MASTERS DISSERTATION

Key differences in online clothes shopping behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y in Ireland

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Declaration

‘I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of MSc in Digital marketing is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.’

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Abstract

The importance of understanding shopping behaviour of consumers cannot be underestimated. The purpose of this study is to identify the main determinants and motivational factors that differentiate Generation Z (Age:18-24) and Generation Y (Age:25-34) consumer groups in Ireland and how this influences their behaviour when shopping for clothes with online retailers. A descriptive research design along with deductive positivism philosophy was applied. Primary data was collected through an online survey of 87 consumers who have experience in purchasing clothes online. Findings show that the most pronounced differences between Generations Z and Y relate to hedonic motivation of Generation Z and utilitarian motivation of Generation Y along with preferences of social media platforms, mobile retailer apps, discounts, uniqueness of clothes and tendencies to purchase from one or more brands. These findings are important for online fashion retailers to understand as these generations represent the largest consumer groups who purchase clothes online.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

There is a constantly growing number of Internet users worldwide including internet users in Ireland who shop online. The behaviour of people has changed significantly in relation to making their clothing purchase decisions and how they shop. Moreover, the consumer purchase journey has become much easier and less time consuming (Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017; Rahman, et al., 2018; Rosy and McCormick, 2018). There is a positive trend, which shows an increase in the number of consumers who use smartphone devices for shopping online. In Ireland, such an increase has been seen from 2017 to 2019 with regard to various channels and this trend continues to grow (Statista, 2020). Research shows that, mobile ecommerce shopping has doubled from 10% in 2018 to 20% in 2019 for all generation groups. A similar increase has been seen with regard to desktop online purchases showing a rise from 14% in 2018 to 21% in 2019, as well as tablets - from 7% to 13% (Mintel, 2020). An annual report “The state of fashion 2019” has found that consumer shopping behaviour is shifting towards mobile device usage, prioritising platforms over other factors and looking for a personal approach (McKinsey and Company, 2019). For instance, a PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report (2019) states that 51% of Irish consumers in 2019 were purchasing fashion clothes items via social media channels.

A big challenge that many online fashion retailers are facing now is to identify the best way and the best time to approach their customers with the right message. The researcher has identified that no studies have been done in relation to determinants and motivational factors that influence the shopping behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y in Ireland. No scholarly research that analyses modern consumers and online fashion retailers’ relationships in Ireland was found. In addition, a number of researchers have stressed the importance of conducting more research relating to shopping behaviour of different age groups and possible differences between them due to the constantly evolving market of the online fashion industry (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Vojvodic, Matic Sosic and Zugic, 2018; PwC, 2019) .

1.1 Background to this Research

Fashion retailers who understand the importance of being digital can bring new social and commercial value to online retail and gain a competitive advantage. According to Mintel (2020), in The Republic of Ireland, clothing retail was on the top of all online purchases made during the period of September to November 2019 counting for 54%. In addition, clothing electronic commerce retail is expected to grow annually at 17% and to reach €749 million by 2023 (iZest, 2019). Yet, despite a positive online shopping trend, physical stores still remain important, as they generate the majority of sales (PWC's Annual Global Total Retail Consumer Survey, 2017). As consumers can purchase online but search in the physical store or vice versa, it is necessary to understand what attracts or motivates them to make online purchases and to choose specific channels and devices.

Despite a significant amount of research relating to online shopping behaviour being conducted (Chen, 2009; Wu and Ke, 2015; Lim et al., 2016; Rahman et al., 2018; Wadera and Sharma, 2018), limited attention has been devoted to a specific generation's behaviour (SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017; Kim and Ammeter, 2018; Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019; Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020) and very little in Ireland (Connolly and Bannister, 2008). Although some studies distinguish age from 18 to 34 years old as one group category (Kim and Ammeter, 2018; Rosy and McCormick, 2018), this research employs an approach based on the latest generally accepted division that includes Generation Z (18 – 24 years) and Generation Y (24 – 34 years) Both generations were found to be the core consumers for most retailers, as they represent the vast majority of the worldwide workforce (*BelVG*, 2019).

According to Hanbury (2019), Generation Z has different beliefs, behaviours, and expectations compared to Generation Y. Thus, these two generations have to be analyzed as separate customer segments in the way they shop online. The gap in the existing literature on online shopping behaviour of consumers who live in Ireland shows that there is a necessity to carry out research in this context.

1.2 Problem Definition and Research Question

This research contributes to the knowledge by investigating determinants and factors of Generation Z and Generation Y online shopping behaviour, purchase intention and impulse-buying behaviour while shopping for clothes online. Moreover, it answers what are preferable online shopping channels and device usage as well as the importance of price and influential factors on online shopping behaviour. The research also defines attitudes of both generations towards shopping for clothes from online fashion retailers, an area that is vital in the twenty-first century, due to the significant growth of online clothing shopping over the past two decades (Rosy and McCormick, 2018). This provides a deep insight into online shopping behaviour of these two generations and identifies whether age influences their choices. As the needs of modern consumers have been constantly changing, especially now at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland (McKinsey, 2020).

The ultimate purpose of this study is to answer the following research question:

“Is there a difference in the behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y in Ireland while shopping for clothes online?”

1.3 Research Objectives

For the purpose of answering the research question, the following research objectives were identified:

O1: To identify the key determinants and factors that influence online shopping behaviour of consumers.

O2: To examine the key determinants that influence Generation Z online shopping behaviour at the pre-purchase and purchase stages.

O3: To examine the key determinants and factors that influence Generation Y behaviour when shopping online at the pre-purchase and purchase stages.

O4: To determine the key differentiating factors between Generation Z and Generation Y in relation to online clothing shopping behaviour in Ireland with online fashion retailers.

O5: To recommend effective ways of engaging with Generation Z and Generation Y in Ireland.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation has the following structure:

Chapter one is an introduction. It includes the background of this research, problems, and gaps that this research will address, along with the research question and objectives.

Chapter two is a literature review. It includes information on research studies relating to online shopping behaviour of consumers, as well as the key variables at the pre-purchase and purchase stages Furthermore, determinants and motivational factors that are the same or different for Generation Z and Generation Y are discussed, specifically, differentiating factors of their behaviour while shopping online. Chapter two also contains the developed hypotheses that will be proved or disproved.

Chapter three contains research methodology based on the "research onion" concept, including the research participants, research design such as philosophy, approach, research strategy, time horizon, materials, sampling techniques, the procedure, and ethics.

Chapter four includes the results of primary data findings based on five objectives of this dissertation. It contains summary data of the main determinants and factors displayed in graphs and sections two to four, includes the main differentiating factors between Generation Z and Generation Y as well as in relation to online clothing shopping.

Chapter five is a discussion. It explains the findings from the collected primary data and compares it to the reviewed literature. Information is analysed in order to identify if research hypotheses are correct based on the data collected through the questionnaire from Generation Z and Generation Y. The research limitations and ideas to the future research are a part of this chapter. It also contains conclusions and the answers to the research question based on the achieved objectives. It provides recommendations for online fashion retailers in regard to the best ways of engagement with Generation Z and Generation Y.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of this Study

The scope of this research is to explore the online shopping behaviour in the context of purchasing clothing from online fashion retailers by Generation Z and Generation Y who live in Ireland.

This research is limited to consumers aged 18 to 34 years old, who have purchased clothes online at least once. The findings do not specify if clothes were bought for themselves or for other people. This study includes consumers from different cultures and does not specify Irish citizens responses. All respondents currently live in Ireland and this was a qualifying factor for them to be included in this research. Thus, the only difference analysed in this research relates to age and not culture.

Although, a wide variety of factors were chosen to identify the difference in behaviour between generations, further investigations can include mediating factors in relation to specific groups of determinants.

A lower number of responses were collected from Generation Z than Generation Y. This may point to the fact that Generation Z may have less experience in purchasing clothing online due to a lack of buying power relating to their young age.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Evaluating existing literature helps to facilitate a discussion about the value of the piece of work and clarify its importance, similarity, or opposite views to the chosen topic (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). According to the literature reviewed, it was possible to develop the research hypotheses.

As stated by Turner (1998) a generation can be defined as "a group of persons who have common habits and lifestyle while passing through a specific period of time" (Turner, cited in Chaney, Touzani and Slimane, 2017). This research aims to understand if there is a difference in behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y when they shop for clothes online. Moreover, it focuses on examining patterns in behaviour at the pre-purchase and purchase stage of these groups. The researcher is planning to identify factors that influence Z and Y generations online shopping behaviour in Ireland, social media platforms, device usage preferences, the level of importance of price and quality along with their expectation in relation to online fashion retailers.

According to what has been mention above, the literature review will be organised in three parts.

The first part will describe consumer online shopping behaviour (including purchase intention and impulsive buying tendency) as well as determinants and motivational factors that are found to be influential on their behaviour. This part will help to identify the main topic. The existing literature widely explores consumer behaviour when shopping online, but fewer studies concentrate on the behaviour of different generations (Hall and Towers, 2017; Vojvodic, Matic Sosic and Zugic, 2018; Florenthal, 2019).

The second part will narrow down the behaviour of the two valuable target groups such as Generation Z and Generation Y and elements of their online journey. In this section online factors that motivate and influence Generation Z and Generation Y will be identified. The literature will also be examined in regard to online channels and devices that are preferred by these groups, influence of the price while shopping online and their overall experience.

The final part will justify the research aim. It will precisely describe vital determinants and motivating factors based on previous literature that are different for Generation Z and Generation Y in relation to online clothing shopping behaviour.

In order to conduct a comprehensive search for the most relevant, peer reviewed and latest studies, a number of free accessible statistic reports, web, and academic articles in Google Scholar, as well as EBSCO databases and other DBS library sources were accessed.

2.2 Online Shopping Consumer Behaviour

The term “consumer behaviour” can be considered from psychological, information system and marketing science concepts. A positivism paradigm refers to consumer behaviour as an independent research field and suitable for using “quantitative and empirical methodologies” (Chen, 2009). In this study, the researcher will look at it in the online shopping context. The definition of consumer behaviour as set out by Solomon (2017) “is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. According to Pachauri (2002), the term “consumer” means both the act of purchase as it is and patterns of aggregate buying which include pre-purchase and post-purchase shopping stages (Pachauri, cited in Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Some consumers love to search and purchase clothes online, others want to make it as convenient and quick as possible. In all cases, people want to have good feelings from shopping and be happy with their purchase and experience (Katawetawaraks and Cheng, 2011, cited in Mican and Sitar-Taut, 2020).

Many studies have found differences in the demographics of consumers (Rahman, et al., 2018; Hwang and Lee, 2018; Herrando, Jimenez-Martinez and Martin-De Hoyos, 2019). More specifically, it is age gender, education, and income (Rocha, Hammond and Hawkins, 2005; Hwang and Lee, 2018) that can influence on the way they shop. However, the findings of some other research have shown a usage of generational cohorts' theory (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016; Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020). Generational cohorts concentrated rather on "core values, attitudes, and preferences shape their behaviors" and can give better understanding of specific segments and patterns in the purchase decision (Chaney, Touzani and Slimane, 2017). This research will be in line with such approach to understand relationship between age and online shopping behaviour. An example is a research in context of two different consumer profiles: consumers who shop occasionally and consumers who shop regularly (Devderea and Toader, 2018). In relation to the above mentioned theory, the study into fashion innovation has shown that demographics are not important in fashion, as "clothing may be a more personal category of purchase" (Goldsmith, Moore and Beaudoin, 1999, cited in Nash, 2019). Findings suggest those who shop more often, find it easier, convenient, and less risky compared to other groups. Nevertheless, both groups of consumers look at "pricing, sizing, quality, website design and architecture and brand familiarity". In the PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report (2019) a similar opinion was stated. The variety of brands available online may inspire consumers to buy more. Most of the time they look for their preferred brands only when they want to buy something (McKinsey and Company, 2019).

Many studies on online shopping behaviour have investigated determinants, moderating factors, antecedents and motivational factors regarding purchase intention and impulse buying behaviour, which influence consumer online shopping behaviour. The study by Rehman et al. (2019) showed that trust, commitment, and consumer purchase intention all have a positive effect on online shopping behaviour. There are various advantages that can be taken by online consumers such as the ability to buy when they want or need, convenience, the option to compare prices and make quick payments. Shopping online offers a great opportunity to save time and money.

According to Katawetawaraks and Cheng (2011) “the convenience of being able to choose online channels” to buy from or engage with well-known brands from all over the world inevitably attracts many consumers (Katawetawaraks and Cheng, cited in Mican and Sitar-Taut, 2020). An interesting finding by Javadi et al. (2012) states that “the more people suggest e-buying to each other, the more this buying method will be popular among people” (Javardi, cited in SivaKumar Gunasekaran, 2017). This is due to the fact that word of mouth (WoM) remains especially important for online and offline consumes shopping behaviours (SivaKumar Gunasekaran, 2017).

One important fact is that more specific and personal data collected via social media channels will equip retailers to serve the right customers with the right customized products. Hence, social media, as a highly social-related communication platform, plays a pivotal role in decision making for online product purchases. The findings by Ho and Rezaei (2018) showed that “consumers not only refer to others’ recommendations on products, but they are most likely to control the use of social media apps and create content”.

Online shopping behaviour is constantly changing as consumers begin to use different devices. Retailers previously concentrated on online desktop shopping, but now must follow new trends (Vasiliu and Cercel, 2015). Mobile shopping has become more important and plays an essential role in consumer behaviour. Consumers are not only searching, but also making purchases of different products through mobile devices. According to Sarwar (2019), 75% of mobile users expect to get immediate information while searching for it, hence it can be expected that they may also quickly respond to what they see online and purchase impulsively.

2.2.1. Theoretical frameworks

Existing research on online shopping behaviour and its influential factors have applied conceptual frameworks such as the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB), the Technology acceptance model (TAM) and the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory (Florenthal, 2019). The Theory of planned behaviour is important to use in the context of understanding online shopping behaviour as it helps to predict consumer behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, cited in Rehman et al., 2019) and to understand consumer behavioural intentions while shopping online (Lubis et al., 2019). Although the TAM model was widely used in many studies relating to the development of internet technologies and the behaviour of consumers (Koufaris, 2002), it also can be seen in a number of studies relating to online shopping behaviour.

While some researches use only one model such as TAM (Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020) or TPB (Valaei and Nikhashemi, 2017), others use a combined version of both models and include other variables depending on the nature of the research (Saprikis et al., 2018; Rehman et al., 2019).

Rehman et al. (2019) highlighted a significant disadvantage of the TPB theory stating that it does not allow effective analysis of online shopping behaviour of modern consumers as it ignores “the effect of perceived risks, trust, commitment, customer satisfaction, financial resources, and past experience of consumer”.

Another conceptual model is the U&G theory which focuses on identifying factors such as “cognitive and affective needs that can be fulfilled by the use of and engagement with particular media channels and content” (Florenthal, 2019). It was used in combination with the TAM model for testing electronic shopping behaviour (Lim, 2015).

Apart from seminal theoretical models, many researchers have created frameworks based on different factors that influence the online purchase behaviour of consumers in their respective countries (SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017; Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020).

After evaluating the above models, the researcher decided to use similar to the latter approach. Instead of using existing theoretical framework to choose the most relevant and influential factors based on scholar research. To formulate hypotheses that are based on literature reviewed, and further collecting primary data to prove or disprove them. Additionally, it was done through achieving research objectives.

2.3 Determinants and Motivational Factors that Influence Online Shopping Behaviour

2.3.1 Purchase intention

According to Lee et al. (2011) purchase intention is the subjective probability or possibility of making a purchase of a particular product by a consumer and was described "as a predictor of subsequent purchasing" (Lee et al., cited in Li, Xu and Xu, 2018). As mentioned in previous section, many researchers address the importance of purchase intention in their studies when examining online shopping behaviour (Sethi, Kaur and Wadera, 2018; Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020). Research findings on social media identify "a positive perception of the retailer as opposed to purchase intention and behaviour" (Hash, 2019).

Shopping value is an important concept in understanding how consumers behave. According to Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) for some consumers it is a way to get positive emotions such as joy (hedonic), for other consumers it is to attain what they need (utilitarian) (Babin, Darden and Griffin, cited in Akram, 2018). According to Rahman, Khan and Iqbal (2018), utilitarian and hedonic motivations are valuable dimensions of an online shopping environment, which were found to be important when choosing online retailers and planning purchases in the future.

In terms of motivational factors, the importance of more personal and specific data that can be accessed by consumers are seen as such factors. According to Lim et al. (2016)

subjective norms has a significant influence on the purchase intention to buy online and can be influenced by perception of family, friends, and media. As stated by Shadkam and O'Hara (2013), additional factors include "online reviews and product ratings" on social media (Shadkam & O'Hara, cited in Ho and Rezaei, 2018; Sethi, Kaur and Wadera, 2018) and again offline word of mouth from friends and family (Rahman et al., 2018).

