

Technology in the Retail Industry

To investigate whether Generation Y are more likely to purchase Online as opposed to using the Traditional Bricks and Mortar Retailer.

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Authors Declaration

I, Andrew Topley declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation. I have personally carried out all the work of which this a record. The programme of study of which this a part has been delivered by Dublin Business School.

Signed: Andrew Topley

Date: 2 April 2015

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate Generation Y's opinions and attitudes towards technology in the retail industry and the main drivers responsible for this shift in attitudes.

Both primary and secondary research were conducted in order to obtain a greater understanding of consumer's feelings towards this new shopping phenomenon. This research is primarily focusing on three main objectives. These are – the technologies being used both instore and online, brand loyalty and the economic influences affecting consumer decisions to shop online.

The primary research was conducted in the form of two focus groups consisting of Generation Y participants from different cities around the world. The secondary research was conducted using online material, published journals and books in the DBS library. A common theme was discovered whilst conducting this research – Generation Y are now in fact using both online and offline methods complementary of each other primarily in the form of Webrooming and Showrooming with price being the main driving factor.

The outcomes of the primary and secondary research supported the hypothesis and revealed similarities between consumer's behaviour in different countries. The focus groups provided a more personal insight into the participant's experiences and their reasons for choosing one method over another. The research also confirmed that retailers in different countries are using similar techniques to provide a seamless shopping experience with ease of use, convenience, efficiency and price being the priority in gaining competitive advantage.

A conclusion of the study will review the main points of interest and recommendations for further research on a larger number of participants and using a different generation is outlined.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Evolution of Technology has changed the way Generation Y interact with brands and how it can influence purchasing decisions both online and offline (Deloitte, 2014). Economic factors are also being considered when making purchasing decisions; items are often researched online for the best price before consumer's part with their money. (Adroit Digital as in Mahoney, 2014)

The purpose of this study is to investigate online versus offline shopping and how technologies are influencing the way Generation Y shop.

1.2 Problem Definition

1.2.1 Research Question

To investigate whether Generation Y students are more likely to shop online for fashion items as opposed to going to a traditional bricks and mortar shop front and the reasons and motivations behind their decisions.

1.2.2 Research Hypothesis

When it comes to buying fashion items; considerable research suggests that although in store shopping is still a hugely popular choice as the look and feel of a product plays an important role for many people, this gap is closing year on year and now online shopping is the preferred choice in the UK (Hill, 2013).

1.2.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the Digital Technologies being used in relation to Generation Y students shopping online as opposed to in store for fashion items.
2. To investigate whether Brand Loyalty comes into play when Generation Y students are shopping online for fashion items.
3. To examine whether the downturn in the economy has affected the online and offline purchasing behaviour of Generation Y students.

1.3 Background to the Problem

The retail landscape has changed drastically over the last five years. A number of events have had an impact on the way consumers purchase goods (Sherman, 2012). At the core of this new environment are Generation Y and the factors contributing to their behaviour. Economic influences play a huge role in the purchasing intentions and purchasing power of Generation Y. Therefore, this is an area that needs to be investigated further.

With the evolution of online retail it is important to study the impact this is having on Generation Y consumers and what technologies they are using to purchase products. Another element that is significant to this study is brand loyalty. With the vast array of brands vying for space on the internet the question needs to be asked whether consumers are staying loyal to the brands they have purchased from in the past or are they willing to try new brands that they have never heard of previously.

The retail industry is a billion-dollar business and an industry that is being heavily invested in. Companies are changing with the times and are creating an online experience similar to that of the in store experience. Retailers are reaching out to customers they would never have had access to previously and technology is aiding in this process.

1.4 Organisation of the Research

Chapter one is the introduction, which will provide the theoretical overview of the study.

Chapter two, Literature Review, will examine published materials along with previous studies carried out on this topic based on the three research objectives. The evolution of online commerce along with advances in technology, both online and offline in the retail industry have significantly aided the ability of retailers to create an online marketplace that mimics the high street.

Chapter three is the Methodology, which outlines the research design strategy. This chapter explains the reasoning behind the primary research tool selected along with the rationale for rejecting other research tools. The research design strategy chosen in this project was exploratory research as it aims to explore and discover issues about the problem at hand as opposed to descriptive and causal research. A single methodology approach was chosen in the form of two focus groups consisting of ten participants each.

Chapter four analyses the data collected from the primary and secondary research conducted. Based on the findings of the research the data is analysed and presented under each of the three objectives.

Chapter five comprises of a conclusion to the study and outlines recommendations based on the data collected from the primary and secondary research.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The research conducted in this study included both primary and secondary research based on the three main objectives: technology in the retail industry, brand loyalty and economic influences on consumer behaviour.

The researcher encountered a number of hurdles during the course of the research project. These included: Lack of experience conducting primary or secondary research and comparing and contrasting the results academically.

A primary obstacle encountered was generating participant involvement in an offline focus group. A number of students agreed to partake but never did. This limitation may have been overcome if there were incentives in place for the offline participants. As a result of non-availability of individuals it was decided that two online focus groups comprising of participants from different countries would provide the most interesting results. This proved to be the case as contributors from Australia, China, Egypt, France, Hong Kong, Ireland, India, Mexico, South Korea and Ukraine all participated.

Although there was a good mix of nationalities it does not reflect all. For example: there were no participants from the USA or Canada and these markets are at the forefront of online shopping.

However, for the purpose of this study the results obtained were satisfactory.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study will identify and examine the literature used to support the chosen research objectives. There is a vast amount of literature available for this particular subject, however only the most up to date and relevant information has been applied to gain a better understanding of the specified topic.

2.2 Evolution of Online Commerce

Research published by Pratt (2014) states that 2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the World Wide Web. Web technology has shaped commerce with online sales set to increase by 20% this year to reach \$1.5 trillion globally.

Table 1: Journey of Commerce so far

Journey of Commerce so far	Commentary
Commerce 1.0	First generation of web shops based on the real world and extended their product ranges. Brands used their traditional sales models and transferred them to the web.
Commerce 2.0	Incorporated richer content such as videos, social networks into the selling process. Brands link stores to their digital assets.
Commerce 3.0	Huge increase in non-PC devices and globalisation. Brands are fully integrating digital into their stores.
Commerce 4.0	Will be driven by the internet. Advanced use of data and analytics and battle for control between retailers and manufacturers.

Source: adapted from Salmon Ltd (2014).

Salmon Ltd (2014) purports the traditional definition of e-commerce is dead. Today's shoppers expect to shop anywhere/anytime, to buy every kind of product and to use every device or channel that suits them at that particular moment in time. Shopper expectations, evolving technology and new competition are the new face of the retail environment that companies are contending with.

Therefore, the new e-commerce is everywhere commerce. Consumers can now make purchases via smartphones, mobile apps, social media outlets and much more. Point of sale is now points of sale and shopping has never been more convenient and more easily accessible for the consumer (Kantar Retail, 2013).

Everywhere commerce can be a useful tool for companies wishing to exploit its potential and gain competitive advantage in the process over their rivals. Hence, everywhere commerce is already here and the choice for today’s retail companies is to adapt or die (Salmon Ltd, 2014). As a result companies need to assess the following key points:

Table 2: Characteristics of Everywhere Commerce

Characteristics of Everywhere Commerce	Commentary
Every Country	Is the company offering its products internationally? Is the shopper experience personalised based on their location?
Every Device	Do all devices and browsers support the e-commerce platform? How are shoppers using their devices?
Every Channel	Are they advertising on the right websites – social media, online marketplaces etc?
Every Shopper	Is the shopper experience personalised? Do the company cater to both B2C and B2B consumers?
Every Interaction	Are consumers satisfied after every interaction? Is the service excellent throughout the customer experience?
Every Product	Are the procedures in place for managing product information, pricing, inventory etc. effective?
Every Piece of Data	Is the company utilizing all the data being gathered by shopper interactions?
Every Business Model	Has the existing business model been integrated with the digital proposition?
Every Delivery Option	Are all timeframes and delivery options efficient and available to customers?

Source: adapted from Salmon Ltd (2014).

2.3 Advances of Technology Online and Offline in the Retail Industry

Technological advances over the last decade have made it much easier and more convenient to buy the things we want. Today every customer is a digital customer whether it is online or in-store. According to Richards & Hamilton (2014), technology is prominent throughout the retail industry with an explosion of end devices, applications and social media advertising – *“79% of consumers have their phone on or near them for all but two hours of their waking day.”*

Online Technology presents a threat to bricks and mortar. However, new technologies have also enhanced the in store experience in the forms of immersive technologies, virtual mirrors, bluetooth beacons, NFC payments and in store mobile applications that can transform the in store experience for the consumer (Accenture, 2014).

Interactive storefront displays have been designed to engage and connect with the customer by showing them what items may look like on. Nike has developed store displays that play jumping games with customers as they walk past. The aim is to see how high the customer can jump before offering them the latest basketball shoes (Szymczyk, 2009).

18% of Northern Ireland and 25% of Republic of Ireland customers research purchases online but prefer to buy the goods in person (Toluna as in Mintel 2014). However, Toluna also states that these figures would be increase to 21% and 44% respectively if there were more Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland based online retailers.

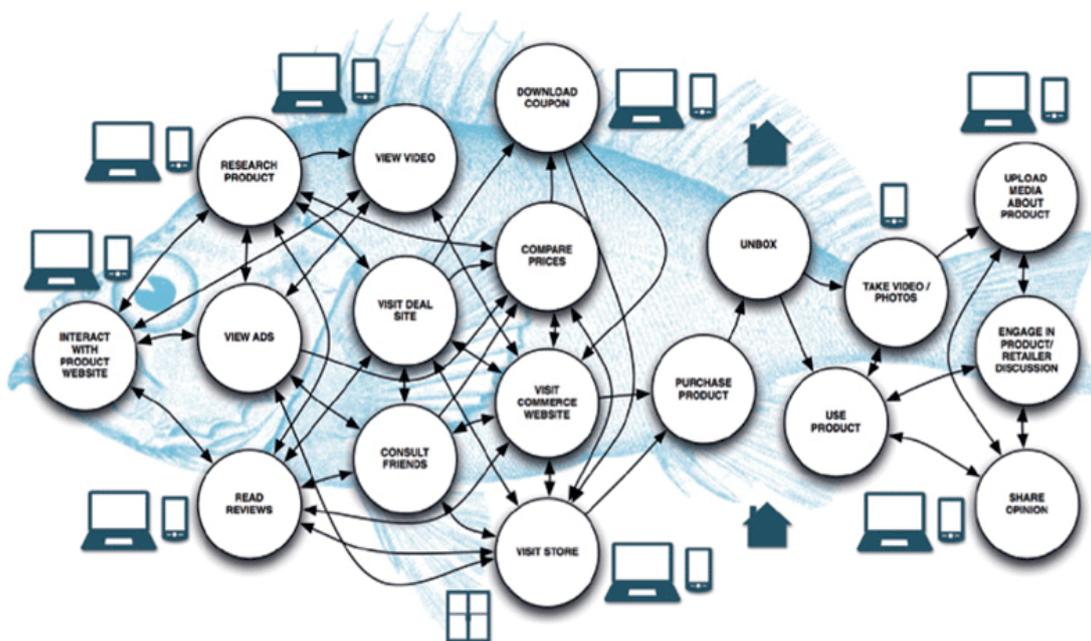
Social has become a vital channel for retail, as customers increasingly trust other consumer’s opinions rather than the opinions of institutions. Getting customers to share and talk about their experiences is a vital part of the communications strategy (Clements, 2014). Retail data has evolved from POS data into SoLoMo data, which is social, local and mobile data. This is linked to behavioural data, which includes what a customer has bought in the past, what they are browsing online and in store, which is aiding in the development of real time data. This will lead to offering the customer

real-time personalised communications based on exactly where they are, what they want and what they are doing (Clements, 2014).

2.4 The Purchase Fish

The purchasing world has become increasingly more complex which can be identified in **The Purchase Fish**. This is a complex web of multi channel contact, feedback and opinion testing with eventual purchase (Kantar Retail, 2013 as cited in The Future Company/Kelly and Rollins, The Open Brand).

Figure 1: The Purchase Fish



Source: Kantar Retail (2013) as cited in The Future Company/Kelly and Rollins, The Open Brand.

Companies are now more likely to incorporate Multi Channel Retailing into their sales objectives. It offers customers a variety of different ways to purchase products. These include – In Store, Online, TV, Catalog Ordering and Over The Telephone (Linton).

However, Walker (2011) challenges this method stating this form of retailing is becoming obsolete and Agile Commerce, which is focused on mobile devices and touch points (Online, Mobile, Social, Direct and Physical Stores) is the future.

Omni Channel Retailing is the development of a seamless approach to the customer experience through all available shopping channels including Smartphones, Tablets, Laptops, Bricks and Mortar, TV, Direct Mail and Catalogs (High, 2014).

2.5 Who are Generation Y?

Generation Y refers to individual's born between 1982 and 2004. They are also known as the Millennial's (Howe, 2014). They have been described as self-entitled, overly ambitious dreamers who don't pay their way and are only concerned about higher pay and more time off. However, on a more positive note they are also more future orientated, ready to contribute now and more opportunity driven (Mannion, 2014).

"They watch 208 channels on TV, surf the web and talk to five friends at the same time . . . and they're still bored," Newenham, 2014, cited in Rugani 2014. This indicates that multitasking is perhaps a trait they have become accustomed to as a result of growing up in a technological age where they are constantly surrounded by a bombardment of information and news. However, when it comes to the workplace Rugani also mentions; managing Generation Y is like parenting and they need to be guided and told what direction their careers are going in (Newenham, 2014).

2.6 Online and Offline Brand Loyalty and Buyer Behaviour in a Virtual Environment

By 2015 Generation Y will achieve a spending power of an estimated \$2.45 trillion (Risher, 2013).

Millennial's are brand loyal when it comes to the categories that matter to them however price is the primary factor in most instances (Risher, 2013). This is backed up by a recent survey carried out by Nielson (2013) that states 41% of global respondents (29,000 Internet respondents from 58 countries) stated getting a better price would encourage them to switch brands.

Mahoney (2014) explains Generation Y has higher expectations about the behaviour of a brand, how they care for the planet and take into consideration the feedback and opinions of customers.

The online shopping environment molds people into making a purchase if there is a deep discount and they are more likely to search for better deals before making a purchase and now expect these same deals from bricks and mortar establishments (Maillian Bias, 2011).

