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Potential concept ideas for digital and physical content at Škoda showrooms

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Thesis abstract

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Digitalization poses challenges for traditional industries, such as the automotive industry. Nowadays, people visit car dealerships and showrooms to a lesser extent than before, which, in turn, forces both car manufacturers and dealers to develop their operations in order to have potential customers visit their physical stores.

The purpose of the thesis is to find out what things young adults (20–35-year olds) appreciate at car showrooms and dealerships and what they think about online and retail trade.

The thesis contains a theoretical and an empirical part. The theoretical part covers all the essential concepts related to the study, whereas the empirical part includes the actual study with its results and analyzes. The research method used was quantitative, and the study was conducted using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire and the analysis were implemented with the Webropol statistics tool. The thesis provides both an analysis based on the survey results and potential ideas for future showroom concepts.

The thesis was commissioned by the Czech car manufacturer Škoda Auto.

Keywords: showroom, quantitative research, questionnaire research, Škoda Auto, digitalization, concept ideas, automotive industry

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Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

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Digitalisoituva maailma tarjoaa haasteita perinteisille toimialoille, kuten autoteollisuudelle. Nykyisin ihmiset vierailevat autoliikkeissä ja näyttelytiloissa koko ajan vähemmän, mikä pakottaa sekä autonvalmistajat että jälleenmyyjät kehittämään toimintojaan saadakseen potentiaaliset asiakkaat vierailemaan kivijalkaliikkeissä.

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on selvittää, millaisia asioita nuoret aikuiset (20–35-vuotiaat) arvostavat autoliikkeissä sekä millaisia ajatuksia heillä on verkko- ja vähittäiskaupasta.

Opinnäytetyö sisältää teoreettisen ja empiirisen osan. Teoreettisessa osassa selvitetään kaikki tutkimukseen olennaisesti liittyvät asiakokonaisuudet, ja empiirinen osa sisältää itse tutkimuksen tuloksineen ja analyyseineen. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin määrällistä tutkimusta, joka toteutettiin verkkokyselynä. Sekä kyselyn toteuttamiseen että vastausten analysoimiseen käytettiin Webropol Surveys -järjestelmää. Vastausten perusteella tehtiin analyysi ja kehitettiin potentiaalisia ideoita tulevaisuuden näyttelytiloja ajatellen.

Opinnäytetyö tehtiin toimeksiantona tšekkiläiselle henkilöautovalmistaja Škoda Autolle.

Asiasanat: showroom, määrällinen tutkimus, kyselytutkimus, Škoda Auto, digitalisaatio, autoteollisuus

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Terms and Abbreviations

Term	
ŠKODA AUTO a.s.	SKODA
OEM	Original equipment manufacturer
USP	Unique selling points

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1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the automotive industry, the car showrooms have been the key places for sales representatives to meet customers and for the customers to get familiar with the cars models. During this time, the concept of showrooms was basically including two main aspects: cars and sales representatives. Since the 21st century, the digitalization has been playing more and more significant role in automotive industry, as well as in other business sectors.

The digitalization can be seen not only inside the cars, but also in car showrooms and dealerships. Now, in 2017 it is possible that there are no physical vehicles or not even sales personnel inside the car showrooms. The digitalization and online-based approach has brought the automotive industry in front of new challenges. In today's world, it is easier for customers to Google all the specifications of the particular car than visit the showroom and ask the sales representative. The question is, how to stay up to date with the running trends of the industry, answer the tough competition and get the future customers to visit the showrooms.

This thesis aims at creating an effective research questionnaire for SKODA Auto, which will allow a more in-depth perception of the young adults' needs and expectations from showrooms. The aim of the work is to make a research, which helps with planning the future showrooms both from physical and digital point of view. The analysis of the results and ideas about the development can be found at the end of the thesis. Along with the survey, the thesis covers all basic concepts related the topic by using appropriate literature.

1.1 Objectives of the thesis

The objective of the thesis is to reach the target group, young adults (20–35 years old) and find out their perception about showrooms and behaviour with online and offline trade. It is crucial for the thesis to allow as much information as possible to ensure a strategic planning of the future SKODA showrooms. The aim is to receive as many answers (100+) as possible, in order to be able to analyse the results and make suggestions with potential concept ideas for future SKODA showrooms.

1.2 Research method: Quantitative approach

All the research has a purpose. The purpose of quantitative research is to explain, describe, survey, compare or forecast matters related to people, their qualities or phenomena of nature (Vilkka 2007, 19). Abraham S. Fischler School of Education's text defines the method in an easy and clear way by explaining, that quantitative approach is an educational research, where the author of the research decides the target of the study, asks proper questions and collects quantitative data from the attendees. After these phases, the researcher analyses the received data by using statistics and finally, conducts the examination in an objective way.

Because the objective of the research is to receive a relatively large sample size, at least one hundred answers, the research method was chosen to be a quantitative approach, conducted as an online questionnaire survey. According to Heikkilä (2005,16), the quantitative approach is an appropriate choice, if the researcher wishes to find out the questions related to quantities and percentages as well as correlations between variables. In other words, the objective of the quantitative approach is to generalize the results and quantify the data and hence measure the occurrence of different opinions and views of a chosen sample (Park & Park, 2016). The theory supports the selection of the research method, because, as mentioned in Chapter 1.1, the objective of the thesis is to find out young adults' opinions and perceptions about showrooms as well as survey their views about both online and offline trade.

Heikkilä (2005, 17) and Vilkka (2007,13) explain the basic characteristics of quantitative research by following:

- It answers the questions: What? Where? How much? How often?
- It has a numerically large, representative sample
- It describes the phenomenon based on numerical knowledge

There are several ways of conducting the quantitative research and collect the data. According to Vilkka (2007, 27–32) and Heikkilä (2014), the four typically used data collecting methods in quantitative research are questionnaire, interview, systematic observation and experimental research. There are several matters that affect the decision of selecting the data collection method. They depend on the research's character, objective, time schedule and budget (Heikkilä 2008, 19).

According to Vilkka (2007, 28), the questionnaire is a type of data collection, where the format of the questionnaires is standardised, which means that all the participants receive an exact questionnaire with identical questions and structure. Both Vilkka (2007, 28) and Heikkilä (2008, 18–19) write, that the questionnaire can be done either online or via post. Heikkilä (2008,19) explains, that the process of conducting an online questionnaire requires expertise and the success of the research depends significantly on the technical implementation of the questionnaire. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. Vilkka (2007, 28) explains, that the frequent problem with the post questionnaire is to receive the filled questionnaire forms back from respondents. Normally, the researcher has to resend the form, which expands the expenses of the research. In an electronic questionnaire the resending of the questionnaire can be done with lower costs. However, according to Heikkilä (2008, 18), the researcher of the questionnaire has to solve the issues with informing the target group about the questionnaire, preventing the answers outside the target group and on the other hand, avoid double responses.

The data collection method was chosen to be an online questionnaire, because of the tight schedule, low budget and desired large sample size. The online statistics tool makes the analysis of the results simpler and faster and therefore, the postal questionnaire was not considered.

The questionnaire as a research design will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

1.3 Investigative questions

The thesis should provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is young adults' perception about online / offline trade and showrooms?

2. How to develop the showrooms to be more attractive for young adults? (according to the results)

1.4 ŠKODA AUTO

ŠKODA AUTO ("SKODA") is a Czech, one of the world oldest, passenger car manufacturers selling "value for money" -segment vehicles. The headquarters is located in Mlada Boleslav, Czech Republic. SKODA was founded in 1895 by Vaclav Laurin and Vaclav Klement who established the company that has been a pioneer in Czech car production for more than a century. SKODA has already been part of the Volkswagen group since 1991, for more than 20 years. During these 20 years of time, SKODA has remarkably increased the company's deliveries and expanded its product portfolio significantly.

The core business operations of the company are the sale, production and development of not only SKODA cars, but also components, accessories, genuine parts and service provision.

Production plants of SKODA are run in the Czech Republic, but SKODA cars are also manufactured in Russia, China, Slovakia, India, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. SKODA Auto employed more than 28 300 people in 2016 (ŠKODA AUTO, 2016).

SKODA's famous logo (see Appendix 1.) was registered as early as in 1926. The winged arrow, which represents an Indian headdress with arrow and feather, is still in the main role of the SKODA logo, although it has been modernized over the years from its original version.

2 PREVIOUS STUDY

Because this thesis is commissioned and tailored into the commissioners' (SKODA) needs and planned in cooperation with the company, the study is unique and therefore exactly similar studies are not found in the automotive industry.

However, Aleksi Aukia's Bachelor's thesis of Turku University of Applied Sciences has in some respects a similar approach. Aukia's thesis is entitled "Combining e-commerce and retail: showroom" and the main issue of the thesis is the concern about the negative impact of e-commerce for the music instrument industry.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the online-based approach has led many industries to face new challenges and the traditional musical instrument industry is one of the victims.

The background for Aukia's thesis comes from noticing the Finnish musical instruments industry. The problem is that the customers visit the physical instrument store to test the product and instead of purchasing it immediately from the store, they will purchase it at home, online. Seems like customers are more likely to wait for their instruments if the price is better online. From this point of view, Aukia wanted to create a new kind of concept, which is an idea about changing the traditional music instrument stores to showrooms without any large warehouses. In music instrument showrooms customers could not only try the instrument, but also place the order via the showroom and not from some other online store. This approach could be a solution for high rental costs that occur due to the large and expensive warehouse spaces required for the instruments.

The purpose of Aukia's thesis is to conduct an online questionnaire about the feasibility of this idea by asking a group of active musicians, both at a professional and amateur level.

The topic of Aukia's thesis can be seen to be relative with this paper, because in both cases the fundamental question is, how to get customers to visit the physical store/showroom and therefore increase the sales.

The sample size of Aukia's research was the Facebook group of 1001 members and the response rate was 4,3 %, which is equal to 44 answers. The questionnaire had a clear target group (active musicians) and it was fulfilled appropriately. However, the response rate can be found to be relatively low compared to the large sample size and therefore, the reliability of the research may be questionable.

The results are presented by using figures. Some of the results were also explained, but the deeper analysis and discussion about causation is missing. In addition, the questionnaire asks the geographical location of the respondent and the result was rather indefinite. Over 90% of the responses came from other than the Helsinki metropolitan area. The questionnaire did not clarify this "other Finland", which can be seen a little problematic, because the commissioner's premises are located in Kaisaniemi (Helsinki). Therefore, it may be difficult to consider the results if discussing about F-Musiikki's actions in Kaisaniemi.

Nevertheless, in the conclusion part the author mentions that the work is a "concise research about given subject", which implies, that the scope of the research was not meant to be more thorough.

3 SHOWROOMS

This chapter explains the main characteristics of showrooms, their meaning and purpose for the businesses, especially for the automotive industry. The chapter is crucial for the thesis, because it covers the most important concept related to the questionnaire research.