The factors mentioned above can have positive or negative influence on the consumers purchase intention. Previous experience plays an important role and will need to be researched in order to understand, how influential external advice is for Z and Y generations in Ireland. Thamizhvanan (2012) conducted research towards youths and found that "impulse purchase orientation, previous online shopping experiences, and trust toward online shopping" were found to have a huge impact on consumers in different countries (Thamizhvanan, cited in SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017). Online shopping experiences are not always positive ones and people are more willing to share such experiences, which can be a big threat for businesses. Nevertheless, the reviews posted online play an important role in determining whether to trust certain online vendors or stores and may encourage consumers to shop online.

In addition, negative factors, which act as barriers to successful consumer journeys, can stop a consumer from buying products online. As investigated by many researchers, it may be perceived risk (Wu and Ke, 2015), brand avoidance (Knittel, Beurer and Berndt, 2016; Vajkai and Zsóka, 2020) or security and privacy concerns in relation to using social media (Deloitte, 2019) and mobile devices (Rahman, Khan and Iqbal, 2018). Consumer behaviour may change whether consumers are happy to make purchases on mobile devices or from unknown foreign shopping websites without checking how secure they are.

2.3.2 The impulsive-buying behaviour

Impulse buying theory was firstly adapted by Stern Hawkins in 1962. It is a significant concept in marketing relating to purchasing products. Stern (1962) mentioned that “impulse purchases are largely driven by external stimuli and differentiate from rational purchasing decision-making” (Stern, cited in Akram, 2018). In few studies partly discussed factors that may stimulate an impulse-buying behaviour, which further influence online shopping behaviour (Lee, 2018; Vojvodić, Matić Šošić and Žugić, 2018). Internal and external factors stimulate impulsive buying behaviour. The examples can be “product display, promotional activities and product characteristics” (Iram and Chacharkar, 2017). One of the important factors that helps to understand impulse purchase behaviour, which has been researched previously, is in the relationship to materialism. But less attention has been focussed in studies on the differences between gender impulsiveness (Iram and Chacharkar, 2017) or the difference between generation impulsiveness. As one of the factors, this research will try to find out if there is a difference between young Generation Z and Generation Y impulsive-buying tendency in clothing shopping. As discussed previously in this chapter, hedonic motives influence purchase intention. Sundstrom, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon (2019) are identified that hedonic motives dominate in fashion retailing and also drive impulse-buying behaviour. Another factor a shopping enjoyment found to stimulate impulsive buying online behaviour (Iram and Chacharkar, 2017; Rosy and McCormick, 2018).

Other examples of incentives that can provoke impulse buying behaviour are discounts (e.g. Black Friday deals), advertisements on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube etc. (Wadera and Sharma, 2018). While using social media or browsing online consumers are constantly exposed to products they may like. Thus, knowing that they can buy them in a few clicks is stimulating such impulse-buying tendency even more.

2.4 Customer Journey

Howard and Sheth (1969) have summarized findings from previous research which agreed on a conceptualization of purchase stages such as pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase (Howard and Sheth, Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Nam and Kannan, 2020).

A developed model, called the "linear model" shows a buying process whereby "customers move from need recognition to purchase to evaluation of the purchased product". The most important factor that relates to consumer shopping behaviour in this model is a "purchase event feedback" (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

Opposite to the linear model, Google have proposed a concept of "micro-moments" (Think with Google, 2016). What is meant by this is the behaviour of people when using "their smartphones or other devices to know, go, do, or buy something". The significance of this is in additional touch points where different factors can change the opinion of consumers. Examples of commonly used channels are mobile fashion apps, social media platforms, retailers' websites, etc. A visual search is expected to be part of the online clothing purchase journeys for both Generation Z and Y (Charlton, 2019). Retailers must bear in mind that they can engage with their target demographic groups at each touch point and it is crucial to know where their audiences are online.

An online personalized service was addressed as a determinant that influence young consumers while purchasing online (Lee and Park, 2009, as cited by Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020). There is a possibility to convert these consumers into customers and stimulate them to make a purchase (Verhoef, Kooge, and Walk 2016).

2.4.1 Pre-purchase stage

Traditional literature on the consumer journey describes the pre-purchase stage as need recognition, search, evaluation, and consideration. When consumers feel the need to buy something it must be fulfilled. This can relate to different consumer segments. For instance, as part of impulsive buying behaviour, particular "stimuli in the environment" could provoke "an urge to buy". The more time an individual spends browsing for products, the more they will feel the urge to buy various products (Wadera and Sharma, 2018). Advertising and promotion are factors that can influence consumer preferences at any moment of the pre-purchase stage (Baxendale, Macdonald and Wilson, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Thus, online retailers must know where their messages have the most benefits and use this knowledge as an advantage.

Different scenarios may appear during the information search stage of the purchase journey. Consumers often check information about items from different online and offline sources, read reviews, compare prices, and ask friends and family. It can partly depend on previous experiences (including past purchases) and external factors (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). While some consumers can quickly buy and pay less attention to features of the channels they use, others will highly depend on their knowledge of the product and possible risk factors. Nevertheless, it is necessary for retailers to consider providing a description of the product and consider promotions, etc.

An evaluation stage involves comparing and looking for alternative options. If a consumer is shopping on a website with many different fashion brands available, it can be small elements that will have an influence on the decision to purchase (price, design, quality, brand, etc.) (Stankevich, 2017).

2.4.2 Purchase stage

Many factors can influence consumer choices and product type is one of the most important. At the purchase stage, consumers can still have thoughts about brands they want to buy from or whether to buy online or offline (Think with Google, 2016). The way certain consumer segments make purchases can also differ. It may be that they complete the purchase straight away or postpone for some time. Thus, understanding consumer preferences and triggers is important for online retailers. Consumers may decide to use the same channel to search and make purchases of products or they may decide to use different channels for searching and purchasing.

Findings from Nash (2019) showed the importance of social media in the online purchase journey and its effect on the age demographic. It can also include mobile retailer's app, websites, or physical stores. Important factors are price and convenience when purchasing clothes online (Stankevich, 2017) as well as security concerns, lack of clear description of a product, worries about the quality and size, which is not possible to have full clarity of when buying online. More options in relation to touch points, where retailers can interact with consumers online, have been growing. It is an important consideration to make the best use of understanding Generation Z and Generation Y differences and the expectation on their purchase journey.

2.5. Behaviour of the Different Generation Groups (Z and Y) towards Online Shopping

In everyday life both generations use technologies such as mobile phone, tablets, laptops, etc., but the way they shop online, which channels they use and the concerns they have are different (Kim and Ammeter, 2018). There are some researchers who have concentrated on the online shopping behaviour of Generation Y (SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017) and some who have separately studied the behaviour of Generation Z (Boardman and McCormick, 2018; Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020).

As mentioned in the PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report (2019) the age of Generation Z is from 17 to 22 and Generation Y or Millennials from 23 to 36. According to

Statista (2020), the similar age was included for Generation Z 15 to 24 and Y 25 to 34. In the Mintel Report (2020) groups are differentiated as Gen Z from 16 to 24 and Gen Y - 25 to 34 years old. In this study the researcher defines Generation Z as aged from 18 to 24 and Generation Y 25 to 34.

Modern consumers can use different channels and devices before and during the purchase of clothes. In addition, they can easily check information about retailers, read reviews, compare prices, and cancel a purchase after adding it to their shopping list. They can comprehensively evaluate what they buy and where, just by using social networks (Hall and Towers, 2017), mobile apps and websites. For instance, only 23% of Irish consumers use mobile retailer apps for shopping and critically 9% are looking for inspiration before their purchase (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, 2017). Mobile retailer apps give benefits for Z and Y generation while finding interesting items, comparing prices, and looking for reviews (Knežević, Delić and Knego, 2015). Findings from the Hall and Towers (2017) research on English consumers (from 16 to 24 and from 25 to 34) showed similar behaviour. For example, requesting an opinion about a fashion product face-to-face was mentioned the most (50%-70%) as well as the use of Snapchat, Twitter, and text messages for exceedingly long shopping journeys. It was found that products with higher prices and with time consuming purchase journeys were reasons for seeking additional advice from their peers and more use of digital channels for information (Hall and Towers, 2017).

2.5.1 Generation Z

The young consumers of generation Z are defined as those who are born between 1995 and 2002 (Kitchen and Proctor, 2015). They are also known as “Gen Next”, “Gen I” or “Echo Bust” and “Digital Natives”. This generation can be described as “particularly innovative and permanently looking for changes” (Chaney, Touzani and Slimane, 2017). As opposed to

Generation Y, this segment grew up with mobile devices and Internet access. They do not need to adapt to online shopping, because it is just the normal way for them to buy items. Generation Z do not consider physical stores as a channel, but rather a way of gathering with friends and family. Consequently, their approach to online channel' usage is interpreted as "separate entities" that bring "different benefits" (Rosy and McCormick, 2018).

2.5.1.1 Factors that influence the online shopping behaviour of Generation Z

In research of digital natives, the significant importance for them to "socialize, i.e. increase sense of belonging with family and friends" (Triantafillidou and Siomkos, 2018; Florenthal, 2019; Lubis et al., 2019) has been mentioned. Devderea and Toader (2018) have stated that, trust that comes from advice given by family and friends is particularly important in the pre-purchase stage of online shopping for clothes. Having trust in the platform/brand/online retailer has also been identified as significant influential factor for online shopping with young generation (Lubis et al., 2019). Personalised service makes it harder for Generation Z to easily switch to a new retailer as "personalization raises consumer perceptions of switching risk and ensures lower level of uncertainty" (Dang, Wang and Vu, 2020). However, this younger generation spends little amount of time "analysing, discussing or examining" similar products with their peer group or friends (Dennis, Jayawardhenab and Papamatthaiou, 2010, cited in SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017). What they do instead is search for reviews, videos, and specific features about products they are interested in (SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017). However, alternative results suggested by Hall and Towers (2017), stated that not only electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is "likely to be increasingly important" for Generation Z, but also as they are always connected with peers, their opinion can "highly influence" the decision-making process in online shopping.

According to Rosy and McCormick (2018), digital natives are particularly sensitive to price and motivated by cost-savings and time-saving. It can be partly because of the fact that many of them are still studying and do not earn money on a constant basis. In such cases, family influence is still high and needs to be considered in retailers marketing strategies. Retailers need to consider if other factors are significant for this generation, in addition to discounts, such as quality, retailer sustainability, longevity of the clothing item, etc. Understanding of the patterns in Generation Z behaviour is especially necessary as their purchasing power is growing (Brewis, no date).

As mentioned in a number of reports on Generation Z behaviour, they are less loyal to brands, which means it is difficult to keep them interested in a particular brand (Gen Z is leading an revolution in shopping that could kill brands as we know them, to date). Generation Z are unlikely to plan their purchase, and more likely to make an impulsive purchase online (BelVG, 2019). In relation to issues making a purchase online, consumers mentioned: “they always have a wide range of online shops that can serve as an alternative” (Devderea and Toader, 2018). Motivational factors in context of purchasing fashion can be “price, easy access and free delivery” (Sundström, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon 2019).

2.5.1.2 Digital devices and online channel usage

Understanding the path of consumers to purchase is at the centre of channel integration now. According to Mintel 2020, the younger generations started “shopping more while on-the-go” in comparison to consumers older than 45 years of age (Mintel, 2020). Factors such as convenience and enjoyment are preferred when using mobile devices (Rosy and McCormick, 2018). However, together with smartphone usage Generation Z are explicitly using social media applications to communicate, share ideas and engage with retailers (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc.) (Ozkan and Solmaz, 2015).

As mentioned by Solomon (2017, p.43), social media is “the online means of communication, convenience, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility.”

Generation Z found it to be important to share information, be connected and interact with others online (Yadav and Rai, 2017). Such behaviour has provoked rapid growth in the use of social media platforms. Platforms they use the most are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. They communicate by reading blogs, writing, and reading reviews along with their interaction through video-sharing platforms (SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017; Florenthal, 2019).

The PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report (2019) showed that Irish consumers between 18 to 24 years were searching for purchase inspiration on social media platforms (37%) and were influenced to make a purchase by reading positive reviews (38%). According to Lubis et al. (2019), younger generations find Instagram in particular to be “very decent and worthy for shopping purposes”. Social media became an important engagement channel while using mobile devices for online shopping (PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report, 2019). Apart from being involved with social media platforms, Generation Z are more likely to use mobile apps for information search and entertainment (Charlton, 2019).

2.5.2 Generation Y

Generation Y is also known as Millennials, Nexters, Generation www, the Digital Generation, Generation E, Echo Boomers, Net Generation (Martin, 2005). According to Goldhill and Roodt (2018), it is “the generation of people who have grown up surrounded by technology such as computers, TV, smartphones, video games, and the Internet”.

Fashion clothing was categorised as a high involvement product by O'Cass (2004), while Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017) described the attitude of generation Y regarding clothing as a low involvement product. Considering this fact, the behaviour of this group can be seen as different from other generations. The research of Lissitsa and Kol (2016) found that "age is positively correlated with online shopping" because Generation Y has little free time and prefers the convenience of online shopping. Currently, the Millennial lifestyle can be described as fast-paced and socially connected (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019). Thus, motivational factors will adjust during changes in this cohort's lifestyle (e.g. starting a family, children, or a new job position). They will represent 75% of the workforce worldwide by 2025 (Deloitte, 2019), therefore are an important generational cohort for fashion-related purchases.

2.5.2.1 Factors that influence the online shopping behaviour of Generation Y

In relation to purchasing fashion clothing for Generation Y, "brand, style, price, social identity, and attitude" is found to be most important (Valaei and Nikhashemi, 2017; Sethi, Kaur and Wadera, 2018). For instance, brand reputation was defined as "the faith in the overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general" (Malaga, 2001, cited in by Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017) and found to be a significant influential factor (Kim and Ammeter, 2018). Not only does the importance of family and peer groups opinion apply to Millennials (Lissitsa and Kol, 2016), but also relevant information and description of the product (Hall and Towers, 2017).

Additionally, some studies highlighted the importance of electronic world of mouth (eWOM) while shopping online (Bento, Martinez, L. M. and Martinez, L. F., 2018; Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019), along with the significant impact of online recommendations from other people in the decision making process (Pauliene and Sedneva, 2019). What Generation Y do not like is being targeted by advertising (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019). In order to get loyalty from Irish generation Y it is crucial for retailers to be in line with their values such as the social and environmental impact of their products (Deloitte, 2019).

2.5.2.2 Digital devices and online channel usage

In relation to channel usage, Generation Y consumers were found to be those who mostly look for online shopping malls that offer fun, but an important consideration is an easy and effective website to navigate (Kim and Ammeter, 2018). Generation Y are more willing to find information and interact with brands or products by using digital media channels and social media platforms (Bolton et al., 2006, cited in Hall and Towers, 2017; Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019). Furthermore, Generation Y consumers have a high expectation in regard to their online shopping experience and 75% are willing to pay extra for it (BelVG, 2019).

According to Bento, Martinez, L. M. and Martinez, L. F. (2018), Millennials are viewed as cost-conscious and need to be informed in posts on social media (such as Facebook) about discounts and special offers. Nevertheless, they are willing to pay more for their favourite brands of clothes (Chaney, Touzani and Slimane, 2017). They also tend to search for information about specific products on social media and YouTube.

Surprisingly, 'The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2019: Findings from Ireland's report' found that 42% of consumers would like to completely stop using social media, even though, social media platforms are seen as an evolving channel for advertising and purchasing. However, 15% of Irish consumers from 25 to 34 years were purchasing directly from social media platforms (PwC Irish Retail and Consumer Report, 2019), which means some Millennials are further adopting these platforms.

2.6 Key Differentiating Factors that Influence Generation Z and Generation Y in the Fashion Clothing Industry

Albeit Generation Y needed to adapt to became digital users, Generation Z were born as digital natives. Hence, motivational factors and determinants that influence their shopping behaviour can differ.

According to Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández (2017) there are two distinct consumers profiles can be identified. First - consumers who use utilitarian motivation and are willing to buy what they are looking for straight away. Second - consumers, who like experiencing products, and have hedonic motivations for shopping (Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017). For instance, during the pre-purchase stage (searching and discovering online) hedonic consumers can enjoy browsing even without purchasing the item. While utilitarian consumers are only interested in having relevant information in relation to reducing risks before making a purchase. Generation Y consumers were identified as fun consumers while shopping online compared to younger generations (Ladhari, Gonthier and Lajante, 2019).

