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Department of Psychology

IKEA Shop keeper
An assessment of tasks and competencies

Supervisor: Robert Ragneklint

Jara Kristina Thomasdóttir

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In this study the job of shop keeper at IKEA in Iceland was analyzed with the aim of better understanding what the job role entailed and what competencies were needed to perform it well. Questionnaires were answered by eight people connected to the job role and six interviews were performed with the current shop keepers and their supervisors. An abbreviated version of grounded theory was used for analysis which revealed several categories of tasks and competencies important to the shop keeper job role. A discrepancy between the existing written job description and the experience of the participants of the study was found as well as a difference in the experience of the different work groups involved. Suggestions were made as to what changes would benefit the selection process and what changes could be made to the job description to attempt to eliminate the discrepancy between it and the actual demands of the job.

Keywords: Job analysis, personnel selection, IKEA, Knowledge, skills, abilities, personal attributes,

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Selection is the process of distinguishing capable applicants for jobs from the not so capable as well as distinguishing between two or more capable applicants (Newell, 2005). The modern age of personnel selection began in 1917 with the United States of America's declaration of war on Germany. To contribute to the war effort the members of the American Psychological Association (APA) developed a performance assessment of officers, ways to screen and rate recruits as well as creating job specifications and job knowledge tests. Systematic methods to aid personnel decisions were developed (Dunnette, 1979). The importance of hiring capable people and holding on to valuable employees force many organizations allocate a great deal of funding to personnel selection (Arnold, Silvester, Patterson, Robertson, Cooper & Burnes, 2005). The organizations competitive edge and success are affected by the match between the organizations demands and the employees' qualifications (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). Generally a systematic personnel selection process is made up of five activities; defining the job, defining the ideal candidate, attracting good potential applicants, assessing the applicants, make a selection decision and evaluate outcome (Newell, 2005).

Defining the job and the ideal candidate

The first step in creating a good personnel selection process is to start by defining what the organization needs (Cook, 2009). One way of doing this is by conducting a job analysis. A *job analysis* is aimed at defining job roles, determining what behaviors are necessary to perform them and then consider the personal characteristics needed to carry out said behaviors (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). In short this is how the organization defines the job and the ideal candidate for the job. Well conducted a job analysis provides a better understanding of specific jobs and the requirements involved such as the position within the company, what responsibilities the worker has and what equipment he/she uses (Arnold et.al., 2005). It can be described on a general or more specific level, reveal similarities and differences between different job positions and make it possible to compare the requirements, content and the responsibilities of the job roles (Cedersund, 1996).

Job analysis is often a content-oriented method which works well for jobs where demands remain fairly constant (Millward, 2005). The two main components of the job analysis are the job description and job specification. *Job description* is defined as the characteristics of the job, the physical responsibilities, tasks to be performed and the circumstances under which they are performed (Arnold et.al., 2005). It may include information such as job title, job activities and procedures, working conditions, social environment and conditions of employment (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). Job descriptions in

various companies are often used to inform workers of their duties and as a base for assessing job performance and calculating salary and benefits. Be that as it may the descriptions are often not up to date or comprehensive enough to provide useful information about what is expected of an employee in a certain job role. This may stem from the description being arbitrarily made and not based on appropriate analysis or it may have simply become out of date due to the changing nature of the job role or because of technical advances (Arnold et.al., 2005). *Job specification* represents the human qualifications assumed necessary to perform a job (Millward, 2005).

The definition of the human qualifications is knowledge (K), skills (S), abilities (A) and other personal attributes (O). KSAO is according to Cascio and Aguinis (2005) the competencies necessary to perform a certain job and competence has been defined as the observable capacity to complete a task successfully (Cook, 2009). These can be very specific qualities acquired through training in a particular job or more general attributes. In KSAO knowledge means knowledge of certain materials or procedures required to perform a job. Skill is the capacity to perform a task, using the tools necessary. Abilities are physical or mental capacities to perform tasks while other personal attributes indicate if and how someone will perform certain tasks rather than if they can perform them. Abilities include such attributes as resilience, interest, motivational attributes and tolerance (Cook, 2009; Ployhart, Schneider & Schmitt, 2006). Personal characteristics such as education and former training are also a part of the job specifications. The person specifications are preferably described in terms of observable behavior. Observable behavior can be reviewed and put into context with the other categories, how tasks were solved and results achieved (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). Together the job description and the job specification define the job role and outline the competencies needed to do a good job. It is possible to make do with a smaller number of competencies in the selection process given that they are relevant to the job role. The process often benefits from concentrating on competencies considered harder to learn or train for (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002).

Methods of job analysis.

The methods used to collect information about jobs are many. *Observation* of work being performed and *participation* of the analyst in the work are methods that assume that jobs are reasonably static in nature (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). These methods are most appropriate when the jobs can be readily learned by the analyst or the main activities are short, manual and standardized, also observation can be time consuming and the observer may miss work behaviors that are less obvious. According to Cascio and Aguinis (2005) *interviewing* people

with knowledge of a particular job is one of the most common ways of accumulating information. Through an interview worker can report behaviors which are not necessarily noticeable to someone simply observing. For added reliability the interview should be structured, at least to some degree, and preferably be performed with several people from different groups or positions within the organization if possible. Interviews can be time consuming and poor structure can make the content difficult to analyze. Another method of analysis that is also a form of interview is the *Critical Incident interviews* were critical incident indicates some specific behavior vital for effective performance on the job rather than a complete list of competencies. The main purpose is to get information about appropriate behavior in particularly demanding or typical situations of a job. It yields behavioral information and clues on what works best in the organization. This method can with great advantage be used as a foundation for creating interview questions but is rarely used alone as a job analysis tool. It can also form the basis of behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS), to be discussed later, and some kinds of structured interviewing systems (Cook, 2009).

The SME (Subject Matter Expert) *panel* is a group of experienced (in the organization or job) people discussing and coming to a mutual agreement. When well composed a panel of subject matter experts can be used to develop information on both tasks and competencies (KSAO). The panel can be used for general as well as critical incident questions. The SME panel can be used with great advantage when constructing other methods of job analysis such as questionnaires and test items. The process of the panel can be difficult to manage and may be time consuming. The process can be influenced in excess by a few people in the group and information may be difficult to analyze (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005).

Questionnaires can be anything from regular questionnaires, checklists, task inventories or electronic programs. It is quite easy and cheap to administer a questionnaire to a large group of people but standardized questionnaires can be time consuming and expensive to develop when not available for sale. If available for sale they may not suit the organization completely, fixed categories may exclude important information. This presents the opportunity to have a custom made questionnaire based solely on the current situation and needs.

Task inventory lists were first developed by the US armed forces and are lists made up by tasks associated with a specific job. The lists are usually created by interviews with SMEs. *Position Analysis Questionnaire* (PAQ) is a worker oriented list and one of the most commonly used job analysis techniques. It is not actually a questionnaire but a structured interview schedule. The results are compared in a large American database to

identify similar requirements between jobs and assists in calculating appropriate salaries and such (Cook, 2009). *The Fleishman Job Analysis Survey* (F-JAS) is intended to describe abilities required for job performance. These include cognitive, physical, sensory, social and KSA abilities (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). Diaries or *self-report* is when a worker writes down the tasks he performs. It can give information about the amount of time spent on each individual task. The quality of the information is reliant on the workers ability to express their work in writing, tasks may be forgotten and various attribution errors may occur.

Documentation at an organization may convey information about what tasks belong to a specific job role. This material is often standardized, structured and easily available. It is however often also out of date and does not always give a realistic view of the tasks involved in a job. As seen here there are benefits and disadvantages to every job analysis method. There is no universal fit for how job analysis should be carried out and most organizations develop their own procedures and methods based on what is appropriate for their own present situation (Ployhart, Schneider & Schmitt, 2006). The purpose should define the method chosen (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005).

Validity and reliability of job analysis.

A good job analysis can improve the overall validity of several selection methods including structured interviews, personality tests, situational judgment tests and assessment centers (Cook, 2009; Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). The only selection method that is not affected by the job analysis is intelligence, or cognitive, tests. The reason for this is that cognitive tests measure a general factor not dependent on the demands of a particular job (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). It can be said that the validity of the job analysis is dependent on the extent it helps in creating a more accurate selection process. It lies in the connection between the assessments done by a selection method and how well the assessed persons fare in their work later on. Also as any valid research job analysis should be beneficiary, that is, keeping detrimental consequences to a minimum at the same time as it produces beneficial knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A good job analysis method should be reliable and stable and always measure the same thing. In subjective testing such as job analysis there is of course less than perfect reliability. Nonetheless, a meta-analysis conducted by Voskuijll and van Sliedregt (2002) reported better reliability for ratings made by job contact (observations or interviews) than those who only had access to job descriptions. They also showed that experience in rating made a difference as ratings conducted by experienced professional raters under job contact conditions had better reliability then ratings made by students and organization members. These are things that should be kept in mind when choosing methods

of analyses as well as the people conducting them. Face validity is another validity that needs consideration. It is important that the participants in any study feel as though what they are participating in is appropriate for the purpose at hand, otherwise they may not give truthful answers or even refuse to participate (Cook, 2009). To this effect, in job analysis, the method chosen should appear relevant to the job.

