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Customer satisfaction and internationalization through e-marketing

Case: Cybershop web shop

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Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on mitata Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyttä verkossa julkaistun kyselyn avulla. Kattavien tulosten saamiseksi, asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyttä palveluun, tuotteisiin ja verkkosivuihin mitattiin.

Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen osa sisältää aiheet; asiakastyytyväisyys, kansainvälinen markkinointi ja kansainvälistyminen verkkomarkkinoinnin kautta. Verkkomarkkinoinnin kautta kansainvälistymiseen käytettiin kirjallisuuden lisäksi kvalitatiivista tiedonkeruumenetelmää haastattelun muodossa. Empiirinen osa sisältää asiakastyytyväisyyskyselyn tulokset ja analyysin, joiden saamiseen käytettiin kvantitatiivista tiedonkeruumenetelmää. Kysely lähetettiin koko Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakasrekisterille sähköpostin välityksellä ja tuloksena oli 884 vastausta. Tulokset analysoitiin kuvioiden avulla.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että asiakkaat ovat tyytyväisiä kaikkiin kolmeen edellämainittuihin tekijöihin Cybershopin verkkokaupassa. Useita ehdotuksia ja kommentteja oli annettu, jotka voivat tarjota Cybershopille arvokasta tietoa siitä, miten heidän toimintojaan voisi kehittää.

Avainsanat: asiakastyytyväisyys, kansainvälistyminen, verkkokauppa

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Thesis abstract

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The purpose of this thesis is to measure the level of satisfaction of the Cybershop's web shop's customers with the help of an online questionnaire. The satisfaction with the service, products and the web pages was measured to gain comprehensive outcomes.

The theoretical part of the thesis includes topics; customer satisfaction, international marketing and internationalization through e-marketing. To gain knowledge of internationalization through e-marketing, in addition to literature, qualitative research method was used in for of an interview. The empirical part includes the results and analysis of the results of the customer satisfaction survey and the research method was quantitative. The questionnaire was sent to the Cybershop's web shop's customer register via e-mail, resulting 884 responses. The results were analyzed with the help of charts.

The results of the research show, that the customers are satisfied with all the previously mentioned three factors of Cybershop's web shop. Various suggestions and comments were also issued, which can provide Cybershop with valuable information in order to improve their operation.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, internationalization, e-marketing

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Terms

Cyberpunk	A subculture that has been inspired by cyberpunk fiction
Emo	A subculture bearing its own type of fashion and lifestyle which got its name after the word emotional.

Abbreviations

OECD	Economic Cooperation and Development
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commissions on International Trade Law
WTO	World Trade Organization
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
VAT	Value Added Tax

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1 INTRODUCTION

The main topic of this thesis is customer satisfaction, including sub topics of internationalization and the use of e-marketing in the process of internationalization. Customer satisfaction is an issue of great importance for any company willing to stay competitive in the markets. A company with a great deal of commerce with private persons needs to measure the rate of customer satisfaction periodically to be able to respond the needs and desires of the customers. In addition, the results of the customer satisfaction survey may act as a guide line for the company, and bring up issues that may come up as a total surprise, demanding perhaps major changes inside the company's activities or ideology or indicate the strengths the company already possesses. In that way, the company improves to satisfy the customers and probably receive new ones simultaneously.

By going international, a company enters new, larger and unfamiliar markets bearing both risks and opportunities. Various factors need to be taken into consideration when internationalization takes place in a company to succeed in the foreign markets, such as demographics, environment and culture.

Internationalization can be executed in many ways, but as the Internet has started to play a major role in any business and in peoples' lives, this thesis is studying e-marketing as the gateway to internationalize, thus any other form of internationalization is excluded from this thesis.

The customer satisfaction research was conducted for the Cybershop's web shop, which is a rather young company on its way to internationalize via the Internet. Cybershop performs customer satisfaction surveys once every a couple of years. For me, this topic is highly interesting, since the company has similar values and view of life as I do. Moreover, I have purchased products from their web shop a couple of times. The research will clarify whether the other customers share similar opinions about the Cybershop's web shop with me.

1.1 The purpose and goals of the thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to measure the rate of customers' satisfaction with Cybershop's web shop. Three main areas were examined in the research; satisfaction with the service, products and the web pages provided by Cybershop's web shop. In addition to the main purpose of this thesis, three sub goals exist as well:

1. The biggest and first goal of this thesis was to study customer satisfaction, internationalization and e-marketing from theoretical literature to gain better knowledge and understanding of the customers and the whole concept of Cybershop as a firm.
2. The second goal was to interview the firm owner about their future plans of penetrating the international markets.
3. The third goal was to do a survey, from which could be examined Cybershop's web shop's level of customer satisfaction.

1.2 Cybershop

Cybershop is an alternative clothing and lifestyle shop which was established by Inga Chaudhary and her husband in year 2003 in Helsinki. The first, rather small, physical store was opened in the center of Helsinki recruiting two employees. After the commercial center Kamppi was constructed, in 2006, Cybershop received an offer of available business premises from the fifth floor of Kamppi commercial center, in which Cybershop has been operating ever since. During the same year, the web shop was established, and later after that, the very first physical store changed its location to bigger premises, one physical store was opened in Turku in 2008 and another in 2009 in Itä-Keskus, Helsinki. In total, Cybershop has now three physical stores in Helsinki and one in Turku. Cybershop can also be seen in the summer festivals. In the future, Cybershop is willing to expand its operations in Finland with a few more stores in the west, middle and north.

Today, the division of the revenues generated between the physical stores and the web shop are roughly 64% from all the physical stores all together and thus 36% from the web shop. Per month Cybershop's web shop receives visitors from approximately hundred different countries and from more than 94 000 visits (number is growing) about 2% lead to purchase, nearly 30% leave from the page as it opens, and the average duration of the visit is seven minutes including ten clicks on average in the web pages. The actual correspondence with foreign customers is rather scarce.

The products are from various countries. European products are from Germany, Holland and England and the products provided are both existing brands and self-designed collections, which are produced in China. From Nepal, Cybershop imports collection following the sustainable development and fair-trade principles by employing people and donating a segment of revenue to the orphanage since 2004.

Cybershop's web shop's delivery time can be considered rather fast, since it promises to deliver purchased products in 3 to 7 working days, or even faster inside Finland. The orders made outside Finland are delivered in 4 to 8 working days.

As Cybershop is on its way to internationalize, changes take place in the product range in the web shop. In the future, Cybershop plans to open physical stores in Europe when interesting offers emerge and time allows. However Cybershop has a physical store and a web shop in Australia. In the web shop, an Australian Internet optimizer is employed to run the web store to enable better response to the Australian customers. Promotion is carried out similarly as in Finland; by reserving appearance in the festivals and handing flyers, thus gaining visibility through face-to-face advertisement. (Chaudhary, 2011, phone interview.)

1.3 Alternative fashion

The fashion that Cybershop sells is said to be alternative on the web pages. This kind of fashion covers various styles from various cultures. The main idea of alternative fashion is that it is totally different from commercial mainstream fashion and the style of alternative fashion is distinctive and impractical, for example, in *Cyberpunk* and *emo* subcultures. However, simplicity and comfort is also available in form of grunge fashion.

People often think that alternative fashion is something modern, but it actually has roots in the Western history. At that time, the subcultures were defined e.g. as criminal, hedonistic, and against of homogeny. Yet these are but stereotypical concepts and did not reflect the values and beliefs of a segment of the users of alternative fashion.

Even today the nature of the users of alternative fashion is affiliated with the look they possess by wearing alternative fashion. It is suggested that the wearers of the alternative fashion use the appearance to indicate similar interests to each other, express oneself or dispute the modern norms of beauty. An individual may separate her/himself from the mainstream fashion even by an accident.

The influences of modern alternative fashion come from various sources and styles. The styles may be from the past, as retro and vintage (e.g. Rockabilly and Victorian fashion, etc.) or from modern times like Japanese street fashion. The styles may also originate from personal tastes and values, musicians, art and films.

2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

2.1 What is customer satisfaction?

This sub chapter is about customer satisfaction as a definition. According to Gerson and Machosky, customer satisfaction is one of the most (if not the most) important aspect in today's companies pursuing profits, thus it does not necessarily matter what business one company considers to be excellent in quality and service if it does not make the customer satisfied. In other words, customer satisfaction can be defined by customer's observation whether his or her expectations have been fulfilled or not. If not, it is the duty of the seller to figure out means to make the customer satisfied. (Gerson & Machosky 1993, 5.)

The most important factor for a company is a customer for whom the work is done, therefore there is no such thing as a functioning company without customers. And the more the customer is satisfied the more likely it is that the customer will form a firm relationship with the company. In addition, the customer may also introduce her or his friends and family with the company. In this sense, from the company's point of view, customer satisfaction is greatly vital for the profitable continuity. (Gerson & Machosky 1993, 5.)

Customer satisfaction can also be defined as the relationship between the expectations and the experiences of the customer. As stated before, if the experience reflects the expectations, customer is satisfied, but if the company fails to meet the expectations of the customer, he or she will be unsatisfied. A satisfied customer is a valuable equity as well as an advertisement. By measuring customer satisfaction, the company will have a general view on the development of its quality on services and/or products and makes it rather easy to take care of problems that may emerge. Briefly, the customer defines the quality of the service and it is in the

key position when company wants to know how well they have succeeded. (Mäntyneva 2001, 125.)

The knowledge about the true needs of the customer is important for a company to segment its service, products and resources. By doing this, not only is the company satisfying the customer but also improving the company's productivity level. (Liukko 1995, 22.)

As one could estimate, customer satisfaction is not a responsibility of a one key person in a company. The whole staff in the company is responsible for customer satisfaction and finding means to improve it. However, there must be a single goal that the entire staff should work towards and understand the customers' needs in order to reach it. A common goal should be a customer who remains loyal and satisfied with the company. A clear common objective results to constant development of services, products and processes, but to reach this goal, one must be aware of the truthful needs of the customer. (Liukko 1995, 22; Gerson & Machosky 1993, 6.)

Kotler sees customer satisfaction as a tool of competition between companies, hence a company should make a customer more satisfied than he or she would be with another company. (Kotler 2005a, 20.)

In addition to needs, customer has also desires. For example, a customer needs to buy a pair of new shoes, but he or she has desires of how he or she will be treated in the buying process. We could thereby determine that the expectations of the customer consist of desires and needs. However, forming the expectations is not only internal but also external. (Grönroos 2000, 263-264.)

2.2 The factors that affect customer satisfaction

There are as many factors that affect customer satisfaction as there are different customers. As we discussed earlier, it is important that a company is able to meet customer's expectations and thereby create customer satisfaction, but even better is if those expectations are exceeded by a positive surprise. Even a small act such as a quick delivery may cause a situation where customer's expectations are exceeded and thus customer's satisfaction with the purchased product or even with the whole company increases. If the entirety functions well and surpasses the customer's expectations, customer feels more satisfied with the trade than he or she would usually feel if the trade would cause outcomes that are on the same level with the expectations. (Rope 2002, 285.)

Customer satisfaction can be established by a special contact between the company and the customer. By doing transaction with a company and by evaluating the activities of the company, a customer achieves satisfaction by the feelings and experiences. The special contact includes personal-, product-, scheme-, and milieu contacts. The factors that produce customer satisfaction are;

- The quality of customer service and sales staff
- The functionality and durability of the product
- Billing and maintenance
- The interior decoration and appearance of the office

As mentioned previously in this text, to ensure customer satisfaction, the entirety must function including all of these aspects and on a level that would satisfy a customer in means of quality and efficiency. (Rope 2002, 266-267.)

2.2.1 Product

According to Kotler (2000, 291.), a product is anything that can be marketed, whether the product itself is either tangible or intangible. A tangible product is material, such as a shirt and intangible product is referred to service product, such as a cashier behind the cash register who is placing the shirt inside a plastic bag for the customer. A product is the entirety consisting of images, goods and services. There are three parts that include to a product. Firstly there is the core product, which means either the service or the product that a customer decides to purchase. Second part is the image product that consists of the following segments: brand, package, appearance of the product, product name, milieu of service and the reputation of the product. Lastly, there are add-on services that are usually included to the core product to add value to services for individual needs. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2001, 105.)

Robinette (Robinette et al 2000, 92.) has stated that customer's purchase decision is ultimately derived by emotions and thus a product is considered to be a commodity of deeper meaning. In addition, more important is what is being offered and how instead of what is being marketed and to whom. To gain a competitive edge over rival companies, product must be better in every aspect; the product should attract customer's emotions, it should be different from similar products, functional and attractive. While making the purchase decision, the customer purchases both the core product and the images that have been created of the product. (Rope & Pyykkö 2003 177-178.) Moreover, customer should have the right to have knowledge about the product. A sales man is ought to present the product to customer, tell the truthful benefits of the product and the customer has the right to experiment the product to prove whether the sales man was honest in his or her presentation of the product. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2001, 219.)

2.2.2 Image

Famous companies are often associated with superior image, but this is not always the case. A customer defines an image of a company by considering the previous experiences and appreciation. Image also has an effect on both expectation of service and experience of service. A company with negative image may forfeit its customers. (Lehtinen & Isoviita 2001, 57.) The perception of image becomes from a customer and his or her opinions about values, information, prejudices, experiences, beliefs, observations, feelings and attitude. An individual experiences life and environment differently from anyone else and the same recurs when defining an image. A company or its product has thus as many images as there are customers to define it. (Rope & Pyykkö 2003, 179.)

Wright (2006) states that corporate name and its recognition has a major impact on the company image. To gain a positive image, several companies have changed their names, thus gaining new market areas. It is arguable that there would be correlation between a positive company image and company success, although very little evidences exist. Moreover, company image has an effect on effectiveness of communication, customer behavior and loyalty, customers' perception of satisfaction, quality and loyalty. It is also mentioned, that:

“...corporate image is an information cue that consumers use to judge matters, such as credibility, perceived quality and purchase intentions.” (Wright 2006, 830-831.)

A company may want to enhance its image amongst its retained and potential customers by image marketing, yet it is difficult to obtain a positive image if the company had a negative image previously. (Lahtinen&Isoviita 2001, 57.) However a company should influence customers and the images they associate with the company.

The image should be clear and informative and explain the following subjects: what the company is, what the company is pursuing and what the company wants to communicate. (Pesonen et al 2002, 88–91.) Or as the CEO of Hackman, Tapio Hintikka, has said:

“When you sell the image, everything should be in order. It requires time, capital, courage and insight.” (Talouselämä web page [referenced 4.2.2002.])

As one could draw a conclusion from the previous text, image is seen as rather powerful implement of companies. However, Kotler finds image to be somewhat overrated, since according to his opinion, in addition to image, a company should invest on product that is different from anything else by means of appearance, features and add on services. (Kotler 2005a, 62.)

2.2.3 Marketing communications

According to Lahtinan & Isoviita (2001), marketing communications are used to create image or information about a product or service. According to the traditional division, the intended resources of marketing communication are advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. Marketing communication can also be unintended, such as good customer service or clean service environment. Negative unintended communicate e.g. arrogant behavior of a sales person, may damage customer’s image of the company.

Marketing communication itself can be divided into two parts. The first part is called the informative communication, which means that the communication dedicates to provide basic data about a product and thus decrease the uncertainty among customers. The second part is suggestive communication, which is intended to affect customer’s emotions by creating an emotional setting with for example pictures, music and movement.

The objectives of marketing communication are:

- making the company and its products well-known
- to accomplish profitable sales
- establishing and developing the relationships with regular customers
- improving the company image
- to affect customers' attitudes

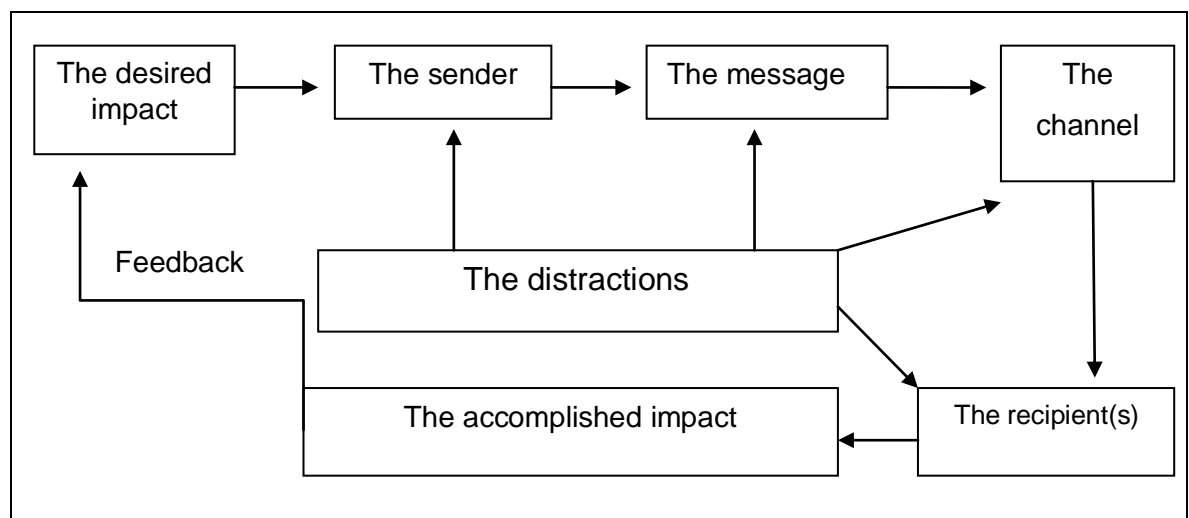


Figure 1. The common model of communication (Lahtinen&Isoviita 2001, 172.)

The first phase of communication is the **desired impact**, which can be defined by setting a goal, of e.g. what is the age of the target group a company is willing to reach. The second phase handles the **sender** which can be either an individual or a community. From the sender, the message goes to the third phase, the **recipient**. Based on the situation, the recipient may be organizations, groups or individuals, which needs and abilities should be researched beforehand to make the correct decisions considering the message and channel used. Fourthly, a company should define a **message** for different channels of media. The message should be concise and differ from the competitive messages to reach the target group. After creating a suitable message, the correct **channel** should be found in order to make the message available for the desired customer segment. There are numerous ways to get the message in publicity; for example television, the Internet,

product placement, trade fairs, newspapers and radio. It is also possible to use several channels at the same time. Sixthly, marketing communication may encounter **distractions** that arise from every phases of communication listed previously; the sender, the recipient, the channel, and the competition. Even the message may be a distraction, if it is not suitable for the target market. Lastly, as the company obtains the **accomplished impact**, it is being compared with the desired impact to gain knowledge whether the message was reached by the target market or not. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2001, 171-174.)

2.2.4 Needs, expectations and experiences

As written in the previous chapters, one could see that there are many issues that have an effect on customer satisfaction. For customer to be satisfied or unsatisfied with the product, service or the whole company, the purchase experience needs to be experienced. Needs are the basis for purchase behavior of a customer and affect the expectations of the product quality. When combined all together, expectations, communication, cost, the product itself and the previous experiences describe the expected quality. In addition to expected quality, customer's own experiences of product or service influence the customer satisfaction. The satisfaction is also affected by the quality of service. To conclude the satisfaction level with the purchase decision, a customer needs to compare his or her expectations with the experiences. (Pesonen et al. 2002, 44–47; Rope & Pyykkö 2003, 151.)

2.3 The significance of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is of great importance, since it is more probable that a satisfied customer will have transactions again with a company than an unsatisfied customer. As well essential are customers' positive experiences with the company because customers will report their positive experiences to other potential customers. Furthermore, a company may conserve marketing costs due to satisfied customers, therefore company's profitability and sales proceeds will increase. Accord-

ing to the rule 1-10-27 and an investigation made in Finland, comparing to regular customer, a 27-tuple investment in marketing is needed to regain a lost customer and it is ten times more expensive to gain new customers instead of selling to the regular customers. Moreover, the satisfied regular customers communicate actively and broadly. The verbal communication among the people “word-of-mouth” has been considered to be more effective than mass marketing. Yet that does not mean that a company should not attempt to gain new customers, since most of the companies experience customer losses at some point.

