

An investigation into the home decoration market in Ireland

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Author declaration

I, CHARLOTTE LECUYER, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation, that during this period of registered study I have not been registered for any other academic award of qualification, nor has any of the material been submitted wholly or partly for any other award. I have personally carried out all the work of which this is a record. The program of study of which this a part has been delivered by the school of business, Dublin business school.

Date: 05/03/2010

Signed:

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Abstract

The focus of this dissertation is an investigation on the home decoration market in Ireland.

The goal of this study is to determine if a market exists for home accessories which come from a company based in France. To determine if this market exists, the researcher was focused on determining if the home decoration market knows an important growth, and if there are some areas on this market which present opportunities.

The researcher chose to use two different method tools to reach this investigation.

First of all, in-depth interviews of specific retailers allow the researcher to get information on the expansion of the home decoration market. The information collected has been confirmed by the secondary research. The secondary research shows an opportunity on the home decoration market in particular on the home accessories market which record good results for tableware items.

Secondly, the researcher chose a personally administered questionnaire, completed with respondents in person. The goal of this questionnaire is to analyze, the consumer's preferences and attitudes. The results from the questionnaire learn to the researcher specific information about consumer's preferences: about kind of products, favorite room, favorite style of interior...

The opportunities on the home decoration market will be explained during this research.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

For several years, the phenomenon of home-decoration knows a big growth all over the world. Many television programs and specialized magazines appear, with support and enthusiasm of consumers. Many multinational groups are implanted in industrialized countries, as an example the giant Ikea.

In relation to this topic, the researcher has his own experience in this area because he has worked for a French company of home accessories. This company was specialized in original home decoration; it manufactures them abroad, before distributing them on the French market. In 2007, the company studied the possibility of commercializing its products on the overseas markets: in Germany and in Italy.

The researcher believes that today, it could be interesting to develop this hypothesis in the Anglo-Saxons countries, and in particular here, in Ireland.

Home decoration is a very interesting topic, because it is amazing to understand the growth of this industry. For several years, people show a particular interest into interior design. Moreover, the researcher has already specific knowledge about this topic, and he is now curious to study the potential market in Ireland for home decoration.

The purpose of this study is to determine a gap, a niche on the home decoration market, and in particular on the home accessories market, to propose news kinds of products for retailers, in relation to the preferences and the needs of consumers.

1. Determine the research question.

Does a market exist in Ireland for original specialist home accessories, originating from a French-based supplier?

This large area of study can be divided into sub-questions:

- Does the home decoration market know an important growth and are there some areas that it could be interested to develop according to their success?
- Do consumers show specific preferences and what products should be introduced on the home decoration market to motivate purchase?

According to John Dewey, the question needs to be narrowly defined as possible. Research question can be developed for any component of the marketing mix and also the target market segment and consumer behavior. (Dewey, John, 2007. *How we think*. Mineola, NY: Dover publication)

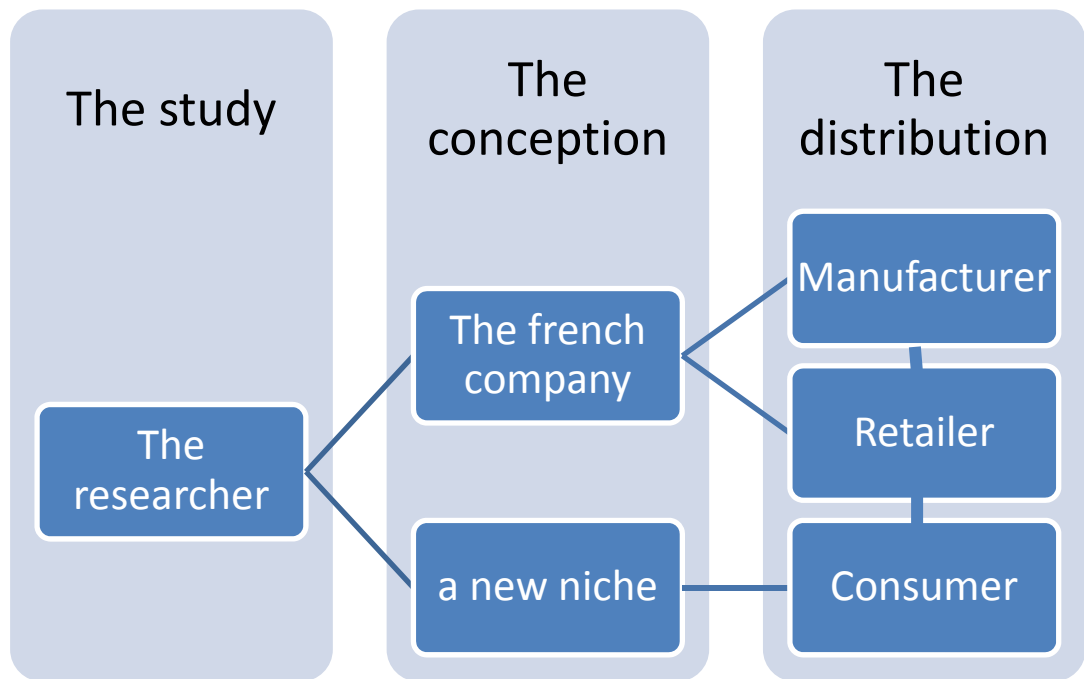
2. Two objectives:

Objective 1: to determine the size and the nature of home decoration market in Europe, and more especially in Ireland.

It means to examine the development and the competition on this market, and to identify the opportunities on this market in relation to the external environment.

Objective 2: To analyze the influences on consumer behavior about home decoration, and their preferences in term of purchases.

It means to search for the expectations of the consumers on this market, and to determine what could be a lack for the retailers. The purpose of the research could be to develop a niche market to create in the future new products to sell to retailers.



Chapter two takes an in-depth look at the literature surrounding the two main areas of this project. It will explain the phenomenon of home decoration, and analyze the European and Irish market. It will show trends about consumer's preferences and determine some areas which know an important development.

Chapter three will explain the methodology the author will follow when conducting the primary research. The research design, research method and the data collection the author will take are explained. Also, the author explains the process to be followed when producing interviews and questionnaire.

Chapter four contains the data analysis and presents the main findings of the primary research. The findings of this analysis will be presented in a series of pie charts and bar charts. The main results will be explained with the literature.

Chapter five will lead the main conclusion from the secondary and primary research. Some recommendations will be made for future research areas.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The interior design has become a social phenomenon that affects both individuals and professionals. The home decoration market has many factors for its development as the evolution of habitat, population and lifestyle.

It necessary to review the objectives of this research: it means to determine the size and the nature of the home decoration market in Europe, and more especially in Ireland.

It also means to examine the competition on this market, through the success of giant furniture store IKEA, and to identify the opportunities on this market in relation to the external environment.

And then, this secondary research intends to show the trends about home decoration, and to examine a possible niche according to the needs of consumer, and to their preferences in term of purchase.

I / The new phenomenon of interior design in Europe

A / Housing has an important place in everyday life.

It's necessary first of all to understand the new phenomenon of Home decoration and his impact on the European markets through some figures.

According to Julie Scelfo (2010), the interior design is a market that has promising to growth despite the economic crisis. The number of actors involved in this market is growing dramatically.

According to Tim Mckeough (2010), the distribution is split into more than 70 000 stores in European union (GSB, department stores, special chains, retailers ...) and the penetration of operators from related areas are increasing by 43 % (Zara, Esprit, Dunes stores ...).

So today, almost 73% of women in Europe are decorating their interior (American authority of interior design study, 2008).

Moreover, the importance of home decoration for people is now evidence. It has been demonstrated that man is exactly what he lives in (Frank Alvah Parsons, 2006). Environment is the strongest possible factor in man's development. It means that concordant sounds, agreeable odors, harmonious colors, and pleasing arrangements have their immediate effects in human's life. In the first place, the home is the center of all life's activities; this matter may perhaps stimulate us in our thinking, which will affect our way of doing whatever we attempt in the future. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware that decorate their interior became a pleasure, and improves the daily life (Consumer behavior theories and lifestyle, 2005).

B / The increase of demand about home decoration: home decoration is perceived as a significant budget for households.

According to Christine Deschamp (2009), for Christmas, the best seller good are respectively: electrical appliances, clothing and toys. It appears for recent years a new specific category: home decoration gifts. When consumers speak about the impact the economic crisis have on their spending, 43% of Europeans were spending less for Christmas 2009. They reduced their purchases related to toys and clothing. However, these reports don't affect the home decoration industry, which hasn't decreased significantly, according to an IPSOS survey in Europe (Deschamp, 2009).

II/ IKEA case

It's important to understand the strengths and the key success factors of the main actor on this market. Ikea could be a potential consumer to distribute the French products.

IKEA displays an amazing resistance to the crisis (The written conditions of the Institute for Promotion and Study furniture (IPEA) 2009). The Swedish furniture IKEA has achieved a worldwide turnover of 21.5 billion Euros, up 1.4% during 2009 fiscal year (Florentin Collomp, 2009). It is a record for the furniture manufacturer, which has never reached such a figure since its beginning in 1943. (Gatinois 2009).