However, Maillian Bias (2011) suggests key points to navigate these issues. For Example, *“Keep quality high, Engage your customers, Solicit feedback from consumers, Give customers a reason to come back, Stay relevant, Provide value and Show your appreciation.”*

Anthony (2014) argues that ease and value are the main reasons consumers either stay with or switch brands, not creating emotional bonds or generating a superior user experience as online shopping makes decisions harder for the customer due to the variety of options available. This point is supported by (Shanyon, 2013, cited in Donnelly, Accenture, 2013) who emphasises that retailers must create a seamless shopping experience for the customer, take advantage of their operational capabilities and have a presence at every stage to the customer journey to deliver a bespoke, brand experience from discovery to exploration of the brand to purchase, fulfillment and beyond product maintenance and returns.

2.7 Are Economic Conditions considered in different Consumer Shopping Behaviours?

Generation Y are responsible for 25.2% of online spending in Ireland which is the largest of any consumer group with travel and clothing being the biggest purchases (Amarach Research, 2012). However, as a consequence of the recession customers are more inclined to shop around and as a result end up finding cheaper alternatives that are very similar to the brands they have become accustomed to and the vast majority have found very little difference in quality (Shanyon, 2013, cited in Deloitte's annual American Pantry Study, 2013).

The research conducted finds money to be the biggest reason to change brands with 56% saying they would change if they had a variation in their finances with 41% saying if their brand increased the price they would change. This is followed by friend's recommendations and succeeded by if something shinier or newer came along (Adroit Digital as in Mahoney, 2014).

The Centre for Retail Research (Warc, 2013) published a bleak outlook for the high street estimating nearly 62,000 stores could close over the next five years with 316,000 job losses.

2.8 What are Bricks and Mortar retailers doing to combat Online Stores?

Burberry recently opened its flagship store in London with the ambition of merging the digital and the physical worlds together. Employees carry iPads to show customers how personalised items look and can order out of stock items if requested by the customer. Merchandise carries sensors that trigger details and videos in mirrors about that particular item (Gaudoin, 2012).

Showrooming is a burden to Bricks and Mortar stores as it involves shoppers going to the store, trying the product and then going online and purchasing it from someone else (Gustafson, 2014). However, Adler (2014) explains Bricks and Mortar stores are now winning the battle in the form of webrooming. This process is actually the opposite of showrooming whereby the shopper researches a product online then goes to the store to try it and completes the purchase from the store. Bricks and Mortar stores have invested a great deal integrating their online and in store offerings with the same prices.

In a recent ploy to try and combat showrooming, Target advocated selling store specific products that can't be purchased online. In doing this they keep the customer attentive to new product releases and encourage them to shop in store (retailcustomerexperience, 2012).

Retailers realise that omni channel is now a permanent fixture in the retail landscape and the bricks and mortar stores must embrace it rather than fight it. Showrooming can be capitalised on as the customer is in the store and know what they want therefore guaranteeing price matching instore diffuses consumer perceptions they can purchase the item cheaper online (Petersen, 2013).

Price matching can also be used compliment webrooming as the customer attends the store with proof of a cheaper price online and therefore receives the same price that they would pay elsewhere (Stilson, 2014).

Blending the in store and online experience using real time price comparisons, shopper apps and interactive displays are the only way for retailers to combat the online stores. They must make use of the fact that the bricks and mortar store is the heart of the brand and the emotional center that customers recognise therefore investment is still needed in the design, media and in store technology to keep the brand exciting (Shanyon, 2013, cited in Interbrands 2013 Best Retailer Brands report, 2013).

2.9 The Future of the Retail Industry

Retail forecasting and predicting buyer behaviour are extremely important as retailers are implementing customer analytics to increase their customer relationship management and satisfy customer demands and expectations (Sherman, 2012). Gramigna (2014) explains that mobile technology is leading the way with customers embracing the interminable array of apps and gadgets being created to excite their senses once again. The previously bleak future prospects of the bricks and mortar retailer has been reinvigorated with both online and instore technology at the forefront of this change. Retail is exciting once again and the instore experience is now captivating the attention of consumers in the right way.

Examples of future trends include the following:

Dynamic Pricing is a controversial ploy by online retailers whereby they alter the price of products dependent on the cookies stored in your browser or if you are a

returning customer looking to buy a product you have researched previously (Lowrey, 2010). Directing users to different deals, offers or internal ads based on purchase history and cookies are also a way for retailers to get the most from the consumer.

Macys has invested hundreds of millions of dollars on e-commerce in recent years. They are at the forefront of integrating digital technologies into their digital/bricks and mortar business model. They are in the process of incorporating a number of new initiatives to become more efficient and innovative. Same day delivery is being tested along with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology, which tracks the exact location of a given item anywhere in the supply chain (Wahba, 2014).

In store Bluetooth Beacons communicate with mobile apps for customers to utilise in store deals, discounts, recommendations and rewards (Milnes, 2014). Another innovative technique is Image Search technology that enables consumers to take a photo of an item and then be directed towards similar items on sale.

Smart fitting rooms have iPads where customers can scan an item and see if there are other colors and sizes available in the store and summon the associate to bring alternatives (Halzack, 2014).

Digital edition is an interactive online catalogue that allows customers to learn about the seasons top trends, get 360-degree view of the products, watch videos and mix and match new outfits (Businesswire, 2014).

Apple Pay Utilises NFC (Near Field Communication) technology to allow customers to purchase goods over the counter by using their smart phones instead of having to use their credit cards or cash (Dent, 2014).

Virtual Mirrors allow customers to try on digital clothes and accessories via the Internet in move forward into Augmented Reality (Corcoran, 2011). It can even select a range of clothing and accessories that will match the garment you have chosen and will be ready for home use in 2016 (Winter, 2014).

SkipQ is an app that lets customers scan the item and pay for it on the using the app and leave the shop without having to queue (Sender, 2014). Another innovative mobile app being tested by over 500 retailers is PowaTag; this allows customers to buy directly from advertisements. Users can scan adverts in various forms (outdoor, tabletop, magazines) complete the purchase within seconds and get the products delivered to their door within 48 hours (Warc, 2014).

3D printing is a huge area that is taking off whereby designs are created using 3D software that communicates with the printer to create and build your design in a physical 3D format with everything from clothing to cars and even body parts being created (Honigman, 2014). Customer experience on the website should be similar to that in store. Retailers are aiming to provide the customer with the in store experience in the palm of their hands. “The next five years will bring more changes in Retail than in the last 100 years” (Accenture, 2014).

2.10 Conclusion

Technology in the Retail industry is making its mark in a big way with new innovative apps and in store technologies now available. As society is becoming ever more demanding retailers are reacting and investing huge sums of money to stay ahead of consumer trends.

Consumers expect consistent interaction with a retailer as they switch between online, mobile and in store channels. They want instant access to products and expect the same prices online as in store accompanied by more transparency from retailers (Retail Technology, 2012).

Consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about products and like to know the backgrounds of the items they are buying. This includes the retailer’s ethics and knowing whether the products are eco friendly or fair-trade. Also, with the bombardment of advertising faced on a daily basis consumers are becoming more impervious to traditional advertising. Therefore, it is more challenging for retailers to wow them with something new and interesting. Customers are looking for price, convenience, speed and a seamless shopping experience. If retailers can deliver these services they will win their loyalty and gain competitive advantage (Accenture, 2013).

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Introduction

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.4) marketing research is a methodology-led process that systematically and objectively investigates a problem or opportunity confronting marketing management.

This section of the project will focus on the Marketing Research Process to examine and analyse the data recovered in relation to the Problem Definition.

Both Primary and Secondary research were gathered from a variety of different sources during the course of this project.

Included in this section are the Problem Definition, Research Design Strategy, Data Collection Method, Research Approach, Primary Research Tool Selected, Fieldwork, Profile of Respondents, Sampling Frame and Sampling Type.

3.2 Problem Definition

3.2.1 The Research Question

To investigate whether Generation Y students are more likely to shop online for fashion items as opposed to going to a traditional bricks and mortar shop front and the reasons and motivations behind their decisions.

3.2.2 The Research Hypothesis

When it comes to buying fashion items; considerable research suggests that although in store shopping is still a hugely popular choice as the look and feel of a product plays an important role for many people this gap is closing year on year and now online shopping is the preferred choice in the UK (Hill 2013).

3.2.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the Digital Technologies being used in relation to Generation Y students shopping online as opposed to in store for fashion items.
2. To investigate whether Brand Loyalty comes into play when Generation Y students are shopping online for fashion items.

3. To examine whether the downturn in The Economy has affected the online and offline purchasing behaviour of Generation Y students.

3.3 Research Design Strategy

The Research Design Strategy used in this project was exploratory research as it aims to explore and discover issues about the problem at hand (Kent, 2007, p.17). It is a method of obtaining a better insight into new emotions, ideas and perceptions about a particular subject. This information that can be used in relation to Generation Y and the variables being measured *Digital*, *Loyalty* and *Economy* in the online and in store retail environment (Shuttleworth, 2008).

Descriptive Research focuses on measuring attitudes towards the market, measures purchaser's intentions, measures feelings towards brands, variables and characteristics in customer's attitudes and focuses on numbers, facts, data and statistics. This wasn't applicable in this particular case, as the researcher wants to fill in the gaps left by the secondary research (Kent, 2007, p.18).

Malhotra, (2010, p.113) describes causal research as the effect one variable has on another. This research is used to measure how actions will affect a business in the future. Hypothetical scenarios are created so a company can base its business plan. Similar to descriptive research it requires a planned structure. This type of research is not relevant in this particular situation as causal research is used to obtain evidence of cause and effect on relationships.

3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 Secondary Research

Malhotra and Birks (2007, p.96) purport that secondary research uses previously published information from a range of different sources. It is easily accessible and is conducted on information that has been previously examined and published relating to the topic of interest. This data is then used to gain a better understanding of the topic area and aid in making recommendations for further research. This includes reports,

surveys, internet articles, newspaper articles, books and other published material. Once the Secondary research is concluded it is easier to carry out primary research.

3.4.2 Primary Research

Malhotra, (2010, p.132) explains that primary research is essentially the creation of your own research to answer specific questions. The collection of primary data involves all six steps of the marketing research process. (1.Problem Definition, 2. Development of an Approach to The Problem, 3.Research Design Formulation, 4. Fieldwork or Data Collection, 5. Data Preparation or Analysis, 6. Report Preparation and Presentation. P.41).

Examples of primary research include focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques (Bradley, 2013, p.112). The researcher has control of what questions are being asked, how the research is directed and when the research is conducted. This is new information that has been gathered by the researcher and hasn't been broadcast anywhere else.

3.4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Data Collection

There are Advantages and Disadvantages to both primary and secondary data collection.

Secondary data is easy to access and there are large amounts available. It is not expensive to get the information and can give different perspectives and insights on a particular topic of interest. (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.96).

However, (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.96) also detail some disadvantages associated with secondary research. It is somebody else's research and may not answer the questions the researcher may have. The quality may not be of the standard required and the information may not always give a complete picture.

Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.26) discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of primary research. The choice of primary data collection is closely linked to the type of research design being used. Some of the advantages include: It

addresses the topic directly, the researcher can control how the information is collected and can ask the questions that they want answered. The information is fresh and up to date.

The disadvantages associated with Primary research: It can be expensive to carry out, it is limited to a relatively smaller group depending on funds available and can be very time consuming.

Table 3: A Comparison of Primary and Secondary Data

	Primary Data	Secondary Data
Collection purpose	For the problem at hand	For other problems
Collection process	Very involved	Rapid and easy
Collection cost	High	Relatively low
Collection time	Long	Short

Source: adapted from Malhotra, (2010, p.132).

3.5 Research Approach

3.5.1 Qualitative Research

Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2013, p.235) purport qualitative research is used to understand human behaviour, towards a particular topic. It is conducted in the forms of focus groups, in-depth interviews and ethnography. Face to face discussion allows the researcher to get a better understanding of a particular product or service from different consumer perspectives. However, one of the downfalls is that the interpretation of results is highly subjective and the quality of the results depends heavily on the skills on the moderator.

3.5.2 Quantitative Research

Hastings and Domegan (2014, p.137) describes quantitative research as a method used to ask the population of interest their opinions in a controlled way so that statistics can be produced. This puts greater emphasis on sample selection and questioning procedures. Structured techniques such as questionnaires are used to ask

respondents their opinions on certain topics. The findings are conclusive, descriptive in nature and used to recommend a final course of action.

3.5.3 Survey Method

Moutinho and Southern (2010, p.57) define market research as a methodical approach to establish consumer interest in a product or service by forming and testing hypothesis through data gathering surveys. This method is used to conduct research and collect information from a population of interest. There are three techniques of survey research - interviews, discussions and questionnaires. Depending on the design of survey chosen it is worthwhile conducting a pilot study to test it.

3.5.4 Observation Method

McGivern (2009, p.51) explains how observational techniques are based on ethnographic methods, they are used in social research and becoming more prevalent in market research. The researcher observes the participants behaviour in relation to the research being conducted. It provides reliable and quantifiable data that can be evaluated and formatted. The main advantage over interviewing is the researcher sees the respondent's natural behaviour first hand without the respondent having to think of answers to questions. However, this process may be time consuming and when people are being observed they may not give a true and fair view of their behaviour.

Table 4: Observation Method

Observation is used in the following situations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the researcher is unsure of what questions to ask. • When a project is starting in an unfamiliar setting. • To examine an activity or process in a new way. • To observe an individual act in detail. • To gather data from another perspective. • When the researcher wants greater understanding of a process or behaviour. • To observe unconscious or habitual behaviour. • When the researcher has concerns about the reliability of the interview data. • To observe the behaviour of people en masse.

Source: adapted from McGivern (2009, p.52).

3.5.5 Interview Method

Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2013, p.235) describe in-depth interviews as a form of qualitative research. They involve bringing together personal encounters, life events and understandings into a more expressive context. They aim to establish people's attitudes, values, behaviour and beliefs. They involve interviewing the population of interest individually for an hour or two about a particular topic. The answers may be more honest than focus groups because there is no one else in the room. However, they are time consuming and sometimes not practical.

3.6 Primary Research Tool Selected

A qualitative research method was chosen in the form of a focus group. Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2013, p.235) explain how the members of the group discuss topics as opposed to answering questions. Hastings and Domegan (2014, p.137) purport some of the benefits of focus groups include the interaction that takes place between the respondents and they also provide reassurance and group identity that facilitates the discussion.

3.7 Fieldwork

Malhotra, (2010, p.173) describes a focus group as an interview conducted with a group of respondents in a natural manner on a list of topics as opposed to structured questions. The researcher leads the discussion with the aim of gaining a better insight into issues of interest by listening to the respondents. Focus groups are the most important qualitative research process. As the research question is focused on Generation Y Students, a focus group was thought to be the most appropriate.