The organization design as a whole as well as work and equipment design can use the job analysis information to their advantage. In work and equipment design it may, among other things, be applied to develop improvements in safety and work methods. It is however in Human Resource Management where the largest benefits of the information are to be had. In HR management job analysis can be used to formulate accurate comprehensive job descriptions, do performance appraisals, assess job classification systems, evaluate how training and development should proceed and improve the personnel selection process (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). In the selection process the job analysis can be used for deciding whether to select for specific qualities or if they may be trained for, choose selection tests, construct structured interview systems and allow the organization to defend selection tests chosen (Cook, 2009).

Job analysis in personnel selection.

It is important to know what is required in a given job to be able to choose appropriate methods of evaluation and selection of applicants (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002), no method has more predictability than chance if not built on a solid foundation. There is often not sufficient attention paid to what qualities or competencies the company needs or how these may be assessed in applicants (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). This can result in less than optimal selection which can have negative economical effects for both the organization and the applicant and create problems of adaptability and collaboration within a work group or the organization as a whole.

To avoid problems recruiting and selecting should not be made before a job analysis has been conducted. The job analysis can give information about the boundaries within which the job is to be performed, the content of the job and its specific tasks, the results expected as well as the competencies necessary. It can also improve the connection between the interview and the job role, reduce stereotypical assumptions about the job role which questions may be built on, and give both the applicant and interviewer a feeling of the interviews relevance and usefulness (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). This also holds for other types of selection tools besides interviews. Correct information in the advertisement for a job can for instance help potential candidates make better informed decisions about whether a

particular position would be suited for them or not and so promote better self selection (Arnold et.al., 2005).

Attracting good potential applicants

Recruitment relates to the process of attracting potential applicants to the organization. Potential applicants can be found external to the company or internal. External recruiting can bring new ideas and experiences to the company. New recruits can contribute to innovation and rethinking of old routines and recruiting from outside the company can prevent a chain reaction of movement which can occur with internal recruitment when one person is moved within the company to fill a vacant position which in turn leaves their former position vacant and in need of recruiting and so on (Nordhaug, Larsen & Öhrström, 2004; Ployhart, Schneider & Schmitt, 2006). Studies show that the most common ways for potential applicants to keep informed of available jobs are the daily papers, various internet sites, trade related magazines and employment offices (Nordhaug, Larsen & Öhrström, 2004). These methods are also among the most commonly used by organizations searching for potential applicants. Other methods worth mentioning are job fairs, networking and recruitment from a place of education. The possibility of advancement within a company can be quite beneficiary to the company.

Nordhaug, Larsen and Öhrström (2004) describe five different beneficial effects of internal recruitment for the organization. The first is the motivation effect, when the worker does not have to change his workplace in order to advance and explore new job roles. This creates less motivation to search for new challenges outside the current organization. Second is the developmental effect where workers in a company with a good internal job market become more interested in developing their organization specific competencies rather than general competencies that may be more easily transferred to other workplaces. The third is the information effect which refers to the possibility of saving time, money and energy in collecting information about job applicants. Internal applicants have a history with the company. Any company with a half decent staff appraisal process can base their choice on much more information when considering an internal applicant than an external one with less effort. Fourth is time effect. The time for hiring an internal recruit has the potential of being a lot shorter than that for an external recruit who may have to give notice at their current job with a fixed period of notice to finish. Internal periods of notice have the potential of being much more flexible. At last there is the cost effect; fewer resources are needed for introduction and learning about the organization. Another aspect that influences both external and internal recruitment is the corporate culture and the ever growing environmental

awareness. It may attract people to the company put may also increase the durability of employment.

It is important both to the organization and the individual that the personnel selection process works well. All processes within applicant recruitment and selection must be perceived as fair and acceptable to the applicants especially when recruiting internally as the dissatisfaction of a worker who feels unfairly passed over can create problems for the organization (Ployhart, Schneider & Schmitt, 2006; Nordhaug, Larsen and Öhrström, 2004). Also the way an organization treats applications and applicants impacts general opinion of it. A good assessment process will help with this as well as solid information about what opportunities the workers may expect to be available (Ployhart, Schneider & Schmitt, 2006).

Assessing the applicants

After attracting potential applicants the next stage of the selection process is assessing the applicants by different selection methods in order to choose the applicant or applicants most appropriate. Matters for consideration when planning the selection process are; what is to be assessed and how can it be done in a satisfactory way? What assessments are to be made and will it require training? What is the budget and time limit? How many people does the company need, how many applicants are expected? And last, but not least, what are the consequences of the wrong applicant being hired? The main elements of applicant assessment are according to Cook (2009); knowledge (K), work and social skills (S), mental ability (A), personality, physical characteristics, interests and values (O).

It is unwise to think that it is possible to uncover all competencies and map all aspects of an applicant. Also, doing a complete mapping of all qualifications will not necessarily help in making a distinction between applicants (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). Instead what is needed is to find a few key elements that are the most relevant to the job role. Here it will also work to ones advantage also to choose elements that are harder to train for. According to Kahlke and Schmidt (2002) the most appropriate methods in any given assessment are usually those who explore items that are closely related to what the applicant is intended to do on the job. Kahlke and Schmidt (2002) further suggest that for many jobs there is a minimum requirement line above which all applicants applying needs to fall in order to be considered for the job at all. These requirements can be anything from age and education to work experience.

Application forms or CVs are usually utilized as an initial screening of the applicants to see if they measure up to the minimum requirements made. All self-report in applications need to be confirmed by other sources of information (Cook, 2009) as they may

be limited by lack of insight, coaching or simply made up. There is an abundance of methods to assess the elements chosen for differentiating between applicants after an initial screening. Traditional methods of assessment include; application forms, CV, unstructured interview and references. Newer methods include; electronic applications, structured interviews, peer rating, bio data, assessment centre, work sample, personality questionnaire and tests of mental ability, job knowledge, honesty and physical ability tests (Cook, 2009; Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). For managerial selection methods such as work samples, cognitive ability tests, objective personality inventories, leadership ability and motivation tests, personal history data and peer ratings all show various degree of success (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). As the current body of work does not cover the recruitment and selection processes as such but rather the ground work leading up to it these methods will not be reviewed in more detail.

Whichever method is chosen it is important to keep in mind that they need to be relevant and appropriate for the assessment and the applicants have to experience them as being fair. Methods of selection experienced as improper run the risk of putting people off applying or accepting the position offered, displeased applicants may even discourage others to apply and share their negative view of the organization with friends, colleagues and so forth (Cook, 2009). A recent study showed that Icelanders consider interviews, work samples, CVs and personal references to be the fairest methods. Tests of personality, cognitive ability and honesty were considered a little less fair while selecting applicants through personal connections was seen as the least fair method personnel selection (Jónsdóttir & Hafsteinsson, 2008).

Another important part of the assessment process is the rating. A conventional type of rating is the graphic rating scale described by Cascio and Aguinis (2005) as a separate points scale where the points are described on a continuum with end anchors such as High and Low or Good and Poor. A problem with these scales is that the rating is most often completely arbitrary and dependent upon the raters' subjective view. Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) aims to make the rating less arbitrary by making each point on the scale meaningful to the rater (Cook, 2009). It is designed to increase inter-rater agreement and reduce leniency but it requires a lot of research to create the definitions of the scale dimensions and they tend to be job specific which renders them rather expensive. Having some kind of consensus about what is a good or poor answer to a question is however a good idea and may help in boost predictability of the assessment process (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005).

Evaluating outcome

Assessment of the predictive validity of the selection methods is usually done by appraisal of job performance. A correlation between performance in selection process and later performance on the job suggests that the selection process does what it is intended to (Mabon, 2005). The measures of job performance can be objective or subjective. Objective measures include production data; units produced, number of errors and employment data; accidents, tardiness, absences. Subjective measures depend on human judgment and need to be based on careful analysis of the behaviors required to perform a job well as they are prone to biases such as leniency, halo or central tendency effect. There is a large variation of subjective performance measures used by organizations (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). The process of evaluation will not be discussed further as it is not part of this study per se.

IKEA Iceland

IKEA in Iceland first opened in Reykjavík in 1981. In October of 2006 the company moved in to a brand new facility especially designed for the business of IKEA. The store is run as a franchise and therefore has more autonomy than many other IKEA stores across the globe. This autonomy results among other things in a possibility to create a more individual way in personnel management where the IKEA way and values are combined with the local culture and needs of the staff at hand. IKEA in Iceland is a large company on the Icelandic scale and at the beginning of March 2011 there were 213 people working at IKEA in Iceland. Like most companies in Iceland there has been some downsizing in personnel following the bank collapse of 2008 and the financial crisis that followed. There are approximately 100 fewer people working there in 2011 than at the beginning of 2008. In the financial boom before the crisis of 2008 the turnover statistics were high but have been improving ever since now with an average turnover of 38% for the period from September 2010 to March 2011 (F. Helgadóttir, HR department at IKEA, personal communication, March, 2011).