3.1 Showroom

Showrooms are places for various kinds of exhibitions. Its fundamental purpose is to represent both the company and its products (Frantti, 2008). According to Catania's article (2016), the showroom is a carefully planned area, which is used to display the products and which can be very beneficial for the company, if it is used in a proper way.

According to Frantti (2008), it is not indifferent, what kind of environment is around the product and therefore, the purpose of the showroom is also disclosing the company's image and values for possible customers. Catania (2016) explains, that the customers can even base their loyalty on the showroom. It is an honest move to display the real products instead of showing the photoshopped online picture and therefore, it is likely to build customer trust and brand loyalty.

By visiting the showroom, the customer usually gets the chance to try the product and get familiarized with it, whereas the company has a chance to convince the customer to order the product (Frantti, 2008). Meeting the customer is a chance that should be used wisely, especially nowadays, when the impersonal customer service is becoming more common, as a result of e-commerce. Retail Design Lab's text explains the changing role of the retail stores, which also involves showrooms. The text states, that the store should be a place to share a common passion, where the operator is offering a story and inspirational experience and therefore, reaches emotional communication with the customer. This way the physical store is completely different from any other channel. Instead of only selling products, the space should be able to offer an engaging overall experience. Catania (2016) explains, that the experience starts already outside the showroom, because not always people are searching for the specific product. Sometimes only the window shopping experience is enough to encourage the customers to come in, walk around and see what catches the eye. The experience does not only presumably increase the traffic in the showroom, but it has also potential to expand the sales. The text explains, that people are more confident to purchase the product after they have had the chance to see and truly feel it.

3.2 Automotive showrooms

Digitalization and its impact on the industry will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. However, the growth of digitalization has remarkably affected also the showroom and retail business, so it cannot be entirely ignored in this chapter either.

As the automotive industry is at a crossroads for many ways, the competition gets more and more intense all the time. It is not easy to get customers to visit physical places, such as showrooms, anymore. Traditional showrooms with salesmen and cars are starting to be “last season” and companies are constantly trying to attract and engage the customers with new digital tools in order create the “wow”- effect. Typically for (car) showrooms, the brand is highly emphasized with matching interior and exterior designs.

According to Pasch et al. (2016, 55–56), before appearing to the showroom, modern customers tend to use the time to do online research and finding information about both dealerships and the most preferred car model. During the showroom visit, the customer has access to Internet content, thanks to smart phones and tablets. This era of Internet pushes the dealerships to adapt to the constantly evolving digital age. Dealers have the possibility to get competitive advantage in sales by linking with the new, digital way of operating in their business. World Economic Forum’s text (2016, 7) states, that in the next 20 years there will be more innovations driven by digitalization than there have been in the past 100 years in the automotive industry.

For example, the Swedish car manufacturer Volvo and the multinational technology company Microsoft united their strengths and created a virtual reality experience demo showroom in 2015. They carried out a wholly digital showroom, where there are no physical cars at all and the car and its features are visualized through Microsoft HoloLens instead. HoloLens are goggles that show virtual objects as holograms. The prospective buyer has the possibility to experience not only the car outside, but also the hidden safety features and sensors, that are normally difficult or impossible to see (Atherton, 2015). This may be the possible next step with automotive showrooms, that are in places with limited amount of square meters for showing the physical car models. Such places can be accessible to large numbers of people passing by, for example, airports, shopping malls and other pop-up stores.

Trotter (2016), explains, that even if the online experiences may be the most useful for customers in terms of ordering and finding items in general, the showroom or store can be valuable in other ways. The space should not just adjust to old-fashioned perceptions about design, this means that it can be used to convey the most positive experience for the customer. Building the best possible experience for the customer can be done for instance simply by rethinking the current layout and adding some new, exciting elements such as a coffee shop or a library. Places like that encourage the customer to visit and may also help with establishing brand communities where the customers meet each other through a common passion or interest. Diverse kinds of events may help the customers to become fans, who are usually a lot more committed, passionate and loyal to the brand.

Another example is Mercedes-Benz, a company that has changed the approach of the showroom to 550 square meters large “Mercedes Me Store”- experience. Mercedes-Benz opened the first Mercedes Me Store in Hamburg 2014. The concept is a mixture of cars, digital tools, culture and restaurant. The store includes tools such as touch screens for configuration and personnel, who provide further information for people who are interested. Once customers are ready with shopping, they can experience the restaurant lounge and exhibition area with art, concerts and readings (Deppe, 2014). This can be seen as a good aspect, since it increases customer brand awareness through digital tools, as well as it entices customers to stop by the art and cafe restaurant. Despite these positive points, a relatively big space requires a substantial investment, and a suitable location in the city center, and therefore such a big project may be difficult to implement.

3.2.1 SKODA showrooms and rebranding

SKODA Auto has currently more than 3200 outlets in 101 different countries all around the globe.

SKODA showrooms have been undergoing changes since the end of the year 2013, when SKODA started to run a consistent rebranding of the company’s corporate identity with dealerships (Skoda Storyboard 2015).

One purpose of the new dealership branding is to make visual improvements, but the main, focus is on better customer service. According to Kolodynska (2016), the line between the products and services has become more vacillating, because nowadays the customer service is in a way included in the product. Kolodynska states, that the companies that provide a superior product without excellent customer service will not succeed. The aim of the new rebranded SKODA showrooms is to be able to fulfil the needs of customers by improving all the processes and procedures in the dealership. The development of these operations is the key to proving the highest level of customer service (Skoda Storyboard 2015).

Currently, in June 2017, the rebranding status is almost 80% of all SKODA dealerships around the world, which means that it already covers all the main markets (Skoda internal network 2017).

Picture 1: New corporate design of SKODA Showroom (exterior)

Picture 2: New corporate design of SKODA Showroom (interior)

New showroom concepts are built with three key factors in mind: personality, directness, and openness for communication. These factors have also naturally reflected into the whole design of the establishments. Showrooms are built and designed to attract visitors through their transparency, both inside and outside. The vision of the architects was to take off all the redundant factors and leave only the essentials needed for the customer service. The new SKODA identity is based on simplicity: simple shapes, innovative lights and, of course, the official SKODA colours white and green. But not only the visible concept has changed through the new corporate identity.

After the rebranding, the sales process and company structures have also become more optimized and therefore, sales and services are better linked together, which extends the customer care. As a result of this notable rebranding project, 19% dealerships are built again and almost half of them have been relocated (Skoda Storyboard 2016).

According to Skoda Media Portal (2016), the recent look of modernized facilities has got positive feedback from the dealerships, who are happy with the increased sales of used and new cars as well as increased demand of services, original parts and accessories. The company expects that the new corporate design would have a positive impact also on customer satisfaction.

The rebranding process and new corporate identity have not only dealt with the appearance of SKODA showrooms. In Skoda Media Portal’s press release (2016) it is stated, that the renewed corporate identity has been an essential part of endorsing the whole SKODA strategy. During the past few years, the company has run the biggest model campaign in its history. The highlight of the year 2016 was the presentation of the new SUPERB model. Later in 2016, the company introduced the new KODIAQ, which was the first SUV model of SKODA. The big news continued in the spring 2017, when the company introduced the new Yeti replacement, SUV model called Karoq.

3.2.2 Confidential

Pages 21 - 25 of the thesis will remain confidential.

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3.3 Competitors' corporate identities

Rebranding is neither an effortless nor a fast process. The overall brand should remain identifiable, whereas it should be modernized and able to attract and excite the customers in a new way. The attraction can, and should lead to the growth in sales, which is a crucial matter when planning the company's future strategies.

Not only SKODA has conducted a big rollout of a new corporate identity. Many of its competitors, such as KIA, Hyundai and Renault have also renewed their identities to reach better brand awareness and customer attraction.

KIA Global SI Space Identity

KIA has also conducted a global "rebranding" for their showrooms and dealerships. According to Kia Motors China Marketing Department (2011), the Kia Global SI Space Identity Guide's main goal is to get a consistent guideline for dealership lay-out including interior, exterior, colours and materials. The expectation of the new space identity is to make the KIA appearance and layout easier to remember and more attractive from a consumer point of view.

The design focuses on dividing the space by using curved and strain lines, that are KIA's design factors.

OPEL showroom standards and new identity

In 2011, the German car brand OPEL was planning to set the new dealer standards. The biggest reason for this was the desire to strengthen the brand identity. OPEL wanted to offer consistent corporate identity, clear brand symbol and sales areas separated from other brands (Autoevolution 2011).

According Designtagebuch's (2017) article, OPEL will have a completely new brand look by the end of 2017. In the late 2016, OPEL informed launching no less than seven new car models during the year 2017, which is the most remarkable amount in company's history. OPEL's pressroom (2017) released an article about the company's modernized logo and brand credo "The Future is Everyone's". The story behind the new credo is OPEL's desire to be a pioneer in future technologies and make them available for everyone.

Renault Store

Jon Mower wrote in The Motoring World blog (2015) about Renault changing their customer experience through the dealership network in the UK. The encompassing launching of the new visual space identity is called Renault Store. All the transformations of the UK dealerships should be implemented by the end of 2017. The new Renault Store showrooms are designed to reflect to the customers' latest ways of making research about the car purchase and fulfil their expectations of the current retail environment. To be able to fulfil these requirements, the new Renault Store showrooms will offer the interactive discovery zones, engaging displays and improved customer flows for visitors.

Hyundai Global Dealership Space Identity (GDSI)

According to Autoblog's article (2014), the Korean car brand Hyundai is conducting a globally massive identity change by 2020. The plan is named Global Dealership Space Identity and its main idea is to remove the diversity from the showrooms and reach the uniform design through the whole company.

The result of the GDSI will be an open and modern showroom which has transparent walls to look in and see the cars. According to the text, the goal of the innovative design is "to strengthen our modern premium brand consistency across all dealerships proving premium emotional experiences related to our brand and increase interaction with customers" (Sookjin Hwan, Hyundai spokesperson via email to Autoblog).

The new Space Identity will be implemented everywhere, except in the US. The reason for this is the "blue and silver color" project, which has been conducted in

US only few years before starting the new GDSI. Another change would cause too much pressure and problems and therefore, the dealers in US are not forced to participate in the process.

4 DIGITALIZATION

This chapter explains the meaning of digitalization first on a general basis and then in more detail, explaining its impact on the automotive industry. The meaning of digitalization according to Business Dictionary has been defined by the: “Integration of digital technologies into everyday life by the digitization of everything that can be digitized”.

The doctoral thesis of Wiefer and Gregus (2016, 9) explains the life of digitalization. According to the thesis, in twenty years of time, the use of World Wide Web, originally invented for a few people, has developed to serve technologies and resulted even in the change of many company’s business models. This has led to the situation, where it is almost impossible to find a company that does not use the Internet today. According to Optimal Systems, the effect of digitalization has drilled into all industries and every area of business from the development of products to customer service and sales. The company must manage the digital revolution, which has become one of the most important tasks that businesses are facing.

