specific order and also, if needed, ask follow-up questions. There will be both fixed and open answerers. During this kind of interview, the interviewer says what (s)he thinks is of great importance and the respondent will give his/her comments on this. When using this kind of method the interviewer get an idea of what the respondent believe are meaningful (Lantz, 1993).

How useful the information will be for the interviewer depends on for example the respondent's ability to explain and describe his/her feelings and opinions of the subject and do so in a very specific and short way. This description is of great importance because this will be the base for the interviewers conclusions later on in the process. It is also of great importance that the interviewer observes the respondent during the interview. The interviewer should try to observe and do interpretations from the respondent's behavior during the interview (Swedner, 1986).

It is important that the interviewer try to test the validity of the individual answers. One way is to compare the answers the respondents gives with the own observations. Another way is that the interviewer can ask several questions about the same thing during the interview. When the interviewer does this, this person can see if the answers are equal (Swedner, 1986).

It is up to the respondent if the (s)he wants to answer the questions or not. The respondent should be aware of why (s)he should answer theses questions and the interviewer has to be able to motivate the respondent to answer. To clarify the purpose of the questionnaire would be a good start as well as making the respondent feel that his/her answers are of great importance and will be used in the research (Patel & Davidson, 2003; Bell, 1993). When the researcher is using questionnaires it is important that it clearly says if the respondent will be anonym or not (Bell, 1993).

As mentioned before, empirical findings can be done through interviews, observations or study of original sources. Interviews can be an informal conversation (Lindh, 2005), structured depth interviews, a very short interview with only one question and this may lead to a conversation which gives the author a lot of information (Glaser, 2001). To think about then is that the questions should not be too direct. If the authors want to get data (s)he has not thought of, it is of great importance that the person who is interviewed gets the possibility to give the answer he or she wants. This is not possible if the ones who interviewing already have answers that the persons who is interviewed can choose from.

2.5.2 How the authors will use surveys and interviews

To get a fair picture of why the customers are leaving Jönköping City core we decided to perform 200 interviews in form of questionnaires. Interviews are according to Lantz (1993) the easiest way to gathering information, and we think it is a suitable way to collect information about the customers' opinions about how the city core can gain, maintain and satisfy the customers. We divided the interviews between Jönköping city core and A6 Centre to get a wider view of the choice of the shopping location. Personal interviews with questionnaires were chosen, so called partly structured interview. This means that the questions will be asked in a specific order and follow-up questions will also be asked if we find it necessary. By using this kind of interview we will have a personal communication with the respondent. If the respondents do not understand the questions or want them clarified, this personal communication makes this easier. By doing this we prevent misunderstandings (Lantz, 1993).

To get a greater diversity in our answers we choose three different days for the interviews; Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Due to their opening hours we performed the interviews with three different starting times, at 10 o'clock in the morning, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and also at 5 o'clock in the evening. We decided not to approach every person we met, but instead every third person was asked to participate in our interview, not discriminating age, sex or purpose of shopping.

2.6 Quantitative method

When using the quantitative method the researcher refers to describe, explain, evaluate or measure phenomenon in our reality (Patel & Tebelius, 1987; Berg, 2001; Blaikie, 2003). Statistical analyzing methods should be used if the purpose is to search for knowledge that explains and describes things. What, how and why are the mainly questions used in quantita-

tive research, as well as in qualitative research (Patel & Tebelius, 1987). According to Balnaves and Caputi (2001) there is logic to social science inquiry. Quantitative social scientific inquiry requires evidence that is observable and testable. Researchers must give explanations for their conclusions. Social science research is public. This assists in avoiding bias in research. Two concepts that are central for the quantitative method are validity and reliability (Bryman, 1997). According to Bryman (1997) the researchers contact with the individuals whom the researcher studies is equal to zero or almost not existing. The researchers who use the quantitative research method most often spend several months to gather all the information needed, but the specific contact with the individuals is very short. The chosen population should be able to represent the whole population. The answers the researcher enables should be suitable for a whole population (Bryman, 1997). According to Rist (1977 in Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) the researcher using the quantitative method emphasize reliability.

The interviews the authors of this thesis will perform summarize the customers' thoughts about what the city core can do to gain, maintain and satisfy the customers. These answers can be seen as quantitative facts, since the authors' gathers answers from 200 respondents. The authors will evaluate the answers from the surveys, which can be connected to the quantitative research method. They will prove a distribution of the choices that the interviewed persons make and these answers will be the basis for the analyzing part in the thesis. The answers will be presented in bar charts in the chapter empirical findings.

2.7 Qualitative method

Qualitative methodology refers to people's observable behavior and their own spoken words or the written ones (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). When using the qualitative research method the researcher is not searching for morality or truth. Instead the individual is trying to get a deeper understanding of the perspective that other people have. All perspectives are valuable for a researcher that is using the qualitative research method (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). According to Berg (2001) the qualitative method is used to answer research questions as; how, what, where and when. The qualitative research method is used to describe the definitions, symbols, meanings and characteristics of different things. A researcher who uses this kind of method is most interested in "*how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth*" (Berg, 2001, p. 6-7). When the researchers are using the qualitative method they want to see how people can learn about other people and themselves. They are also trying to make some sense of the others as well as of themselves (Berg, 2001).

"Symbolic interaction is an umbrella concept under which a variety of related theoretical orientations may be placed. The theme that unites the diverse elements of symbolic interaction is the focus on subjective understandings and the perceptions of and about people, symbols and objects" (Berg, 2001, p. 7).

2.8 Validity

Validity means that the researcher is trying to guarantee that he really measures the things he wants to measure with the right method (Swedner, 1986; Patel & Tebelius, 1987; Bryman, 1997; Keats, 2000). Has this person managed to collect all the information and data needed to be able to fulfil the purpose with for example the thesis? It is also of great importance that the researcher looks through his/her data so all the data really are of relevance and the data which not is needed for the thesis should not be included (Kylén, 2004,

Ejlertsson, 2005). The researcher shall try to reach as high validity as possible. It is not just problems when it comes to the measuring instrument itself, also the validity of the information gathered can be hard to define. Interviews are an example of that. It is difficult to see if the information is trustworthy (Patel & Tebelius, 1987). The most important demand on the measuring instrument is the validity. It does not matter if you do a good research if the instrument used does not measure the things you want to measure. There are two kinds of validity; inner and outer validity (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1999). Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1999) states that the inner validity is “*the conformity between the conception and the measurable definitions of them*” (p. 38). It is possible to do research about the inner validity without gathering empirical facts.

When the quality of the interview should be considered in terms of validity, the interviewer should think of two specific things according to Kylén (2004); the interviewer should only ask question that concerns the topic the interviewer want to gather information about, the interviewer should explain why s(he) want to make this interview and the questions asked should be easy to understand.

2.9 Reliability

According to Patel and Tebelius (1987), Bell (1993) and Kylén (2004) state reliability the trustworthiness, how true the facts are. To be reliable the data need to be stable, they should not change as long as not the external circumstances changes. It is of great importance that the questions asked in a survey or in a personal interview is constructed in the correct way; otherwise the variation of the random will be large in the answers. The reliability can be checked by repeating the data collection once more and then it should end up with the same result as the first time (Ejlertsson, 2005). If the method should have a high reliability, it should not matter who performs the research. You should come up with the same answer independent of which you are (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1999). Soft data such as; experiences, opinions and feelings can vary but they could be reliable if they strive in the same direction. The reliability will be higher if the amounts of answers are high. To decrease the decline the interviewers should motivate the one s (he) wants to interview why they should agree to an interview. To use a pilot study is a good way of avoiding misunderstandings concerning how the persons who will be interviewed will understand the questions.

When the interviewer will think of the quality of the interview in terms of reliability, s(he) should think of that; the questions asked should be easy to answer, the answers should be clear so they only can be interpreted in one way, the answers should be the same if the interviewer repeat the same question and the person who is interviewed, his/her answers should be striving in the same direction if all the questions are concerning one specific topic (Kylén, 2004).

Holme and Solvang (1991) states that the reliability is depending on how careful the interviewers have been when it comes to the processing of the information gathered and also how well performed the measures have been done. If the one making the interviews uses structured methods, the reliability will be high.

2.9.1 The authors use of validity and reliability

We thought of the five questions that Kylén (2004) think everyone should think of, who use reliability in for example his/her research. When we considered how we could make the reliability high in this thesis, we will think of Kyléns recommended questions;

- Have we understood the intentions with the answers, of the ones' we have interviewed?
- Have we put the data together in a correct way?
- How have the methods used in this research had an impact on the data we got from the interviews?
- Should the results be the same independent on who had gathered the data?
- Should the results be the same if the data were gathered at different times?