What is important is that the utilitarian dimension is a stronger predictor than the hedonic dimension. As mentioned by Koufaris (2002), online consumers have more power and demands compared to offline consumers and are found to be utilitarian in the way they shop (Koufaris, 2002). Whilst Lim (2017) in his research, emphasised that both dimensions are needed to be considered by consumers, who shop to find a good variety of products online.

Consumers generally process information in various ways depending on their level of involvement (Blackwell et al., 2016; as cited by Hall and Towers, 2017). One of the seminal pieces of research that studied personal values and personality traits as antecedents of involvement with fashion clothing is O'Cass (2004). It includes a discussion about the role of involvement together with other variables in relation to the process of purchasing clothes and investigating consumption patterns. It was found by a number of researchers that the perceived value affects online fashion and clothing purchase intention (Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017; Yan and Chiou, 2020) and stimulates consumers to browse online retailers websites (Wadera and Sharma, 2018).

One of the findings is a materialistic value of consumers that includes the knowledge and the extent of an understanding of fashion clothing by a particular group of people (O'Cass, 2004). Also, even how they see themselves in the clothes they wear. According to Goldsmith, Moore and Beaudoin (1999) the theory of self-image is an important concept while studying consumers behaviour in the clothing segment (Goldsmith, Moore and Beaudoin, cited in Nash, 2019). Some consumers appreciate the possibility of having a wider assortment and variety of clothes compared to physical stores while shopping online (SivaKumar Gunasekaran, 2017; Rahman, et al., 2018)

Trust was found as a "strong agent" that has a big influence on the attitude of consumers and can mitigate against the perceived risk (Wu and Ke, 2015). It was also defined as a second factor, after perceived value influencing purchase intentions in the fashion clothing industry (Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017). In addition, the website design and brand familiarity can trigger confidence in relation to having a positive previous experience while shopping online (Devderea and Toader, 2018).

Although, some research findings showed that consumers shop online to save time (Escobar-Rodríguez and Bonsón-Fernández, 2017; Rahman, et al., 2018; Rosy and McCormick, 2018), other studies have found that consumers also like to shop without rushing and take their time spending more money and buying more than they expected (Lim, 2017).

These generations are two of the most important consumer segments for fashion retailers and it is vital to find key variances to help deliver more precise targeting strategies such as an understanding of channel usage. While searching online, before making an actual purchase, consumers can be faced with a number of different factors (Hall and Towers, 2017). These factors can both encourage or discourage the purchase from specific fashion retailers. In addition to this, when both Generation Z and Generation Y consumers use social media platforms or browse online without an initial intention to buy, there is an opportunity for fashion retailers to engage with potential buyers. This makes it very important for fashion retailers to be able to identify what factors may encourage consumers to choose a specific online fashion retailer or brand while shopping online. Findings from Hall and Towers (2017) research showed that 41% of consumers look for clothing inspiration and ideas from “a variety of high street shops”, 39% – “a variety of shopping websites” and 25% - social media channels. Pujadas-Hostench et al. (2019) findings revealed that Facebook and Instagram are two channels which used the most for shopping clothing.

Another finding highlights that the Generation Y is more willing to share thoughts and express feelings on social media, while Generation Z are just not as interested in sharing something with random people. What they are willing to do is to ask peer groups or family for advice in buying clothing items. The research findings of Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017) revealed that group of consumers from 18 to 27 years old are “brand conscious because of the influence from peers or parents”. Because Generation Z like to socialize and meet with friends while shopping, for them the in-store experience is important. On the other hand, Millennials are highly into online shopping. This behaviour relates to the fact that they find it more convenient, time-saving, cost-saving and an advantage over traditional shopping, which they previously experienced as the only one option (BelVG, 2019). It was found that promotional offers, novelties, and collections of clothes on the social media sites lead to purchase intention (Pujadas-Hostench et al., 2019). Similar finding shows in study of Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017), where clothing style, its price and “followed social identity” are influence the consumers purchase intention.

According to finding Trivedi, J. P. and Trivedi, H. (2018) Generation Y highlighted the importance of a personalized experience as a moderate to significant influencing factor. On the other hand, consumption for Generation Z becomes a means of self-expression and it does not fit in with the norms of groups. In order to get a personalised experience consumers, need to share their personal data, which is still an issue for many consumers (McKinsey and Company, 2018). Vajkai and Zsóka (2020) has also emphasized that fashion clothing consumers from Generation Z do feel more sensitive and want to show off their personalities by wearing unique clothes rather than those from fast fashion retailers. Generation Z were more likely to identify themselves through fashion clothing brands as well as following them online (McKinsey and Company, 2019).

As per the Mintel market report (2016) clothing retailing (excluding footwear and accessories) was expected to grow by 97% between 2016-2021. Online sales take 17% of total revenue in the Apparel market (Statista, 2020). Having a percentage of 12% in 2015, it is seen a growth in online shopping in Ireland (Mintel, 2016). Women and men are together aggregate 85% of the total sales from clothing, another 15% is children clothes (Statista, 2020). Not surprisingly, statistics shows that clothing is one of the categories where women were willing to purchase online more than men (Statista, 2020). However, in research conducted in Romania, findings suggested that women were more likely to shop offline, while men preferred online shopping (Devderea and Toader, 2018).

As of 2020, 66 % of online consumers worldwide use mobile shopping apps (Kemp, 2020). Yang and Kim (2012) mentioned that having a mobile device almost always with them, makes it easier to look at different products frequently, even without the intention to buy. It was found that Generation Z are more likely to use mobile apps for purchasing clothes from consumers under 44 years old (Charlton, 2019). This gives the fashion retailer an opportunity to engage with their target demographic group 24/7 and offer them a desirable shopping experience (Yang and Kim, cited in Kim, Li and Kim, 2015).

Interest in fashion clothing is substantially affected by "consumer's degree of materialism, gender and age" (O'Cass, 2004) and brand engagement (Goldsmith, Flynn and Clark, 2012). These studies are related to consumer motivating factors, on contradict Kaushik and Dhir (2019) addressed possible non-conformance with regards to relationships between online apparel retailers and online shoppers (from 19 to 35 years old).

2.7 Fashion (Clothing) Retail

As recorded by Sundstrom, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon (2019) hedonic motivation is prevalent more in the fashion industry than other industries. In addition, impulse buying behaviour plays an important role as a concept in the clothing industry. It has also been identified that this behaviour is seen more in physical stores than online (Sundström, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon, 2019). However, a growing trend of using mobile devices in addition to desktops for online clothes shopping is indicating that this behaviour is moving online also.

Fashion retailers can be divided into web-only retailers and retailers with an online and offline presence (Statista, 2020). Findings show that "the perception of high-street fashion retailer were positively influenced by presence on social media" (Nash, 2019). Examples of web-only retailers include Boohoo and ASOS (Nash, 2019). Examples of high street clothing retailers are Topshop/Topman, Next, Zara, H&M that are valuable fashion brands popular around the world (Statista, 2020).

As the clothing manufacturing industry moves towards sustainable development, it is putting many fashion retailers under pressure to upgrade their approach and to show customers that they care about their needs. Conceptual framework with "new demands triggered by digital experience” developed by Yan and Chiou (2020) include personalisation needs, customised needs, and self-fashioning.

According to the McKinsey Fashion annual report in 2019, many clothing brands who are highly engaged with their main audience through Instagram, have seen growth in their online sales. For example, Reformation is a brand who has more than 1 million followers on Instagram and 80% of its sales take place online. Well-known brands, such as H&M and Zara find it more challenging to engage online and compete with new brands. Smaller brands with effective online strategies use influencers and celebrities to advertise their clothes and deliver more personalised engagement with consumers (McKinsey and Company, 2019).

2.8. Research hypotheses

Studies discussed in the literature review chapter determined the next hypotheses:

H1: There are distinct differences between Generation Z and Generation Y online shopping behaviour.

H2: There are no distinct differences between Generation Z and Generation Y online shopping behaviour.

H3: There is a difference in attitude of Generation Z and Generation Y towards online shopping from online fashion retailers.

To test these hypotheses the researcher created questionnaire with different determinants and factors that discussed in this chapter. It was based on the scientific findings from the literature reviewed and not on personal beliefs or feelings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter explains the determinants and factors that are important in relation to online shopping behaviour. In addition, it emphasizes the role of behavioural factors, social media, mobile retailer apps, price, and quality along with attitudinal factors that impact interactions with online retailers. The researcher's approach was to critically evaluate the existing research and test certain finding with regard to Generation Z and Generation Y consumers in Ireland. The researcher's interest was not specifically focussed on fashion clothing but included factors that were found to be important for online shopping behaviour and influential to Generation Z and Generation Y.

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to clearly explain the methodology of how the research should be undertaken to answer a research question. It is especially important to follow a theoretical concept of the "research onion" (Figure 1), which was developed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, p.130). It demonstrates the stages involved in this research process and gives guidance of the main techniques and procedures of data collection and analysis.

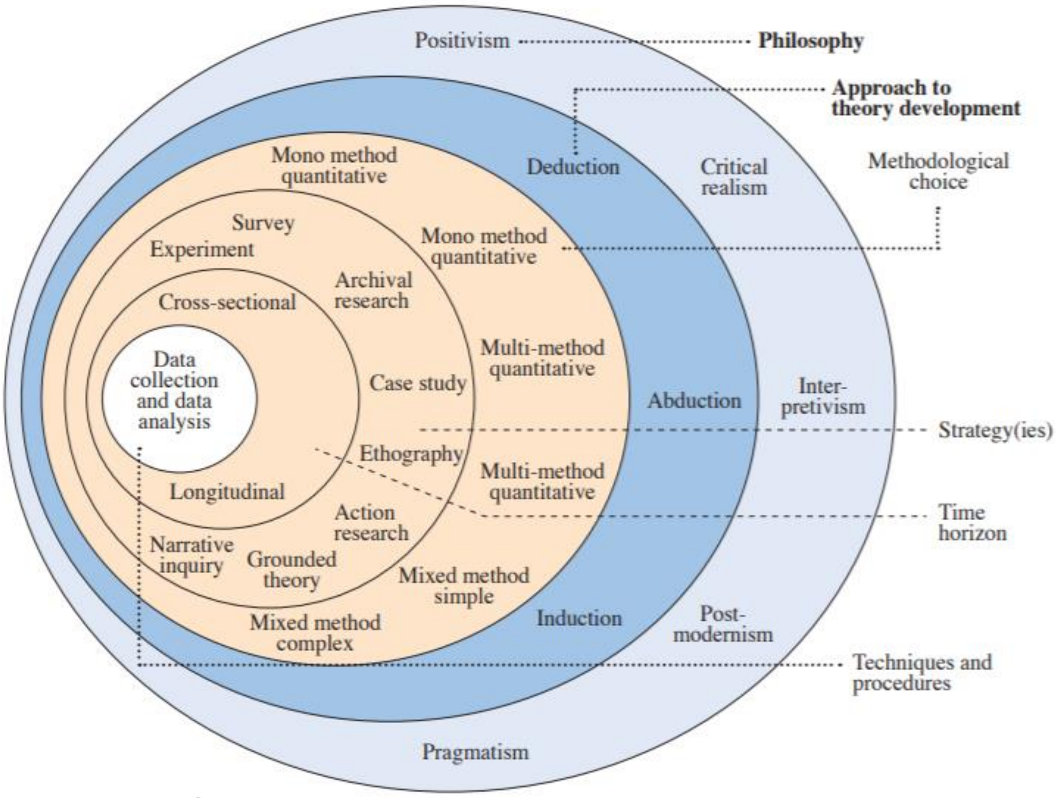


Figure 1. "The research onion"

As demonstrated in Figure 1, each section will be related to a specific layer of the "research onion", including research philosophy, approach to theory development, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, techniques (materials), and procedures. In addition, participants and ethics will be stated.

3.2 Participants

The chosen participants included Generation Z and Generation Y consumers who shop online, live in Ireland, both male and female participants. In this study, the researcher defines Generation Z as consumers from 18 to 24 years old and Generation Y from 25 to 34 years old.

A percentage of Generation Z consisted 26%, Generation Y were 69% and respondents completed survey above the 34 years old 5% in total responses used for data analysis (Table 1). In addition, data was analysed from 17 female and 12 male respondents from Generation Z, and 28 female and 30 male respondents from Generation Y. Having experience in online shopping and familiarity with clothes shopping, they provided valuable information for this study. Even though, a primary data was collected though online, the usage of a quota sampling and a snowball sampling helped to choose participants, which applies to the specific research criteria (see Sampling Techniques section of this chapter). Generation Z and Generation Y are the main generations of consumers interacting with online fashion retailers (Mintel, 2016; PwC, 2019). Thus, the comparison and an understanding of the possible differences between Generations Z and Generation Y will provide valuable additional knowledge relating to consumer online shopping behaviour in Ireland. From a web questionnaire, it was found that female and male per group have similar percentages.

Table 1 *Characteristics and Frequency of Participants*

Demographics	Characteristics	Frequency, %
Gender	Male	40%
	Female	48%
Age	18-20	11%
	21-24	17%
	25-29	41%
	30-34	31%
	35+	5%
Living in Ireland	Yes	98%
	No	2%
Shopping for clothes online	Yes	94%
	No	6%

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Research philosophy

According to Saunders and Lewis (2018, p.106) research philosophy is a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. Understanding the philosophy allows the researcher to develop knowledge in a specific field. It can be a new theory or a solution for an existing problem in a study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 130).

There are two dominant paradigms associated with research methodology that can be applied based on the aim of the researcher: qualitative and quantitative or their combined method (Ranjit, 2014). In this study, quantitative analysis, which is rooted in physical science, was used. As stated by Kolb (2018, p.31), quantitative research is descriptive in nature and enables the researcher to gain insights into consumer opinions and behaviours. The purpose of this research is to determine relationships between two variables. The age is an independent variable and an online shopping behaviour is a dependent variable. Characteristics of quantitative research design include several data collection techniques used for research. It can be mono method, multi-method, d mixed-method (simple or complex) depending on the research purpose (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 178). The mono method of quantitative data analysis, which is a questionnaire sent online, was applied for this study.

There are five major philosophies that can be applied in the field of business and management (including marketing). They are positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 144).

Quantitative research design is often associated with positivism philosophy. It means that existing theories can be used to develop hypotheses. A theory can be applied on its own or a new theory can be formulated by combining certain variables. Either way both theory applications will need to be tested.

3.3.2 Research approach

The research approach can be described as a perspective or an area that the researcher considers at the beginning of the research study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p.152). Empirical data is an important element for positivism philosophy which is related to this research. This data can be collected by using inductive, deductive, or abductive approaches. As stated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, p.130) if the researcher starts with data collection and then builds a theory from this data, this is an inductive approach. On the other hand, if the researcher starts from a theory and then tests the theory it is a deductive approach (Figure 2). The latter approach was applied to the current study. By reviewing the existing literature, the researcher was able to develop the hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested on data collected from responses of Generation Z and Generation Y. Some of the hypotheses were confirmed and some rejected.

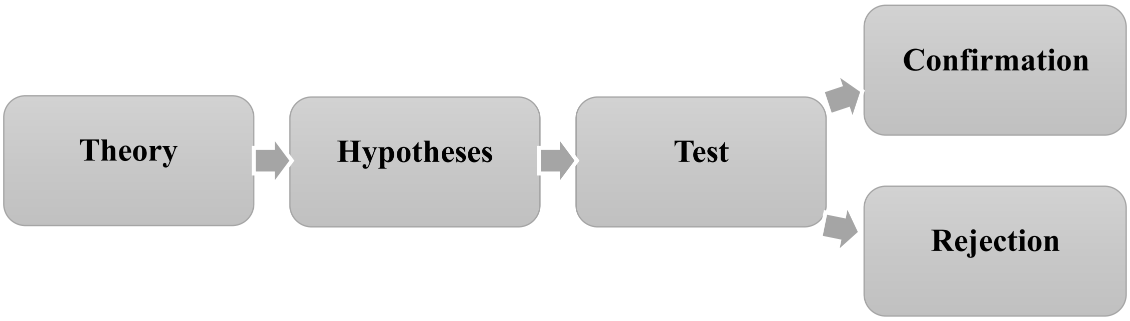


Figure 2. Deductive research approach. (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p.153)

To identify differences between two generation groups, the sample size must be sufficient and representative of the target population. Representative samples tend to be associate with larger surveys and the use of quantitative data (Denscombe, 2017, pp. 33-34). The uniqueness of this sample is that the researcher can draw conclusions from the data which will be part of the overall research population. To clarify this, it is necessary to look at the "generalization" characteristic of the deductive approach. For example, it is not enough to collect specific data only from Generation Z and not from Generation Y, to achieve the correct results and to answer the research question in this study. Descriptive research has been found suitable for this research purpose and will be used along with deductive analysis which includes cross-sectional data collection.