One of the most important questions for companies is, how to benefit from digitalization and improve the company’s performance in front of digital transformation. Digitalization has a significant impact, especially on traditional retail. According to Wiefel (2015, 1), the retailers are not adapting their operations as fast as global consumers become increasingly experienced. It is explained, that to be able to narrow the gap and get a better understanding of customers, retailers must significantly increase their resilience and activity. This can be done by making changes to basic operations such as ways of tracking, marketing the products, running the stores, and measuring the behaviour of consumers. In the text it is stated, that the winners will be the ones who can build a flexible organization, are able to recognize the trends and have the capability to deliver a rational, profitable presentation in a multichannel way.

4.1 The effect of digitalization in automotive industry

The effect of digitalization has extended also in the automotive industry and it already is forecasted to be one of the biggest factors in financial benefits for the automotive companies in the future.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the digital revolution has had a significant impact on almost every business and not least in the automotive industry. According to World Economic Forum’s White Paper (2016, 6–7), at the time when the automotive industry brought in advanced innovations, such as assembly lines and mass production, the industry was a pioneer of its time. Despite of significant developments in car performance, safety and built, there have been not so recognizable blockbusters or products in the automotive industry in the past 100 years, unlike for example, the technology sector has been. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, it is claimed that in the next 20 years there will be more innovations driven by digitalization than there have been in the past 100 years. The meaning of digital transformation in the automotive industry is basically said to be the new way of operating not only with company and customer resources, but also with services and products. By reassembling the aforesaid procedures via digital technologies, the company can grow its efficiency, value and revenue.

The digitalization has an impact on all stages of the automotive industry, including manufacturing. According to KMPG’ s (2016, 8) text, it is beneficial for both, manufacturers and suppliers to gain higher productivity, shorter times to market, more flexibility and better quality. Thanks to digitalization, the new, beneficial applications have been discovered to develop the whole manufacturing value chain. This can be seen as a positive aspect for suppliers, OEM’s (Original equipment manufacturers) and after all, end-customers. More focused applications, such as robotics on production are used in some technologies, but also other technologies such as cybersecurity, diagnostics and cloud computing are constantly leading to new applications and an unforeseen information sharing across the whole value chain.

The customers are also likely to benefit from digitalization with, for instance, self-driving cars, developed connectivity services and better safety systems. The new big trend of the automotive industry is a concept called connected car. Not a long time ago, the digital technology in the automotive industry was mostly concentrated on increasing the performance of internal functions, whereas now the focus is more into connecting the car to the outside world and boosting the experience inside the vehicle. Basically, a vehicle that has the ability to enhance its own actions and maintenance, besides the comfort and accessibility of passengers by using Internet connectivity and sensors, can be called a connected car (Mc Kinsey, 2014).

However, the automotive industry and car manufacturers are not developing the digital and autonomous systems by accident. The World Economic Forum's (2016) text explains, that the biggest factor for the change is the rising amount of "digital native" consumers, who allow and even demand their vehicles to be digitally advanced. It is said, that modern consumers expect the services and products to be available whenever and wherever they are needed, all the time. Nowadays the transportation has a bigger meaning for consumers, it is not only a way of moving from a point A to a point B anymore. The transportation can be seen more as a touching and experimental journey of users who expect to have immediate access to social media, entertainment services and other transparent data. This illustrates the demands of customers, which may constitute a specific challenge for the automotive industry

5 THE RESEARCH WORK

The last part of the thesis, before the conclusion, is devoted to the research. The implementation part firstly covers all the necessary basic information related to the research project. The second part is an important overview about the research method used in the thesis. The rest of the text is concentrated on the results of research and according to the results, there will be proposals of innovative ideas for the future SKODA showrooms. The conclusion can be found at the very end of the thesis.

5.1 Implementation

The research was conducted as an online survey by using Webropol Systems, which is an online based statistics and data collection tool.

The questionnaire survey consists of three parts: general part, visual part and detailed part. Each part is shared into different pages. The questionnaire is both in English and Finnish.

The first part consists of questions based on respondents' information like gender, age, nationality and so on. The general part includes also questions about retail and online trade. The aim of the general part is to make the respondent think about their last purchases and get the rough idea of their purchasing behavior in general, before moving more into details about automotive showrooms.

The second, visual part has six different example pictures about automotive showrooms. The respondents are asked to choose the two most attractive showrooms in their opinion. The main idea of the part is to get the respondents' first impression by showing pictures of various kinds of automotive showrooms.

In the questionnaire, there are both open and closed questions. The closed questions consist mostly of list questions (the respondents choose the most suitable answers that apply) and category questions (the respondents choose the best answer from multiple options). Some questions are "fixed", which means that there are both multiple choices and open box for comments and/or additional information. In total, there are 18 questions and most of them are closed multiple choice questions with an open box for additional information and/or comments. The survey form can be found in Appendix 2.

The questionnaire was shared as a public post via Facebook and LinkedIn and therefore, the exact sample size cannot be proved. The questionnaire was also sent to all SKODA Auto University's students and the approximate number emails sent was one thousand. The total population size can be between 1100 and 1600. According to the Checkmarket's online sample size calculator, if the population size is, for example between the scope, roughly 1300, the required sample size (number of respondents needed) with the expected response rate of 20% should be 297. The calculator has noticed also the margin of error, which is usually 5% and the confidence level of 95%.

The planned time for publishing the research was in the beginning July 2017, which was fulfilled according to the schedule. The online research was open from 30.6.2017 to 14.7.2017, which makes precisely two weeks.

The expected amount of responses was agreed upon together with the commissioner and SKODA Auto and set to be at least one hundred answers. The final number of respondents was 243, from which there were 194 young adults, which means that the target was achieved on one side. On the other side, the calculated representative sample size (297) was not completely fulfilled. However, the number of respondents is still relatively satisfactory, because the research was conducted during the summer holiday season and without any "carrot", which is usually used to attract more respondents to participate in the surveys.

5.2 Research design: questionnaire

According to Waidi (2016) Needham and Dransfield (2004), a questionnaire is a structured list of questions that are designed to collect the information from people about their beliefs, values, attitudes or specific events. Rowley (2014) states, that the questionnaire as a research design is useful when the goal of the research is to clarify and profile the situation and develop already existing models. Park and Park (2016), for their part, explain that the purpose of the questionnaire is to describe the particular distinctives of a large group of people and comprise the present circumstances.

The questionnaire is one of the most common ways to collect data from a large amount of people (between 100 and 1000 persons). Because of the commonness of the method, it is generally easy to assume that questionnaires are effortless to design and use. However, this is not the exact truth about questionnaires. A lot of effort is used in the creation process of a good questionnaire. A good questionnaire can answer the research questions and achieve satisfactory response rates (Rowley 2014, 308). In Heikkilä's publication (2005, 48), the importance of the appearance of the questionnaire form is also mentioned. It is not meaningless, how the questionnaire form looks like, because usually, it affects the decision whether the person participates in the research or not.

In Rowley's (2014, 308) text, it is explained that the term questionnaire is used to designate the documents that contain both open and closed questions, to which invited respondents provide their answers. Good questions and correct target group are the basic requirements for a successful questionnaire research (Heikkilä 2005, 48). According to Chen (2012), the key factors for every research are to have explicitly and clearly designed questionnaires or survey instruments, that adapt to the representative sample. Without these factors, it is impossible to reach the accurate results that are properly related to the target population. The number of variables included in a research project determines the size of a sample. If the form of the questionnaire is clear and well structured, the questionnaire can be as complex or long as necessary. However, the length of the questionnaire should not become a problem that bothers responses.

Heikkilä (2005, 48) has listed the ten main characteristics of a good questionnaire form by following:

- It looks attractive and clear
- Text and questions are well structured
- The beginning of the questionnaire consists of basic questions
- Only one question is asked at the time
- The answering instructions are clear and unambiguous
- The form makes the responder feel that his/her answer is important
- The form is pre-tested
- The form is easy to analyse with the statistics tool
- The questions are proceeding and numbered logically
- The form is not too long

There are several ways to distribute the research questionnaire; it can be for example an online questionnaire, sent by e-mail or post, or given by hand. However, the important characteristic for questionnaires is explained to be that they are conducted, in most cases, without any interaction between the researcher and respondents (Rowley 2014, 308).

5.3 Validity and reliability

Heikkilä (2005, 29), Bryman and Bell (2007) state, that the validity of the research is a concept, which indicates whether the research was measuring what was initially meant to be investigated or not. Heikkilä (2005) explains, that if the researcher has not set clear goals to the research, it is possible to investigate wrong matters. Validity basically means the absence of systematic error. The questions of the research form should cover the whole research problem and measure the right concepts unequivocally. In addition, the precisely measured universe, proper sample attainment and high response rate support the fulfillment of the valid research. The goal of the research was to find out young adults' perception about showrooms and behaviour with online / offline trade. The research gives answers to this question and a satisfactory amount of information for analysis and development ideas. Therefore, the systematic error was not discovered, and the research of the thesis can be found valid.

According to Heikkilä (2005, 30), reliability means the exactness of the results. The results of the research should not be random and therefore, a reliable research requires the possibility of repetition the research with equivalent results. To be able to reach the reliability, the researcher must be critical and pedantic during the whole research process.

If the study was done in similar conditions, the results would remain the same and therefore, the study can be considered reliable.

5.4 Results

This chapter concentrates only on the results that are received from the target respondents, aged between 20 and 35. Because the aim of the research is to find out what kind of aspects young people (potential future customers) appreciate in showrooms, the answers from the age group of 16-19 years old (5%) are also taken in the analysis due to commissioner's wish. The total amount of answers of young adults was 194. The overall answers of the questionnaire are given to the commissioner as an additional part out of thesis.

Background information

Age

The biggest target group reached was young adults aged between 20 and 25 years old (59%). The second biggest group of ages were 26-30 years old people with 24%. The rest of the respondents were 31-35 years old (12%) and 16-19 years old (5%).

Nationality

Most of the answers came from Finnish (49%) and Czech (45%) respondents, mainly because of the questionnaire distribution channels. However, there were also four answers from Russia, two answers from Germany and one answer from Iceland, France, Moldova, Belarus and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Gender

The genders distributed quite evenly. There were 45% of female respondents and 55% of male respondents.

Current status

Almost half of the respondents (49%) were students and 39% were employed. 6% of respondents answered to be self-employed, 3% of the respondents were unemployed and the rest are none of the options.