An interviewer got to assume that the person's s(he) interviews are honest when they answer the questions. Even though the interviewer have been very well prepared for the interviews s(he) have had, by doing research about the topic chosen and tested the questions through a pilot study before, s(he) can never be totally shore that the person who is interviewed tells the truth. This of course has an affect on the result, which the interviewers will come up with, through the answers from the interviews. Some people can also be lying, even though it is not the purpose. The interviewed person might only believe that s(he) have greater knowledge in a subject than s(he) actually has. This will also affect the final result. As an interviewer you can ask the person who is interviewed to explain his/her answers more in detail to avoid misunderstandings. This will also be a good way of recognizing if the interviewed person is lying or if s(he) is telling the truth. An interviewed person who can explain his/her answers in detail are more likely to tell the truth than one that can not explain why s(he) is thinking like s(he) says (Krag Jacobsen, 1993).

We have thought of these above stated difficulties concerning interviews, when we performed the interviews. Of course we had to believe that the persons we interviewed answered the questions honestly, but we have different possible problems which could have an influence on our result, so we tried to avoid those by thinking and acting of the below mentioned things.

The interviewers were well prepared before the interviews; we had made research about both the city core and the shopping centre before starting with the interviews. We have had a pilot study, because we wanted to see that the interviewed persons understood our questions correctly. This pilot study consisted of ten people, five persons were interviewed in Jönköping city core and five at the A6 centre. We made this division because the interviews we should do later on would be totally 200 and they would be divided as 100 at the Jönköping city core and 100 at the A6 centre.

This amount of interviews was chosen because we believed that the result from the interviews would be trustworthier, than if we had just interviewed ten people all together. When such a huge amount of people is interviewed there are a lot of different people with different kinds of opinions involved and this made the trustworthy high.

To make shore that we made the result as trustworthy as possible we started by asking the every third person for an interview. This because we had in mind that we wanted to avoid asking people with the same opinions and buying behaviour. One way of doing that was to

not ask every single person. When we asked the person for an interview, we also asked if s(he) was living in Jönköping or in its surrounding, if s(he) is familiar with these two places and use to make his/her purchases at one/both of these places. People who do not come from the town or its surroundings were we not thinking of as suitable person to interview, because they do not know or have the experiences of the city core of Jönköping or the A6 centre as we thought was needed to be able to answer our questions.

We made the interviews during three days; Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This was made because we wanted a greater diversity. Different persons makes their purchases during different days, but also during different times, which made us to perform the interviews during three different starting times; at 10 o'clock in the morning, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and at 5 o'clock in the evening. We thought that by perform the interviews during different days and times we could avoid interview the some kind of people. For example; at Monday morning there are a lot of pensioners making their purchases, in the afternoon mothers/fathers are in town or at the A6 centre and in the evening the ones who have been working all day are coming to make their purchases. These three specific days were chosen because there are five days in a working week, and by choosing the first day, the day in the middle and the last one, we should cover a wide range of people with different opinions and experiences of Jönköping city core and the shopping centre A6.

We are also aware that not all people have the opportunity to go to for example A6 centre. Students mostly cannot afford a car during their time studying at the university. They might prefer the city core because it is closer to the University or if the live closer to A6 and can use the bike to get there or if it is walking distance, they will walk to the shopping centre. This can of course have affects on the result we got from the interviews, but we are aware of it. To avoid this we tried to interview people in different ages.

We noticed that the topic of this master thesis was something that people were really interested in. Almost every single person we asked for an interview, said yes and had a lot of comments to share with us. According to Andersson (1985) it is very important to be aware of the decline and that it has an impact on the final result. Because it was almost no one who said no to an interview, the decline was very small, which we believe helped to make the trustworthiness of this thesis high. Of course we are aware that decline does affect the result, because these people who choose to not answer might have other opinions and experiences than those who were interviewed. Because of the small decline of our interviews, we believe that it did not have a large impact on the final result.

When the person interviewed answered a question, we let him/her explain in detail how s(he) really mean, just to see how this person was thinking and relate this to the answer we got from this person. By doing this we could, as Krag Jacobsen (1993) suggested, easier notice if this person was telling us the truth or if the answer was telling us a lie. As stated before, you can never be shore that the person you interviews are telling you the truth, but there are some ways the interviewer can use to make it harder for the interviewed person to tell lies. We followed these different ways and believe that this master thesis result is trustworthy.

2.10 Criticism against interview as a method

According to Lantz (1993) the respondent's answers are going to be analyzed and interpretations will be made. It should be very difficult for the interviewer to get the information about the individual's feelings and opinions about certain topics and events if the individu-

als did not participate in interviews. The interviewer will not be able to see if the respondent tells the truth or not. (S)he will neither be able to hear if the respondent tells him/her everything or deliberately chooses not to say anything. It is up to the respondent to decide what to tell or not. Therefore the question; Can the interviewer trust what the respondents says? appears. This is one question the interviewer can be thinking of when considering the validity. There is often a difference between what a person says and what (s)he actually does. This has the interviewer have to have in mind.

It is of great importance that the researcher does not tell the respondent too many details of his/hers research. When the respondent understands that (s)he will be studied really closely by the interviewer the respondent can feel uncomfortable and maybe even see this as a threat. This can make the respondent answer differently at the questions and not telling the whole truth. The results will differ from a situation where the respondent would have felt totally secure and comfortable with the situation. (Swedner, 1978; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). A common problem is that the respondent says the answer (s)he thinks that the interviewer wants to hear. Another problem is that the interviewer takes notes about things (s)he thinks are interesting and not everything the respondent says (Swedner, 1978).

2.11 Criticism of quantitative and qualitative research method

The quantitative research method belongs to the behavioral science. The researcher has to create his measuring instrument by himself, to be able to gather the information about the phenomenon (s)he want to study, this because the social sciences have little use for, or little access to, natural scientific measurement instrument. The main problem for the researcher is how the researcher shall know what he measures and the security of measurement (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

The researcher himself is in center when it comes to qualitative research method. It is the researcher who is in focus when he/she gathering the information and do the analysis. The ideas and thoughts that the researcher has are the basis rather than the data itself. The researcher has to ask a lot of critical questions, such as: Is the theoretical part enough? Do you need a greater theoretical part, because of that the general knowledge about this topic is too small? Does the information in the document really concern the phenomenon chosen? Are there any factors that have made impacts on the interpretations? And are there any alternative of interpretation?, because there are no external criteria's to do their judgment on (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

3 Theoretical framework

The purpose of our frame of reference is to create a picture that enlightens what solution can be made and how to our further identified problem.

3.1 Location

Selecting a location for your store is one of the most important decision to make in the process of starting a business, with the location you make yourself available for your customers. In addition to this one also has to have the knowledge about competitors, who they are and what they do, be aware of who your customers are and how to adapt a product on a market. When locating a business one can choose to be a part of a shopping center or a shopping district, for example a city core. Salvaneschi (1996, p. 25) gives four ways to gather information in order to make a location decision; these are:

- *The city's relationship to surrounding cities;*
- *The road system and road configurations within the city;*
- *The traffic patterns of the people who live, work, play, and travel in the city: and*
- *What causes people to move in certain directions*

Information about these four points will give a company deeper knowledge about the patterns in the demographic, the infrastructure and also deeper knowledge about their customers (Salvaneschi, 1996).

The difference between shopping centers and city cores is the location. Shopping centers are often situated outside the city with easy accessibility while shopping district located often is embedded in the city core. The City core consists of a number of individual shops located on individual sites while shopping centers provide a number of stores under the same roof (Dawson, 1983). Both A6 Centre and Jönköping City core fits in to this description. A6 Center is located by the E4, which is a European highway from the north of Sweden to the south, making A6 accessible not only for local citizens but also for people passing through Jönköping (www.a6center.se)¹¹. The city core of Jönköping is located between the lakes Vättern and Munksjön creating a rectangular shopping area parted in an east and a west side. The east side provides the customers with a wide range of stores, restaurants and cafés on a pedestrian street. On the west side one can find the railway station, the bus station, stores, several travel agencies and discotheques (www.pastan.com)¹². This do not leave out that there are Shopping Centers in the city core. The Shopping Centers located in the city core are often small in size and only hold a few stores (Dawson, 1983).

3.1.1 Local or outside shopping

It is important for the storeowners and marketers to know why people want to go outside their local area and go elsewhere to make their purchases. Some factors are price, larger offer of products and services and also a wider variety of both products and brands. Another

¹¹ <http://www.a6center.se> downloaded 2005-05-25

¹² <http://www.pastan.com/> downloaded 2004-11-16

differentiation between these groups is concerning fashion. People who only make their purchases in the local area seems to be less interested in fashion, than those who make at least some of their purchases outside their local area (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

3.2 Servicescapes

The physical environment communicates the firm's image; the environment influences the customers very strongly. If the environment is not preferred by the customer it may influence their satisfaction of the company's services and products as well. Some companies have a very simple servicescape with an environment that lacks spaces and forms. These kinds of environments are called: lean environments. Elaborate environments; on the other hand, includes several forms and elements (Bitner, 1992; Schroeder, 1997).