3.3.3 Research Strategy

The primary aim of a research strategy is to create ways for the researcher to answer a research question and to achieve the research objectives. The aim of this study is to understand the behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y while they shop for clothes from online fashion retailers. For this research it was important to examine pre-purchase and purchase stages as per determinants, motivational factors, devices, channel usage and expectations of price differences or similarities. All these elements were analyzed when reviewing the existing literature and research. As described by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, p. 189) the research strategy is “a plan of action to achieve the goal” and is a link between chosen philosophy and methods of data collection.

There are different strategies available such as experiments, surveys, case studies, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival research, and narrative inquiry (Saunders and Lewis, 2018, p.119-127). Thus, the crucial part is to make sure that the chosen strategy will suit the nature of the research.

As stated by Saunders and Lewis (2018, p.120) a survey is a research strategy which involves the structured collection of data from a sizeable population. A survey with a questionnaire is the most common way of gathering data when using a survey strategy (Saunders and Lewis, 2018, p.120).

When implementing the survey on the Internet and social media platforms it is quite easier to collect responses, but to find a specific age group can be challenging and time consuming and this must be considered beforehand. What can encourage people to participate in a web questionnaire is anonymity, where respondents cannot be identified. This means they can be more honest and straightforward (Steber, 2016). As a result, this strategy is ideal to be used with the positivism philosophy, and the deductive approach, as collected data can be quantified (Burns, Veeck and Bush, 2017, p. 172).

3.3.4 Time Horizon

Saunders and Lewis (2018, p. 128) pointed out that research can be carried out in two ways: longitudinal or cross-sectional. The main advantage of longitudinal studies is the capability of analyzing change over a certain time frame. It was not possible to apply this for this study, as the researcher had time constrains.

On the other hand, the cross-sectional research, also known as “snapshot”, means that responses are collected about a topic and over one time period, which suited the nature of the study. This cross-sectional study includes responses collected from web surveys with questionnaires to obtain quantitative data. The web survey was available online for fourteen days. Furthermore, primary data collected from this research can be used as secondary data in longitudinal study (Saunders and Lewis, 2018, p. 130).

3.4 Materials

The survey was in the form of a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix 1). To understand consumer behaviour, the questionnaire was built according to the Likert scale with 5 points from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” and “very important” to “not important at all”. In addition, ratio data (“one choice option”) and “multiple-choice options” were chosen for collection of necessary data. Questions were created that were relevant to the research objectives and to answer the research question. The focus of this research is on determinants and motivational factors of Generation Z and Generation Y, their device usage, preferences in online channels and behaviour towards price and quality when shopping for clothes with online fashion retailers. This research does not use any theoretical models as several drawbacks were highlighted during the literature review. The researcher elected to summarize factors from different studies and used them to examine consumers in Ireland.

The questionnaire was adjusted and shortened after being reviewed by a supervisor, along with feedbacks from respondents of their experience while completing a pilot survey. As a result, people were more willing to answer concisely written questions with relevant answer options. (*Questionnaire design*, no date).

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is most used in surveys and small-scale research. According to Denscombe (2017, p. 33) the main characteristics of sampling is that it saves time, money and "produces accurate findings" without actual data collection from every person of the research population. Due to difficulties relating to time restrictions and access to the entire population many researchers consider a sample-based approach instead. A sample is a subset of the population in whom the researcher is interested as participants for their research. There are two distinct approaches that can be used for the selection of a sample: probability and non-probability (Denscombe, 2017, p. 34). Probability sampling relies on the theory that the researcher has no influence on the selection of people in the representative sample. Non-probability sampling means that the researcher might find it difficult or undesirable to rely on a random selection and will take part in the selection process. The main reasons for this are (Denscombe, 2017, p. 35):

- The researcher does not find it necessary to include a large number of participants in the population.

- The researcher does not have adequate information about the research population to undertake probability sampling.
- The researcher finds it difficult to contact a particular group of people (e.g. homeless, drug addicted) when using probability sampling.

Consequently, non-probability sampling includes a variety of techniques that can still generate a representative sample (see Table 2). An advantage of non-probability sampling is that it is commonly used in behavioural research. Hence, having analyzed techniques of the two sampling types and without the ability to access every consumer between 18 to 34 years of age who lives in Ireland, non-probability sampling was chosen for this study.

Table 2 *Non-probability Sampling Techniques*

Non-probability sampling techniques	**Description**
Convenience sampling	This is a type of sampling in which the sample is reached from people who are easy to obtain rather than because of appropriateness (Saunders and Lewis, 2019, p.147).
Snowball sampling	These techniques use for reaching the sample through a process of referencing from one person who took part in research to the next person. Further each "nominees" is asked to involve more "persons who might be included in the sample" (Denscombe, 2017, p.43).
Quota sampling	This technique establishes certain categories which considered to be important for the research to ensure right sample is chosen by answering this categories (Denscombe, 2017, p.41).
Purposive sampling	This type of sampling allows to the researcher to select the sample members. It highly rely on his knowledge of the population. Mostly uses when collecting qualitative data (Saunders and Lewis, 2019, p.147).

This research was conducted by using quota sampling along with snowball sampling. The first technique enabled the selection of relevant respondents based on the research nature (discussed later in this chapter). An online questionnaire can lead to difficulties in reaching the required sample of the entire population. Screening questions were particularly useful and helped the researcher to inform the respondents of specific requirements for participation.

Snowball sampling, the second technique used enabled the researcher to connect with the required sample population by using social media and WhatsApp. The main social media platforms which were used to gather responses from Generation Z was Instagram ("link in bio" option), while Facebook was chosen to collect responses from Generation Y. In addition to completing the web survey, participants were also asked to share the survey with relevant people.

3.5 Procedure

A pilot test of the survey was sent to 18 people by email to establish the validity of the chosen measurement. After being adjusted, the final online survey with 26-item questionnaire was distributed through a hyperlink via the Internet, WhatsApp, and social media platforms. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, p. 509) sending a hyperlink to a web questionnaire "offers greater control" as people can easily access it and are more likely to complete it. This will increase the reliability of received data, as it is crucial to get responses from the target generations with specific characteristics for this study. For accurate, reliable, and consistent data to be collected a valid questionnaire must be created. (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, p. 516).

A subscription for LimeSurvey Professional was bought for 15 euro for one month. The online software was used to create and send pilot testing and final surveys. The research questionnaire was built with 3 sections while using the LimeSurvey Professional tool:

- The first section consisted of 4 questions enabling the researcher to qualify people for the questionnaire. Requirements included: Live in Ireland, aged between 18 to 34 years old, have bought clothes online, at least once. The fourth question was to agree with the Consent & Information Sheet mentioned on the first page of the survey.

- The second section included 3 questions about “factual and demographic variables” such as specific age in group, gender, and highest completed education.

- The last section had 19 specific questions relating to consumer behaviour, which enabled the researcher to meet their research objective and to answer the research question.

The first two sections helped to explore the differences between “attitudes and opinions” variables along with “behaviour” variables of Generation Z and Generation Y and to identify if the sample was suitable for this research (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, pp. 512, 514).

After 14 days of the questionnaire being online, 123 responses were collected, from which 15 people who clicked on the link left the survey while reviewing the first page. Another 15 people filled in 2 out of 3 sections and failed to submit the survey. Having specific requirements towards the target population may have influenced the decision of the respondents to complete the web survey. Therefore, from the total responses 30 were uncompleted while 93 responses were completed in full, making the completion rate 76%. However, 10 completed responses were invalid as they did not meet the requirements of the target population: 5 respondents were over 34 years old; 2 respondents were not living in Ireland and 3 respondents did not give consent to participate. Consequently, responses from 83 people were analyzed in this research. After the responses were received, primary data was analyzed in Excel and findings presented in graphic format in Chapter 4.

3.6 Ethics

As stated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, pp. 252-253) ethics refer to the “standards of behaviour that guide conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it". A Consent & Information sheet with all necessary information about the purpose of the research, participant' rights and the data privacy policy was provided for the pilot test and with the final web survey on the first page of the questionnaire (see the Appendix 1).

All respondents were informed about the anonymity of this survey, meaning that no personal data collected would be shared with any third parties. Furthermore, the participants were informed of the deadline of the questionnaire (9th August 2020) which allowed them to submit or withdraw their responses at any stage before that date. Data collected was stored in LimeSurvey Professional tool and only the researcher had access to it.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the primary data findings which were obtained through the use of the web questionnaire. All findings will be used to answer the research question and to question the hypotheses.

The first section of this chapter includes a description of a sample demographic filtered by a number of factors such as age and location.

The second section includes summarised and analysed data to qualify the first objective. The researcher will analyse data obtained from all respondents regarding factors that influence online shopping behaviour.

The third section includes data with regard to determinants, devices and channels at the pre-purchase and purchase stages, along with price and quality to examine specific behaviours of Generation Z consumers when shopping online.

The fourth section has the same structure as the third section and includes factors that explain the online shopping behaviour of Generation Y consumers.

The fifth section includes analysis of key differentiating determinants of online clothes shopping behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y. The analysis is partly based on factors, which were found as the most important for each group. Additional findings from primary data in relation to shopping behaviour when purchasing clothing online as well as data relating to attitudes towards online fashion retailers were also added.

The sixth section summarises important motivational or demotivational factors which can affect how consumers buy clothes online and how this behaviour changes between Generation Z and Generation Y. This data is specifically important for online fashion retailers to enable them to target Generation Z and Generation Y consumers more effectively.

4.2 Sample Demographics

Overall, 123 responses were collected from the final web questionnaire, which was created through the LimeSurvey Professional tool. The web questionnaire contained 3 sections, and respondents were required to complete all sections in order for data to be used in the analysis. The final sample size of eligible responses was 88. These 88 responses enabled the researcher to carry out analysis relating to Objective 1. From the 88 responses83 responses were from Generation Z and Generation Y. Collected data showed that 26 % of all responses were completed by Generation Z (18 to 24 years old) and 69% of responses were completed by Generation Y (25 to 34 years old).

4.2.1 Age and gender of the respondents

Section two of the web questionnaire consists of factual and demographic questions about participants age and gender. This data is summarised and visualised in Figures 3-4.

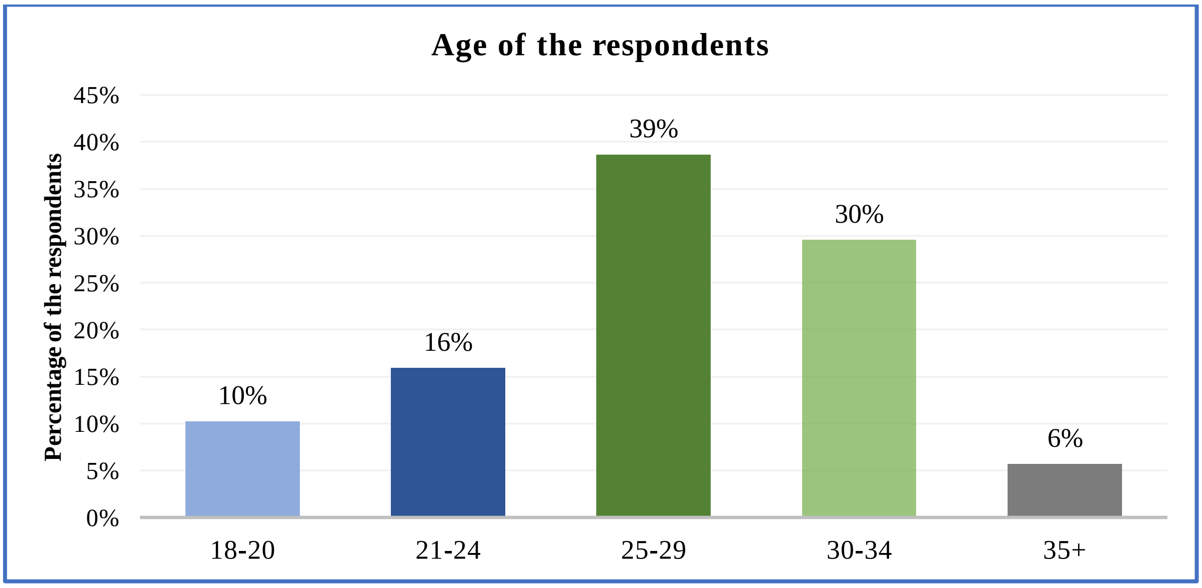


Figure 3. Age of the respondents
Source: Primary data findings

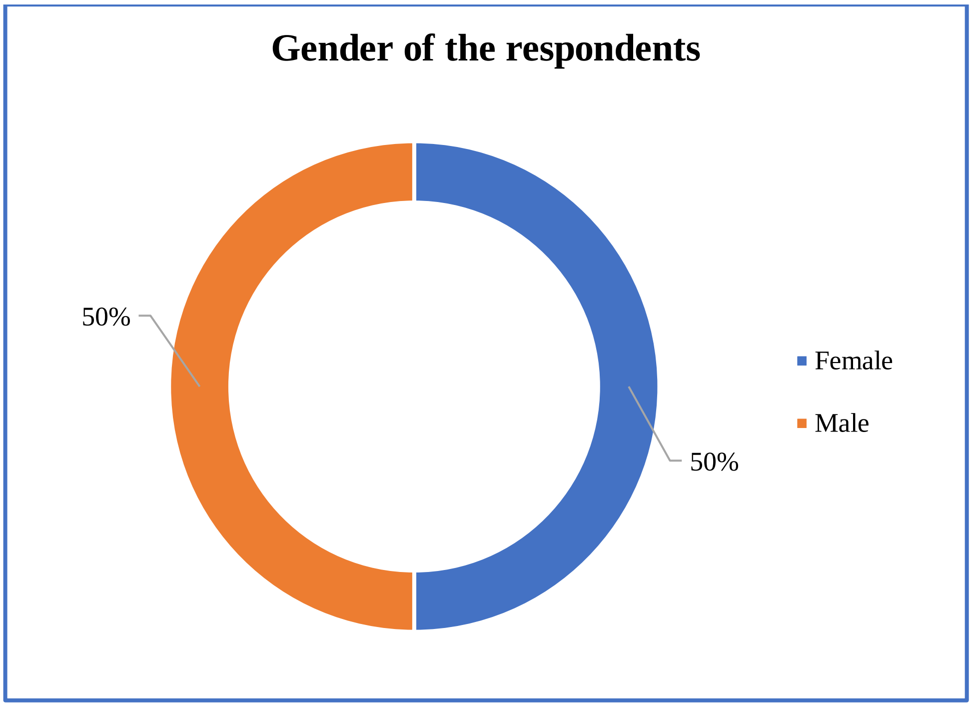


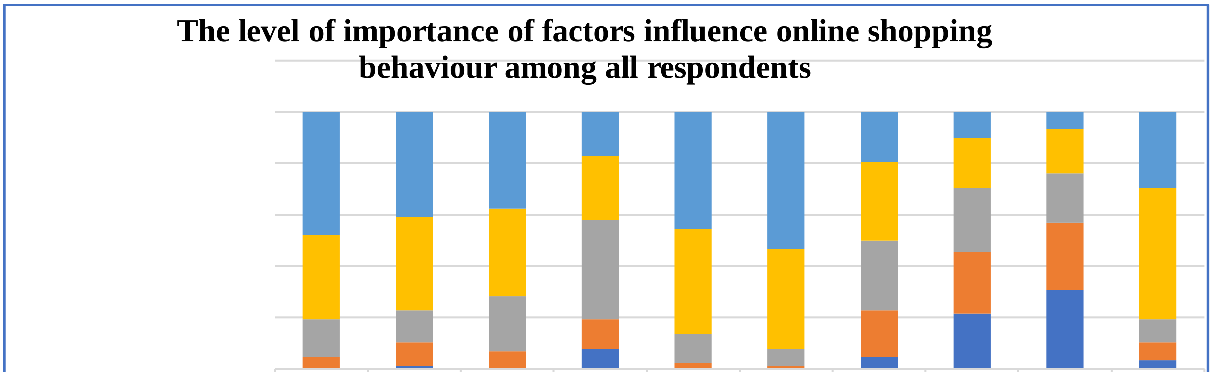
Figure 4. Gender of the respondents
Source: Primary data findings

Data Summary

While there was a higher number of respondents from Generation Y than Generation Z there was an equal amount of responses received from both genders across all age groups. This allowed the researcher to comprehensively analyse data of both genders and across both Generations.

