**ONLINE SHOPPING IS KING - HIGH STREET STORES MUST ADAPT OR DIE**

**Abstract**

Online shopping in the current context has been a boon for the consumers as well as the organisation. In the wake of Covid 19 and the imposition of lockdown the trend of online shopping has been eminent in the current context. Due to the facilities of online shopping, people nowadays are getting more attracted towards online shopping rather than traditional brick-and-mortar stores. In this study, a discussion has been made on online shopping in which various analyses would be made while understanding the fact that high street stores must adapt to online facilitation of the products or not. The study has very well narrated the reason behind the sharp inclination of people towards online shopping in the current context and why a retail organisation to gain competitive advantages needs to adapt technological advancements by providing facilities of online products to its customers.

The paradigm shift in shopping from physical stores to online shops would change the customer shopping experiences and behaviour patterns over the course of time. The factors that determine the customer needs during the shopping process include convenience, urge to remain relevant, functionality, unique budget, reliability, efficiency among others. Additionally, while considering the service aspects, customers look at empathy, transparency, control, accessibility, and adequate information leading them to make a purchase. It has also been found that customer engagement in online sales is crucial in meeting the needs of the customers. The aspects of customer engagement and retention help maintain loyalty and enable the customers to remain updated with the arrival of new products or product recommendations. Customer focus is also important in ensuring customer loyalty. The high street stores through placing greater emphasis on customer focus could adapt to the online setting and meet the needs of the customers adequately.

Gaining a good knowledge about what the needs of the customers are is increasingly important in the contemporary city world. Therefore, specific steps pertaining to the same have been stated in the dissertation. In addition, the ways in which the high street shops can increase their visibility in the market has also been stated, along with bringing out some of the efficient methods in which the same could be done have also been asserted throughout the course of the entire study. Besides, it is also noteworthy that the high street stores have a number of advantages along with disadvantages in the implementation of the method of online shopping, which has also been appropriately and adequately pointed out. Besides, the growing significance of online shopping in the present scenario brings out the crucial role that online mode of sales plays in contemporary society through the process of pulling sales and profitability to the organisation.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 General Analysis

Online shopping in the current context has been one of the most important parts of everyone's life. On the other hand, it can be noticed that online shopping due to its facilities has turned into the habits of the people present all over the world. Amid this pandemic, online selling has been a trend where people are being able to buy products while sitting at home. Technically online shopping is known to be the form of electronic commerce that allows the consumers to buy direct products as well as services from the manufacturer by making use of the web browser or mobile applications. A typical online store enables its consumers to access a range of products as well as services while considering the information provided and the image of the product given by the seller. Online shopping has been one of the most essential and vital trends for consumers which enables them to buy products with ease and comfort.

## 1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the research is to understand the ways in which high street stores could adapt to the changing markets and buying patterns of the consumers in order to prevent them from becoming obsolete.

The objectives of the research can be stated as under.

* To find out the requirements of the consumers when they are preoccupied with shopping for items of their need
* To identify and realise the advantages that are solely provided by online shopping in consideration of the customers.
* To suggest or recommend some procedures, which can be applied by the high street shops so that they continue to remain within the eyesight of the customers and do not run entirely obsolete

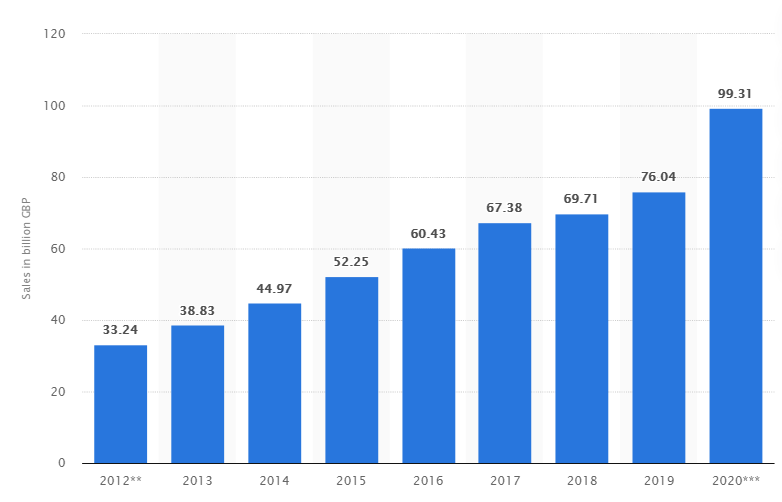
## 1.3 Research Question

The research questions are the ones that are below.

* What are the requirements of the clients while they are engrossed in shopping activities?
* What are some of the advantages that are brought about by the online mode of shopping in regard to the organisational consumers?
* What are a few ways that can be suggested to the high street shops so that they do not become obsolete in the market and learn to adapt to the specific consumer requirements in the market?

## 1.4Background of the research

The recent years have been marked by the ascendancy of online shopping. The use of digital platforms has become a modern reality that has resulted in a decline in sales for several high street retailers. Customers have exhibited easy acceptance of the choices, competitive pricing, and convenience provided by the online shopping platforms. The Covid 19 pandemic in recent times also acted as a catalyst for e-commerce to grow while further worsening the condition of high street retailers undergoing store closures. The shopping habits of the customers are likely to change permanently even with the reopening of the physical stores' post-pandemic crisis. It has, therefore, become incumbent on the high street retailers to adapt and embrace the online platform which will ensure their survival in the long run.



**Figure 1: Value of online retail sales in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2012 to 2020**

(Source: Statista, 2021)

Online retail sales have experienced tremendous growth over the past decade. With the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020 the value of online retail sales was estimated to reach about 100 billion pounds. Clothing items was one of the most popular retail items purchased by the consumers through internet in 2019.

## 1.5The rationale for the research

***What is the issue?***

The poor implementation of technological change is the issue. In the current scenario majority of the high street stores are not being able to survive in the market due to lack of implementation of technological change.

***Why it is an issue?***

The poor implementation of technological change is an issue as in the majority of the customers prefer shopping through online due to its facilities. In the current scenario, it can be seen that majority of the organisations have implemented technological changes within their business which helps in facilitating them competitive advantages in the market.

***How issue is shedding light on research paper?***

The issue is shedding light on the research and a detail comprehension would be gained through this research paper on the issues that has been identified.

***What the research wants to do?***

The research paper has been conducted so that comprehension can be made about the importance of online shopping and adaptation of online shopping by the high street stores. The research paper has the opportunity to be developed in the future also. Various adaptations, experiments, and tests can be carried out about the topic of the research paper in the future. In the future, the discussion could have been made on various evaluations, approaches that can be used to extend the scope of the research work in the future (Akter, 2018). The research paper has focused on online shopping and its aspects. In the research paper, a discussion can be made on the impact of Covid 19 on the buying habits of customers that influence increased online shopping. Besides, more models can be used to understand the buying habits and influencing factors of online shopping. In this research paper, the dependent variable is defined as the success of high street stores. Whereas the independent variable would be the online shopping upon which the success of high street stores is dependent.

## 1.6Significance of the research

The research is significant as it would depict the paradigm shift in shopping behaviours with the growing popularity of online channels. It would also indicate the steady decline in sales in high street stores with reducing footfalls over time. The challenge further intensified with digitisation impacting the retail landscape. The research would provide recommendations to the high street shops in order to prevent them from becoming obsolete and adapt to specific consumer requirements.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The literature review can be defined as a piece of written overview, which would involve some of the significant ideas associated with the topic in the context (Greenberg and Lewis, 2017). The purpose of the literature review is to provide a detailed insight into the fundamental objectives that are involved with the study. In addition, a brief evaluation of each point is done so that the idea of each is imparted clearly. Generally, a summary, a standard description, and an assessment are given about each concerned topic associated with the study in the context through the course of the entire literature review.

## 2.2 Needs of customers while engaged in shopping

### 2.2.1 Product attributes that influence customer needs

As stated by Chen *et al*., (2020), it is difficult to assess the needs and wants of the customers as well as the factors motivating them towards a purchase. The most common reason for consumers to make a purchase decision is their need to buy products that would add to the convenience in daily life. On the other hand, it has also been pointed out that a certain section of customers engages in shopping due to the concerns associated with the fear of missing out. Such purchases are indicative of remaining a part of the group or trend and showing off their purchases. The companies, therefore, look at the industry trends or popular products in order to remain innovative and relevant amidst the changing demands and buying patterns of the customers.

According to Grosso and Forza (2019), customer needs are the motives that prompt customers to buy a definite product or service. The need is the most important factor that determines the purchase decision of the customers. The organisations look at the needs of the customers as an opportunity to contribute or resolve a surplus value to the motive of the customers. Customer-centric companies are focused on solving customer needs and exceeding expectations to foster good relationships and drive healthy business growth. There are various needs of customers that work in tandem leading to the making of a purchase decision. Ceccacci *et al*., (2018), indicate that the product needs of the customers are associated with functionality. Customers need the products or services to function in a way that solves their problems or fulfils their desires. In addition, customers also have unique budgets that influence their purchase decision as well. The product and service also need to provide convenience and a positive experience for the customers. The customers while engaging in shopping also look at the attribute of reliability of the use of the products or services. Furthermore, performance or efficiency are also important factors that help customers fulfill their goals and prevent them from engaging in time-consuming processes. The compatibility of the new products and services with already existing products and services used also form the need of the customers while engaging in the purchase process.

### 2.2.2 Service attributes that influence customer needs

Badar and Irfan (2018), indicate the service needs that are taken into consideration in the purchase process. The primary aspect of service is empathy that helps the customers with adequate assistance in case of need. On the other hand, the customers while purchasing also look at the fairness in pricing, servicing terms, and contract length provided by the company. Kumar *et al*., (2018) also imply that transparency is another factor that creates a positive impact on the minds of the customers while making a purchase. It entails pricing changes, service outages, and various other factors that require clarity while conducting sales. Control is another need of the customers that direct them during the purchase process and makes them feel empowered regarding the decision-making. Additionally, the purchase process is further accentuated with the convenience in returning products, adjusting terms of changing subscriptions that provide greater control to the customers.