The job role of shop keeper.

Shop keepers are people responsible for a specific department or section of the IKEA store as if it was his/her own little shop. It is a middle management position with responsibilities that include the same responsibilities as the sales personnel in general as well as the supervision of the daily operations in the department and managing the sales personnel in the department. There are five shop keepers operating at the IKEA store in Iceland each one with an assigned area of responsibility. Three operate in the furniture department and two in the market hall where the small goods are sold. There are plans to add another shop keeper to the furniture department in the near future. The shop keepers are, almost without exception, recruited internally from the pool of sales personnel. Internal selection saves the company time, effort

and money otherwise committed to assessing external applicants. With internal recruitment the company already has a basic knowledge of the applicants' qualities and it has an opportunity to promote able employees and keep them with the company for a longer time as the possibility for promotion within IKEA creates less motivation for staff to search for new challenges elsewhere.

There have however been some problems with this arrangement. On more than one occasion the applicant chosen has not been able to live up to the expectations of the job role. This creates a problem for all involved and the options have been few when time, training or guidance has not worked. The possibility of going back to their old job is not considered an option as this is experienced as a demotion and there are no other positions available at the same level where the demands are considered different from the job role they cannot master. When this situation has arisen the outcome has therefore invariably been one of the new shop keepers leaving the company. This is not considered an acceptable outcome for either party.

Aim

This explorative and descriptive study is an attempt to better understand what the job role of shop keeper entails and what competencies are needed to perform well. Its aim is to be a stepping stone towards an insight into what the selection process should focus on and assist in formulating a more cohesive job description.

Method

Scientific method

There is always a need to find an adequate method relating to the research object at hand (Barbosa da Silva, 1994). Usually a compromise is needed between what should be done from a scientific perspective and what can be done practically and ethically. Much theoretical research has little direct applicability in organizational settings and much of the research conducted in organizational settings is of little interest to the academic community as it is often very specific to a certain company or branch with less generalizability. The chosen data collection method becomes a combination of the research purpose and the practical limitations of the surrounding research setting. Sometimes it is even the method of data collection that leads to a conclusion of what type of research is being conducted which can be unfortunate (Allwood, 1999). Interviews are for example often considered more qualitative than behavior observation or questionnaires. The actual events being researched are also sometimes used as determinants but the most important method of distinction is the data analysis method applied. In data analysis statistical results are considered a part of

quantitative research while interpretation is a more qualitative method. This is however not an absolute distinction either as statistics involve interpretation as well (Allwood, 1999).

Grounded theory focuses on identification and integration of meaning from data (Willig, 2001). Its purpose is not to test any existing theory, rather to develop theory through induction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As a method it provides guidelines on how to identify categories and how to establish links between them. Grounded theory emerges from the data were categories and theory evolve throughout the process (Willig, 2001). They should be short and define the experience of the person interviewed with the goal to develop categories that capture the object of the analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This is in contrast to Content analysis were the categories are determined before data analysis (Nylén, 1999).

According to Willig (2001) the categories in Grounded theory are made up of instances that share essential characteristics and may be used as descriptive labels with the possibility of ever higher levels of abstraction. The categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. When reaching a certain level of abstraction the labels can cease being merely descriptive and become analytical interpretations of the phenomena at hand. The full version of Grounded theory involves a constant comparative method, going back and forth between the field and the data analysis several times as the categories and links between them evolve. This allows for the triangulation of sources of data and different types of data collection and a possibility to advance towards theoretical saturation. In most instances however this version is not feasible due to time and/or resource restraints, for example in the work of students with short periods of time at their disposal. In these cases an abbreviated version is used were only original data is used and the methods of Grounded theory are used in confinement of this text. This way Grounded theory becomes a descriptive method of data analysis only (Willig, 2001). Interviews (or other data) are categorized for systematic representation of participants experience and to understand the object of investigation. The analysis is then objective in approach, in its search for understanding the larger context, as well as subjective with its aim to map the participants' experience (Willig, 2001).

Participants

The participants were a purposive sample of people working at IKEA in the position of shop keeper or directly above or below it. The intention was to have a range of informants able to contribute with their experience of the job role. The two heads of sales, four shopkeepers, one sales person and the assistant HR manager answered the questionnaire. One shop keeper was omitted for practicality reasons. The department of this omitted shop keeper, the kitchen department, was deemed to differ from the other departments in tasks, demands and overall

structure in a way that may have skewed the results concerning the remaining departments. For the interviews both heads of sales and all four shop keepers participated. The assistant HR management and the sales person where omitted from the interviews due to convenience and time issues. No participant was new to the company or their working position and were all considered capable of assessing the job role of shop keeper. Participants were contacted beforehand and the main purpose and aim of the study was explained to them. They were then asked if they would like to participate in the study and it was stressed that participation was voluntary. All persons asked chose to participate.

Material

Data was collected by questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The intention was to get information about what, if any, tasks were more central to the job role of shop keeper than others and what KSAO may be desirable. A questionnaire was considered appropriate for this purpose. It was designed specifically for this analysis, based on the job analysis questionnaire framework of Ásta Bjarnadóttir (1996) (for questionnaire, see appendix 1)¹. The first two questions on the questionnaire related to what tasks were the five most and least important as well as how frequently they were performed. This part of the list was constructed as a checklist as the tasks of the job role were known and did not need specification from the participants. They were however invited to add or subtract to the list if they felt it necessary. The items on the checklist were not in the same order for all participants to avoid the effect of primacy or recency. After the checklist three open questions followed covering areas of responsibility and what KSAO were considered needed to perform well in the job role. Knowledge was a separate question while skills, abilities and other personal attributes were merged into one question as these categories and their content often are used interchangeably and it was deemed appropriate to combine them in this case.

The interviews were an attempt to see to what extent the employees experience corresponds with the generally supposed demands of the job role. A Dictaphone was used for the face-to-face interviews and the material was transcribed verbatim shortly after each session. The interviews had open ended and reflecting questions (see appendix 2 for original questions). Participants were first asked to describe the aim and expected result of the job role

¹ All material used in the gathering of data is in Icelandic. It was decided not to attempt any translation of this material as a whole into English as this could affect the meaning of the individual items of the questionnaire leaving it different from the original in a way that may be misleading to the reader. Items of the questionnaire will instead be described in the text.

and then to give their opinion on preferred qualities of a good shop keeper. Lastly they were asked what, if any, changes were needed to improve performance in and quality of the job role. The questions were subject specific but not leading pertaining to the content of the answer. The interviews were semi structured with all the participants getting the same questions even though some follow-up questions differed depending on the answers before. Follow-up questions were however few.

The software program [Sphinx](#) was used to analyze the data from the interviews to some extent. In qualitative data analysis computer programs decreases the large amount of time it usually takes to structure the material. Interpretation of the results is however still the task of the researcher. Categorization, or coding, is the main form of computer analysis in qualitative research today and most programs work with written text, even if there are some that can deal directly with sound recordings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). There were however some problems running the software and so after some rudimentary groundwork and validity checks that was done on the computer the remaining analysis was done by hand.

Data collection

Most of the participants did not have the opportunity to sit down at one particular time during the day to fill out the list all at once as their work required them to be available to the customers. They were given two days to finish the questionnaire at their own convenience. The timeframe of two days was also expected to give them a better chance to reflect on their answers. Instructions came with the questionnaire explaining its purpose and intended use. The interviews were conducted one-on-one in a small conference room available at IKEA after the participants had answered the questionnaires. The purpose of the interview and its connection to the questionnaire was explained at the beginning of each interview.

Ethical considerations

No deception of the participants was used in this study. All participants were informed of the nature and aim of the whole study verbally and then again in writing for the intent of the questionnaire and verbally for the interview. They were also informed that they were free to decline participation or withdraw at any time and that their individual answers would be confidential. This was all done in accordance with the recommendations of the [Swedish Science Council](#).