However, unfortunately for companies, negative experiences are as well reported forward among customers. The well-known rule 26/27, created by Möller, states that only one customer of 27 makes a complaint of unsatisfactory treatment to the company, instead unsatisfied customers will report their negative experiences to approximately 10 people. (Lahtinen & Isoviita 2001, 81-83.)

The satisfied customers of a company are loyal, which means that they will usually purchase more and more often and stay loyal to a company even when it is going through modifications. (Lele & Sheth 1991, 1.) According to Lecklin (2002, 128-129.) satisfied customers are purchase loyal and willing to continue the business relation. Still, it may not be always true because of e.g. customer’s willingness of variation or high costs. In the following figure (FIGURE 2) it is shown the significance of losing a loyal, long-term customer.

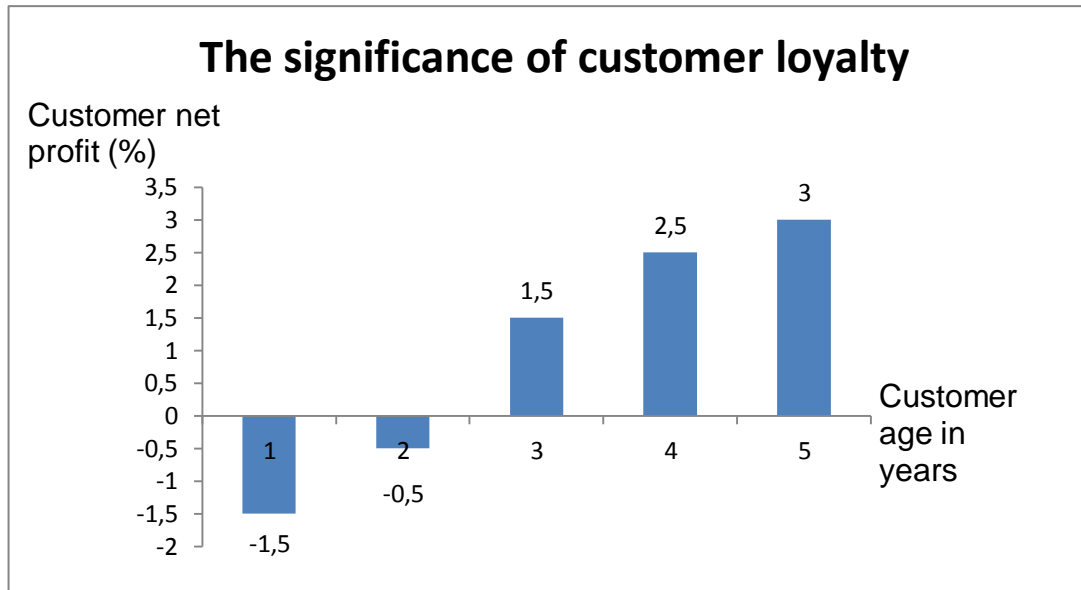


Figure 2. Customer age and its impact on customer profitability. (Lecklin (2002, 129.)

2.4 Measuring customer satisfaction

There are as many perceptions of a company as there are customers that expect to have decent service. Moreover, every customer has a unique opinion on good service, thus it is vital for a company to research the issues that customers appreciate and transform these expectations into actual operation. With good service, a company differentiates from other companies and attracts new potential customers. (Ylikoski 1999, 117.)

2.4.1 Reasons to measure customer satisfaction

Gerson (1993, 24-30.) has listed seven different reasons to measure customer satisfaction.

1. To acquire customer perceptions
2. To determine customer wants, needs, requirements and expectations
3. To close the gaps
4. To examine expectations to improve services and customer satisfaction
5. Because improved performance leads to increased profits
6. To learn the current situation and design the future
7. To constantly improve

According to the first reason, customer perceptions should be analyzed in order to improve business. It is suggested that not only should a company research in quantitative but also in qualitative methods. By researching customer perceptions, a company can solve various topics, such as what does customer seek in the company, what makes them satisfied and how can a company make the customers become long-term customers. The second reason means that a company should investigate the customers' present and future needs in order to have the ability to react to demand beforehand. Thirdly, it is recommended to close the gaps and a gap could stand e.g. for the space that exists between the customers' expectations and experience. In other words, if the customer did not get what he or she expected to get by purchasing a product, there is a gap that ought to be closed so that customer satisfaction would be gained. Fourthly, when it comes to improving a company, it is recommended that a company would set customer satisfaction based performance norms, research the customers' needs and expectations and finally compare the company's norms against the customers' requirements. Thus a company gains knowledge about the company's current state and the enchantments that should take place to meet the customers' demand. The fifth reason is that a company may elevate profits in correlation with performance and customer satisfaction, as more potential customers emerge. Sixthly, one of the most important facts that a company should be aware of is the customers' satis-

faction with the company now and in the future. To gather customers' opinions on company's business is of great importance for current and the future times. It may even affect the strategy and the orientation of a business. The last reason to measure customer satisfaction is that a company can improve its performance, by continuously asking its customers and staff how to better the activities. (Gerson & Machosky 1993, 24-30.)

2.4.2 How to measure customer satisfaction

Measuring customer satisfaction is vital for companies that are willing to improve, but as a company decides to measure customer satisfaction, it should be aware of two different ways to implement it. In addition to customer satisfaction surveys, a company should be able to collect direct feedback from the customers as well. To clarify the actual rate of satisfaction and to be able to react to the changes rapidly enough, a company should use these both methods interchangeably. (Rope 2002, 297–298.)

Rope (2000) suggests that decent preparations should be made considering the customer satisfaction survey before the actual survey takes place. A company ought to think over the essential issues, such as who are measured, which methods are used and how often the satisfaction research is executed. (Rope 2000, 300.) To make the process simpler, a company may use methods that are demonstrated functional before and the collecting of results, analyzing and drawing conclusions is thus easier and lowers the margin of error. A successful customer satisfaction research is able to explain the rate of satisfaction and the factors that have an impact on it. (Lotti 2001, 71.)

The quality of customership should also be taken in account; whether the customer is old or new, what did the customer buy and when did the last purchase take place. The behavior is said to be different between the customers in different phases of customership timeline. A new customer pays attention to different issues than an old customer and this is why when conducting a research, the di-

verse phases of customerhip should be recalled. Only when a customer decides to purchase from a company again, one can estimate whether the customer has actually been satisfied or not. (Lotti 2001, 71.)

A useful indicator was introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in the middle 1980's called Servqual. The idea behind Servqual is that the customer satisfaction rate toward product or service is measured based on their experiences and expectations. In other words, if the experience is not on the same level with expectations, customer is unsatisfied and vice versa. As Parasuraman et al examined the elements of the service quality and how the customers estimate quality, they first defined ten elements of quality which were later summarized into five crucial factors. These five factors are associated with company environment, reacting vulnerability, assertiveness, reliability and empathy. (Grönroos 2001, 112–115; Lotti 2001, 71–75.)

Below are explained the five crucial dimensions of quality.

1. *The company environment* reflects the pleasantness of the business premises including the materials and devices. Moreover both staff's appearance and communication have an effect on the functionality of the environment.
2. *Reacting vulnerability* is about the customer service and how quickly, helpfully and sincerely a staff member is prepared to serve the customer.
3. *Assertiveness* means the both know-how and the professional ability level of the staff. Additionally the rate of how well the staff manages to create trust among the customers.
4. *Reliability* originates from the company's internal actions. The customers should always be served with precise and flawless service.
5. *Empathy* occurs when a company takes care of its customers, is willing to solve their problems and operate for the advantage of the customer.

When implying the Servqual measurement system, a customer is requested to answer what their expectations were before and the experiences after the pur-

chase. Every question had a scale of seven sections between the pinnacles of “totally agree” and “totally disagree”. As the expectations and experiences are compared with each other, the overall rate of satisfaction can be measured. If the customers gained less than what they expected, the rate of satisfaction was low. In addition, the Servqual system is used to survey how important every dimension is for the customer. The results are analyzed in different dimension and consecutively, because even if the factors generating dissatisfaction were improved, there is a chance that actual modification does not take place due to the dependency of the elements. The research should be performed regularly, since the customers and their expectations change over time. The purpose of the system is to realize the influence of different issues between one other and to be able to concentrate on the most important factors. (Grönroos 2001, 116–120; Lotti 2001, 71–75.)

3 INTERNATIONALIZATION

In this chapter, international marketing is being discussed. As the issue is considered rather wide, to keep the chapter structure simple, compact yet broad enough at the same time is not an easy task to conduct. However, this chapter mainly focuses on general issues excluding e.g. the foreign market entry modes (exporting, licensing, joint venture and direct investment), since the main purpose of the thesis is to concentrate on internationalization through e-marketing.

As long as the national borders have existed, so has the international trade. Although both domestic and international marketing share many similarities, as the basic factors of marketing, they share differences as well. The biggest difference is that international marketing occurs between countries. In addition, international marketer encounters with diverse limits, macroenvironmental issues and conflicts considering cultures, laws and societies. (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2004, 4-5.) The issues that an international marketer needs to take in consideration beforehand are discussed more deeply in a later chapter.

International marketing can also be defined as international transaction. As the nature of international marketing is volatile, international marketer needs to follow and adjust to it, whether it demands sacrifices among marketing strategies or even the business idea. In other words, international marketing can be referred as science or art if accomplished successfully.

3.1 Reasons for internationalization

Many countries' and companies' enthusiasm to internationalize has grown over the past some decades as the international trade has continuously bypassed domestic trade in performance. Furthermore, internationalization offers more opportunities in markets if compared with domestic markets.

Czinkota & Ronkainen (2004) have listed various motivations to internationalize. The motives are divided into two parts; the first set of motivations is under the heading called proactive motivations, which stands for the motivations that derive from inside of a company and the internationalization process is desired. Then there is another set of motivations that is called reactive motivations. These motivations emerge to a company externally and the international process is constrained.

There are seven factors under proactive motivation. Firstly, by internationalizing, a company may receive a **profit advantage**, which is considered to be the major agitator as the managers presume, that international marketing might raise the profit margins and expose to supplemental profits. Yet, in most of the internationalization cases, the expected revenues do not correlate with the gained revenues. Usually the high costs of starting an internationalization process and lack of experience in international marketing destabilize the estimations of possible revenues in a negative way. The second most stimulating factor is, depending on a company, **unique products** or **technological advantage**. Even if a company produces exceptional products or services, or attains an advantage through developed technology in certain sector, one should take R&D into consideration as it has been proven to have a positive impact on the exported products' success. However, a company should evaluate the duration of the success. Nowadays, it is rare that a company with a competitive edge would guarantee itself years lasting designation as the single international market supplier because of scarcity of protecting the intellectual property and competition. The third motivation is **exclusive market**, which consists of know-how in areas of e.g. marketplaces and customers abroad. This know-how is usually protected from other companies, and generally includes, for example market research, important contacts or business sense. Still, these activities seldom guarantee permanent leadership in the international markets, since the competitors often tend to follow and time to time even surpass the market leaders. Fourthly, there is a motivation called **managerial urge** which means that the managers of the company may have the desire to pursue international markets, business growth and extension of the market. The fifth motivator considers the taxes. Companies may receive tax facilitation from the government as a

stimulus when penetrating the international markets, thus international activities can be seen productive. Lastly, if a company endeavors market share, it may be motivated by **economies of scale**, which can not only increase profitability in international activities but domestically as well by increasing the level of production and thus decreasing the costs of the production.

There are listed six reactive motivations for a company to internationalize. The first reactive motivation is **competitive pressure** which arises as a company becomes aware of competitors that might surpass in performance and market share. In addition, if a company acts slowly towards internationalization, competitors gain better market share. Yet on the other hand, if the company enters the foreign markets too quickly, it may lead to drawbacks as the preparation has not been sufficient enough. Secondly, **overproduction** can also trigger a company to internationalize, since large inventory may result in rapid, short-term internationalization, if the domestic market demand is not adequate. The third motivation is **declining domestic sales**, in which case a company might expand abroad instead of enhancing its products back to the beginning of their life cycle in the domestic markets. Especially developing countries may benefit from the products exceeded by the newest innovations, and that are already declining in their life cycle in their country of origin. Fourthly, a company may be motivated by **excess capacity**, if the company produces less than it has potential. Internationalization can offer a possibility to cover the fixed expenses generated by excess capacity the company could not otherwise cover in the home market. **Saturated domestic markets** are the fifth stimuli, which can be referred to declining domestic sales in results. In this case, internationalization is as well used to elongate the product or company life cycle. The last reactive motivation is **proximity to customers and ports**, which can be considered rather important especially among companies that export internationally. Yet it is not always the case that the country to penetrate should be close physically, since psychological distance is as well vital. Psychological distance can mean similarities between countries on the base of culture, language or laws. Therefore it is recommended that companies willing to expand across borders would start from the countries that are close rather psychologically than physically.

In addition to these listed motives above, a company should take the following issues under consideration; companies driven by proactive motives usually result in success in export activities and characterized as somewhat steady, as no drastic changes take place. It is also said, that a proactive company is more interested in marketing, strategy and service than a reactive company is. The means of internationalizing may be the most distinct factor that differentiates proactive company from a reactive company; the proactive companies tend to initiate the internationalizing process whilst the reactive companies are the ones waiting for someone to initialize the process. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004, 226-230.)

3.2 Opportunities and challenges of internationalization

Internationalization can be characterized as double edged sword, since it offers as many opportunities as challenges for a company. But most of these challenges or threats may be avoided with sufficient preparations and fallback plans in case a company needs to redesign new strategies or perhaps an entire business philosophy needs to be changed. By adapting to the changes of the international environment, a company can preserve its leadership, whether it is e.g. economical or political. Moreover, a company can assist a country to stay in the world markets by active outputs in innovations, creativeness and improvements of processes.

As a company begins with internationalization, new opportunities arise and for some companies, going international is the only way to grow, survive and intensify the company's competitive edge. Furthermore, a company can reach more customers and prolong or revitalize the product life cycle by expanding its activities abroad. Nowadays, even the transferring of production sites is possible, thus various suppliers are available around the world. Another opportunity an international company may encounter is collaborative agreements which can improve all of the participant companies' activities and ideas which could otherwise be unreachable attempted alone. Internationalization has also proved to have a lower risk solvency and better paychecks for the employees. In addition, both companies and consumers benefit from internationalization, since by expanding on a world wide ba-

sis, companies products are available to enhance customers' quality of living in more affordable prices. Yet to attain such opportunities, a company must prepare careful framework and understand world's changing environment and ways to adapt them. In other words, companies should adjust itself on the international field to succeed. Especially important is to adapt to the international market, since companies may collapse if they do not understand that the customers and their needs are not necessarily similar abroad.

As internationalization brings opportunities it also develops some challenges which are usually related to marketing as written in the end of the section of opportunities of internationalization. Often is the case that companies refuse to internationalize, since they feel that those activities are for major multinational companies only. However, even the minor companies can succeed internationally and as an example may be Germany, which half of exports are conducted by small enterprises with less than 20 employees and the vast majority of exporters in the U.S are SME's. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004, 10-11.) Internationalization is a whole new process when it comes to knowledge about the markets and risk management, since a variety of unfamiliar issues arise which then raise the level of risks. Another challenging issue is profitability in the early stages of internationalization due to large investments, which may affect negatively on companies revenue in the beginning for a short period of time. However, as the companies are gaining further knowledge about the international markets and perceive the advantage of various market opportunities, the risk levels silt in a long run and profitability increases. Still, if a company decides to rely on short term activities, they may encounter with some opposite occurrences as the risks increases and profits decreases. One could draw a conclusion, that still most of the companies tend to choose market internationally for a longer period of time. Yet, it is rather impossible to succeed internationally, if risk is not tolerated at all. (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004, 243, 610.) Bradley (2005) has defined three sets of risks of internationalization, and the first set is under the heading of **common environmental risk**, which means the risks that exist in every industry of each country. These include challenges with politics, government, economics, and uncertainty of physical or social environment. The second set of risks is about the industry changes that are specified as

industry risk, which embodies the yield on labor or materials, availability and quality. Also product-market insecurities are associated with industry risk, since it comprehends e.g. consumer taste variables. Moreover, there is the competitive uncertainty, which requires the companies to foresee the market situation; what is available, how much and who offers. A company entering a new market area needs to do research about its competitors in the target market beforehand to lower the risks. The third risk is internal, and called firm-specific risk and consists of uncertainties among R&D, credit, behavioral and product responsibility. As all of these risks exist at the same time and the company has activities in various cultures and environments, it can be considered a rather challenging task to survive and control the operations. (Bradley 2005, 125.)

3.3 The steps of internationalization

According to Curry, most of the companies tend to localize before entering international markets. The process of internationalizing may be as long as several years, but in some cases it may even happen in a couple of months. There are some basic guidelines which Curry (1999, 9-10.) has listed for companies pursuing either domestic or international markets.

1. *Market assessment* means the realizing of opportunities and market potential.
2. *Market orientation* is used as the market assessment is executed. In market orientation, a company decides the product or service to market and the target group. An essential objective to figure is also the scope and the duration of the market control as well as the examination of the competition in that particular area.
3. *Strategy development* should exist after the goals are set to obtain them economically. Strategy itself consists of three phases which are firstly segmentation, which means that a specific product or service is allocated to a specific group on consumers. Secondly, penetration is used to enter the desired market and lastly, a company should position its products or service

to differentiate from competition and thus gain market share. Some factors in positioning may consider e.g. product appearance or product's cost in the market.

4. *Implementation* is about making the strategies concrete and available to the customer group.
5. *Control* is an imperative after implementation, since for a company to be successful now and in the future requires sustaining and supervising the performance in every area of company and its activities.
6. *Strategy analysis* is gathered by surveys considering brand acknowledgement and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, a company ought to monitor the statistical levels of market share and profits. (Curry, 1999, 9-11.)

3.4 Macro environments to consider before internationalizing

Curry (1999) describes every market to have a door in front of them. Some doors might be easier to open than others, yet those doors are never either fully open or closed. Which ever market a company may choose to penetrate, a decent market analyze needs to conducted before approaching any of the doors. (Curry 1999, 80.) The next chapters will introduce four major macro-economic factors that companies should handle in order to manage in the target country's market. All the following factors interact with each other, thus a company should monitor them all.

3.4.1 Political-legal environment

Political and legal environment can both limit and open new opportunities to companies and individuals and consists of laws, government bureaus and pressure groups. There are two big factors that can be defined in this environment; **business legislation growth** and **increase in special interest groups**.

Business legislation protects companies by defining fair rules of competition, consumers by indicating unjust business activities and societies by conserving their

interests from unlimited behavior of business. Debiting the companies due to societal costs generated by their products or processes is the main purpose of the business legislation. Though the laws were fully justifiable, at its worst, a new set of restraining laws could paralyze the growth of economy. The strictness of the regulations vary between countries and regulations mainly concern competition, product liability and safety, sales promotion and fair trade. These are laws that a marketer should be carefully aware of how to practice business within ethical frames.

Special interest groups are groups that are fighting for the rights of e.g. minorities, women, children or seniors. One movement has a major impact on businesses, and it is called the consumerists. Their goal is to improve the consumer rights compared with companies, stating, that the consumers have the right to know exactly what they are buying. Another raising issue is privacy policy, which concerns consumers trading goods and providing their information, but a company can enhance its liability by offering consumer assistance and responding to their questions by for instance e-mail.

The growing number of new laws can appear restrictive and arduous from marketers' opinion, as they may have to carry out various changes in companies' public relations and affairs, consumer affair departments and insurance issues. (Kotler & Keller, 2006, 93-95.)