Al-Jahwari*et al*., (2018), point out that customers are largely influenced by the availability of options before making the purchase process. The customers are likely to make purchases from a brand when it can offer a variety of products, payment options, and subscriptions thereby providing freedom of making choices. Furthermore, information is a decisive factor in conducting brand interaction even after several months post-purchase. The customers are further facilitated by blog content and instructional posts that improve their shopping process and successful use of products or services. Accessibility is another need of customers that drives purchase intentions. It means having access to customer services and support teams in an effective way. The understanding of customer needs is, therefore, pivotal in fulfilling them and improving the overall experience.

## 2.3 Factors influencing customer satisfaction

### 2.3.1 Prices and goods deals

As asserted by Radojevic *et al*., (2017), online shopping has been one of the most popular and vital trends in the current context of the digital era. The majority of the people currently make sure that they buy products and services through various online platforms making use of various digital platforms. On the other hand, as propounded by Ramanathan *et al*., (2017), the majority of the organisations in the current context make sure that they are getting associated with some kind of digital platform or e-commerce platform so that they can reach a large number of people all over the world. However, certain factors ensure customer satisfaction which is also largely associated with online shopping for the consumers. The major factors other than price, quality, and services are known to be the understanding and comprehension towards customer satisfaction and adaptation of new technology.

As opined by Al-Jahwari*et al*., (2018), price plays an important role in the achievement of customer satisfaction in a large manner. Some customers are involved in the buying of online products as they get to find appropriate deals and offers according to their needs and the requirements through the filter option. This is the factor which on tapping would be able to facilitate positive as well as consistent experiences for the customers in the market. This helps in creating real customer loyalty for the customers present in the market. Online websites make sure they come up with various types of deals and offers so that they can attract a larger number of people present in the market. Online shopping platforms or digital platforms are famous for facilitating products that are of minimum prices. Hence it can be stated that prices are one of the prime factors that help in achieving customer satisfaction. As asserted by Neupane (2015), customer services also play an important role in achieving customer satisfaction.

### 2.3.2 Implementation of technology

In the current context, the online shopping platforms have implemented Artificial intelligence chatbots so that they can facilitate customised customer satisfaction. Through customised customer services make sure that they are being able to determine and measure the satisfaction of the customers with the help of the services provided by any organisation. Customised or personalisation customer services significantly means that the organisation is making sure that the services that they are providing to the customer have been designed in accordance with the needs and the requirement of customers. In today’s digital era personalised customer services crucially refer to the delivery of the customised services that help in mating the customer services of the customers which in turn helps in achieving customer satisfaction for the particular product. Customised and personalised customer services help the customers in growing the sense of more connected with the organisation.

As a customer receives a tailor-made solution of their issues that is associated with their product, leaves them with the sense of satisfaction which helps them in turning into a loyal customer. As advocated by Ramanathan *et al*., (2017), technology has been a major part that helps in achieving satisfaction for the customers. With the help of technology, the online platforms make sure that they track as well as to measure the satisfaction of the customers present in the market. This helps the organisation in growing the insight about the needs and the requirements of the customers present in the market. On the other hand, as asserted by Marinkovic and Kalinic (2017), the organisation assesses the factors that motivate customers to buy a product and what are the factors that the customer uses in order to be interested in a particular product and the service. The technology ensures that the organisation is able to track customers online so that they can build a better picture of their buying products and services. Quality is also one of the important factors that determine customer satisfaction.

### 2.3.3 High quality of the product is cost-effective prices

The majority of the customers ensure that they buy products that are of high quality that can be availed at a cost-effective price. Online shopping is one of the mediums which helps the customer in attaining quality products at cost-effective prices and hence the online platforms are eligible in achieving customer satisfaction for the products. The most important factor is that an organisation is providing efforts in order to understand the needs and the requirements of the customer and identifying the appropriate and exact factors that can be used actively for achieving customer satisfaction. For different customers, the factors for achieving satisfaction can be different, and hence the customers must be identifying appropriate factors while focusing on the target market demographics and more.

## 2.4 Advantages and Limitations of online shopping

### 2.4.1 Advantages of online shopping

***The convenience of the Digital Era***

In the digital era, online marketing and shopping have been some of the most important trends that the majority of customers make use of. As asserted by Pham and Ahammad (2017), one of the most important conveniences that a customer enjoys with online shopping is the convenience of purchasing while at home. Online shopping facilitates the convenience of buying products while avoiding long queues. The customers consider online shopping in order to avoid long queues at the time of payment. It helps the customers save their time, money, and effort for purchasing products.

***Access to a wide range of products and services online***

On the other hand, as asserted by Baubonienė and Gulevičiūtė (2015), another factor that influences customers in buying products online is the availability of a wide range of products and services. The customers while surfing online can conveniently access the wide range of products which is next to impossible for offline stores to facilitate. At the same time, it can be observed that customers with the help of the wide range of the products get the facilities to choose the product in accordance with their required size and colour. While shopping offline a customer can face issues and challenges to access products of appropriate size and colour. The appropriate combination of size and colour is difficult to find in offline shopping while it is quite convenient to find and place orders through online shopping platforms. So, it can be stated that it is one of the most important factors that customers consider for buying products through online shopping.

***Easy access to customer reviews and feedback for the buyers of a product***

One of the other factors that motivate the customers to buy online products is to have easy access to customer reviews and feedback. The customers have the opportunity to access and gain in-depth knowledge about the longevity of a particular product through various reviews and feedback provided by other customers. This helps the customers in availing more informed products and service purchases. In the current context, almost all renowned organisations have associated their business with online selling platforms for selling their product online. On the other hand, as argued by Jozanovic (2016), some organisations have opened their own online websites platforms so that they can facilitate customers with online shopping and which in turn would increase their customer base and review earning. At the same time, it can be observed that awkward prepositions by eager salespeople can also be avoided by the costumes through online shopping.

***Availability of cost-effective prices of a product***

Availability of cost-effective prices of the products is also one of the biggest reasons for the customer to buy online products. To buy products that are cost-effective and which have cheap deal options and better prices, the customer has the opportunity to go for a comparison of the various models and brands through comparison options. As opined by González-Benito *et al*., (2015), online platforms or e-commerce platforms come up with various discounts and lowered prices so that they can attract a large number of customers present in the market. Cheap prices and various discounts can be availed by the customers through online buying as the product that they buy through online platforms can be directly bought by the seller or the manufacturer without any kind of middlemen involved.

***Access to detailed information and various facilities***

Rohit (2018), avers that a customer can get facilitated with detailed information about the products and services about their characteristics, longevity, features, and more. It is one of the major factors that influence people to buy products and services online. They have the facility to know the details of the products, details of the manufacturing, materials used in the products, and more. Customers also have the facility to cancel, exchange products, or return products if the customers do not find the product appropriate and up to the mark.

***2.4.2 Disadvantages of online shopping***

As asserted by Angelopoulos *et al*., (2016), online shopping is also associated with some of the limitations which negatively impact the buying experience of some of the customers present in the market. One of the biggest limitations that the customer faces while buying online products through e-commerce platforms is known to be the lack of physical contact with the product. Lacks of unavailability of shop assistants also at times create issues for some of the customers while buying a new product. Increased shipping costs and delayed delivery time sometimes can be a deterrent for the customer while buying online products. Lack of confidence, while buying expensive products online is also one of the major challenges for the customers while online buying of products and services.

## 2.5 Different ways in understanding the requirements of the consumers

There is a plethora of ways in which the needs of the customers can be assessed, some of which can be stated as under.

### 2.5.1 Ways to gain an understanding of consumer demands

***Gathering feedback from clients can be considered as the primary measure***.

Extracting some form of feedback from the customers can be regarded as one of the most convenient ways in which their requirements can be understood and analysed. Gathering feedback can be done through the most common term process of giving them feedback forms from the end of an organisation after they move out of the shop post-shopping. According to Nash (2019), customers can be asked to fill up the forms and put them into the organisational drop boxes that would be present somewhere outside the entry or exit doors of the organisational premises. Some of the most famous retailers of the UK, namely ASDA, Ann Summers, ALDI, and Austin Reed, utilise the method of taking customer feedback so that they can improve their future services in case they find any unsatisfactory information entered by a customer in the feedback form. This procedure helps the organisation to appropriately understand what the customer needs or what their desirable requirements are from the end of the company. For instance, with regard to another organisation into consideration, namely Apple had taken customer feedback and understood that they would be required to fulfil the psychological demand or need of the client through the production of some products of premium range. As stated by HR and Aithal (2020), taking the same into consideration, the organisation has involved itself in producing Apple Watches, iPad as well as MacBook, which were integrated with superior designs, rich functionality coupled with consistent backend support in cases of problems.

Keeping an eye on the number of competitors can help the organisation to understand what the competitors are doing in order to please the customers. It would help the high street shops in this case to understand the range of products that their competitors are providing in order to stand out in the market and what they must do to bring back some of the customers that might have left purchasing from the organisation as a consequence of receiving high-quality products from its competitors.

An analysis of the customer-specific requirements can be done through the process of building a profile specific to each one of them. This can be done by gathering the following data about them and are stated as under. The identity of the consumers required to be assessed, taking their age, gender, location as well as their marital statuses into consideration. Their motivational thoughts behind purchasing a product must also be known so that their provided benefits and the consumer requirements can be balanced. It is required to understand the way in which they buy, which would include information about whether they prefer online or offline mode of shopping. The amount of money that each customer has the capability of spending is also required to be known. Most importantly, their expectations from the end of a high street shop must be known, which stands as the most crucial element in retaining the position of the high street shops and keeping them from turning totally obsolete. Lastly, the factor that makes the customers feel good or relaxed about purchasing the product of the organisation must also be known.

## 2.6 Methods that can be implemented by high street shops to sustain themselves in the market

Some of the ways that the high street shops can seek to implement so that the customer footfalls in their stores increase, eliminating the fear of them going completely obsolete, can be asserted as below.