Table 5: Advantages of Focus Groups

Advantages of Focus Groups	Commentary
Synergism	Putting a group of people together will encourage a better insight and ideas than interviewing an individual.
Snowballing	One persons comment can trigger a chain reaction from the other participants.
Stimulation	The respondents want to express their feelings as the general level of excitement over a topic increases.
Security	The respondents feel comfortable and therefore are willing to express their ideas and feelings.
Spontaneity	Since there is no specific questions the respondents responses are spontaneous and therefore provide an accurate idea of their views.
Serendipity	Ideas are more likely to arise than in an individual interview.
Specialisation	A number of participants are involved simultaneously use of an interviewer is justified.
Scientific scrutiny	The group discussion allows close scrutiny of the data collection process in that observers can witness the session.
Structure	The group discussion allows for flexibility in the topics covered.
Speed	Since the participants are being interviewed at the same time, data collection and analysis are processed quickly.

Source: adapted from Malhotra, (2010).

Table 6: Disadvantages of Focus Groups

Disadvantages of Focus Groups	Commentary
Misuse	Focus groups can be misused by considering results as conclusive rather than exploratory.
Misjudge	The results can be easily misjudged and they are susceptible to researcher or respondent bias.
Moderation	They can be difficult to moderate. The quality of the results depends on the skills of the moderator.
Messy	The unstructured nature of the discussion can make it difficult to analyse and interpret the results.
Misrepresentation	The results are not representative of the general population.

Source: adapted from Malhotra, (2010, p.181).

Questionnaires also have many advantages and disadvantages. McGivern (2009, p.298) explains the importance of questionnaires whilst conducting research. They play a huge role in helping the interviewer gather and record data accurately and effectively. They also help the respondent provide accurate, complete and reliable data.

Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.290) define the primary purpose of a questionnaire is measurement. They can be used to measure customer’s behaviour, their attitudes, awareness and characteristics. There are a number of methods used to conduct a questionnaire – personal interview, telephone, postal or online.

A questionnaire has three main objectives. 1) It must be easy for the respondent to understand whilst gathering the information the researcher is looking for. 2) It must encourage and motivate the respondents to co-operate with the process. 3) It should minimise the chance of error. Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.290).

Questionnaires should be used to answer the questions that the secondary research could not. Therefore, the questions must be to the point so that the results can be analysed. They should be used to support research that has already been conducted.

When creating a questionnaire the following steps should be implemented:

Table 7: Questionnaire Design Checklist

Steps involved	Commentary
Step 1	Specify the information needed.
Step 2	Specify the type of interviewing method.
Step 3	Determine the content of individual questions.
Step 4	Design the questions to overcome the respondent's inability.
Step 5	Decide on question structure.
Step 6	Determine the question wording.
Step 7	Arrange the questions in proper order.
Step 8	Identify the form and layout.
Step 9	Reproduce the questionnaire.
Step 10	Eliminate bugs by pretesting.

Source: adapted from Malhotra, (2010, p.355).

3.7.1 Research Tools Rejected

Given all the benefits associated with questionnaires and interviews a focus group was the preferred choice as the researcher was interested in the respondent's opinions and beliefs given the objectives of this particular project.

Questionnaires were rejected due to the fact an emotional response was sought from the participants explaining their real life experiences. Focus groups allowed the participants to explain their answers and give their views. Whereas questionnaires can often be completed hastily without any true reflection on respondents attitudes and feelings towards a particular subject.

Interviews were also rejected as the researcher sought the opinions of a variety of consumers with the aim of comparing the results as it was felt that this would give a truer reflection of the demographic chosen. Interviews can limit the results to a certain degree as they don't reflect a greater audience and are restricted to the opinions of one individual.

Focus Groups allowed for the respondents to construct opinions and sentiments based on the responses of other participants.

3.8 The Sampling Process

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.376) once a decision has been made to commence a sample, the researcher engages in the sampling process. It consists of seven stages.

Table 8: The sampling plan

Stages involved	Commentary
Stage 1	Define the population.
Stage 2	Choose a sample frame.
Stage 3	Choose a sampling method.
Stage 4	Select a sampling type.
Stage 5	Determine the sampling size.
Stage 6	Analysis of data.
Stage 7	Validation of the sample.

Source: adapted from Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.376).

3.8.1 Sampling Frame

Kent (2007, p.237) describes a sampling frame as a list of all the people in the population of interest that will be interviewed. The first stage of sampling is deciding whether a sample or census will be used. The population of interest needs to be defined and a sample list of all the participants. There are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability.

3.8.2 Sampling Type and Size

Type: Focus Group.

Number of participants: 2 groups, 10 participants in each group.

Profile: Generation Y.

Media used: Focusgroupit.

Two online focus groups were selected as the medium of choice as the researcher had difficulties conducting offline focus groups due to participants having other commitments and being unavailable to meet at certain times.

3.8.3 Profile of respondents for focus group

The population of interest consists of Generation Y participants whose ages vary from 20 to 32. The nationalities of the participants make this research intriguing as it gives a comparative global insight into various retail markets in different countries and the similarities and contrasts of each. All of the participants are familiar with online shopping and have used technology previously to purchase items online therefore are well suited for this research project.

Table 9: Focus Group A

Group A				
Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location
Sandeep	29	Male	India	Wicklow, Ireland.
Luis	32	Male	Mexican	Acapulco, Mexico.
Brendan	32	Male	Irish	Wicklow, Ireland.
Boremir	26	Male	Ukrainian	Dublin, Ireland.
Ken	28	Male	Irish	Dublin, Ireland.
Esmond	32	Male	Irish	Clare, Ireland.
Ciaran	29	Male	Irish	Wicklow, Ireland.
Sophie	25	Female	Irish	Wicklow, Ireland.
Jake	24	Male	Australian	Canberra, Australia.
Zoe	25	Female	Irish	Dublin, Ireland.

Table 10: Focus Group B

Group B				
Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location
Des	20	Male	Irish	Dublin, Ireland.
Mohammed	32	Male	Egyptian	Dublin, Ireland.
Carol	24	Female	Chinese	Canberra, Australia.
Gavin	30	Male	Hong Kong	Sydney, Australia.
Florian	20	Male	French	Dublin, Ireland.
Jeimy	32	Female	Mexican	Monterrey, Mexico.
Shunghing	20	Female	Irish	Dublin, Ireland.
Rosa	30	Female	Korean	Seoul, South Korea.
Aaron	21	Male	Irish	Dublin, Ireland.
Amjad	30	Male	Iranian-Australian	Adelaide, Australia.

3.9 Sampling Method

Kent (2007, p.231) purports that once a population list has been compiled the next stage is choosing between a probability and non-probability sample.

3.9.1 Probability Sampling Method

Bradley (2013, p.162) explains probability sampling as a technique used to collect samples in a process that gives all individuals an equal chance of being selected. The effect of this is minimal bias as the individuals are randomly selected. They include – Simple Sampling, Stratified Sampling, Systemic Sampling and Cluster Sampling.

Table 11: Types of Probability Sampling

Type	Commentary
Simple	This is the easiest form of the sampling techniques. The researcher needs to ensure all members of the population are on the list and randomly select the desired number of individuals.
Stratified	Subjects are grouped into different classifications such as age, gender or socioeconomic status. Usually used when the researcher wants to study a particular subgroup within the population.
Systemic	The difference between any two consecutive numbers is the same. The researcher randomly pick an individual from the list, then every 2nd or 3rd or 4th person etc.
Cluster	Cluster sampling is used when the population is too big and almost impossible to do simple sampling. E.g. Population of Europe.

Source: adapted from Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.383-p391).

3.9.2 Non-Probability Sampling Method

This method of sampling differs from probability sampling, as the process doesn't give all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being chosen. Becoming more familiar with the population and their views is more important than having a representative sample. Domegan and Fleming (2007, p392).

Table 12: Types of Non-Probability Sampling

Type	Commentary
Convenience Sampling	Individuals are selected because of their availability to the researcher. This method is considered the easiest and cheapest to implement.
Purposive Sampling	The sample members are chosen because they are not representative of the population. They are chosen because they reject the product or service being discussed. It is used to include a range of opinion.
Quota Sampling	This is the most common of all sampling techniques. The researcher ensures equal representation of subjects depending on what the basis of the research is.
Judgmental Sampling	The researcher chooses the subjects that are more suited for the research compared to other individuals.
Snowball Sampling	This type of sampling is done when there is a small population size. However, due to the small size of the respondents it is not representative of the population.

Source: adapted from Domegan and Fleming (2007, p392-p397).

3.10 Conclusion

The sampling method chosen for this study was non-probability sampling. This was chosen in the form of convenience sampling as the researcher had access to Generation Y participants in Dublin Business School and colleagues abroad with the use of Focusgroupit. The researcher aims to conduct two focus groups over the course of a week with respondents logging on at similar times to give their opinions on technology in the retail industry in their home countries whilst answering questions relating to the three primary objectives.

A single methodology approach was chosen in the form of exploratory research. Exploratory research lays the groundwork for future studies. This was thought to be

most suited as opposed to descriptive and causal. Descriptive and causal were rejected as the researcher is looking for new ideas and opinions.

Qualitative was chosen over quantitative and the research tool selected was a focus group over questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Malhotra, Birks and Wills (2013, p.51) purport that data analysis is a set of methods and techniques that are used by a researcher to obtain information from the data collected. Data collection and analysis are intrinsically related therefore can almost be done at the same time.

In this chapter the researcher will analyse the outcomes of the focus groups and the literature review to gauge if there are any distinct similarities or contrasts between the primary research and the secondary research. This will result in the research hypothesis being recognised or rejected. The outcomes will be separated according to the research objectives and triangulation will take place in recognising these key conclusions.

4.2 Data Analysis and Preparation

There are four essential tasks that must be undertaken in order to decipher the data collected. These include: Editing, Coding, Tabulation and Summarisation.

Table 13: Stages of data collection

Stage	Evidence
Editing	Editing is used to increase accuracy and precision. It involves checking for a number of problems including: Ambiguity, Inconsistence, Incompleteness, Inaccurate data, and Interviewer error, Non-adherence to sampling instructions and if responses are too consistent. Whilst the data collected from the focus groups is extremely useful it is necessary to edit this information in order to assess the relevant answers for the study being undertaken. As the research is being conducted on participants who don't have backgrounds in the retail industry it is necessary to edit their responses accordingly. English is a second language for a number of participants therefore it is required to check they understood the questions being asked and correct their responses without taking away from the point's they are making.
Coding	The primary purpose of coding is to eliminate errors in the raw data and to process the data into categories. Coding is divided into two types. These are pre-coding and post-coding. Post-coding has been selected for this particular project. The responses from the participants were grouped together and assigned a code dependant on the answer they gave. This makes it easier to unveil any similarities between the answers provided and reveals any trends that may occur during the process.
Tabulation	Once responses are assigned to categories it is necessary to count the responses in each category. Tabulation involves three activities: sorting, counting and summarising. There are two forms of tabulation: simple tabulation and cross tabulation. As the research carried out was exploratory the results are more of a guide than definite statistical resolutions.
Summarisation	There are two types of summarisation. These are: measure of central tendency and measures of dispersion. Once the previous three steps have been carried out the information is summarised and analysed. Triangulation occurs as a result. This is the use of more than one method of research to cross reference the data collected from a number of different sources.

Source: adapted from Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.413-423).

4.3 Research Question

The research question investigates whether Generation Y are more likely to shop online for fashion items as opposed to going to a traditional bricks and mortar shop front and the motivations behind their decisions. This research proves that consumers still have mixed feelings about which is their preference. They are acceptive to both methods and welcome new technologies. Not many participants have heard of bluetooth beacons but they were very interested to know more about this technology.

4.4 Research Hypothesis

As a result of the primary and secondary research conducted, the findings insinuate that the research hypothesis is accurate. Online purchases are an increasingly popular choice and this trend is replicated internationally. Some of the main obstacles faced by online stores are the sizing charts and what the item would look like when tried on by the customer. This indicates most participants still prefer to see the product and try it on before purchasing it. However, this hindrance appears to have been overcome in the forms of showrooming and webrooming. Although most participants in the focus groups have never heard of these terms almost half stated that they have participated in these rituals with showrooming being the preferred choice.

Online security is also a major anguish for the participants with most indicating this as a primary concern.

Research findings suggest that online shopping is increasing in popularity. However, it is still imperative for the retailer to have a shop front in order for the customer to have the option to try on the items before purchasing.

4.5 Research Objectives

4.5.1 Objective 1 – Findings

In this section of the research the author analyses the findings for objective 1 as follows:

To examine the Digital Technologies being used in relation to Generation Y students shopping online as opposed to in store for fashion items.

The participants responded very positively to new technologies available both online and offline. Most participants have never heard of bluetooth beacons and this raised an interesting point in the discussion with most intrigued and fascinated to know more. Another interesting finding was the participants in Asia/Australia preferred mobile devices such as their smartphones or iPads to shop online whereas the Irish participants favoured laptops or PCS. Although Generation Y may be regarded as tech savvy a number of them had never heard of Bluetooth Beacons and were also hesitant

about the possibility of using them. Many prefer to go to the store without having to use their phone to get deals and bargains whilst in the store shopping. This can be distracting and may result in tetchiness amongst the participants.

Triangulation:

The primary research aimed to fill in gaps left by the secondary research. Obtaining customers opinions versus the opinions of authors and journalists was of utmost importance to identify whether the literature being published is a true and fair reflection of consumers attitudes.

Although the use of online shopping websites and apps can be convenient and of great advantage to many retailers as stated in the literature review, it fails to recognise that in fact using a retailers website to purchase goods can be quite off putting due to the bombardment of advertising as stated by a number of participants in the online focus groups.

An interesting point is that consumers shop online to avoid the hassle and stress of crowds however there are other factors that are causing similar frustrations. This is a point that the literature research fails to identify.

4.5.2 Objective 2 – Findings

In this section of the research the author analyses the findings for objective 2 as follows:

To investigate whether brand loyalty comes into play when Generation Y students are shopping online for fashion items.

This research proved the point that consumers usually stick to what they know. However, price is a key factor. The research suggests participants will stick to the brands they are familiar with but will shop around for the best deal on the product they like. Some participants said they aren't brand loyal specific however they only shop for brands they are familiar with.

Triangulation:

A key factor in brand loyalty is customer service. The interaction with staff was slightly overlooked by the respondents of the focus groups. They were more inclined to focus on brands they were familiar with and mentioning price as being the key factor.