4.3 Objectives

4.3.1 Objective 1: To identify the key determinants and factors that influence online shopping behaviour of consumers.



	Trust of retailer	Previous positive experience	Brand reputation	Retailer sustainability	Price	Quality	Unique design	Availability and activity on social media	Having retailer mobile app	Speed of delivery
Very important	48%	41%	38%	17%	45%	53%	19%	10%	7%	30%
Somewhat important	33%	36%	34%	25%	41%	39%	31%	19%	17%	51%
Neutral	15%	13%	22%	39%	11%	7%	27%	25%	19%	9%
Not very important	5%	9%	7%	11%	2%	1%	18%	24%	26%	7%
Not important at all	0%	1%	0%	8%	0%	0%	5%	22%	31%	3%

Figure 5. Factors that influence online shopping behaviour and their importance to all respondents
Source: Primary data findings

Factors that were found to be important in influencing online shopping behaviour from all respondents include quality (92%), price (86%), trust of retailer (81%), speed of delivery (81%), previous positive experience (77%), brand reputation (72%).Factors that were found to be not important include retailer mobile app (57%), availability and activity on social media (46%). Factors that were found to be neutral to respondents are retailer sustainability (39%), unique design (27%), availability and activity on social media (25%).

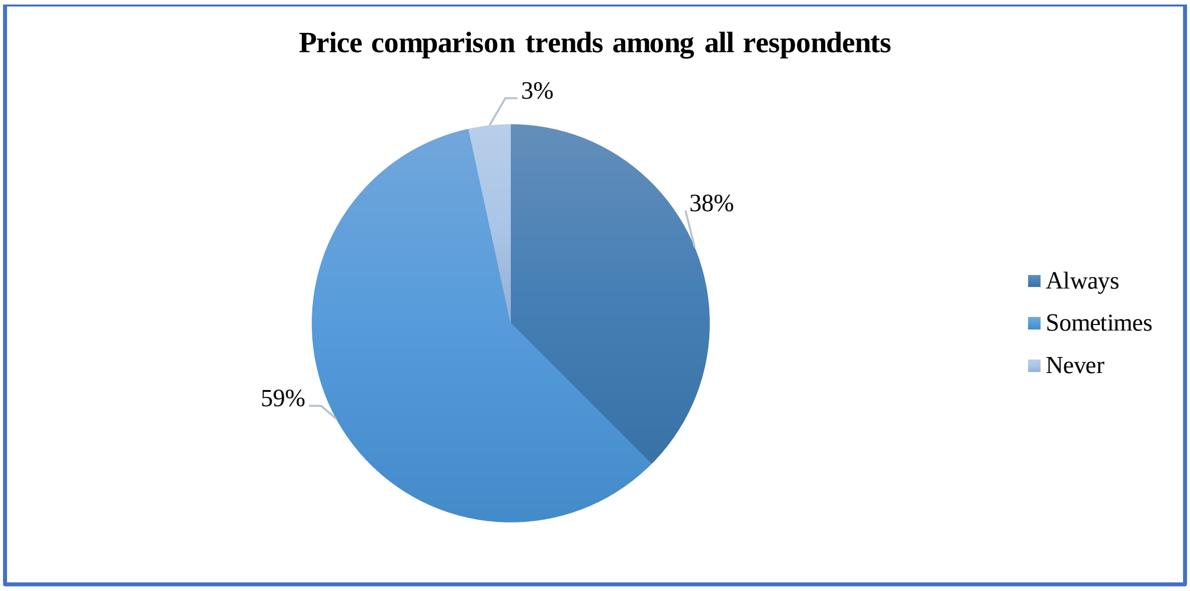


Figure 6. Price comparison trends among all respondents
Source: Primary data findings

Figure 6 shows that 59% of respondence “sometimes” compare prices, 38% “always” compare prices and only 3% “never” compare prices when shopping online for clothes. Such behaviour may explain why Generation Z, are less loyal to online retailers.

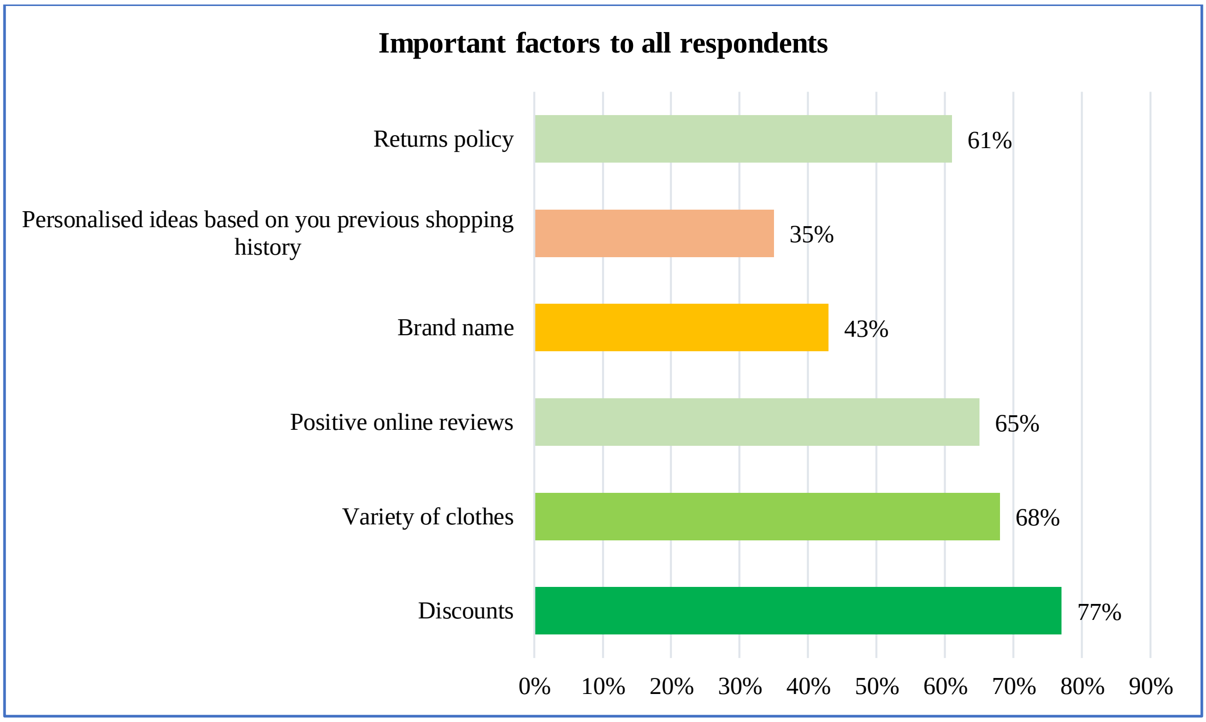


Figure 7. Important factors to all respondents
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 7 shows that important factors influencing online clothes shopping behaviour include discounts (77%), variety of clothes (68%), positive online reviews (65%) and returns policy (61%). Less important factors include brand name (43%) and personalised ideas based on previous shopping (35%)

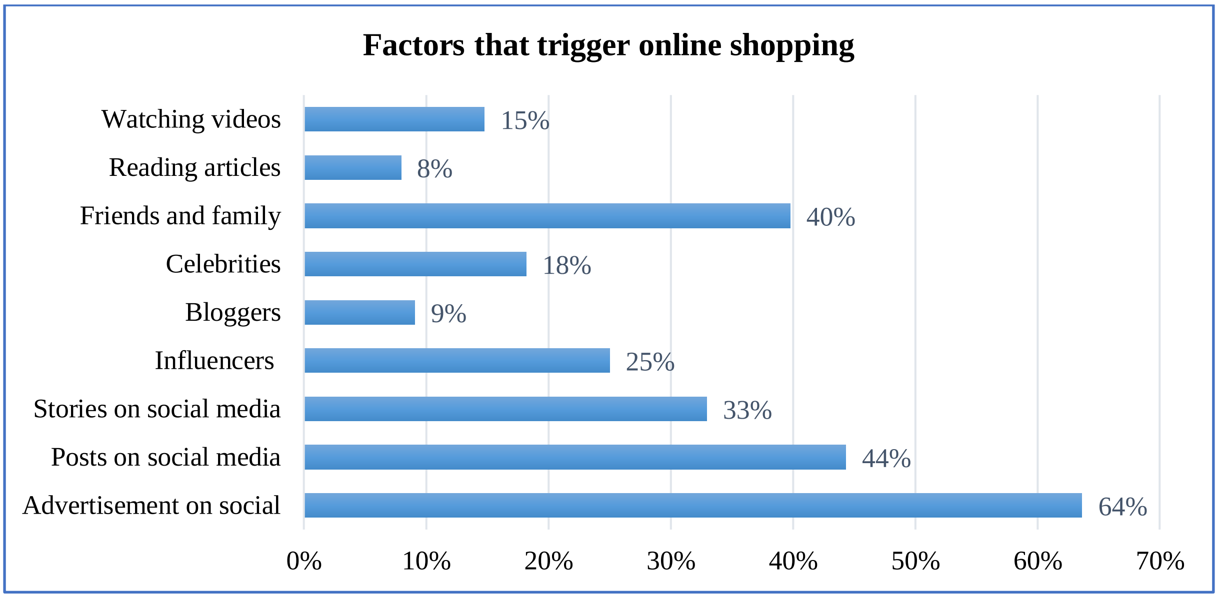


Figure 8. Factors that trigger online shopping
Source: Primary data findings

Figure 8 shows that major motivating factors for online shopping are: advertisement on social media (64%), posts on social media (44%) and friends and family (40%). Reading articles (8%) bloggers (9%) and watching videos (15%) has an influence on the least amount of people.

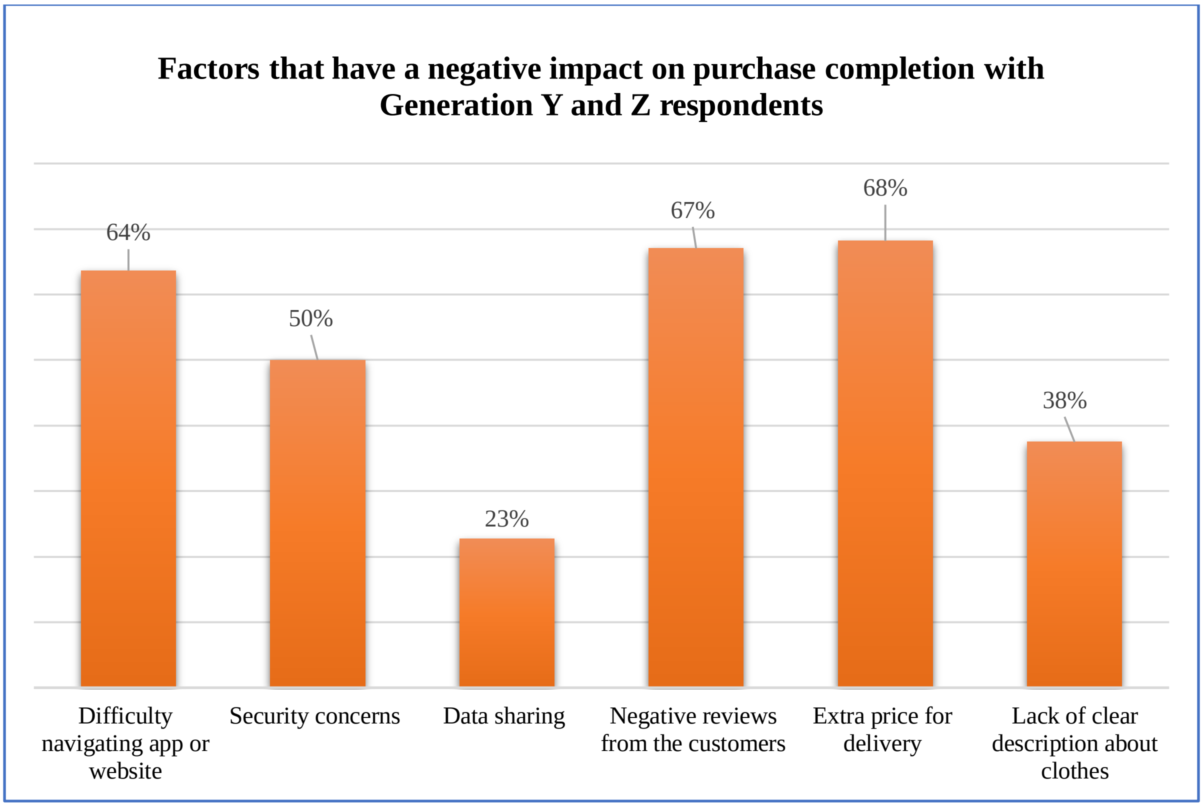


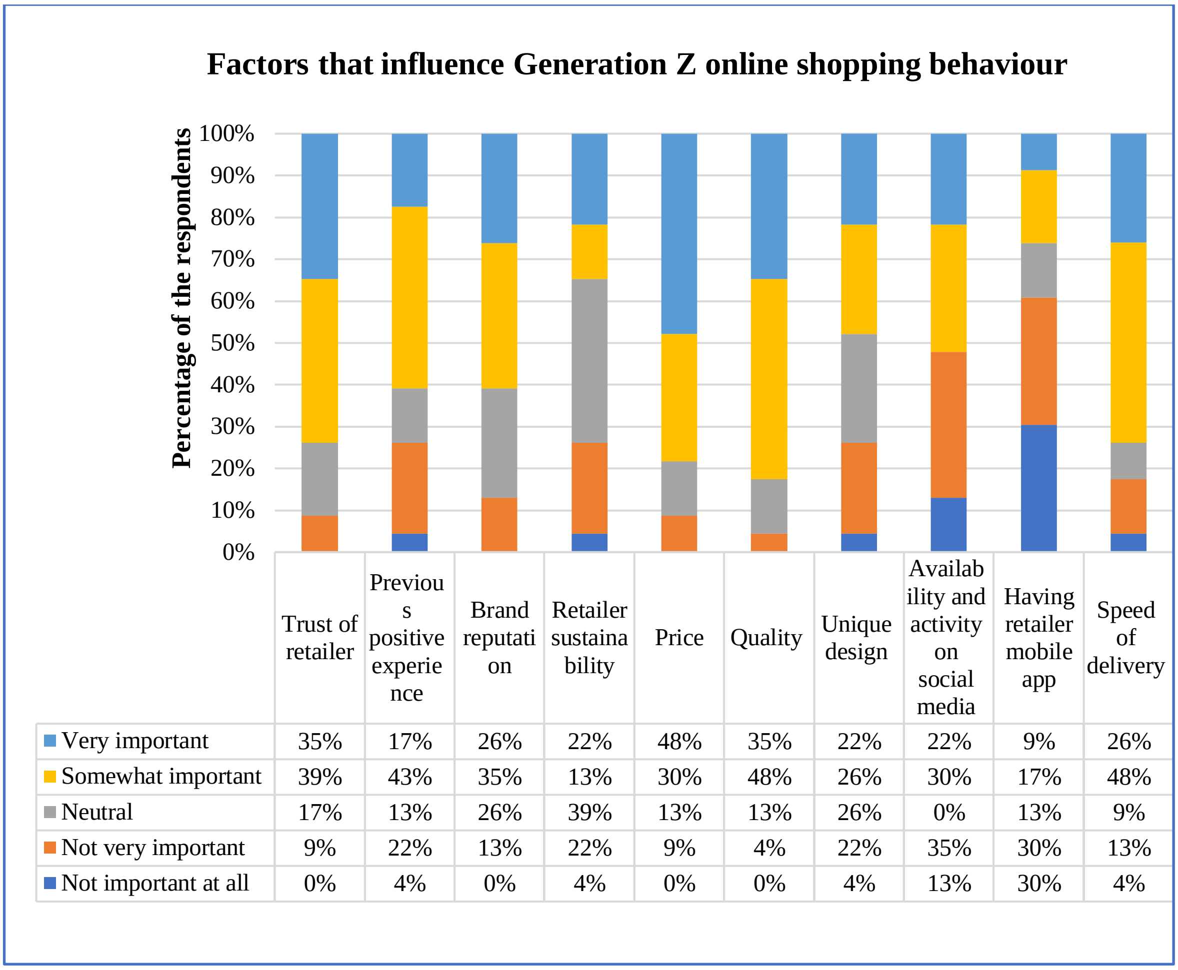
Figure 9. Factors that have a negative impact on purchase completion with Generation Y and Z respondents.
Source: Primary data findings

Factors found to have a negative impact with the most respondents were extra price for delivery (68%), negative reviews (67%), difficulty navigating app or website (64%) and security concerns (50%).

4.3.2 Objective 2: To examine the key determinants and factors that influence Generation Z online shopping behaviour at the pre-purchase and purchase stages.