### 2.6.1 Implementations to improve high street shops exposure

***Tidying up the shop front is a fundamental way.***It is a known fact that the prevailing competition faced by the high street shops is severe and requires immediate solution measures to eliminate competitive forces and retain their position in the market. Therefore, the premises of the high street shops can be made as attractive as possible to lure maximum customers. As professed by Hospers (2017), such measures might include keeping the entry doors of the high street shops open so that some of the inside parts are visible from the outside that appears to be enticing in the eyes of the customers and they are automatically driven towards the paraphernalia displayed inside the shop. Incorporating this strategy would make the shopfront look more approachable and enticing, thereby retaining customer engagement and eliminating the fear of them turning obsolete.

***Building loyalty towards clients can be another method.***Customer loyalty can be maintained by the process of giving them additional discounts and giveaways. According to Finlay and Kobayashi (2018), this can be done by the high street shops by first making a list of the customers that offer frequent visits to the shops. Remaining loyal to a set of customers will help spread the word through customers, thus helping the consumers so that a broader customer base can be gained.

***Boosting up of marketing procedures is also a potential procedure in consideration of the same.***It is required to keep in mind that the marketing techniques implemented are appropriate and comprehensive in nature so as to achieve maximum customer exposure. It also needs to be assured that the targeted set of customers are reached.

As asserted by Hubbard (2017), it is a fundamental need for the high street shops to take many instances, good and evil, into consideration in order to keep their existence in the market and adapt to the altering preferences of the customers. Therefore, the factors that seek to influence the satisfaction of the consumers require to be taken into consideration. Secondly, the way to understand what the customers exactly need is a way in which the high street shops can seek to maintain a place of profitability in the market and ensure that footfalls increase. This can be done by the above-mentioned methods of creating an understanding of their demands through regulating frequent surveys so that what the customers enter into the feedback or survey forms can be extracted to produce the best demands of the customers.

***Advantages and scopes***

In the same way, some of the procedures need to be implemented from the end of the high street shops to increase their exposure in the market in some other ways to keep them from becoming obsolete. As propagated by Hubbard (2019), such methods, as stated, would involve one of the most positive ways of creating an attractive surrounding in the premises of the shop. It is often noticed that customers seem to get attracted to shops that appear to be flashy and enticing to the eye. This process can also involve displaying attractive banners and hoardings that would contain content stating that prices have been slashed down or new arrivals have entered the shop or mentioning of special discounted prices on the shop fronts.

***Other strategies***

Some other innovative ways in which the high street shops can thrive to survive in the highly competitive market can be adjusting as well as extending their opening and closing hours. Besides, the range of products that the new number of high street shops are offering today can also be increased. Adjusting the closing along with the opening hours by taking a close look into the consumer behaviour can serve to increase their exposure. Besides, a service that would involve click and collect benefits can also perform to meet the customer demands by addressing to the fact of them not becoming totally obsolete.

Another effective strategy implementation might include improving the experiences inside their stores. This might involve the integration of practices such as greeting the customer in a way in which the individual gets pleased. A rapid check-out experience would remove the feeling of disgust in the customers and assure the fact that they visit the physical stores more often. Online payments can be incorporated through the scanning of barcodes in order to eliminate feelings of disgust in the organisational customers. In order to avoid long queues in waiting for clearing their bills, counters can be increased in numbers so that about four to five customers have to stand at each counter in one single line.

Well-trained employees who would demonstrate to the customers about the use of the product would also serve to explain the benefits of the product by physically being present at the location would also help to improve the number of customers visiting high street stores.

## 2.7 Customer satisfaction theories

### 2.7.1 SERVQUAL Model

SERVQUAL Model is devised to assess the gap between the belief of an organisation and its delivery to customers. There are five dimensions in the SERVQUAL model and the understanding of each dimension helps an organisation in meeting customer needs. According to this model, the five dimensions based on which customers evaluate the quality of services include reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Prentkovskis*et al*., 2018). The first dimension is reliability which is indicative of the organisations’ ability to provide accurate services. Its application in the context of high street stores and their shift to online services would indicate error-free, consistent, and timely services to each customer.

The second dimension is responsiveness which implies the ability of the organisations to meet the needs of the customers promptly. The high street retailers following the shift to online platforms must take into consideration the aspect of promptness. If the organisations fail to respond to customers' needs and are unable to provide logical explanations it may result in creating a negative perception in customers' minds. The third dimension is the assurance which depends on the ability of the employees to establish confidence and trust with the customers (de Arruda Falcão *et al*., 2017). The retailers in order to cater to the needs of the customers effectively must have efficient staff with in-depth knowledge of the services and the ability to develop polite and friendly communications.

The fourth dimension is empathy which is established by the employees' ability to express concerns and care for the customers. The high street retailers need to emphasise the employees' ability to show empathy and help the customers adapt to the changes in shopping patterns. The last dimension is tangibles which are pertinent to the aesthetics of the company. The online space is largely impacted by the visual appeal that attracts customers to a particular website. The high street retailers need to develop their websites in a way that is appealing as well as convenient to use.

### 2.7.2 The Dissonance Theory

According to Lazim *et al*., (2020), the dissonance theory suggests that a consumer expecting a high-value product and receiving a low-value product would realise the disparity and experience cognitive dissonance. The disconfirmed expectations lead to creating psychological discomfort or dissonance. The theory further indicates that when consumers would find deviation in product performances in respect to expectations cognitive repositioning is required. It has also been argued that satisfaction results from previous product performances, hence, it is the magnitude of difference that affects the satisfaction level of customers post decision-making. The previous product experience provides a comparative baseline resulting in the difference.

The high street retailers with the shift in services to online platforms may create cognitive dissonance for a section of customers. The customers could feel that there is a disparity between the services provided in physical stores and e-commerce platforms. Such a situation may cause customers to refrain from making product purchases. The organisations, therefore, need to take steps to resolve cognitive dissonance and change perceptions of customers regarding online purchases and sales services. The high street retailers could use the social media platforms to update blog posts or video content stating the services that could be availed by the customers making the purchase process and post-purchase services convenient for the customers.

### 2.7.3 The Contrast Theory

Lin *et al*., (2017), state that the contrast theory explains the exaggeration of disparity caused by the customers when the product performances do not match expectations. It explains that the customers tend to magnify the differences between the expected and received product. It predicts that the product performance below expectation tends to receive poor ratings that it is in reality. The theory assumes that outcomes resulting from expectations may cause the customers to react either favourably or non-favourably to disconfirmation experience. Hence, a positive disconfirmation is associated with product appraisal while negative disconfirmation results in poor product evaluation (Zhang *et al*., 2017).

The changes in the consumption pattern of the customers from physical stores to digital platforms could severely impact the levels of expectations of the customers. It is, therefore, important for the high street retailers to develop a thorough understanding of the expectations of the customers to generate favourable reactions. The retailers if failing in their attempt to meet the expectations may adversely affect the reputation of the organisation as well. Hence, the attempt of the organisations to make a shift into a digital platform should be well formulated so that the customers do not reject the experience as unsatisfactory. However, under-promising and exceeding expectations may also lead to positive disconfirmation and better results for the company.

## 2.8 Summary

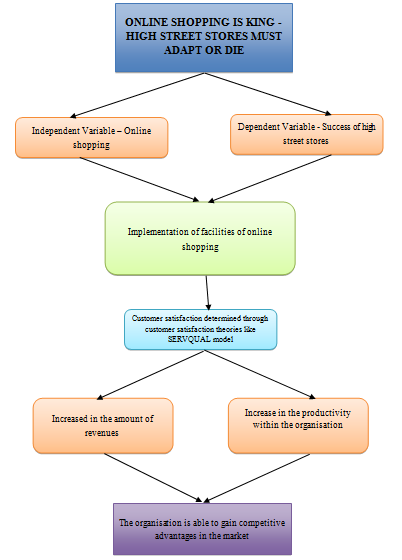
Based on the above analysis it can be stated that there are several needs pertinent to the product and service attributes of a customer that influence the shopping process. Some of the factors include convenience, reliability, functionality, empathy, availability of options among others. There are also various factors that influence customer satisfaction like price, quality, customer satisfaction, adoption of new technology among others. Additionally, online shopping in the digital era has various advantages as well as disadvantages. The advantages are associated with convenience, availability of a wide range of products, access to reviews and feedback while there exists a degree of imitation, unavailability of products, lack of consumer confidence while buying expensive products. The way that has been mentioned to understand the requirements of the consumers is gathering feedback while the methods that could be implemented by high street shops to sustain themselves in the market include tidying up the shop front, building customer loyalty, boosting marketing, and training employees. Lastly, Customer satisfaction theories like the SERVQUAL model, the dissonance theory, and the contrast theory have been discussed in the context of the shift of high street stores to online platforms.

## 2.9 Literature Gap

The study provided an elaborate analysis of both the independent and dependent variables while discussing the topic. While various factors have been suggested that could determine the success of high street stores, there has been significantly less use of literature suggesting and proving the same. It would have contributed positively to the study if relevant information regarding the same had been incorporated.

## 2.10 Conceptual Map

The conceptual map is indicative of the various elements that were included in the study. The independent variable as identified in the study is online shopping while the dependent variable is the success of high street stores. The combination of these two factors led to the implementation of online shopping. Furthermore, the customer satisfaction model denoted increased revenues and organisational productivity.

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**Figure 2: Conceptual framework**

(Source: Created by author)

# Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

## 3.1 Introduction

The section has provided a detailed analysis of the techniques and methods applied to conduct a study on the research topic in an effective manner. Research methodology facilitates in clarifying research inquiry and the imperativeness of the same. The methodology section is crucial in providing a thorough explanation of the beginning stage, bearings, and ramifications of the research. In the present study, the methodology has provided guidance in describing and evaluating various aspects pertinent to the research process. In this chapter, step-by-step processes will be revealed and methods to be used will be elaborated to generate results and reach a definite conclusion.