Questions and answers related to online trade, retail and automotive showrooms

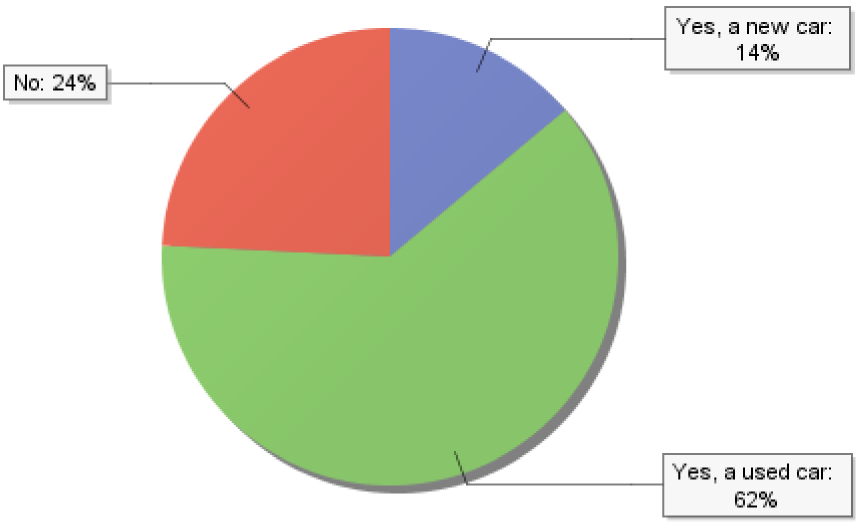

Figure 1: Have you ever purchased a car?

Figure 1 is a question which is investigating, if the respondents have ever purchased a car. More than half (62%) of the respondents answered to have purchased a used car. 14% of the answers said to have purchased a new car, and the rest, 24% have not acquired any car. The number of people who have purchased a car is relatively high, altogether 76% have bought a car, whether a new or used one. Considering that most of the respondents are students, who usually do not have big financial assets, the amount of purchased car can be found rather high.

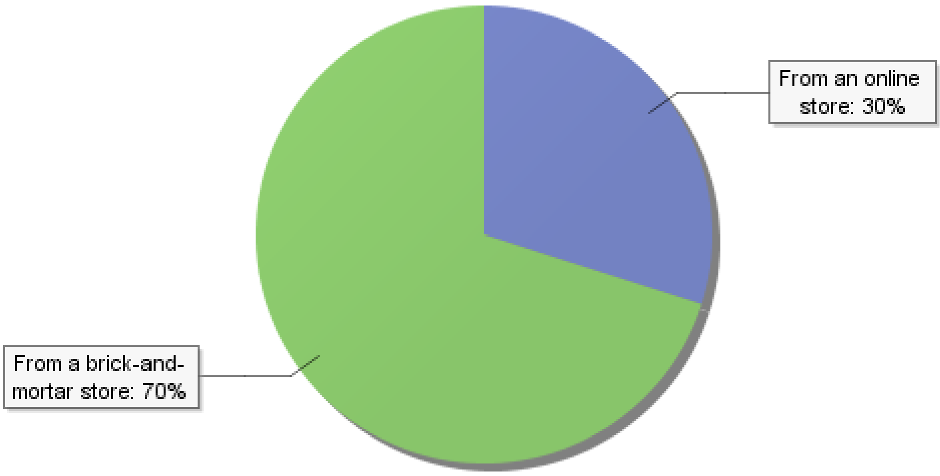

Figure 2: Think about your last purchases. How did you buy them?

Question 6, Figure 2 is a question about young adults' purchasing behavior. The type of purchase was not specified. The majority (70%) of respondents answered that their last purchased have been made from physical store and the rest, 30%, of the respondents answered to have been purchased lately online. The purpose of the question was to make respondents think about their own buying behavior and make them more amenable to the next questions.

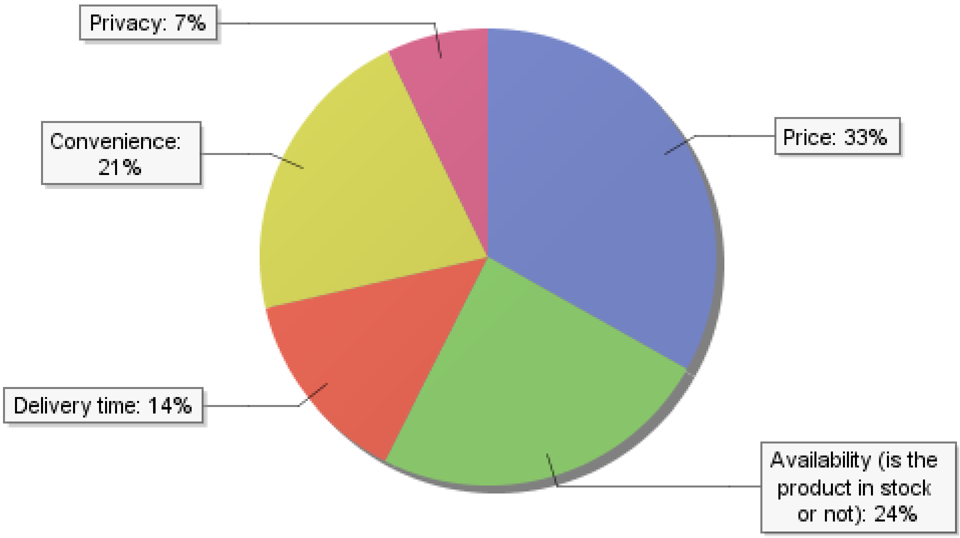

Figure 3:Which factors affect the most your decision to buy online or from physical store? (you can choose more)

Question aimed at the most crucial factors for the decision of buying online or from a physical store. The most key factor was chosen to be the price of a product with 30% of all answers. According to the comparison between genders, women were more pricewise. Even 77% of women chose the price to be the one of the most principal factors that affects to the decision, whereas 67% of men found it important. The second and third important things were the availability of product (24%) and convenience (21%).

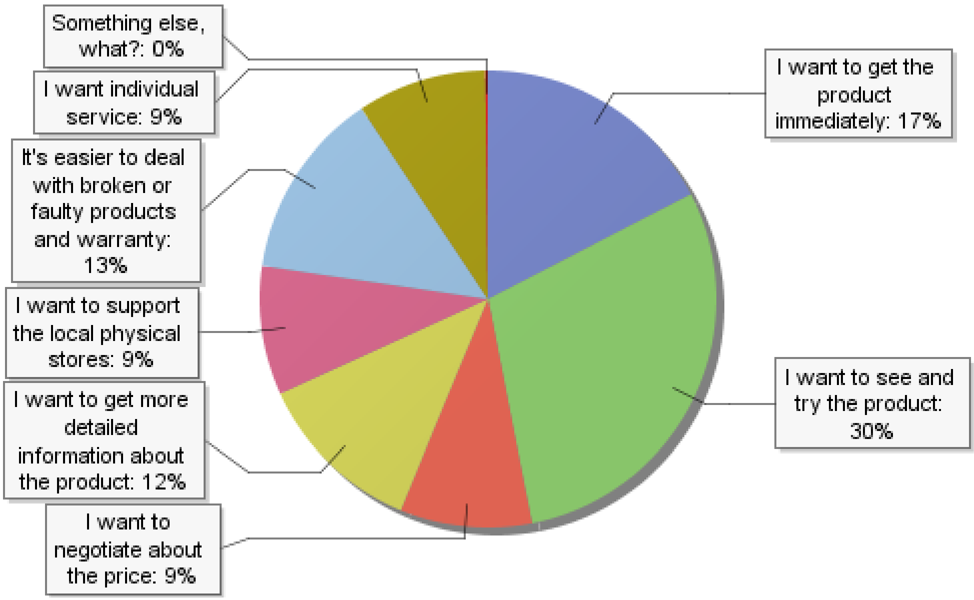

Figure 4: What is/are the most important reasons for you to buy product from a physical store (instead of buying online)? (you can choose more)

In Question 8, the respondents were asked to choose the most important reasons to visit a physical store instead of buying online. The most important reason was chosen to be the ability to see and try the product (30%). The second and third important reasons were to get the product immediately (17%) and the ease with dealing with warranty matters if there is something wrong with the product (13%).

When comparing differences between genders, women were more unwilling to wait for the product answered one of the main reasons to be the desire to get the product immediately (women 56%, men 46%). Also for women it was more important to be able to see and test the product and 93% of women chose this alternative to be one of the main reasons. 81% of man respondents chose the seeing and trying the product to be an important reason to buy from a physical store. However, men respondents were more willing to talk about the pricing in physical store and therefore, 31% of men told one of the reasons to visit the physical store to be the desire to negotiate about the price of a product. Only 22%, the least number of women, found this as an important reason for buying a physical store.

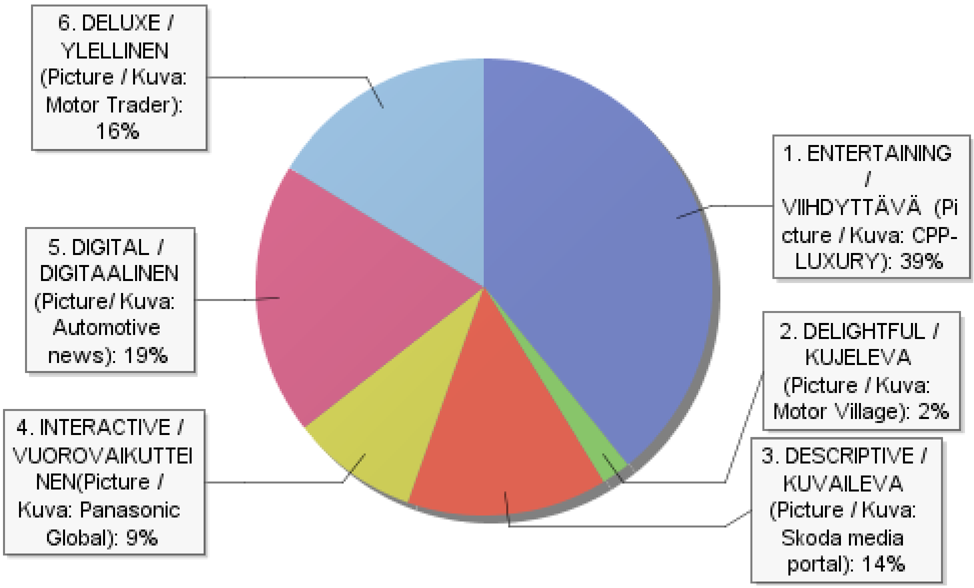

Figure 5: Choose two most attractive showrooms by clicking the chosen pictures.

In the Question 9 the respondents were asked to choose two most attractive showrooms from the pictures (see pictures from questionnaire form in Appendix 2). The two most popular answers were the first picture, called “entertaining” with 39% and “digital” with 19% of all young adults.