The first thing the customers will meet is the display window, used properly this is a good tool to affect the customers. By decorating an interesting and tempting display window the customers will visit the store. To be able to be successful in this matter it is important that the shop window is organized and artistic and the merchandise visible in the shop window should be change on a regular basis and using different themes is a way to tempt the customers (Schroeder, 1997).

Schroeder (1997) suggest that the storeowners should not explicitly think about the furniture, but also the aromatic environment. Depending on which aroma the store use, it creates a certain atmosphere for the customers. An owner of a company selling bread machines, can use the sense of fresh bread to lure the customers to buy the products. The aroma of new baked bread can create a more relaxed environment and also create a positive attitude the customers can relate to. Candles can also create an inviting atmosphere for the customers, but the kind of aroma the store should use depends on the kind of products and services they sell. Schroeder states that "*A pleasant, light aroma is known to have a pleasing effect on most people*" (Schroeder, 1997, p. 71).

3.3 Shopping Centers

Shopping Centers are buildings where several shops are gathered under the same roof providing the customer with a range of shops in different categories often situated outside the city core as a freestanding building. Sweden was one of the first countries in Europe to build Shopping Centers; Shopping Centers became more usual in the suburbs when Stockholm were decentralizing. There are three types of Shopping Centers; *neighborhood centre, community centre, and regional centre* (Dawson, 1983).

Neighborhood centers provide its customers with a range of convenience goods and personal service. Neighborhood centers are characterized by the personal services; services such as schools, post offices or a local gambling store. The centers provide few parking spaces and are located so that a population within a certain area can have access to it (Dawson, 1983).

A community centre is somewhat larger than a neighborhood centers and provides a wider range of merchandize. The stores in a community centre have different sizes; there can be large chain stores and small-specialized stores. Community centers are often situated nearby freeways and they can be an upgraded version of a neighborhood centre, where the neighborhood centre has expanded its businesses. In Europe there are very few community centers, they are more common in the USA (Dawson, 1983).

Regional centers are a further development of community centers; they are larger and provide even a wider range of merchandise than the community centre. A regional centre provides stores such as general merchandise, shopping goods, furniture and home furnishing stores. These shopping centers are located at the freeway intersections and are easily accessible for the customers (Dawson, 1983).

3.4 A competitive environment

Customers' value time. Their time is expensive and they are not willing to waste time visiting stores that may not fulfill their needs, wants and demands. They will make their purchase in stores they know meet their expectations and do so effectively. Time is also money (Holbrook, 1999).

"An organization's ability to remain in business is a function of its competitiveness and its ability to win customers from the competition" (Cook, 1994, p. 15).

Cook (1994) says that it is not possible for companies to only compete with price since competition between companies today is more intense. To be able to stay strong in the competition, *"companies have developed a strategy of providing superior customer care to differentiate their products and services"* (Cook, 1994, p. 15) and also use the different characteristics to compete on a long-term basis (Larsson, 1994).

According to Dutka (1995) customers are more demanding nowadays. Their expectations have risen, when they have begun to experience better service. To be able to attract new as well as keep existing customers, companies have to offer both good products and services. This can be performed by providing the customers with longer opening hours, better after service on the products, longer durability, have a wider and deeper range of products or giving the customers easy access to the store in order to locations and parking spaces (Larsson, 1994). The company's reputation is also of great importance when it comes to attract customers and a good reputation is hard to accomplish and easy to lose (Cook, 1994; Larsson, 1994). To be successful in their businesses companies need to think and look at their business using a customer's viewpoint (Dutka, 1995).

A company can use internal or external means used to draw attention to the store. Internal means are special offers, demonstrations of products, and window displays, which gives the customers a real product to relate to in their purchasing. External means include advertisements, coupons, and leaflets put out for display to draw attention to the store (Larsson, 1994). Advertisers create a certain feeling for people when it comes to products, services and brands. A specific brand may act as a status symbol in the society, allowing a person to express a personality or a belonging to a group. Buying such a product results in self-completion. Some customers choose to buy special goods and services because they believe that these products give them a certain image. This can be very important for some people, by believing that others will see at them in a certain way when using products or services with this specific brand gives a person the sense of well-being. What a specific customer values the most are the things that fulfill this specific person, and different people value different things (Holbrook, 1999).

According to Gunter and Furnham (1992, p. 27) *"Values are generalised beliefs or expectations about behaviour. Values are important lifestyle determinants and are broader in scope than attitudes or the types of variable contained in AIO (Activities, Interests and Opinions) measures"*. Persons are not born with specific values; these are rather created during the individual's whole lifetime, mostly influenced by parents and other family members (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

If the storeowner possesses the ability to educate employees to offer the customers' good service, positive attitudes, great knowledge about the company's products and services, and also give the employees the authority to please customers through decisions, a competitive advantage towards other in the same business will be held. If a company offers both smiling professional employees, with a positive attitude and quality products customers will most likely return (Schroeder, 1997). To be sure that the store fulfils the customers opinion about a good service and quality products, it is important to communicate with them (Johnson & Scholes, 2002) and ask them what they expect from the company and then offer them even more to make the customers satisfied (Schroeder, 1997). Sometimes the company and the customers define good service differently and therefore regular communication between the two parties is of great importance (Dutka, 1995). Good service will end up with more return businesses (Schroeder, 1997). By communicating with the customers the company gets useful knowledge about why the customers buy this company's products and services, which kind of products and services they prefer, how they make their purchase etc. This kind of knowledge is necessary for the company to be able to survive in the competitive market (Foxall, 1986).

3.5 The six P's

To be able to develop a better business, the company needs to know what their customers think about them and why or why not they buy the company's services and products. It is important that the company knows its identity, to be able to promote it correctly. The company should focus on selling the whole store and not just trying to sell the products or services. The marketing-mix variables; product, people, price, place, presentations, promotion, are used to implement a store's identity (Mason, Mayer & Wilkinson, 1993). "*The entire store's heart, soul, and mind must be focused on the target market*" (Mason, et al., 1993, p. 105).

Product; If the company choose to advertise their product as a high qualitative product, it is important that this is correct otherwise the customers will not continue to buy it. The company may have several competitors which are selling the same products and services, and then it is important to be active when it comes to convince the customers that this company is the best option (Mason, et al., 1993).

People; The employees need to be good at serve the customers with a positive attitude and have great knowledge about the products and services they sell. A good customer service can be determining for a customer which store (s)he chooses to make his/her purchase (Mason, et al., 1993; Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 2002).

Price; is one factor which can be used as a competitive advantage and tempt customers which value cheap products and services (Mason, et al., 1993; Kotler et al., 2002)

Place; It is important that the store is located at a place where the customers have an easy access to it. The store has a better chance to sell their products and services if it is located on a place where many people pass by during the day (Mason, et al., 1993; Kotler et al., 2002).

Presentations; The atmosphere in a store is very important. If the customer does not like the atmosphere, this person may not buy your products and services (Mason, et al., 1993).

Promotion; It is of great importance to be seen by the old and new potential customers through for example advertising. If your brand is not seen, the customers do not know that you exists (Mason, et al., 2002).

3.6 The targeting group

Gunter and Furnham (1992) state that it is impossible for a seller to satisfy all people in the world. The customers are too many and they have all different kinds of needs, wants and demands. Therefore it is necessary to select which group of customers the stores products or services should be aimed to.

It is of great importance for the company to have a clear picture of their typical customer (Dutka, 1995; Schroeder 1997) and their values (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). If the store employees have great knowledge about their targeting group it is easier for them to succeed with their sells (Dutka, 1995; Schroeder, 1997). This kind of knowledge can be learned by observing the customers when they are visiting the store. Then the employees can identify the individuals' sex, age, how they are walking around in the store, which products and services they buy etc (Mason, et al., 1993). They also need to have in mind that there will be other kinds of customers as well who visits the store and then they have to be able to act in another way to get them by the company's products and services. If the employees have the talent to see what a customer want, this will be a strong competitive advantage (Dutka, 1995; Schroeder, 1997).