The brand opened last year a dozen new stores around the world. In total, IKEA has 267 stores in 25 countries, plus 34 franchised in 16 countries. Europe represents 80% of sales, ahead of North America (15%) and Asia-Australia (5%). According to Mikael Ohlsson (2009), many of customers have less money to spend and the low-price concept of Ikea is for this reason more relevant than ever.

In relation to this information, to position products at low price to propose new product to the giant Ikea, maybe could be a success to penetrate the home decoration market for an oversea company.

III / Irish home decoration market

A/ The development of this sector

In this study, the researcher is interested about the Irish market. It is primordial to narrow this research to analyze the expansion of home decoration market in Ireland.

According to Vimla Bheemuck (2009), in Ireland, in particular in the capital, are held a lot of events related to decoration. The 20th edition of The Autumn Gift & Home Show 2009 was held last August in Dublin. 128 international professionals (especially manufacturers) attended this annual event. They have received just over 4,000 visitors including a large majority of traders, merchants and multi-brands retailers.

Moreover, according to Aurélie Denimal (2009), throughout Ireland, there is the emergence of the giant furniture and interior store, Ikea. He opened the doors of its second store in Ireland after Belfast, in Dublin. Following the success of this opening, the leader, who already employs 500 people, plans to recruit 100 additional employees. Since its opening, more than 15 500 people visited Ikea. For the first year, officials expect 2.75 million visitors and a turnover of 100 million Euros. Garry Deakin, store manager welcomes the enthusiasm and excellent returns for the Irish.

Recently, opening a shopping center dedicated to the interior near to Dublin.

This shopping center is best in art of the interior: porcelain vases designed by Rachel Allen sculptures, from teapots, cups and tableware designer Graham Knuttel acknowledged to be the artist's most popular in Ireland. It will thus present his masterpieces, traditional or modern art, and many visitors who roam every day shopping in this village like no other in search of an original and unique. (The Irish Time according to a study by the institute UbiFrance, 2010)

B/ Irish purchases related to home decoration in 2009

According to Monna Muray (2009), despite the crisis has affected the global economy, the year 2009 was a year of stagnation in the Irish decoration market, which recorded a slight fall in sales of only 0.3%. This is the first market decline since 2003, after six years of uninterrupted growth.

The stagnation of the market is largely due to the strong development of housing young and kitchen specialists who have continued to grow.

Several factors explain this drop in activity in 2009 in Ireland. First, the home decoration market was obviously impacted by the uncertainties of financial markets since early 2008. Rising fuel prices and the economic crisis have greatly affected the morale of customers and make consequences on their spending.

IV/ Irish Market: the success of home accessories

Home decoration is a very large topic, and most of the time, a manufacturer is specialized in one or some specific areas of decoration. This research shows that it could be interesting to be more focus on home accessories market which recorded good figures.

A/ Home accessories figures.

Although sales of furniture know a little decrease since 6 months, the sales of home accessories know for recent years a big rising up.

We have spoken before about the 20th edition of The Autumn Gift & Home Show in Dublin.

According to Marina Guerlinger, who has made a study for UbiFrance about the market of tableware, gifts and decorative items in Dublin (2009), many professionals who purchase products on this show, will resell them in their trade during the Christmas period.

Tableware is an area very successful during this kind of show, but it's a very seasonable market, because most of items are sold between December and January for Christmas period, and between June and august for weddings.

According to the latest figures available, gifts and decorative items represents 180 million Euros for the Irish market in 2009 (Ubifrance survey, 2009).

Furthermore, Ireland is a country of Catholic tradition, and more than 25 000 weddings are celebrated each year and the birth rate is high (14.3). Consumers will therefore continue to buy tableware accessories and linen for these occasions.

B/ The success about French exportations to Ireland.

Irish stores are very attending about new products. They expect new concepts and new ideas to differentiate themselves. Often, retailers search on the overseas markets.

For 2009, French imports in terms of decoration increased by 12.8%.

More especially, the volume of imports from French products related to tableware increases by 10.15% between 2008 and 2009, placing France as the 2nd largest trading partner, after Britain.

There are also a lot of opportunities to enter this market niche for French companies who have an excellent image.

The Irish are Francophiles and readily acknowledge the craftsmanship, creativity and excellence of quality French products.

Moreover, the Irish market is characterized by a high degree of openness to foreign companies and a very young population with high purchasing power.

French company can easily penetrate the Irish market: The Economic Mission of Dublin organizes meetings targeted to present the French products in Ireland, as an example about:

- Furniture
- Decoration
- Tableware
- Home textiles (upholstery and linen)

V / New market niches for home decoration

To create new home accessories, it is necessary to know the expectations of consumers; it means the new trends. It's also primordial to examine what part of the house they prefer, to intend to develop a niche on the home decoration market.

Favorite room at home for Irish people

- The dining room is dedicated to the reception
- The kitchen, a room cozy and functional

According to Onell O'brain, (2008), the most important room is the big kitchen. The idea of the big kitchen was that family and friends could hang out together.

The kitchen as centre-of-operations with the living room demanded a number of appliances.

The TV program *Sex in the City* has its effect. Women wanted their kitchen and living room to be pretty and seductive. Cue fairy lights threaded, and romance in the form of French style, slightly useless bow-legged furniture painted cream. The look could change thanks to the throw and scatter cushion combos much favored by interior decorators in show apartments.

Moreover, vintage became the new buzz word. People express a need to change as most as possible their interior. Kitchen specialists recorded a growth of their turnover, because people are looking for new design and new modern kitchens.

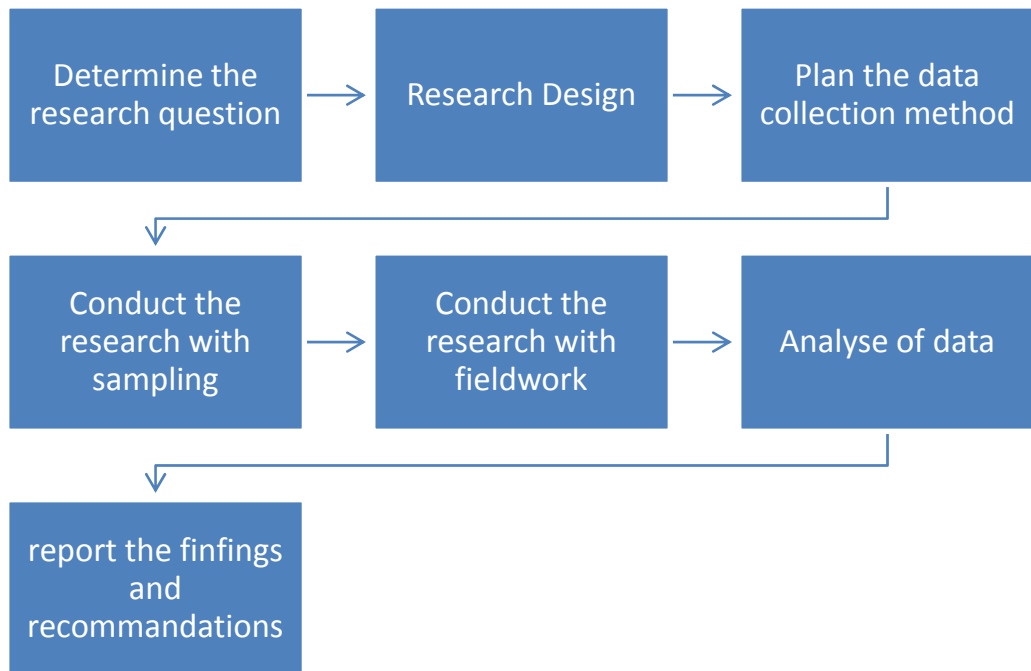
Conclusion

Everywhere in Europe, the phenomenon of interior decoration takes a phenomenal dimension. In Ireland, the organization of special shows related to home decoration, and the opening of shopping center dedicated to decoration show the presence of this phenomenon. Although the economic crisis has affected the Irish market, the sales related to this industry carry on to growth. Especially according to the development of kitchen areas, the tableware and dining accessories recorded good figures for several years. This trend can be explained by the number of weddings and births in the country and by the celebration of catholic tradition. Moreover, it results from these data that French import products possess a good image for Irish consumer. France is also the second partner, after Britain related to the importation of products.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

1. Steps in the research process



2. Research hypothesis

On other hand, the researcher thus wishes to lead this study on the Irish territory, to estimate the demand for new products of decoration.

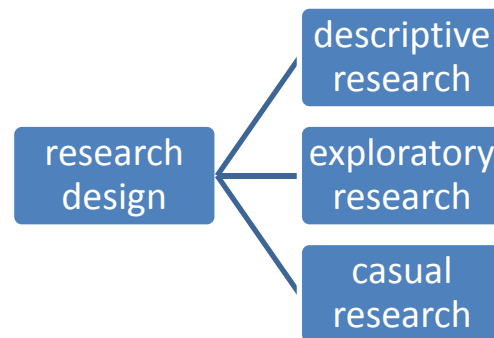
We can already notice the success of furniture and decoration accessories in Ireland with a recent study of the new implantation of Ikea store in Dublin.

Published in *The Irish Times* (2009)14 (4), the study explains that the opening new Ikea store in Ireland, predicted a large influx of customers, but with the arrival of the store, the public's interest in the furniture has been again more momentum.