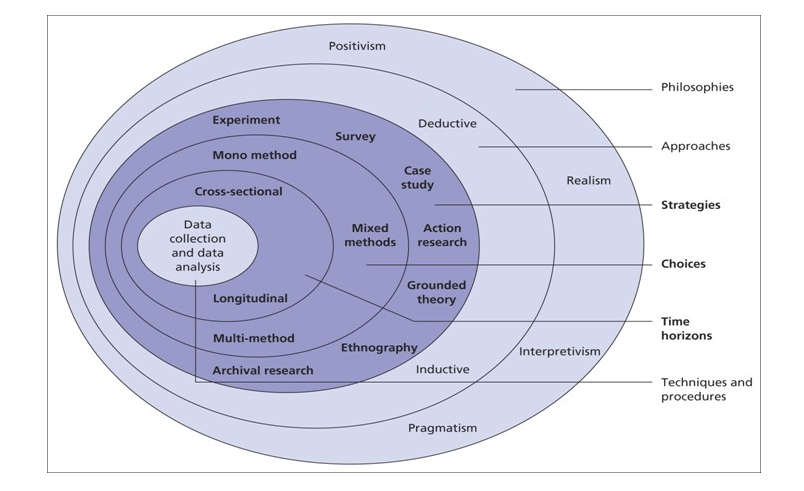
The methodology section commenced with the discussion of the research design and philosophy. It has further provided justification for the selection of the definite research design and its influence on the reliability of attained results. The design has been indicative of the development of an operational plan to undertake important steps while conducting the research. The philosophy, on the other hand, has provided various assumptions as well as determine the strategy and methods of the study. It has further provided a discussion on the approach of the research. The research approach has explained the procedures and plans comprising broad assumptions as well as details of data collection method, data analysis method, and data interpretation process. Lastly, ethical concerns and research limitations has been highlighted.

## 3.2 Research Onion

The research onion aims to describe various decisions taken during the development of a research methodology in an organised manner (Sahay, 2016). The explanation of the research onion will provide details on various elements that are involved in research leading to the development of the research design. It has been elaborated below:

**Research philosophy:**The set of principles that guides the way of research is referred to as research philosophy. Philosophy has formed the basis for the study and contributes to the authenticity and validation of information and the process through which it has been collected. The philosophies primarily used are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. However, in the course of this study interpretivism has been used where individual perception and interpretation of reality are included. Interpretivism philosophy has attributed a high degree of validity of data making the study honest and trustworthy. The use of interpretivism has been preferred over other philosophies as it has allowed qualitative research in great detail. In addition, it has provided diversified views into the adoption of online channels by high street stores. The data collected with the use of this philosophy would provide better insight for future actions.

**Research approach:** The choice of an appropriate philosophy is followed by the selection of the research approach. The research approach is categorised into deductive and inductive (Melnikovas, 2018). The present study being associated with qualitative research would adhere to an inductive approach. The use of an inductive approach has been relevant in understanding the transition of high street stores to e-commerce operations. Additionally, it would also add to the flexibility of the research and provide scope for regularities, resemblances, and patterns to reach conclusions.



**Figure 3: Research Onion**

(Source: Melnikovas, 2018)

**Research strategy:**The selection of a research approach then leads to the selection of a strategy for conducting the research. The choice of strategy has been based on the aims of the research and the type of data required for executing the particular study. The strategy that has been chosen is thematic analysis to derive definite conclusions. It has facilitated sorting the data sets into broader themes and effectively addressing the research questions. The choices of the method are pertinent to the selection of specific data for conducting the research. The choices are categorised into mono, mixed, and multi-method (Sinha *et al*., 2018). In the present study, the mono method has been used. The single type of data that has been selected is qualitative data allowing to address the research questions and understanding the shift of high street stores to online stores effectively. Techniques and procedures lie at the centre of the onion that exhibit practicalities of research to choose specific techniques and procedures. It takes into consideration the type of data required to be collected and the methods to be employed for its analysis. In the present study, the techniques and procedures have been aligned with aims and objectives to reach effective results.

**Time horizon:** Time horizon is indicative of the time required for the completion of a study. The use of cross-sectional data is done when all observations are done at a definite point of time while longitudinal data is indicative of the changes and progressions over a course of time. In the present study, a longitudinal time horizon has been used to detect changes and developments and their consequent integration in the study.

## 3.3 Research design or research strategy

Research strategies, designs, philosophies and methods are some of the most inherent parts that are involved in a research methodology. The research design and philosophy utilised for the purpose of this study is a secondary method and it is descriptive in its design (Tian, 2020). The descriptive research design generally demonstrates a way in which the accurate and systematic elaboration of a situation or a specific phenomenon is done to appropriately represent the causes behind the circumstances and the processes that can be implemented to omit the unnecessary outcomes. The descriptive research design mainly attempts to answer the questions of how, when, what and where. The advantages that would be gained by the high street shops through this process of descriptive research is that it would be extremely helpful in final decision taking processes as the ways in which the high street shops can attempt to survive into the market can be explored through the course of this study (Ma *et al*., 2020). Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn by the help of the same. This would be possible since the data that would be utilised in evaluation would be either found from the previous experiences of other similar organisations or identified from the ways they had implemented in order to come out of some familiar situations. Furthermore, an analysis of the pre-existing data can be made in order to assess the desirable outcomes that would be gained on the part of the high street stores.

**Figure 4: Research strategies**

(Source: As created by the author)

The extensive variety of data that can be found through applying this method are also many, which serves to be another fundamental advantage. Moreover, the descriptive research methodology can be considered as the one that seeks to save a lot of time in the whole implementation of the process and is cheap as compared to other methods of research. This is primarily because of the fact that the already pre-existing data is being studied in this process to evaluate the possible outcomes that might be generated from the end of the organisations. Furthermore, this process can be carried out in ease and quickly and eliminates unnecessary fuss, which is caused by the processes of collecting surveys from a set or a group of participants (Fenton *et al*., 2021). A holistic understanding of the problems of the research is gained through the process of carrying out the research in such a manner as it serves to provide an insight into both qualitative as well as quantitative data. Besides, no specifically defined condition is required for the process of carrying out a descriptive research method and it can be done under any sort of prevailing circumstances.

Descriptive methods can be considered as a very useful method of research, which has been implemented in this case because the secondary resources that would be involved in the same process would also involve some sources of quantitative data present in some of the articles that have been published earlier (Hoekstra *et al*., 2020). The process in which the descriptive research methodology is carried out is through collection of data that seeks to give descriptions of events that have occurred earlier and provides a justification for the same. The core and primary purposes that are involved in carrying out a descriptive research is that it describes, explains as well as seeks to validate certain descriptions. Moreover, it seeks to organise the findings in a specific way that they can be appropriately made to fit with the aforesaid explanations, and the same is done through the course of this study as well.

The descriptive study can be considered as an essential element especially for research studies as they seek to provide a lot of useful information for the purpose of implementation to the asserted problem in the scenario. It seeks to give an insight into the similar situations in other cases through which a justified knowledge of the fact about the way to avoid ruthless situations in future can be attained.

The research strategy that has been implemented in this method is the case study strategy, which seeks to investigate deeply into a natural life phenomenon taking the real-life situations truly into context (Halkias and Neubert, 2020). Besides, this method is totally based on an in-depth study into certain concepts that help to provide a greater understanding of one specific subject matter or area of study. It also attempts to explore the reasons behind the underlying policies or principles.

Determination of the appropriate design of the case study can be taken to be as the most crucial step in conducting a research as the outcomes would be based on the same. The methodology is mainly implemented based on the problem that the study seeks to solve, and the best or the most appropriate way that can serve to fulfil the same is implemented. The research strategy in this tends to give an overall direction to the research, which also contains the process in which the fundamental research is conducted. The case study research strategy is indeed accepted worldwide as an appropriate method in carrying out a descriptive research process.

It is seen that management studies, along with different organisational theory associated studies, seem to firmly rely upon case studies to structure the way in which data can be gathered or collected (Suprapto *et al*., 2020). Viewed from the point of view of research, the case study is differentiated for its exclusiveness in determining answers to questions of a complex nature. There are a number of reasons why the case study research design is taken to be necessary, and the first and the most significant among them can be the fact that case studies have the elements of qualitative along with quantitative in them, which would help the researcher in a detailed analysis of the subject matter. Besides, the researcher would tend to get an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon or, in the case of the event (Xu *et al*., 2020). This detailed information or existing knowledge will further assist in the different associated principles by taking into consideration of a real-life situation or context.

The benefits of a research strategy would lie in the fact that it aids a business towards making its position firm in the market. Moreover, it makes sure of the fact that the client or the customer gets the outcomes as well as the analytical work, which would convert the same to fruitful findings. In addition, if there was no specific research design for the purpose of performing a research, the researchers would end up having a very faint idea of what has to be done in the case. The reason behind the existence of a research design is the significance that it carries as a concept, which would serve the purpose of keeping the mind of the researcher clear and making the individual’s base firm on the area of performance or conduct (Ligouri *et al*., 2020). Studies at times tend to move on to a wrong path if a research design is not integrated into the same. The existing clarified concept of the same existing in the mind of the researcher would definitely help in the smoothening of the process of the fundamental research in an effective manner.

The significance of the research design is brought out more when the data or information associated with the research are searched for (Gu *et al*., 2020). The researcher, without the knowledge of the design of the research, would not know the nature of the data that is required to be collected or gathered. Moreover, research design helps to come to a more structured conclusion to the research and in the providence of solutions and recommendations in the end. Furthermore, the research design appears like a road map that seeks to take the research through a well-planned path so that no faults or disadvantages can be chalked out of the process in which the research would be done. Hence, the success of the study would definitely depend majorly on the design in which the investigation would be strategised.