3.7 Consumer profile

According to Gunter and Furnham (1992) there are four kinds of shoppers; "*Economic shopper, Personalising shopper, Apathetic shopper and Ethical consumer*" (p. 104). The consumer classified as an *economic shopper* is careful when (s)he will buy a product or service. The quality and price are important factors in the decision of buying or not. The *economic shopper* has no personal relation to the chain stores or to the smaller local stores. This customer want product that is socially visible, for example hair spray and medicated face make-up base (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

Customers who belong to the group of *personalising shopper* like to make their purchase in the small local stores. This customer creates quasi-relations with the ones who work in the stores they use to visit, making them feel at home when shopping. The consumers who do not have any special bounds to any store or brand are called *Apathetic shopper*. They do not like to shop at all. To build up any kind of relations with the workers in the stores is not found necessary at all. The *Ethical shopper* is the consumer who has high social status and is loyal to their local shops. They have most often lived in the same community for many many years. The strong relationships they have built up with the local shop workers means a lot to them and they see the larger chain stores as threats to their local shops (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

3.7.1 Buying behavior

Human needs can be divided in three groups; physical-, social- and individual needs. Physical needs are clothing, safety and food. Belonging is an example of social needs and a need for self-expression belongs to the individual needs (Kotler, et al., 2002). An individual, who has unsatisfied needs, will aim at reducing this need by trying to find an object that provides them with satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2002). The needs that are shaped by the culture are called wants. It is the society that has shaped this wants and it is these wants in form of objects that fulfill the people's needs. A want becomes a demand though people have unlimited wants, but their resources are limited, but this people want these products and services to create maximum satisfaction for their money (Kotler, et al., 2004).

Pooler (2002) has identified five levels of shopping needs. First people shop for survival, essentials as food and clothing. Second people look into security needs, shopping items such as products to prevent health problems and give a feeling of security. At the third level we shop to feel belonging in social matters, we dress in certain ways and we use certain products to show our interests. To feel secure with one self and get self-esteem people shop, at the fourth level, to bring out, this. The shopping of today is located at the fifth level in the model below. *“This is shopping for the self, shopping to define the self and shopping for self-fulfillment, personal growth and personal happiness”* (Pooler, 2002, p. 8).

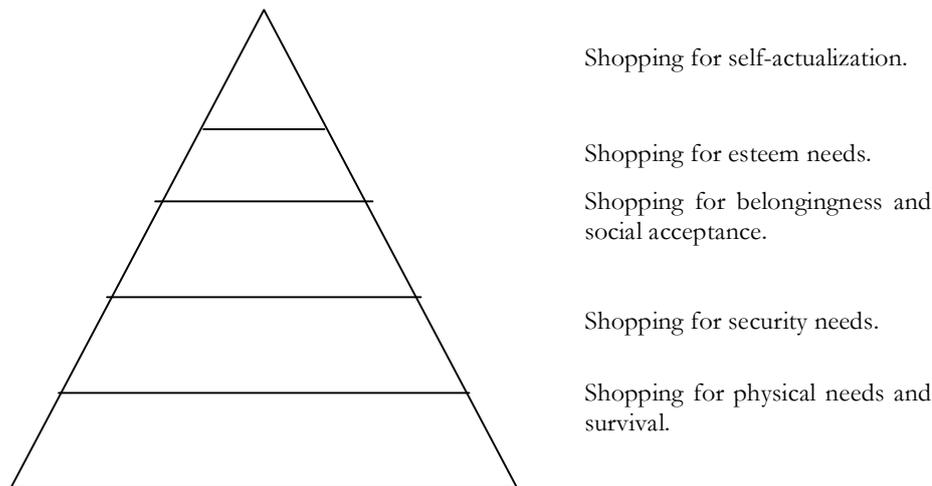


Figure 1 A Shopping Hierarchy of Needs (Pooler, 2002, p6.)

Individuals purchase behavior is affected by age, but also in which life stage they are. Depending on which age a person has (s)he will demand different kind of products and services. The needs will also differ from age to age and purchase behavior also differs between females and males. Still it is important that the stores and the marketers have to keep a strict watch over women’s and men’s purchase behavior, because the line between what is typical feminine and masculine products and services are not that sharp anymore (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

Life stage is another factor which has an impact on which products and services a person buys. Young people have a tendency to buy fashion products, while older people are more careful what they spend their money on. A reason for this may be that young people often do not have debts, which older people may have (Gunter & Furnham, 1992).

Lifestyle has also impact on which products and services a customer will buy (Gunter & Furnham, 1992). *“Lifestyle is a systems concept. It refers to the distinctive or characteristic mode of living, in its aggregative or broadest sense, of a whole society or segment thereof. It is concerned with those unique ingredients or qualities which describe the style of life of some culture or group, and distinguish it from others. It embodies the patterns that develop and emerge from the dynamics of living in a society”* (Gunter & Furnham, 1992, p. 34).

3.8 Caring for the existing customer

“...the purpose of every business is to create and keep a customer” (Drucker & Levitt in Cook, 1994, p. 17).

To attract a new customer is more costly for a company, than to take actions to keep old customers. It is of great importance that the companies are trying to multiple its business relationships with the companies existing customers and repeat it. If they are able to do so, the opportunity to maximize resources and sales appears (Cook, 1994).

One very important factor is to listen to the customers. Customers can give the company a lot of feedback when it comes to the quality of the products, the service etc. Today some companies do not appreciate the importance of listen to customers. Companies that actually are listening to their customers find that the feedback can be used to improve their business and fulfill their customers' wants and needs (Cook, 1994).

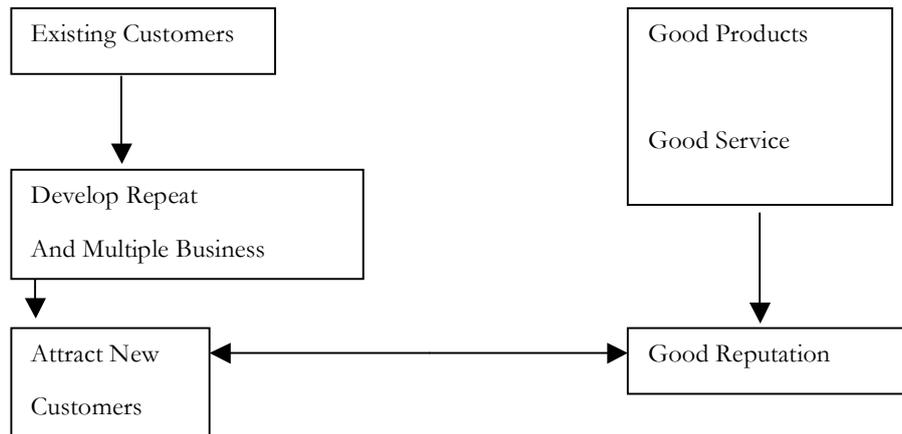


Figure 2 The Power of Existing Customers (Cook, 1994, p. 18)

According to Solomon (2002) companies can believe that all the customers who return to them regularly, are totally loyal to the company, but that are not always the case. Some customers keep going to the same companies because it is comfortable and they have not had the time to look for other companies who would be able to fulfill their needs and wants. When these persons recognizes other firms who are willing to satisfy their needs and wants to a lower price than the present firm, they will not be loyal customers any longer and begin to make their purchases at the other firm instead. Szmigin (2003) state that it is of great importance that companies continue to make their products and/or services attractive for the “loyal” customers, otherwise they might choose to do their purchases somewhere else. The competition at the market today is very hard and it is necessary to make the customers to feel that they are special and that the company really cares about them.

When the firms recognize people as their loyal customers, because they return to the company over and over again, they often promise the customers reduced prices and other benefits if they join their club. This can be a good thing to get the customers to keep doing their purchases in this store, but it is also of great importance that the company is able to keep all the promises they give the customers, such as good service, low prices and high quality products and services. If these promises are not fulfilled the customers will loose the faith in the company and choose to make their purchases in another store. Just because the company has managed to get the customer to be loyal, it cannot relax and think that this will last forever. The customers have to feel that they are well treated and that the company can keep all the promises it send out through its marketing (Szmigin, 2003).

Many companies see the relation marketing as the key for success and this concept is really popular today. Relation marketing means that the company tries to create a long lasting relation with the customers. This might sound easy, but it is not. Not all customers are will-

ing to create a relation to all companies, every person has its favorite companies. Two examples of things that companies do to create long lasting relations to its customers are that they provide the customers the chance to have a direct dialogue with a person at the company if they have something to ask or discuss about the company's products or services. This direct dialogue is something that many customers appreciate. The second is that the companies create personalized marketing. Instead of just mass marketing, the company also sends advertising directly to the customer and includes a letter with the customer's name that is done to make the customer feel special (Söderlund, 2003).

These above mentioned factors could be helpful when the companies want to create long lasting relations with the customers, but it is not always successful. The most important to the customers according to Söderlund (2003) are that they feel that they are able to have an interaction with the company, their loyalty to the company are rewarded and that they can have an impact on the company's activities.