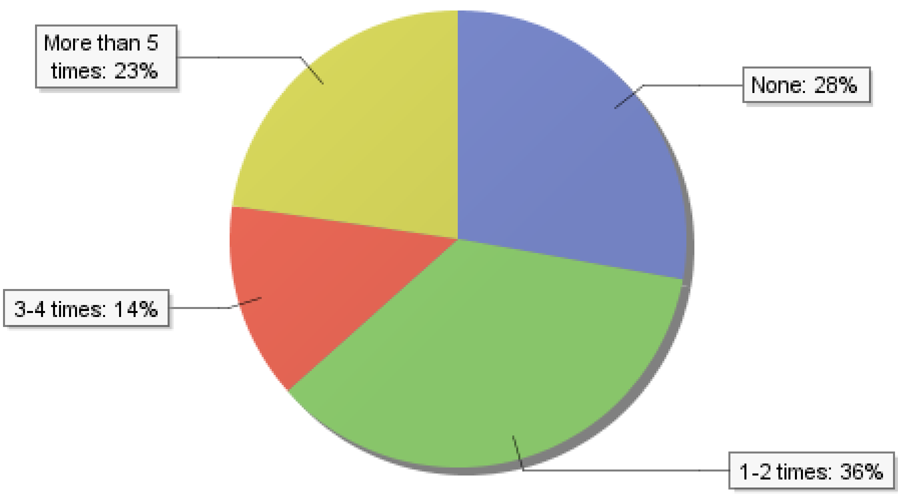

Figure 6:How many times have you approximately visited a car showroom in last five years?

Question 10 is investigating, how many times the young adults have been visiting the showroom within last five years. The biggest majority (36%) answered to have visited the showroom one or two times in last five years. The second majority (23%) answered to have visited a car showroom more than five times.

The most interesting results can be seen by comparing again the differences between genders. There are significantly more women (37%), who have not visited in a car showroom in five years at all than men (21%). This illustrates, that even though the women are interested in buying a car, they are not willing to visit the showrooms. According to this result, there is a lot of hidden and unused customer potential among female consumers.

The majority of men, 34%, have visited the showroom more than five times, whereas only 9% of the women answered similarly. Most of women (43%) answered to have visited the showroom one or two times within the given time scale. The question gives the guidance, that car showrooms are not very familiar or attractive places for young women. Ideas for developing the showroom also from the female point of view can be found from the Chapter 5.6 Suggestions and development ideas.

	What would be the most likely reason for you to visit car showroom?
To see the actual car that I am interested in	55,67%
To learn more information about the car	8,25%
To see the showroom itself	6,7%
To do the test-drive	15,98%
To participate in some event	11,86%
Something else, what?	1,55%

Figure 7: What would be the most likely reason for you to visit car showroom?

Both Questions numbers 11 and 12 illustrate, that the most principal factors in a car showroom are the ability to see the actual car and do a test drive. In Question 11 it is asked, what is the most important reason to visit the car showroom, and the largest majority (over 55%) answered that seeing the actual car to be the most important thing. This is an interesting fact and supports the traditional way of presenting different car models physically, not only virtually in showrooms. Another supporting fact for the presence of physical cars in the showrooms is the second majority of answers in Question 11, which shows that the second key factor of the showroom is the ability to do a test drive (15,98%).

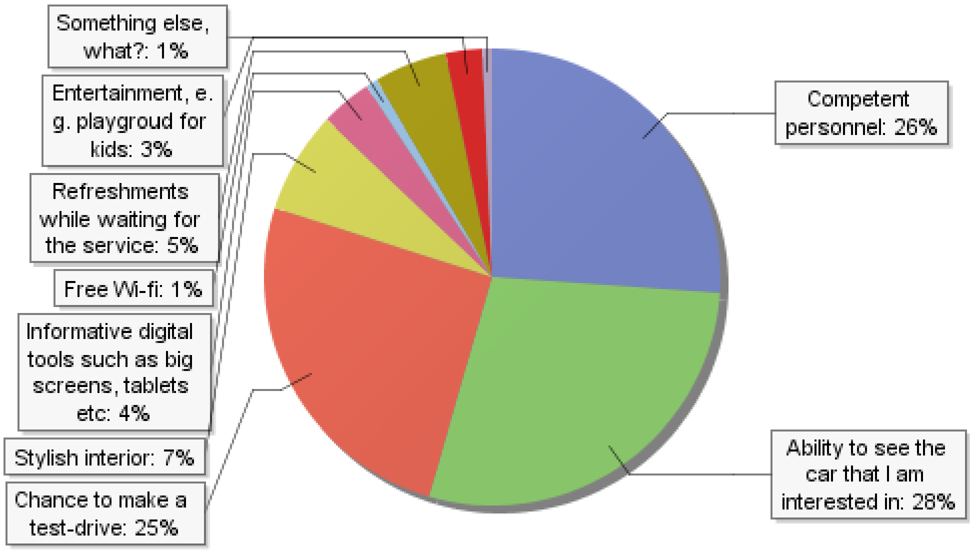

Figure 8: Choose three most important factors that you appreciate the most in car showrooms

In the Question 12, respondents are asked to choose the three most appreciated factors in car showrooms. Along with the factors of seeing the car (28%) and making a test-drive (25%), one of the three most popular options is chosen to be competent personnel with 26% of all respondents. This information is also likely to give the idea of young people's expectations of showrooms. Even though the digital things are popular among the young people, their perception of the car showroom still can be seen as quite traditional, including physical cars, ability to do a test-drive and competent personnel. The least important factors according to the Question 12 seem to be Informative digital tools (4%), Entertainment (3%) and Free Wi-Fi (1%).

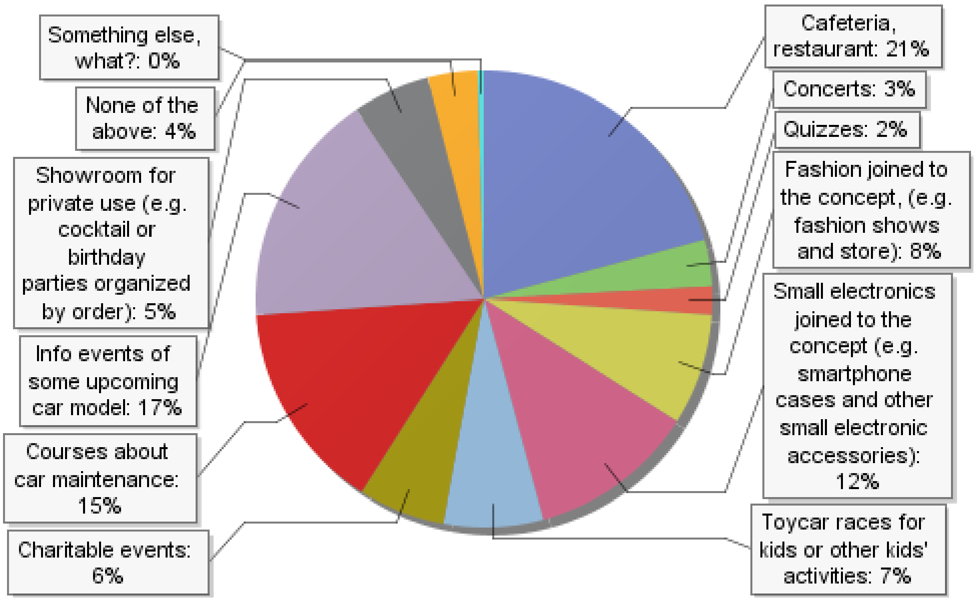

Figure 9: What kind of additional activities/events/functions would you like to see in car showrooms? (you can choose more)

In Question 13 the respondents were asked to choose the most interesting additional activities organized in showrooms. The amount of answers was not limited. The answers were distributed quite evenly, but the three most popular functions/activities were Cafeteria with 21%, Info events of some upcoming car model (17%) and Courses about car maintenance (15%).

There are slight differences between the genders. According to the comparison between the genders, females were also interested in courses of car maintenance, almost as much as male respondents (women 32%, men 36%). The most significant gap between genders was in answers about charitable events, which interests 20% of female respondents, whereas only 9% of male respondents would see this as an interesting activity. Instead, male respondents would more likely to see small electronics joined to the showroom concept. This matter also interested young women, albeit to a lesser extent (men 32%, female 22%). In an open answer box, there was a wish to get more motorsport present in showrooms and ability to get the car for a longer test drive, for example for the weekend in order to get a better picture about the possible upcoming big investment.

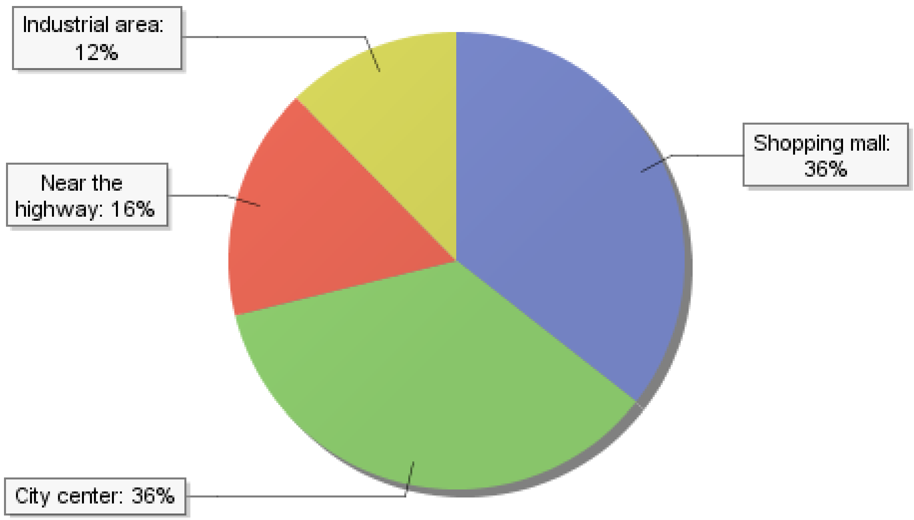

Figure 10: What would be the most preferable location for a car showroom with additional functions (mentioned in Question 13)?

Question 14 is a logical continuum from the previous question by asking the most preferable location for the showroom. According to the answers, the two most preferable options for the location of showrooms were city center and shopping mall both with 36% of all answers. The less preferable location for the showrooms was industrial areas, where most of the current showrooms are located. These results are on one hand supporting the trend of establishing the new showrooms in areas with a high number of pedestrians, such as city centers.