## 3.4 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined to be the belief about the way that can be used to develop data about the phenomenon about which data can be gathered, used, and can be analysed. The research philosophy of the product significantly deals with various sources, nature, development of the knowledge about the research paper. In simple terms it can be defined to be the collection of data about a fact, using the data to develop the research and making analysis of the data so that an understanding can be developed regarding the data whether can be used or not (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). Various types of research philosophies can be used to develop the research paper. The various types of research philosophy that can be used by the researchers are ontology, epistemology, positivism, Realism, interpretivism, and anxiology.

The research philosophy, philosophy used is known to be interpretivism philosophy. The philosophy of interpretivism which is also coined as interpretivism makes sure that it involves the researcher to interpret the element of the study. It can be observed that the philosophy of interpretivism helps in integrating and developing the interest of humans in the particular study (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). In accordance with the philosophy, the study would focus more on qualitative analysis rather than quantitative analysis. Interpretivism philosophy includes social perspective and theories that embrace a view of reality as socially made and constructed meaningful through the understanding and comprehension of various events that come under it.

## 3.5 Data Collection Method

The data collection method is defined to be the procedure of gathering the information of various types and measuring the information that has been collected on the variables of interest in an established fashion of a systematic approach. The systematic approach would be helpful to facilitate the answer of the stated research questions, test hypothesis, and evaluation of the outcomes of the research paper (Nagel *et al*., 2015). Data collection is defined to be the procedure of collection of the method from all the possible relevant sources such as journals, websites, books, and more so that hypotheses can be tested, research problems can be significantly answered and the possible outcome can be evaluated. The data collection method of a research paper can be divided into two categories which are known to be the use of primary methods to collect data and the other is known to be the use of secondary methods to collect data.

Primary data is defined to be the data that is being collected by the researchers directly from the direct sources which include face-to-face or telephonic interviews, experiments, target groups, surveys, and more. With the help of the primary data research method collection, the needs and the requirement of the research can be easily met while establishing relationships with various sources. The major advantages of the researchers are known to be the direct collection of useful data which can help meet the purpose of providing information of the study significantly.

Secondary data collection, on the other hand, is known to be or refer to the data that is collected through various sources other than the use of the primary user. The most common sources for collecting data are defined to be the information collected by government departments records of organisations, organisational data that is collected from other research papers (Disman *et al*., 2017). Using secondary data research helps in building the core of any research paper. Secondary data collection procedures and techniques help in building research papers depending on the existing research which would help in resulting in a better outcome and turn same time and money. In this research paper, secondary data analysis would be used for collecting various data and information so that appropriate information can be used for building the research paper significantly.

To collect data for developing the research paper various peer-reviewed journals, authenticated websites and government sites would be used. A secondary data collection method would be used so that a broad description of two types of shopping can be made in this research paper and a comparison between two the performances of the two types of purchasing methods of the customers can be identified as well as can be used.

## 3.6 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is known to be the method of interpreting the data to discover, informing conclusions from the interpretation of the data, and making use of data for developing an analysis of a particular study. Data analysis is known to be the most crucial part of any research paper. Data analysis significantly means that a summarisation would be done on the data that has been collected through a particular research method. It largely involves the interpretation of data that has been gathered through the use of logical reasoning and analysis so that various relationships, trends, and patterns can be determined within the study (Reiter, 2019). Data analysis is known to be the procedure of the systematic application of logical and statistical techniques so that an illustration and description of data would be given so that the data could be condensed and recapped. The essential components of making sure integrity of data are defined to be the appropriate and accurate analysis of any research findings. There are a number of data analysis methods among which qualitative and quantitative are known to be the most important and majorly used data as well as two main methods of data analysis methods.

Qualitative analysis is defined to be the approach that can be used to answer the question which involves why, how, and what. These questions can be answered using qualitative analysis which includes questionnaires, attitude scaling, outcomes of standard types, and more. Such analysis is done usually in the form of narratives or text which might include various types of presentation. On the other hand, the quantitative data analysis method is defined as the technique or the approaches that make use of statistical and mathematical modeling research, a measurement that to understand the behaviour of the study particularly (Singh, 2015). Quantitative analysis is being done for evaluation of the financial instrument as well as predicting real-world events which largely includes changes in various aspects of the related topic and so on. In this research paper, a qualitative data collection method would be used so that in-depth knowledge can be gained about the research paper. Qualitative data analysis is one of the vital data analysis which helps determine the particular frequency of characteristics and traits of any research topic. Qualitative data analysis helps in gaining the observation that can be facilitated through the quantifying various studies present on the topic.

## 3.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is one of the most important aspects while conducting research and it is imperative while developing the formulation plan of research (Noon, 2018). The study has been conducted with thorough consideration of addressing the specific research questions pertinent to the topic. Hence, the conclusions were correlated to the questions and results obtained. It has also been emphasised that the used methods relate to the questions. The study has also sought institutional ethics before the collection of journals required for the purpose of research and ensuring the proceedings in an effective manner. It also ensured that deeply personal and biased reviews are not collected. Additionally, the most updated and recent resources have been considered for the study. The considerations also include the use of research papers where research has been done by ethical means.

Furthermore, considerations have also been made to find appropriate research methods and maintain transparency in data analysis. The research ethics were decisive in finding the methods that were the most appropriate to the aims of the study. It also facilitated pointing the restrictions, strengths, and potential risks pertinent to the method. The ethical aspect also included that the research maintains the integrity and quality of its results with explicit mention of aims and methodology (Reid *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, transparency has also been considered vital for the research, and honesty in approval and the research process has been maintained. The works of other works that have been used in the course of the study have been given proper acknowledgment. Lastly, the study has maintained the highest levels of objectivity in analysis and discussions.

## 3.8 Research Limitation

The limitations of the research can be cited to be the absence of primary research. Primary research would have ensured the inclusion of relevant and updated information adding a greater degree of accuracy to the study. It would have also provided better control on the ownership of data. In addition, the time has also been a major constraint which also prevented a more elaborate study on the topic. In terms of obtaining materials from online resources, restrictions were faced due to limited access which could also be considered as a limitation in the study.

## 3.9 Summary

Based on the above discussions, it can be summarised that the methodology section has been a vital factor in directing the course of the research. The selection of appropriate methodology has been helpful in focussing on the research aims and deriving appropriate conclusions. The selected research philosophy was interpretivism that added to the validity of the results. In addition to this, the choice of research approach was inducted that facilitated in carrying out qualitative research. The research design that has been chosen for the study is descriptive which provides an accurate description of the topic and appropriate outcomes. The descriptive design has been able to validate various descriptions associated with the topic and provide justification regarding the same.

The methodology section also placed significant emphasis on the method of data collection. Since, the research has been based on secondary data, the sources from which resources were gathered include peer-reviewed journals, authentic websites, government sites, and books were used. Furthermore, the qualitative method has been used for analysing the collected data and interpreting relevant information from them. The study has further scope for development through aligning the change in shopping patterns with the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. The ethical considerations have revealed that integrity, transparency, and objectivity have been maintained through the course of the study that has added to its validation. Lastly, the limitations that have been pointed out include the absence of primary resources, time constraints, and restrained access to online resources.

# Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

## 4.1 Customer engagement to meet the needs of the customers

As stated by Haslehurst*et al*., (2017), customer engagement for retail brands is a crucial factor in retaining and engaging with the customers. Customer engagement and retention help the customers in maintaining loyalty and remaining updated with new products, product recommendations, and new arrivals. Retention and engagement with customers help in maintaining their needs, expectations, and demands. The increasing popularity of the online platforms has further facilitated customers to provide feedback on the website which enables the implementation of necessary changes in products or services. Grewal *et al*., (2017), on the other hand, indicate that in-store shoppers are the highly engaged prospects of a brand. It implies that the customers have chosen a definite brand over the others which further increases the importance of brand engagement. The use of online platforms by high store retailers has made it incumbent to leverage the attention of its customers and further enhance customer engagement. Pavlova (2018), asserts that customer engagement is associated with the process of developing a line of communication and connection between a brand and its customers. It has further been mentioned that such bonds could only be developed by catching the attention of the customers. In such a scenario, the brands are required to develop compelling and engaging content.

According to Atherton (2019), in contemporary times social media plays a crucial role in capturing customer attention and promoting products or services. The high street retailers through displaying content and updating them in real-time are able to share social media feeds easily and reach out to their customer base. On the other hand, Hofman-Kohlmeyer (2017), states that while the use of online platforms has facilitated the aspects of promotion and sales, it has also intensified the competition. Hence, the customers have multiple options to choose from during shopping. The high street retailers despite the use of membership plans and loyalty programs may still encounter difficulty in retaining the existing customer base. The most important challenges include long purchase cycles for products, competition from low-priced retailers, and ineffective retargeting that prevent repeat purchases. The presence of fierce competition among the retailers and long purchase cycles may lead to finding alternate ways of retaining existing customers and driving repeat purchases. The primary challenge the high street retailers might face is to find ways to keep the customers excited and have a thorough understanding of the needs of the customers at the right time.

**Figure 5: Customer engagement and its impact**

(Source: As created by author)

## 4.2 Importance of customer focus

The consideration of the needs by the retailers forms the basis for customer loyalty. MONDAL *et al*., (2017), opine that customer focus makes the customers loyal to a particular organisation where their needs are met effectively. The high street stores in order to adapt to an online setting need to place a greater emphasis on customer focus strategy that is based on an operational as well as an emotional level. The high street stores with the use of such a customer focus strategy would be able to develop honest, transparent, and real relationships with the customers. It would further provide guidance in setting the right processes and tools to meet the needs of the customers.

NGUYEN and KHOA (2019), assert that online operations must ensure a greater degree of collaboration within various teams to provide a consistent experience for customers. The collaboration would ensure the generation of more leads, increased sales, and profit generation for the brands. It also needs to be taken into consideration that collaboration does not lead to reduced productivity of the teams which may consequently cause an adverse impact on customer satisfaction. The high street stores, therefore, require integration of customer data across all departments to prevent disruption in the workflow. On the other hand, Busalim*et al*., (2019), state that it is also important that the customers are heard through ensuring effective interaction with the brand. The adaptation in the online space would include the high street stores to equip their teams with conversation history and relevant context to provide a personalised experience to customers.