Moreover, before opening the store in July 2009, several studies show that Irish people cross the country just to go to Ikea Belfast.

2. Research Design Strategy

There are three general research design strategies discussed by theorists (Domegan and Fleming, 2003, Malhotra and Birks, 2003, Kotler et al., 2001)



Each approach contains certain tools or methods that are most useful with that approach.

3.1 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is always used when statistical data and numbers are needed: for example research on customer demographics or purchase frequency. (Franses, Paap, 2002). The tool used to conduct descriptive research is almost always survey. If the number of people asked to complete the survey is large enough compared to the total of population, the answer can be even be said to have been proved.

This research is not based on statistical data. However, some information related to numerical data is still required because statistical data are relevant to analyze the trends of consumer's purchase.

3.2 Casual research:

Malhotra and Birks (2003) define this as “conclusive research where the major objective is to obtain evidence regarding cause and effect relationships”

Causal research is very specific and conducted to discover whether the change a company is planning to make will have a positive or negative effect on customers.

3.3 Exploratory research

Malhotra and Birks defined exploratory research as “research design characterized by a flexible and evolving approach to understanding marketing phenomena that are inherently difficult to measure.”

Exploratory research is used on seeking insights on motivation or behavior. We can use exploratory research to learn more about purchase motivation and attitude on a specific market.

The researcher chooses to use exploratory research because it can be used to research marketing opportunities by researching trends in consumers behavior.

Exploratory research is very adapted for this study because, the consumer information received will provide details and insights that will help. For example, to adapt a product, a price, a promotion and a distribution to meet consumer desires. It will help simply to create a new product or to find a new niche on a market, as in this research project, where the goal is to determine if there is a market for home accessories.

4. Data collection

4.1 Secondary Data collection

Secondary data can help too to provide background information on an industry or market. Even if the secondary data that are analyzed do not directly provide the answer to the problem, their collection and analysis are still helpful to provide information and context on the research issue. (Domegan and Fleming, 2007).

The advantage of secondary data is that they are less expensive to collect than primary data, and they are also less time consuming. However, it's important to take caution that the data are not outdated.

4.2 Sources of secondary data:

➤ **academic journal:**

Academic research or trade associations are often published in academic journals, because examining the research of others can provide information on some basic question. The researcher found some interested study on two institute of research (UbiFrance about export French products, and APEA, an institute which study the home decoration market).

There are often focused on the consumers who purchase a product.

➤ **Popular magazines:**

Market researchers in the home decoration industry should make a habit of reviewing such publications to keep abreast of consumer trends in this area. These lifestyle magazines would also provide valuable information to market researchers related to home decoration industry.

➤ **On website:**

They contain information that are pertinent, it includes traditional publications that are online on websites devoted to groups that share a specific interest. Blogs and social networking are too an easy way to research consumer interest, particularly those of younger consumers.

➤ **Competitors:**

It's important to consider the actions of a company's competitors.

We can find this information on business newspapers and magazines or through networking. The researcher works on IKEA data, which are relevant to understand the home decoration market.

5. Plan the research method

There are two types of research approach as noted by many writers (Domegan and Fleming, 2003), they are discussed below.

- **Quantitative research**
- **Qualitative research**

After choosing the research approach, researchers must design the research method. This will include the details of how the research will be conducted.

5.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is numerically oriented research that requires significant attention to the measurement of phenomena. It seeks to quantify data and involves some form of statistical analysis (Market Research World, 2009, Malhotra and Birks, 2005)

5.1.1 Observation:

It's a research method where information is gathered by watching participants and recording their actions. It's a "systematic process of recording patterns of occurrences without communication with people involved" (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2008).

5.1.2 Survey:

A survey is based on the use of a structured questionnaire given a sample of the population (Malhotra et al, 2005).

Survey can be administered in several ways including in person (personal interview), over the phone or by mail, or postal interview.

Personal interview may take place in a variety of locations.

Personal interview has the advantages to have less non-response error than other survey and to collect more information with good quality.

For this research, survey is relevant because it permits to learn more about some statistical data related to consumer's trends and preferences. To collect information directly from consumers in a store could help to learn more about their expectations and their preferences in term of products.

5.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is designed as “the collection of data which is open to interpretation, for instance on attitudes and opinions, and which might not be validated statistically” (Domegan and Fleming 2003).

A variety of qualitative tools, like focus group or interview, are available.

Qualitative research doesn't measure; it provides insight and new ideas (Ruyter and Scholl, 1998).

5.2.1 Focus group:

A focus group consists of a group of 8-12 participants who are lead by a moderator in a discussion of a particular topic (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2008)

The main disadvantage of focus group is that people selected are not automatically corresponding of our kind of consumer.

5.2.2 Projective techniques:

These are techniques that can obtain information in ways other than verbal response. The idea is to get emotional responses, rather than intellectual level. Some simple projective techniques include word association, sentence completion and cartoon tests.

5.2.3 Interviews:

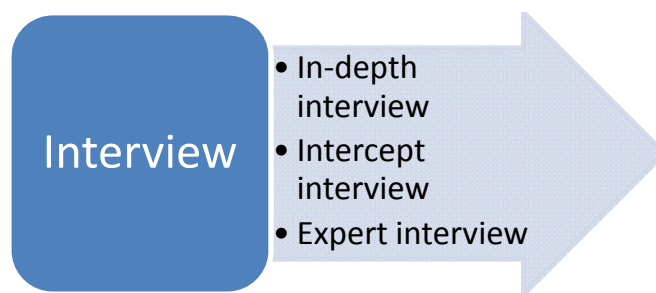
The interview protocol:

- **Opening:** communicates the purpose of the interview
- **Questioning:** uses predetermined questions
- **Probing:** uses follow up questions based on earlier response
- **Closing:** a researcher gives their thanks and answers the participant questions.

Advantages of using interviews:

- Allow research participant to express ideas in own word: express motivation, whereas a survey for example, the answer are based on preconceived ideas.
- Allow time to develop their idea fully: if something is unclear for the participant or the researcher, they can clarify the question or the answer, whereas with a survey, they generally can't.
- The fact that some questions are the same for each participant allows comparability.

Interview can be one of three types:



Intercept interview:

Intercept interviews are often called “person in the street” interviews. They are design to be short, taking only 3 or 5 minutes, and are limited to a specific topic. To conduct the interviews, a researcher will go to a location where participants can be found.

Expert interview:

The participants in these interviews are not potential or current customers but rather individuals who have specific knowledge. This knowledge is involved about a type of industry, or about what benefits a consumer prefers about a product for example.

In depth interview

There are one-on-one interviews that educe and probe detailed information on customer’s motivation (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2008).

In dept interview is very appropriate to probe needs behavior and attitudes, and to interview professional people.

The researcher chooses to use in depth interview because the respondents are more amenable and spontaneous when answering question in person, and in private situation. In-depth interview is very well adapted to interview professionals of home decoration industry, like retailers. A lot of information about this market and consumers behavior can be collected. The goal here is too interview some particular people who have a specific knowledge about home decoration market.

6. The questionnaire and interview design

A questionnaire is a “set of questions designed to generate the data necessary to accomplish the objectives of the research” (McDaniel and Gates, 2008).

All questions within the interviews and questionnaire must answer these objectives:

- ❖ **Objective 1:** To determine the size and the nature of home decoration market in Europe, and more especially in Ireland.

For example, the third part of the interview and the questions 2 and 6 from the questionnaire answer to this objective.

- ❖ **Objective 2:** To analyze the influences on consumer behavior about home decoration, and their preferences in term of purchases.

For example, the first and the forth part of the interview and the questions 3/4/5/7/8 from the questionnaire answer to this objective.

Questionnaire content:

- **Unstructured question:** it means open ended questions with own word of the respondent, like all the questions in the interview and question 7 of the questionnaire.
- **Structured questions:** with multiple- choice questions: a list of answers from which they must pick one or more. Like questions 2/3/4/5/6/8 in the questionnaire.

7. Sampling

Conduct Research with Sampling

7.1 Define the population

To summarize the precedent information, two research method tools are selected for this project.

- First of all, two in-depth interviews of specific retailers are conducted to learn more about the home decoration market because they have a specific and technical knowledge.
- Secondly, a personally administered questionnaire, completed with respondents in person. The goal of this questionnaire is to collect some statistical data, because it's easier to analyze, in particular according to consumer's preferences and attitudes.

7.1.1 About In-depth interviews:

⇒ **An element:** The people we want to gather data from are retailers, or managers of home decoration store, and especially home accessories (tableware) stores. It means to interview people who have a specific knowledge about home accessories and consumer's behavior.

⇒ **A time dimension:** The in-depth interview took place the 17th of February, and the 18th of February 2010.

⇒ **A geographic boundary:** The interviews took place in retail shops. It permits to the respondents to be more confident, and to explain their ideas by showing to the researcher different home items. Moreover, the researcher chooses to use two kind of store: first, a middle-high range store (the store Foxford in South Williams Street), and a low- middle range store(Sweeney's store).

⇒ **A unit:** Retailers are very relevant for this research because they are closed to consumers, and they know perfectly their needs, what they like. They probably have an idea about the lack and the weaknesses of the market.