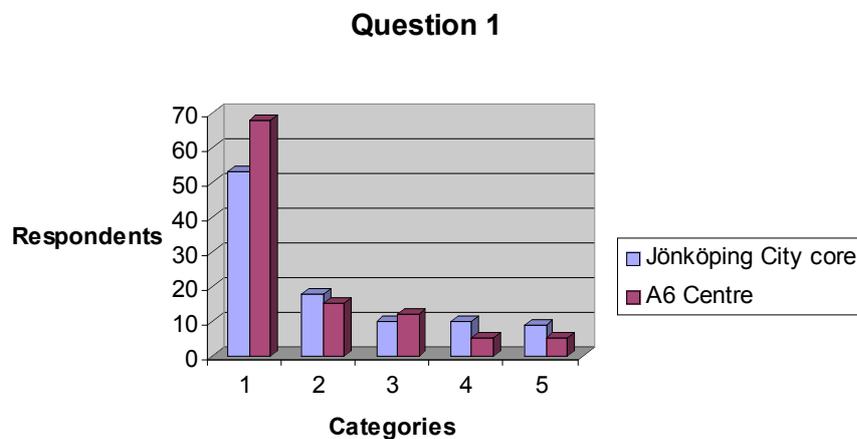
4 Empirical findings

In this chapter we will present the results of the 200 interviews performed in Jönköping City core and at A6 Centre. The answers of the hundred respondents in Jönköping city core is placed over the diagram and the answers of the hundred respondents at A6 centre under the diagram.

4.1 Interviews

Question 1; Which errand?

The main reason why people visit the City of Jönköping is to purchase products. 53 % of the people interviewed visited the City core for shopping reasons. Another reason for visiting the City is to just walk around and look what the stores have to offer. These persons are not there because they want to buy anything, the just want to spend a couple of hours in the City and look around. The different bank offices were also a drawing card.



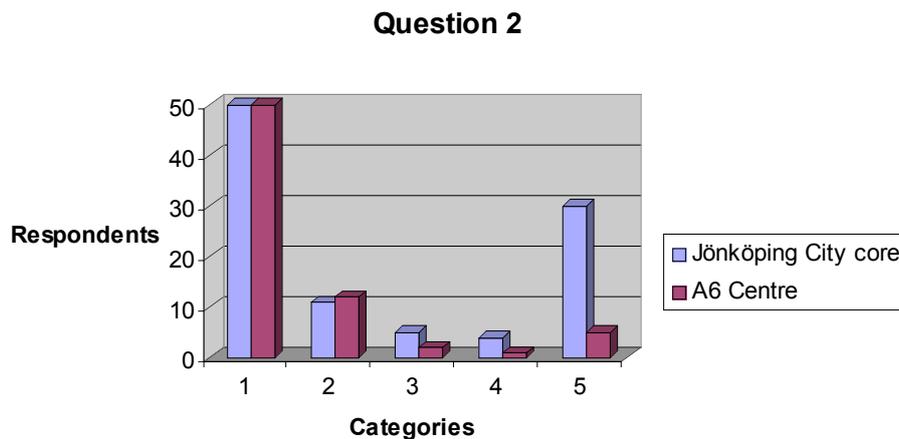
¹³ Table 1; question 1

Out of 100 respondents 68 visited A6 just for shopping. No specific product was in mind, the customer just wanted to spend the day visiting different stores in order to see if they found something worth taking home. Twelve of the respondents have a specific purpose for the visit such as going to the hairdresser, buying a specific product, visiting IKEA or meeting some friends for a cup of coffee. People chose to combine quality time with family and friends with shopping, have a cup of coffee or eating lunch. Mostly a person does not visit A6 for a specific purpose.

¹³ Explanation for the categories; 1; Shopping, 2; Strolling, 3; Specific errand, 4; Lunch, 5; Other

Question 2; Why the City core of Jönköping or the shopping centre A6?

Half of the respondents, 50 per cent, choose the City due to its closeness to home, work and/or school. They found the accessibility to the City core as very good since they, in comparison with visiting A6, would not be forced to use a car. People who work in the City have the possibility to make their purchases during a break or before or after their work hours, this is the reason why the City is their preferable choice in their purchases. The bank offices do also tempt the customers to the City since there are no banks at the shopping centre. A nice environment, which can be experienced in the City of Jönköping, is another important factor.



¹⁴Table 2; Question 2

The reason for visiting A6 did not differ much between the respondents. Most of the respondents visited A6 for its accessibility, having a wide range of stores under the same roof. This in combination with the weather affected their decision. Instead of being outdoors freezing they chose to be inside and at the same time still do their shopping.

Question 3; Different places for purchase?

Sixty-three per cent of the one hundred interviewed choose different places of purchase depending on what (s)he wants to buy. In the City of Jönköping customers buy clothes, goes to restaurants and run banking errands. At A6 people chose to do their purchases when they want to visit a certain store, as IKEA or want to buy food. Weather is another reason that influences the customers. When the weather is nice people want to enjoy being outdoors and are more willing make their purchases in the City. When the weather is bad they prefer to be at the shopping centre, where all the stores are underneath the same roof. Specific store are also the attraction of the City core, stores such as Gina Tricot and Bobbys are only located in the City.

Because of the shorter opening hours in the City, people choose to do their shopping at A6. The reason might be that they are working later than six o'clock pm and then they have

¹⁴ Explanation for the categories; 1; Close, 2; Range of stores, 3; The environment 4; Specific errand 5; Other

Empirical findings

to go to A6 to be able to make their purchases. Some people said that they do the serious shopping at A6, which means that the most often have a shopping list, which means that their impulsive purchases are performed in the City core. Electronic products are one thing that customers buy at A6, since their perception is that there are no stores in the City that sell electronic products.

Thirty-four per cent answered that they do not choose any specific place to do their purchases. Fourteen per cent believe that the City core is the most suitable place to make their purchases, for the closeness to their home, the cozy environment, with the nice cafés and restaurants and the a coincidence, while 3 % think that A6 is the most optimal place to make their purchases. 3% did not wanted to comment this question, because they did not know if they make any different purchases depending on the place they visit.

Question 3

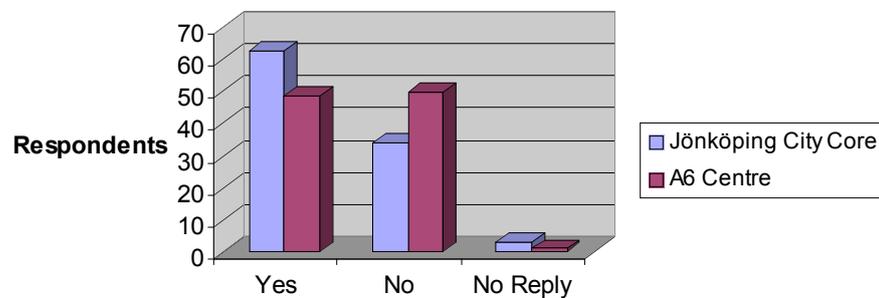


Table 3; Question 3

The decision of where to purchase merchandise differed in the group. Half of the group made their purchases in different places, depending on number different things. Examples of this could be price, accessibility to the location, what kind of product the customer searched for and certain shops are only available in certain places. For the group who said that the decision did not matter the examples could be that they purchased all of their products at A6, that they thought that the stores and the products to not differ in different location so where the product is purchased does not matter. 15 respondents said that if they should purchase a specific product they went to the City and if they had to search for a product they chose A6. They also thought that it is good that A6 and the City has similar products. If a product is sold out at one location they have the opportunity to purchase it at the other.

Question 4; where do the customers make most of their purchases?

Forty-seven per cent of the persons who were interviewed in the City did most of their purchases in the City. When customers thought of which things will make them change their purchases at A6 centre instead, the following were mainly mentioned; If they owned or had access to a car, if there were special stores which you could not find in the City, the supply of products and services were larger, the environment at the centre was less stressed up, better air-condition, the prices are lower, more stores with clothes and technical products and if the products or services they are searching for can not be found in the City they will go to the centre instead.

Thirty per cent rather go to A6 shopping centre. The main reasons for this is; a larger range of stores selling clothes, a larger variation of stores, if there were stores there which they could not find in the City core, free parking lots, more stores, a grocery store, more parking lots, longer opening hours and better and more cozier environment. 23 % combines their purchases, both in the City and at A6.