Reflexivity

When attempting to gather knowledge through interviews there is a need for awareness about the contributions you make as a researcher to the production of knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Willig, 2001). There needs to be an understanding of the fact that previous

experiences influence the way we understand something and interpret it. An awareness of possible biases and problems that may arise from the method chosen is important (Alvesson, 2003). It is also to be anticipated that the research process will shape or influence the object of analysis in some way. The questions asked may influence the answers given, interviews are also subject to self-report bias and, as mentioned before, the researchers' identity and past experiences may influence the course of the interview and the responses given (Willig, 2001). In this case the researcher is a former employee of IKEA. Personal reflexivity due to own past experiences with the work place and the various job roles, which is the case here, may have shaped the research but it was attempted to have an awareness of the contribution of these experiences when formulating research questions and analyzing the results. In some way it is even hoped that these experiences had a positive rather than negative effect on the ability to understand the situation and find an appropriate solution. The HR department of IKEA particularly expressed satisfaction with the fact that this experience with the company was presentas they believed it to be useful for understanding how certain areas of the organization worked. IKEA prides itself in creating a certain kind of *IKKEA mindedness*. IKEA mindedness is characterized by cooperation, respect for each other and the customer, to lead by example and keeping things simple through efficiency and good common sense. Also it entails not being afraid of being different, to think outside the box to find cost effective solutions and not seeing responsibility as a burden but an opportunity and privilege. Having been part of the company may have made it easier to understand this way of thinking and perhaps also to see how it may influence the way things are done compared to other companies.

Analysis

The answers on the questionnaire were divided by question and in accordance with the grounded theory approach codes were marked down for each statement made that summarized the content of the statement made. Most answers where single worded or short sentences in the questionnaire which eased the procedure. These codes where grouped into subcategories by similarity in content, characteristics, meaning and over all fit².

Example 1: Be able to communicate with co-workers was coded as communicate

Know how to talk to staff was coded as talk

These codes were grouped (with others similar in meaning) into the subcategory
Good communication skills.

² The exception being the question of Task importance where the subcategories were already given by the checklist.

Example 2: Being able to direct others was coded as direction

Knowing how to get others to do stuff was coded as influence

These codes were grouped into the subcategory Ability to lead along with others similar in meaning and content.

After all data had been grouped into subcategories these were generated into categories according to affinity in concept, similarity and relatedness.

Example 3: The two subcategories Good communication skills and Ability to lead were grouped (with other related subcategories) into the category Leadership.

This kind of analysis was performed on all answers describing the tasks, responsibilities and KSAO of the job role.

Each statement found in the interviews was coded in order to summarize its content. For the most part only one, sometimes two statements could be found in one line of text.

Example 4: “..they [the shop keepers] are to be responsible for it.” was coded as responsible
“Yes, be in charge of the department including the staff” was coded as be in charge of. All codes were grouped into subcategories according to similarity in content, essential characteristics, similarity in meaning or over all fit.

Example 5: the codes responsible and be in charge was incorporated into the subcategory of Accountable.

Properties and dimensions of the different subcategories were generated into categories according to similarity and relatedness.

Example 6: The subcategories Accountability, Dependable and Knowledgeable along with other connected subcategories made up the category of Conscientiousness.

All text was coded and grouped this way until there did not appear to be any more ways to group or connect the different subcategories and categories. Then saturation was considered reached and analysis of the raw data completed.

Findings

Questionnaire

No core category was identified for the questionnaire. Three categories were found for each level of Task importance as well as for the Areas of responsibility. Two categories were found for the question of Knowledge and four for the question of Skills abilities and other personal attributes. Table 1.1 illustrates the categories identified in the questionnaire. See appendix 3 for subcategories.

Table.1.1 Questionnaire categories divided by question

Most important	Least important	Areas of responsibility	Knowledge	Skills, abilities and other
Staff management	IKEA involvement	Staff management	Computer knowledge	Leadership
Department standard	List management	Department supervision	IKEA expertise	Customer oriented
Customer service	Product stocking	Assisting the customer		Work ethics Work efficiency

Task categories.

The most important tasks of a shopkeeper appear to be divided into three main categories; Staff management, Department standard and Customer service. *Staff management* involves training staff, making sure that the staff knows the rules and sales tactics of IKEA, keeping them informed of changes and upcoming tasks, promoting a good working atmosphere and cooperation in the department. Knowing what is going on in the work place decreases uncertainty and may influence the overall working atmosphere and morale. A good atmosphere also makes it easier to get information across and get feedback on what information or training is necessary at any given time.

Department standards include the subcategories sales management in consult with the head of sales, making sure all price tags and signs are correctly posted, ordering in merchandise for sale in department and keeping the department clean, neat and attractive to customers. These subcategories are all intertwined as one influences the other. Good sales management, correct ordering and correct signs all contribute to a more attractive department. A well organized and attractive department with the correct merchandise, signs and price tags also makes it easier to have a good overview and making good sale management decisions. Department standard is also the category which is implemented most frequently.

Customer service involves assisting customers and having expert knowledge of the department merchandise. The level of knowledge has an impact on service but assisting customers will also create opportunity to learn more about the merchandise. All subcategories of the most important categories are performed daily except sales management with the head of sales which is a weekly occurrence.

Items considered least important also divide into three categories; IKEA expertise, List management and Product stocking. *IKEA involvement* involves having expert knowledge of the IKEA concept and merchandise of the store in general, doing price comparisons and attending courses and meetings. This category involves accumulating

knowledge about the store, its merchandise in general and its position in the market. *List management* includes the subcategories working the lists containing hard to sell and promotion merchandise³ and keeping track of common customer questions. *Product stocking* entails stocking the shelves of the department with merchandise. The least important categories are performed on a weekly or monthly basis except stocking merchandise which is a daily occasion.

Areas of responsibility.

Areas of responsibility divide into three categories; Staff management, Department supervision and Assisting customers. *Staff management* involves supervision and training of staff, making sure that the staff knows the rules and sales tactics of IKEA, keeping them informed of changes and upcoming tasks and promote a good morale and cooperation within the department. It is the shop keepers' responsibility to keep a knowledgeable and content staff.

Department supervision include the subcategories of sales management in consult with the head of sales, making sure all price tags and signs are correctly posted, ordering in merchandise for sale in department, stocking the shelves, keeping the department clean, neat and attractive to customers as well as working with lists of hard to sell and promotion merchandise.

Assisting the customer is a single item category of making sure the customer gets the assistance and help necessary. The categories here are not so dissimilar from the ones appearing for the tasks. Staff management involves the same tasks in both instances and therefore get the same name. There is however a difference between Department standard under Task importance and Department supervision in Areas of responsibility as keeping the shelves stocked is considered an area of responsibility but not one of the most important tasks. Therefore they do not share exactly the same name.

Knowledge.

Computer and software related knowledge is considered important as well as knowledge of the IKEA concept and merchandise. These make up the two categories of knowledge; *Computer knowledge* and *IKEA expertise*. The question about knowledge seems to be a little bit misunderstood as several of the items mentioned by participants appears to belong in the

³ The item working promotion merchandise lists had a score on most important but when it was looked into it became apparent that one participant had scored this item as both most and least important. It was decided to ignore that particular participants score of the item when categorizing it.

skills, abilities and other personal attributes category rather than knowledge of certain materials and procedures required to perform a job. Interpersonal or leadership skills are particularly noticeable but this will be considered in the following section. The category of IKEA expertise is similar to the task category of IKEA involvement but with the difference that involvement entails a more overall knowledge of the store while expertise is a little more department specific.

Skills, abilities and other personal attributes.

The items of skills, abilities and other personal characteristics appear to divide into four categories; Leadership⁴, Customer oriented, Work ethics and Work efficiency. *Leadership* includes having good communication skills, setting a good example, having the ability to lead and encourage others, showing respect for others and organizational skills. *Customer oriented* includes being service minded, being a skilled salesperson and having the ability to handle demanding customers. *Work ethics* incorporates being punctual, conscientious, honest and ambitious and having a positive attitude while *Work efficiency* includes ability to work independently, taking initiative, being organized, being skilled in handling stress well, being flexible and being interested in the work and merchandise of the company.

Interviews

The interviews were first analyzed as a whole (section A) and then divided into groups by the different job roles of the participants; shop keepers and heads of sales (section B) to see if the categories appear in both groups or if there is a difference in perception between them. This was not possible with the questionnaires as they were handed in anonymously.

Section A

Categories describing attributes, performance and problem areas and a core category were identified. From the participants' description of the main qualities needed to take on the job as shop keeper a core category emerged named "Leading through competent management". This core category is generated from the four categories of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, Department standard and Issues to be addressed (Table 1.2).

⁴ Answers given in the previous section of knowledge are included in this category.

Table 1.2 Categories with core category based on description of shop keeper job role

Core category	Categories	Subcategories
Leading through competent management	Conscientiousness	Able Knowledgeable Independent Accountable Conscientious Having control Dependable Role model Approachable Communicative
	Agreeableness	
	Keeping standard	department Keep department stocked Keep price tags and signs correct Order merchandise Look of department
	Issues to be addressed	Lack of control Lack of responsibility To little difference between job roles

The core category of Leading through competent management describes the main feature required to be a shop keeper. Focus is on having the appropriate tools to be able to succeed in the job role. Leading means being able to get the staff to follow given directions and make them feel part of a team. This may be done through competent management which entails the shop keepers' ability to formulate plans for the department and make sure that they are followed through. Good management boosts confidence in the shop keeper as a competent leader and increases the likelihood of good cooperation in the department.

Conscientiousness.