However, customer service and human interaction are key in generating brand loyalty. This was also an essential area that was not overly prevalent in the secondary research as many articles and books focused more on generating brand loyalty as a result of having a superior product and competitive price. The importance of friendly, helpful staff seems to be an area that is getting overlooked as retailers migrate to an online marketplace. This has been a key factor for decades in the bricks and mortar stores however it seems to be an area that needs to be invested in going forward.

Good service is not only delivering a product on time. Generating brand loyalty involves human contact and gaining regular consumers is based on the interaction of staff. This is an area that may need to be focused on in the future by retailers and market researchers alike.

4.5.3 Objective 3 – Findings

In this section of the research the author analyses the findings for objective 3 as follows:

To examine whether the downturn in the economy has affected the online and offline purchasing behaviour of Generation Y students.

The majority of participants intimated price as the primary factor for their online shopping behaviour. However, they don't necessarily prioritise essentials over luxuries. If the participants want a product, they research it and eventually purchase it for the most competitive price possible. Therefore, although the economy has changed over the last decade consumers still purchase the items they want however take more time to research for the best price. Cheaper alternatives may also be considered if the quality is comparable.

Triangulation:

There is a direct association between the primary and secondary research regarding price being the key reason Generation Y shop online. Whilst quality of the product and speed of delivery do play important roles, the cost of the product is the main recurring theme amongst most participants.

This was mentioned by the majority of the participants which reveals that in fact the economy is having an effect on the way generation Y shop whether they are aware of it or not.

4.6 Conclusion of Key Findings

This research focused primarily on Generation Y participants. The age varied from twenty to thirty two, therefore there was a good spread of participants responding. The researcher felt that the study would be more interesting if contributors from around the globe participated and gave their view's on the online shopping experience in their home countries as this would give a better perspective of what was happening globally and the outcomes could be compared to the online shopping experience of Irish consumers.

The results were intriguing and it was felt that if there was a significant investment put in place this research could provide some very beneficial findings for retailers to utilise.

Participants indicated price, convenience and choice as the significant factors in choosing online shopping. These key findings were prominent in the literature review and remain the case in the primary research. Security was a concern amongst the group; however, most used websites they were familiar with therefore this did not distract them from shopping online. The online market resembles the high street in some ways, as shoppers appear to stick to what they know, like and trust.

Therefore, the fact that customers are located in Australia, China, Ireland or Mexico does not matter, as consumer attitudes to online shopping are very similar.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate Generation Y's attitudes to online shopping versus the traditional high street store experience. Participants from around the globe took part in two focus groups to give their views and experiences of what they have encountered.

The primary and secondary data revealed a number of similarities between the two and complimented each other to a certain degree. The secondary research revealed price and convenience to be the main reasons consumers chose to shop online and this was supported by the primary research carried out with most participants citing these as their main reasons followed by quality.

The participants were familiar with the technologies available in the forms of websites and mobile apps however cited the barrage of advertisements as a nuisance that they would prefer eradicated from the online shopping experience.

5.1.1 Objective 1

The first objective of the research was to investigate online shopping and the new technologies being used in the retail industry. According to the secondary research conducted, retailers are investing a great deal of time and effort into employing new technologies both online and instore and much of their attention is being focused on tech savvy generation Y.

Bluetooth beacons raised interest from the participants of the focus groups, which confirms consumers are intrigued by new technologies. However, the responses were mixed as to whether they would be willing to try them or not as some participants cited that they were a form of aggressive marketing. Findings also concluded that online security is still a concern whilst using mobile apps and websites, with consumers still hesitant to shop online as a result. Participants mentioned online advertisements as a nuisance and that retailers should rescind on this to a certain degree, as it is dissuading customers from using those websites.

In conclusion, the investment in both instore and online technologies is worthwhile from the retailers point of view as generation Y are now using their mobile devices to shop online. However, more focus should be placed on price and ensuring security of customer's personal details.

5.1.2 Objective 2

The second objective sought to examine whether Generation Y were brand loyal or willing to try new brands and products when shopping online. The primary research revealed the majority of participants were more inclined to remain loyal to the brands they have become accustomed to however if they found comparable products for a lot cheaper and similar quality they would be inclined to try them instead. Therefore, it is essential for companies to generate brand awareness along with competitive prices. This can be achieved by embracing the different media channels available, such as social media and employing various digital marketing techniques.

The majority of participants are affected by recommendations from people they know therefore this is an avenue that retailers could investigate further. Perhaps companies could put in place rewards schemes for customers who endorse their products and websites. This would increase familiarity of a brand with the general public and consequently result in customers trying these new brands.

5.1.3 Objective 3

The third objective aimed to understand whether the downturn in the global economy affected Generation Y's attitudes to online and offline shopping. In a recent study conducted by Accenture (2013) it was revealed that generation Y customers are looking for price, convenience, speed and a seamless shopping experience. This research was supported by the primary research conducted which discovered price and convenience to be the key contributing factors for Generation Y participants when choosing to shop online as opposed to offline.

The primary research also revealed that Generation Y are more inclined to shop around before making a final purchase. The accessibility of various retailers online makes it easier to browse and compare products and prices. Participants in the focus

groups mentioned that eliminating delivery costs would motivate them to use one retailer over another.

Therefore, retailers must be aware of competitor prices and implement incentives to attract online customers and gain competitive advantage as customers are being more savvy with their money.

5.1.4 Verification of The Hypothesis

The research confirms the research hypothesis that online shopping is becoming the new norm for Generation Y with competitive prices and convenience being the main driving factors. However, having a well-known physical store is important for a company to gain trust and build a relationship with the customer, as consumers are still hesitant about using online retailers they are not familiar with.

The primary research revealed a main aspersion online retailers faced was the uncertainty faced by customers regarding returning items purchased online. However, possessing a physical store on the high street can counteract this as the customer feels they can go to the shop if they are unhappy with the product or service and speak to someone face to face. Therefore, online and offline should be used to compliment each other as opposed to retailers choosing one over the other.

5.2 Recommendations

Following the completion of the study, the researcher would recommend conducting future research on a larger number of participants and using a different generation.

Comparing the views of older and younger participants to that of Generation Y may give different perspectives and result in different outcomes.

Creating brand awareness is essential for online retailers as verified by both the primary and secondary research. Online consumers are shopping for brands they are familiar with and recommended by peers. Therefore, having an instore presence is as equally important as to just having an online presence as this creates familiarity of the brand with the general public.

More accurate sizing charts and better photos are points the focus group participants suggested they would change about the online experience. Providing incentives to regular online clients was mentioned and this is an idea that stores may wish to focus more attention on in the future. Perhaps retailers could provide cash discounts for regular clientele.

Price and convenience are key points that companies should focus on. Being aware of competitor's prices and what ad-campaigns they are running is essential for retailers to remain competitive. Therefore, having advanced technology and gimmicks is pointless if a competitor is offering similar quality products at a better price.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Focus Group A

Technology in the Retail Industry

Focus group name: Technology in the Retail Industry Group A

About this focus group

Hello everybody. My name is Andrew and I will be the moderator for this focus group. The primary subject area of interest will be Technology in The Retail Industry. The main topic areas being discussed are: what technology do you use to purchase fashion items, are you brand loyal when shopping online and has the recession affected the way you shop and if you shop around before making a final purchase? I would like to find out your motivations and feelings towards the technology available to you today and in particular these main topic areas. Please feel free to express your feelings and don't be shy to elaborate on any issues you feel are important. Your feedback is appreciated and your opinion counts, as they are your views on particular subjects. Also, if you could please just give a quick introduction. E.g. Name, Age, if you are fulltime working, Nationality - as it would be great to hear about foreign country's shopping websites and how they compare to shopping online in Ireland. Thanks a million for your input.

Media Used: www.focusgroupit.com

Group A

Can you please give a brief introduction of yourself? Name, Age, Gender, Nationality - as it would be great to hear about another country's shopping websites and how they compare to shopping online in Ireland.

Sandeep P: Sandeep Pandey, 29, Male, Indian. Studying food science in Dublin. I mostly use www.jabong.com.

Luis - Lmanuel1978: Sure, I am Luis Manuel, 32, Male, Mexican. And I usually shop on the following website www.mercadolibre.com.

Brendan O: I am 32 and I come from a rural village in County Wicklow in Ireland. I am currently employed as a warehouse operative and studying a fas course in the evenings.

Boremir B: Boremir, 26, male, Ukrainian student doing a health and safety course in Dublin city centre.

Ken: Ken, 28. Male. Irish. Part time student.

Esmond: I'm Esmond. I'm 32. I work as a personal trainer and am doing a course in lifeguarding and to be a surf teacher.

Ciaran: Ciaran. 29. Irish. I'm a part time student doing Physical Therapy and work part time as well.

Sophie M: Sophie, 25, female, Irish. Student. Civil Engineering in DIT.

Jake Fraser: Jake, 24, male, Australian.

I work as both a professional full time and part time student.

Zoe M: My name is Zoe. I am 25 years old and I am Irish. I am working full time with Lidl and studying retail management.

1. Are you familiar with online shopping and the various websites available?

E.G. Amazon, ASOS, Littlewoodsireland and so on.

- **If so, what websites did/do you use?**
- **What were the main reasons you started shopping online? (Convenient, don't like the hassle of crowds, competitive prices, try new brands)**

Sandeep P: Yes some of them, I often use Amazon. I do find shopping online hassle free and often have a wider selection.

Lmanuel1978: I am familiar with Amazon; I have bought some products there though I usually avoid shopping online because to be honest I am kind of old-fashioned. The main reason I do online shopping is because there are certain products I can't just find at my local mal and in those cases I do, they are usually more expensive.

Brendan O: Yes I am familiar with online shopping and I would use Amazon, Gumtree most frequently.

Boremir B: Yes, I do shop online using eBay and Pixmania. Online shopping is great because certain products are hard to get in shops, e.g. "rare products". The prices are often cheaper as I guess the profit margins are different. Another benefit is the factor of convenience, no need to travel to a shop, the product is delivered to your doorstep. Often the selection, such as colour, sizes are better.

Ken: I often shop online for best deals and prices. I know Amazon, Ebay, Dresslily, Littlewoods, Arnotts, Brown Thomas, Genius, Next, etc. the main reasons I started is because I work during the day and study at night so don't have time. I play football on the weekend and besides the shops are too busy on the weekends anyways.

Esmond: I use Surf World and Vans.ie. They have free delivery so it's a good deal. I live in Clare so it's easy to get the stuff delivered to my apartment.

Ciaran: Yes. I am familiar with Amazon, Asos and LittlewoodsIreland. I also know eBay and Argos. I have used Addidas and a few other websites.

I started shopping online because it is convenient and more sales and bargains online.

Sophie M: I occasionally use online shopping. I have used websites such as Amazon, Missguided, Arnotts, Eason's, and Schuh.

Easier when busy/busy lifestyle. Don't like crowds. Handy delivery. Money saving. Online sales.

Jake Fraser: I often shop online to find things I like either for my girlfriend or myself. I often go online to Asos, General Pants, Universal Store, Beloved Clothing and when ever I find new sites.

I like being able to look at the range all at once and competitive pricing.

Zoe M: I use ASOS, Missguided and Boohoo quite often and am familiar with the other websites listed. I used these mainly for convenience and to try new brands. The prices are usually also lower than in other retailers.

2. How often do you shop online? (Once a day, once a week, once a month).

• **When you shop online which of the following devices do you use the most? (Smartphone, iPad, Laptop, Desktop)?**

• **What factors are important to you for your online shopping experience?**

• **What do you enjoy most about shopping online over in store?**

Sandeep P: Once a Month. Use Laptop most of the time. Cheap delivery. Convenience and freedom.

Lmanuel1978: I shop online at least once a week. The device I use the most is my laptop and occasionally my smartphone. What I enjoy the most about it is that I can do it 24/7 regardless of my location. I also like that I can buy products that I normally cannot find at my local mall.

Brendan O: I generally shop online once a week. I generally shop online using a laptop. Lower prices are important and easy methods of paying. I like online shopping, as it is less time consuming.

Boremir B: 1. It depends really, on average I would say at least twice a year to purchase some products, e.g. a book, IT gadget, also, all my holidays are booked online. 2. I use my desktop pc, it is more convenient to use compare to android tablet or Apple iPad. 3. Important factors include: website looks transparent and secure, well known, has good reviews, webpage is not flashy, e.g. doesn't bombard you with unnecessary ads, payment process is quick and easy to follow. 4. Convenience, selection, ability to compare the prices.

Ken: Few times a fortnight. When I have time I browse a few sites on the iPad. It's handy when getting the bus too and from work. I like a shop that has good reviews and that is efficient. Doesn't necessarily have to be Irish but I do trust Irish more because its local. I enjoy the convenience and the fact you can browse 3 or 4 different sites at the same time.

Esmond: Now and then. I use the laptop for buying but sometimes my phone if I'm just having a look. I like to see the newest styles and brands. It's good because I don't need to leave the apartment to shop.

Ciaran: I don't shop online much. I probably shop online once a month or on a special occasion like a birthday or Christmas.

I use my laptop when I shop online. I think cheaper prices are important and a reliable company. I enjoy the convenience of shopping online because you can browse many websites and have more choices and better selection.

Sophie M: Use online shopping occasionally (every few months). I mainly use laptop or PC.

There are no crowds, you can shop from any location.

Browsing through different items, look for best deals.

Jake Fraser: Probably once or twice a week I will browse through new clothing however I will only buy say once a month.

I think a good website with easy to use search functions is essential.

I enjoy collecting a range of stuff I like then narrowing down to what I want.

Zoe M: I would shop online once a month and would usually do so using my phone or my laptop. How easy the site is to navigate is important to me and how clear the payment methods are is also important. Shopping online is a more relaxed environment for me than going into store.

3. What are your opinions about the technologies being used today to shop? EG Online websites, mobile apps, bluetooth beacons, apple pay etc.

- **Are you familiar with Bluetooth beacons? They are devices set up in shops to notify you about products and special offers that you access on your smartphone.**
- **Is this something you would use or find interesting?**

Sandeep P: Technology is definitely making the online shopping experience much easier. Never heard of bluetooth beacons. I do find that interesting.

Lmanuel1978: I am pretty excited about them because they do make people's lives easier. I am not that familiar about Bluetooth beacons, I have heard about it but never really used it. For sure I would like you know more about it.

Brendan O: Today's technologies are making it easier to shop and helping to deliver more consumer choice. I am not familiar with Bluetooth Beacons, however I think it is aggressive marketing.

Boremir B: E commerce technologies are rapidly developing market, they will grow bigger and bigger with new ideas coming in to the market.

I am not familiar with Bluetooth beacons. I would not be happy about "a device" accessing my smart device via bluetooth while I'm in a shop, it is intrusive in my opinion, or aggressive marketing, works for someone, but not with me, would run a mile from a place like that. I would not use bluetooth beacons, neither would I recommend it to a friend.