7.1.2 About personally administered questionnaire:

The objective of this questionnaire is to learn more about consumer's preferences.

⇒ **An element:** the population targeted will be adults between 18 years old and 60 years old. More women are interviewed than men, because they seem to be more interested about interior decoration than men. It could be loyalty consumers of Ikea or just visitors.

⇒ **A time dimension:** the administered questionnaire took place the Saturday 6th March, 2010, during the afternoon, to have a chance to meet more people who correspond to the unit.

⇒ **A geographic boundary:** The questionnaire took place in Ireland, in Dublin, inside the giant furniture store Ikea. The researcher chose this place because Ikea is a big store with the most important variety of products according to home decoration in Dublin. Moreover, Ikea is not situated in the city center of Dublin. That's why; the researcher has less chance to interview people who just come to have a walk or to do shopping, as it could be in the city center of Dublin.

⇒ **A unit:** people in Ikea are automatically a little bite concerned about the home decoration phenomenon, as they are here. It can be either households with children, or single men and women between around 18 and 60years old.

7.2 Choosing a Sampling method

It exist two sampling types:

- **Probability sampling**
- **Non probability sampling**

7.2.1 Probability sampling:

This is where each member of the population has a known chance of being selected (Domegan and Fleming, 2007).

- Simple random sampling involves selecting sample members randomly from a list of entire population (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). It can be done with or without replacement of a member when picked and is sampling in its simplest form.
- Systematic random sampling: a variation on simple random sampling. Every nth member of the population is chosen from the sample frame.
- Stratified random sampling: entails sampling sub-population within the overall population list. It's used when the researcher has a greater knowledge of the population and may want to use it to improve the sample design (Hague and Harris, 1993).
- Cluster sampling: requires the selection of groups, rather than individuals, from the entire population.

7.2.2. Non probability sampling:

This type of sampling is subjective as the sample members are chosen by the researcher (Domegan and Fleming, 2007).

- Quota sampling: has replaced random sampling techniques in recent years (Wyndlham and Goosey, 1997). It is based on “the deliberate selection of groups of people”.
- Judgment sampling: employs the researcher’s expertise to identify and select the sample units from within the population (Aaker et al, 2007). They are chosen because the researcher believes they are representative of the population of interest.
- Purposive sampling: It is used to obtain an entire spectrum of attitudes and opinions. (Domegan and Fleming, 2007).

The researcher chose this method because she helps to identify additional people to be included in the study (consumers for personal questionnaire). After interviewing two retailers, the researcher would solicit these people to help him to identify the right place to interview consumers. These first interviews permit to obtain some specific knowledge about home decoration market. Moreover, it permits to have some advices from the respondent according to the place and kind of people who will be the most relevant for the personal administrated questionnaire.

- Convenience sampling: is used when researchers choose any willing and available individuals participants. This method can be implemented when it is known that a specific location tend to attract specific participant for the interview.

The researcher chose this method to interview consumers. He chose a right place to set up the questions: here the place is the store Ikea

Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research options open to the researcher for this project, and why qualitative and quantitative researches were chosen. The interview design was explained to give the reader an insight into the main tools to be utilized in this primary research.

The combination between in-depth interview and personally administered questionnaire is chosen, because she brings to the researcher more opportunities to collect maximum information for this research, it means qualitative data, as much as quantitative data.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

1.Data Analysis and findings

1.1 Introduction

The author has carried out primary research and collected the data from interviews and questionnaire to determine if there exists a market for home accessories in Ireland.

In this chapter, the data will be analyzed and the findings will be presented.

1.1.1 Editing

Data editing is used to “identify omissions, ambiguities and any errors in the responses” (Kumar et al, 2002) collected from respondents to a survey.

1.1.2 Coding

Coding involves assigning each individual question response a value, normally a numerical value (Hair et al, 2003). Dichotomous and multiple choice questions can be pre coded as there are a limited number of responses whereas open ended questions may only be categorized after the data has been collected (Domegan and Fleming, 2003).

1.1.3 Tabulation

Tabulation consists of counting the responses to each category (Kumar et al, 2002). The author will utilize sample tabulation and cross tabulation. Using simple tabulation, the researcher will count a single variable. Cross tabulation will describe relationship between two or more variables.

1.1.4 Summarization

Domegan and Fleming (2003) highlight two types of statistical summarization: measurers of central tendency and measurers if dispersion. The measure of central tendency provides the researcher with the midpoint of the distribution, such as the mean, median and mode. The measurers of dispersion provide the researcher with the spread of the data in the form of the range, variance, and standard deviation.

1.2 Field work:

The researcher distributed 17 questionnaires and collected information from two interviews. The interviews are hold with two specialized retailers of home decoration stores, and the questionnaires were handed out with consumers or visitors of IKEA store in Dublin.

1.3 The data analysis:

The data was analyzed with the software program Microsoft Excel. Findings are represented on pie charts and bar charts, according to numerous data.

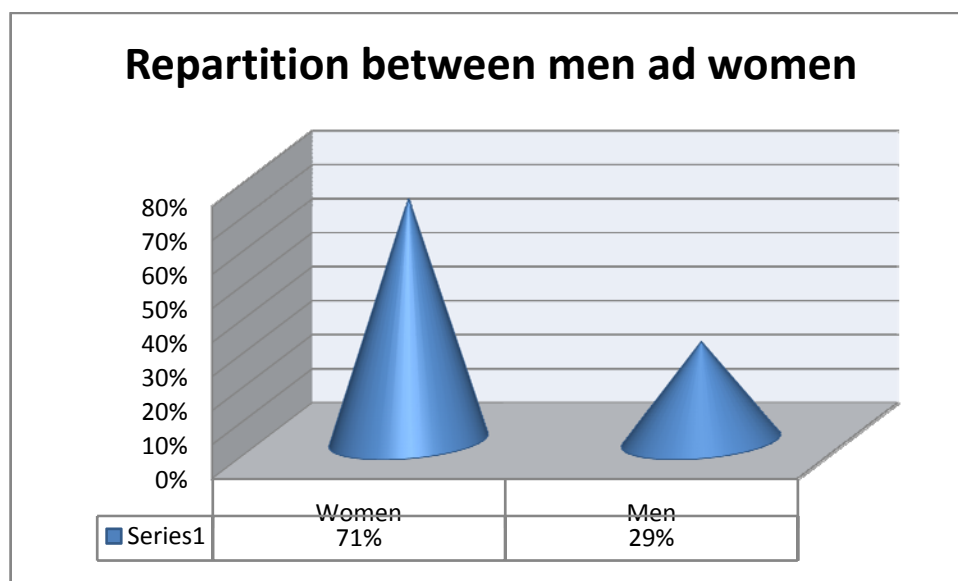
However from open-ended question, especially from the interview's answers, any recurring themes are developed to aid the researcher to understand respondent's opinions and attitudes.

1.4 Demographic of respondents:

This is a brief overview of respondent's overview. This information concerned only the questionnaire:

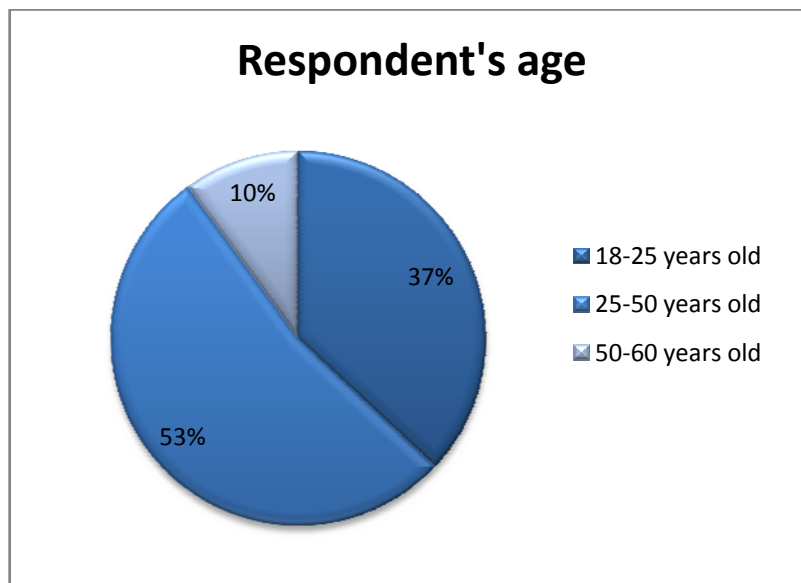
12 women and 5 men were questioned; it means 71% of women and 29% of men.

Figure 1: Repartition of respondents between men and women



37% of respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years old, the majority (53%) was aged between 25 and 50 years old, and the final, 10% were aged between 50 and 60 years old.

Figure 2: Respondent's age



1. Research Findings

Objective 1

The researcher first objective is to determine the size and the nature of home decoration market especially in Ireland.

1.1 Information collected from Interviews of retailers:

Is the competition very developed related to home decoration stores?

The interviews reveal that more and more stores are implanted in Dublin. The retailers speak about the new shopping center dedicated to home decoration and the opening of Ikea recently. Although the competition carries on to growth in Dublin,

Ikea, doesn't worry the retailers because the giant store based his strategy on low prices. There are some others competitors in Dublin which are middle-high range and which do not propose the same quality of products than Ikea. Retailers think that the demand is large enough to record good figures in each store.