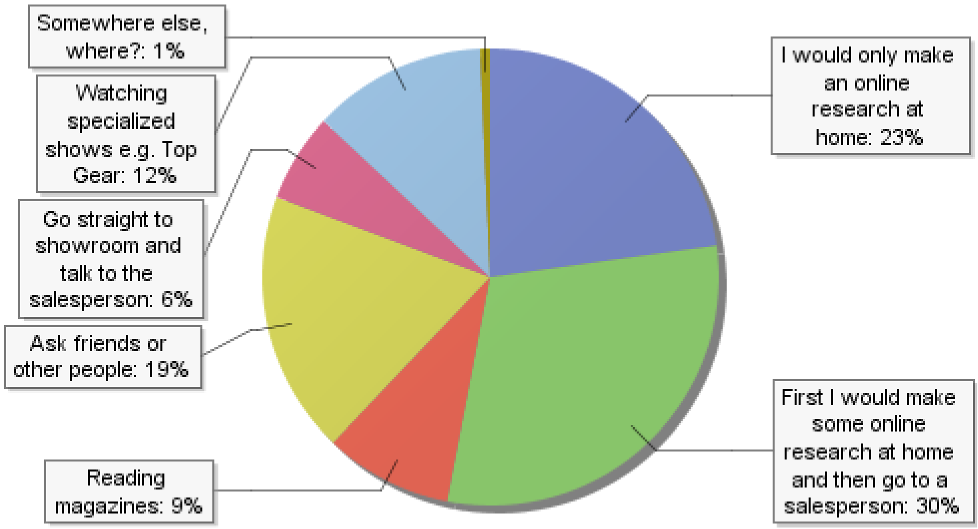

Figure 11: Where would you prefer to find out the information about the car you are interested in? (You can choose more)

Most of the respondents (30%) answered to get the information most preferably by exploring the online sources first and afterwards by visiting the showroom for receiving further information. This result was almost identic between male (66%) and female (67%) respondents. The second majority (23%) would do research only online, at home. When comparing the differences between genders, the female respondents are more willing to ask advice from friends or other people (47%) than male respondents (35%). Men also responded to find more information about magazines and specialized TV-programs than female respondents. In the open comment box also watching YouTube videos was mentioned a couple of times.

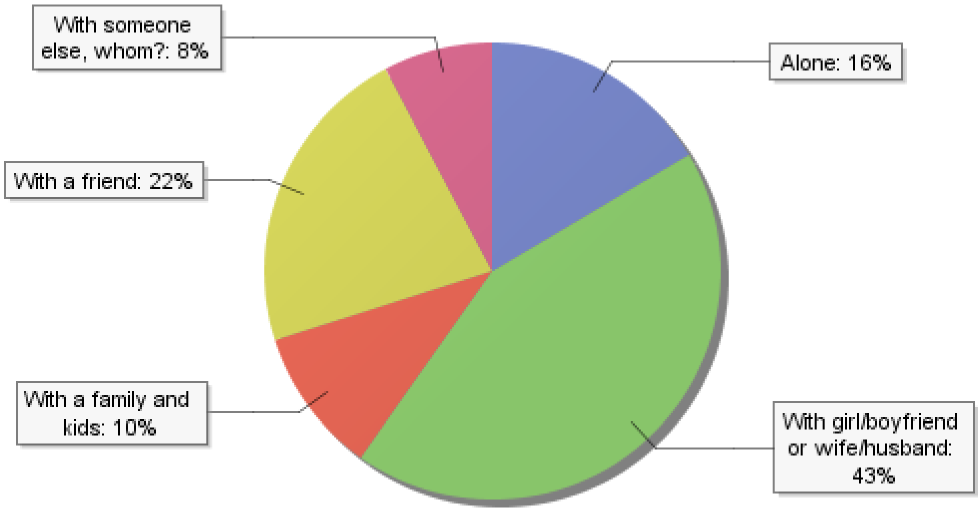

Figure 12:With whom would you preferably go to car showroom and why?

In Question 16, the respondents were asked to answer to a question about the most preferable company to enter the car showroom with and the particular reason for this. Most respondents (43%) answered to go to the showroom most preferably with a partner (girlfriend/boyfriend, wife/husband). In an open comment box, most of the answers illustrate that the reason for this is the partner's better knowledge about cars. Especially for female respondents it was significantly more important to take the partner to the car showroom than for male respondents. 64% of female respondents would like to go to the showroom with a partner, whereas only 26% of male respondents answered similarly. The second biggest majority (25%) of males answered to enter the showroom most preferably alone. The most common reason for this was the desire to be in own silence and make own decision without any distractions. Only 7% of female respondents would like to visit the car showroom alone.

The second majority of respondents (22%) would like to go to the showroom with a friend. The most commented reason for this was to get a fair and honest opinion about the car to help the decision making.

10% of respondents would like to visit the showroom with a family and kids. The most important reason for this was, naturally, the ability to test the size of a car with children.

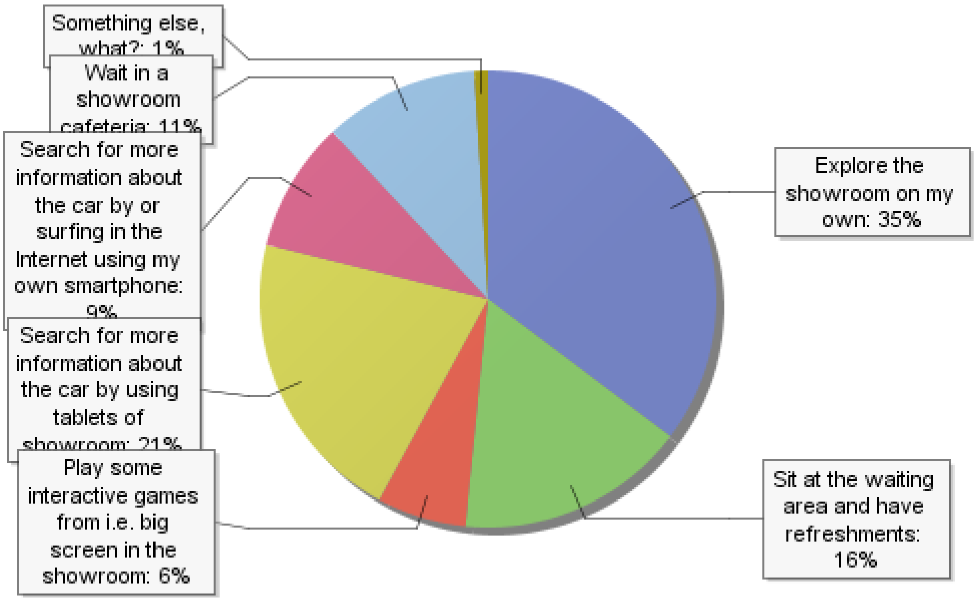

Figure 13:If you need to wait for the service from personnel, what would you preferably do? (You can choose max. 3 answers)

In Question 17, the respondents were asked to answer about most preferable activities while waiting for the service. The majority (35%) would like to explore the showroom on their own. This answer was the most usual between both genders (80% of men, 68% of women).

The second majority (21%) would most preferably search for more information about a car by using the tablets of the showroom. The difference between the genders in this answer was quite remarkable. 55% of female respondents would like to search for more information by using digital tools, whereas only 34% of male respondents found this interesting.

In an open comment box there were answers about the unwillingness to wait for the service for such an expensive purchase. Some respondents answered that in a case that they have to wait for the service, they would probably leave and come back later.

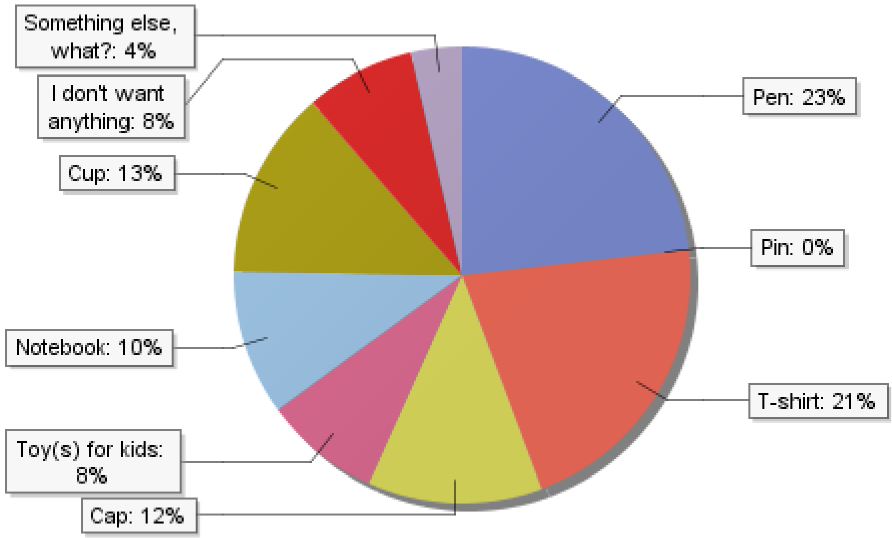

Figure 14: You get a free advertising item from showroom. Choose the most preferable item.

The last question was inquiring the most preferable merchandising item got from the showroom. The two most common answers between all respondents were pen (23%) and t-shirt (21%). Women, 27% of them, are more willing to take a pen and most (24%) of the men would like to have a t-shirt. Also a cap was a popular choice between male respondents (19%), whereas females would prefer to receive toys for kids (15%). Eight percent of all respondents answered that they do not want to have anything from a showroom.

In an open comment box, there were suggestions about car accessories such as waxing products and mobile chargers, small accessories like keyrings or stickers, car miniatures or something very practical, such as free fuel pass or a discount for fueling.

5.5 Summary of results

Most (56%) of the respondents were 20-25 years old Finnish men and women, who are mostly students or employed. More than 60% of the respondents have purchased a used car and even 14% have got a new car. 70% of respondents have made their last purchases from a brick-and-mortar store. The most crucial factors that affect the decision to buy online or physical stores are: price, the availability of the product and convenience. According to the answers the most significant reasons to buy the product from the physical store were the chance to see and test the product, get the product immediately and ease with dealing the warranty matters. In the open comment box, there were comments about the concern about the trustworthiness of online stores, which usually leads to the decision of buying the product from physical store.

The two most attractive showrooms from the pictures in Question 9 were chosen to be “Entertaining” and “Digital” showrooms (see pictures in questionnaire form in Appendix 2). Entertaining picture of the showroom includes only one car and otherwise the room is a bar-restaurant. The popularity of the answer supports the results of Question 13, which illustrates the cafeteria and restaurant to be the most wanted additional function for car showrooms.

The majority of respondents (36%) answered to have been visited in a car showroom one or two times within the past five years. 23% of the respondents told to have visited more than five times and 28% have not visited the showroom in five years at all. The results can be seen quite positive, because 72% of all young adults who answered to the questionnaire have visited the showroom in last five years, which is well related to the number of respondents who had earlier answered to have been purchased a used or new car, 76%.

The most important reasons to visit the showrooms are the ability to see the actual car, to do test-drive or to participate in some event. In Question 13 about the most interesting additional functions/activities organized in the showroom the most popular answers after the cafeteria were courses about maintenance and info events about some upcoming new car model. In addition to seeing the car and doing a test drive, the respondents value competent personnel a lot (26%).