Ken: I don't really go to the shops so I wouldn't use them. I do use the apps on the iPad.

Esmond: Good. There are not many shops in Clare so its good to be able to get the stuff delivered to the door. I don't know Bluetooth beacons. I prefer shopping from home so the websites are handy and easy to use.

Ciaran: Its great there are so many websites available. More choice and more competition so better prices. I use my laptop but don't really use my phone to shop online. I like to look around before making a final decision. I've heard about them but I'm not 100% sure what they are. I think it could be interesting. Especially if it gives a better price.

Sophie M: I think online shopping is really good. Saves so much hassle. I've never heard of Bluetooth beacons.

Jake Fraser: I think online shopping is great as you can receive discounts on special items and be notified at once.

And Bluetooth beacons sound like a cool idea although I have not experienced them.

Zoe M: Most of the websites that I would frequently purchase items on also have a mobile app. This is also good because sometimes these apps offer discounts that would not be available on the website. Traditional in store retailing seems to be having to constantly adapt to keep up with the ever growing field of online shopping I am familiar with the concept of Bluetooth Beacons but am not sure if I would use them.

4. In your opinion what are the best and worst things about shopping online?

Sandeep P: Best- Convenience and wider range. Worst- Delivery charge and Size not matching.

Lmanuel1978: The best: I have Access to far more products and at a better Price. The worst: you are exposed to identity theft and hackers.

Brendan O: The best things are that it is less time consuming, more consume choice.

I would be worried about online security.

Boremir B: Good things: convenient, competitive pricing, good variety (selection of "rare products"), especially suitable for people in remote locations

Bad things: possibility to be scammed, expectation of a product is different upon receiving it, e.g. one thing on the screen, but different feel when you hold it in your hands, lack of customer protection, e.g. where would you go to dispute if the seller is the other part of globe.

Ken: Best: can shop on the bus or train! I like the deals that are offered and the sites are up to date with the latest stuff.

Worst: can be addictive and end up buying things you didn't intend on.

Esmond: Best is the item is sent to me in a day or two. Worst is if they send the wrong thing. It hasn't happened yet but that would be annoying.

Ciaran: The best things for me are the variety of options available, good competitive prices and no crowds.

The worst thing is you don't know the quality and the fit of the product. You could buy a jumper and when you get it, its terrible quality or doesn't fit properly. Also, I don't trust websites I haven't heard of.

Sophie M: Best - can do from the comfort of your own home, can check out competitive prices.

Worst - not being able to try things on, not knowing the true quality.

Jake Fraser: Best is CONVENIENT, pricing, range, how quick it is.

Worst: can't try on the product to know if it looks good on you or fits.

Zoe M: The best thing about online shopping is how convenient it is. You can shop and browse at your own pace without having to worry about other shoppers. The prices online are also cheaper quite often than instore.

The worst thing about online shopping is the delivery times. Depending on which website you use delivery time can be quite long.

5. Are you more inclined to shop for brands you are familiar with or would you often try new brands when shopping online?

• **Do you research items and websites before purchasing?**

Sandeep P: I probably will stick to brands I know the best. Yes.

Lmanuel1978: I often shop for brands I know or those whom I might not know directly but that my friend recommend. For sure I research items before purchasing.

Brendan O: I tend to buy the brands that I am familiar with and I would research items and websites before making a purchase.

Boremir B: It depends really on I am buying, when it comes to technology or performance, its good to stick with reliable well known brand, on the other hand if this is part of clothing, etc. price would be a good indicator, the cheaper the better, do not care about brand name

Yes, I do research and compare prices, also review comments, etc.

Ken: Depends. I usually buy what I am familiar with. I research a few websites before buying it. Just like comparing prices.

Esmond: I know the surf brands but I buy what I like. Doesn't matter if they are a different name. I have a variety of clothes. I don't shop a lot so just buy what I like and think looks good.

Ciaran: I shop for brands I know and like. I would only try a different brand if the price is really good or the clothes are really nice and good quality.

I browse a lot before buying something. I like to see what it is like on before I buy it.

Sophie M: Both - would look for good bargains in name brands but also try new brands. Yes to ensure I am getting a good deal.

Jake Fraser: I would stick to mainly the same website but go for anything that looks good. And no research.

Zoe M: I would be just as inclined to buy a brand that I already knew as I would for a brand that I didn't know.

I would research websites and would go on several ones to make sure I was getting the item at the best price.

6. Do other consumers opinions affect your decision to use a website?

• Do you recommend online stores to your friends or post about them on social media?

Sandeep P: Yes various review always give an indication about how good the product is. No I don't really share this with my friends.

Lmanuel1978: I do consider other people's opinions before using a website, I have realised that that's a very useful source of information. I have recommended online stores a couple of times but I don't usually post about them on social media that often.

Brendan O: I would listen to my peers when discussing websites.
No I would not tend to recommend stores.

Boremir B: Yes, if people had bad experiences with the product I would stay away from them yes, I would, if the product is good I would say it to my friends.

Ken: Yes, I would think twice about buying from a website that I've never heard of and somebody was complaining about. I wouldn't really tell people about what I bought. Don't think they would be too interested anyway.

Esmond: Sometimes. If someone got ripped off or their credit card details stolen I wouldn't use that site.

Ciaran: Yes. If someone says they had a bad experience with a website I wouldn't use it. I don't put them on Facebook but I tell friends if I got a good deal.

Sophie M: Yes - I would look at others reviews of items. Yes I have recommended stores to friends.

Jake Fraser: Yes to both. If someone I know has had a negative experience I will usually stay clear.

Zoe M: If a friend or family member recommended a website I would then be inclined to use this website. If they also said that they had a bad experience with a certain website I would then be more likely to avoid this website.

I would not post about online stores on social media but I would recommend them to my friends, providing that I had had a good experience with this store

7. Have you heard of Showrooming and Webrooming?

- **Showrooming is when you go to the store and find an item you like. Try it on and then go online and purchase it for a better price.**
- **Webrooming is when you find an item online and go the store to try it on and purchase it in the store.**
- **Have you used either of these techniques and what were the main reasons for doing so?**

Sandeep P: No I have never heard of these before and never used these techniques. But your definition they do make sense if you have a lot of time in your hand.

Lmanuel1978: I have used showrooming. I don't know why products are so expensive on stores. I have purchased products online at half the Price they are offered on stores.

Brendan O: I have used Showrooming in order to buy items for cheaper.

Boremir B: I didn't use either of the techniques, but the idea is good, certain things, such as for example clothes, etc. need to be tried on before you buy it, once you have the idea about the size, colour for this particular brand, you can then purchase online.

Ken: Sometimes the bad thing about shopping online is that the sizes might not be what you expected. I don't have much time to go to the shops so I don't really use these techniques but I have seen people taking photos of clothes before. It's pretty popular.

Esmond: No. I just buy it if it looks good.

Ciaran: I do this but didn't know that was the name. I look online and go to the shop to try it on. If the price is the same in the shop I will buy it or I will ask the shop to match the online price.

Sophie M: No I haven't heard of them. But yes I have used Webrooming. My main reason would be to try the item on for size and to see quality.

Jake Fraser: Never heard of them but I do both. I like to try it on first. If it's not too much more expensive in store I'll just buy it there.

Zoe M: I have heard of both showrooming and webrooming but have not used either of these techniques.

8. Are there any brands you trust and are there any brands you buy over and over again?

- **What are the reasons for this?**
- **What would make you loyal or fond of buying a particular brand over other brands?**

Sandeep P: I use various Brands depending what sort of clothing it is i.e. casual, sport, formal. I stick to my brands, as I know them the best.

Lmanuel1978: I don't consider myself to be loyal to any brand because I am constantly searching for better products at better prices. Perhaps I could find a brand that suits all my needs and meets all my expectations I would but that hasn't been the case so far.

Brendan O: Tommy Hilfiger, and Nike as I have always tended to buy these brands. The quality of the product.

Boremir B: Penny's, good prices, I don't care much about brands, the clothes should look trendy though.

Ken: Stick to what you know. That way you have less chance of being disappointed. If a brand constantly makes good products and are well known I often stick with them.

Esmond: The quality. I'm not loyal. If I like it then I will buy it. Doesn't bother me about if its quicksilver or something else.

Ciaran: Diesel, Addidas, Nike and a few others. I like the style and quality so I buy their products more than others.

Sophie M: Good quality products. Nice style.

Jake Fraser: Yes there are. Zanribe is by far my favorite brand. I love the clothes they come out with and they are a good quality clothing that last.

Zoe M: I trust the Apple brand. I tend to always buy these products if looking for a new phone or laptop. This is mainly due to their high status is the market and because of recommendations from friends.

9. Do you prioritise what you shop for now and take more time to shop around for a better deal as a result of the changes in the economy?

Sandeep P: Yes I do that most of the time.

Lmanuel1978: Yes I generally do unless of course I am in a hurry and have no time to shop around.

Brendan O: I will generally browse a number of Sites before making a purchase.

Boremir B: If there is good price, I think it's worth it, I often buy it. Would not buy brand new "latest model" products as prices are exaggerated, would wait until all the hype subsides. My priorities are food comes before clothing and entertainment.

Ken: Yea, I love getting a good bargain and don't mind waiting for the sales. But things are at a good price nowadays and there's a lot of competition online with hundreds of websites to choose from.

Esmond: Not really. The stuff I like is usually the same price. I just use a few websites because they are Irish and I know the stuff will get to me quickly.

Ciaran: I shop around a lot now because there are a lot of websites so I look for the best deal.

Sophie M: Yes.

Jake Fraser: No I more just browse and if it's something I like at a good price I will get it.

Zoe M: I usually just browse around to try to find the best deal but not necessarily prioritizing one product over the other.

10. Do you look for cheaper brands when buying a product or stay with the brands you know?

Sandeep P: Again it depends what I am buying for example a t-shirt I might look for cheaper brands while a jacket I will stick to my brands.

Lmanuel1978: It depends, when it comes to clothes and lotions I usually stay with the brands I am familiar with, but regarding any other kinds of products I have no problem with cheaper brands.

Brendan O: I tend to stay with the brands that I know and that have a good reputation for quality and functionality.

Boremir B: It depends, if you go for performance, technology, food (e.g. organic, free range), etc. its OK to pay extra for quality, for something like clothes, fashion, e.g. paying extra for the brand so to speak would not be my thing to do...

Ken: I usually stick to what I know.

Esmond: Doesn't bother me. If I like it then I will get it. I'm not into shopping around. I only buy stuff online occasionally so I don't spend hours looking around.

Ciaran: It depends. I will buy diesel first but if there is something nice that's a good price I will try it.

Sophie M: Depends on the price.

Jake Fraser: I always look around for new brands but mainly the stuff I like is already in the brands I know.

Zoe M: It depends on the product. Usually I would try to find a cheaper option.

11. What would be the main thing you would change about the online shopping experience if you could?

Sandeep P: Faster Delivery, less charges, Virtual size fitment software where you can upload few of your full-length photos and you can get an idea about how it will suit your body.

Lmanuel1978: In some cases shipping takes to long that would be the only thing I would change about it.

Brendan O: Less advertising on sites and better shipping times.

Boremir B: Make sites more transparent, get rid of advertisement, include product review as a mandatory part of products page, hence, dodgy/poor products will be reported and spaced out of the market quicker.

Ken: Better size charts and be able to see what it looks like on. No delivery charges. And better benefits for regular clients. Should get more discounts the more you buy from a website.

Esmond: More brands available. In America there are loads of brands that you can't get here.

Ciaran: Better photos and see how it looks like on. Sometimes clothes look good in a picture but when you try them on they look terrible. Also, cheaper prices.

Sophie M: More competitive pricing. No delivery charges.

I like the Schuh website. They show good pictures of their products, they give 365 days for returns and you can check online stock and reserve products. I have always found the staff and service to be very helpful.

Jake Fraser: Have more accurate sizing charts to help know what will fit.

Zoe M: Lower or no delivery charges. Sometimes this can be off putting when buying a product online. Better descriptions/images of products. A clear/easy returns process.

Appendix Two: Focus Group B

Technology in the Retail Industry

Focus group name: Technology in the Retail Industry Group B

About this focus group

Hello everybody. My name is Andrew and I will be the moderator for this focus group. The primary subject area of interest will be Technology in The Retail Industry. The main topic areas being discussed are: what technology do you use to purchase fashion items, are you brand loyal when shopping online and has the recession affected the way you shop and if you shop around before making a final purchase? I would like to find out your motivations and feelings towards the technology available to you today and in particular these main topic areas. Please feel free to express your feelings and don't be shy to elaborate on any issues you feel are important. Your feedback is appreciated and your opinion counts, as they are your views on particular subjects. Also, if you could please just give a quick introduction. E.g. Name, Age, if you are fulltime working, Nationality - as it would be great to hear about foreign country's shopping websites and how they compare to shopping online in Ireland. Thanks a million for your input.

Media Used: www.focusgroupit.com

Group B

Can you please give a brief introduction of yourself? Name, Age, Gender, Nationality - as it would be great to hear about another country's shopping websites and how they compare to shopping online in Ireland.

Dessie Hynes: AGE: 20 year old. GENDER: male. NATIONALITY: Irish. DBS.

Mohamed S: Sammy 32 years Egyptian/Irish.

Live in Ireland. In the middle east online shopping has lots of problems as this medium of buying isn't fully trusted so many of the Arab countries you wouldn't find big names like eBay or Amazon would have branches for them there or simply refuse to send items there. But there is some local websites trying to make initiatives like <http://uae.souq.com/ae-en/>.

Carol_Feng: Name: Yushan Carol Feng. Age: 24. Gender: Female. Nationality: China, currently living in Australia. Favorite online shopping page: www.sasa.com (an online shop in Hong Kong). Studying in University Canberra.

Gavin S: Gavin, 30. Male. Chinese living in Australia. Studying CPA.

Florian.TUE: My name is Florian, I am 20 years old and I am a French man, currently business student.

Jeimy G: Name: Jeimy Guerra. Age: 32 years old. Gender: female. Nationality: Mexican. Studying hospitality.

Chan.S: Hello my name is Shunhing and I'm 20 years old. I'm a female and Irish.

Rosa: Hi, my name is Miseon and from South Korea. Of course Korean. I'm 30 years old. Female and studying IELTS.

Aaron o: Aaron o Reilly, 21, male, Irish. Studying in DBS.

Amjad: My name is Amjad, am 30 yrs old, Male, Iranian-Australian. Studying Civil Engineering in Adelaide.