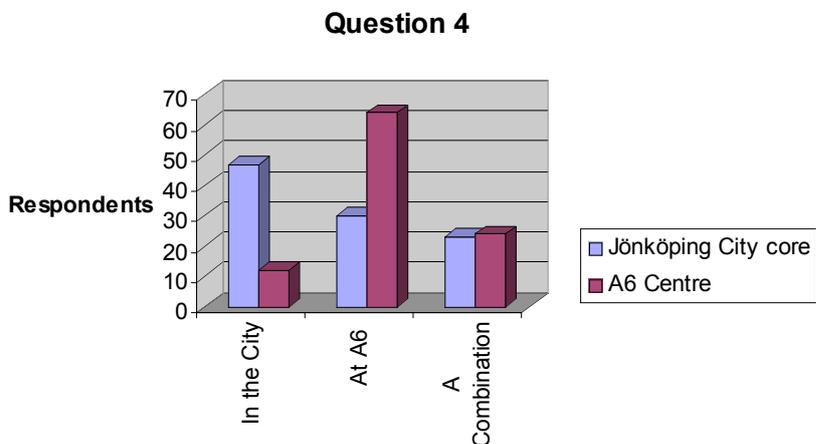


Table 4; Question 4

Of the respondents interviewed at A6 64% made most of their purchases there. Only 12% did most of their shopping in the City and 24% said that approximately half of the purchases were made at A6 and the other half in the City.

Question 5; Can the customers think of changing place of their purchases?

Stores and services the customers are missing at the locations are stores that provide technical products both at A6 and in the City. Gina Tricot is a store that many customer would prefer to be situated at A6, stores with clothes for men is asked for both at A6 and in the City and stores selling fashion clothes for teenagers (but are not influenced by Vila, Vero Moda and Gina Tricot) with a different range of clothes is also proposed for. Travel agencies are missing at A6, as well as banks and post offices. The customers also said that both locations could provide the customers with a store selling sewing materials.

A6 Centre visiting Jönköping City core

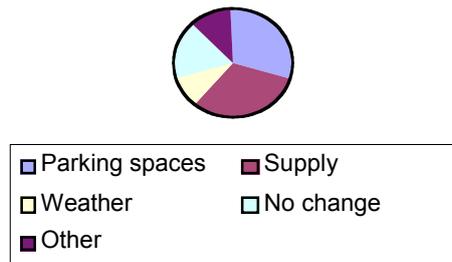


Table 5; question 5

The respondents could consider changing shopping location from A6 to the City for mainly three reasons; parking spaces, more and a wider range of stores and a change in the weather. 30% would prefer more and most of all cheaper parking spaces, 30% said that they would visit the City if they wanted to visit a certain store or if the City had more stores and 10% would prefer better weather to change location. 18 people could not see themselves visit the City and nothing could change their mind. One person wanted the City to move closer to the motorway and one person had already been in the City.

Question 6; How does the supply effect you purchases?

A vague majority, fifty-two per cent, of the interviewed people think that the offers of products and stores are not crucial in the choice of place of purchase, which means A6 or the City. Their preferable choice of the customers is predetermined and it differs if the choice is the City core of Jönköping or A6. These customers are loyal and will not make their purchases at a different place because of its products offers and stores. The

Question 6

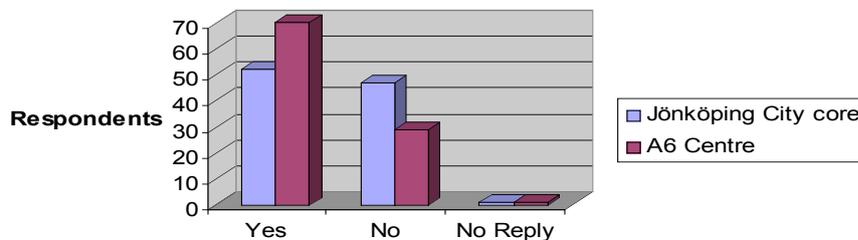


Table 6;question 6

Coincidence is often crucial when it comes to choice of purchasing place. It depends on where the person is in the specific moment when (s)he decides that (s)he has to buy something. The forty-seven per cent, who thinks that the supply of products and stores do matter, also have a strong opinion about which of these two places they like the most. If the stores or products a person is looking for is not available in the City core the customers do not hesitate to visit A6 instead, or vice versa. One per cent of the interviewed persons did not know if they care about the offers or not.

70% takes the supply in to consideration when they decide what and where to purchase their products. They think that the stores differs, that A6 provides mostly chains such as H&M, KappAhl, Lindex while the City in addition to the chains also provides stores that are more niche with a different range of products. One thing the customers think is good is that both location has the same stores; if one product is sold out in for example A6 they can still have a chance to purchase it in the City. 29% thinks that both locations provide the same kind of stores and product, but they chose one or the other location for different reasons. One respondent did not care about the stores and the product as much as this person prefers good service by the employees.

Question 7; Improvements at A6 Centre

The shopping centre needs some improvements according to fifty-eight of the persons who were participating in the interview. Many people experience the shopping centre as a very stressful environment to be in. There are a lot of people, the space is very limited and the air inside the shopping centre is often experienced as too warm or limited. People want to see a larger supply of both stores and products, and they also want more explicit stores, stores that do not existed in the City as well. Stores with fashion clothes, for both men and women are demanded, but also stores selling technical products are wanted. Travel agencies, post- and bank offices are other things which people is asking for at A6 centre, since this would ease their combined purchases. A greater demand for a wider range of restaurants with different food alternative and cafés, is required at A6, but also that the restaurants and cafés already located at A6 keep a clean and inviting environment.

“A6 is good the way it is, it is complete providing everything you need”, this is the opinion of 30% of the respondents. 70% has found two different areas in which A6 can perform better; the environment and the supply. Too many people makes A6 crowded and does not provide the visitors with enough air. The environment could include more space; seating areas and the opportunity get fresh air throughout the centre. A6 could also improve number of stores, more specialty store, a bank service, more ATM's and a wider range of restaurants and coffee shops. 16% would also prefer the opportunity to sit outside for a bite or just a cup of coffee.

Question 8; Improvements in the City

The City of Jönköping needs improvements as well according to seventy-eight percent of the interviewed persons. The main focus is on parking lots, the customers want more parking lots and they want them to be free of charge, as they are at A6 centre. The supply of stores and products are too small and overall the customers want the City core to offer them more stores. Stores selling clothes are demanded, as well as stores selling technical products, white goods and make-up products. Customer thinks that it would be nice if the

City of Jönköping could offer different stores than the ones that A6 centre has. The opening hours in the City is shorter than those at A6, this is negative, claims the customers. People, who finish their work late, after six o'clock in the afternoon, are not able to do their purchases in the City. There is a demand that the stores should change their opening hours, this would benefit both the customers and the merchants in Jönköping. A grocery store is missing in the City core and the customer would hold the City as their preferable purchasing choice if these items were corrected. The restaurants and cafés are satisfying, but the visitors would like to have a wider range.

The City can, according to the respondents at A6 Centre, improve in three different areas; parking spaces, opening hours and stores and products. 60% would like to improve the accessibility to the City by creating more and cheaper parking spaces. Solutions such as, more free parking spaces, more 30 minutes parking spaces for free, lower charge, 3 hours for 10 Skr was suggested by the respondents. This to get rid of feeling stressed when shopping in the City, always thinking on when to get back to the car. The opening hours should also be changed, many respondent suggested longer opening hours, but most of all they wanted the stores to be opened on Sundays as well as the other days of the week. The opening hours creates problem for people working to four and five in the afternoon. The City closes at six pm and the respondents said that it is to stressful to visit the City after work hours. Several people also wanted more alternative in stores, an alternative where they can buy food, launching different stores but also providing small malls in the City so the visitors can shop indoors. 15% did not think that the City could improve anything, where some liked it as it is and some would not visit it whatever changes they made.

Question 9; The choice of purchasing location

People choose the City of Jönköping because of its nice environment with an old-fashion style of architecture, which gives the visitors a certain feeling and a nice atmosphere not experienced as stressful. The customers think it is less people shopping at the same time in the City, which gives a lot of space for everyone. To have the sky as the roof and be able to walk outdoors in the fresh air is a positive feeling. People choose to go to the City, not only for shopping, but also as an opportunity to look at people and go strolling around in the stores. When the weather is nice people prefer to make their purchases in the City instead of the shopping centre. How much time the customers want to spend on the shopping also have an impact on the choice of location for their purchases, if a person have lot of time many choose the City. Several people have their work, home and/or school close to the City and therefor this is the preferable choice in their purchases. The supply of restaurants and coffee shops is greater than the one at A6 and is a factor that entice the customers to the City core of Jönköping. The older generation makes their purchases dreading that the municipality will move all the stores from the City to A6 if the businesses in the city decrease.