The most preferable location for showroom is whether in the city center or in a shopping mall. The information about the interesting car is usually taken first from the internet and then asked for the sales personnel in a showroom or mutually done only at home. The most popular company for young adults to visit the showroom is girl/boyfriend or husband/wife, because often the partner's opinion is important, and/or the partner has better knowledge about cars. The second majority of respondents (22%) would like to go with a friend, who has knowledge and is interested in cars and gives a fair opinion. However, 16% of the respondents still want to visit the showroom alone and the most usual reason for this was the chance to get familiar with the car in own peace without any other distractions.

While waiting for the service, the respondents most preferably like to explore the showroom independently (35%), search for more information by using the tablets of showroom (21%) or sit in the waiting area and have refreshments (16%). However, in the open box there were comments that illustrate the unwillingness of the respondents to wait for the service. If it is about the remarkable financial investment and if the customer does not get the service soon, he/she would leave the place and come maybe later again.

In the case that respondents would get a free advertising item from the showroom they would most likely get a pen or t-shirt. In an open comment box, there were suggestions about some practical and useful car-related accessories, such as car waxing products or car chargers for smartphones. Also, car miniatures were suggested by two respondents.

5.6 Suggestions and development ideas

According to the conducted research, young people appreciate quite traditional car showrooms. The car showroom's most important mission is to present the cars, offer the test-drives and serve the customer with the best knowledge available. However, as noticed earlier in the thesis, the traditional showrooms are starting to be old-fashioned and car manufacturers must come up with innovative ideas of showroom concepts. The research showed, that the digital tools are good, but they cannot replace the real cars and competent personnel.

5.6.1 Cafeteria

The idea of the cafeteria in a car showroom got a strong endorsement from respondents and this can be seen from the answers of several different questions. If the showroom would be also located in the city center, the theme cafeteria would work well. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Mercedes has taken this approach into use and many of its functions are similar to the results of the questionnaire. The respondents are interested in café-restaurant and events, such as courses of car maintenance and information of some upcoming new model. This idea of cafeteria would be carried out in a place which could be modified easily for both purposes. For example, the showroom-cafeteria would be a normal café in the daytime, but in the evening, it would be a place for presentations, events and courses.

Excellent service is the most crucial factor in this kind of place and it gives a positive image of the brand. While writing the thesis, the writer visited Audi's pop-up event in a Milanese bar-restaurant. The decision to enter the place was made because of the beautiful place in a central park and interest to the brand. Audi's logos could be seen from afar and it gave the feeling, that the place must be high-class, because a brand like Audi is having an event with cars there. However, this was not the truth. The service in the restaurant was very poor and after waiting for the attention from the personnel too long, the time was ripe to leave the place. This left a miserable feeling not only about the place, but also about Audi. Bad service was not under Audi's responsibility, but the association between the bad service and a car brand is inevitable. For this reason, the quality of the service should be premium no matter which country or culture is in question and every time the brand is shown.

The idea of SKODA cafeteria could be developed. As the customers want to see the actual car, with the cafeteria it may not be possible to present all the models at the same time in a same place. The solution for this could be themed weeks or months of each model. For example, the theme month of SKODA Kodiaq could include not only the car inside the café, but also brand accessories with a promotional price. The selection of meals in a café would be named after different models of SKODA, for instance, a "Fresh Fabia" would be a name of a salad. According to the month's theme, there would be some unique offers for the meals, during Kodiaq's month the similarly named meal would be discounted. The theme months would bring variation for a normal cafeteria and attract people to visit the place.

Digital tools and virtual reality

As already mentioned, digital tools and virtual reality are good tools as an addition to the showroom, but they should not be the substitute for personnel and real cars. Virtual reality is getting more and more used in the showrooms and it is a useful tool when presenting something new, such as the latest model which is just launched but not yet arrived in to the showroom. For example, with Microsoft HoloLens, which displays objects as holograms could be used when presenting the electric vehicles in the showroom. Virtual reality would be one part of SKODA showroom as an additional tool. Virtual reality corner would work best in places where there is not enough space for presenting all the car models physically in the showroom.

It is predicted, that in future, the virtual reality is going to change the test driving experience as well. It is already forecasted, that virtual reality simulators will replace the traditional test-drive experience, which makes it easier for company owners, when they do not have to organize and handle the test-drives. This is likely to happen, however, according to the questionnaire results, young adults are not as keen on digital tools and the ability to do the test drive was one of the key factors appreciated in the showroom. Again, virtual reality is a good additional tool for existing services.

Events and activities

According to the questionnaire, young adults were interested in events organized in showrooms. More and more often women are the ones who purchase a car, but according to this and other researches women are more likely to do research about the car options online rather than visiting the showroom.

One solution for this would be the events tailored especially for women or families. 32% of women were interested in courses abut car maintenance. Showroom would organize practical courses only for women and use the cars and accessories of the showroom as an example or help with practicing. The course could give a positive image of a SKODA brand and it is very good chance to present the different models and the features for potential clients. The similar concept would work with men too, because 36% of them answered also to be interested in car maintenance courses.

Another idea for the future would be to make a cooperation between SKODA and a local driving school. If the showroom was in the city center and there is some additional room for presentations, the driving school lessons would be organized there. As mentioned earlier, locating the showroom in the city center is a remarkable investment and thus, the room capacity should be used wisely during the entire day. It is not worth investing in large business premises if not used properly. By organizing the driving school in the showroom, the place could be in use also in the evenings, when the theory lessons are usually held. In addition to the benefits of using the room capacity, this would also raise the brand awareness among the young adults, who are probably going to purchase the car, but are not quite certain about which brand they would prefer. The cars in the showroom would be also used as a part of teaching, for example showing the proper tires and so on. If the idea is developed a bit further, the logical continuum to the cooperation between the SKODA and the local driving school(s) would be using the SKODA cars also in driving lesson sessions.

Among with showroom concept ideas for women and young adults, children should not be forgotten either. Children are also potential future customers and the positive awareness from the initial stages can last for a long time. By organizing the children's or family activities in the showroom it would bring not only the children, but also their parents (especially mothers) to the showroom. Positive and fun activities with gratification and proper product placement will stay in the children's' minds which may lead to better results in future.

As an example, McDonald's is usually very attractive choice for children. However, usually the taste of the food is not the reason they love this American fast food restaurant chain. The reason is the overall "experience" that the restaurant offers for families. Bridget Davis, "The Internet Chef" (2010), has covered the topic quite well at her websites by saying: "As children are guided by what's fun and exciting rather than nutritional value and health, the Happy Meal and colorful playgrounds holds every child's fascination. Something greasy, something sweet, a new toy to unwrap and a playground to let loose on".

Even though, the example about McDonald's is from a completely different business branch, the same logic can be also considered when thinking about automotive industry and showroom business. As a summary, for children it is important to have fun at the playground or with some activities and get something extra, like appropriate free merchandise or toys.

6 CONCLUSION

As mentioned several times in the thesis, the objective of the work was to find out the young adults' perception about showrooms and their behavior with online and offline trade. According to the results of the research the additional question was, how to make the showrooms more attractive for young adults. The information can be used in developing the current and planning the future operations.

The method of data collection was chosen to be quantitative approach conducted as an online survey. The method was an appropriate choice, because the results were beneficial and the analyzing process delivered potential ideas for future showrooms. Therefore, the objectives of the thesis were fulfilled, and the study can be found valid. Even though the most important results are quite basic matters, they give guidance about the concepts that should remain, be added to, or removed from the future showrooms.

The research shows, that biggest reason for buying the product from brick and mortar store is the desire to see and try the product and get it immediately. The theory about the showrooms supports the results. The theory explains, that the showrooms are key places for customers to see and try the product and for the company to convince the customer. The research also indicates, that the principal factors of car showrooms are the presence of physical cars, ability to make test drive and competent sales personnel. From this point of view SKODA has functional showrooms, which signifies, that these factors should not be removed from the concept.

The theory about digitalization in the automotive industry implies, that manufacturing processes of the vehicles and vehicles themselves are more and more digital, thanks to robots, connected cars and autonomous vehicles. This development happens because of digital native consumers, who demand digital devices and vehicles. The research did not directly talk about digital vehicles, as the focus was mostly on the showrooms. However, the research indicates, that digital tools in the showroom are useful as an addition, but they should not replace the personnel and physical cars.

Young adults were interested in additional concepts, such as cafeteria and new model releasing events organized in the showroom. Also courses about car maintenance was a popular choice, between the both genders. At least these three concepts would make the showroom more attractive for young adults. The study also revealed an interesting fact, which implies, that according you young adults, the showroom should be located either in the city center or in a shopping mall.

6.1 Limitations

The idea of adding a cafeteria/restaurant to the showroom concept is presented in the thesis for several times. However, there are some limitations of implementing it to the showroom concept. According to the conducted research, the most preferable location for the showroom a city center or a shopping mall. The combined showroom and cafeteria requires a plenty of space, which is a massive financial investment especially in big cities. Due to its expensive implementation, this idea may be seen as a limitation.

6.2 Suggestion for further research

Possible follow-up research would be a work, where some of the most useful ideas are tested in a pilot showroom. The work could include the detailed planning process of the ideas, implementing them in cooperation with the commissioner and analyzing the results of the pilot testing. The project would give a realistic idea about the feasibility of the new concepts and therefore, the chances of errors are minimized.

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PICTURES:

APPENDIX 1: Skoda Logo (Skoda storyboard, 2016) available at:

https://www.skoda-storyboard.com/en/?s=logo&group=images

Picture 1: New corporate design of Skoda Showroom (exterior) (Skoda Storyboard, 2016). Available at: https://www.skoda-storyboard.com/en/?s=new+corporate+identity&group=images

Picture 2: New corporate design of Skoda Showroom (interior) (Skoda Storyboard, 2016). Available at: https://www.skoda-storyboard.com/en/?s=new+corporate+identity&group=images

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. SKODA logo

APPENDIX 2. The questionnaire form

APPENDIX 1. SKODA Logo (Skoda storyboards)

APPENDIX 2. The questionnaire form

Questionnaire research about retail, online trade and automotive showrooms
Kyselytutkimus vähittäismyynnistä, verkkokaupasta sekä autoteollisuuden showroomeista

The questionnaire is anonymous, which means that the answers of questionnaire cannot be connected to individual respondents.
The questionnaire is a part of Bachelor's thesis and the results will be partly published in the final paper.

Kysely on anonyymi, mikä tarkoittaa, että kyselyn vastauksia ei pystytä yhdistämään yksittäisiin vastaajiin.
Kysely kuuluu ammattikorkeakoulun opinnäytetyöhön ja tulokset tullaan osittain julkaisemaan osana lopputyötä.

1. Gender / Sukupuoli *

- ◯ Female / Nainen
- ◯ Male / Mies

2. Country / Maa *

- ◯ Finland / Suomi
- ◯ Germany
- ◯ Czech Republic
- ◯ Something else, which?