Conscientiousness is about how a shop keeper needs to be to handle the pressure and the responsibilities of the job; disciplined, thorough and organized. Able means that the shop keeper needs to be ready to take on different tasks that need attending to and do so without having to be told or to consult supervisors. To be knowledgeable signifies being aware of the status of the department at any given time and knowing what staff member is doing what and where. Being knowledgeable also entails knowing what will work in certain conditions and what will not. The subcategory Independent implies that the shop keeper needs to be able to

make sound decisions without consulting others. Independence also means that he/she should be able to run the department on a daily basis without having to involve supervisors. The subcategory Accountable indicates that the shop keeper should be and feel responsible for the department and its staff. He/she should be able to acknowledge mistakes and not attempt to move responsibility to others when something goes wrong. Also it entails the shop keeper making decisions he or she is able to stand by. Being conscientious relates to the shop keeper being meticulous and careful in his work. Having control signifies always being aware of the current situation and not losing sight of the big picture even in times of stress. The subcategory of Dependable concerns the shop keepers' trustworthiness and that supervisors should be able to count on him/her to deliver in their job. Also it entails that the staff can count on the shop keeper to be reliable in that decisions and changes will not be made without due consideration or without staff being informed.

Agreeableness.

Agreeableness is how a shop keeper should be to be able to connect with the staff and customers. The subcategory of Role model means that the shop keeper should lead by good example. The shop keeper should show initiative when it comes to the daily routines of the department and encourages staff to do the same. The subcategory of Approachable refers to that the shop keeper should be physically as well as emotionally approachable to (by) the staff, not be condescending or act superior. The subcategory of Communicative appertains to that the shop keeper should be competent in relaying information to his staff and that he/she should do so to the extent of the staff always being up to date on all things concerning the department, changes, tasks ahead and so forth. The subcategories all interact in some way. For example, good communication skills may contribute to the level of approachability and both communication skills and approachability may contribute to the possibility of being a good role model. Being a good role model may enhance the level of approachability as well.

Keeping department standard.

This category includes tasks brought up by the participants that need to be handled on a daily or at least regular basis. It is the shop keepers' responsibility to make sure these are done in a satisfactory way. The subcategories of keeping the department stocked and ordering merchandise are related as one is necessary for the staff to be able to finish the other. The shop keeper is to see to that this is done along with checking that all price tags and signs are correctly posted. All this contributes to the overall look and attractiveness of the department. The subcategory of making sure there is staff in the department at all times comes down to customer service. No staff means no service. This category relates to the previous ones as

these are part of the tasks that need attending to by the shop keeper or other members of staff. It is the duty of the shop keeper to organize work in the department so that all chores or tasks get done. The categories of Agreeableness and conscientiousness are connected to this category as the level of these influence to what extent the shop keeper completes the tasks of this category.

Issues to be addressed.

The category of Issues to be addressed consists of items mentioned needing improvement. Lack of control refers to the control the shop keeper has over the department and its staff and the freedom he/she has to run it. The shop keeper currently does not appear to have the amount of control that he/she should have, the head of sales has taken over many of the responsibilities of the shop keeper especially concerning the staff. This is considered an issue to be addressed. The subcategory of control is related to the one of lack of responsibility as the lack of control may result in a diminishing experience of responsibility and accountability. The last subcategory of little difference between job roles has to do with the perceived difference between shop keeper and sales personnel. These issues relate to the other categories as they may impact the shop keepers' level of commitment but also because the shop keeper can diminish the occurrence of those through his/her own conscientiousness.

Section B

Two different job groups participated in the interviews; shop keepers and heads of sales. There appears to be a slight difference of opinion between groups regarding the shop keeper role. When the subcategories and categories found are viewed for each group separately it is revealed that three categories are common ones. The common categories are Conscientiousness, Keeping department standard and Issues to be addressed. Agreeableness is a category only found in the interviews from the shop keepers.

Text richness

Ecological validity of the interviews was estimated by a correlation of text richness and text length performed with the [Sphinx](#) software program. The high correlation between the two indicated high validity. Correlation between text length and text banality close to zero suggests good reliability. All interviews had good correlation between text length and text richness. One interview had a higher correlation between text banality and text richness (0.38) and text banality and text length (0.42) than other interviews. The correlation between text length and richness was still high (0.99). This is assumed to be a result of the short length of that particular interview which lasted only approximately 4 minutes. An example of the correlations is showed here, the rest can be found as tables of correlation in the appendix 4.

The correlations between text length and text richness is 1 and the correlations between text length and text banality is less than zero (-0,14).

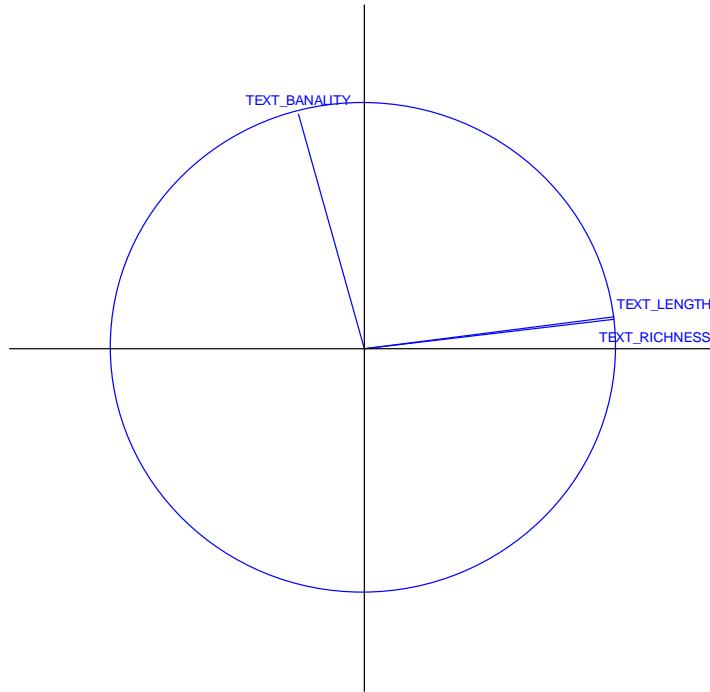


Figure 1.1 Graph showing correlation between text length and richness in interview nr.1.

Discussion

This study was an attempt to better understand what the job role of shop keeper entails and what competencies are needed to perform well as a shop keeper. The results of the study provide a guideline to follow concerning a revision of the job description along with insight into what the selection process should focus on.

The job description

A job description that is not comprehensible enough risks leading some to believe the job entails other things than it actually does. The discrepancy between an actual job and the expectations of it can lead to dissatisfaction. This may be one contributing factor to why some shop keepers have fared less well in their position, the job may have been something other than they expected. It may also be that the people selecting for the job role have not understood what it actually demands of those selected. The existing job description has some repetition in its description of the job roles area of work and the competencies required are rather general. As an example managing sales includes keeping track of supply status and sales but this is stated as a separate task. When the different items on the list are compared some of them can be taken out as they are already part of other items. This, if not shortens at

least simplifies the list. Furthermore, the description seems to put equal importance on all items mentioned in the questionnaire checklist. This is not in accordance with the study results. Department related items are considered most important, followed by staff management issues and customer service related items. These are all considered among the main responsibilities of the shop keeper and Department standard is experienced as the most time consuming category as well.

A matter of consideration is however the fact that practically all items on the most important list are tasks performed daily while the less important tasks are performed less frequently. The frequency may have influenced the experienced importance, or lack thereof, of some tasks. The tasks experienced as less important cannot be ignored as they also are the duties of the shop keeper albeit not the most central ones. But in order to have a job description that as closely as possibly resembles the work and daily routine of the shop keeper the categories considered most important should be prominent.

Having IKEA involvement, knowing what's what in the store and surrounding markets, is not a priority and is also not seen as a responsibility of the shop keeper but having expert knowledge of IKEA merchandise and concept is one of the few things mentioned as important knowledge to do a good job which may seem as a contradictory result. This discrepancy may however stem from flawed categorization in the job description and in the study itself. Acquiring expertise knowledge may actually be seen as equally important to the daily tasks of the department but they are perhaps misinterpreted when spoken of in the same category. Being involved in the IKEA concept and having IKEA expertise may be something that is done unconsciously to the personnel rather than something they think actively about everyday as they do with the planning and organizing of the department. Having expertise may therefore not rate as important when tasks and main responsibilities are discussed but is still viewed as necessary knowledge to succeed at the job. The items on the job description concerning expertise and knowledge could perhaps be separated from the more practical tasks with a clearer purpose as a result.

Keeping track of the most common customer question is assessed as not important and not a responsibility of the shop keeper. The reason for this is unclear but a task that is not experienced as important or a responsibility has the risk of not being performed at all as doing it may seem pointless. The value of this task may need to be reassessed and it may also need some alteration or further explanation if the task is to continue to be featured on the job description as a separate item. It may be an improvement to start by incorporate the task under the expertise section as knowing the customers most common questions is

knowledge presumably needed for competent sales management. But a more thorough reassessment is still needed.