3.4.2 Social-cultural environment

Populations taste and preferences are guided by the society and its impact on values, norms and beliefs and the global view that determines the population's relationship with themselves, the others, the organizations, the society, the nature and the whole universe. Population's view of themselves, as individuals have different tastes and they change as time passes e.g. five decades ago, people in the U.S were considered to live rather luxurious lives as for now, people tend to be more conservative in their purchase behavior. When discussing about the views of oth-

ers, people nowadays are more troubled about the social problems; such as some might not have homes and increasing crime for an example. As people have a habit of gathering among people with similar thoughts and mindsets, an observant marketer can find new consumer patterns from social activities. Peoples' view on the companies today is slightly more negative than in the past. People see that the companies are not trustworthy, and consider the workplace as an imperative to gain money unlike in the past, workplaces were seen more of a source of contentment. With this issue, the companies have a challenge to gain that trust back that people once had, when they were operating with companies before. There are many views on the societies as well. People might defend it, guide it, benefit from it, modify it, see it more profoundly and people who would like to abandon it. These aspects have also an effect on marketing since the social stance affects consumption behavior. Variations in standpoints of nature exist as well, some people feel exposed by it, someone else might feel peace with it, and the rest might want to control it. Despite the fact that people have the technology to destroy the nature, they have realized that the resources of the nature can not supply the humanity for an eternity. This behavior has raised questions and interest towards nature and gives plenty of opportunities among e.g. travel and camping gear for marketers. In a larger scale, people have different visions about the universe, whether it was created by cosmic activities or by religious events and it is of an interest for marketers, as there are core cultural values and their transition through time in question. These long-lasting core values include for instance marriage, family or virtuous behavior, yet there are also people, whose beliefs and values can modify in the long run, and these values are called the secondary values. Marketers may have an impact on the secondary values. However, it is difficult or nearly impossible to alter the core values in means of marketing. (Kotler & Keller, 2006, 87-89.)

3.4.3 Demographic environment

Probably the major issue in demographical developments is the population, which creates market base. From companies' point of view, the most interesting issue is

the modification of the population and its size and growth in national, regional and city level. In addition, age dissemination, ethnical and educational backgrounds, households and movement and features of regions include in demographic factors.

The population is growing on a worldwide basis, which will eventually lead to lack of nutrition and minerals and profuse of pollution and population. What is even more significant is that the growth is largest in the developing countries, which can not support the overpopulation as the rate of death decreases whereas birth rate has remained on a regular level. This has an effect on businesses, since not always does a growing rate of population mean bigger customer base, however, a thorough analysis may reveal notable opportunities. Another important issue is age distribution, by which companies may define what kind of products could be successful in target country, yet researches have shown that population age curve is becoming larger from the top as the people are getting older and less babies are being born, thus future's labor force is decreasing on a regular basis and a large amount of younger people are needed to sustain the elderly. This change will though give opportunities for marketers to conceive products and services designed for the older age groups.

Every country has its own ethnical mixture; some countries may consist mainly of native inhabitants whereas some might have dozens of different nationalities mixed all together. A company willing to market to ethnical groups in other country must be rather careful, since ethnical consumers tend to have different needs and purchasing customs. Though, a company should not overly generalize population in an ethnical group because the fact is that people are individuals. In addition to ethnical markets, people with inabilities are also a sensitive matter when conducting a marketing plan.

The level of countries education should also be taken into consideration when internationalizing, as there are countries of which may include illiterate people, students in high-school, college and professional degrees, thus one could draw a conclusion, that in countries, where there is a high rate of educated people, as in

the United States, is also a demand for studying supply, literature and skill supplies.

What can be called the “classic household” usually consists of a married couple and children. However; nowadays this classical mind set is shattered as more people are finding alternative ways of living by e.g. living alone or sharing a household with someone of same gender. The divorce and separation rate increases, which leads to different needs in the markets. Today, as the “non-classic” households are getting more popular than the “classic households”, companies need to adapt to the change by slightly starting to offer product options in smaller sizes.

The increasing number of migration has given opportunities to marketers as well. The movement of population may happen either inside a country or between them, which affects the taste of the consumers in both services and products. As an example, a person moving from warm climate to a cold city may be in need of warm clothing or sufficient heating inside his or her accommodation. Differences arise even in smaller scale, between the consumers living in cities and suburbs. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 79-85.)

3.4.4 Economic environment

The economic environment has an impact on companies in many ways, since the economic level defines the purchase power, which thus is reliant in factors, such as prices, debt, surplus, revenues, and availability of credit. Trends have an effect on the purchase power; therefore companies must take them into consideration to maintain their businesses.

There exist big differences between countries when it comes to revenue distribution and structures of industries. There are four defined industrial structures; raw-material exporting (for e.g. minerals and oil), industrializing (demand for new products), industrial (demand for goods of all kinds) and subsistence economies (offers

little opportunities). Companies should especially keep an eye on the countries which income level is increasing and figure which products could be offered in each country depending on their economic status, whether the gap between populations wealth is wide or narrow. Even the debt, savings and credit availability have an effect on consumers' purchase power. Another important issue is outsourcing, which companies use due to gaining competitive edge, thus increasing the number of unemployment in their own countries. Although companies may cut costs by outsourcing, the long-term effects seem drastic from the domestic employees point of view. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 85-87.)

3.4.5 Natural environment

The people worldwide are getting concerned about the natural environment, which condition is getting worse; air is polluted, ozone layer gets thinner and lack of water is increasing. In addition, companies are put into difficult positions, as new regulations restrain the activities in specific industries by determining them to use more environmental friendly means to produce goods. Yet, this global change can offer companies considerably opportunities if environmental friendly innovations are generated for the consumers and still be aware of some major issues as growing energy costs, shortfall of raw materials, pollution and the role of governments. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 89-90.)

3.4.6 Technological environment

Technology is yet another two-sided matter, since it has had an effect on peoples' lives both in positive and negative way. Every new innovation in the field of technology usually means the entombment of another one and growth of the economy. Yet, technological innovations do not emerge regularly, thus a silent period within major technological discoveries may slow down the growth of economy, and could even cause a standstill, but fortunately for the economy, even minor innovations can keep the economy on a positive level. Some innovations may have an unpre-

dictable long-term impact on e.g. demographic environment such as contraceptive pills. For a marketer, the most important task is to supervise the technology trends of the rate of change, innovation opportunity, budgetary estimates of R&D and growing regulation. (Kotler & Keller 2006, 92.)

4 USING E-MARKETING TO PENETRATE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

It is said that e-commerce will rapidly increase in the next few years and it has a major impact on international trade, in addition, the increasing usage of web as a trade arena has forced many companies to expand their business actions to the Internet to stay competitive as the costs decrease and customer base grows. (Trepper 2000, 15, 19-20.)

To attract as many potential customers as possible abroad, companies ought to create web pages, which are globally understandable and intriguing. (Ahola et al 2002, 132.) By marketing on the Internet, a company is able to reach the international customers arguably better than by any traditional way. The web pages should be of high quality and versatile. By using pictures, web pages can wake up interest and provide customers with nonverbal information. (Ahola et al. 2002, 47.) It is possible that a potential customer only visits a web page once and never returns due to unsatisfactory visual image. (Lindén 2009, 197.)

The Internet opens up new doors to SME's as they can be compete equally with bigger corporations by marketing on the Internet to the international markets. Usually, a consumer has the role of the passive recipient of information in traditional marketing, unlike on the Internet, where a consumer is engaged with the information search and the whole marketing process. (Ahola et al. 2002, 47.) If compared with the traditional marketing channels, the Internet gives a company a better setting when it comes to communicating and interacting with customers all around the world. (Sterne 1996, 5.)

4.1 Opportunities and challenges of international e-marketing

As in any form of international operations, risks and opportunities exist in e-marketing as well. The perhaps most common reason for a company to internationalize through e-marketing is because of the decrease of the costs and better ac-

cessibility. When compared with traditional face-to-face marketing, the Internet approach tends to be more economic for companies and e-marketing can be practiced even in the places most physical stores could not be operating in, thus being able to reach the customers that would otherwise be unattainable. These factors create advantages for not only the companies, but for the customers as well. Customers benefit from the e-marketing in three defined ways. Firstly, unlimited information is available and provided in ways that would be difficult to counterfeit in any other marketing form. Secondly, a company has better starting point in customizing products or services and finally, human contact is not required while the actual transaction takes place. (Singh et al. 2005, 612-613.)

The customers are able to access an online shop when ever and where ever. Moreover, consumers have found it possible to save their own money by purchasing from another country by using the Internet. This fact has made a major change in buying power. (Korper et al. 2000, 49.)

Yet there are some challenges too, since people by nature are willing to be in contact with the product before the purchase, and get the satisfaction of shopping in physical stores. In addition, they might not trust the technology which makes them able to buy products even from another continent. From businesses point of view, although the e-marketing decreases operation costs, the startup costs might be dramatic and even a small mistake may threaten the whole company. Besides, the global competition exists to make company's attempts even more difficult, but the usual way to cope with the competitors is to outshine them. (Korper et al. 2000, 89.) Moreover, from a Finnish company's point of view, gaining trust and visibility abroad is considered rather difficult and also a major obstacle is the mailing system in Finland which leaves little chance to gain competitive edge on pricing. (Interview [referenced 20.4.2011.])

In addition, technical difficulties create surplus challenge for especially to companies operating on an international level. The most usual problems emerge in interoperability, which means the way the company uses the information technology to communicate with other organizations and interfaces which (in this case) means

the information systems and how it communicates inside the company. It can be said, that all the positive factors of the Internet can only be enabled by functional information technology communication both internally and externally of a company. E-marketing requires the cooperation of security functions, data management and telecommunication, which thus calls for excess workforce and researches whether the technology is sufficient enough to enable e-marketing. (Trepper 2000, 58-59.)

4.2 Issues to consider before internationalizing through the Internet

As in any internationalization strategy, internationalization through e-marketing requires careful planning. E-marketing is a constantly developing form of trade and it is a necessity that companies trading through the Internet can be able to develop together with new technologies, in which OECD has the key role. In international e-marketing, company has various questions to solve including cultures, languages, trade habits, laws and finance. (Trepper 2000, 62.)

Chaffey et al. have listed three main factors to enable a competitive status for an international e-marketing company, which are:

- complete understanding of local marketing environment abroad;
- experience in international shipping (regulations and customs);
- 24-hour access for orders and responding of customer service.

Bigger multinational corporations already manage the competitive global marketing environment, and SME's are encouraged by the governments to use e-marketing as the channel of internationalization. (Chaffey et al. 2006, 137-138.)

4.2.1 Cultural and lingual differences

Trepper (2000, 62.) suggests that cultural and lingual differences can be both mental and part of legislation. For example, in France it has been illegal to adver-

tise in any other language since year 1994 than French. A Finnish e-marketing company may use English as their trade language, but to do a major impact inside Europe, they could use international languages as well. However, Chaffey et al. state that as e-marketing becomes more popular so does the possibility of launching English as the standard language in trade. (Chaffey et al. 2006, 137.)

The precept is that a company adapts the language, currency and customs of each country it wishes to operate in and make the operation as functional and easy as possible. As mentioned earlier, English is about to become the lingua franca in international e-commerce, yet the consumers, living in a place where English is not spoken, demand service in their own language. Equally important is to gain knowledge of the local culture and avoid the common pits of misunderstandings in e.g. advertising which can be avoided by interviewing or examine the opinions of the local consumers before the activities are established abroad. (Trepper 2000, 63.)

4.2.2 Politics

According to research conducted by OECD, commercial policy is considered to have a strong prohibiting impact on e-marketing and its development. To avoid protectionism and to create qualifications for companies by sharing the information of various countries' legislations and business world to manage international trade are the most important goals of international organizations. Moreover, to be able to keep up with the constant changes in the world of politics, companies need to recruit more workforces to gain more knowledge in cultures and international trade. (Trepper 2000, 63-64.)

Trade laws. Despite the internal organizations' pursuits in reducing the obstacles of trade, different countries have different edicts, which should be fully studied before attempting international e-marketing. Professional jurists are entering this area. The Model Law on electronic Commerce of UNCITRAL defines how the international contracts should be regulated and includes norms by which can be de-

defined the competence of the electronic contract and the most essential factor of model law is the electronic signature. Another important organ is WTO, which has created the laws for securing the copyrights called TRIPS. (Trepper 2000, 64-65.)

4.2.3 Taxation and currencies

Trepper states that one of the greatest obstacles of international e-commerce is taxation, since it can be rather difficult to define where the actual transaction takes place and thus which taxation custom is used. A Finnish company should be aware whether trade happens inside or outside Europe to be able to prepare beforehand if some special arrangements should be taken into consideration with taxation. (Trepper 2000, 66.) Chaudhary adds that VAT can be seen as a barrier in international trade through the Internet. (Chaudhary 2011, phone interview.)

To solve the taxation problems, tax jurisdiction is applied. The present international tax treaties system defines that the permission to tax is distributed between the country which company receives the income and the country which company induces the income. (Chaffey et al. 2006, 140.) OECD has defined and with various countries' governments tries to solve the following issues:

- the questions of OECD model law
- the transfer costs from country to another
- taxation of consumption in different countries
- tax administration

If not solved quickly, these problems may end up in a result of countries losing tax revenues. (Trepper 2000, 66-67.)

Currencies are as well a confusing matter as taxation. Currency rates are affected by political, social and economical issues and in e-commerce, currency rate changes are more dramatic than in traditional trade. To protect the prices, it is vital to build a currency monitor and a mechanism on the system with the help of an

international trade expert. All in all, banks' enterprise services advice companies in these matters. (Trepper 2000, 67-68.)

5 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESEARCH FOR CYBERSHOP WEBSHOP

5.1 Methodology

The research is based on quantitative method. At first, before the questionnaire was launched, the research method was supposed to include both quantitative and qualitative features. Qualitative features, as in more detailed examination of the international respondents who participate in the questionnaire. However, as the amount of international respondents did not reach the desired quantity; the methodology was changed solely to quantitative.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, 126.) recommend, that both quantitative and qualitative research methods should be used in a research, since both of the methods present diverse information. Veal (Veal 2006, 40.) states that qualitative research leads to non-numerical data of small amount of respondents, by interviews and observation, while quantitative data is statistical and gathered from a large proportion of respondents to support the hypotheses numerically. By using computers and manpower, the research can end up being reliable. The data sources can be secondary, questionnaire surveys or observation.

5.2 Research implementation

As mentioned previously, I conducted the customer satisfaction survey using the quantitative research method, because the plans of gathering data both in quantitative and qualitative did not succeed in the desired way. Due to the fact that the data was collected for this research, data can be considered primary. The research itself was conducted by doing a questionnaire which was designed to measure the level of Cybershop's customers' rate of satisfaction with various factors of the web shop. The questionnaire was executed on the Internet and it had five separate parts, including 35 questions of which all were closed questions yet

offering the respondent a chance to explain the answer in more detail. The questionnaire was both in English and in Finnish and due to technical issues, it was impossible to attach the online version of the whole questionnaire, so it is in Microsoft Word form including everything from the original version of the online questionnaire. (Appendices.)

The questionnaire was available for the Cybershop's web shop's customer base online during 9.3.-31.3.2011 and it was approved by my thesis employer, Cybershop's owner Inga Chaudhary. The questionnaire was only in online form since satisfaction with the web shop was examined, thus limiting the examined population into web shop customers. When the questionnaire was ready to be published, I sent it to Inga Chaudhary, who then sent it forward to the whole customer base in a form of a newsletter and the answers came directly to my Gmail account. Among the respondents willing to leave their contact information was held a raffle of five gift tokens worth 50€ each sponsored by Cybershop. My personal goal was to gather at least 100 responses, but for my positive surprise, on the first day the questionnaire was launched, 475 answers were already registered to my Google documents spreadsheet. In total 884 answers were gathered and Google docs was used to implement the survey and data analyzing.

5.3 Research validity and reliability

As the purpose of validity is that a study correlates with the measured concept, as in practice, the purpose of this research is to measure the satisfaction level of Cybershop's web shop's customers. To gain a valid set of responses, the questionnaire ended up rather long and the number of respondents leaving their contact information covers up to 98% thus 14 respondents did not leave their contact information, neither phone number nor e-mail address which means that one person have not answered the questionnaire more than one time. All in all the research presents what it is meant to present, which in this case is the level of customer satisfaction among the customers of Cybershop's web shop.

The research is reliable as well, since if the research was conducted again it would end up in similar results. The reliability of this research was enabled by executing the questionnaire properly and receiving a great number of responses.

5.4 Research results

This chapter analyzes the results of all of the questions of the questionnaire with the help of charts except the open questions. The percentage charts are complemented with a brief explanatory analysis. Due to the nature of this research and the responses, cross-tables can be considered unnecessary. All the open text box questions are not listed since the quantity is too large. Instead the representative answers of the most common topics were gathered and quoted.

5.4.1 Respondents' backgrounds

Vast majority of the respondents were willing to provide their personal information (name, phone number and e-mail) in order to participate the lottery over the gift tokens.

Gender distribution. The respondents were asked to announce their gender and as can be seen from the pie chart, the amount of respondents is mainly based of women by 94, 5%, whilst only 5, 5% of the respondents are men. This result was to be estimated, since most of the products provided by Cybershop's web shop are designed for women.

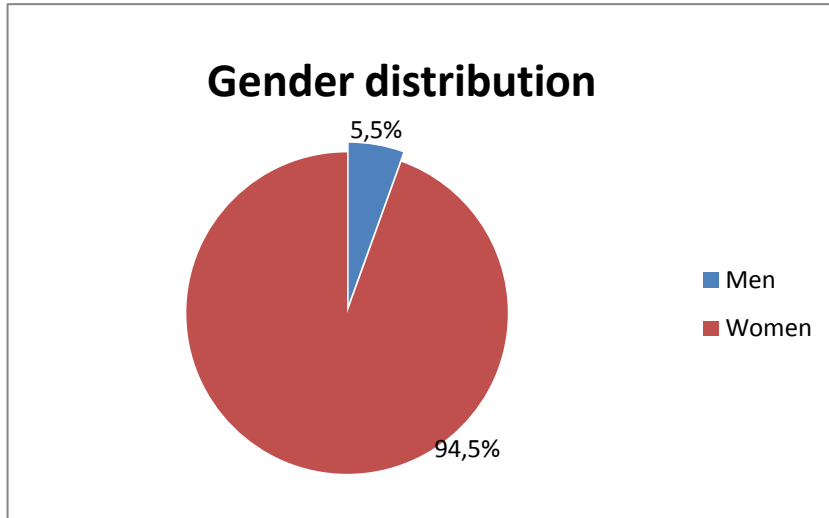


Figure 3. Gender distribution of the respondents (n=884).

Age distribution. The respondents are rather young as the percentages of the three youngest categories reach the total of 79%. The remaining 187 participants are placed on the two oldest age categories. The largest age group was the participants between the age of 17 and 22 up to 41%. Least participants can be found from the age category of age older than 36 years.