4.3.2.1 The determinants and factors that influence online shopping behaviour of Generation Z

As was mentioned earlier, the percentage of Generation Z responses against overall responses obtained through the web questionnaire was 26%. This data was analyzed to identify major factors that have an influence on Generation Z online shopping behaviours.



	Trust of retailer	Previous positive experience	Brand reputation	Retailer sustainability	Price	Quality	Unique design	Availability and activity on social media	Having retailer mobile app	Speed of delivery
Very important	35%	17%	26%	22%	48%	35%	22%	22%	9%	26%
Somewhat important	39%	43%	35%	13%	30%	48%	26%	30%	17%	48%
Neutral	17%	13%	26%	39%	13%	13%	26%	0%	13%	9%
Not very important	9%	22%	13%	22%	9%	4%	22%	35%	30%	13%
Not important at all	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	13%	30%	4%

Figure 10. Factors that influence Generation Z online shopping behaviour
Source: Primary data findings

Factors that were found to be important in influencing online shopping behaviour from Generation Z respondents include quality (83%), price (78%), trust of retailer (74%), speed of delivery (74%), previous positive experience (61%), brand reputation (61%). Factors that were found to be not important include retailer mobile app (60%) and availability and activity on social media (48%). Factors that were found to be neutral to respondents are retailer sustainability (39%).

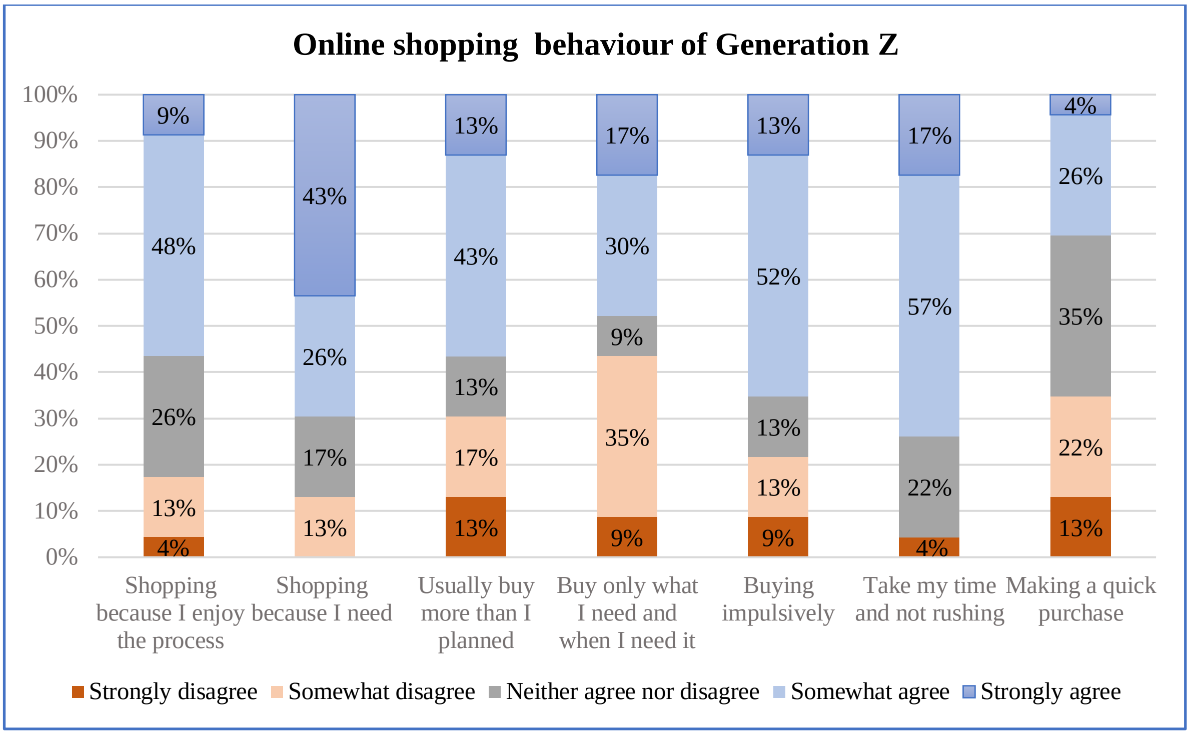


Figure 11. Online shopping behaviour of Generation Z
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 11 indicates how Generation Z shop online 74% of respondents take their time and do not rush while 70% shop when they need to. Another 65% buy impulsively with 57% buying more than they have planned and shop because they enjoy the process.

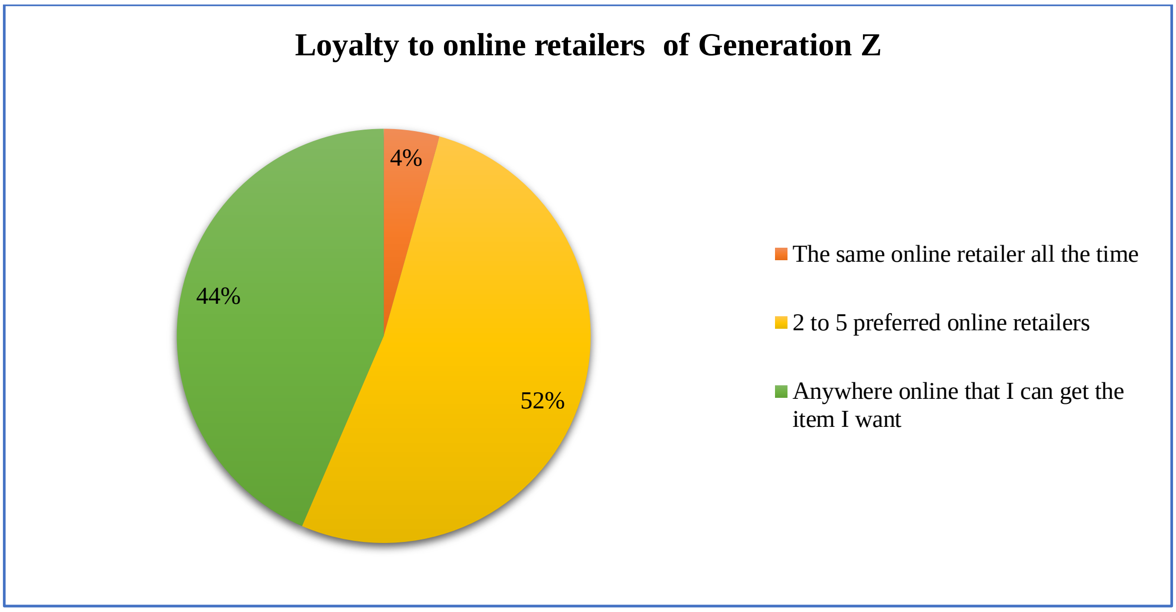


Figure 12. Loyalty to online retailers of Generation Z
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 12 shows that 52% of Generation Z make purchases from 2 to 5 preferred online retailers, while 44% show no loyalty and shop anywhere where they can purchase what they require. Only 4% purchase from the same retailer all the time.

4.3.2.2 Generation Z device usage during the shopping journey

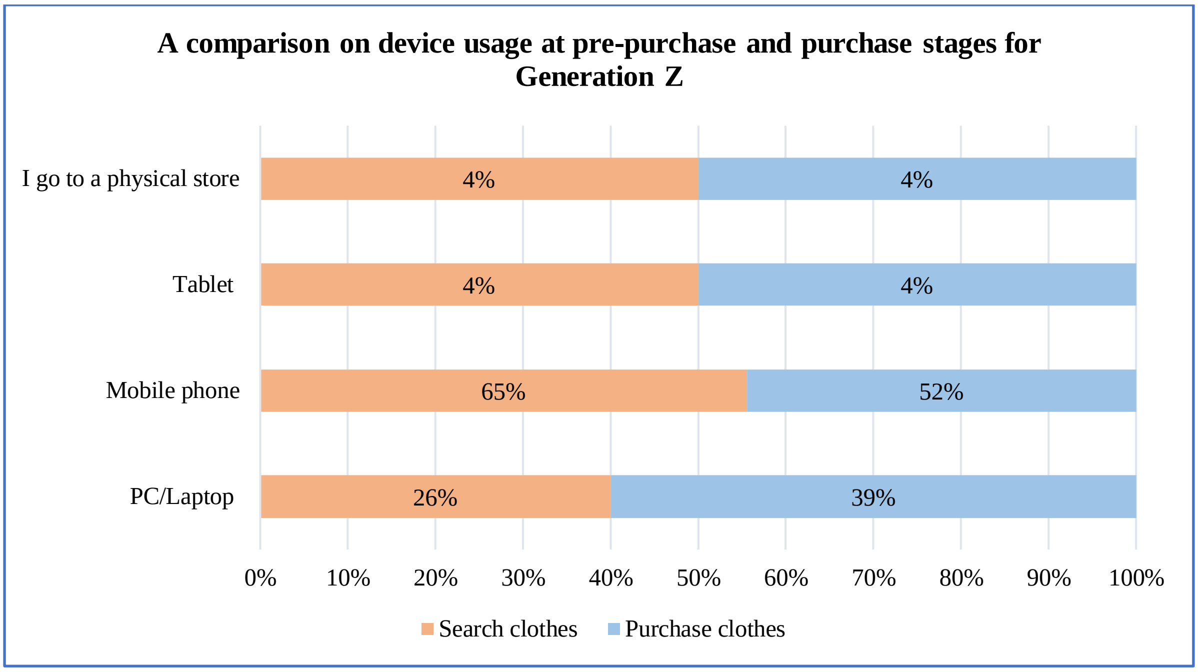


Figure 13. A comparison on device usage at pre-purchase and purchase stages for Generation Z, %
Source: Primary data findings

Of all Generation Z respondents, 65% search for clothes on a mobile phone while 52% make a purchase through mobile phone. The data points to the fact that 13% who search for clothes on mobile phone make their final purchase on a PC/laptop. It is interesting to note that only 4% of Generation Z respondents said that they search and make purchases in a physical store.

4.3.2.3 Online channels at the pre-purchase stage and purchase stages

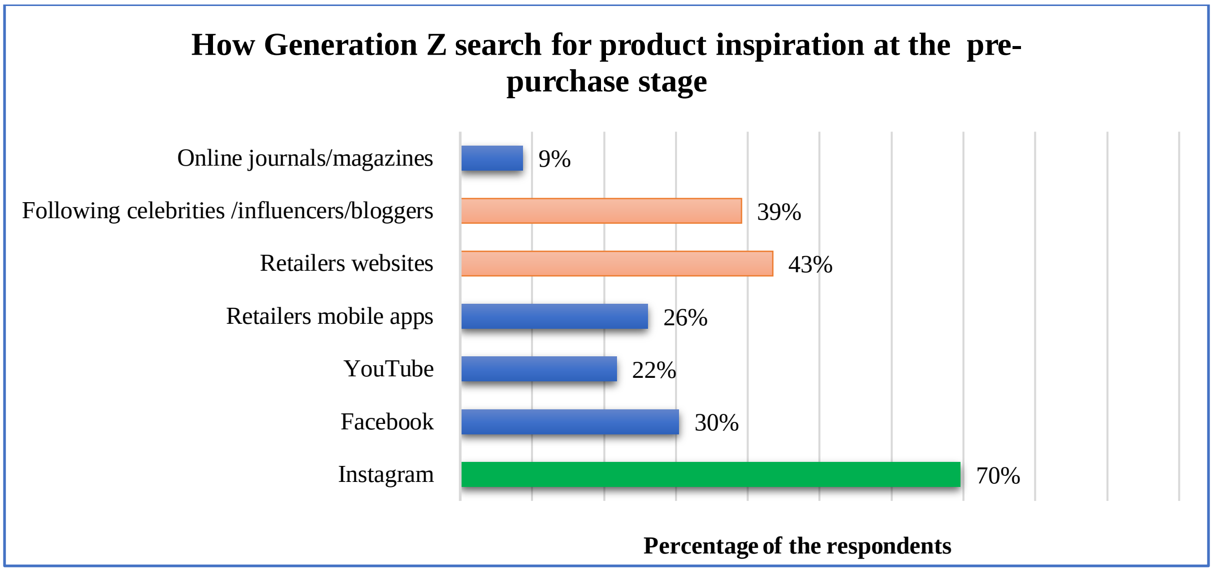


Figure 14. How Generation Z search for product inspiration at the pre-purchase stage.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 14 shows that all of Generation Z consumers look for inspiration for clothes online Instagram (70%) was found to be the most popular online channel, followed by retailers websites(43%) and celebrities/influencers/bloggers (39%).

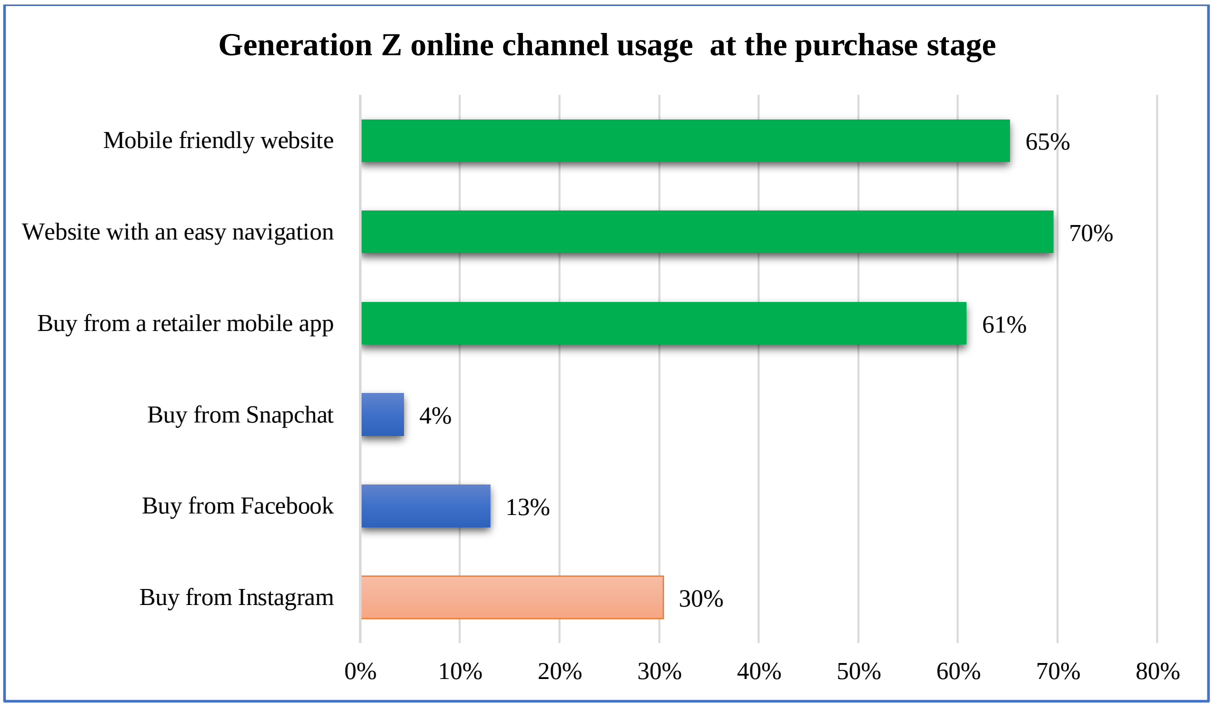


Figure 15. Generation Z online channel usage at the purchase stage.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 15 shows that websites with easy navigation (70%), mobile friendly websites (65%), and a retailer mobile apps (61%) are the most used online channels for Generation Z at the purchase stage. Social media platforms were rated as the least favorable online channels at the purchase stage). However, having an option to buy directly from social media platforms seems to be important for Generation Z consumers (43%).

4.3.2.4 Price and Quality

Factors such as price (78%) and quality (83%) (please see Figure 8 in Section 4.3.1) are 2 of the most important factors for Generation Z when shopping for clothes online. Uniqueness of the clothing design was important for 44% of Generation Z respondents. 57% of Generation Z look for discounts when shopping online and 61% expect to have a good variety of clothes.