3. Age / Ikä *

- ◯ Younger than 15 years / Nuorempi kuin 15 vuotta
- ◯ 16-19 years / vuotta
- ◯ 20-25 years / vuotta
- ◯ 26-30 years / vuotta
- ◯ 31-35 years / vuotta
- ◯ Older than 35 years / vanhempi kuin 35 vuotta

4. Your current status is..
Tämänhetkinen asemasi on.. *

- ◯ Student / Opiskelija
- ◯ Employed / Työntekijä
- ◯ Self-employed / Yrittäjä
- ◯ Unemployed / Työtön
- ◯ Retired / Eläkkeellä
- ◯ None of the above / Ei mikään edellä mainituista

5. Have you ever purchased a car?
Oletko koskaan hankkinut autoa?

- ◯ Yes, a new car / Kyllä, uuden auton
- ◯ Yes, a used car / Kyllä, käytetyn auton
- ◯ No / En

6. Think about your last purchases. How did you buy them?
Ajattele viimeisimpiä hankintojasi. Millä tavalla ostit ne? *

- ◯ From an online store / Verkkokaupasta
- ◯ From a brick-and-mortar store / Kivijalkamyymälästä

7. Which factors affect the most your decision to buy online or from physical store? (you can choose more)
Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat eniten päätökseen joko ostaa netistä tai kivijalkamyymälästä? (voit valita useita)

- ☐ Price / Hinta
- ☐ Availability (is the product in stock or not) / Saatavuus (onko tuotetta heti varastossa vai täytyykö tilata erikseen)
- ☐ Delivery time / Toimitusaika
- ☐ Convenience / Mukavuus
- ☐ Privacy / Yksityisyys

8. What is/are the most important reasons for you to buy product from a physical store (instead of buying online)? (you can choose more)
Mikä tai mitkä ovat tärkeimpiä syitä ostaa tuote kivijalkamyymälästä (verkosta ostamisen sijaan)? (voit valita useita) *

- ☐ I want to get the product immediately / Haluan saada tuotteen heti
- ☐ I want to see and try the product / Haluan nähdä ja testata tuotetta
- ☐ I want to negotiate about the price / Haluan neuvotella hinnasta
- ☐ I want to get more detailed information about the product / Haluan tarkempaa tietoa tuotteesta
- ☐ I want to support the local physical stores / Haluan kannattaa paikallisia kivijalkamyymälöitä
- ☐ It's easier to deal with broken or faulty products and warranty / Helpompi toimia takuuasioissa jos tuote on rikki tai viallinen
- ☐ I want individual service / Haluan yksilöllistä palvelua
- ☐ Something else, what / Jotain muuta, mitä?

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9. Choose two most attractive showrooms by clicking the chosen pictures.
Valitse kaksi sinua eniten miellyttävää showroomia klikkaamalla valitsemiasi kuvia. *

1. ENTERTAINING / VIIHDYTTÄVÄ

(Picture / Kuva: CPP-LUXURY)

2. DELIGHTFUL / KUJELEVA

(Picture / Kuva: Motor Village)

3. DESCRIPTIVE / KUVAILEVA

(Picture / Kuva: Skoda media portal)

4. INTERACTIVE / VUOROVAIKUTTEINEN

(Picture / Kuva: Panasonic Global)

5. DIGITAL / DIGITAALINEN

(Picture/ Kuva: Automotive news)

6. DELUXE / YLELLINEN

(Picture / Kuva: Motor Trader)

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Questionnaire research about retail, online trade and automotive showrooms
Kyselytutkimus vähittäismyynnistä, verkkokaupasta sekä autoteollisuuden showroomeista

Car showroom means a car dealership that business is to display and/or sell cars for customers. In most cases automobile manufacturer displays diverse models of cars in showrooms. In showrooms customers have chance to e.g. get familiar with the car with an assistance of sales representatives and do a test-drive.

Auto showroomilla tarkoitetaan näyttelytilaa, jossa myydään ja/tai esitellään asiakkaille uusia autoja. Useissa tapauksissa autonvalmistajat esittelevät autojen useita eri malleja showroomeissa. Showroomissa asiakkaalla on mahdollisuus mm. tutustua autoon myyjän avustuksella sekä ajaa koeajo.

10. How many times have you approximately visited a car showroom in last five years?
Kuinka monta kertaa suunnilleen olet vieraillut auto showroomissa viimeisen viiden vuoden aikana? *

- ◯ None / En kertaakaan
- ◯ 1-2 times / Kertaa
- ◯ 3-4 times / Kertaa
- ◯ More than 5 times / Enemmän kuin viisi kertaa

11. What would be the most likely reason for you to visit car showroom?
Mikä voisi olla todennäköisin syy auto showroomissa vierailuun? *

- ◯ To see the actual car that I am interested in / Halu nähdä auto, josta olen kiinnostunut
- ◯ To learn more information about the car / Saada enemmän tietoa autosta
- ◯ To see the showroom itself / Nähdä itse näyttelytila
- ◯ To do the test-drive / Ajaa koeajo
- ◯ To participate in some event / Osallistuminen johonkin tapahtumaan
- ◯ Something else, what? / Jokin muu, mikä?

12. Choose three most important factors that you appreciate the most in car showrooms.
Valitse kolme tärkeintä asiaa, joita arvostat showroomeissa eniten. *

- ☐ Competent personnel / Osaava henkilökunta
- ☐ Ability to see the car that I am interested in / Mahdollisuus nähdä auto, josta olen kiinnostunut
- ☐ Chance to make a test-drive / Mahdollisuus koeajoon
- ☐ Stylish interior / Tyylikäs sisustus
- ☐ Informative digital tools such as big screens, tablets etc.
  Informatiiviset digitaaliset välineet, kuten suuret näytöt, tabletit jne.
- ☐ Free Wi-fi / Ilmainen verkkoyhteys
- ☐ Refreshments while waiting for the service / Virvokkeet palvelua odotellessa
- ☐ Entertainment, e.g. playgroud for kids / Viihdykkeet, esim. leikkipaikka lapsille
- ☐ Something else, what? / Jotakin muuta, mitä?

13. What kind of additional activities/events/functions would you like to see in car showrooms? (you can choose more)
Millaisia lisäaktiviteetteja/-tapahtumia/-ominaisuuksia toivoisit näkeväsi auto showroomeissa? (voit valita useita) *

- ☐ Cafeteria, restaurant / Kahvila, ravintola
- ☐ Concerts / Konsertteja
- ☐ Quizzes / Tietokilpailuja
- ☐ Fashion joined to the concept, (e.g. fashion shows and store)
  Muoti yhdistettynä konseptiin, (esim. muotinäytöksiä ja myymälä)
- ☐ Small electronics joined to the concept (e.g. smartphone cases and other small electronic accessories)
  Pienelektroniikka yhdistettynä konseptiin (esim. älypuhelinsuojat ja muut pienet elektroniikkatarvikkeet)
- ☐ Toycar races for kids or other kids' activities / Leluautokilpailu lapsille tai muut lastentapahtumat
- ☐ Charitable events / Hyväntekeväisyystapahtumat
- ☐ Courses about car maintenance / Kursseja auton kunnossapidosta
- ☐ Info events of some upcoming car model / Infotilaisuuksia tuleviin automalleihin liittyen
- ☐ Showroom for private use (e.g. cocktail or birthday parties organized by order)
  Showroom yksityiseen käyttöön (esim. cocktail- tai syntymäpäiväjuhlat tilauksesta)
- ☐ None of the above / Ei mitään yllämainituista
- ☐ Something else, what? / Jotain muuta, mitä?

14. What would be the most preferable location for a car showroom with additional functions (mentioned in Question 13)?
Mikä olisi mieluisin sijainti auto showroomille, jossa olisi edellisessä kysymyksessä mainittuja lisätoimintoja tai tapahtumia? *

- ◯ Shopping mall / Ostoskeskus
- ◯ City center / Kaupungin keskusta
- ◯ Near the highway / Lähellä moottoritietä
- ◯ Industrial area / Teollisuusalue

15. Where would you prefer to find out the information about the car you are interested in? (You can choose more)
Miten/ mistä yleensä hankit tiedon autosta, josta olet kiinnostunut? (Voit valita useita) *

- ☐ I would only make an online research at home / Kotona selaamalla netistä
- ☐ First I would make some online research at home and then go to a salesperson
  Ensin netistä selaamalla, jonka jälkeen kysymällä tarkempia tietoja myyjältä
- ☐ Reading magazines / Lukemalla lehdistä
- ☐ Ask friends or other people / Kysymällä kavereilta tai muilta tutuilta
- ☐ Go straight to showroom and talk to the salesperson / Menemällä suoraan showroomiin ja kysymällä myyjältä
- ☐ Watching specialized shows e.g. Top Gear / Katsomalla aiheeseen liittyviä TV-ohjelmia kuten esim. Top Gear
- ☐ Somewhere else, where? / Jostakin muualta, mistä?

16. With whom would you preferably go to car showroom and why?
Kenen kanssa menisit mieluiten käymään auto showroomissa ja miksi? *

- ◯ Alone / Yksin
- ◯ With girl/boyfriend or wife/husband / Tyttö/poikaystävän tai vaimon/miehen kanssa
- ◯ With a family and kids / Perheen ja lapsien kanssa
- ◯ With a friend / Kaverin kanssa
- ◯ With someone else, whom? / Jonkun muun kanssa, kenen?

17. If you need to wait for the service from personnel, what would you preferably do? (You can choose max. 3 answers)
Mikä on mielestäsi mieluisinta tekemistä, jos joudut odottamaan palvelua henkilökunnalta? (Voit valita max. kolme vastausta) *

- ☐ Explore the showroom on my own / Tutustuminen showroomiin omin neuvoin
- ☐ Sit at the waiting area and have refreshments / Istuminen odotusaulassa ja virvokkeden nauttiminen
- ☐ Play some interactive games from i.e. big screen in the showroom
  Interaktiivisten pelejen pelaaminen esim. ison näytön kautta
- ☐ Search for more information about the car by using tablets of showroom
  Autoon tutustuminen käyttämällä showroomin tabletteja ja kosketusnäyttöjä
- ☐ Search for more information about the car by or surfing in the Internet using my own smartphone
  Lisätiedon etsiminen omalla älypuhelimella tai muu netissä surffailu
- ☐ Wait in a showroom cafeteria / Odottaminen showroomin kahvilassa
- ☐ Something else, what? / Jotain muuta, mitä? ____

18. You get a free advertising item from showroom. Choose the most preferable item.
Saat ilmaisen mainostuotteen showroomista. Valitse mieluisin tuote. *

- ◯ Pen / Kynä
- ◯ Pin / Pinssi
- ◯ T-shirt / T-paita
- ◯ Cap / Lippalakki
- ◯ Toy(s) for kids / Lelu(ja) lapsille
- ◯ Notebook / Vihko
- ◯ Cup / Muki
- ◯ I don't want anything / En halua mitään
- ◯ Something else, what? / Jotain muuta,mitä? ____

[<-- Previous] [Submit]

100% completed