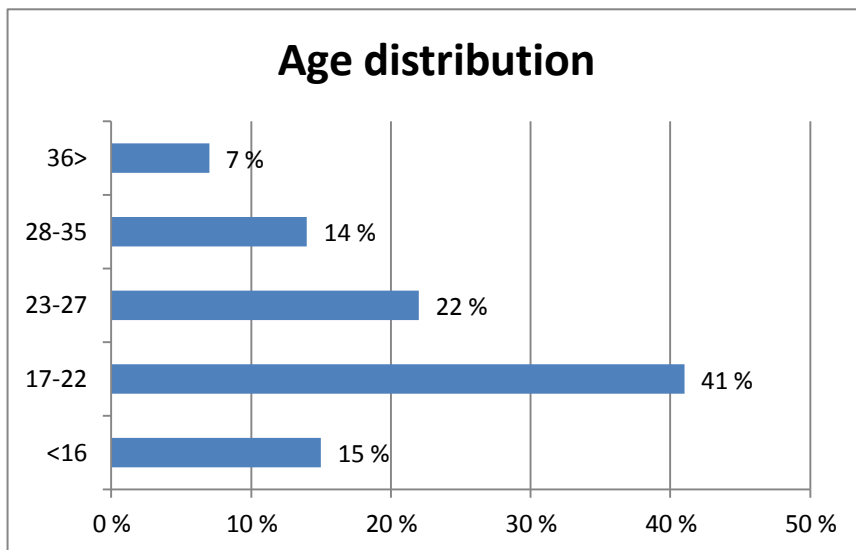


Figure 4. Age distribution of the respondents (n=884).

Country distribution. The country of origin was asked in the survey, since I wanted to know how far abroad people know about Cybershop, yet most of the respondents (881) were from Finland, the remaining three respondents were from Spain, Holland and Estonia.

5.4.2 Satisfaction with the service

This category consisted of twelve questions relating to customer service and service provided by Cybershop's web shop.

The importance of good customer service. From the chart can be seen, that the majority of respondents with 99% feel that good customer service is an important part of a purchasing process in general. Only a few respondents consider customer service not that important part of the purchase experience.

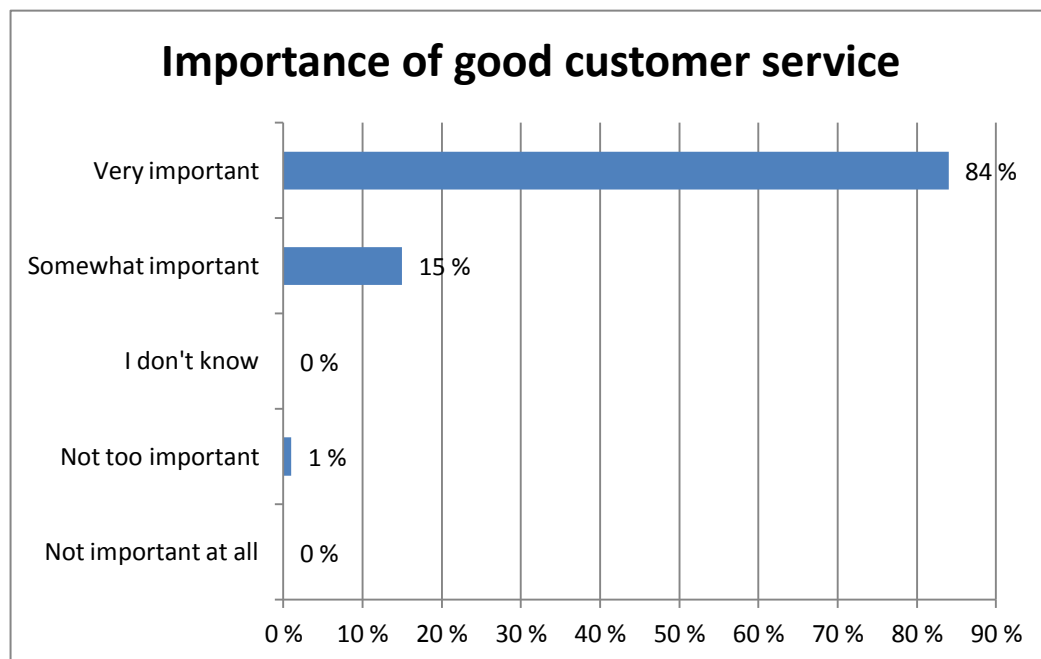


Figure 5. Importance of good customer service (n=884).

Problem confrontation and problem solving. The respondents were asked if they have ever confronted a problem while purchasing something from the Cybershop’s web shop. The chart indicates that 12% (102) of the respondents did confront a problem of some kind during the purchase process. However, the majority’s purchase experience has been problem-free.

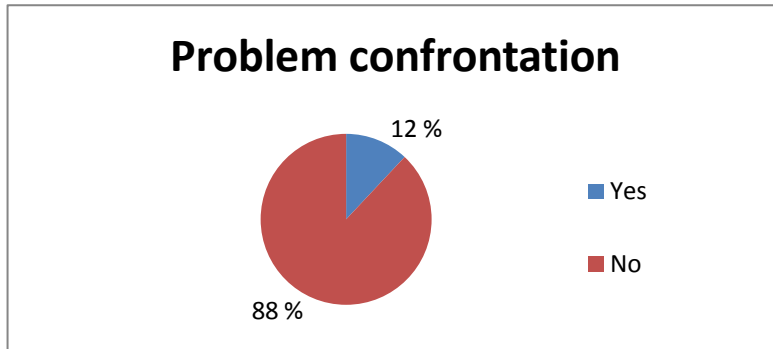


Figure 6. Problem confrontation (n=884).

The survey also included a separate question for the respondents that have encountered a problem during the purchase process at Cybershop’s web shop, on how they felt the quality of getting the problem solved. The chart shows that the respondents, who faced problems, were mainly satisfied with the quality of the problem solving in Cybershop’s web shop. For an unknown reason the amount of respondents getting their problems solved was 161 whilst the amount of respondents, who actually informed about confronting problems, was only 102.

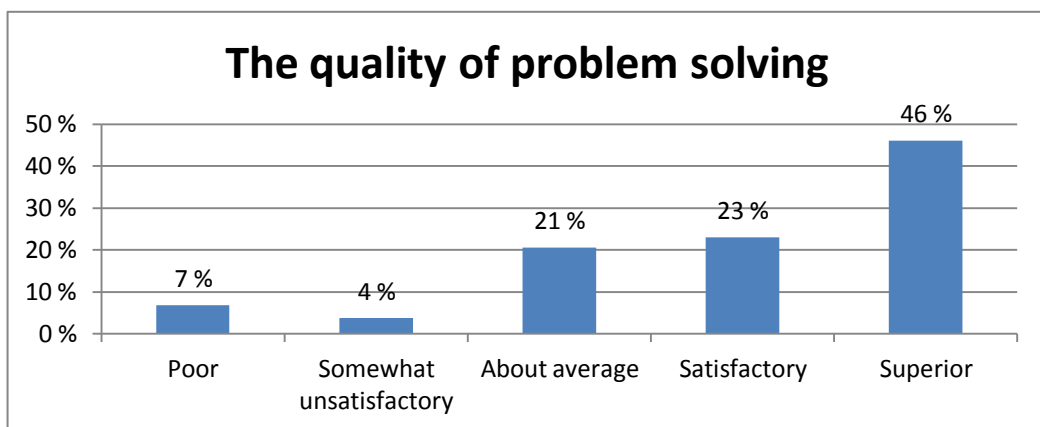


Figure 7. The quality of problem solving (n=161).

The ease of contacting the customer service. This part was asked to clarify how easily the respondents could contact the customer service when needed. The respondents, who had not had the need to contact the customer service of Cybershop's web shop, were asked to mark "I don't know". Over a half of the respondents did find the contacting process with the customer service easy. Yet few respondents did not. 45 % have not had the need to contact the customer service of Cybershop's web shop.

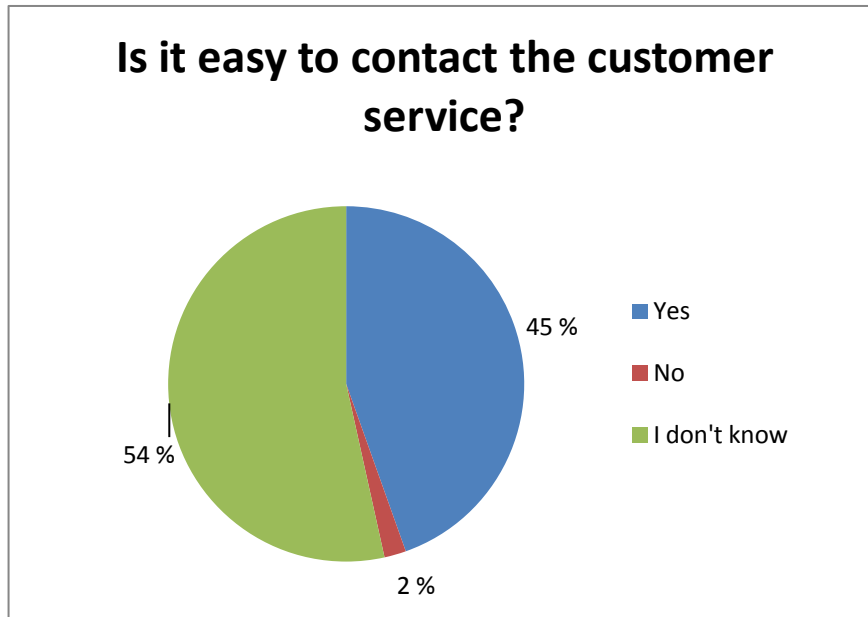


Figure 8. Ease of contacting the customer service (n=884).

The professionalism of the staff. The respondents were asked to evaluate the level of the professionalism of the staff of Cybershop's web shop by answering a claim. The chart indicates that in total 90% agree even on some level that the staff in Cybershop's web shop is professional. The rest 10% of the respondents whether did not know whether the staff is professional or disagreed on a level of some sort.

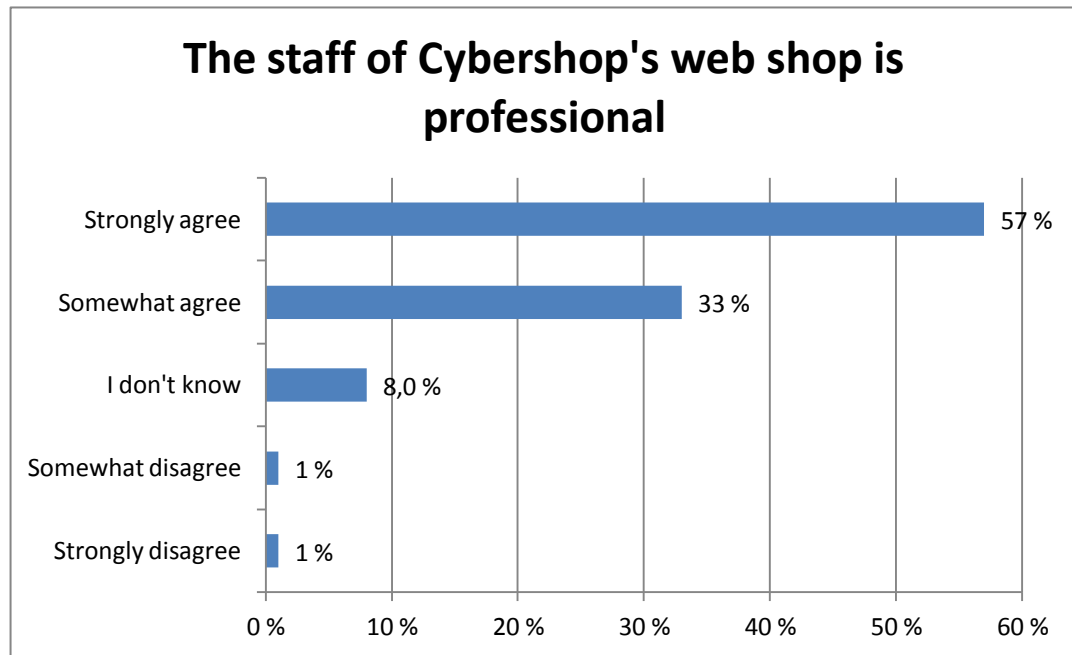


Figure 9. The perceived professionalism of the web shop's staff (n=884).

The delivery time of a product and returning of a product. There was a question about the duration of the deliveries on the questionnaire, and the respondents were asked to rate the duration they felt while waiting for their product to arrive after making an order. Rather small percentage of 3% considered the time of delivery somewhat long whilst the majority felt that the products were delivered quite fast to their destination. 12% of the respondents did not know how to describe the duration of the delivery time.

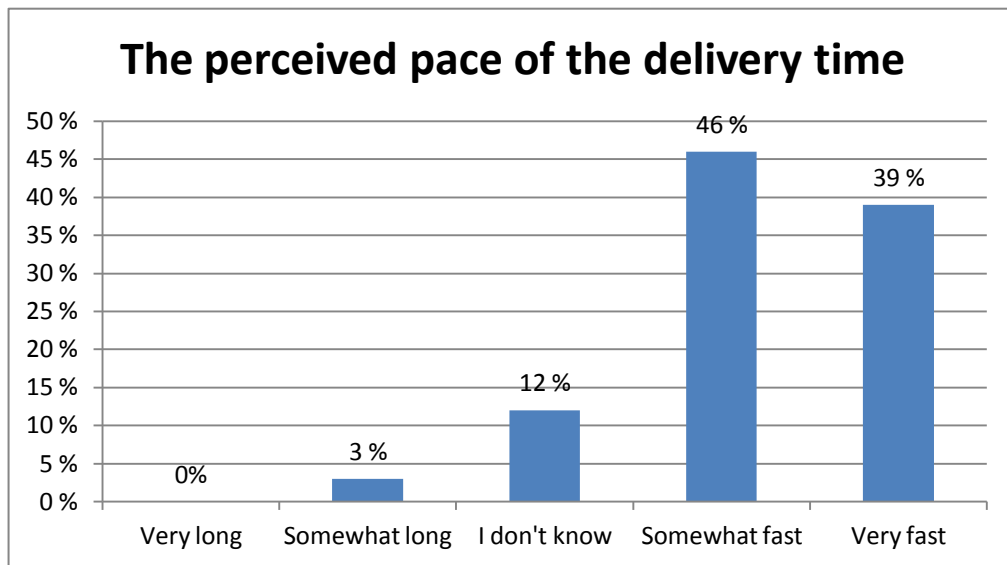


Figure 10. The perceived pace of the delivery time (n=844).

Payment methods. This question was designed to examine whether Cybershop's web shop can offer enough versatile payment methods. Most of the respondents find the payment methods offered by the web shop versatile enough, whilst 32 respondents did not find the variety of the payment methods sufficient enough. 8% did not know whether enough payment methods were offered.

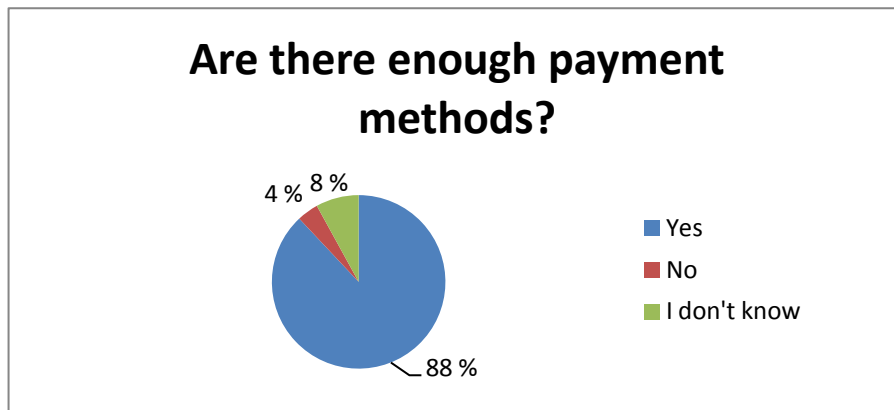


Figure 12. The perceived sufficiency of different payment methods (n=884).

The perceived ease of returning a product to the web shop. The ease of returning a wrong or a defect product was also examined. The people, who never have had the need to return a product back to Cybershop's web shop were requested to mark "I do not know". The chart indicates that 73% of the respondents have not had the need to return a product. In addition, those, who actually have had the need to return a product, in total 27%, 26% see the return process easy, when 10 (1%) respondents found it somewhat difficult to return the product.

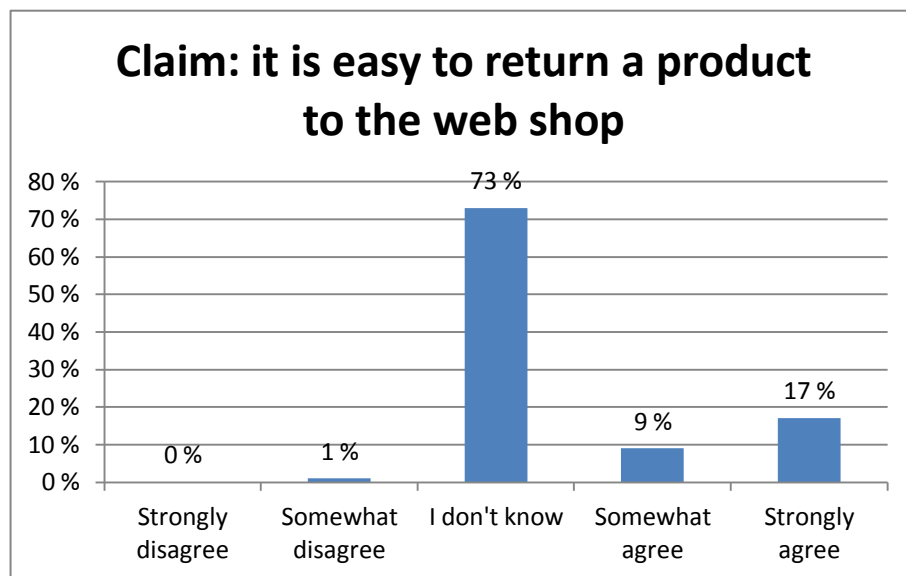


Figure 11. The perceived ease of returning a product to the web shop (n=884).

Newsletters. This section is about newsletters, and the respondents were asked whether they find newsletters generally important. Most of the respondents, in total 82%, find newsletters important on some level while 8% do not find newsletters important. 87 respondents did not know how to define their opinion on the importance of the newsletters.

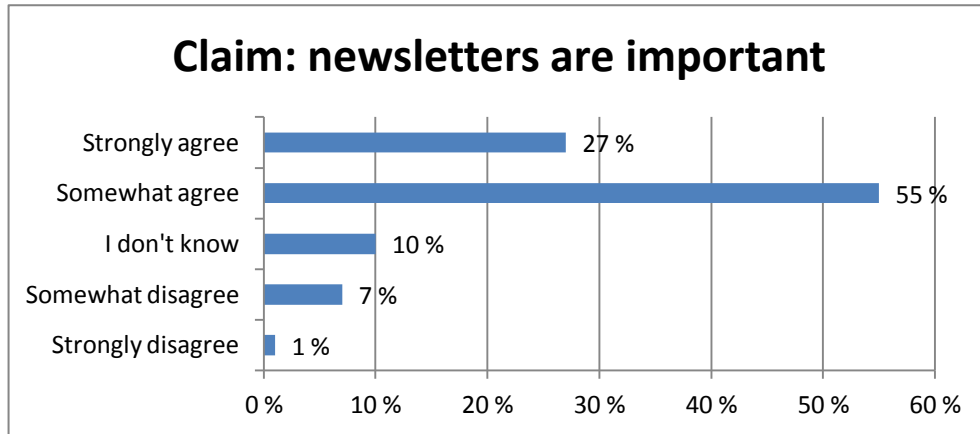


Figure 13. Newsletters' importance for the respondents (n=884).

The perceived frequency of receiving newsletters from the web shop. The next question was made to find out whether Cybershop's web shop sends enough newsletters. The pie chart indicates that in total 65% of the respondents feel that Cybershop's web shop sends newsletters frequently enough. More than a quarter of respondents answered that they do not know whether the web shop sends newsletters often enough. 13% feel that the web shop does not send enough newsletters.