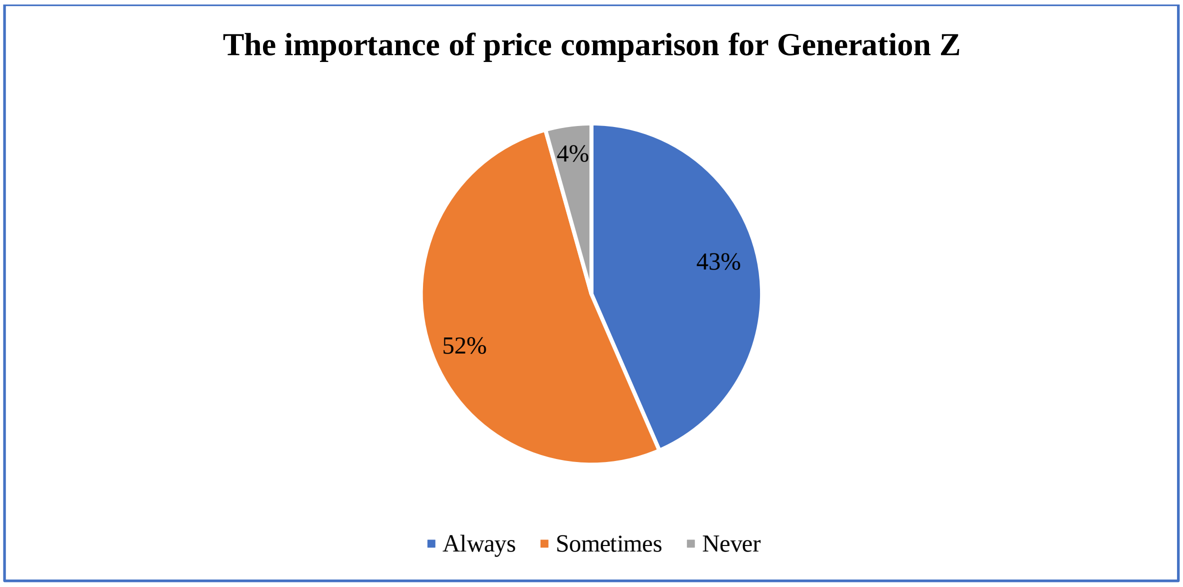


Figure 16. The importance of price comparison for Generation Z
Source: Primary data findings

Date in the graph above indicates that 43% of Generation Z always compare prices, 52% sometimes compare prices and 4% - never. However, 56% of consumers shop with at least 2 online fashion retailers while44% are not loyal to any brands see Figure 10 above). This behaviour indicates that factors such as price, quality, discounts, and variety of clothes can have an impact on Generation Z shopping journeys and their choice of retailer (see Figure 17 below).

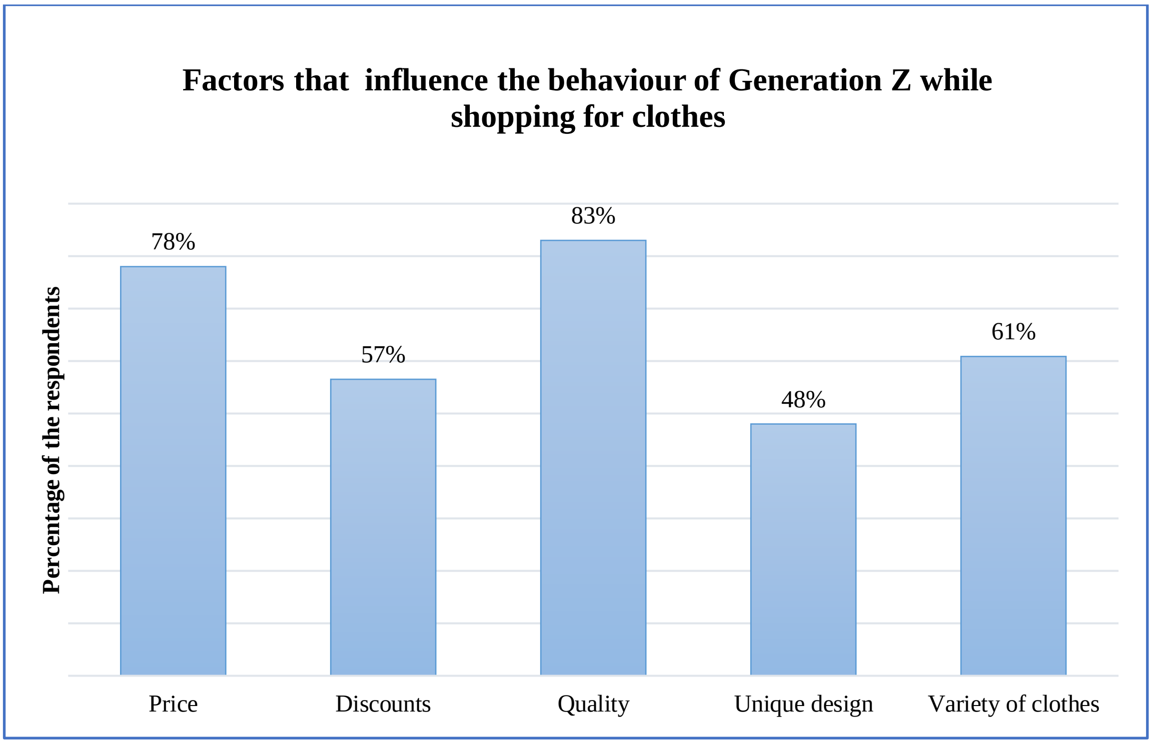
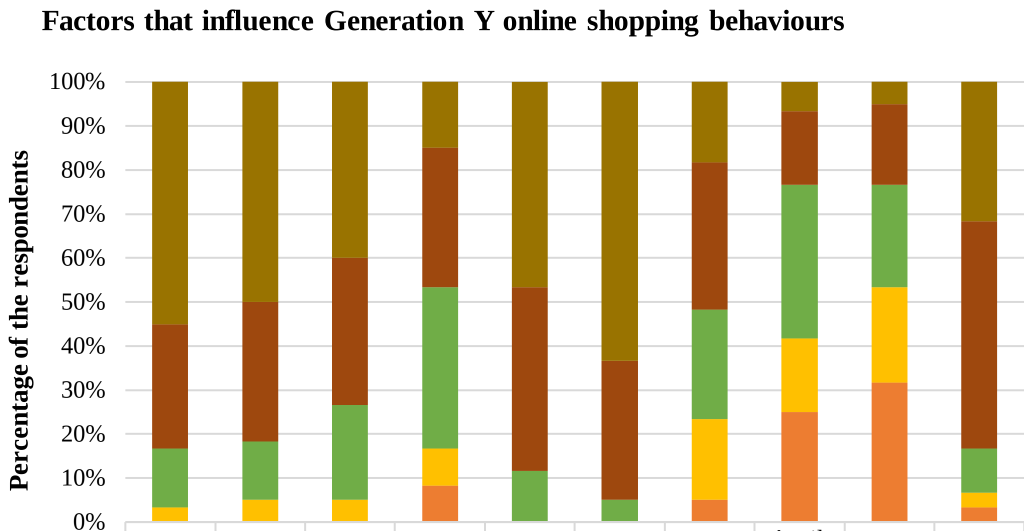


Figure 17. Factors that influence the behaviour of Generation Z while shopping for clothes.
Source: Primary data findings

4.3.3 Objective 3: To examine the key determinants and factors that influence generation Y online shopping behaviour at the pre-purchase and purchase stages.

4.3.3.1 The determinants and factors that influence online shopping behaviour of Generation Z

The percentage of Generation Y responses against overall responses obtained through the web questionnaire was 68%. This data was analyzed to identify major factors that have an influence on Generation Y online shopping behaviours.



	Trust of retailer	Previous positive experience	Brand reputation	Retailer sustainability	Price	Quality	Unique design	Availability and activity on social media	Having retailer mobile app	Speed of delivery
Very important	55%	50%	40%	15%	47%	63%	18%	7%	5%	32%
Somewhat important	28%	32%	33%	32%	42%	32%	33%	17%	18%	52%
Neutral	13%	13%	22%	37%	12%	5%	25%	35%	23%	10%
Not very important	3%	5%	5%	8%	0%	0%	18%	17%	22%	3%
Not important at all	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	5%	25%	32%	3%

Figure 18. Factors that influence Generation Y online shopping behaviours
Source: Primary data findings

Factors that were found to be important in influencing online shopping behaviour from Generation Z respondents include quality (95%), price (88%), trust of retailer (84%), speed of delivery (84%), previous positive experience (82%), brand reputation (73%). Factors that were found to be not important include retailer mobile app (54%) and availability and activity on social media (42%). Factors that were found to be neutral to respondents are retailer sustainability (37%).

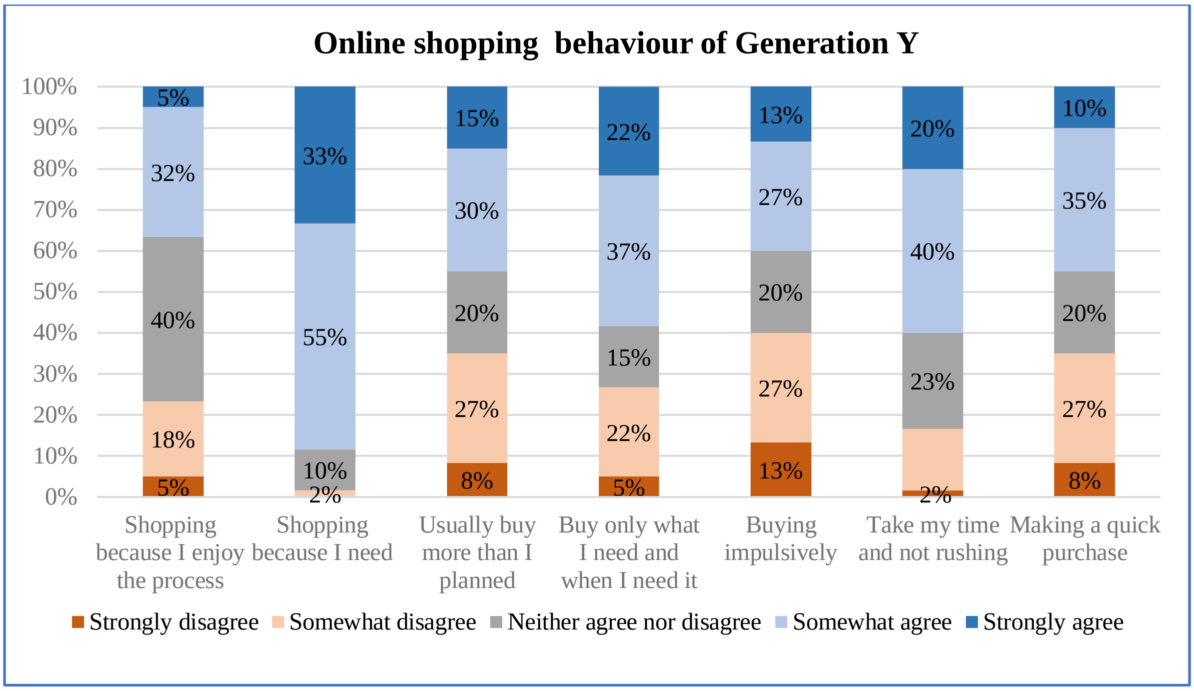


Figure 19. Online shopping behaviour of Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 19 indicates how Generation Y shop online: 88% shop when they need to while 60% of respondents take their time and do not rush. Another 57% buying more than they have planned and 37% shop because they enjoy the process with 40% buy impulsively. In general, 58% of Generation Y respondents said they search and purchase at the same place online.

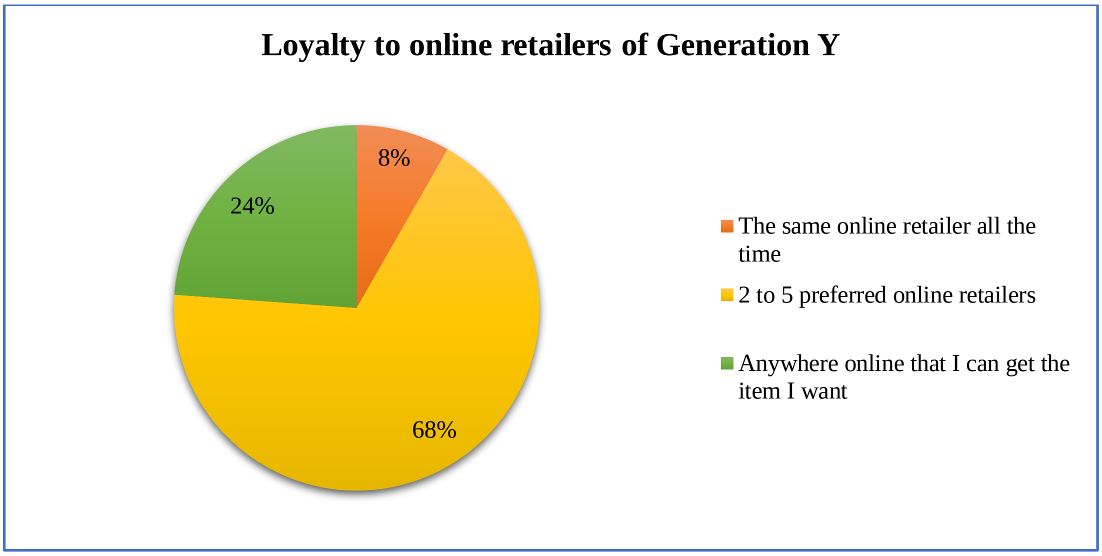


Figure 20. Loyalty to online retailers of Generation Y.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 20 shows that 68% of Generation Y make purchases from 2 to 5 preferred online retailers while 24% show no loyalty and shop anywhere where they can purchase what they require. Only 8% purchase from the same retailers all the time.

4.3.3.2 Generation Y device usage during the shopping journey

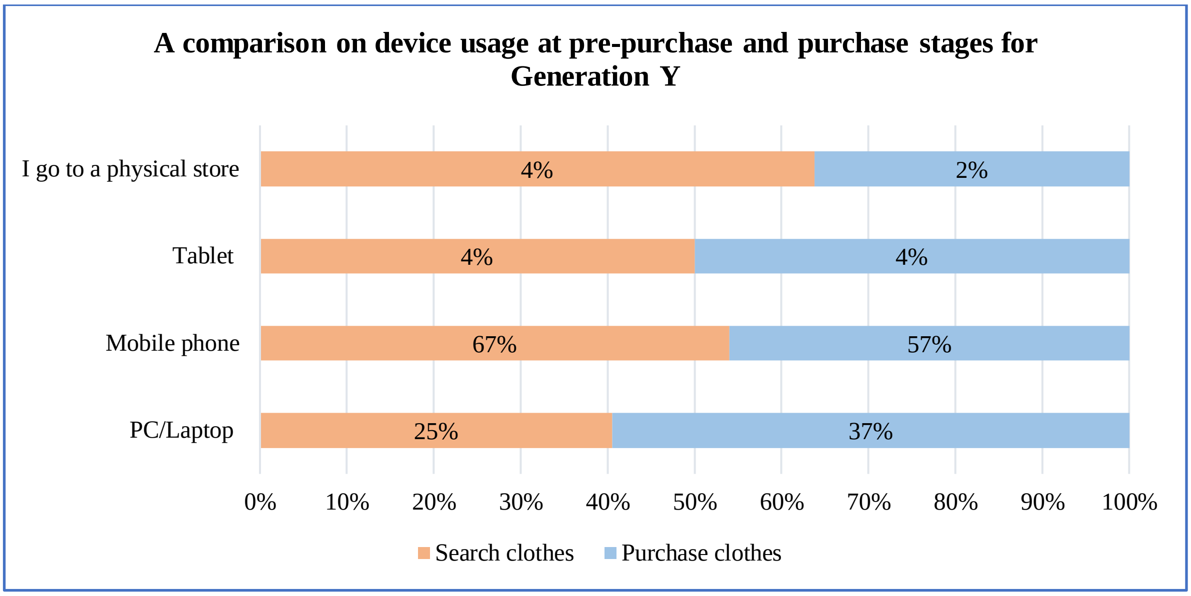


Figure 21. A comparison on device usage at pre-purchase and purchase stages for Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

Of all Generation Y respondents, 67% search for clothes on a mobile phone while 57% make a purchase through mobile phone. The data points to the fact that 8% who search for clothes on mobile phone make their final purchase on a PC/laptop. It is interesting to note that only 4% of Generation Y respondents said that they search and only 2% make purchases in a physical store.

Less consumers use PC/Laptop for clothes shopping in the web questionnaire the respondents who switch from mobile phone at pre-purchase stage to PC/Laptop at the purchase stage were given an option to explain their reasons. Some reasons given were:

- “webpages are better adapted to navigate”

- “problems with the options in webpages using mobile phone”,
- “reading all details/reviews is better on the laptop”,
- “more trust” using laptops and making mistakes on the phone”.