The difference between the existing job descriptions for shop keeper and sales personnel is not clear enough. As these are different positions within the company at separate levels of responsibility and pay there should be a more distinct difference between them. This may be done by accentuating the tasks and responsibilities particular to the shop keeper and making them more prominent. Most obvious difference is the shop keepers' responsibility in staff management and perhaps the overall responsibility for everything in the department. This corresponds to the tasks considered most important. By accentuating those categories in the job description the issue of discrimination between job roles could resolve itself.

Leading through competent management is identified as a core category. This should serve as a base for the competences listed on the job description. The competences mentioned on the existing description are to the most part the same for both shop keeper and sales personnel. Only three are solely on the shop keeper job description; Positive and agreeable demeanor, ability to instruct and encourage others and organizational skills⁵. The category of conscientiousness is more or less missing from the job description. This is quite surprising as this was a competence agreed upon by all as being important to fare well in the job. Accountability, ability to work independently and being reliable are qualities connected to the category of conscientiousness and would almost certainly improve the accuracy of the description of qualities supposed necessary for doing a good job as shop keeper. It would also further establish the core feature of being able to lead through competent management.

Education, experience and human qualities are the header for the competence part of the job description. As neither education nor experience is mentioned it may be advised to change the header to Knowledge and personal competences⁶ which are the featured content. One competence is skills in human relations⁷ which is very general while three other qualities much more accurately describe what kind of interpersonal competences is needed in this particular job; Positive and agreeable demeanor, ability to lead and encourage others and great

⁵ Glaðlegt og þægilegt viðmót, hæfni til að leiðbeina og hvetja fólk og skipulagshæfni

⁶ Þekking og mannskostir

⁷ Færni í mannlegum samskiptum

service mindedness⁸. These are more precise and less open to interpretation and therefore less likely to be misunderstood.

With these things in mind the revised job description text should be approximately as follows, keep in mind these are English translations of the Icelandic original (Icelandic versions of the original job descriptions for both shop keeper and salesperson as well as the revised job description for the shop keeper can be seen in appendix 5).

Work assignment

- Train department staff
 - See to that the staff follows the rules and implement the sales tactics of IKEA at all times
 - Show support of staff and make sure they have all information deemed necessary at any given time
 - Promote a good morale and cooperation in the department

 - Assist and service customers
 - Make sure the department, as well as the store in general, is neat and sales inspiring
 - Make sure price tags and signs are correctly posted
 - Make sure merchandise is ordered for the department
 - Be ready to carry out any work that may come up in the department

 - Sales management with the head of sales
 - Attend courses and meetings as required

 - Work with the shop keeper checklist
 - Work with the hard to sell items list
 - Work with the promoted merchandise
 - Perform price comparisons with competitors
- The shop keeper should always strive to:
- Have expert knowledge of merchandise in own department
 - Acquire expertise knowledge of IKEA merchandise in general
 - Acquire knowledge about the IKEA concept
 - Have knowledge of and record the 10 most common customer questions

Knowledge and personal competencies

- Positive and agreeable demeanor
- Ability to instruct and encourage others
- Great service mindedness

- Accountability and reliability
- Organizational skills
- Sales skills
- Ability to work independantly

- Interest in the IKEA concept
- Interest in design

- Have knowledge of the Navision software
- Good computer skills

⁸ Glaðlegt og þægilegt viðmót, Hæfni til að leiðbeina og hvetja fólk, Frábær þjónustulund

The selection process

The selection process of the shop keeper has no written plan on what qualities to look for or how to look for them. It is however clear after talking to the HR department that they follow a procedure even there is no official written form. A short review of the unwritten follows here.

Selection process of the shop keeper.

The job is usually only advertised within company. An advertisement is hung on the wall in the personnel area. On occasion the company's information screen is used for advertising available positions as well. Advertisements are posted in the personnel area for at least two weeks. This allows them to be seen also by staff only working every other weekend. An email with the advertisement is also sent out to everyone with a company mail address. Those interested are asked to submit name, current job position, a short CV and to make a short report on why they are applying for the job. All applicants are called to a first interview which is conducted by a member of the HR staff, the current shopkeeper (if possible, sometimes they have already left the company and are therefore unavailable) and the head of sales. In the interview the process and the job in question is explained. This is as far as possible done the same way every time so every applicant gets the same information.

As the recruitment is internal there is a good amount of information available on each applicant such as; how long they have been with the company, what company courses and further education they have attended and absenteeism. This information is accumulated before the interview. Questions for the interview are decided in advance by the staff of the HR department. These are not necessarily the same in every selection process but they are the same for all applicants in a particular selection process. Topics of the interview are sent to the applicants before the interview so they can prepare and is supposed to help getting more nuanced answers in order to distinguish between applicants. The answers are evaluated and compared immediately after the interview and after all interviews are done a decision is made upon which applicants should be called back.

The chosen applicants are called to a second interview where tests on problem solving and work samples are given. Time limits are then given to see how applicants work (if they do it right away, wait until last minute, work steadily all the way through, if they are able to finish on time given, request more time and so forth). At this stage the applicants' current supervisor is asked their opinion of the applicants' work ethics, ability to work with others, take direction and so forth. Results of tests and recommendations are reviewed before a decision is made. Applicants not chosen for the position are informed of decision and

reasons for why a particular person was hired. This is done by a standardized email to insure everyone the same information.

As far as selection processes go this is not a bad one. The reservations that are to be had mainly involve what questions are being asked, what tests are being administered and how the information gathered is evaluated. Currently the questions and tests are chosen upon assumptions about the job role not on an actual analysis of it. The evaluation of the information is arbitrary and subjective with no way of knowing if all assessors involved use the same criteria when judging the applicants. These are things that need changing if the process is to yield better and more reliable results. The questions and tests need to be relevant for the job role and there needs to be some kind of systemization of the evaluation process. When work samples correspond well with the job it is an appropriate means of selection. Structured interviews containing job related questions with a pre-determined template for answer merit would yield results of higher predictive validity (Millward, 2005).

According to the findings of the study the main competency is the ability to lead through competent management. Two of the categories forming this core category are conscientiousness and agreeableness, which both belong to the five-factor model of personality. In the five-factor model evidence points to conscientiousness being the most valid predictor of job performance tests but agreeableness has also shown some positive connections to success in managerial jobs (Kahlke & Schmidt, 2002). There are a multitude of tests that can be used for the purpose of finding aspiring shop keepers with the suitable demeanor and interview questions and work samples can without doubt be constructed quite easily to test for them as well. A template for evaluating answers needs to be prepared. Using a template that clearly states what a good, an average or a poor answer is will ensure that all evaluators in the selection process use the same criteria when evaluating the applicants. This is important to diminish arbitrary evaluations.

Agreeableness as a category was only found among the shop keepers. The heads of sales do not appear to consider it to be necessary to have this competence in order to succeed in the job. This may be because they have themselves been taking over part of the staff related duties as was revealed in the interviews and therefore do not see it as central to the job role as a whole. This conduct and disposition may however be part of the problem the company has been having in their selection of new shop keepers. The heads of sales are part of the team selecting the shop keepers and if these do not see agreeableness as an essential competence when all the current shop keepers experience it to be so, this might result in the

wrong criteria for selection to be used and a less competent applicant to be selected. As there is no standardized method present in the evaluation process there is no certain way to know this but it may be assumed that the shop keepers have some insight into the job role that others do not and that this should not be ignored. Following is a summary of what may be done to improve the selection process:

- Develop predetermined interview questions that bring to light the competencies required
- Develop work samples that show problem solving in staff management with emphasis on level of conscientiousness and agreeableness
- Develop (or find) a template for evaluating answers so all who evaluate the answers do it according to the same criteria.
- Use personality test to test for level of conscientiousness and agreeableness (this may not be relevant or cost efficient at this point but it is good to have the possibility in mind)
- Write down the selection process for better overall view.

The issues requiring further consideration brought up in the interviews seem to in part be issues of power distance were the distance between the shop keeper and his/her staff is too small for the shop keeper to be able to run the department in the way supposed. When difference is perceived as small the shop keeper staff may be prone to listen to and follow instructions to a lesser degree. The fact that the heads of sales have been taking over some of the duties of the shop keeper may have contributed to this situation. Smaller power distance does not necessarily have to be a negative thing but it may be contributing to some of the problems experienced by the shop keepers. Having responsibility for things beyond their control may also create the experience of a lot more pressure with few added perks which is not an ideal circumstance for great work performance.

This study would perhaps have benefitted from the comparative method of the full version of Grounded theory. That could have helped find out more about the difference in perception between the shop keepers and heads of sales. Repeated interviews could have helped in further honing in on the most important parts of the job. The methods used in this thesis were not only chosen upon the basis of perceived appropriateness and time convenience for this particular study but also as an attempt to find a cost effective way for the company to continue this work if desired for other job roles within the company. As was mentioned in the introduction the validity of a job analysis is dependent on the extent to which it helps in creating a more accurate selection process. In this view only a later assessment of recruited applicants can truly validate the procedure used here and its results.