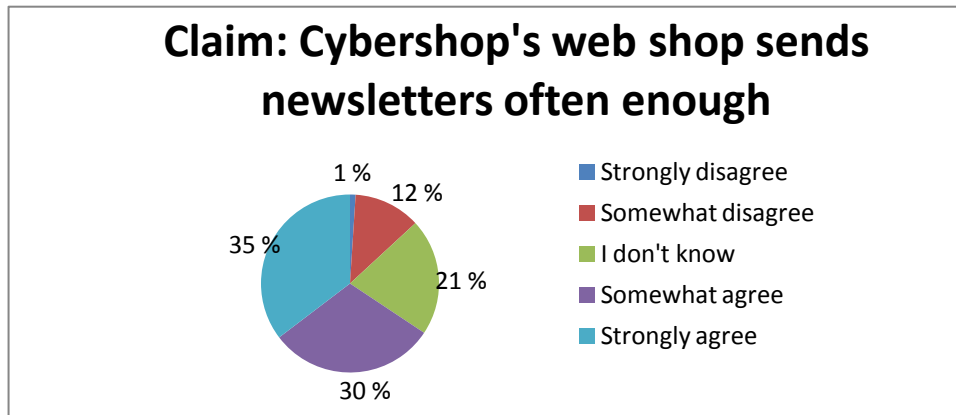


Figure 14. The perceived frequency of received newsletters from the web shop. (n=884).

Service quality of the latest purchase experience and overall grade of Cybershop web shop's service. The respondents were required to evaluate their latest shopping experience's rate of quality in the web shop. The quality perceived by the respondents was ranked on average or above average. However, since there is a large quantity of respondents, small percentages can not be seen without using several decimals. There were few (5) respondents stating that the quality of the latest purchase process was either poor or somewhat unsatisfactory.

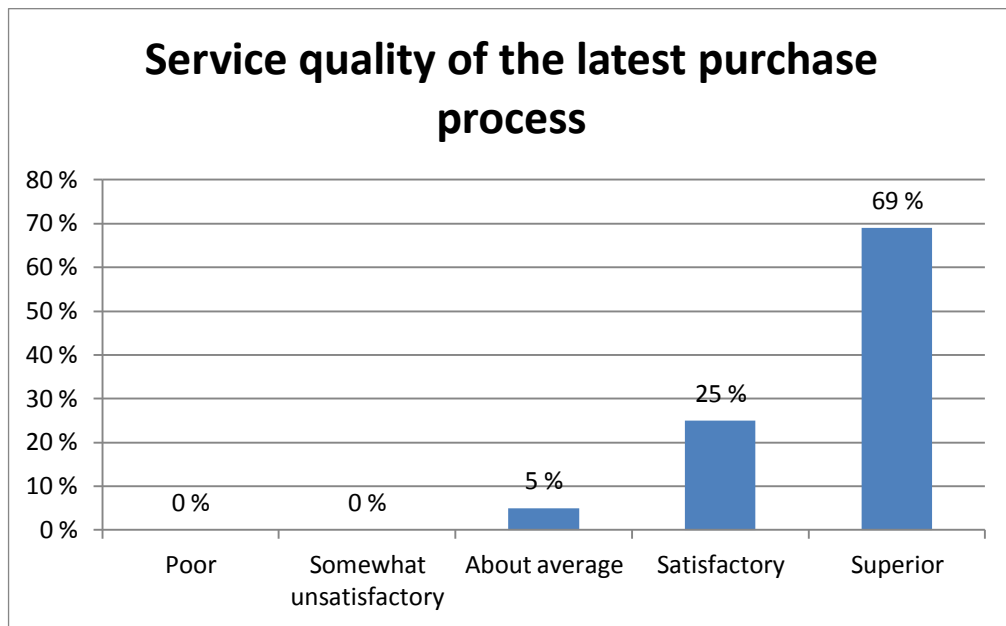


Figure 15. The experienced service quality of the latest purchase process (n=884).

The overall grade of service. The last question of the service part was to gain knowledge about how the respondents would grade the quality of service of Cybershop’s web shop. The worst grade is number 1 as the best grade is number 10. As can be seen from the chart, nearly 70% of the respondents give a higher grade than number 8 and only 4% of the respondents give grade which is lower than eight. Almost a half of the respondents feel that Cybershop’s web shop’s service is as good as grade number nine. In average of all given grades, the Cybershop’s web shop’s service receives the grade of 8.83.

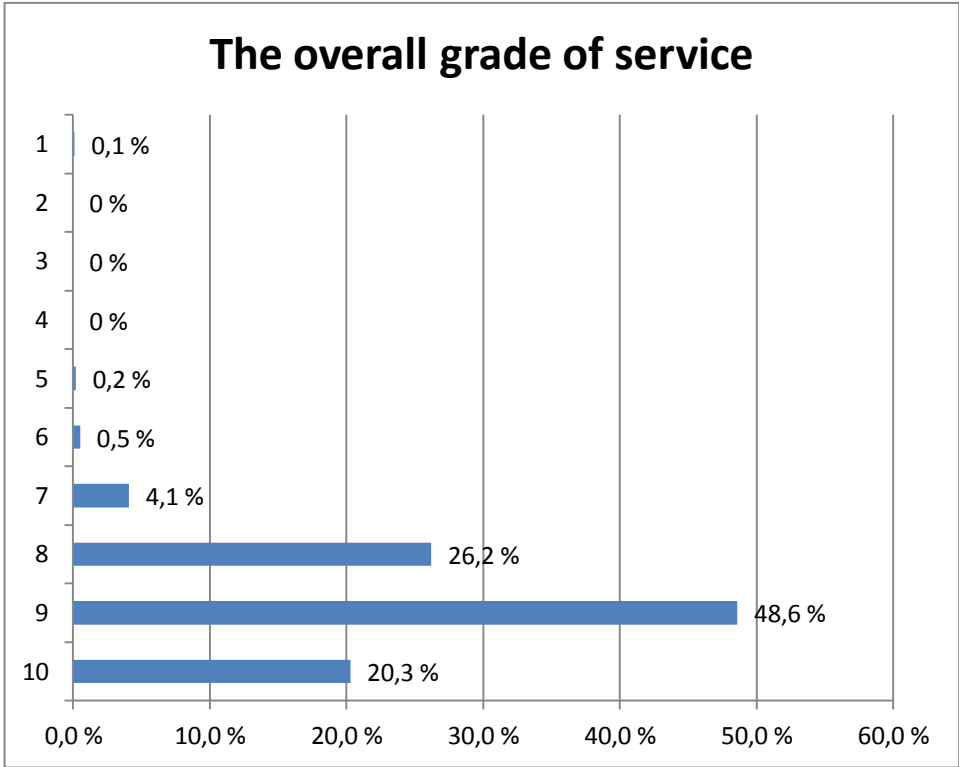


Figure 16. The overall grade of Cybershop’s web shop’s service (n=884).

5.4.3 Satisfaction with the products

The second large section in the questionnaire was about the respondents' satisfaction with the products that Cybershop's web shop offers. Different factors were taken into consideration and in addition to general satisfaction with the web shop's products, factors which drive a customer to purchase a product, were also taken into consideration.

Product range broadness. The respondents were asked to define whether the product range of Cybershop's web shop is broad enough. The chart below tells that the majority felt that the product range is broad enough whilst 166 respondents thought otherwise. 13% of the respondents did not know what to answer in the question.

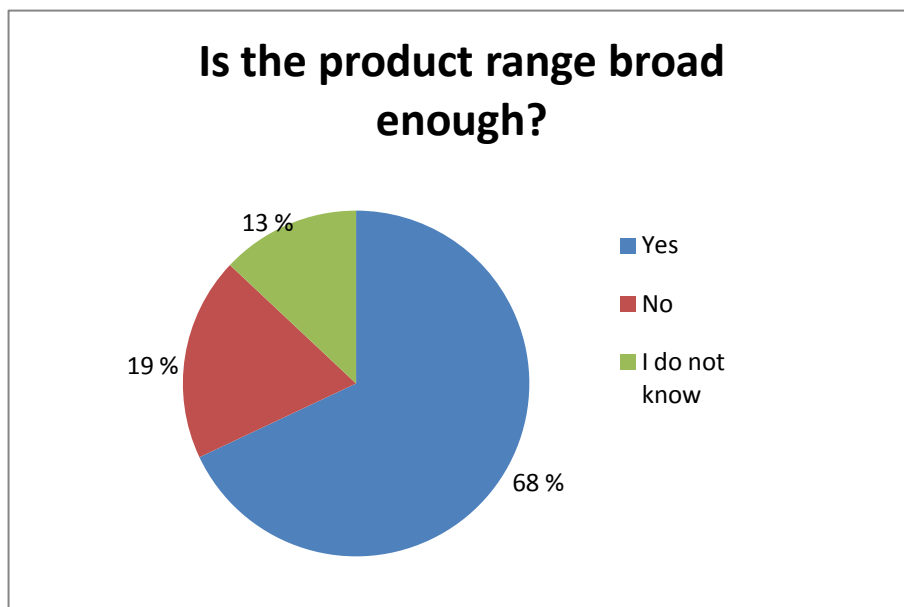


Figure 17. The perceived broadness of the product range (n=844).

Availability of the desired product. The questionnaire included a question whether the desired product of the respondent has been available in the web shop. In total, 49% of the respondents state that the product that they have desired is usually available in the web shop whereas 39% answered that the desired product may not always be available for purchase. The remaining 13% did not know whether their desired product was available.

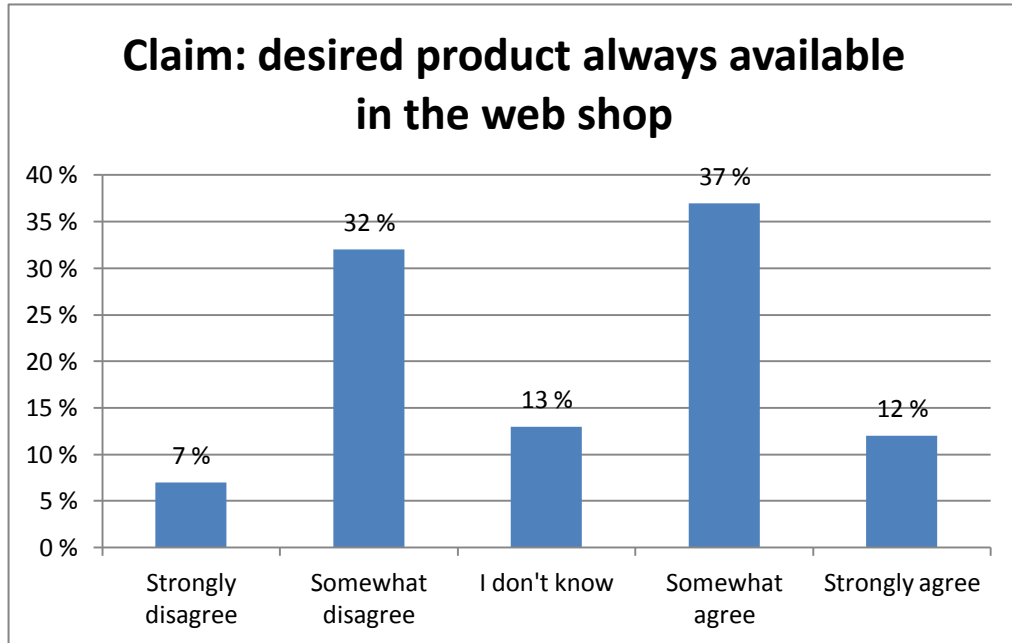


Figure 18. Respondents' view on desired product availability (n=884).

The reliability of the informative label of a product. This question was designed to examine if the informative labels on the products actually reflect the true nature of the products bought from the web shop. The majority of 86% in total agree in some level that the informative label fully reflects the bought products nature. 5% disagrees that the informative label succeeded in reflecting the product's true nature that was bought. The remaining 7% did not know if the informative label reflected the purchased product.

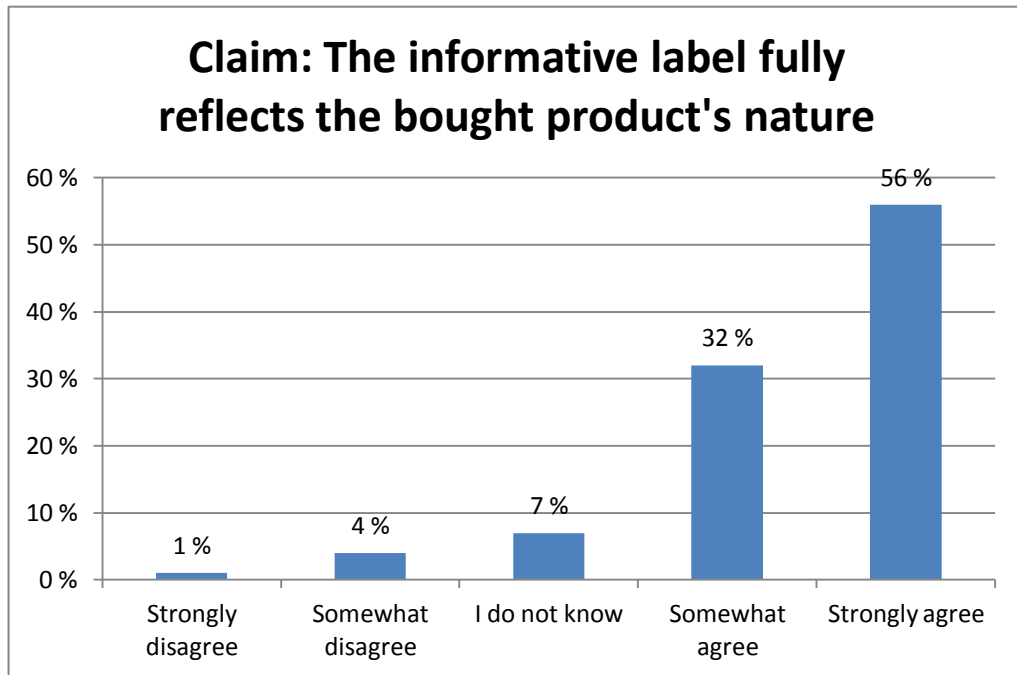


Figure 19. The perceived resemblance between the informative label and true nature of the bought product (n=884).

Cost-effectiveness of purchased products. The respondents were asked to describe whether they find the product/s purchased from the Cybershop's web shop cost-effective. Most of the respondents (79%) feel that the purchased products were either fully or partially cost-effective meanwhile 13% felt that the products were either barely or not at all cost-effective. 47% state that the purchased products were almost entirely cost-effective.

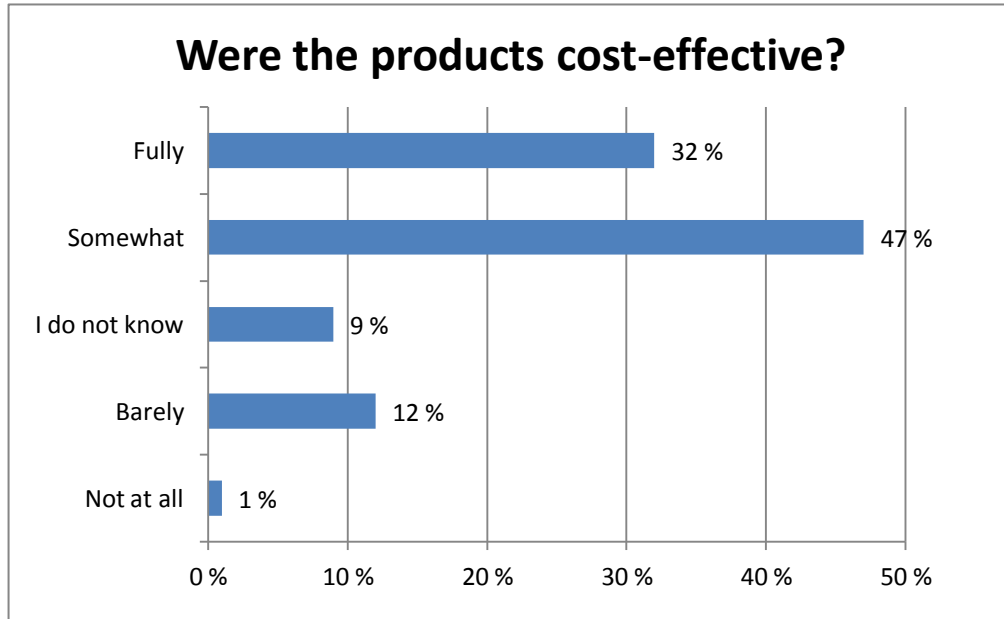


Figure 20. The perceived cost-effectiveness of a purchased product (n=884).

Factors that drive into a purchase decision and the fulfillment of the factors.

To gain knowledge of the factors, which drive a respondent to purchase decision was also examined on the survey. The respondents were able to choose more than one option, so the percentage adds up to more than 100%. The chart indicates that the three most effective factors driving one to a purchase decision are products price, color and uniqueness, respectively and the three least effective factors were other, brand and ethical.

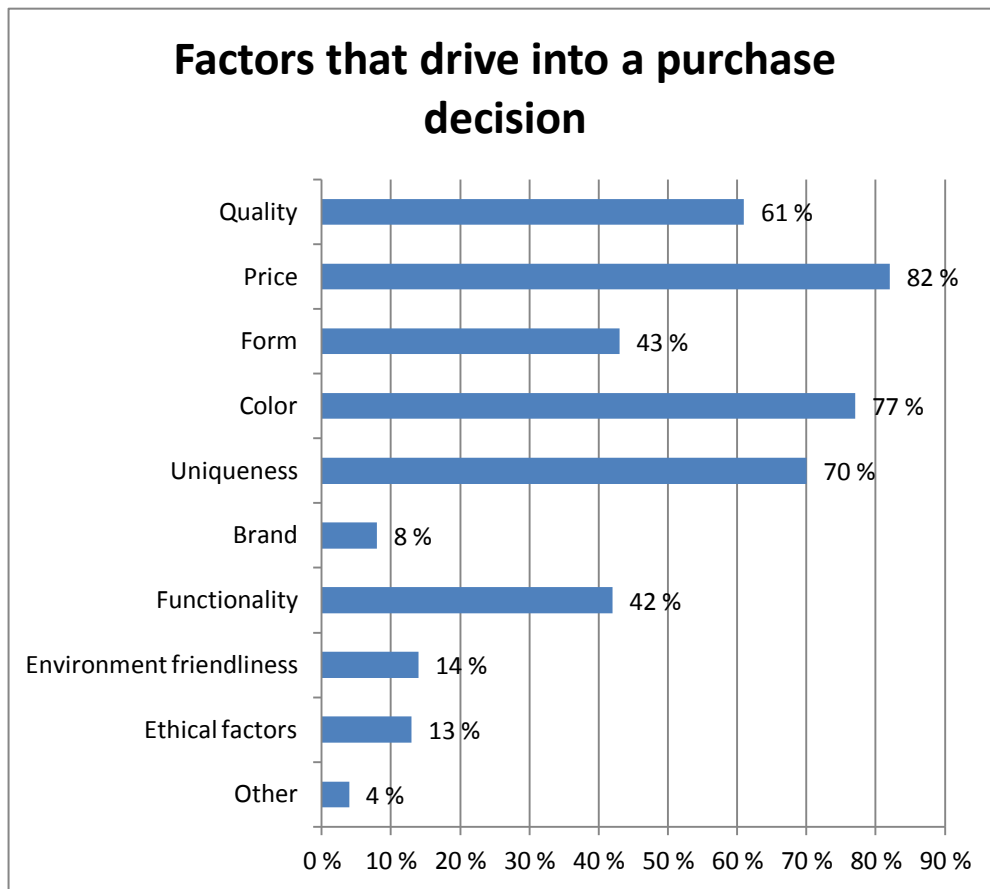


Figure 21. Factors that drive into a purchase decision (n=884).