**Figure 6: Importance of Customer focus**

(Source: As created by author)

According to Moravcikova and Kliestikova (2017), an emphasis on a single channel of communication and providing a great customer experience is convenient for brands. However, communicating according to the channels of choice of customers is an important driver of customer loyalty. Genchev and Todorova (2017), reinstates that the objective of putting efforts and easing customer experiences is to contribute to the positive perception of the brands. It would, therefore, require the high street stores to provide personal and fast responses to the customers. Customer focus also entails efficient use of customer feedback to improve its operations. The high street stores, therefore, require to use customer feedback for providing a better experience and amplifying their voices. It may include customer surveys or developing an online community that provides a platform to share experiences regarding products or services or gain insight through votes on product features. The use of online mediums requires the creation of a feedback loop that treats partners as collaborators and helps in developing a customer-focused culture.

Camacho-Otero *et al*., (2019), state that the availability of data has enabled companies to look into trends and cater to customer needs. However, it does not imply simply using the data, rather adding context to it. The high street stores while using the online platform must use data to develop insight on the section of customers using their products and the expectations of the customers in the future. The stores could adjust their content based on the customer journey and develop a segmented content base to effectively interpret and manage customer data. Silva *et al*., (2019), on the other hand, asserted that customer-focused businesses are not only reactive to customer needs but also have the ability to meet their expectations proactively. The online experiences could be further augmented with the use of machine learning to reduce customer complaints and predicting customer satisfaction.

## 4.3Shopping experiences and customer satisfaction

In the current context of the digital era, modern technology has paved various ways for multi-functional devices and social media. Digital shopping platforms and trends have been more powerful than ever before. With the help of technologies and various technological trends, the lives of people have been faster, better, easier, and more (Al-Debei*et al*., 2015). This is the era that has been defined to be the technological revolutions in which one or more technologies are largely replaced by new technologies. In the current context, the trend of shopping experiences has been largely changed and has paved satisfaction for the customers. It can be seen from the traditional time that customer satisfaction is largely associated with the customer experience. Be it offline shopping experience or online shopping experiences the trend of customer satisfaction has been the same and is dependent on the experience that the consumers are enjoying.

Various shopping situations and contexts help in moderating the relationship between the customer's satisfaction and customer experiences along with the environment of the shopping that the consumers are enjoying. In the case of physical store shopping, it can be stated that the experience of the environment has a more effective and positive influence and effects on the satisfaction of the customers (Putro and Haryanto, 2015). On the other hand, it can be observed that the rapid growth of online marketing has given a new aspect and element to the shopping experience for the customers present in the market. Due to the numerous advantages of online shopping, in the current context, people of every age are attracted to online shopping methods. The consumers find the mode of online shopping beneficial due to the ease of convenience, ease to use, access of 24-hour day and 7-day week availability, effectiveness, and more. In the wake of Covid 19 and the imposition of lockdown, people are now more inclined towards online shopping.

People in the current context, want to stay safe and in the comfort of their home for placing orders for services and products so that they can avoid long queues as well as save time. In the current context, online shopping has been one of the frequent and widely used channels for shopping in a stress-free manner. On the other hand, it can be observed that it has been defined to be the renowned channel of shopping within the community of the web. Online shopping has been able to receive a wide range of acceptance in recent times for purchasing, office requirements, household products as well as various services (Naseri, 2021). The trend of online shopping has been increasing due to the benefits of purchasing products from any nation or place and this has been one of the major factors for bridging customer satisfaction. It can be seen that the operationalisation of customer satisfaction is largely dependent on information satisfaction, system satisfaction, satisfaction with the site, and e-satisfaction. Customer satisfaction has been one of the major terms in the marketing sector.

On the other hand, it can be observed that customer satisfaction is also associated with the development of sentiments of customers with the buying experience as well as the products. It can also be stated that the impact of customer experience on the satisfaction of customers helps in creating sustainable competitive advantages for the online platforms (Huseynov and Yıldırım, 2016). Taking into consideration the various situations of shopping, customer experiences has been one of the main sources for online retailers to gain a competitive edge in the market. Currently, some organisations have taken the initiative to open their website and online shopping platform for their customers so that they can facilitate the ease of shopping without any hassle. On the other hand, some organisations have linked their product with various e-commerce websites where they get the facility to sell their products effectively. Online shopping is in trend also due to the ease of returning products if the customers are not happy with the products.

Various factors can be taken into consideration that help in facilitating a positive customer experience for the customers (Warayuanti and Suyanto, 2015). These factors can be the quality of the products, good deals for the customers, cost-effective prices, availability of a product, and more. The success of any e-commerce organisation is largely contingent upon its popularity and its positive brand name. It can be seen that online shopping has gained a lot of popularity in the modern age and a large customer base in the current context are significantly dependent on online shopping. It can be observed that consumers in the current context, all over the world are getting shifted significantly to one-click online shopping from crowd stores. Customer satisfaction for online retailers is defined to be the degree of teaming up as well as transporting the needs and the responses of customers to excel the anticipation of the customers.

The satisfaction level of a customer is defined to be the important part of the customer knowledge for retailers which discloses the performances of the online retailer towards the anticipation of the customers (Ahmeda*et al*., 2015). The impression a customer gained concerning online retail is the total of the procedure the customer goes through while buying products online from booking of the product and the goods to the delivery to the customer. Hence it can be stated that the positive experience gained by the customer is beneficial for both customers as well as retailers.

## 4.4Benefits experienced and enjoyed by customers through online shopping

Due to the rapid growth and development of technology, retail business firms have now switched over from the method of traditional selling of products and goods to the electronic methods of selling their products. On the other hand, it can be observed that the internet has been the key vehicle for these retail organisations for conducting commercial transactions (Safa and Von Solms, 2016). One of the greatest facilities that the customer enjoys is that the online stores do not create barriers or constraints for space and facilitates a range of products through the display of websites or e-commerce sites. This helps the analytical buyers to purchase a product after giving a good amount of time for searching for a product. Besides, consumers get facilitated with the numerous conveniences of online shopping. With online shopping, the customers have the opportunity to buy and return products at any point in time and from any place.

As it is easy to cancel the transaction that people have made through online shopping at any time in accordance with their convenience, people are more inclined towards online shopping. The Internet and online shopping platforms or e-commerce have shaped the trends of shopping along with the nature of buying of the customers. There are ample reasons that one can consider to make shopping online (Martin *et al*., 2015). One of the most significant reasons is known to be saving time as well as effort while shopping online. Shopping while avoiding long queues is a dream come true for every customer. Online shopping facilitates customers in facilitating shopping without standing in queues for a longer time period. It helps in saving time for them as well as the effort of going to a particular place for shopping for various stuff. Hence, customers prefer buying products online while sitting at home.

On the other hand, it can be observed that in physical stores, the sales representative tries to influence buyers to purchase products following them. However, consumers are not pressurised while buying any products through online shopping (Tanadi*et al*., 2015). At the same time, it can be observed that online shopping facilitates consumers with the opportunities to go for comparisons. Customers have the opportunity to avail several discounts and concessions which helps them in saving their money while shopping online. To attract a large customer base, e-retailers, as well as marketers, offer various discounts to the consumers. Various discounts can be offered by the retailers to their customers as through online shopping the retailer has the facility to eliminate real estate cost, maintenance, and so on.

***Analysis of client needs during the act of physical shopping***

The client always expects the person serving in the physical outlet to greet them properly and address every need that the consumer seeks while being present during the activity of physical shopping. Businesses always try to give a particular level of attention to the clients or customers so that they can grab the attention of the customers towards the offerings of their shops. According to Nurhadi and Ilfitriah, (2020), their own ideas and methods can be designed by businesses in the way in which they would be able to attract the attention of the customer and perform an effective analysis through the utilisation of the same. Customer needs are essentially simple and they are always triggered by physical as well as psychological forms of motivators.

Understanding the requirements of the consumers makes the customers undergo a more practical experience in shopping, which in turn contributes to the loyalty of the brand that does the same. Moreover, this would help the high street shops to build a commitment from the end of the brand as a result of which the customers of the organisation or the high street shops would be able to rely on the brand for further purchases. As professed by Zhou et al. (2020), it is a known fact that the psychology of most people reveals the truth that the value of the product must be placed in a compatible manner so that the customers understand the importance delivered by the offering and at the same time it proves to be fruitful for the sellers, and they can gain a significant amount of profit behind the same. Moreover, if customers do not seem to like an experience during their shopping, they do not seem to revisit the shop again, and they ignore or avoid that shop again. However, if the sellers of the high street shops yield the customers a helpful attitude, then the consumers tend to visit the shops over and over again. Good transactions can help the customers to stick to a high street shop. As propagated by Barnes et al. (2020), assisting the customers to maintain small lines in the queues during the payment of bills of the materials they buy from the shops would help the consumers of the shops to flock to the shop more because a good transaction of money draws more customers towards the organisation.

As stated by Vanebo et al. (2020), the providence of good customer service is also an essential factor in understanding the needs and requirements of the customers while they shop. A customer who gets enhanced customer service after they have purchased a product plays a crucial role in grasping the needs of the customers while they shop. A good after purchase service in the dedication of the customers are always considered to be fruitful in an analysis of the customer needs. In addition, customers only seek services and products that would play a significant role in the improvement of their lifestyle and overall conduct. Therefore, a psychology of a customer requires to be studied closely by the seller or the marketer in order to understand the possible needs of the customer while the individual is present shopping at the high street shop. The customer will also want to save as much money as possible, and through the same, the client would also like to extract maximum utility from the end of the product. Therefore, the nature of the consumer need is also central to the analysis of the consumer needs for the high street shops.