The job analysis performed through this study has shown that there is a slight difference between how the job role of shop keeper at IKEA in Iceland is experienced and

how it looks on paper. There also appears to be some difference as to how the shop keepers themselves and their superiors view the job. The study showed how there may be made improvements to the job description in order to further clarify the role and perhaps diminish misunderstandings and also what competencies should be looked for in applicants for the job.

It is hoped that this will be to some assistance to the HR department of IKEA in Iceland and that future selection processes will be successful.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Þessi spurningarlisti er liður í masterverkefni mínu í vinnusálfræði. Spurningarnar sem hér fylgja snúa að starfi svæðisstjóra. Ætlunin er að fá skýrari mynd af því hvað svæðisstjóri gerir, hvað hann ber ábyrgð á og hvaða mannkosti þið teljið auðvelda þeim sem sinna starfinu að standa sig vel. Niðurstöður verða notaðar til að endurskoða og beturumbæta starfslysingu og ráðningaráferli ef þörf þykir. Svörin verða ekki rakin til einstakra svarenda og munu ekki verða notuð í fleira en þetta verkefni. Vinsamlegast leitið ekki aðstoð annara við svörun, ég hef áhuga á því hvað ykkur sjálfum finnst.

Takk fyrir,

Jara Kristina Thomasdóttir

Hver eru verkefni svæðisstjóra? Leggið ykkar mat á þá þætti sem hér eru taldir upp á næstu síðu og bætið við þeim sem ykkur finnst vanta. Skráið hversu miklum tíma þið teljið varið í hvert verkefni (miklum eða lítlum) og hversu oft (daglega, vikulega, mánaðarlega). Ef þið teljið eitthvað á listanum alls ekki eiga við starf svæðisstjóra eruð þið beðin um að taka það fram með því að strika yfir það.

Skráið hvaða fimm verkefni þið teljið mikilvægust í starfi svæðisstjóra. Mikilvægasta verkefnið fær töluna 1, það næst mikilvægasta 2 og svo koll af kolli upp í 5. Hafið í huga að sá tími sem varin er í verkefni vísar ekki endilega til mikilvægi þess.

Verkþættir	Mikilvægustu verkþættirnir 1-5	Tíma sem varið er í verkefni (mikill/lítill)	Verkefni framkvæmd		
			Daglega	Vikulega	Mánaðarlega
Veita viðskiptavinum þjónustu og aðstoð					
Skrá 10 helstu spurningar viðskiptavina					
Afla sér sérfræðingsþekkingu á vörum deildarinnar					
Sækja námskeið og fundi					
Gera verðkannanir hjá samkeppnisaðilum					
Afla sér þekkingar til að vera sérfræðingur í IKEA húsgögnum					
Öðlast sem mesta þekkingu á hugmyndafræði IKEA					
Upplýsingamiðlun til starfsmanna					
Pjálfa starfsmenn deildarinnar					
Efla starfsanda og samvinnu í deildinni					
Sjá til þess að starfsmenn deildar þekki reglur og söluaðferðir IKEA					
Sölustýring í samráði við sölustjóra					
Sjá um að verðmerkingar og skilti séu rétt					
Fylgjast með birgðum og sölu í deildinni					
Vinna með steypulista					
Panta vörur í deild					
Vöruáfylling í deild					
Halda deildinni ávallt snyrtilegri og söluhvjetjandi					
Vinna með A vörur					

Hér eruð þið beðin um að skrá þau fimm verkefni sem eru þau minnst mikilvægu í starfi svæðisstjóra. Minnst mikilvæga verkefnið fær töluna 1, það næst minnsta 2 og svo koll af kolli upp í 5. Hafið í huga að sá tími sem varin er í verkefni vísar ekki endilega til mikilvægi þess.

Verkpættir	Minnst mikilvægu verkþættirnir 1-5
Veita viðskiptavinum þjónustu og aðstoð	
Skrá 10 helstu spurningar viðskiptavina	
Afla sérfræðingsþekkingu á vörum deildarinnar	
Sækja námskeið og fundi	
Gera verðkannanir hjá samkeppnisaðilum	
Afla sér þekkingar til að vera sérfræðingur í IKEA húsgögnum	
Öðlast sem mesta þekkingu á hugmyndafræði IKEA	
Upplýsingamiðlun til starfsmanna	
Pjálfra starfsmenn deildarinnar	
Efla starfsanda og samvinnu í deildinni	
Sjá til þess að starfsmenn deildar þekki reglur og söluaðferðir IKEA	
Sölustýring í samráði við sölustjóra	
Sjá um að verðmerkingar og skilti séu rétt	
Fylgjast með birgðum og sölu í deildinni	
Vinna með steypulista	
Panta vörur í deild	
Vöruáfylling í deild	
Halda deildinni ávallt snyrtilegri og söluhvetjandi	
Vinna með A vörur	

Hver eru ábyrgðarsvið svæðisstjóra? Á hverju ber hann ábyrgð í starfi sínu?
 Vinsamlegast skráið þau og mikilvægi hvers þeirra. Mikilvægasta verkefnið fær töluna 1, það næst mikilvægasta 2 og svo koll af kolli.

Dæmi: Flugfreyja ber ábyrgð á öryggi farþega og þjónustu um borð í vél.
 Skólastjóri ber ábyrgð á öryggi og vellíðan kennara og nemenda í skólanum, skipulagi og fjármálum skólans.

Ábyrgðarþættir	Mikilvægi ábyrgðar- þáttar

Hvaða þekkingu þarf svæðisstjóri að búa yfir til að standa sig vel í starfi?
 Vinsamlegast leggið ykkar mat á hversu mikilvægur hver þekkingarþáttur er, hvort nauðsynlegt sé að búa yfir þessari þekkingu við ráðningu og hvort hægt sé að bæta þekkinguna með þjálfun. Mikilvægasta verkefnið fær töluna 1, það næst mikilvægasta 2 og svo koll af kolli.

Dæmi: Bókhaldari þarf hafa góða þekkingu á bókhaldskerfum og hafa tölvukunnáttu.
 Enskukennari þarf að hafa enskukunnáttu og þekkingu á kennslufræðum.

Pekkingarþáttur	Mikilvægi þekkingar	Parf að kunna við ráðningu (já/nei)	Er hægt að bæta með þjálfun (já/nei)

Hvaða færni, getu og persónulega eiginleika þarf svæðisstjóri að hafa til að standa sig vel í starfi? Vinsamlegast skráið hvað þið teljið að góður svæðisstjóri þurfi að kunna eða geta til að standa sig vel í starfi og hvaða persónulegir eiginleikar eru æskilegir. Leggið mat ykkar á hvort þessi færni, geta og eiginleikar þurfi að vera til staðar við ráðningu og hvort hægt sé að öðlast þá eða bæta með þjálfun.

Dæmi: Heilbrigðisritari þarf færni í hraðritun og skilja mikilvægi þagmelsku.

Skátaforingi ætti að vera félagslyndur, áreiðanlegur og hafa færni til að vinna með börnum.

Leikari þarf að vera skýrmæltur, geta munað eftir texta og ekki vera hræddur við að gera sig að fífla.

Eiginleikar	Mikilvægi eiginleika	Parf vera til staðar við ráðningu (já/nei)	Er hægt að bæta með þjálfun (já/nei)

Takk fyrir þátttökuna!

Appendix 2

Questions for interviews

Hver eru markmið svæðisstjórastarfssins? What is the purpose of the shop keeper position?

Hvernig á góður svæðisstjóri að vera? What should a good shopkeeper be like?

Hverju, ef einhverju, myndir þú vilja breyta varðandi stöðu svæðisstjóra eins og hún er í dag? What aspects, if any, would you like to change about the position as shopkeeper as it is today?

Appendix 3

Table 4.1 Subcategories of most and least important task on questionnaire.

Categories	Subcategories
	MOST IMPORTANT TASK
Staff management	Training staff Ensure staff knows rules and sales tactics of IKEA Keeping staff informed of changes and tasks Promote good working atmosphere Promote cooperation in department
Department standard	Sales management with the head of sales Ensure price tags and signs are correct Ordering merchandise for sale in department Keeping department clean, neat and attractive
Customer service	Assisting customers Having expert knowledge of department merchandise
	LEAST IMPORTANT TASK
Ikea involvement	Having expert knowledge of the IKEA concept Having expert knowledge of the IKEA merchandise in general Do price comparisons with competitors Attend courses and meetings
List management	Working the list of hard to sell items Working the list of promotion items Track 10 most common customer questions
Product stocking	Keeping shelves stocked in department

Table 4.2. Subcategories of responsibility, Knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes on questionnaire.