Then the respondents were asked to evaluate whether the products of Cybershop's web shop can fulfill these factors that drive them into a purchase decision. The vast majority feels that the Cybershop's web shop is able to respond to the factors that drive them to the purchase decision either satisfyingly or superbly. 3% of the respondents did not feel that their driving factors were not met and 8% did not know whether their driving factors were fulfilled or not.

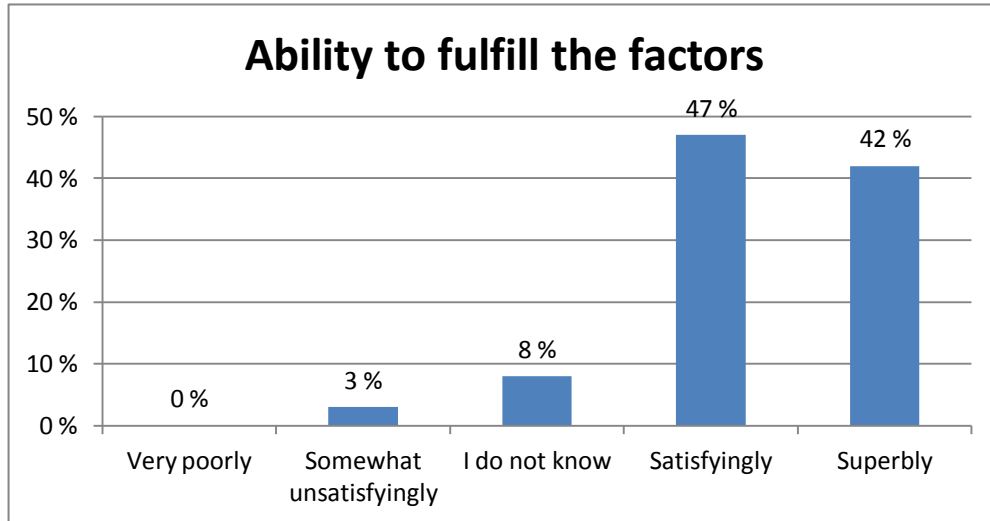


Figure 22. Ability to fulfill the factors that drive one in to a purchase decision (n=884).

The most interesting product groups. The respondents were required to mark the most interesting product group they felt the Cybershop's web shop have to offer. As can be seen from the chart, the most interesting product group was clothes voted by 43% of the respondents, on the second place are hair products with 24% and the split third place goes to jewelry and contact lenses of 9% each. The least interesting product groups are cosmetics, scarves and other (products), respectively.

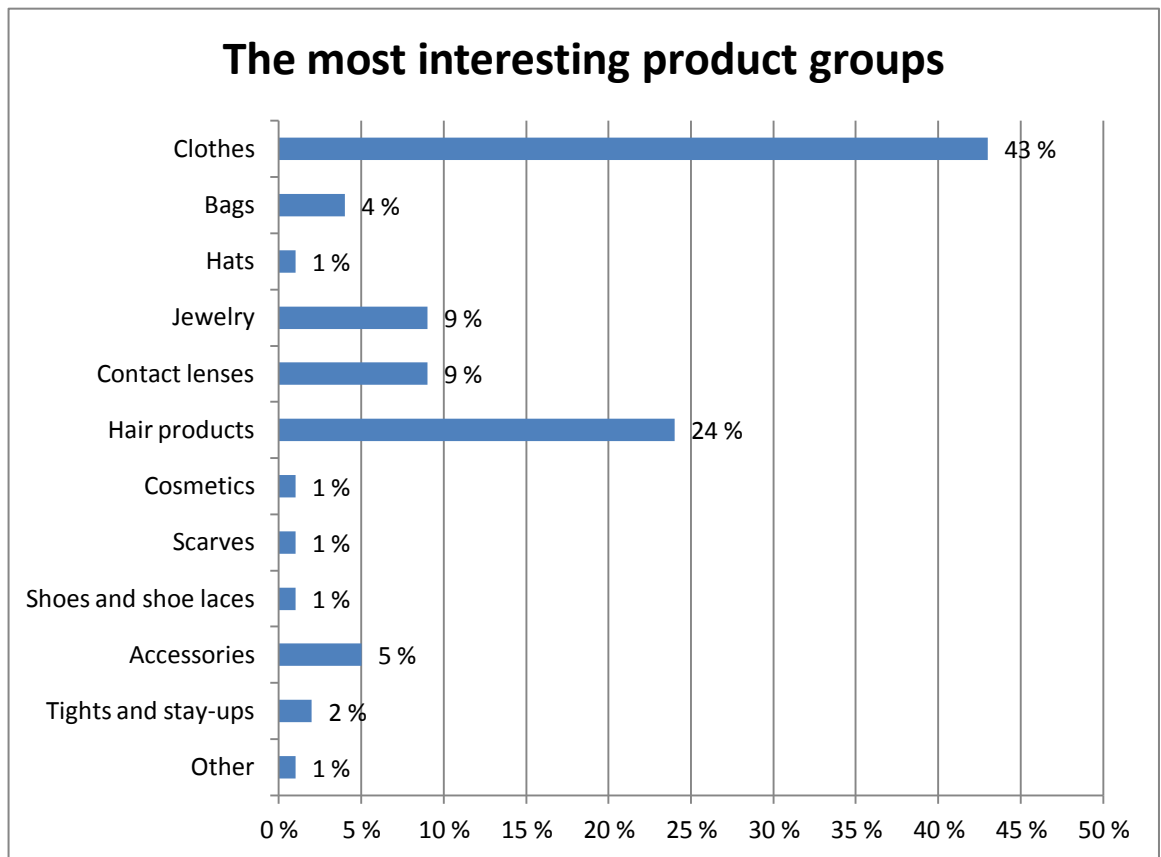


Figure 23. The most interesting product groups (n=884).

Competitiveness. The questionnaire also examined the respondents' perceived view of Cybershop's web shop compared with similar firms' similar products. The chart shows that nearly a third of the respondents find the products provided by Cybershop's web shop about the same as offered by other similar firms, yet in total 51% perceive the products offered by Cybershop's web shop either somewhat better or much better. However, 4% feel the Cybershop's web shop's products are either somewhat worse or much worse than the similar products offered by other similar firms. 12% did not know how to compare Cybershop's web shop's products with similar ones.

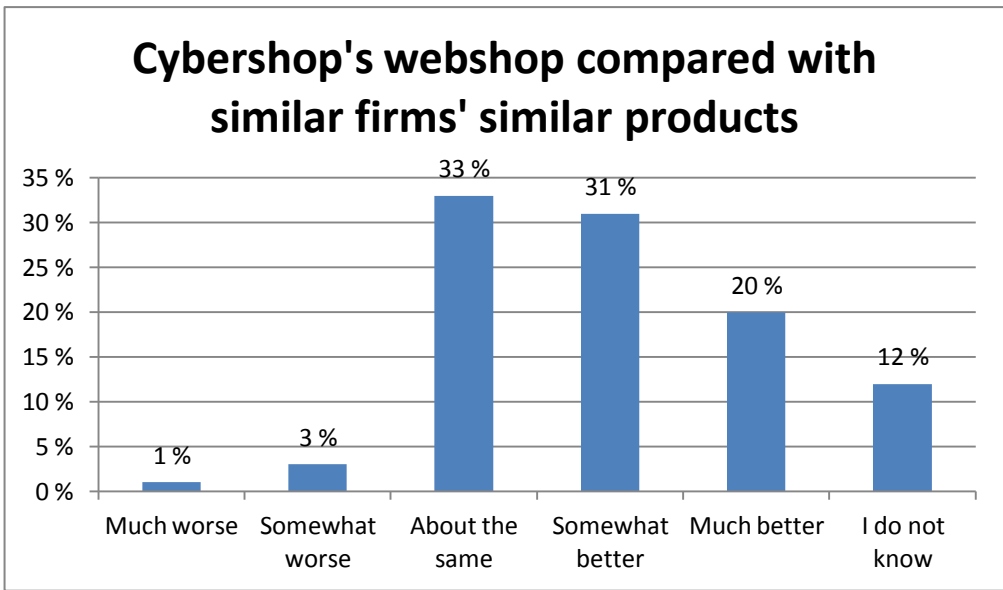


Figure 24. Cybershop's web shop compared with similar firms' similar products (n=884).

Customer loyalty. The respondents were asked whether they would buy again from the Cybershop's web shop. From the chart can be seen that most of the respondents, 94%, are willing to perform a repurchase at Cybershop's web shop. The amount of respondents, who were not willing to do their shopping again in the web shop, was 1%. The remaining 5% did not know whether to purchase again from the Cybershop's web shop.

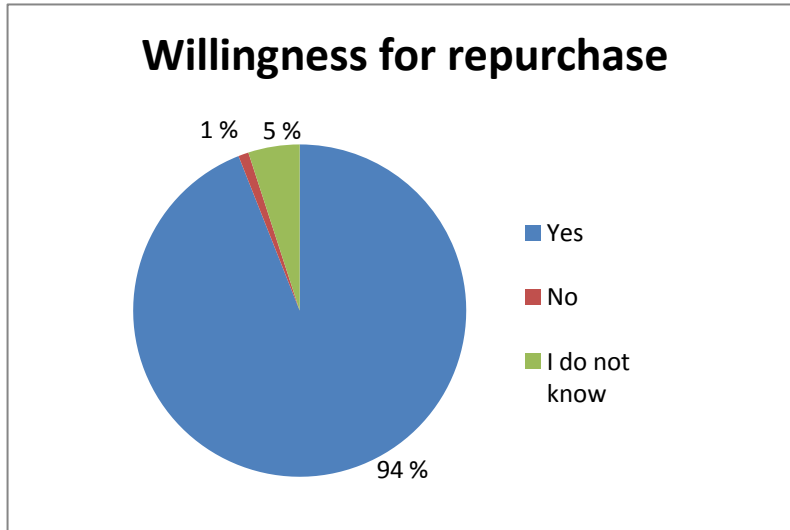


Figure 25. Willingness for repurchase (n=884).

Overall grade of products. In the last question of the section of satisfaction with the products, the respondents were asked to evaluate the overall grade of the products provided by Cybershop's web shop. Number one is the worst grade whilst number ten is the best. The chart shows that the grades given for the products were not lower than number 6, which means that the respondents feel the products average or better. Most of the respondents, 40%, evaluated the products with number 9. The second largest grade category is number 8, with 33%. Overall, the average of all grades given by the respondents, Cybershop's web shop's products receives the grade of 8.54.

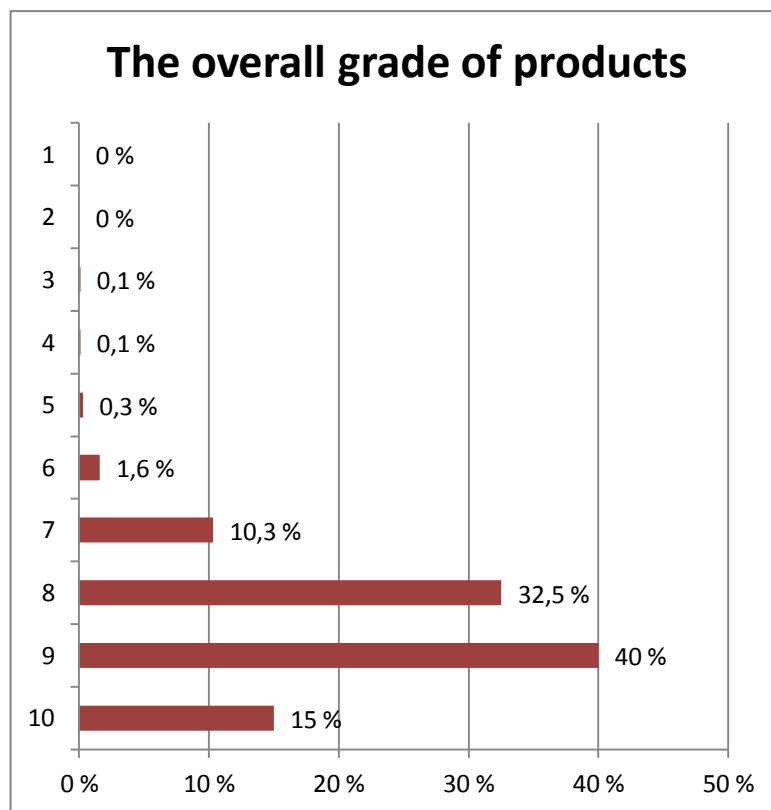


Figure 26. The overall grade of products (n=884).

5.4.4 Satisfaction with the web pages

The second last section of the questionnaire is trying to examine the respondents' satisfaction with the web pages.

The frequency of visiting the web pages. This question was designed to examine the frequency of which the respondents visit the web shop's web pages. Over a half of the respondents visit the web pages a couple of times in a month, whilst almost a quarter visits them every week. 19% visit the web pages few times in a year. The both extremities have low percentages with 1% on respondents who visit the web pages very rarely and 4% on the respondents who visit the pages several days in a week.

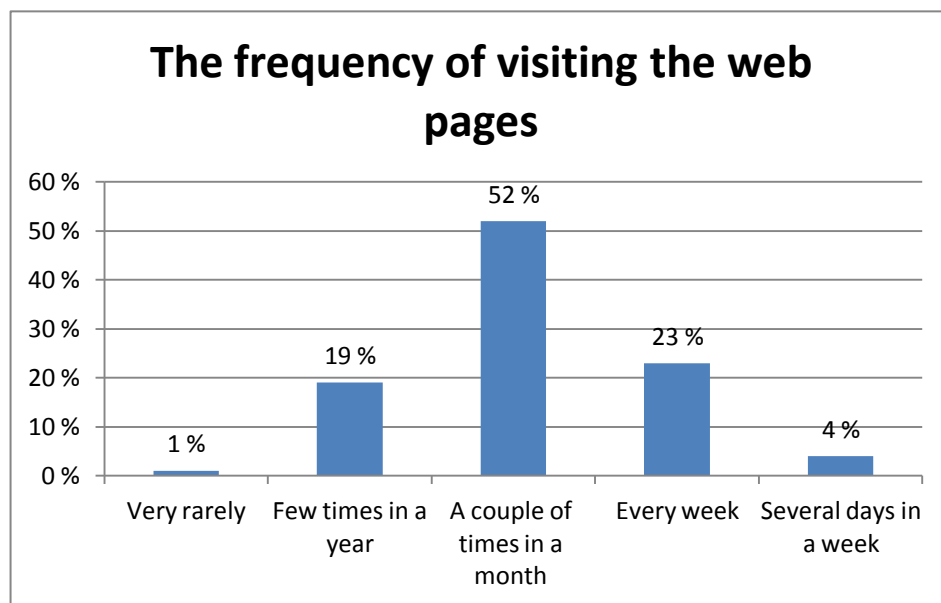


Figure 27. The frequency of visiting the web pages (n=884).

Practicality and the appearance of the web pages. The respondents were asked to describe how they find the web pages in use as well as the appearance of the pages. The following chart indicates that the majority in total of 92% agree either partially or totally that the pages are clear and easy to use. 6% in total either fully or partially disagree that the web pages are easy and clear to use. 2% did not know whether the pages were easy and clear to use.

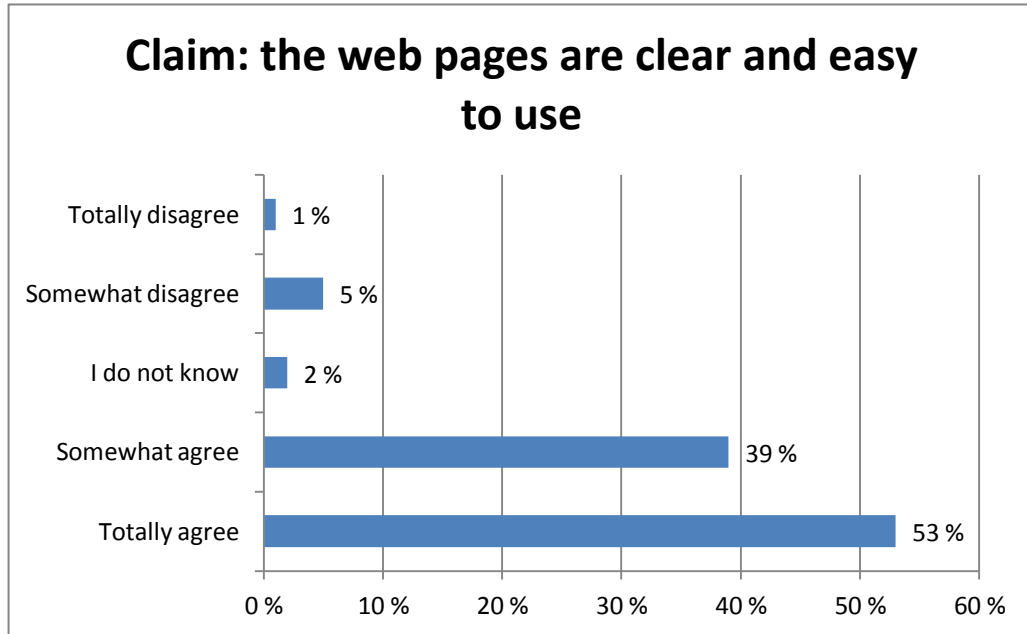


Figure 28. The perceived practicality of the web pages (n=884).

The perceived appearance of the web pages was also examined. The chart shows that the perceived appearance of the web pages among almost half of the respondents was found superior. The second largest group of 46% found the appearance of the web pages satisfying. 3% did not know how to rate the perceived appearance and 3% felt that the appearance was unsatisfying.

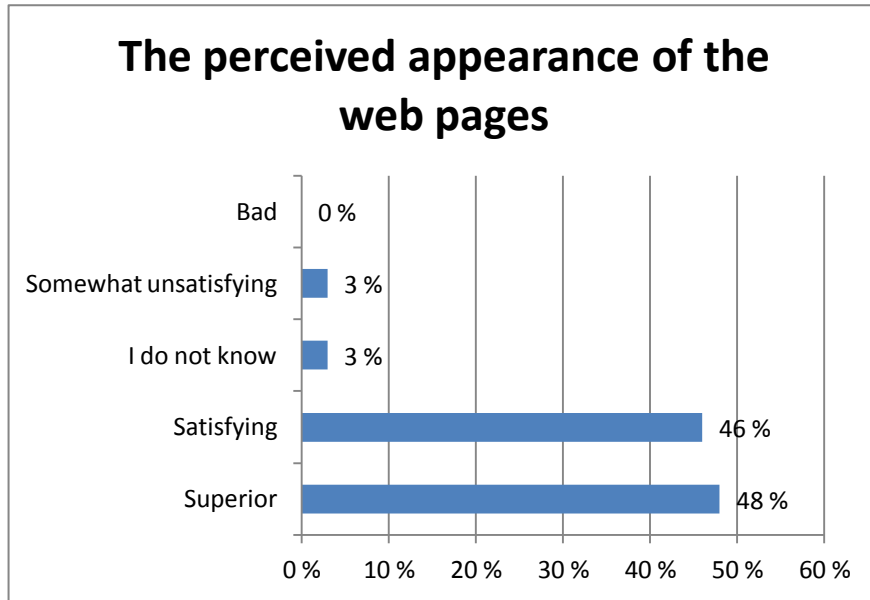


Figure 29. The perceived appearance of the web pages (n=884).

The sufficiency of information on the web pages. The questionnaire included a part where the respondents were asked to tell if the Cybershop's web shop's web pages are informative enough. From the chart can be seen that almost a half of the respondents somewhat agree, that the web shop's web pages are informative enough whilst 40% agree totally with the claim. 3% of the respondents somewhat disagree with the claim that the web pages would be informative. 7% did not know whether to agree or disagree with the claim.