Most of the respondents visited A6 due to their slogan "Everything under one roof?". They like the accessibility and the range of products and that they can combine several things with shopping, such as spending time with family and friends, eat and/or have some coffee. If a customer lacks time some prefer to visit the shopping centre since the perception is that A6 has a wider range of products with lower price. People who prefer to look at people while they are shopping like the centre best, people experiences that it is more people shopping at the centre, than in the City. The closeness to IKEA is important as well. A lot of people see IKEA as a place suitable for excursion and when people have made their

Empirical findings

errands to IKEA, they think it is more smoothly to make the rest of their purchases at A6, instead of going to the City. The closeness to home and work are other reasons why people choose the shopping centre instead of the City.

Question 10; The differences between the locations

The opinion of the respondents is that the main thing that differs between A6 and the City is the opening hours. The stores are outside in the City the stores and indoors at A6, the parking lots are better, free and more at A6 compared to the City, the offers of products is thought as larger at A6, the environment are much nicer in the City. A6 can give the customer a feeling of constant stress and not enough space for everyone while in the City people can take it easy, mooch around and look in the display windows or go for a closer look inside the store.

The belief at A6 is that the main thing that differs A6 and the City from each other is the accessibility. A6 is located by the motorway, providing free parking spaces with a wide range of stores under the same roof. A6 also has IKEA which is a strong attraction of the centre. The advantage of the City is that people prefer to visit it when the weather is nice, enjoy being outdoors, some specific stores are only located in the City but most of all the feeling of visiting the City determines the difference. The City is described as more nice and cozy.

5 Analysis

By combining the theoretical framework with the empirical findings the authors have identified three problem areas in accordance with our purpose.

5.1 Connected problem areas

Below is a model of the identified problem areas developed through the information we got from the 200 interviews. The model gives a view of the problem areas, how they are connected and the importance of each of them. The accessibility is the main problem in focus according to the results from the interviews. Accessibility includes three problem areas which are; *location, parking spaces and opening hours*. These three compose the largest problem in the city core of Jönköping, but it is certainly the same in all cities. The second largest problem area is the range of stores. The customers' wishes that a grocery store should be built, then they do not have to go to Maxi or to A6 to make these kinds of purchases. Niche stores are also something that the customers want to have in the city core. The environment is the third important problem area. The shopping centers can provide the customers indoor shopping, while the city's stores are outside, which can make the possible customers to stay home if it is raining or go to the shopping centre instead. Even though the outdoor shopping is seen as a problem for some customers, they also claim that the outdoor shopping in the city is something that they really like, when the weather is good. The three main problem areas; accessibility, range of stores and the environment are all connected to each other. Accessibility is the largest problem area and then comes the range of stores and last the environment.

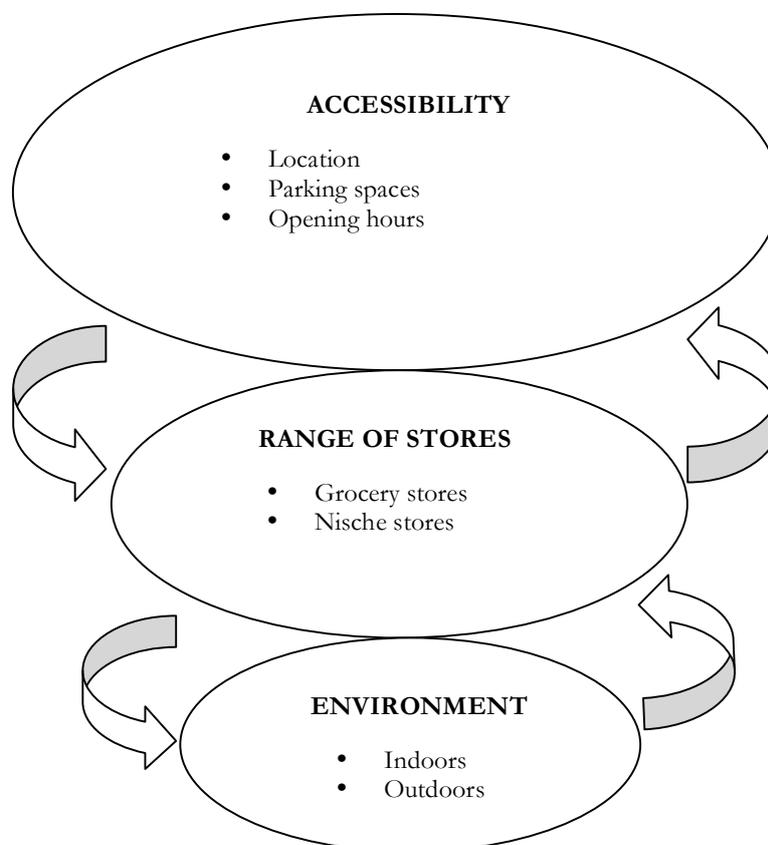


Figure 3 Connected Problem Areas, (Ragnhem & Warjo, 2005)

5.2 Accessibility

To place a store where the customers do not have access to it can be seen as suicide (Mason, et al., 1993). When it comes to location A6 has an advantage over the city core. The interviews showed that A6 had more customers satisfied with the location than the city. The City was described as too long and narrow with distances to the stores while A6 benefited from the easy accessibility due to the location by the motorway. Road configurations are common in customers' decision of purchasing location (Salvaneschi, 1996). Walking or bicycling is common when a customer decides to visit the city core. Several of the respondents said that if they had access to a car they would prefer to do their purchases at A6 instead. When owning a car it is of importance that the driver has access to parking spaces when running errands. The parking lot at A6 provides the customers with free parking spaces that are easy to find, situated walking distance to the shopping centre.

It is a service to providing the customers with long opening hours (Larsson, 1994). Here the two locations differs; A6 are opened from 10 am to 8 pm on week days, 10 am to 5 pm on Saturdays and 11 am to 5 pm on Sundays¹⁵, while most of the stores in the City has opening hours from 10 am to 6 pm on weekdays, 10 am to 3 pm on Saturdays and closed on Sundays. Not all part of the City follows there opening hours¹⁶. The shorter opening hours creates a stressful feeling for the customers in the City for two reasons; first, if a person gets of work at 5 pm they often chose not to do their purchases in the City due to the lack of time, and second, due to the parking fees. For 10 Skr a person gets one hour parking, this is not enough to feel relaxed when shopping.

5.3 Range of stores

Purchases are made for two different reasons; either a customer is sure about what they want or a customer is just looking around and maybe will purchase something by impulse (Foxall, 1986). On both locations the respondent shopped for different reasons, some knew exactly what they wanted and some were just out looking. The ones who knew what they wanted were at the locations to buy a certain piece of clothing, a gift for a friend or relative, visiting the bank, post office of traveling agency or just out for lunch. The other category had the time to look around, no purchase were planned, but the persons where positive to impulse purchases if they found something they liked.

People have according to Kotler et al (2002) physical needs such as clothes and food. Both shopping locations are incomplete within these areas. When it comes to products their concern was mostly about the range of product and stores. About half of the all of the respondent thought that A6 and the City provided them with the same range of stores and products, while the other half said that the City has more niche stores and A6 holds more chains or that there are store at one location that does not exist in the other and vice versa. A6 also got a more youthful impression to the customer, being trendier, putting focus on young people in for example their clothing range. The price of the products does not differ between the places, both locations holds stores with different price classes. The customers are missing clothing stores with more original range of products as well as a grocery store in the city core. These things can be found at A6, while a grocery store cannot be found in

¹⁵ www.a6center.se

¹⁶ <http://www.pastan.com/oppettider.html> downloaded 2005-05-12

the City of Jönköping, which customers are missing. Several customers believe that they would make all their purchases in the City, if there were a grocery store as large as Willy's, Coop or Maxi in the City. A6 provides the customers with both clothing stores and grocery stores under the same roof, but still customers are missing stores with an original range of products since many clothing stores are chains. Areas in which A6 can widen their range is the restaurants and the café. Customers would like to have different dishes to pick from in the restaurants, more restaurants to choose from and more cafés. The customers would also prefer the option to dine outdoors.

It is important for a company to convince the customers that their product is the right one for them (Mason et al., 1993). When it comes to the products the respondents choose to buy certain products due to the performance, for example if a customer wants a certain piece of clothing for a special occasion the customer often chooses a store which is more specialized in certain products. In the decision to buy other products the price is a determining factor of where the products shall be purchased.

5.4 Environment

A seller cannot satisfy every customer, and therefore it is important that the customer they know is being satisfied (Gunter & Furnham, 1992). This is clearly shown in the case of A6 and the City. The customers prefer being indoors depending on the weather, but do not like that the air is bad, and there are customers that prefer fresh air and visits the City but when it rains, is it cold outside or if it snows the same customer complains about the bad weather.

A company can translate their inner values to their customers in the way they choose to create their servicescape (Bitner, 1992; Schroeder, 1997), on this matter A6 is the location with 'problem'. Although almost all customers appreciate being served with many stores under the same roof, they are not satisfied with the environment. The rebuilding of the centre has made it more fresh looking but there is still the problem of a bad indoor environment with a lot of noise and bad air. In the City the customers appreciate the coziness and the fresh air from being able to be outdoors that attract the customers.