Categories	Subcategories
	RESPONSIBILITY
Staff management	Supervision of staff Training of staff Ensure staff knows rules and sales tactics of IKEA Keeping staff informed of changes and tasks Promote good morale Promote cooperation in department
Department supervision	Sales management with head of sales Ensure price tags and signs are correct Keeping shelves stocked in department Ordering merchandise for sale in department Keeping department clean, neat and attractive
Customer service	Assisting the customer
	KNOWLEDGE
Computer knowledge	Having knowledge of computers and software
Ikea expertise	Having expert knowledge of department merchandise Having expert knowledge of the IKEA concept Having expert knowledge of the IKEA merchandise in general
	SKILLS, ABILITIES AND OTHER PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES
Leadership	Good communication skills Setting a good example Ability to lead Ability to encourage Show respect for others Organizational skills
Customer oriented	Service minded Skilled salesperson Ability to handle demanding customers
Work ethics	Punctual Conscientious Honest Ambitious Positive attitude
Work efficiency	Ability to work independently Taking initiative Being organized Handle stress well Be flexible Have interest in work and merchandise

Appendix 4

Table.3.1. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 1.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	1	1	
Text banality	-0,14	-0,14	1

Table.3.2. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 2.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	0,98	1	
Text banality	0,18	0,11	1

Table.3.3. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 3.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	0,99	1	
Text banality	0,02	-0,05	1

Table.3.4. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 4.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	0,96	1	
Text banality	0,19	0,07	1

Table.3.5. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 5.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	0,99	1	
Text banality	-0,16	-0,2	1

Table 3.6. Correlation between text length, text richness and text banality in interview 6.

	Text length	Text Richness	Text Banality
Text length	1		
Text richness	0,99	1	
Text banality	0,42	0,38	1

Appendix 5

Revised job description for shop keeper

Starfssvið:

- Sjá um þjálfun starfsmanna sem heyra undir deildina
- Bera ábyrgð á að starfsmenn deildar fari ávallt eftir reglum og söluaðferðum IKEA
- Sýna stuðning við sitt starfsfólk og sjá til þess að það fái þær upplýsingar sem þurfa þykir
- Leggja sitt af mörkum til þess efla starfsanda og samvinnu í deildinni
-
- Veita viðskiptavinum verslunarinnar þjónustu og aðstoð
- Sjá til þess að deildin, sem og verslunin almennt, sé ávallt snyrtileg og söluhvetjandi
- Sjá um að vörur deildarinnar séu ávallt verðmerktar og skilti séu til staðar þar sem við á
- Sjá til þess að vörur sé pantaðar inn í deild
- Vinna þau störf sem til falla innan deildarinnar
-
- Sölustýring í samráði við sölustjóra
- Sækja þau námskeið og fundi sem fyrirtækið óskar eftir
- Vinna með tékklista svæðistjóra
- Vinna með steypulista
- Vinna með A vörur
- Gera verðkannanir hjá samkeppnisaðilum

Sölustjóri skal ávallt leitast eftir að:

- Vera sérfræðingur í vörum síns svæðis
- Afla sér þekkingar til að vera sérfræðingur í IKEA húsgögnum almennt
- Öðlast sem mesta þekkingu á hugmyndafræði IKEA
- Þekkja og halda skrá yfir 10 helstu spurningar viðskiptavina

Pekking og mannkostir:

- Glaðlegt og þægilegt viðmót
- Hæfni til að leiðbeina og hvetja fólk
- Frábær þjónustulund
-
- Samviskusemi
- Skipulagshæfni
- Söluhæfileikar
- Hæfni til að vinna sjálfstætt
-
- Áhugi á hugmyndafræði IKEA
- Áhugi á hönnun
-
- Pekking á navision
- Góð tölvukunnáttu

Annað

- Starfsmaður skal ávallt vera snyrtilegur til fara, gæta fyllsta hreinlætis og klæðast IKEA einkennisfatnaði
- Starfsmaður skal aðstoða við önnur verkefni sem til falla innan fyrirtækisins sé þess óskað af yfirmanni
- Starfsmaður skal kynna sér allar hús- og öryggisreglur og þekkja þær vel
- Pað er á ábyrgð allra aðleggja sitt af mörkum til að gera IKEA að enn betri og skemmtilegri vinnustað
- Virða skal þau réttindi og skyldur sem fyrir eru lagðar varðandi vinnutíma og matar- og kaffítíma.

Yfirmaður: Sölustjóri

Original job description for shop keeper

Starfssvið:

- Veita viðskiptavinum verslunarinnar þjónustu og aðstoð
- Halda últiti verslunarinnar söluhvetjandi og snyrtilegu
- Sjá um að vörur deildarinnar séu ávallt verðmerktar og skilti þar sem við á
- Vinna með tékklista svæðistjóra
- Fylgjast með birgðum og sölu á sínu svæði
- Svæðisstjóri skal leitast við að vera sérfræðingur í vörum síns svæðis
- Sýna stuðning við sitt starfsfólk og sjá til þess að það fái þær upplýsingar sem þurfa þykir
- Bera ábyrgð á að starfsmenn deildar fari ávallt eftir reglum og söluaðferðum IKEA
- Sölustýring í samráði við sölustjóra
- Að vinna með steypulista
- Að vinna með A vörur
- Að gera verðkannanir hjá samkeppnisaðilum
- Að leggja sitt af mörkum til þess efla starfsanda og samvinnu í deildinni
- Að öðlast sem mesta þekkingu á hugmyndafræði IKEA
- Afla sér þekkingar til að vera sérfræðingur í IKEA húsgögnum
- Að vinna þau störf sem til falla innan deildarinnar eða annars staðar í fyrirtäkinu sé þess óskað
- Að leggja sitt af mörkum til að halda deildinni ávallt snyrtilegri
- Að sækja þau námskeið og fundi sem fyrirtækið óskar eftir
- Að fylgjast með 10 helstu spurningum viðskiptavina og færa upplýsingar stöðugt í þar til gerða bók
- Þjálfun starfsmanna sem heyra undir deildina

Menntun, reynsla og mannkostir:

- Glaðlegt og þægilegt viðmóti
- Færni í mannlegum samskiptum
- Frábær þjónustulund
- Áhugi á hönnun
- Skipulagshæfni
- Áhugi á hugmyndafræði IKEA
- Þekking á navision
- Góð tölvukunnáttu
- Hæfni til að leiðbeina og hvetja fólk
- Söluhæfileikar

Annað

- Starfsmaður skal ávallt vera snyrtilegur til fara, gæta fyllsta hreinlætis og klæðast IKEA einkennisfatnaði
- Starfsmaður gæti þurft að aðstoða við önnur verkefni í deildinni sem sett eru af yfirmanni
- Mikilvægt er að kynna sér vel allar hús- og öryggisreglur
- Það er á ábyrgð allra aðleggja sitt af mörkum til að gera IKEA að enn betri og skemmtilegri vinnustað
- Virða skal þau réttindi og skyldur sem fyrir eru lagðar varðandi vinnutíma og matar- og kaffítíma.

Yfirmaður: Sölustjóri

Original job description for sales person

Starfssvið

- Veita viðskiptavinum þjónustu og aðstoð
- Halda útliti verslunarinnar söluhvetjandi og snyrtilegu
- Sjá til þess að smávörur séu pantaðar í deild þar sem við á
- Tryggja að vörur deildarinnar séu rétt verðmerktar og skilti þar sem við á
- Að leggja sitt af mörkum til að efla starfsanda og samvinnu í deildinni
- Afla sér þekkingu á hugmyndafræði IKEA
- Að verða sérfræðingur í IKEA húsgögnum í sinni deild
- Fylgjast með markaði og samkeppnisaðilum sem best
- Að leggja sitt af mörkum til að deildin sé ávallt snyrtileg
- Að sækja þau námskeið og fundi sem í boði eru
- Að fylgjast með 10 helstu spurningum viðskiptavina
- Framkvæma „customer flow“ í samráði við yfirmann
- Sölustýring í samráði við yfirmann

Menntun, reynsla og mannkostir

- Frumkvæði
- Stundvísí
- Mikil þjónustulund
- Samskiptahæfni
- Áhugi á IKEA og hönnun
- Almenn tölvukunnáttu
- Drifkraftur
- Sveigjanleiki
- Þekking á navision kostur

Annað

- Starfsmaður skal ávallt vera snyrtilegur til fara, gæta fyllsta hreinlætis og klæðast IKEA einkennisfatnaði
- Starfsmaður gæti þurft að aðstoða við önnur verkefni í deildinni sem sett eru af yfirmanni
- Mikilvægt er að kynna sér vel allar hús- og öryggisreglur
- Það er á ábyrgð allra aðleggja sitt af mörkum til að gera IKEA að enn betri og skemmtilegri vinnustað
- Virða skal þau réttindi og skyldur sem fyrir eru lagðar varðandi vinnutíma og matar- og kaffitíma.

Yfirmaður

- Sölustjóri/Svæðistjóri