The shopkeeper must also take the following point into consideration that they are contributing effectively to the customer requirements through an analysis of identifying the level of utility the customer derived through the usage of the product that had been sold. Customers seem to display a relentless dedication when it comes to finding the best deal that is present that day. Therefore, analysis of customer needs or requirements would also involve the salesperson to help the customers of the organisation in finding the product that would be sold at the deal of the day and that the customer can buy the product at the best price. Moreover, the high street shops can serve to free the customers of their existing stress by the means of helping them out to choose products. Some customers, on the other hand, are ready to pay any amount of money for a product that helps them to lead a quality or normal lifestyle, and they seek the help of the salespersons to find out such fruitful products. The high street shops require an understanding of the same and lend a helping hand towards the same purpose.

***Strategy utilisation in maintaining the exposure of the high street shops and their advantages***

According to Packard and Berger (2021), paying attention to the health of the customers is increasingly important from the end of the high street shops, which appears to be one of the foremost essential strategies in taking care of the fact that the exposure of the shops is still evident in the marketplace. As opined by Lindemann *et al*., (2020), in order to implement the same, the high street shops require to grasp the methods of providing them aid in the selection of the best suited products to them so that they are benefitted on the basis of their health as well as mental well-being. Creation of payment systems that would be totally contactless; for instance, the techniques of QR code scanning can be introduced by the high street shops so that the consumers can pay in a faster and swift manner without much fuss. At times, while making payment through credit and debit cards, the payments are withheld, which creates a state of anarchy and confusion among the sellers and the buyers and in turn makes the customers avoid the shop due to the inconvenience caused to them. Therefore, in that case, contactless payments can be considered as a practical strategy implementation behind the same, especially during the time when a deadly pandemic like Covide-19 had already hit the economy of various countries, increasing the death and affected rates on an overall basis.

According to Kampani and Jhamb (2020), the fact that maximum people are aware of the high street shop must be made more evident through the utilisation of online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube videos. Videos mainly would serve the purpose in an increasingly enhanced manner because informative videos seem to have a lot more views than that of just pictures of the high street shops. This can be an effective strategy behind the same. The advantage of execution of this strategy would be that the customers to the high street shops will increase automatically, leading to their increase in exposure and thereby leading to huge profits incurred by the same.

In order to bring an improvement in the exposure of the shops, it is also crucial that the quality of the products that would be offered by the shops are not compromised. Maximum customers tend to seek good quality products hence making this a significant strategic movement towards assuring that the exposure of the shops is maintained.

***Advantages and pitfalls of the providence of online shopping facility to consumers***

Some of the most prominent advantages of giving the customers the choice of online portals for shopping is that the process of their sales becomes faster and grows at a galloping pace. Much cost is reduced behind the implementation of online shopping. Moreover, customers enjoy the flexibility of viewing the products of the high street shops at any time of the day that they want to and place orders every time. According to Banerji (2020), there are no restricted hours during which they are required to shop. Lately, customers finally get a platform where they can compare and contrast the prices of the products of different high street shops through their online portals.

Nevertheless, the pitfalls are also significant in that opening an online portal for the purpose of product sales includes incurring large-scale expenses, which at times can become too much for the organisations, making the procedure expensive for them. Another notable disadvantage is that the process of shopping online does not initiate any sort of interaction with the customers, through which a lack of understanding of their exact needs might come to the forefront. As identified by Chiang et al. (2020), at times, the customers become too much aware of frauds happening with them online and they might not choose to buy online in that case.

# Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

## 5.1 Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be stated that online shopping in the current context has been one of the most important factors which help in earning customer satisfaction. On the other hand, it can be observed from the above discussion that the majority of the people in the current context make sure that they are choosing online shopping instead of offline shopping. Technology in the current context of the digital era has been able to make significant development and progress over the years so that customers can enjoy better shopping experiences. On the other hand, to facilitate an enhanced shopping experience, technology has introduced customers to online shopping trends.

Customer satisfaction and online shopping experience are also associated with each other. Retail organisations ensure that they take initiatives to provide appropriate services so that their consumers can be facilitated with more enhanced shopping within the market. Along with the rapid growth of brands and the products within the market, customers, as well as organisations, have speculated that online shopping practices will overtake the practice of in-store shopping. However, some organisations have not initiated online selling of products due to a lack of adequate knowledge. On the other hand, some customers still are comfortable shopping in the brick-and-mortar stores in market areas where they have the opportunity to touch and analyse the product properly.

The availability of online shopping has been producing more knowledgeable and educated consumers who are able to shop around with relative ease and facility without spending a lot of time shopping. In addition to this, online shopping has facilitated opportunities for many small retailers and entrepreneurs to open online shopping spaces without incurring high costs behind brick-and-mortar stores or physical locations. Online shopping is considered to be a win-win situation for sellers as well as the consumers in the market as both of them get facilitated through online shopping.

Online shopping has its advantages as well as limitations. From the above discussion, it can also be concluded that through online shopping the customer avails facilitation of shopping from anywhere with access to the internet connection. This is one of the biggest facilities that customers enjoy and it also helps the retailer organisation in facilitating customer satisfaction. With the help of online shopping, it can also be concluded that the customers have the opportunity to access a range of products and buy accordingly. On the other hand, the customers also have the opportunity to return the product if they do not like the product after receiving it. Hence it can be stated from the above discussion that despite very little adverse impact online shopping has earned a big popularity and customer base.

The study highlighted that there are specific needs of customers that influence the process of shopping. The needs are segregated into product needs and service needs. The product needs encompass convenience in everyday life while purchase decisions are also made due to the fear of missing out. The organizations to cater to such customers introduce innovation according to the changes in the buying pattern of the customers. On the other hand, the service attributes also influence the purchase process. The customers evaluate the service attributes based on pricing strategy, contract length, and service terms. In addition, control, transparency, adjusting terms, return facilities influence the purchase decisions of customers. The analysis of customer satisfaction theories sheds light on various dimensions that influence customer needs. The SERVQUAL model, the dissonance theory, and the contrast theory have provided different perspectives constituting customer satisfaction. It could be inferred that customer engagement is the most important factor in customer engagement and retention. Customer focus is crucial in predicting customer satisfaction as well as reducing the number of customer complaints.

From the information included above it can be stated that customer requirement understanding is indeed central to the process of enhancing the exposure of the high street shops. It has been effectively pointed out that through online mode of shopping as a consequence of lack of required interaction sometimes their needs cannot be appropriately understood due to which effective sales in a methodical manner cannot be done. Hence, the choices are always left on the customers, whether they want to purchase a particular product or not. Maintaining specific vital strategies so that the high street shops continue to remain in exposure is also essential, and the most significant one among them is keeping the shop fronts as much attractive as possible so that the customers are driven away with the way the shop looks from outside. This would help in drawing maximum sales to the high street shops. Another critical strategy is sticking out the latest offers on the boards so that the consumers can view them and have an urge to make a purchase from the shop. It must be made sure that the deals look profitable to the customers.

Another prime fact that has been brought out through the course of the study is that a consumer requirement analysis is always central to the increased exposure for any high street shop. Therefore, while the customers are present purchasing in the shops, they must be assisted by the members of the organisations or the ones that work for the shops in selection of products that would be profitable for customer use. In this case, the sellers can be involved in asking specific questions to the consumers in relation to the fact about how much they previously liked that offering, and based on that, and they can recommend additional products to the customers. A customer need analysis can also be done by gathering proper feedback on the product, and this would make the customer pleased about the conduct of the sellers making them flock to the place over and over again.

The study has been carried out through the use of case study analysis research design and by the execution of qualitative analysis as the research strategy, which had been proved to be fruitful for the research. An overall view about all the problems and the profitable areas about the high street shops were gathered through delving into different case studies related to high street shop exposures.

## 5.2 Recommendation

The retail organisation needs to enhance the experience of the online customers present in the market. To do so they can take some of the initiatives this would help improve the shopping experience for the customers. The recommendations are discussed below:

* ***Personalised customer services through AI implemented chatbots*** - The retail organisation can facilitate the ease of personalised customer services such as artificial implemented chatbots (Ikumoro and Jawad, 2019). Through chatbots, the user or the customer would have the opportunity to directly come up with their issues and the AI implemented chatbot would be able to provide solutions to the issues pertinent to the customers. With the help of automating sales and support, the organisation would be able to come up with various effective solutions to the issues and the marketers would be able to save time and money for addressing customer's issues (Adam *et al*., 2020). Chatbot in the current context has been one of the developmental strategies that help in providing personalised customer service and would help achieve customer satisfaction.
* ***Ensure easy navigation*** - The high street shops must ensure that the customers are able to navigate their websites easily. The organisations must implement features to limit unnecessary clicks and avoid losing the interest of the customers. In addition, the organisations must invest in site search technology which will form an important part of the customer journey. The use of efficient search technology will help organisations to use the right content to target the right section of customers (Ijaz and Rhee, 2018). Moreover, result clicks and search queries provide user feedback which could be used in providing a more personalised experience in the future.
* ***Emphasise on-site loading*** - The high street stores must aim at reducing website loading time to facilitate its use for both mobile and computer users. The time taken by websites to load may be associated with negative customer experience affecting customer retention (Vijay *et al*., 2019). The organisations, therefore, require to enable various aspects of customer relationships that include browsing, engagement, and purchasing. The high street stores during their online operations must optimise their websites and guarantee maximum performance irrespective of the location, network connection, and the devices used. The improved ability of the websites would help the potential customers to stay at the web pages and gain a good shopping experience.
* ***Use of high-quality photos to attract customers*** - It has been stated that generic or commonly recognised products do not require a visual appeal to attract consumers. However, images provide reassurance to the customers in identifying the products they want. Moreover, the visual appeal entices customers towards the website and also helps in creating a similar feeling to a physical store (Ullah *et al*., 2018). The use of photos providing the features of zooming in and seeing multiple angles could also be associated with creating a real shopping experience for the customers.
* ***Inclusion of customer reviews -*** Customer reviews have greater significance than any marketing strategy developed by an organisation. The high street stores could significantly improve customer experience by showcasing product reviews on their website and mobile application. Customer reviews in the era of digitisation have proven to be an essential resource in influencing the purchase decisions of consumers. The high street stores by making reviews and ratings easily accessible across various touchpoints create a positive customer experience.
* ***Provide option for live chat -*** The high street stores with their shift towards online platforms may be associated with the increased number of queries by the customers. In order to solve the queries regarding the product offerings, a live chat option could be created. The live chat option would, therefore, enable the customers to contact someone and get the answers related to the product.
* ***Assuring that the replies to the customers seeking service are made fast*** - prompt and fact replies to the needs of the customers are an excellent way to gain popularity through the mode of implementing online shopping portals by the high street shops. Customers always tend to seek quick replies as they do not like waiting for a customer service reply for long hours as it makes them feel agitated (Tupikovskaja-Omovie and Tyler, 2020). It can be recommended that the organisation recruit candidates who would have a good typing speed so that immediate replies can be sent to the customers in order to improve their own exposure and reveal the fact that they are always available to the needs of the customers. It is only through serving the customers in an effective manner that they can gain a broader customer base, thus improving on the profitability of the organisation. In addition, quick replies would make more customers seek online service from the organisation as it is a faster way to solve problems related to products.