Does the phenomenon of home decoration well develop in all the rest of the country?

Interviews from retailers reveal that sometimes, customers are people spending holidays in Dublin, and they come from Ireland, like Belfast or Cork. The variety of stores is maybe less developed in the rest of Ireland than in the capital, but customers still interested by watching TV shows about home decoration, and reading some specialized magazines.

According to the retailer of Sweeney's store, if the giant store Ikea has chosen to implant one of his shops in Belfast, it's that there were some people ready to buy.

Does the home decoration industry have suffered to the economic crisis?

Retailers are concerned about the economic crisis. They especially explained that furniture have suffered from this crisis. People carry on coming to shops regularly but now they used to spend less money. They have a more restrictive budget than in the past, but this trend is going to disappear.

The retailer of Sweeney shop explains that, as wherever, they have a little bite suffered to the crisis, but the figures are becoming better.

What Kind of products are the most sold?

Foxford shop shows a trend to sell most of little items than big furniture. People often come to buy some gifts, some accessories, and most of the time, linen articles. Candles have also a great success, like mirrors and lamps. This trend is confirmed by the second retailer, who explains that his consumers have often a specific need.

Are there specific areas about home decoration where the variety of products is very few developed?

Accessories related to tableware, like dishes and especially about plates don't present a lot of different styles and creative designs. Moreover, it's difficult for a retailer to

find linen which would be coordinated to dishes. Sometimes they look like too traditional. The retailer of Foxford thinks that tableware accessories need to be customized and reviewed.

Are French home decoration products well welcoming on the Irish market?

French products, as Britain products, are very well welcoming on the market. People like the “French touch”, because French products look like for them innovating, and creative.

Moreover, Foxford retailer already works with abroad products. He thinks in a global economic context, it’s primordial.

Does tableware market record good results? (Explanation of tableware by each category, as linen, dishes, plate, glasses...)

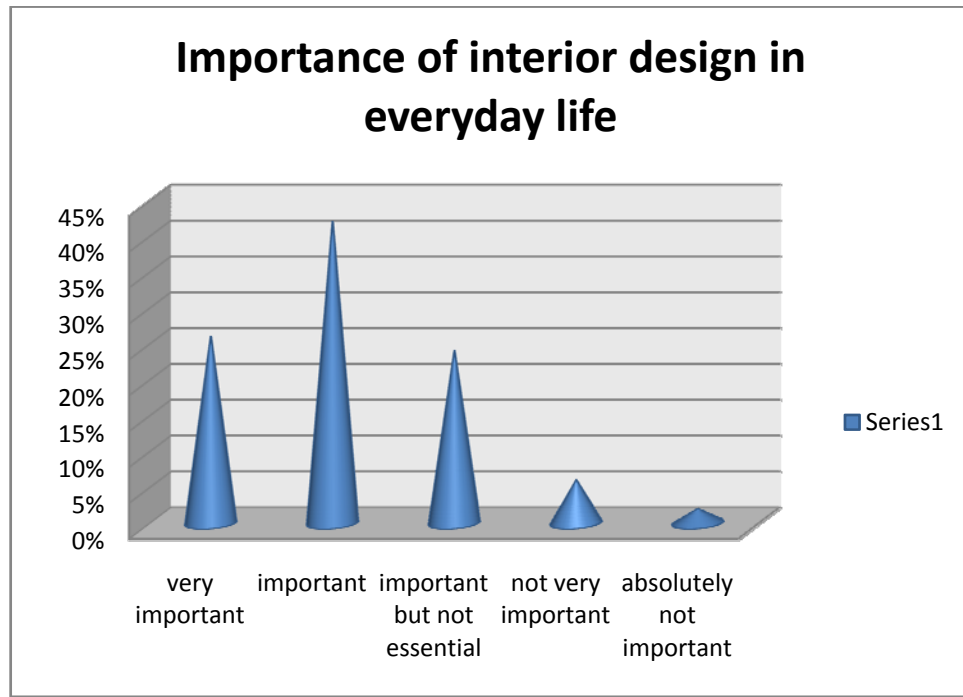
Tableware seems to be a seasonable market, because the sales increase particularly between December and January, for Christmas time, and during the summer, because there are lots of weddings. But tableware items, especially linen still one of the products that retailers sell the most.

According to Sweeney’s store, dining accessories and especially linen, have a great success for several years. People feel like more comfortable when they often change the design of these items.

1.2 Information obtained from the questionnaire

Does your interior design have an important place in your life?

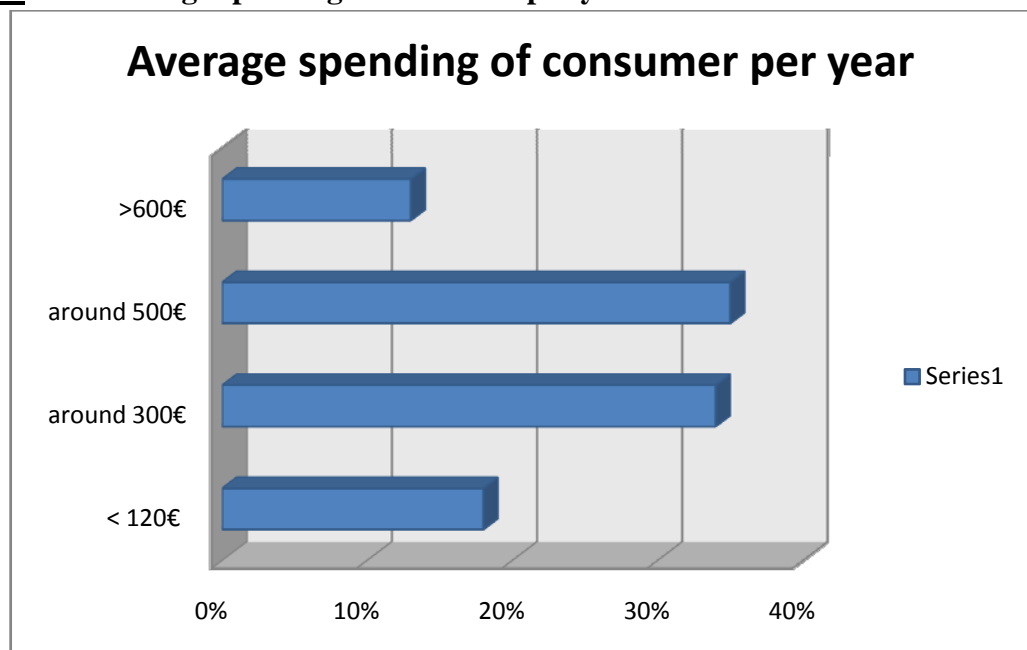
Figure 3: Importance of interior design in everyday life.



The answers about the importance of interior design for consumers show that people are very interested, and concerned about this phenomenon. About 68% of consumers think that interior design is “very important” or “important” in everyday life.

What is the average budget consumer spending on home decoration?

Figure 4: The average spending of consumer per year



According to the information collected, the researcher can draw as conclusion that people spend between 300 and 500€per year into decoration items. It is a significant budget which concerned more than 60% of the population interviewed.

It's also a good new related to the future of home decoration market, because an average spending of 400€per year for a household is a big number if we consider that households spend in average 1500€per year into clothes (study of institute about lifestyle in Europe, 2008).

Conclusion for the first objective:

The competition is going to be developed everywhere in Ireland, with the opening of Ikea, shopping center dedicated to decoration...Although the economic crisis has effectively concerned this market: it appears that furniture industry has been more touched than home accessories market. This area has recorded good results for several years. Moreover, majority of people expresses the fact that home decoration is “important” in everyday life. This information confirmed that home accessories market is a market which is going to develop.

Objective 2

The objective is to analyze the influences on consumer behavior about home decoration, and their preferences in term of purchases.

2. 1 Information collected from the interviews:

What room do consumers prefer to decorate in their house?

According to the retailers, most of the sales are accessories for the living room and the kitchen. People spend more time to decorate rooms which are the most seen when they receive visitors, friends of family; it means the kitchen and the living room.

Are consumers' well adapted to new products, new concepts?

Retailers are used to speak not about new concept, but about new style, new design.

According to their experiences, it really depends of the consumers. There are two kinds of consumers: one part which prefers traditional and classic design, and the other part, which searches for very original ideas and new concepts, like special design, modern colors...

Do you think people are more interested about modern design or do they expect some vintage design?

Foxford retailer explains that it's very rare to have the two kinds of styles in the same store. For example, his shop is more specialized into "cosy" and "vintage" design than modern design. Only giant store like Ikea for example can provide a lot of styles. For the retailer, vintage and modern styles are the two main styles.

What kinds of consumers come and buy in your shop? Is it more loyalty consumers, or almost always new visitors?

It's more people who are looking for high quality of products. They research some creative and different products that they could find in the large distribution. They want to differentiate themselves, and they require a good level of quality for their products. It often concerned consumers who are not very sensible on price. It's often loyalty consumer who come regularly to our shop.