1. Are you familiar with online shopping and the various websites available?

E.G. Amazon, ASOS, Littlewoodsireland and so on.

- **If so, what websites did/do you use?**
- **What were the main reasons you started shopping online? (Convenient, don't like the hassle of crowds, competitive prices, try new brands)**

Des: Yes I am very familiar with online shopping. Mainly the websites I am more familiar with are clothing websites such as Boohoo, River Island, superdry etc. The main why I started shopping online is that its 100% more convenient as for example you don't have to get out of bed to shop also to find deals and bargains as usually there are discounts you can get while shopping online which you wouldn't be able to get if I went physically shopping.

Mohamed S: Yes. I use ebay.ie amazon.com buyandsell.ie adverts.ie

Carol_Feng: Yes I am familiar with online shopping. It depends what items I want and go on different websites. Such as Sasa.com is my favorite page to purchase Korean and Japanese cosmetic. It is convenient for me to purchase other countries' products and compare different brand's prices.

I tried to order clothes from Yesstyle.com couple years ago, but I prefer purchase in store now.

Gavin S: I am not too familiar with online shopping I use eBay normally and I have more choices to buy the products I want in more competitive brand and the price there is more competitive but sometime the quality of the products may not be as good as was mentioned.

Florian.TUE: I am familiar with Amazon, for me it is the best way to purchase books. This website allow me to find the best price of the market and to receive it home within few days in France.

I ordered clothes on ASOS few years ago but I prefer to see the clothes before I purchase them.

Jeimy G: I use Amazon, eBay, and also Mercado Libre its a Mexican website.

The reason is because it is very comfortable and easy, saving you both time and avoid long queues to pay.

Chan.S: Yes I am familiar with online shopping and the various websites. Boohoo.com I started to shop online however I don't do it as much anymore I'm not really fond of shopping online now. Although there are advantages to it, online shopping does have disadvantages too.

Rosa: I prefer online shopping than in store. It depends on what and which item do I need to; If I would like to buy clothes then I go online as Korean website. There are a great amount of website for women. Because online is more cheaper than department. It's good to look around for busy salary people as Korean work too much. Also, is able to compare a price.

Aaron o: Ebay, Cheap prices and loads of selections.

Amjad: Amazon, Myer online shopping.

It's much more convenient and gives me more freedom of choice to select the cheapest and the best just but clicking on my mouse.

2. How often do you shop online? (Once a day, once a week, once a month).

- **when you shop online which of the following devices do you use the most? (Smartphone, iPad, Laptop, Desktop)?**
- **What factors are important to you for your online shopping experience?**
- **What do you enjoy most about shopping online over in store?**

Des: 4/5 times a year and I use my laptop.

Security of payments is a huge factor

The availability of multiple products.

Mohamed S: I shop online when needed but mostly once a week.

I use my laptop .

What important when online to find the items which are hard to source in stores and in good price.

Carol_Feng: Every three months. Laptop.

The most important factors for me to purchase online are reliable of website and security of payment.

Variety of products and comparative price.

Gavin S: Once a month. I use smartphone online shopping.

I like more photos and video in online shopping instead of words.

I like online shopping because it gives me more privacy and variety of products.

Florian.TUE: I shop approximately three times a year online and use my laptop.

The most important thing for me is the security of payments and to be able to have precise information on the quality and size of the product (Clothes).

To be able to select and seek more quickly what you want.

Jeimy G: When I need something or when I get emails of sales, normally I use my iPad or laptop, one of the factors is that they have a quick search and accessible, I love to buy directly in stores, however the internet you can find all colors and tastes of a very easy way, and without taking much time.

Chan.S: I don't shop online often. Just when I find a good price online.

Rosa: Well I do shopping online one or two time a weeks. But most time just look around and usually my desktop and sometimes use IPad. For me, I do not care of brand just look and buy my style as something unique and simple or beauty.

One of the best enjoyable is that very convenient with my phone. Korean people looking at Internet mall a lot, especially girls and women when they want something or just like a habit .

Aaron o: Once a week I use my laptop and a good selection is a big factor important too me the hassle of the crowd.

Amjad: Twice a month on average. iPad. Get the cheapest goods.
Virtually visiting many shops and avoiding the crowd.

3. What are your opinions about the technologies being used today to shop? EG Online websites, mobile apps, bluetooth beacons, apple pay etc.

- **Are you familiar with Bluetooth beacons? They are devices set up in shops to notify you about products and special offers that you access on your smartphone.**
- **Is this something you would use or find interesting?**

Des: No I am not aware but sounds very interesting.

Mohamed S: I think technology made a huge difference for customer experience it make it very simple to get what you are looking for to your doorsteps.

No not familiar with bluetooth beacons.

I like to get offers in my smart phone in the shops.

Carol_Feng: Technologies are good, such as mobile apps, we can shop any time at any location.

No, never heard about Bluetooth beacons.

Gavin S: No I haven't heard of it. But love to find out more about it.

Florian.TUE: Technologies are great but the security of payment can still be improved as lots of people got rip off every year. Not at all. Never heard about it. No, I think it is a too incentive way of marketing products.

Jeimy G: I'm not sure, just completed the data from my card, and address, and immediately I can make the purchase, is not even that application used to buy.

Chan.S: I don't use any apps to shop online and I am not familiar with Bluetooth beacons.

Rosa: Well, nowadays we can pay via phone as easy to use with apps. After register my card details, and then I can put only my password. However I cannot trust bluetooth beacons yet.

Aaron o: I don't use app's too shop due too security. I think technology has come far. I am not aware of bluetooth beacons perhaps I would find it interesting to use.

Amjad: Well, the variety of apps has made it difficult for me to do my shopping online, I'd much rather use iPad or laptop. And I do believe apps have a long way to go to satisfy most of people who make online purchasing.

I am not that familiar with Bluetooth beacon as far as I am aware, very very rare establishment may equipped with this technology here in Australian Market.

4. In your opinion what are the best and worst things about shopping online?

Des: Best- some cases cheaper prices, variety of products, accessibility.

Worst- any time I shop online I am always worried about payment security.

Mohamed S: The best thing is able to get what you want in a short time and effort and the worst is scams and false claims and sometimes you end up losing money for returns.

Carol_Feng: Best things: variety of selections, comparative prices, easy to access.

Worst things: cannot touch and see the products, security of the payment.

Gavin S: The best thing is cheaper price and variety of price.

Worst thing is the quality of products may not be guaranteed and it takes longer to receive the products compared shopping in a shop.

Florian.TUE: Best: Time saving. Worst: not to be able to check the size.

Jeimy G: The best thing about buying over the internet is that it is quick and easy what is bad is when you bought something you didn't like or was, it is difficult to return.

Chan.S: Best things: - A wider range of products to choose from, saves time and cheaper.

Worst things: - Can't try the items (clothes) on before purchasing them and the products could be faulty.

Rosa: Firstly, one of the best things is I can compare all products through internet. And cheap that's why many Koreans go store or department first then back for check online price or sales.

Second, it's very convenient for busy employees. People are always hard work and they have less time to go shopping. So online website is very useful or can buy something from abroad.

Last, worst things is that sometimes make me annoying after receive my stuff from delivery service or it's not the same product as I compared between online pic n real one.

Aaron o: Less hassle more choices. Worst thing is security and delivery.

Amjad: The best thing is you save a lot of time, and have the choice to take a look at many items at the same time and pick the best based on your financial situation. More importantly stops me form buying impulsively. and the worst thing is ,you can't really see or touch the item that you are purchasing.

5: Are you more inclined to shop for brands you are familiar with or would you often try new brands when shopping online?

• Do you research items and websites before purchasing?

Des: Yes I am more inclined to shop for brands I am familiar with but if I liked a brand that I am not familiar with then I would research before I buy it.

Mohamed S: I shop first with the trusted brands I had dealt with them before but if none apply I will read comments and feedbacks and do research for alternatives.

Carol_Feng: Mostly shop for brands I am familiar with. Check the comments before purchasing.

Gavin S: I am more inclined to shop for brands I am familiar with. I do some research for the items before purchased normally.

Florian.TUE: More influenced by a brand that I know.
I first look at the website.

Jeimy G: Honestly if I liked I bought, even though it's not a recognised brand, but prefer to find things of the brands that I like. If I look for in different websites to compare.

Chan.S: I rather shop for brands that I'm familiar with and yes I do.

Rosa: I'm a person who look for something unique or special items. So I do not mind but I mind price. I know well my style so I can buy with good deal price even if very cheap. I'm so happy if people compliment me or recognised me that I look like I wear lush. Korea has flood of clothes, cosmetics more things... So I always search and compare before buy my one.

Aaron o: I would try new brands online. I would always research as it makes sense too.

Amjad: Almost always I go for brands that I am familiar with, in other words I buy from the same brand over the time.

I do research to get the best deal by searching among those brands that I am familiar with.

6: Do other consumers opinions affect your decision to use a website?

• Do you recommend online stores to your friends or post about them on social media?

Des: Yes if they say they had a bad experience on a website then I would be inclined to stay away.

I would recommend but I wouldn't post on social media.

Mohamed S: Yes other opinion may affect my decision. I may post sometimes about an online shop I had a good experience with or recommend special offers.

Carol_Feng: Yes, it is important for me to check the comments of the website before purchasing. I recommend online stores to my friends but never post any comments on social media.

Gavin S: Yes it does affect me. I haven't recommended my friends any online stores yet. Because I don't do online shopping that often.

Florian.TUE: Yes of course. I always check forums before purchasing in a website I have never heard about.

No I don't.

Jeimy G: Do not affect me the comments, I risked and normally I don't do recommendations because each person has different tastes.

Chan.S: Sometimes and I wouldn't post about them on social media.

Rosa: All situations are depending on.

Aaron o: No not too a certain extend. I normal would recommend eBay.

Amjad: Slightly, maybe 25%-35%. because before purchasing an item I do a lot of research. I do strongly recommend online stores to my friends even though I might not post it on social media.

7: Have you heard of Showrooming and Webrooming?

- **Showrooming is when you go to the store and find an item you like. Try it on and then go online and purchase it for a better price.**
- **Webrooming is when you find an item online and go the store to try it on and purchase it in the store.**
- **Have you used either of these techniques and what were the main reasons for doing so?**

Des: Yes I have heard of them both but I haven't done either up to date.

Mohamed S: No I haven't heard of showrooming or webrooming.

Carol_Feng: Never heard about that. Never tried any of them.

Gavin S: I have done both before. I did showrooming with clothes because I would like to make sure the clothes I bought suit me and the price online is cheaper.

I did webrooming because I would like to try on the new products (there are no differences in price between buying online and in a shop) and I feel more comfortable to try the products before I buy.

Florian.TUE: Showrooming: Heard about it but never tried. Webrooming: Never heard.

Jeimy G: I never heard about that, I don't use any of those.

Chan.S: I have never heard showrooming or webrooming...So I haven't use either of the two techniques.

Rosa: I did both. But I never buy trousers via online. Cos always failed. So I'm half showrooming and half webrooming.

Aaron o: Showrooming would be more preferred for me too do and the main reason is cheapness.

Amjad: Yes I have heard of, but not here in Australia. I have not seen any here. I have not used any of those techniques yet.

8. Are there any brands you trust and are there any brands you buy over and over again?

- **What are the reasons for this?**
- **What would make you loyal or fond of buying a particular brand over other brands?**

Des: Yes there are brands I trust for example superdry, Abercrombie, jack wills, river island clothing and I do buy these over and over again because the quality of clothes and the style.

Mohamed S: What makes me loyal is after service as this gives lots of good reason to buy but when you face a problem a lot have bad customer service.

Carol_Feng: Yes, purchase same brands over and over again. Reasons: quality, just love it.

Gavin S: Hugo boss, Armani... I buy their products because I like their design in general and my friends like them.

Florian.TUE: Levi's, Apple: for the quality. Jules (French brand of clothes): because of the good looking of the clothes.

Jeimy G: Some brands like electronics and the reason are quality.

Chan.S: It really depends on what the item being purchased is.

Rosa: Do not mind for woman's things but I believe a brand if I would like to buy electronic or others.

Aaron o: Yes like Samsung. Trustworthy I would trust certain brands by the experience I had with them.

Amjad: Yes, the same brands that I purchase from, over and over. Lifetime and quality. It just last longer, its looks better and if it's an electronic device it would perform better than other brands by the time.

9. Do you prioritise what you shop for now and take more time to shop around for a better deal as a result of the changes in the economy?

Des: Yes I do on occasions.

Mohamed S: Yes many times I will shop for better prices and wait for sales.

Carol_Feng: Shop when I need the product.

Gavin S: Sometime but only if I have a lot of spare time.

Florian.TUE: I always take more time to shop around for a better deal.

Jeimy G: Depends, on if that is of good quality, I'm not expecting, I take at the time.

Chan.S: Take more time to shop around.

Rosa: I may go shop straight away. It's better to look directly.

Aaron o: Yes I would shop around.

Amjad: I use to but not anymore, since I have realised brands or the shop that I have made my purchasing from over these years has the most satisfying quality and I do appreciate quality than price.

10. Do you look for cheaper brands when buying a product or stay with the brands you know?

Des: Stick with brands I know.

Mohamed S: It all depends if the other brand offers a decent price for a similar quality.

Carol_Feng: If the price is much more cheaper and other technologies are similar, I prefer the cheaper brands. Otherwise purchase the brands I know.

Gavin S: If the price of cheaper is a lot cheaper and the quality is acceptable for me, I will try a new brand.

Florian.TUE: Concerning IT I always take the brand that I know but regarding other things I would look for the cheapest.

Jeimy G: Honestly don't care brands if really like to me, but I'm sure of the some brands offer more quality and exclusive designs to other.

Chan.S: I look for cheaper brands but I do stay with the ones I know as well.

Rosa: Whatever. Both are preferred but sometimes wait a time for sale.

Aaron o: Look for cheaper brands at times.

Amjad: I go for a cheaper one as I earlier said, as long as it has almost the same functionality and it's within my trusted brands.

11. What would be the main thing you would change about the online shopping experience if you could?

Des: At the moment I wouldn't really change anything but if I was being picky maybe the sizes for clothing shops.

Mohamed S: I need to have more trust for the sellers online the scams and the different items arrived to you opposite to what you requested is really frustrating.

Carol_Feng: Since only purchase cosmetic online, I would like to see more details of products, such as ingredients and the safety check etc.

Gavin S: I would like to see more products in photos and videos in online shopping to avoid the situation that you wait for the products for long time and at the end you do not like the product once you receive it.

Florian.TUE: The main thing that I would change concerning my online shopping experience of clothes would be the way that they inform concerning the size and make it much more precise.