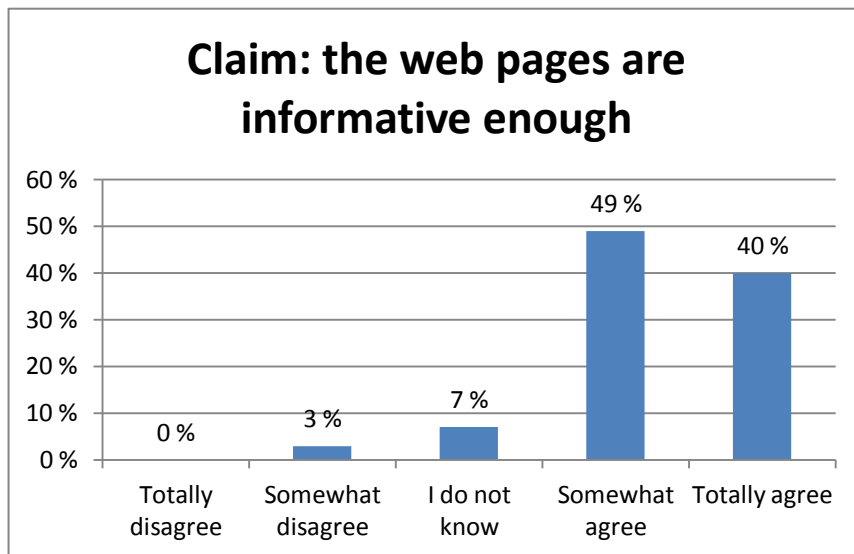


Figure 30. The perceived sufficiency of information on the web pages (n=884).

The overall grade of the web pages. The respondents were asked to evaluate the overall grade of the web pages. Even single evaluations were taken into consideration while calculating the average grade of the web pages. The chart shows that the majority of 39% evaluated the web pages with number nine. The second largest group is for grade number eight by 30% and thirdly grade number ten with a percentage of 18,4. Grade number seven receives 8,6% of the votes. Smaller percentages, lower than 1%, were divided among grades one, three, four and five. The average grade of Cybershop's web shop's web pages is 8.55.

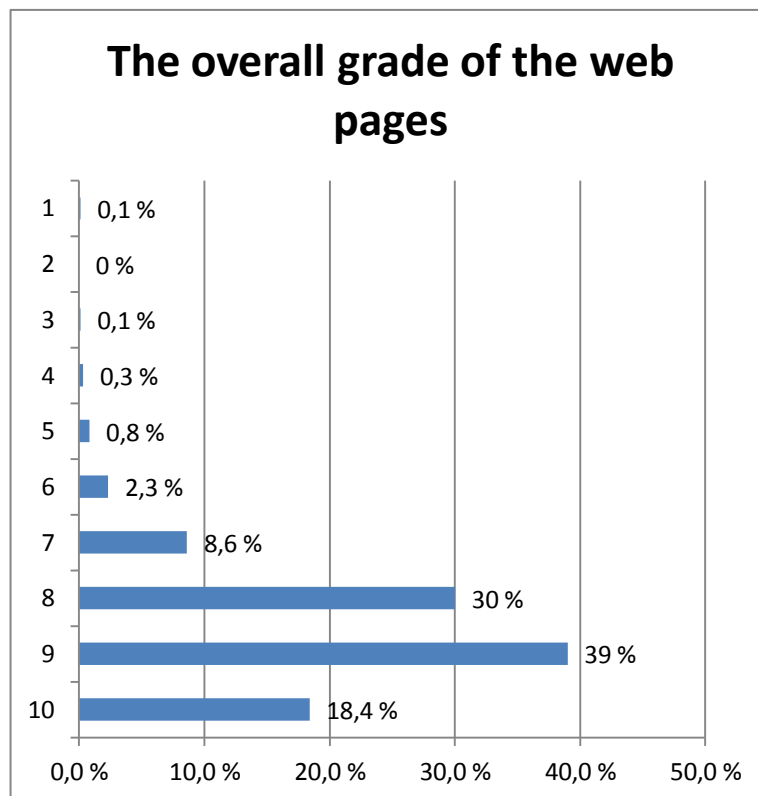


Figure 31. The overall grade of the web pages (n=884).

5.4.5 Miscellaneous questions

The last section of miscellaneous questions include two parts which concentrate mainly on the visibility and the possibility of respondents to recommend the web shop forward to their friends, family and other familiar people.

Visibility. This part was designed to find out if Cybershop's web shop is visible when it comes to advertising. By a mistake, one major channel was not added to the questionnaire which was the Cybershop's presence in the festivals. Yet the following options were included; magazines, television, radio, the Internet and information from a friend. Over a half of the respondents (52%) have heard about the web shop from a friend whereas 45% have found it through the Internet. The remaining 3% have found Cybershop's web shop from a magazine.

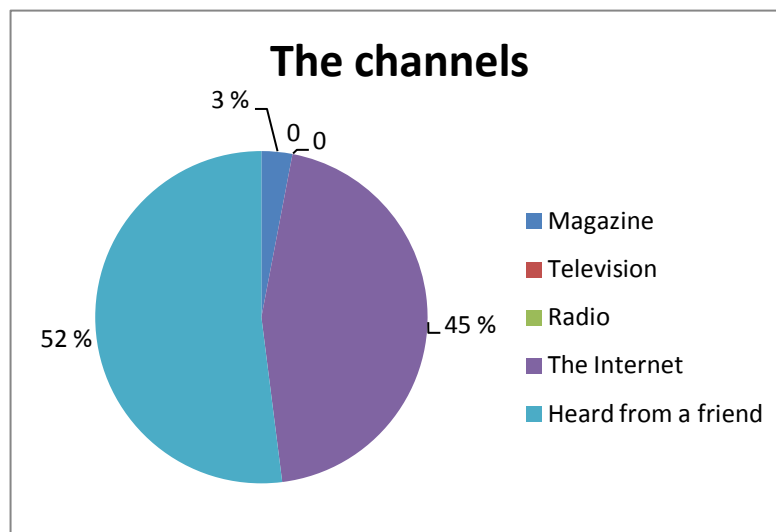


Figure 32. The channels from which the respondents have discovered Cybershop's web shop (n=884).

Respondents' willingness to recommend the web shop to acquaintances. This is the last part of the questionnaire and it handles the issue of probable advertisement done by customers willing to recommend the web shop to the others. The pie chart strongly indicates, that 99% of the respondents belonging to the Cybershop's web shop's customer base would recommend the web shop to their acquaintances. However, 9 (1%) respondents would not recommend the web shop to the people that they know.

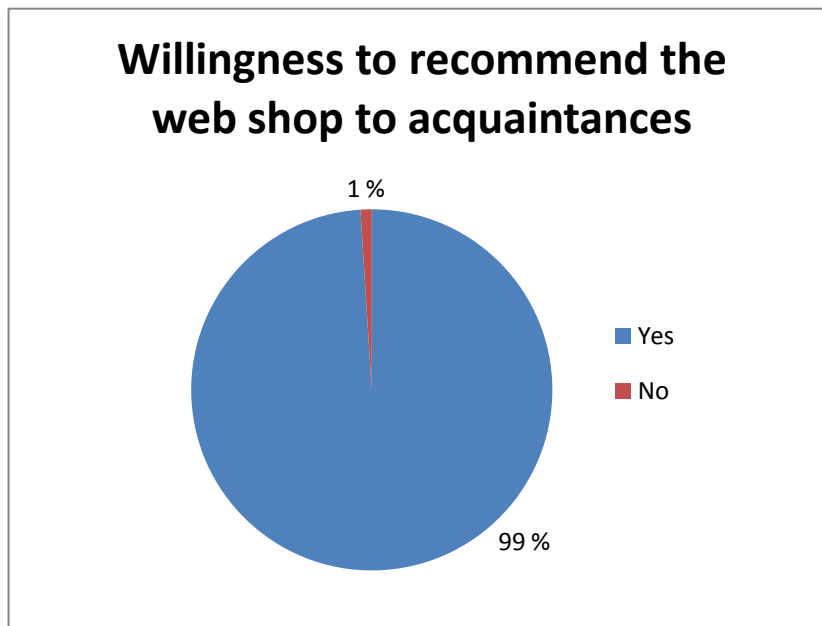


Figure 33. Willingness to recommend the web shop to acquaintances (n=884).

Suggestions and comments. As mentioned earlier, after each closed question in the questionnaire, the respondents were free to explain their answers in more detail. The open text boxes included both comments and suggestions and I have collected the most common suggestions and comments, since from 884 respondents, many did write in the text boxes.

First I collected the most common suggestions and comments on customer service related issues. Majority of the respondents, who feel that good customer service is important, explained their views more deeply. One respondent stated the following: *“Good customer service is sensible for both parties, and encourages the customer to do business in the same place again. Good customer service also arouses trust.”* When the perceived quality of Cybershop’s customer service was asked, one and many other respondents said: *“Customer service is really good. It is great that the staff comment on the questions that the users send them. If they replied in formal language and told the things too “professionally” it would not be as nice. Now it feels relaxed and that the staff is really interested and eager to reply to things.”* Yet another comment summarizes the majority’s opinion on the service provided by Cybershop’s web shop: *“Professional, yet humane service.☺”* Some of the respondents also would know more about the new products through newsletters: *“It is nice to gain knowledge of offers and new products. It is sad, if one has to monitor separately whether there are new arrivals. It is nicer to go and check out when one knows that there are those.”* When the sufficiency of different payment methods were asked, respondents were rather pleased with the present payment options, yet some respondents wrote: *“Pay Pal would be a nice extra in payment methods.”*

Secondly, I collected the most common suggestions and comments on products. Vast majority states the following: *“There should be a lot more variety in products!”* and the variety of sizes was also mentioned in many text boxes: *“More assortments in clothing and bigger sizes, please!”* Some respondents also want more variety in different genres: *“The scale of clothes of different genres is not broad enough.”* When the products’ level of cost-effectiveness was asked, the most common answers were the following: *“The level of quality varies...Some products*

are rather expensive when compared with the quality and durability.” Many respondents stated the following opinion about the products’ informative labels:

“There should always be the measures of different sizes.”

Thirdly, the most common suggestions and comments were collected considering the web pages of Cybershop. Although the web pages did receive good results in the closed questions, many did not find the web pages as good to use: *“The web pages open up really slowly with slower Internet connection.”* Some also stated that the former web page design was better than the present.

Fourthly, I collected the most common suggestions and comments about the part of miscellaneous questions. The question where the respondents were asked to answer where they found Cybershop’s web shop, most of the respondents have heard about it from a friend, yet many of the respondents answered the following: *“I have not seen any advertisement, but I was searching for stores selling punk style clothes in Google and I found Cybershop.”* Most of the respondents are willing to recommend the web shop to acquaintances and wrote: *“I have received many praises for the products purchased from Cybershop and I have guided my acquaintances to the shop.”*

The vast majority is really pleased with the web shop in its entirety, and the most common positive comments were such as: *“It is going great!! Keep up the good work!! 😊”* And: *“a web shop that is easy to use, with broad variety of all kinds of stuff!”*

5.5 Overview of the responses

The responses tell us, that Cybershop's web shop's customer base is broad in different age groups with the majority of female customers. Mainly satisfied with the service provided by Cybershop's web shop, problems occur rarely which can rather easily be solved with the help of Cybershop's staff which was evaluated professional. The newsletters are found to be important and Cybershop manages well to meet the needs of the customers thirst of knowledge by sending newsletter frequently enough. There are a sufficient number of different payment methods and the majority of the customers who had the need to return a product found the procedure easy and overall quality of service was perceived good.

The satisfaction with the products was defined as good; however Cybershop's web shop should pay more attention to the inventories to be able to provide desired products. The range is defined rather broad, the products are found cost-effective and reflecting their informative labels, and the desired factors of the customers are well responded with the products provided by Cybershop's web shop. The most interesting product group is clothes, and with the products which Cybershop's web shop offers have a competitive edge over its rivals as the most of the respondents consider Cybershop better than the similar stores with similar products and the customers can be characterized as loyal.

The web pages are not visited too frequently by the respondents, yet the web pages are found by the majority informative, great in appearance and easy to use.

It can be said that there are very few channels where Cybershop can be found, from five options, three channels were defined, and many respondents ended up into the web pages by an accident. However, the word-of-mouth seems to be functional, as 99% of the respondents are willing to recommend the web shop to their acquaintances.

The averages of satisfaction with all; customer service, products and web pages creates the average grade of 8.64, which means that on average, the respondents are very pleased with Cybershop's web shop.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

As a company with niche market, it is important for Cybershop's web shop to listen to its customers' needs and desires and improve the web shop based on those issues thus maintaining the present customer base and gaining new ones. Moreover, as the company is willing to internationalize, special attention is needed with foreign customers, products and service, whether something needs to be changed in order to be successful abroad. As the owner of Cybershop said, changes will take place all the time, as new trends emerge and especially when the international interest is growing.

The main problems which Cybershop has to solve during its internationalization are the delivery issues and VAT. As discussed in the theoretical part, these are seen as major obstacles, and as a company is not able to compete with price with these obstacles in front, access to international competition is quite difficult. In addition, it drives people to purchase similar products more affordable abroad. However, Cybershop's owner, Inga Chaudhary states, that there are some means to be competitive and these obstacles can be avoided by, for example, by giving compensation to customers, who order products in large quantities over a certain sum of money, in form of free shipping. Cybershop is not considered to be too visible, as few resources are used in promotion; e.g. attendance in festival where flyers are distributed and visibility in Google. The similar ways of promotion are planned to use in foreign markets as well.

When it comes to customer satisfaction on every areas of Cybershop's web shop, customers are mainly happy with the shop and find it better than its competitors. To keep up with the customers' needs and desires, Cybershop conducts customer satisfaction surveys every two years.

There were a lot of noteworthy suggestions and comments about all of the factors of Cybershop's web shop. Especially important I found the chat which can be used by the customers to gain more knowledge of particular products and functions. Another important issue was the web pages, since due to the large quantity of pic-

ture material, the web pages were considered not as functional with slower Internet connections. The third most important issue was about the clothes, variety and sizes. More variety of different genres and brands were suggested and bigger sizes were desired. These suggestions may help Cybershop's web shop to improve their operations both in Finland and abroad.

This research was important for the company, since it is always important to know how the customers perceive the company and its actions and do modifications according to the research results. Later on, research should be repeated regularly to constantly improve and to be able keep up the good level of customer satisfaction.

From my point of view, the research was meaningful and interesting to conduct, since I am a customer of Cybershop myself.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The openings of the five questionnaire parts



Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cybershop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

Kiitos kun vastaat tähän kyselyyn! Vastaamalla sekä autat opiskelijaa päättötyössään että halutessasi osallistut Cybershopin verkkokaupan 50€ lahjakortin arvontaan! Mikäli haluat osallistua arvontaan, täytä myös kolme ensimmäistä kyselykenttää. Osallistujien kesken arvotaan viisi (5) kappaletta 50€ arvoista lahjakorttia ja arvonnän voittajiin otetaan yhteyttä henkilökohtaisesti. Kyselyssä on viisi osaa ja vastaaminen kestää noin 15-20 minuuttia. Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti! Vastausaika loppuu 31.03.2011.

Thank you for answering this survey! By answering, not only You help a student with her thesis but also will take part of a lottery with a prize of gift token worth 50€ to Cybershop's web shop! The lottery is optional, but if you decide to participate fill out the first three fields (otherwise optional) of this survey form. Five (5) gift tokens worth 50€ are drawn among the participants and the winners are contacted personally. The survey consists of five parts and answering to the survey takes about 15-20 minutes. The responses are handled with confidence! The response time ends the 31.03.2011.

* Required



Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cybershop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

* Required

Tyytyväisyytenne palveluun / Your satisfaction with the service (2/5)

Tämä osa kyselystä käsittelee tyytyväisyyttänne palveluun Cybershop verkkokaupassa. Jokaisen kysymyksen perässä on tekstikenttä, johon voitte halutessanne syventää omin sanoin vastauksenne.

This part of the survey is about Your satisfaction with the service provided by Cybershop webshop. After each question, there is a field where you can explain your answer in more detail, if You wish.



Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cybershop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

* Required

Tyytyväisyytenne tuotteisiin (3/5)

Tämä kyselyn osio keskittyy tyytyväisyyteenne Cybershopin verkkokaupan tuotteisiin. Jokaisen kysymyksen perässä on tekstikenttä, johon voitte halutessanne syventää omin sanoin vastauksenne.

This part of the survey is about your satisfaction with the products that Cybershop's web shop has to offer. After each question, there is a field where you can explain your answer in more detail, if You wish.



Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cybershop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

* Required

Tyytyväisyytenne verkkosivuihin (4/5)

Tämä kyselyn osio käsittelee tyytyväisyyttänne Cybershopin verkkosivuihin.

This part of the survey is about Your satisfaction with Cybershop's web pages.



Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cybershop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

* Required

Sekalaisia kysymyksiä/Miscellaneous questions (5/5)

Tämä on kyselyn viimeinen osa ja käsittelee yleisiä aiheita Cybershopin verkkokauppaan liittyen.

This is the last part of the survey and it is about some common topics about Cybershop's web shop.

Appendix 2. Customer satisfaction questionnaire

Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakastyytyväisyyskysely / Cyber-shop's web shop customer satisfaction survey

Kiitos kun vastaat tähän kyselyyn! Vastaamalla sekä autat opiskelijaa päättötyössään että halutessasi osallistut Cybershopin verkkokaupan 50€ lahjakortin arvontaan! Mikäli haluat osallistua arvontaan, täytä myös kolme ensimmäistä kyselykenttää. Osallistujien kesken arvotaan viisi (5) kappaletta 50€ arvoista lahjakorttia ja arvonnän voittajiin otetaan yhteyttä henkilökohtaisesti. Kyselyssä on viisi osaa ja vastaaminen kestää noin 15-20 minuuttia. Vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti! Vastausaika loppuu 31.03.2011.

Thank you for answering this survey! By answering, not only You help a student with her thesis but also will take part of a lottery with a prize of gift token worth 50€ to Cybershop's web shop! The lottery is optional, but if you decide to participate, fill out the first three fields (otherwise optional) of this survey form. Five (5) gift tokens worth 50€ are drawn among the participants and the winners are contacted personally. The survey consists of five parts and answering to the survey takes about 15-20 minutes. The responses are handled with confidence! The response time ends the 31.03.2011.

* Required

Vastaajan tiedot / Background of the respondent (1/5)

Tämä kyselyn osio käsittelee vastaajan, eli Teidän, taustatietojanne.

This part of the survey is all about the respondents, in other words Your, background information.

1. Nimi/Name

2. E-mail

3. Puhelinnumero/Phone number

4. Sukupuoli/Gender *

- Mies/ Male
- Nainen/ Female
-

5. Ikä/ Age *

Mihin ikäkategoriaan kuulut?/ In which age category do You belong to?

- <16
- 17-22
- 23-27
- 28-35
- 36>
-

6. Maa/Country *

Tyytyväisyytenne palveluun / Your satisfaction with the service (2/5)

Tämä osa kyselystä käsittelee tyytyväisyyttänne palveluun Cybershop verkkokaupassa. Jokaisen kysymyksen perässä on tekstikenttä, johon voitte halutessanne syventää omin sanoin vastauksenne. This part of the survey is about Your satisfaction with the service provided by Cybershop webshop. After each question, there is a field where you can explain you answer in more detail, if You wish.

7. Miten tärkeänä pidätte hyvää asiakaspalvelua?/How important is good customer service to You? *

- Ei lainkaan tärkeänä/Not important at all
- Ei kovin tärkeänä/Not that important
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin tärkeänä/Somewhat important
- Hyvin tärkeänä/Very important

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



8. Oletteko törmänneet ongelmiin asioidessanne Cybershopin verkkokaupassa?/
Have You confronted a problem while shopping at Cybershop's web shop? *

Esim. Liian suppea selostus tuotteesta yms. / For example too narrow informative label.