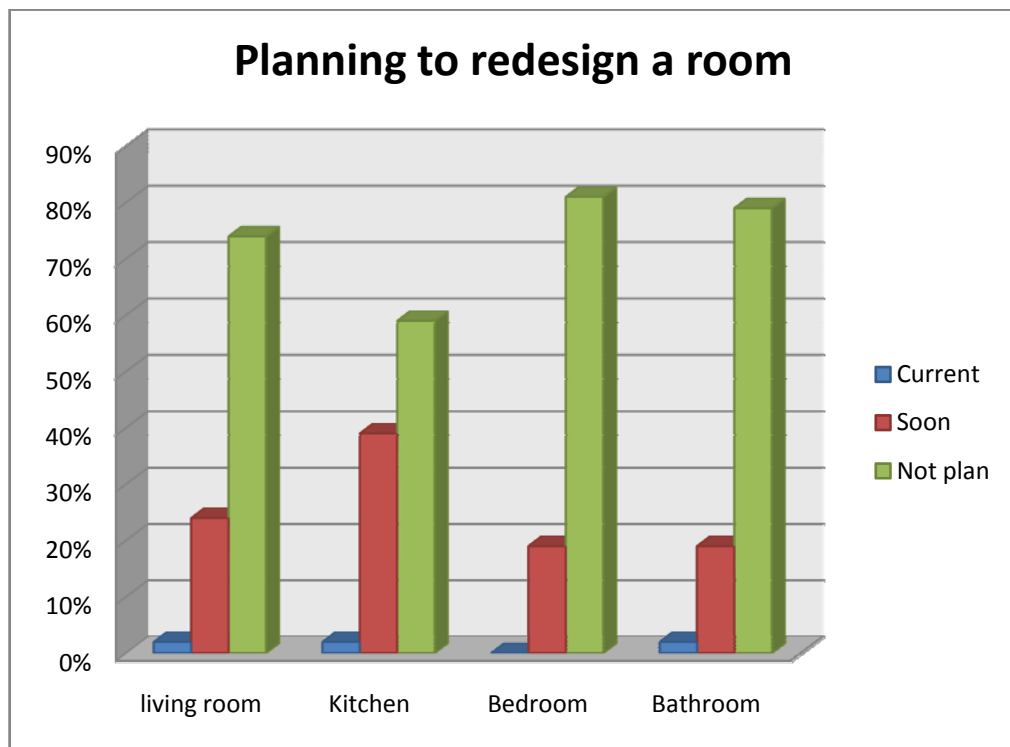
However, according to Sweeney's shop, they meet consumers who haven't a specific budget and who just research a specific item. But most of the time, people come to this shop because there is a lot of choices and because it's less expensive than in

other shop. It's often new visitors, who search for the best value and low price for products.

3.2 Information obtained from the questionnaire:

Do consumers project or plan to redesign the interior of one of your rooms this year?
What room is going to be redesign?

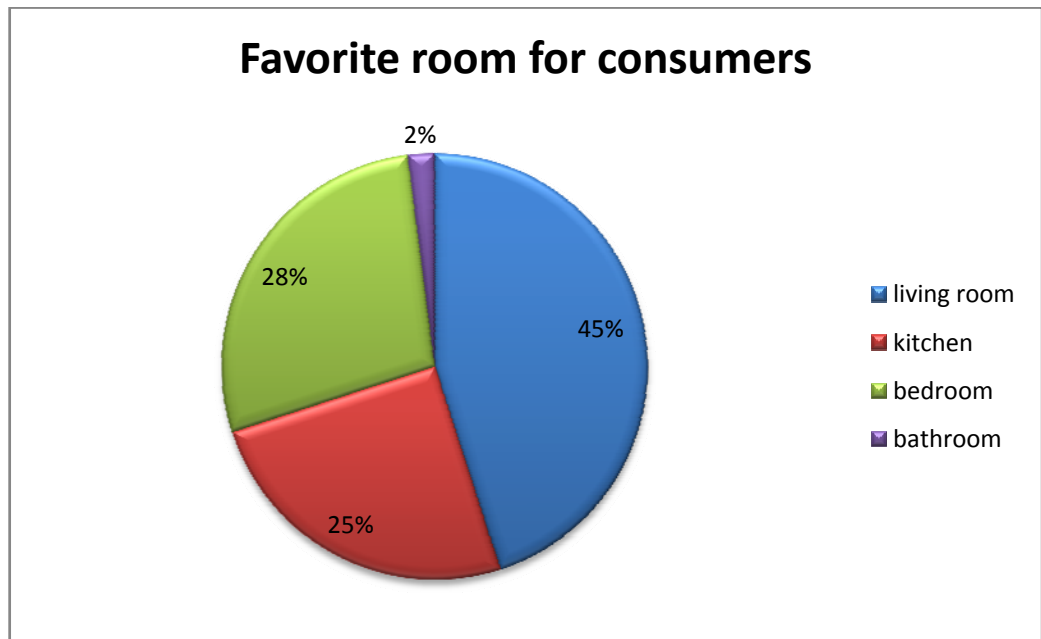
Figure 5: Planning to redesign a room.



According to the answers collected from the questionnaire, the researcher shows that some people are going to redesign a room. The kitchen is especially concerned because around 40% of people interviewed, are going to plan to redesign their kitchen. Some people interviewed are also concerned, because they are doing changes in their living room, kitchen or bathroom. These results show that people don't let their house with original design, but they want to change and arrange it.

What room do consumers prefer?

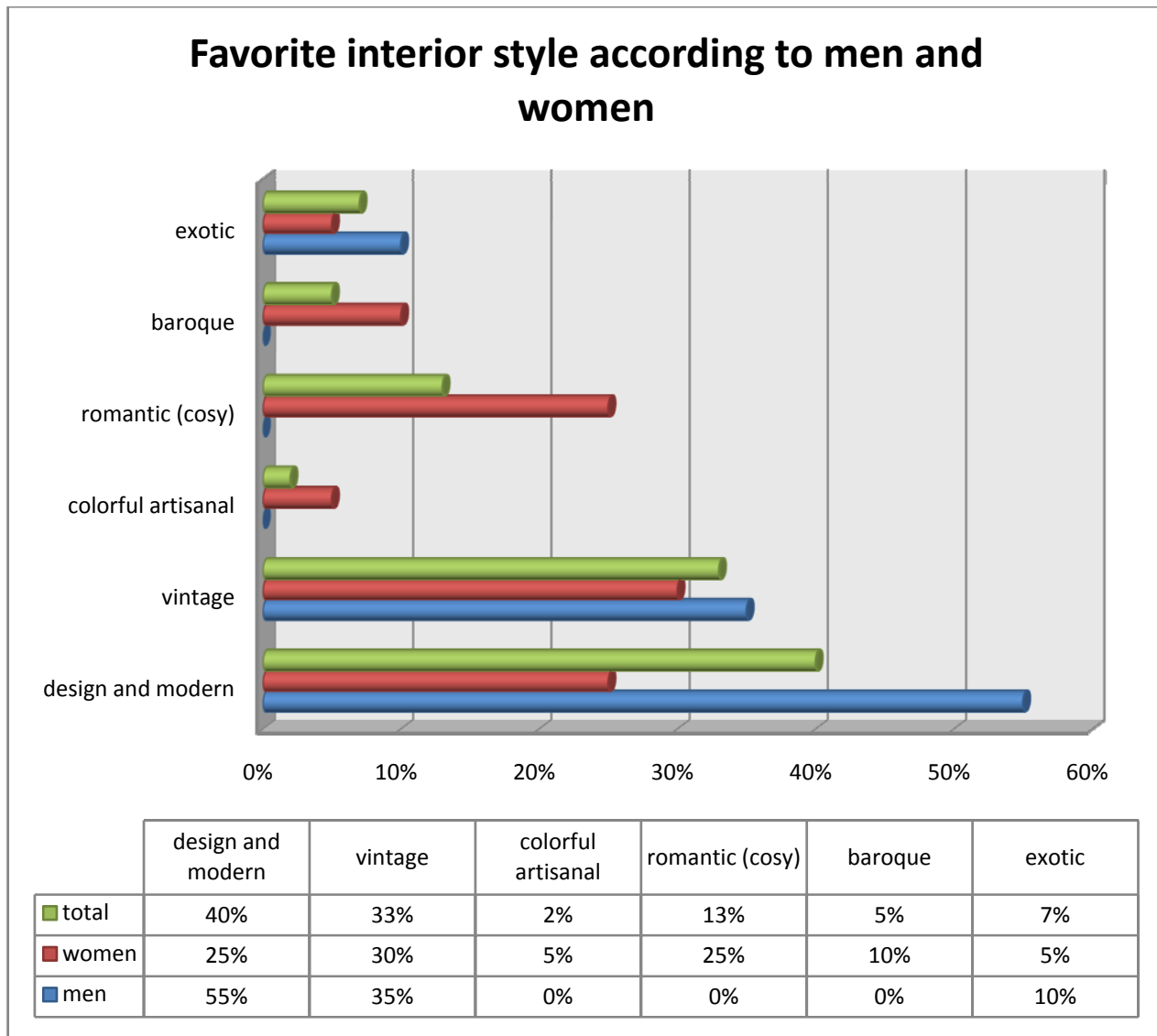
Figure 6: Favorite room for consumers



According to the data collected from the questionnaire, this pie chart shows that the favorite room is the living room for near half of the population interviewed. This information confirmed the results explained in the literature review and given by the retailers. Moreover, the chart shows that Bedroom and kitchen are also often the favorite rooms for lots of people (28% and 25%).