Jeimy G: The truth I have no problems with the shopping online, for that reason does not change anything by now.

Chan.S: Yeah...I don't really have much online shopping experience so I don't know what I would change about it...

Rosa: Just want to to say, please do not write epilogue with your lie. The most problem is in Korea, people write as a lie. Also company hire part time for this. What a stupid things this is like foolish advertisement even if they do not use or wear, they write good compliments. I hate that.

Aaron o: I have to say I am happy with my shopping experience

Amjad: Will make easier for people, and will remove the junk ad on that websites and especially will not try to make people to buy what I want that what they want. For E.g.; when I go on a website which has lots of ads of what they have on sale and what they recommend people to buy, it's just not working for me at least, because as a person who 2-4 times a month make an online purchase, I already know what am going to buy or look for. The thing is on online stores you can't really be an impulse buyer, instead if they give you an offer like, once you reached a certain amount of points, you will be given a free delivery or discount on other items.

Appendix Three: Coding

Can you please give a brief introduction of yourself? Name, Age, Gender, Nationality - as it would be great to hear about another country's shopping websites and how they compare to shopping online in Ireland.

AGE					
Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	Code	Group B	Code
18-20	1	Respondent 1	3	Respondent 1	1
21-25	2	Respondent 2	4	Respondent 2	4
26-29	3	Respondent 3	4	Respondent 3	2
30-32	4	Respondent 4	3	Respondent 4	4
		Respondent 5	3	Respondent 5	1
		Respondent 6	4	Respondent 6	4
		Respondent 7	3	Respondent 7	1
		Respondent 8	2	Respondent 8	4
		Respondent 9	2	Respondent 9	1
		Respondent 10	2	Respondent 10	4

Gender					
Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	Code	Group B	Code
Male	1	Respondent 1	1	Respondent 1	1
Female	2	Respondent 2	1	Respondent 2	1
		Respondent 3	1	Respondent 3	2
		Respondent 4	1	Respondent 4	1
		Respondent 5	1	Respondent 5	1
		Respondent 6	1	Respondent 6	2
		Respondent 7	1	Respondent 7	2
		Respondent 8	2	Respondent 8	2
		Respondent 9	1	Respondent 9	1
		Respondent 10	2	Respondent 10	1

Nationality					
Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	Code	Group B	Code
Australian	1	Respondent 1	6	Respondent 1	8
Chinese	2	Respondent 2	10	Respondent 2	3
Egyptian	3	Respondent 3	8	Respondent 3	2
French	4	Respondent 4	11	Respondent 4	5
Hong Kong	5	Respondent 5	8	Respondent 5	4
Indian	6	Respondent 6	8	Respondent 6	10
Iranian Australian	7	Respondent 7	8	Respondent 7	8
Irish	8	Respondent 8	8	Respondent 8	9
Korean	9	Respondent 9	1	Respondent 9	8
Mexican	10	Respondent 10	8	Respondent 10	7
Ukrainian	11				

1. Are you familiar with online shopping and the various websites available?

E.G. Amazon, ASOS, Littlewoodsireland and so on.

- **If so, what websites did/do you use?**
- **What were the main reasons you started shopping online? (Convenient, don't like the hassle of crowds, competitive prices, try new brands)**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. B. Websites		Respondent 1	1		8	Respondent 1	7		8
Amazon	1	Respondent 2	1		11	Respondent 2	2	1	
Ebay	2	Respondent 3	1	7		Respondent 3	7		8
Asos	3	Respondent 4	2	7	10	Respondent 4	2		10
Arnotts	4	Respondent 5	2	4	10	Respondent 5	1	5	10
Argos	5	Respondent 6	7		8	Respondent 6	1	2	8
Missguided	6	Respondent 7	1	3	8	Respondent 7	7		
Other Websites	7	Respondent 8	1	6	8	Respondent 8			10
C. Emotions		Respondent 9	3	7	8	Respondent 9	2		10
Convenience	8	Respondent 10	3	6	8	Respondent 10	1		8
Wider Variety	9								
Cheaper Prices	10								
Other Reason	11								

2. How often do you shop online? (Once a day, once a week, once a month).

- **When you shop online which of the following devices do you use the most? (Smartphone, iPad, Laptop, Desktop)?**
- **What factors are important to you for your online shopping experience?**
- **What do you enjoy most about shopping online over in store?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A Frequency		Respondent 1	3	8	13	Respondent 1	5	6	
Once a week	1	Respondent 2	1	9	13	Respondent 2	1	10	13
More than once a week	2	Respondent 3	1	10	13	Respondent 3	5	7	13
Once a month	3	Respondent 4	5	7	12	Respondent 4	3	7	14
More than once a month	4	Respondent 5	4	9	15	Respondent 5	5	6	13
Less than once a month	5	Respondent 6	5	9	13	Respondent 6	5	9	15
B Factors		Respondent 7	10	3	13	Respondent 7	5		
Security	6	Respondent 8	5	9	13	Respondent 8	2	9	12
Well Presented Website	7	Respondent 9	2	7		Respondent 9	1	9	13
Delivery	8	Respondent 10	3	7	14	Respondent 10	4	10	15
Convenient Access	9								
Competitive Prices	10								
Other	11								
C Medium Used to Shop									
PC	12								
Laptop	13								
Smartphone	14								
iPad	15								

3. What are your opinions about the technologies being used today to shop? EG

Online websites, mobile apps, bluetooth beacons, apple pay etc.

- **Are you familiar with Bluetooth beacons? They are devices set up in shops to notify you about products and special offers that you access on your smartphone.**
- **Is this something you would use or find interesting?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A		Respondent 1	1	5	6	Respondent 1	3	5	6
New Technology is Good	1	Respondent 2	1	5	6	Respondent 2	1	5	6
Not Interested in New Technology	2	Respondent 3	1	5	7	Respondent 3	1	5	8
No Opinion	3	Respondent 4	1	5	7	Respondent 4	3	5	6
B		Respondent 5	1	5	7	Respondent 5	1	5	7
Familiar with Bluetooth Beacons	4	Respondent 6	1	5	7	Respondent 6	3	5	8
		Respondent 7	1	4	6	Respondent 7	3	5	8
		Respondent 8	1	5	8	Respondent 8	3	5	7
		Respondent 9	1	5	6	Respondent 9	2	5	6
		Respondent 10	1	4	7	Respondent 10	2	5	8
Not Familiar with Bluetooth Beacons	5								
C									
Interested in Bluetooth Beacons	6								
Not Interested in Bluetooth Beacons	7								
No Opinion	8								

4. In your opinion what are the best and worst things about shopping online?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Best		Respondent 1	2	9		Respondent 1	1	6	
Price	1	Respondent 2	3	6		Respondent 2	4	8	
Convenience	2	Respondent 3	2	6		Respondent 3	3	7	
Variety	3	Respondent 4	2	6		Respondent 4	1	10	
Quick Delivery	4	Respondent 5	2	10		Respondent 5	2	9	
Other	5	Respondent 6	4	10		Respondent 6	2	8	
B. Worst		Respondent 7	3	7		Respondent 7	3	7	
Security	6	Respondent 8	2	7		Respondent 8	3	10	
Cant try on the Items	7	Respondent 9	2	7		Respondent 9	3	6	
Difficulty Returning Items	8	Respondent 10	2	10		Respondent 10	2	7	
Correct Sizes	9								
Other	10								

5: Are you more inclined to shop for brands you are familiar with or would you often try new brands when shopping online?

- Do you research items and websites before purchasing?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Brand Loyal	1	Respondent 1	1	3		Respondent 1	1	3	
		Respondent 2	1	3		Respondent 2	1	3	
Yes	2	Respondent 3	1	3		Respondent 3	1	3	
No		Respondent 4	2	3		Respondent 4	1	3	
B. Research Items Before Buying Online	3	Respondent 5	1	4		Respondent 5	1	3	
		Respondent 6	1	3		Respondent 6	2	3	
Yes	4	Respondent 7	1	3		Respondent 7	1	3	
No		Respondent 8	1	3		Respondent 8	2	3	
		Respondent 9	1	4		Respondent 9	2	3	
		Respondent 10	1	3		Respondent 10	1	3	

6: Do other consumers opinions affect your decision to use a website?

- Do you recommend online stores to your friends or post about them on social media?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Affected by other consumers opinions	1	Respondent 1	1	4		Respondent 1	1	3	
		Respondent 2	1	3		Respondent 2	1	3	
Yes	2	Respondent 3	1	4		Respondent 3	1	3	
No		Respondent 4	1	3		Respondent 4	1	4	
B. Recommend online stores to friends?	3	Respondent 5	1	4		Respondent 5	1	4	
		Respondent 6	1	3		Respondent 6	2	4	
Yes	4	Respondent 7	1	4		Respondent 7	1	4	
No		Respondent 8	1	3		Respondent 8	2	4	
		Respondent 9	1	3		Respondent 9	2	3	
		Respondent 10	1	3		Respondent 10	1	3	

7: Have you heard of Showrooming and Webrooming?

- Showrooming is when you go to the store and find an item you like. Try it on and then go online and purchase it for a better price.
- Webrooming is when you find an item online and go the store to try it on and purchase it in the store.
- Have you used either of these techniques and what were the main reasons for doing so?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Heard of Showrooming and Webrooming		Respondent 1	2	4	6	Respondent 1	1	4	6
		Respondent 2	1	3	6	Respondent 2	2	4	6
Yes	1	Respondent 3	1	4	6	Respondent 3	2	4	6
No	2	Respondent 4	2	4	6	Respondent 4	1	3	5
B. Tried Showrooming		Respondent 5	2	4	6	Respondent 5	1	4	6
		Respondent 6	2	4	6	Respondent 6	2	4	6
Yes	3	Respondent 7	2	3	5	Respondent 7	2	4	6
No	4	Respondent 8	2	4	5	Respondent 8	1	3	5
C. Tried Webrooming		Respondent 9	2	3	5	Respondent 9	2	4	6
		Respondent 10	1	4	6	Respondent 10	1	4	6
Yes	5								
No	6								

8. Are there any brands you trust and are there any brands you buy over and over again?

- What are the reasons for this?
- What would make you loyal or fond of buying a particular brand over other brands?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Are There Brands You Trust		Respondent 1	1	4		Respondent 1	1	3	
		Respondent 2	2	6		Respondent 2	1	7	
Yes	1	Respondent 3	1	5		Respondent 3	1	3	
No	2	Respondent 4	1	6		Respondent 4	1	5	
B. What Do You Look For In a Brand		Respondent 5	1	4		Respondent 5	1	3	
		Respondent 6	2	3		Respondent 6	1	3	
Quality	3	Respondent 7	1	5		Respondent 7	2	8	
Used to the same brand	4	Respondent 8	2	3		Respondent 8	2	8	
Style of the brand	5	Respondent 9	1	5		Respondent 9	1	7	
Price	6	Respondent 10	1	3		Respondent 10	1	3	
Customer Service	7								
Other	8								

9. Do you prioritise what you shop for now and take more time to shop around for a better deal as a result of the changes in the economy?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
A. Do You Prioritise What You Buy as a Result of The Changes in The Economy? Yes No	1	Respondent 1	1			Respondent 1	1		
		Respondent 2	1			Respondent 2	1		
		Respondent 3	1			Respondent 3	2		
		Respondent 4	1			Respondent 4	1		
		Respondent 5	1			Respondent 5	1		
	2	Respondent 6	2			Respondent 6	2		
		Respondent 7	1			Respondent 7	1		
		Respondent 8	1			Respondent 8	2		
		Respondent 9	2			Respondent 9	1		
		Respondent 10	1			Respondent 10	2		

10. Do you look for cheaper brands when buying a product or stay with the brands you know?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
Cheaper Stick to what I know Depends on the Product	1	Respondent 1	3			Respondent 1	2		
		Respondent 2	3			Respondent 2	3		
	3	Respondent 3	2			Respondent 3	3		
		Respondent 4	3			Respondent 4	3		
		Respondent 5	2			Respondent 5	2		
		Respondent 6	3			Respondent 6	3		
		Respondent 7	3			Respondent 7	3		
		Respondent 8	3			Respondent 8	3		
		Respondent 9	2			Respondent 9	1		
		Respondent 10	3			Respondent 10	1		

11. What would be the main thing you would change about the online shopping experience if you could?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Group A	A	B	C	Group B	A	B	C
More Competitive Prices	1	Respondent 1	8	9	4	Respondent 1	4		
Better Information on The Products	2	Respondent 2	8			Respondent 2	5	11	
Better Photos and Videos	3	Respondent 3	6	8		Respondent 3	2	11	
Better Size Charts	4	Respondent 4	5	6	11	Respondent 4	3	11	
More Transparency on The Websites	5	Respondent 5	4	9	11	Respondent 5	4		
Less Advertisements	6	Respondent 6	11			Respondent 6	10		
Better Security	7	Respondent 7	3	1		Respondent 7	10		
Quicker Delivery Times	8	Respondent 8	1	9	11	Respondent 8	5		
Less Delivery Charge	9	Respondent 9	4			Respondent 9	10		
Nothing	10	Respondent 10	9	3	11	Respondent 10	6	11	
Other	11								

Appendix Four: Tabulation of Focus Groups

AGE	Code	Number of Respondents
18-20	1	3
21-25	2	5
26-30	3	7
30-35	4	5
36-40	5	0

Gender	Code	Number of Respondents
Male	1	6
Female	2	14

Nationality	Code	Number of Respondents
Australian	1	1
Chinese	2	1
Egyptian	3	1
French	4	1
Hong Kong	5	1
Indian	6	1
Iranian Australian	7	1
Irish	8	9
Korean	9	1
Mexican	10	2
Ukrainian	11	1

1. Are you familiar with online shopping and the various websites available?

E.G. Amazon, ASOS, Littlewoodsireland and so on.

- **If so, what websites did/do you use?**
- **What were the main reasons you started shopping online? (Convenient, don't like the hassle of crowds, competitive prices, try new brands)**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. B. Websites		
Amazon	1	9
Ebay	2	6
Asos	3	3
Arnotts	4	1
Argos	5	1
Missguided	6	2
Other Websites	7	7
C. Emotions		
Convenience	8	10
Wider Variety	9	
Cheaper Prices	10	6
Other Reason	11	1

2. How often do you shop online? (Once a day, once a week, once a month).

- **When you shop online which of the following devices do you use the most? (Smartphone, iPad, Laptop, Desktop)?**
- **What factors are important to you for your online shopping experience?**
- **What do you enjoy most about shopping online over in store?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A Frequency		
Once a week	1	4
More than once a week	2	2
Once a month	3	4
More than once a month	4	2
Less than once a month	5	8
B Factors		
Security	6	2
Well Presented Website	7	5
Delivery	8	1
Convenient Access	9	7
Competitive Prices	10	4
Other	11	
C Medium Used to Shop		
PC	12	2
Laptop	13	10
Smartphone	14	2
iPad	15	3

3. What are your opinions about the technologies being used today to shop? EG Online websites, mobile apps, bluetooth beacons, apple pay etc.