# Chapter 6: Personal Reflection

The research paper has shed light on the online shopping trends and customer satisfaction, facilities, and imitations. While developing this research paper I have been able to add a lot of information through my personal experiences as well as from journals. While developing the research paper I was able to access a lot of information as I had the opportunity to access information through online journals. On the other hand, I have included information while assessing a particular age group present in my family. While developing the research paper I have been able to gain a lot of knowledge about online shopping which has helped me in developing an in-depth knowledge about the same and incorporating the knowledge in a significant manner. In this study, a description of online shopping and associated aspects of online shopping has been developed. Moreover, what are the factors that can help in facilitating enhanced customer satisfaction have also been given. I have also listed down some of the possible advantages that the customers and the firm might enjoy and the potential limitations that consumers or the organisation might face. Through this dissertation, I have been able to increase my knowledge of technological advancements and social media marketing.

The study was an overall enriching experience as it facilitated me in coming across a wide range of study materials and gaining different perspectives regarding the topic. It was of particular significance as I was able to increase my research skills through gaining in-depth knowledge of authentic and inauthentic sources. The study also helped me realise the importance of time management which I lacked previously. It was during the course of the present study I realised that it was important to set goals and identify the factors leading to time wastage. It helped me remain focussed and accomplish the targets that I set out to achieve. The emphasis on time management helped me prioritise tasks with consideration of submission date and the number of tasks needed to be completed within the given time frame. It helped me develop a full schedule and a list of priorities that ensure the accomplishment of each task accordingly. Additionally, I also learned that big projects like the one I worked on tend to be overwhelming hence, it was important to divide it into small tasks that eased the process. I also learned that my urge to multitask affected my productivity hence I focussed on doing one thing at a time that yielded good results.

Through the course of the research, I have grasped the understanding of how some strategies can be implemented in order to improve the conduct of the high street shops for magnifying their exposure into the market. Moreover, throughout the entire research work, it has been possible for me to grasp the knowledge of the fact about how different organisations integrate schemes and effective measures to improve their position in the market. My experience of delving deep into informative journals increased, and I could develop a better understanding of the phenomenon in which the organisations work. I also understood that there are a number of benefits and drawbacks to the incorporation of the strategies behind improving market visibility and pointed out the ways in which they can be removed from my own understanding of going through the different articles and case studies using which the research was done. Furthermore, the dissertation taught me how to develop individual strategies to gain an understanding of prevailing marketing problems and what marketers implement to eliminate them. On an overall basis, I can say that I feel satisfied after performing the research as I have gained knowledge about various segments individually. Besides, the ability of the way in which client needs could be understood was also acquired.

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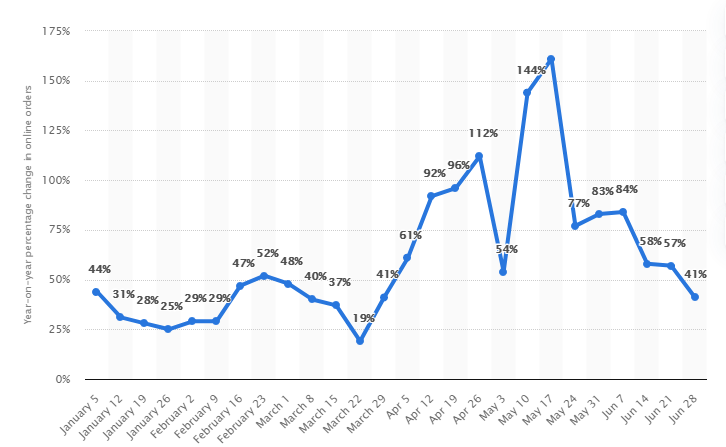
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# Chapter 8: Appendix

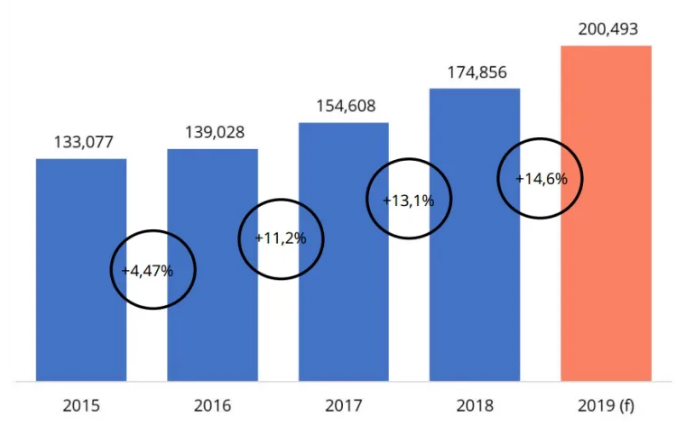
## 8.1 Appendix 1

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**Figure 7: Revenue of online-only retailers in the United Kingdom (UK) from January to June 2020**

(Source: Statista, 2021)

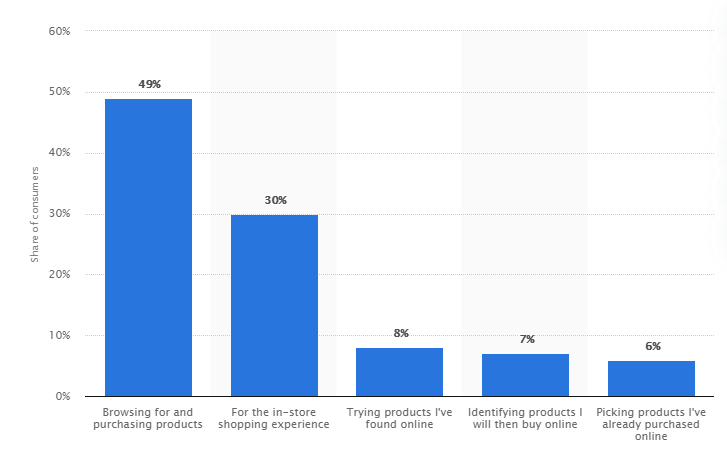
## 8.2 Appendix 2



**Figure 8: B2C Ecommerce Turnover from 2015 to 2019**

(Source: Ecommerce News, 2021)

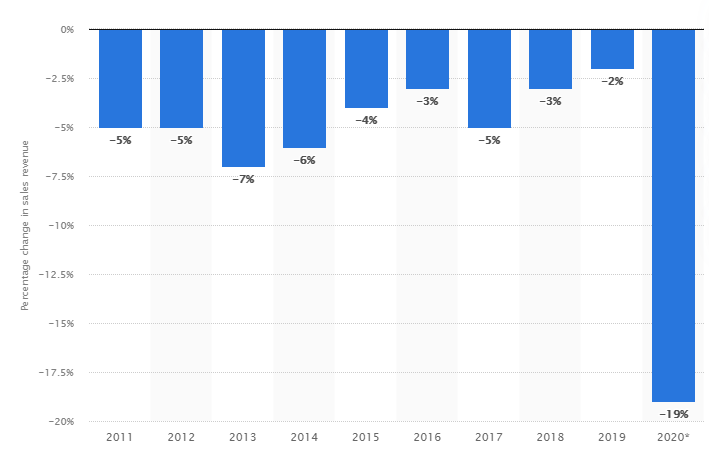
## 8.3 Appendix 3



**Figure 9: Main motive behind utilisation of high street shopping**

(Statista.com, 2021)

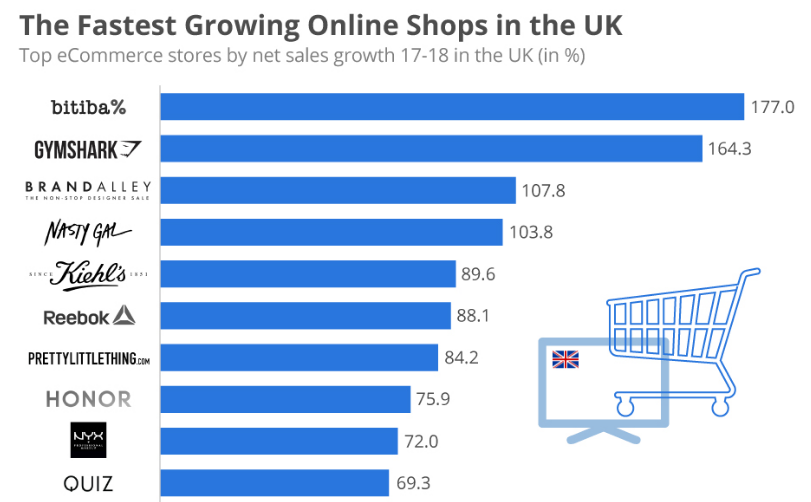
## 8.4 Appendix 4



**Figure 10: High Street store sale revenues**

(Source: Statista.com, 2021)

## 8.5 Appendix 5



**Figure 11: The fastest growing online shops in the United Kingdom**

(Source: Armstrong, 2021)