When it comes to the environment, how it appeals to the customers (Larsson, 1994) the preferable choice is the City. Almost every respondent referred to the City as more cozy and nice, while A6 environment does not provide enough air and is noisy and crowded. Several respondents complained about the bad environment and the noisy and crowded centre. This can lead to a decrease in sales (Mason, et al., 1993) and it is important that A6 takes this into consideration and try to do something about it.

5.5 Other aspects affecting the customers

All four different kind of shoppers identified by Gunter and Furnham (1992) were situated at both A6 and in the City. The group with most representatives was the economic shoppers; they wanted products but did not put more emphasis on where the product was bought. We also met personal shoppers who preferred the smaller shop, often located in the City, for their personal service and their range of products. Apathetic shoppers were seen in people only joining the family, wife and kids, to the locations as a support, not having any personal shopping reason for being there. The ethical shoppers were mostly represented in the City. There people made their purchases because they had done it for years

and they were used to it. To change location to A6 was seen as frightening since the shopping centre was so large and new.

Holbrook (1999) claims that the customers' today values time. Time is expensive and customers do not want to waste their time visiting stores which do not have the services and products they want. Instead people choose stores which are known of them and which can fulfill their needs and wants. If the respondents felt that they had lot of time they mainly choose to do their purchases in the City, where they can mooching around and take a break at some of the restaurants or cafés.

Knowledge about customers and how to approach customers is important for storeowners both at A6 and in the City. If a customer is treated well, with respect this customer most likely will come back (Dutka, 1995). In the interview we recognized one customer who changed the shopping behavior due to not enough knowledge from the employees' part and out of the 200 questionnaires only one person chose stores based on the attitude of the employees in the store. This person had been treated bad at several occasions and therefore acted in this way.

Factors such as price, brands and wider range of products and stores may encourage people to seek shopping places outside their hometown (Gunter & Furnham, 1992). In the interviews we detected that not all respondents were not all local representative. Tourist comes from outside Jönköping to shop, some from smaller cities and some passing by. The range of stores and products were appreciated and also the location of A6.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion will provide the reader with the results found in this report. This section will also give suggestions for further research and end up in an end discussion.

6.1 Results

The areas identified by the customers as problem areas, or areas that differs the two shopping locations, are the accessibility, the range and the environment. Some effect decisions more than other, but they are inseparable, meaning that not only one problem can be solved to solve the problem of how the City core of Jönköping shall be able to gain, maintain and satisfy its customers.

The first problem to be tackled by the City core is the problem with the parking spaces. The customers require more of them at a cheaper price, but also the opportunity to park for free. Although the city provides the customers with 5 107 parking spaces, the customers still feel that they do not have access to them. Either because they are not located in walking distance to the City or because the parking lots are already full. This will be a hard problem for Jönköping City to solve since it is the municipality that handles these kinds of issues and not the association På Stan.

Another problem the City core is facing is the difference in opening hours. Different stores have different opening hours. A first step would be to adapt to the same opening hours whether the store is located in the east part of the City or the west. It is also required by the customers that the store introduce opening hours on Sundays. According to the respondents the City is abandoned on Sundays and they would prefer to be able to do their shopping this day as well. Both shopping areas could improve their range of stores. The customers are missing stores with original product for men, women and children. Since both locations hold large chains the customers feels that everyone is wearing the same clothes, which is very boring. Here the city has an advantage over A6. The city provides the customers with more niche stores than A6, but the customers still feels that this is not enough.

A6 is not problem free in these issues either. The customers are not satisfied with the environment at A6. Although the centre has been through a renewal phase the customers still feels that there are too many people at a small space and this affects the air and sound level of the shopping centre. Many customers complained about noisy and crowded spaces and bad air making them tired. We don't think that A6 is willing to decrease the number of visitors, but maybe they can try to bring in more fresh air and widened the passages giving the customers more space.

6.2 Further research

- For further research the authors will suggest looking upon the possibility to create more parking opportunities as well as lowering the price on these.
- Another subject can investigate the possibilities to improve the environment at A6 Center

6.3 End discussion

To increase sales and resources it is important for a business to not only concentrate on the new customers but also the old ones. By listening to the customers a company can get hold of valuable information that can be used to increase the business (Drucker & Levitt in Cook, 1994). We hope that the store owners and the organizations involved in A6 and the City are willing to take advantage of the information in our research and hopefully use it to solve the issues we have found.

One solution for the City core can be to be opened certain Sundays of the month or before holidays such as Christmas or during vacation time, when several tourists visits Jönköping.

The main problem areas here in Jönköping city core were the accessibility, range of stores and the environment. These three areas is of great importance concerning if the customers will make their purchases in the city core or at the shopping centre. If the accessibility is better to the shopping centre people will choose to go there instead of the city. Most often the shopping centers provide the customers with free parking lots which are a great competitive advantage and one of the reasons that many people prefer to make their purchases at the shopping centre instead of in the city core. The city cores need to create more parking lots and they have to be cheap or free too fit the customers' wants. If the city cores should provide free parking lots as well, then the competition should be more equal between the city core and the shopping centre.

To be able to get the customers to stay loyal to the city cores they need to provide the customers with a grocery store in the city. A lot of people sad that the grocery store at the shopping centre gives the customers to make all their purchases all at the same place, which many want to do. Therefore, it would be a good thing for the city core to build a grocery store in the city core or right next to it, to get the customers to make all their purchases there. Nischstores are also something that the city core needs to think of. The customers want this and it would be a great competitive advantage towards the shopping centers.

The environment is another factor. The indoor shopping at the shopping centers will always provide the customers with a good place for shopping, even though the weather is bad outside. The outdoor shopping is still the way of shopping that many customers prefer, but it would be a nice idea to build a roof along the shopping street on both sides so the customers do not get wet if it should rain.

We believe that these kinds of problems are not typical for Jönköping. These factors can be applicable for all cities. We believe that there will always be a competition between the city cores and the shopping centers, but the city cores can make their position better at today's competitive market if they can provide the customers with free and more parking lots and a wider range of stores and if they try to make the environment in the city cores more attractive for the customers, using flowers, build roofs outside the stores, and have better restaurants and cafes.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire to Inger Molin (managing director at På Stan Jönköping)

1. What is Your task as the managing director at På Stan Jönköping?
2. How do You work to tempt customers to come to Jönköping's City?
3. Which advantages has the City in Jönköping if You compare with A6 centre, according to You?
4. How do You work to get the customers to choose to do their purchase in the City of Jönköping instead of at A6 centre?
5. Do You see A6 as a huge competitor? Why? Why not?
6. Has it been done any research about why customers make their purchases in the City of Jönköping vs. do their purchase at A6 centre? How was the result look like?
7. Which similarities and differences are there when it comes to Your tasks as managing director at På Stan and as a centre leader at A6?
8. How come that You choose to leave the post as centre leader and began to work as managing director at På Stan Jönköping instead?
9. Do You see any special purchase pattern by the customers when it comes to which products/services they choose to buy in the City of Jönköping instead of at A6 centre?
10. Do You have any projects that You work with right now which will tempt customers to the City of Jönköping?

Appendix 2

Questionnaire to Inger Molin (centre leader at A6)

1. Which were Your tasks as centre leader at A6 centre in Jönköping?
2. How did You work to tempt customers to come to A6 centre?
3. Which advantages have A6 centre in comparison with the City of Jönköping, according to You?
4. How do You work to get the customers to choose to do their purchases at A6 centre instead of in the City of Jönköping?
5. Do You see the City of Jönköping as a huge competitor? Why? Why not?
6. Has it been done any research about why customers make their purchases in the City of Jönköping vs. do their purchase at A6 centre? How was the result look like?
7. Do You see any special purchase pattern by the customers when it comes to which products/services they choose to buy at A6 centre instead of at the City of Jönköping?
8. Do You have any projects that You work with right now which will tempt customers to the City of Jönköping?

Appendix 3

Interview with customers

1. Which is Your errand here today?
2. Why did You choose to make Your purchases at A6/the city core today?
3. Do You choose different places of purchase depending on what You will buy?
Why/How?
4. Where do You do most of Your purchases? (A6/City core/Other alternative)
5. For what reason should You change your place of purchase?(To city core/A6)
6. Do the supply of products and stores have an impact of Your choice of place of purchase?
7. What can be improved at A6, to make You choose A6 as place of purchase?
8. What can be improved in the City core to make You choose the City core as the place for purchase?
9. What makes You choose A6/the City core to make Your purchases?
10. What are the differences between A6 and the City core, according to Your opinion?