- **Are you familiar with Bluetooth beacons? They are devices set up in shops to notify you about products and special offers that you access on your smartphone.**
- **Is this something you would use or find interesting?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A		
New Technology is Good	1	13
Not Interested in New Technology	2	2
No Opinion	3	5
B		
Familiar with Bluetooth Beacons	4	2
Not Familiar with Bluetooth Beacons	5	18
C		
Interested in Bluetooth Beacons	6	8
Not Interested in Bluetooth Beacons	7	7
No Opinion	8	5

4. In your opinion what are the best and worst things about shopping online?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Best		
Price	1	2
Convenience	2	10
Variety	3	6
Quick Delivery	4	2
Other	5	
B. Worst		
Security	6	5
Cant try on the Items	7	6
Difficulty Returning Items	8	2
Correct Sizes	9	2
Other	10	5

5: Are you more inclined to shop for brands you are familiar with or would you often try new brands when shopping online?

- **Do you research items and websites before purchasing?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Brand Loyal		
Yes	1	16
No	2	4
B. Research Items Before Buying Online		
Yes	3	18
No	4	2

6: Do other consumers opinions affect your decision to use a website?

- Do you recommend online stores to your friends or post about them on social media?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Affected by other consumers opinions		
Yes	1	17
No	2	3
B. Recommend online stores to friends?		
Yes	3	11
No	4	9

7: Have you heard of Showrooming and Webrooming?

- Showrooming is when you go to the store and find an item you like. Try it on and then go online and purchase it for a better price.
- Webrooming is when you find an item online and go the store to try it on and purchase it in the store.
- Have you used either of these techniques and what were the main reasons for doing so?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Heard of Showrooming and Webrooming		
Yes	1	8
No	2	12
B. Tried Showrooming		
Yes	3	5
No	4	15
C. Tried Webrooming		
Yes	5	5
No	6	15

8. Are there any brands you trust and are there any brands you buy over and over again?

- **What are the reasons for this?**
- **What would make you loyal or fond of buying a particular brand over other brands?**

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Are There Brands You Trust		
Yes	1	15
No	2	5
B. What Do You Look For In a Brand		
Quality	3	8
Used to the same brand	4	2
Style of the brand	5	4
Price	6	2
Customer Service	7	2
Other	8	2

9. Do you prioritise what you shop for now and take more time to shop around for a better deal as a result of the changes in the economy?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
A. Do You Prioritise What You Buy as a Result of The Changes in The Economy?		
Yes	1	14
No	2	6

10. Do you look for cheaper brands when buying a product or stay with the brands you know?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
Cheaper	1	2
Stick to what I know	2	5
Depends on the Product	3	13

11. What would be the main thing you would change about the online shopping experience if you could?

Arrangement of Responses	Code	Number of Respondents
More Competitive Prices	1	1
Better Information on The Products	2	1
Better Photos and Videos	3	3
Better Size Charts	4	5
More Transparency on The Websites	5	3
Less Advertisements	6	2
Better Security	7	
Quicker Delivery Times	8	3
Less Delivery Charge	9	4
Nothing	10	3
Other	11	9

Appendix Five: Supervisor Progress Meetings

Meeting	Date
1	12/12/2014
2	16/01/2015
3	30/01/2015
4	16/02/2015
5	9/03/2015

Over the course of this project there were a significant number of meetings with the allocated supervisor in which the assignment was discussed and work reviewed. Complimentary to these meetings a vast number of emails were sent and feedback was provided on the progress being made. These are outlined in the Reflective Diary in Appendix Six.

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **1**

Date of Meeting: **12th December 2014**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

This was our 1st meeting. Andrew contacted me in relation to scheduling a time to meet as per specification.

Andrew has considerable work completed prior to today's meeting and evidence of academic readings was apparent. We discussed his chosen topic area including his three objectives.

We will need to augment his academic writing skills however this will be relevant post-Christmas.

Progress expected before the next meeting

- Attend the library class on "Preparing a Literature Review" on Thursday 18th December CH2.8 from 5pm – 6pm
- Read around the subject area, look at relevant video's / webinars to get a feel of the subject area
- Review 10 academic articles relating to each of the objectives (30 articles)
- Keep a live bibliography of articles read
- I will contact Andrew on Monday 15th December and Monday 5th January to gauge how he is getting on with the literature review
- Our next meeting will be confirmed after the Monday 5th January phone call (for W/C 12th January) By this time, I would like to see an almost complete Literature Review

Date of next meeting: **TBC on 5th January**

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed(Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **2**

Date of Meeting: **16th January 2015**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

- 1) Attend the library class on “Preparing a Literature Review” on Thursday 18th December CH2.8 from 5pm – 6pm (*unable to attend due to personal issues. Has registered for upcoming classes in January*)
- 2) Read around the subject area, look at relevant video’s / webinars to get a feel of the subject area
- 3) Review 10 academic articles relating to each of the objectives (30 articles)
- 4) Keep a live bibliography of articles read
- 5) I will contact Andrew on Monday 15th December and Monday 5th January to gauge how he is getting on with the literature review
- 6) Our next meeting will be confirmed after the Monday 5th January phone call (for W/C 12th January) By this time, I would like to see an almost complete Literature Review

Draft literature review completed evidence of excellent research to date. Academic writing style to be focused on to augment marks however content is relevant and accurate.

Commence diary as per JT request.

Review format of pages 1 & 2

Submitted draft methodology. Spent most of the meeting time reviewing same. Substantial work needed to augment marks however Andrew has committed himself to focus heavily on the submission of this document to the best of his ability.

Progress expected before the next meeting

- Register for library classes as per discussion
- Review the methodology chapter areas from eSource to get a feel of that is expected in terms of structure and content.
- Update references in methodology section to utilise academic sources only
- Draft methodology section as per discussion

Date of next meeting: **Friday 23rd January 10.30am Room location TBC**

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed(Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **3**

Date of Meeting: **30th January 2015**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

- Register for library classes as per discussion
- Review the methodology chapter areas from eSource to get a feel of that is expected in terms of structure and content.
- Update references in methodology section to utilise academic sources only

Submitted draft methodology. Spent most of the meeting time reviewing same. Substantial work needed to augment marks however Andrew has committed himself to focus heavily on the submission of this document to the best of his ability.

Progress expected before the next meeting

Continue with methodology section. Focus particularly on research tools rejected and those chosen.

SM will follow up with a phone call on February 5th and will arrange next meeting on that date.

Date of next meeting: TBC in phone call on 5th Feb

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed (Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **4**

Date of Meeting: **6th February 2015**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

Reviewed draft methodology. Much improved methodology section - more focused than previous versions. Discussed the sampling process including the sample he will use for primary research purposes.

Discuss the benefits and limitations of online focus groups. Based on his requirements, Andrew has decided to use an online focus group as his primary methodology.

Progress expected before the next meeting

Continue with methodology section. Complete primary research and collate relevant data.

Will check in with phonecall on Feb 9th and arrange a time and date for next meeting.

Date of next meeting:

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed (Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **5**

Date of Meeting: **26th February 2015**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

Draft 1 of project submitted for review.

Analysed primary data. Comparisons made between secondary and primary data.

Conclusions reached.

Progress expected before the next meeting

Recommended to review this chapter again as more focus is required relating to same.

Also, review the formatting/spelling as it needs attention

Date of next meeting: March 9th

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed (Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **6**

Date of Meeting: **12th March**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

Reviewed methodology section & data analysis chapter.

Progress expected before the next meeting

- Further evidence of editing, coding and tabulation needed. You have just outlined what each is however you need to provide evidence on data preparation
- Focus more on triangulation as currently there is minimal evidence of same
- You need to emphasize the sampling process much more that what you have provided.

Date of next meeting: 27th March

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

Signed (Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Research Project Meeting/ Progress Monitoring Report

Student Name: **Andrew Topley**

Student No: **10020876**

Name of Mentor: **Siobhan Magner**

Meeting No: **7**

Date of Meeting: **27th March**

Topics/ Issues discussed or addresses at the meeting.

Reviewed data analysis, conclusions and recommendations sections.

Progress expected before the next meeting

Needs to continue to focus from an academic perspective. This is our final meeting prior to the submission of the project.

Andrew has performed extremely well over the past number of months. His dedication and diligence should be commended in relation to the completion of this project.

Date of next meeting: NA

Signed (Mentor): **Siobhan Magner**

27/03/2015

Signed (Student): Andrew Topley

(Please complete and retain a copy of this report for each student meeting. Please attach supporting documentation as appropriate)

Appendix Six: Reflective Diary

Reflective Diary: Technology in the Retail Industry

To investigate whether Generation Y are more likely to purchase Online as opposed to using the Traditional Bricks and Mortar Retailer.

By Andrew Topley - 10020876

*Submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements of the
Bachelor of Business Degree in Accounting*

Supervisor – Siobhan Magner

Lecturer – Jacklyn Tully

Dublin Business School

April 2015

1. What – Knowing what you did helps you understand the learning achieved.

Prior to commencing this project I had no previous experience conducting either primary research or extensive secondary research. Attending lectures was of great benefit as they clarified the process involved in writing a research project and provided clear guidelines. Without the lectures it would have proved extremely difficult to complete the project within the set timeframe. During lectures I always wrote notes on what the lecturer was speaking about. This aided in clarifying the process and making the objectives more understandable. A crucial lecture was the literature review class. This lecture stands out as I gained a great deal of valuable knowledge from this lecture regarding the process of conducting secondary research and understanding what was required for the purpose of the project. The lecturer also provided valuable guidance on where to locate relevant sources of academic research and publishings.

Two articles that I came across during my research were a study published by Kantar Retail and another by Accenture. These had a great deal of valuable information that aided considerably in the building of this project. Through these studies the purchase path was introduced to me along with the notion of creating a seamless customer experience which proved essential to the direction of the project.

The meetings with my supervisor helped greatly and in particular the first two. These meetings provided direction and my supervisor provided valuable information that would have been very time consuming to obtain otherwise. The advice provided in relation to my academic writing abilities and avoiding the use of colloquialism was extremely beneficial. Learning to write academically has been the greatest attainment from this experience. My supervisor introduced me to showrooming and webrooming, which proved invaluable along with the use of bluetooth beacons. The articles on the Burberry store in London and Macy's in New York also proved extremely valuable.

2. Why – Knowing why you are doing something helps you move from being a passive to an active learner.

The background knowledge I gained from this experience has been invaluable. The methodology was the section which cemented the reasoning and understanding of why I was completing tasks and how they would affect and bring together the other parts of the project. Prior to this section I was following guidelines and instructions however during this phase I feel I came into my own and fused all the previous knowledge together.

Planning and organising are strong points for me. Therefore, I applied these to the development of this project. Strict timelines were personally set and prioritised over other external tasks. The literature review was completed in early January and the methodology by the end of January. The focus groups and data analysis were completed mid-February and a draft version of the project was completed at the beginning of March. This allowed time for review and refinement. Each supervisor meeting reviewed material I had completed the week before and planned work to be completed for the following meeting.

The DBS library and online resources proved essential during the research process. Both lecturer and supervisor recommended valuable resources including Amarach Research, Retailtechnology, Retailcustomerexperience, Warc, Mintel, Nielson, The Irish Times, Bostino and Inc. These were used in conjunction with a variety of different resources including published materials from Domegan & Flemming and Malhotra. The literature review was an ongoing process during the course of the project and constantly updated with new material accordingly.

Warc and Mintel proved extremely valuable as they provided an academic slant on the research being carried out as opposed to material solely published online.

My supervisor recommended I attend a library class in academic writing skills, which I completed on the 27/01/15 at 5pm in Castle House. This proved useful and worthwhile.

The methodology was the section I enjoyed most. I spent a significant amount of time in the library researching, reading and understanding the methodology behind the assignment. I like to understand how processes work and the reasoning behind them. Therefore, this section was enjoyable as it proved most educational and can be applied to future projects I partake in.

Conducting the focus groups, editing, coding and tabulating the results was very gratifying. This process was completely new to me therefore required extra attention.

3. Reaction – Knowing your strengths and weaknesses are fundamental in any learning and helps us to become better learners.

A fundamental strength is my organisational skills and my ability to work alone on different tasks. I enjoy the challenge of learning something new and found it very rewarding completing certain sections within the deadlines that had been set.

A foible would be my intolerance of working in groups. Therefore, I do prefer working individually on projects as opposed to in a group as I work quite efficiently and quickly and don't like to rely on others to get the work done. I set tight deadlines which may not accommodate certain students. The group projects I have taken part in have been quite challenging as a result, however, learning to be more patient and delegate work appropriately has been something I have improved on during the process. Project management, planning, leading a group, delegating work appropriately, having the ability to conduct in-depth research and coordinate primary research are important skills that can be applied in a company environment.

4. Learned – Reflecting on learning achieved helps us to understand how we apply this learning in different contexts.

A fundamental skill I learned throughout the course of this project was improving my academic writing skills. This has been a learning experience from the start and one that I will apply to future courses and work environments. A great deal of knowledge was gained through research of the retail industry, the technologies being used by

retailers to attract potential customers and gaining an understanding of Generation Y's attitudes.

Important skills gained include being able to write in academic format, use Harvard referencing, setting tight deadlines and adhering to them along with gaining leaderships, planning and motivational skills.

I learned how to conduct a focus group and collate the results and apply them to the relevant topics of interest.

Along with the knowledge gained, I also learned to overcome certain challenges and work around difficult situations. An example of this would be the reluctance of classmates to attend a live focus group, therefore, I had to act swiftly and change the direction slightly of the primary research by implementing two online focus groups consisting of students I knew from different countries. This actually worked out to my advantage in the end as it made the results a lot more intriguing and captivating.

Over the course of the project my ability to apply research to relevant objectives and compare and contrast different research findings has improved greatly.

5. Overall Reflection and Advice – How could your learning help others?

The topic chosen was Technology in The Retail Industry: To investigate whether Generation Y are more likely to purchase Online as opposed to using the Traditional Bricks and Mortar Retailer. For this particular topic Generation Y were appropriate. However, conducting the research on a different generation and comparing the results would be intriguing.

Some advice I would give future students is to plan ahead and adhere to deadlines set. Doing this will leave plenty of time to implement minor changes, corrections and gives plenty of time to review the work completed and polish off minor details.