What is the favorite interior style for consumers according if they are men or women?

Figure 7: Favorite interior style according to men and women

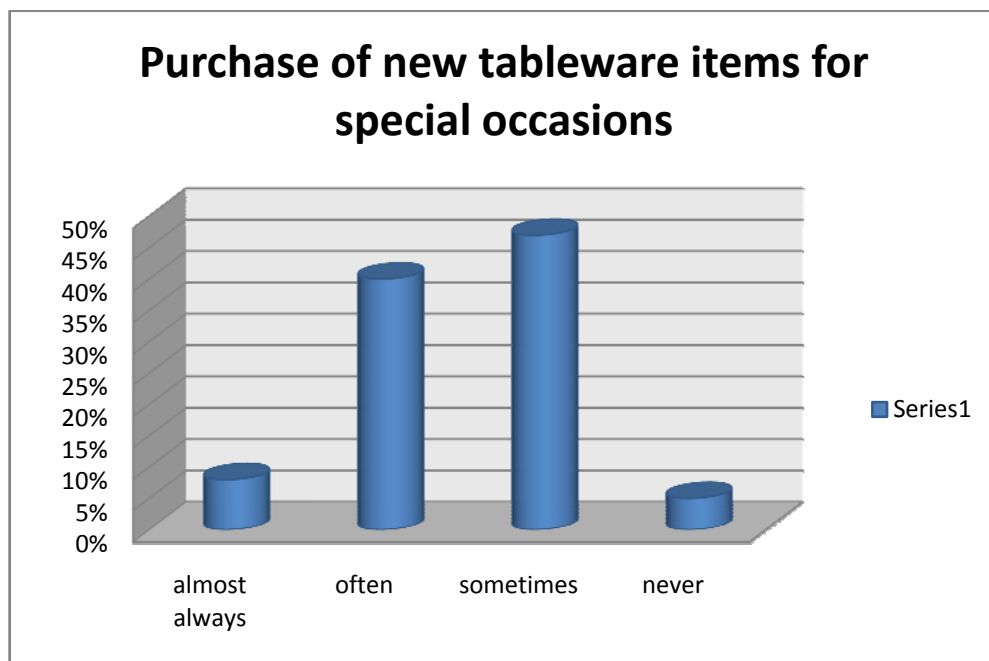


The researcher has asked to people about their favorite interior style, in relation if they are men or women. The results show specific trends. First of all, the graph shows that men and women, both, are more interested about modern and vintage style. This trend is very clear, and it is confirmed by the explanations of the Foxford retailer. Romantic style has good success with women, but absolutely not with men.

The information collected from this question show the important potential for design and vintage products, even if it's two very different styles.

When people organize some diner at home, for Christmas time, familial meeting, or to meet some friends, are they used to buy some new tableware items?

Figure 8: Purchase of new tableware items for special occasions



This last question is essential for the researcher. During this research, he intends to find an area where it would be interesting to develop products. According to the knowledge of the retailers and the data explained in the literature review, the home decoration market presents opportunities related to tableware accessories. This specific area knows a particular growth for several years. The answers to the last question are essential because the researcher wants to confirm this trend. These results show that people “sometimes” and “often” buy new tableware items for special occasions, it means for example for Christmas time, familial meetings, weddings, launch with some friends...

More than 70% of people interviewed have answered that they “sometimes” or “often” buy new tableware accessories (linen, dishes...). Only few people, fewer than 10% estimated never change their tableware items.

Conclusion:

Information collected from consumers and retailers reveal that their favorite room is the living room and the kitchen, and that a lot of people are going to redesign these rooms.

The information collected show moreover specific trends about interior style, for example, people show a particular interest about modern and vintage style. This trend is confirmed by retailers who said that they sell in majority modern and vintage accessories.

But the most important information is that people are used to change their tableware items, especially for particular occasions. It reveals that it could be a market in expansion.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The researcher has analyzed the data collected from the consumer of home decoration sample in Ireland. This chapter will draw the main conclusions from the literature and the research findings. The researcher will highlight any implications of these conclusions on the existence of a market for a specialist home accessories company, based in France.

Findings and Conclusion

Objective 1: The researcher first objective is to determine the size and the nature of home decoration market especially in Ireland.

The researcher was investigating if a market exists in Ireland for home decoration accessories.

The phenomenon of interior decoration, through Europe, takes a phenomenal dimension. In Ireland, the development of specific areas, as shopping center, or the growth of the competition, like with the arrival of Ikea, show that the home decoration market is going to take a decisive turn. However, even if this market is increasing, it knows too some weaknesses. The economic crisis has affected especially the furniture market. But some figures show that certain areas haven't been affected, as tableware market. Others are carry on to growth as kitchen specialists. Moreover, the penetration of the market by foreign companies (theorist Ansoff) is facilitated, particularly for France, which possesses a good image for Irish consumers. We can believe today that this trend is not likely to reverse.

Objective 2: The objective is to analyze the influences on consumer behavior about home decoration, and their preferences in term of purchases.

To study the preferences and the needs of consumers was essential for this research. To penetrate the market, it was primordial to learn more about consumer's expectations according to this market. Now the researcher is able to determine what room people prefer to decorate, what style they choose for their interior...

The literature review had revealed a trend: people prefer decorate living room and the kitchen. The "vintage" style is also a new trend on the home decoration market. This information are confirmed by the primary research. Indeed, the results from the interviews and the questionnaire

The overall conclusions of this research agree with the research hypothesis which states that the public's interest in furniture and decoration accessories has been momentum in Ireland, especially with the arrival of the giant store Ikea.

Recommendations

- To penetrate the Irish home decoration market, the company based in France has to be prudent about how to position her products. She has to decide between different strategies. The researcher advices to propose items to low price stores, like Ikea, and to position other kinds of products at middle-high range stores (into small retailers like Foxford).
- Tableware looks like to be a sure investment for the French company. The researcher advices to launch a tableware collection for specific occasions (Christmas, weddings, birth...), and to launch a linen collection for the rest of the year. The « vintage » style seems to have soon a great success.
- The French company should use her French image to sell the products, like to invent a very "French name", because French products seem to be well accepted by Irish consumers.

Recommendations for future research

Others researches could be investigated, for example, about what kind of products exactly should be created (questions about forms, colors, design, size, materials...)

Research limitations

The time limitations on this research have limited its scope. If the researcher had more time, the primary research could have included more respondents from other kind of shops than Ikea.

The sample size is small due to the time limitations of the study. The small size implies that the findings of this research cannot be applied to all the population of Ireland.

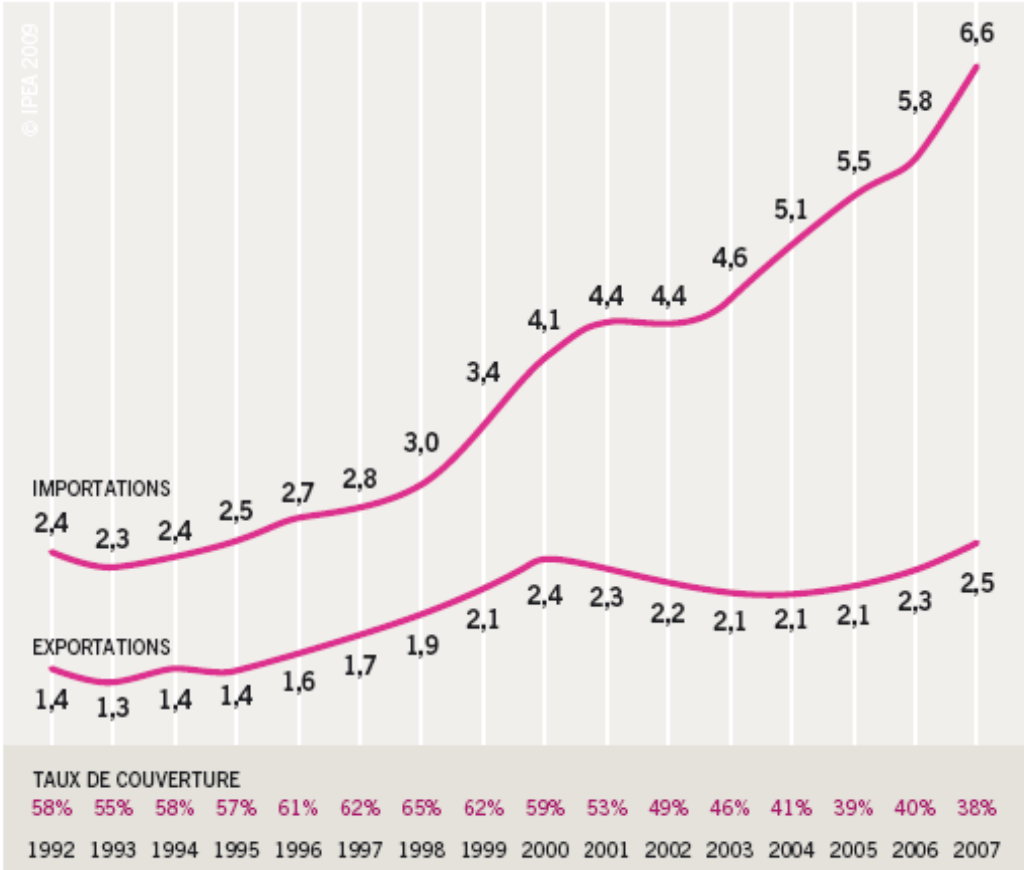
Home decoration is a very large topic, that's why some difficulties can appear related to the non exploration of all the areas of home decoration.