- Kyllä/Yes
- En/No

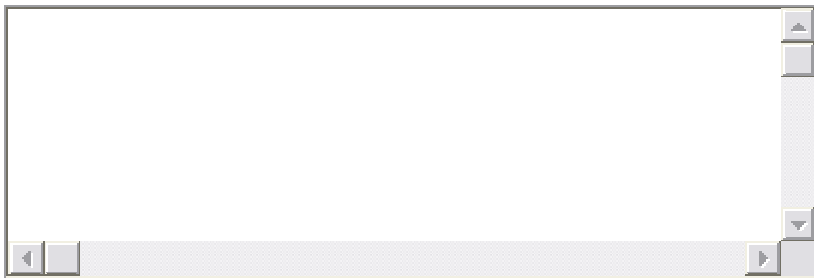
Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

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9. Jos vastasit edelliseen kyllä, miten ongelmanratkaisu mielestänne toimi?/ If You answered "yes" in the previous question, how would You describe the process of getting Your concerns solved?

- Huonosti/Poor
- Jokseenkin epätyydyttävästi/Somewhat unsatisfactory
- Keskivertaisesti/About average
- Tyydyttävästi/Satisfactory
- Erittäin hyvin/Superior

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

An empty rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin black border. It features standard scrollbars on the right and bottom edges.

10. Onko mielestänne yhteydenotto Cybershopin verkkokaupan asiakaspalveluun vaivatonta?/ Would You consider contacting the Cybershop's web shop customer service easy? *

Vastatkaa "En osaa sanoa, mikäli teidän ei ole tarvinnut ottaa yhteyttä asiakaspalveluun. /Please, answer "I don't know" if You haven't have got the need to contact the customer service.

- Kyllä/Yes
- Ei/No
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



11. Vastatkaa väittämään: Cybershopin verkkokaupan palvelu on ammattimaista./ Please, answer this claim: Service at Cybershop's web shop is professional. *

- Vahvasti eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/ I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

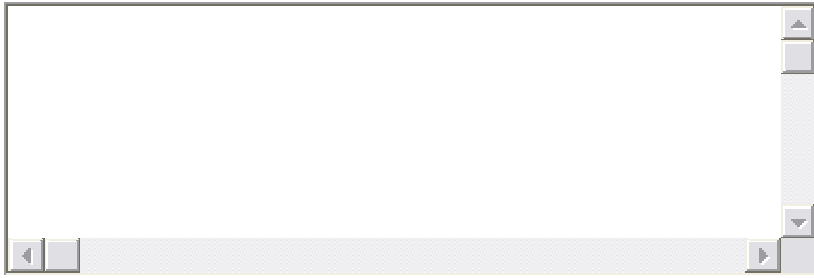
Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

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12. Miten kuvailisitte Cybershopin verkkokaupasta ostamanne tuotteen toimitusaikaa?/ How would You describe the delivery time on a product You have bought from Cybershop's web shop? *

- Todella pitkä/Very long
- Jokseenkin pitkä/Somewhat long
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin nopea/Somewhat fast
- Todella nopea/Very fast

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

An empty rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a thin black border. It features standard scrollbars on the right and bottom edges.

13. Onko Cybershopin verkkokaupassa mielestänne tarpeeksi maksutapavaihtoehtoja?/ Are there enough payment methods on the Cybershop's web shop? *

- Kyllä/Yes
- Ei/No
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

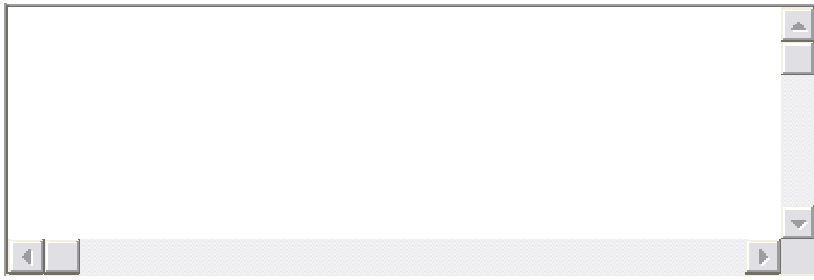


14. Onko viallisen/väärän tuotteen palauttaminen vaivatonta Cybershopin verkkokauppaan?/ Is it easy to return defective/wrong product to Cybershop's web shop?*

Vastatkaa "En osaa sanoa", jos ette ole joutunut palauttamaan tuotetta./Please answer "I don't know" if You haven't have got the need to return a product.

- Vahvasti eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



15. Pidätkö uutiskirjeitä tärkeinä?/ Do you find newsletters important? *

- Vahvasti eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



16. Vastaa väittämään: Cybershopin verkkokauppa lähettää tarpeeksi usein uutiskirjeitä./ Answer the claim: Cybershop's web shop sends newsletters often enough. *

- Vahvasti eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

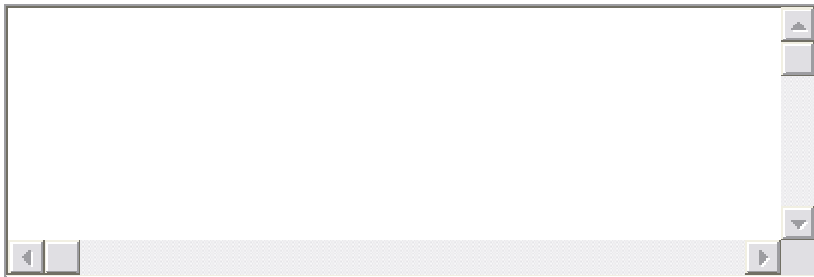
Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

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17. Ajatellen viimeisintä ostokokemusta Cybershopin verkkokaupassa, oliko palvelun laatu: / Considering the previous shopping experience at Cybershop's web-shop, was the quality of service: *

- Huonoa/Poor
- Jokseenkin epätydyttävää/Somewhat unsatisfactory
- Keskivertoa/ About average
- Tyydyttävää/Satisfactory
- Erittäin hyvää/Superior

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

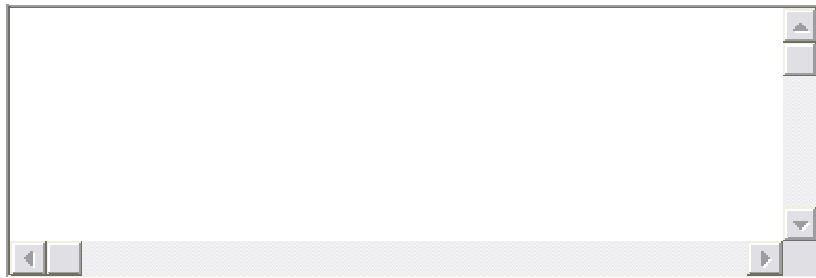
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18. Millaisen kokonaisarvosanan antaisitte Cybershopin verkkokaupan palvelulle?/
What would be the overall grade for Cybershop's web shop's service? *

Numero 1 on huonoin ja numero 10 paras. / Number 1 is the worst and number 10 is the best.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



Tyytyväisyytenne tuotteisiin (3/5)

Tämä kyselyn osio keskittyy tyytyväisyyteenne Cybershopin verkkokaupan tuotteisiin. Jokaisen kysymyksen perässä on tekstikenttä, johon voitte halutessanne syventää omin sanoin vastauksenne.

This part of the survey is about your satisfaction with the products that Cybershop's web shop has to offer. After each question, there is a field where you can explain your answer in more detail, if you wish.

19. Onko Cybershopin verkkokaupan tuotevalikoima mielestänne tarpeeksi laaja?/
Do you find the product range of Cybershop's web shop broad enough? *

- Kyllä/Yes
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Ei/No

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

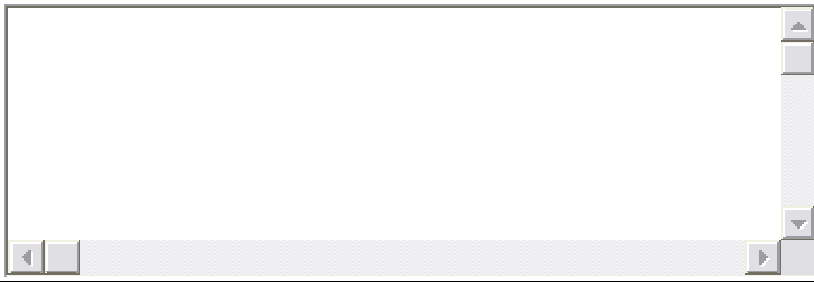


20. Vastatkaa väittämään: Haluamaani tuotetta on aina varastossa Cybershopin verkkokaupassa. / Answer the claim: Product I want is always available at Cybershop's web shop's storage. *

Toisin sanoen, haluamanne tuote ei ole loppuunmyyty./ In other words the product You want is not sold out.

- Täysin eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



21. Vastatkaa väittämään: Ostamanne tuote vastaa Cybershopin nettisivuilla esitettyä tuoteselostetta. / Answer the claim: The product You bought reflects the informative label shown on the Cybershop's web page. *

- Vahvasti eri mieltä/Strongly disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Strongly agree

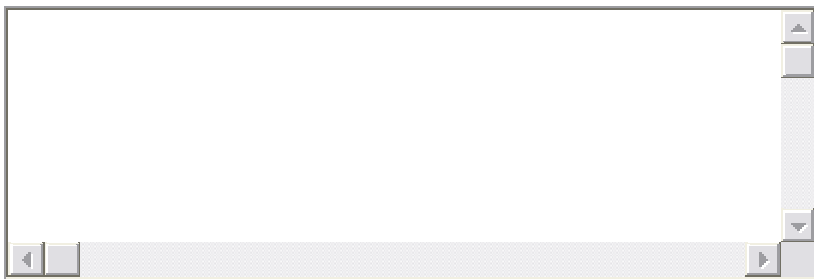
Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



22. Millainen on Cybershopin verkkokaupasta ostamanne tuotteen hintalaatusuhde? / How would You describe the cost-effectiveness of the product bought from Cybershop's web shop? *

- Tuotteen hinta ei vastaa laatua lainkaan/ The price of the product does not reflect the quality at all
- Tuotteen hinta ei juurikaan vastaa laatua/ The price of the product barely reflects the quality
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Tuotteen hinta vastaa joksseenkin laatua/ The price of the product somewhat reflects the quality
- Tuotteen hinta vastaa täysin laatua/ The price of the product fully reflects the quality

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

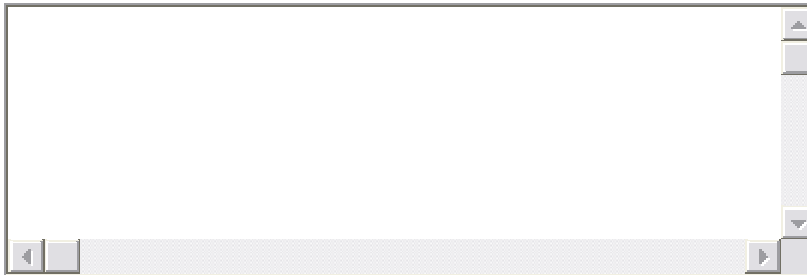


23. Mitkä ominaisuudet saavat sinut ostamaan tuotteen? /Which aspects drive you to purchase a product? *

Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon. / You may pick several options.

- Laatu/Quality
- Hinta/Price
- Muoto/Form
- Väri/Color
- Yksilöllisyys/Uniqueness
- Tuotemerkki/Brand
- Käytännöllisyys/Functionality
- Ympäristöystävällisyys/Environment friendliness
- Eettisyys/Ethical aspects
- Other

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



24. Koetteko edellisessä kysymyksessä valitsemienne ominaisuuksien täyttyvän Cybershopin verkkokaupassa ostamistanne tuotteissa?/ Do You feel that the aspects You chose in the previous question were fulfilled with the products You have bought from Cybershop's web shop? *

- Hyvin huonosti/Very poorly
- Jokseenkin epätydyttävästi/Somewhat unsatisfyingly
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Tyydyttävästi/Satisfyingly
- Erinomaisesti/Superbly

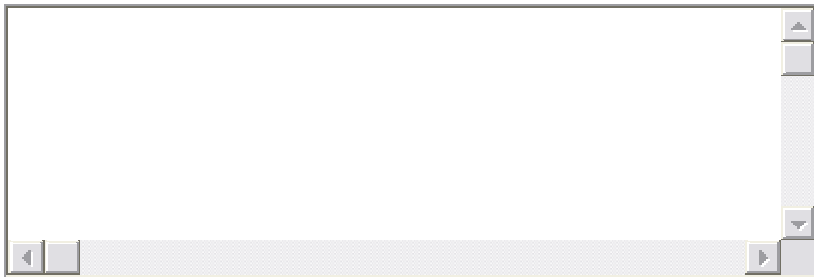
Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

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25. Valitkaa yksi Teitä kiinnostava tuoteryhmä Cybershopin verkkokaupassa./
Please, pick one of the most interesting product group in Cybershop's web shop. *

- Vaatteet/Clothes
- Laukut/Bags
- Pähineet/Hats
- Korut/Jewelry
- Piilolinssit/Contact lenses
- Hiustuotteet/Hair products
- Kosmetiikka/Cosmetics
- Huivit/Scarfs
- Kengät ja kengännauhat/Shoes and shoe laces
- Oheistuotteet/Accessories
- Sukkahousut, leggingsit ja stay-upit/Tights and stay-ups
- Other

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It contains no text. On the right side, there is a vertical scrollbar with a small square slider. On the bottom left and bottom right corners, there are small square buttons with left and right arrows, respectively, for horizontal scrolling.

26. Miten vertaisitte Cybershopin verkkokaupan tuotteita muiden firmojen tarjoamiin samankaltaisiin tuotteisiin?/ How would You compare Cybershop's web shop's products to other products provided by a similar firm? *

Jatkaen lausetta "Cybershopin tuotteet ovat..." / By continuing a sentence "Cybershop's products are..."

- Paljon huonompia/Much worse
- Jonkin verran huonompia/Somewhat worse
- Jokseenkin samanlaisia/About the same
- Jonkin verran parempia/Somewhat better
- Paljon parempia/Much better
- En osaa sanoa/ I don't know

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



27. Ostaisitteko tuotteita Cybershopin verkkokaupasta uudelleen?/ Would You buy products from Cybershop again? *

- Kyllä/Yes
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- En/No

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

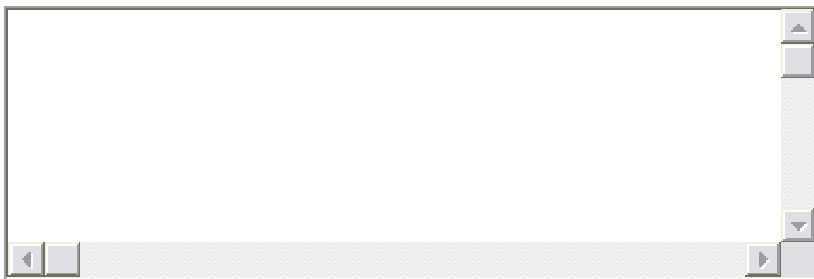


28. Millaisen kokonaisarvosanan antaisitte Cybershopin verkkokaupan tuotteille?/
What would be the overall grade for Cybershop's web shop's products? *

Numero 1 on huonoin ja numero 10 paras. / Number 1 is the worst and number 10 is the best.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



Tyytyväisyytenne verkkosivuihin (4/5)

Tämä kyselyn osio käsittelee tyytyväisyyttänne Cybershopin verkkosivuihin.

This part of the survey is about Your satisfaction with Cybershop's web pages.

29. Kuinka usein suunnilleen vieraillette Cybershopin verkkosivuilla?/ How often do You approximately visit the Cybershop's web pages? *

- En juuri koskaan/Very rarely
- Muutaman kerran vuodessa/Few times in a year
- Pari kertaa kuukaudessa/A couple of times in a month
- Viikoittain/Every week
- Useana päivänä viikossa/Several days in a week

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



30. Koetteko Cybershopin verkkosivut selkeiksi ja helpoiksi käyttää?/ Do You find Cybershop's web pages clear and easy to use? *

- Täysin eri mieltä/Totally disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Totally agree


Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It contains no text. On the right side, there is a vertical scrollbar with a small square slider. On the bottom left and bottom right corners, there are small square buttons with left and right arrows, respectively, for navigating between text boxes.

31. Miten kuvailisitte Cybershopin verkkosivujen ulkoasua?/ How would You describe the appearance of the Cybershop's web pages? *

- Huono/Bad
- Jokseenkin epätydyttävä/ Somewhat unsatisfying
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Tyydyttävä/Satisfying
- Erinomainen/Superior

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It contains no text. On the right side, there is a vertical scrollbar with a small square slider. On the bottom left and bottom right corners, there are small square buttons with left and right arrows, respectively, for navigating between text boxes.

32. Ovatko Cybershopin verkkosivut mielestänne tarpeeksi informatiiviset?/ Would you think that Cybershop's web pages are informative enough? *

- Täysin eri mieltä/Totally disagree
- Jokseenkin eri mieltä/Somewhat disagree
- En osaa sanoa/I don't know
- Jokseenkin samaa mieltä/Somewhat agree
- Täysin samaa mieltä/Totally agree

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

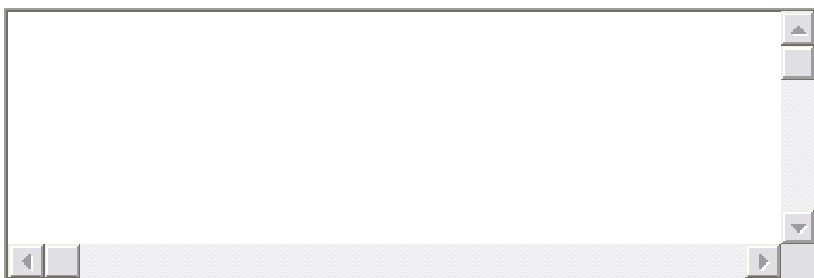


33. Millaisen kokonaisarvosanan antaisitte Cybershopin verkkosivuille?/ What would be the overall grade for Cybershop's web pages? *

Numero 1 on huonoin ja numero 10 paras. / Number 1 is the worst and number 10 is the best.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



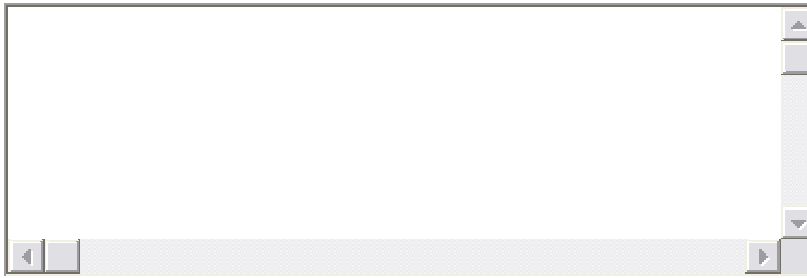
Sekalaisia kysymyksiä/Miscellaneous questions (5/5)

Tämä on kyselyn viimeinen osa ja käsittelee yleisiä aiheita Cybershopin verkkokauppaan liittyen. This is the last part of the survey and it is about some common topics about Cybershop's web shop.

34. Miten löysitte Cybershopin verkkokaupan?/ How did You find Cybershop's web shop? *

- Näin mainoksen lehdessä/Saw an advertisement on a magazine
- Näin mainoksen televisiossa/Saw an advertisement on a television
- Kuulin siitä radiossa/Heard about it on the radio
- Näin mainoksen netissä/Saw an advertisement on the Internet
- Kuulin kaverilta/Heard from a friend

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation



35. Suositteletko Cybershopin verkkokauppaa tutuillenne?/ Would You recommend Cybershop's web shop to the people that You know? *

- Kyllä/Yes
- En/No

Valinnainen perustelu/Optional explanation