Conclusion

The author has drawn the main conclusions of the research leading the reader to the end of this research process.

Appendices

Evolution of Home decoration items in Europe between 1992 and 2007



Source : IPEA d'après Eurostat.

Previous Home accessories sold in France by the French company concerned by the research project



Previous Home accessories sold in France by the French company concerned by the research



Previous Home accessories sold in France by the French company concerned by the research project



In-depth Interview with retailers

1) Introduction of the interview

Purpose of the research

2) About the shop

What Kind of products do you sell the most?

Do you have good results according to tableware? (Explanation of tableware by each category, as linen, porcelain...)

Do you think tableware is a seasonable market, (sold essentially for weddings and Christmas time), or these kinds of articles are sold during all the year?

What is the average price that people spend in your shop?

What kinds of consumers come and buy in your shop? Is it more loyalty consumers, or almost always new visitors?

Do you already work with abroad foreign companies?

3) About home decoration market

Do you think the competition is very developed according to your kind of shop, in Dublin?

Do you think the phenomenon of home decoration is well developed in all the rest of the country?

Do you think, in relation with your own experience that home decoration industry has suffered to the economic crisis?

Since the economic crisis, do people feel more sensible about price?

What do you think about IKEA 'success'?

Are French products welcoming on the Irish market?

Are there specific areas about home decoration where the variety of products is very few developed?

4) About consumer's preferences and their expectations

Do you think Irish people are concerned about decorating interior, and spending money and time in it?

Are consumers' well adapted to new products, new concepts?

What part of the house do you think people prefer to decorate?

Do you think people are more interested about modern design or vintage design?

Do you have any suggestions for new concepts or products?

5) Close

Thank you

Conclusive comments

Agreement for using the information gained from the discussion

Personally administered questionnaire

1) Introduction

Explain the purpose and how respondent can help

2) Does your interior design have an important place in your life?

- Very important 1
- important 2
- important but not essential 3
- not very important 4
- absolutely not important 5

3) Do you project or plan to redesign the interior of one of your rooms this year?

- Current 1
- Soon 2
- Not plan 3

4) If you plan to, what room is going to be redesign?

- Living room 1
- Kitchen 2
- Bedroom 3
- Bathroom 4

5) What room do you prefer to decorate in your home?

- Bedroom 1
- living room 2
- kitchen 3
- bathroom 4

6) What is the average budget you spend on home decoration?

- < 10€it means less than 150€per year 1
- Between 10 and 30€it means around 250€per year 2
- Between 30 and 50€, it means around 500€per year 3
- More than 600€per years 4

7) In what kind of stores are you used to go to buy some home decoration items?

.....

8) What kind of styles of interior design do you prefer?

- Design and modern, 1
- Vintage, 2
- Artisanal, 3
- Romantic , 4
- Baroque, 5
- Exotic. 6

9) When you organize some diner at home, for Christmas time, familial meeting, or to meet some friends, are you used to buy some new tableware items?

- Almost always 1
- Often 2
- Sometimes 3
- Never 4

10) How old are you?

- Between 18 and 25 1
- Between 25 and 50 2
- Between 50 and 60 3

11) Conclusion/ thanks

Answers to the In-depth Interviews with retailers

1) About the shop

What Kind of products do you sell the most?

Foxford shop: We are used to sell most of little articles than big furniture currently. People often come to buy some gifts, some accessories, but moreover linen articles. Candles have also a great success, like mirrors and lamps.

Sweeney's shop: People who come here often buy two or more articles because it's not very expensive. They often come because they have a specific need, but after, they buy some little articles or accessories in addition: like candles, bathroom items, or kitchen items.

Do you have good results according to tableware? (Explanation of tableware by each category, as linen, porcelain...)

F: It's a very seasonable market, because it works better between the month of December and January, it means for Christmas time, and during the summer, because of lots of weddings. But tableware items, especially, linen still one of the products we sell the most.

S: Of course, we sell a lot of dining accessories, especially linen and articles like plates, and glasses. Only porcelain has not a big success because they are a little bit traditional.

Do you think tableware is a seasonable market, (sold essentially for weddings and Christmas time), or these kinds of articles are sold during all the year?

F: Has already answered.

S: No, I think we sell well tableware accessories during all the year. Maybe the sales growth for Christmas but it's still common products that people buy everytime.

What is the average price that people spend in your shop?

I think it's around 40 and 60€ But it really depends. The average is not too high because people are used to buy more home accessories than big furniture, it is more unusual.

The average price for each consumer is around 20€ Our shop proposes products which are not too expensive. They sometimes buy one or more items, but it's rarely

more than 50€ But our low prices permit to people coming often to the store and changing their decoration as we want.

What kinds of consumers come and buy in your shop, is it more loyalty consumer, or almost always new visitors?

F: In our shop, it's more people who are looking for high quality of products. They research some creative and different products that you could find in the large distribution. They want to differentiate themselves, and they require a good level of quality for their products. It's often people who are not very sensible on price who come to our store. It's often loyalty consumers who come regularly to our shop.

S: It depends. Sometimes, we meet people who haven't a specific budget and just research a specific item. But most of the time, people come here because there are a lot of choices and because it's less expensive than in other shops.

Do you already work with abroad foreign company/ product?

F: Yes, sure. I think in the global context, it's primordial to work with abroad products. I work with a lot of foreign companies, but all of them are European. Our two first partners are Britain and France for the quality of the product.

S: I am not very informed about that. I know some items come from Asia. I also know that each country in Europe export specific products, but it's difficult to say exactly what. But yes, we work with foreign companies.

2) About home decoration market

Do you think the competition is very developed according to your kind of shop, in Dublin?

F: I think more and more stores are implanted in Dublin, as an example the opening of Ikea. But Ikea doesn't worry me because they based their strategy on low price, and as I have explained before, people didn't come to our shop to have low prices. There are some others competitors in Dublin which are middle-high range, but the competition is not too developed, and there is largely enough demand for each store.

S: Since the arrival of Ikea, we have recorded a few decrease of our sales. People prefer going to Ikea to obtain some creative ideas, and moreover, because there are a lot of variety of products.

Do you think the phenomenon of home decoration is well developed in all the rest of the country?

F: I have always lived in Dublin, and I have no idea about that. Just only that sometimes, customers are people spending holidays in Dublin, and they come from Ireland, like Belfast or Cork, that's why I think it's the same phenomenon.

S: I think if the giant industry of Ikea has chosen to implant his store in Belfast, it's that there were some people ready to buy. I think in the rest of Ireland, people are interested about interior design. Even if they have less access to lots of shops like in Dublin, they can find advices and concepts on TV shows or in magazines.

Do you think, in relation with your own experience that home decoration industry has suffered to the economic crisis?

F: Yes, of course. I think especially furniture market has suffered from this crisis. People carry on coming to the shop regularly but now they used to have a few budget than in the past.

S: As wherever, we have a little bite suffered about the crisis, but the figures are becoming better.

Since the economic crisis, do people feel more sensible about price, do they take care more about price?

F: He has already answered

S: Even before the crisis, people didn't spend lots of money in our shop. That's why they always look after small prices, but I think they have around the same budget.

Are French products well welcoming on the Irish market?

F: Yes, French products, as Britain products, are very well welcoming on the market. People like the "French touch", because French products look like for them innovating and creative.

S: I have no idea because I don't think we sell some French products.

3) About consumer's preferences and their expectations

Are consumers' well adapted to new products, new concepts?

F: We aren't used to speak about new concept, but about new style, new design. It really depends of the consumers. There are two kinds of consumers: one part which prefers traditional and classic design, and the other part, which searches for very original ideas and new concepts, like special design, modern colors...

S: In general, we sell most classical items, I think that if people want to find creative concept, they should buy designer product which are very expensive.

What part of the house do you think people prefer to decorate/ to make accommodations?

F: Most of our sales concerned accessories for the living room and the kitchen. People spend more time to decorate rooms which are the most seen when they receive visitors, friends of family; it means the kitchen and the living room.

S: I think people spend more time and money to design their living room. It's the central room where they can receive people. With I can see every day, consumers spend money into living rooms or kitchen items. I think it's their favorite room.

Do you think people are more interested about very modern design or sometimes do they expect some vintage design?

F: It's very rare to have the two kinds of styles in the same store. For example, our shop is more specialized into "cosy" and "vintage" design than modern design. Only giant store like Ikea for example can provide a lot of styles. That's why people are oriented from this kind of shops which proposes styles. The answer is difficult because each consumer has a different opinion from another, but for me, vintage and modern styles are the two principle styles.

S: I think it really depends on every preferences of consumer. The trends are going to change every year.

The store FOXFORD for the interview



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