4.3.3.3 Online channels at the pre-purchase and purchase stages

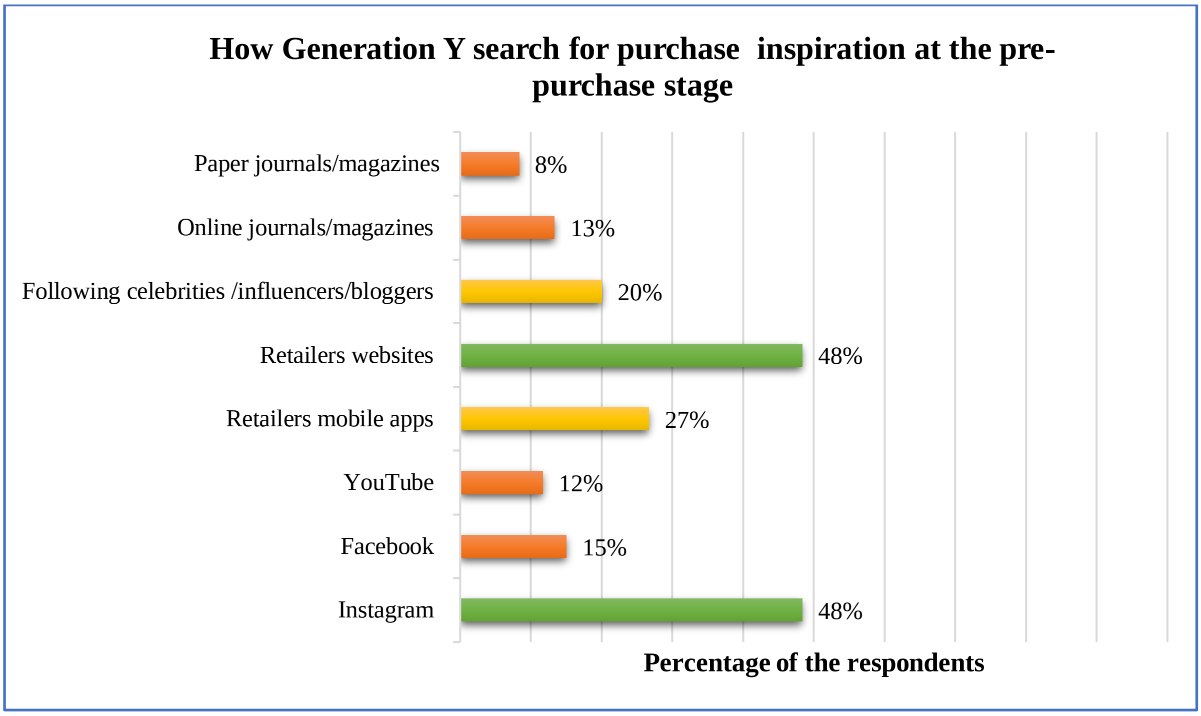


Figure 22. How Generation Y search for product inspiration at the pre-purchase stage
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 22 shows that all of Generation Y consumers look for inspiration for cloches online. The major channels are retail websites (48%), Instagram (48%) and retailer mobile apps (27%).

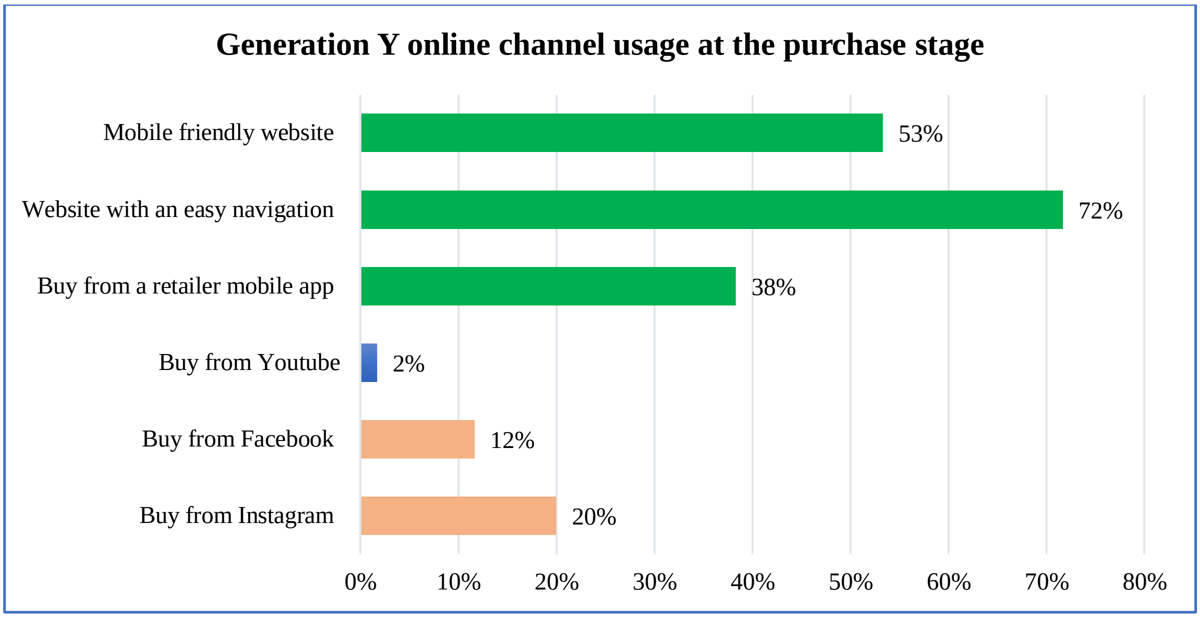


Figure 23. Generation Y online channel usage at the purchase stage.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 23 shows that website with easy navigation (72%), mobile friendly websites (53%), and retailer mobile apps (38%) are the most used online channels for Generation Y at the purchase stage. Social media platforms were rated as the least favorable online channels at the purchase stage. Additionally, having an option to buy directly from social media platforms was found to be not important for Generation Y consumers: 47% agreed that it is “not important” and 42% said they “do not care”.

4.3.3.4 Price and Quality

Factors such as price (89%) and quality (95%) (see Figure 16 above) are 2 of the most important factors for Generation Y when shopping for clothes online. Uniqueness of the clothing design is important for 51% of Generation Y respondents. 85% of Generation Y respondents look for discounts when shopping online and 95% expect to have a good variety of clothes.

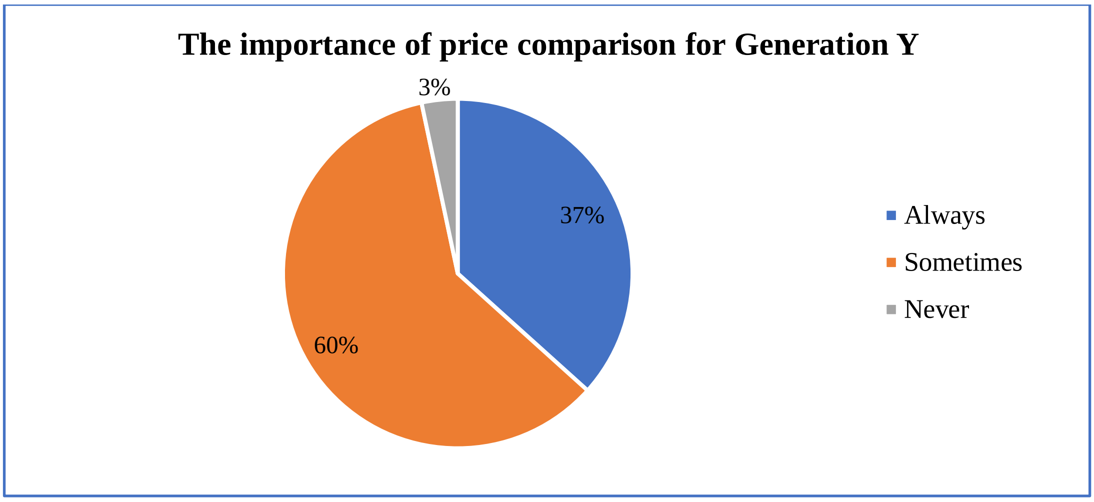


Figure 24. The importance of price comparison for Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

Data in the graph above indicates that 37% of Generation Y always compare prices, 60% compare prices sometimes and 3% - never. However, 68% of consumers shop with at least 2 online fashion retailers, while 24% are not loyal to any brand (see Figure 20 above). This behaviour indicates that factors such as price, quality, discounts, variety of clothes can have an impact on Generation Y shopping journeys and their choice of retailer (see Figure 25 below).

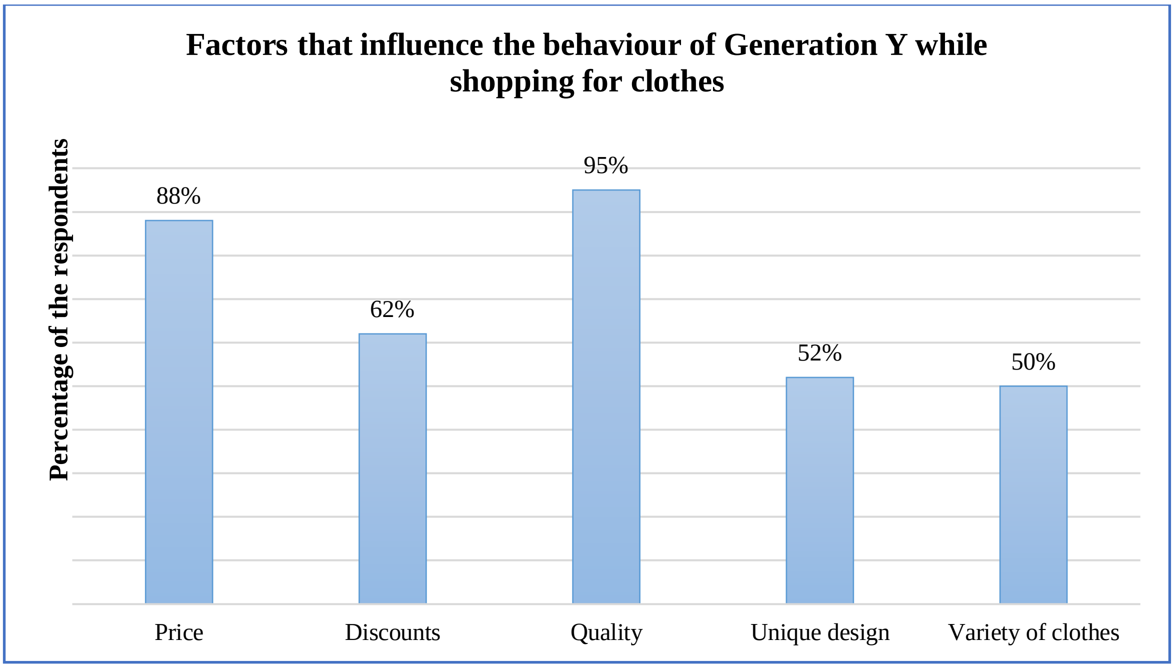
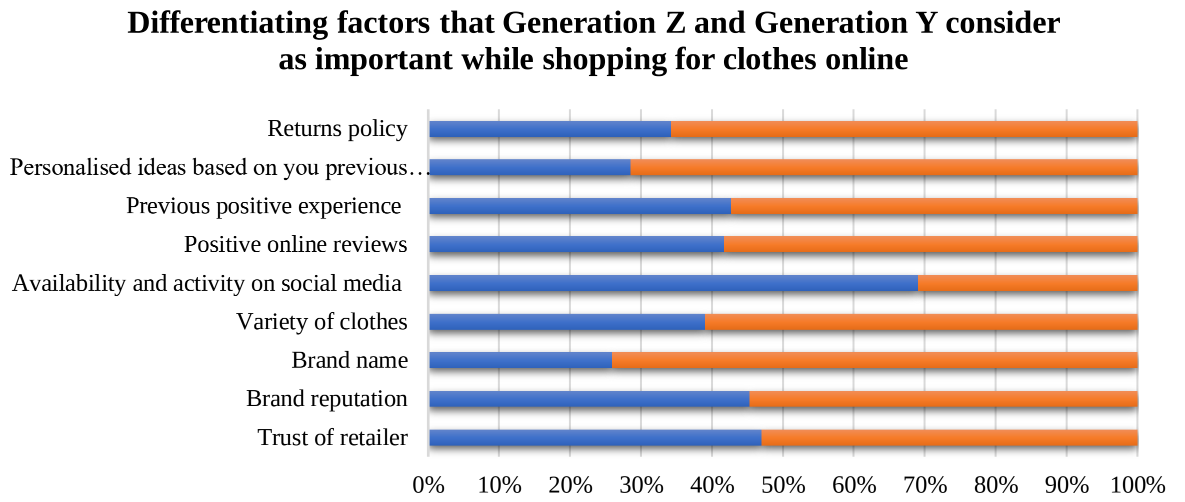


Figure 25. Factors that influence the behaviour of Generation Y while shopping for clothes
Source: Primary data findings

4.3.4 Objective 4: To determine the key differentiating factors between Generation Z and Generation Y in relation to online clothing shopping behaviour in Ireland with online fashion retailers.

The respondents from Generation Z and Generation Y were asked to identify important factors while shopping for clothes from online fashion retailers. All factors are presented in the graph below and highlight differences between the generations.



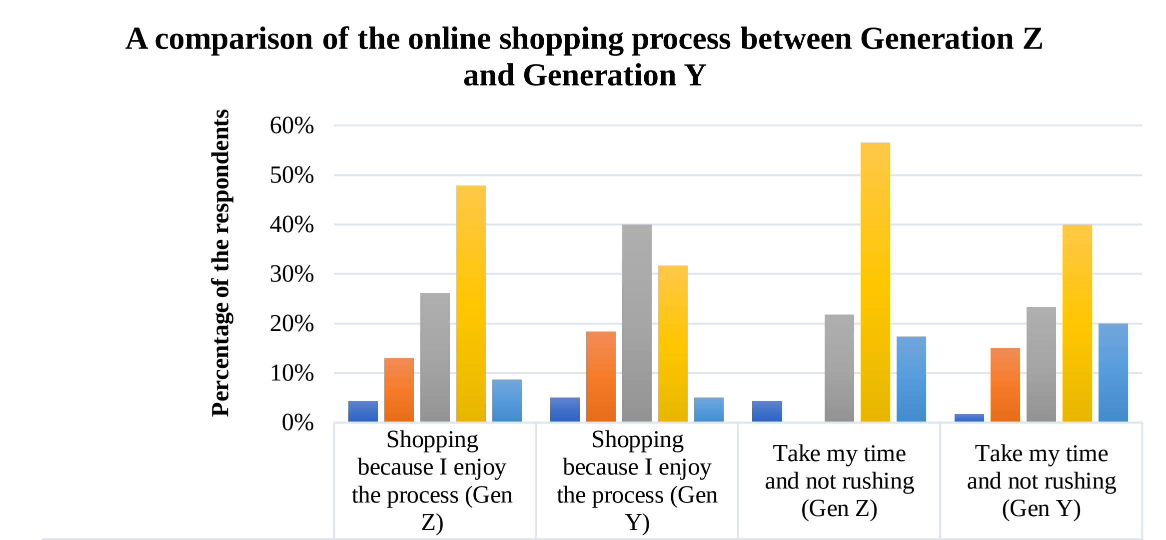
	Trust of retailer	Brand reputation	Brand name	Variety of clothes	Availability and activity on social media	Positive online reviews	Previous positive experience	Personalised ideas based on you previous shopping history	Returns policy
Generation Z	74%	61%	30%	61%	52%	70%	61%	35%	52%
Generation Y	83%	73%	87%	95%	23%	97%	82%	87%	100%

Figure 26. Differentiating factors that Generation Z and Generation Y consider as important while shopping for clothes online.
Source: Primary data findings

From 18 factors that were tested on both Generation Z and Generation Y 9 were found to have distinct differences and these are displayed in Figure 26.

Among these 9 factors the most pronounced differences were availability and activity on social media, brand name, personalised ideas based on previous shopping history and return policy.

Availability and activity on social media are more than twice as important for Generation Z than it is for Generation Y. Brand name, personalised ideas based on previous shopping history and return policy are twice or more important to Generation Y compared to Generation Z. Even though, trust of retailer and brand reputation are important for both generations, a higher percentage of Generation Y consider these factors as important. In addition, 95% of Generation Y and 61% of Generation Z consumers expect a good variety of clothes online. Positive online reviews are a crucial factor for Generation Y (97%) but less for Generation Z (70%). Positive previous experience is more important for Generation Y (82%) that for Generation Z (61%).



	Shopping because I enjoy the process (Gen Z)	Shopping because I enjoy the process (Gen Y)	Take my time and not rushing (Gen Z)	Take my time and not rushing (Gen Y)
Strongly disagree	4%	5%	4%	2%
Somewhat disagree	13%	18%	0%	15%
Neither agree nor disagree	26%	40%	22%	23%
Somewhat agree	48%	32%	57%	40%
Strongly agree	9%	5%	17%	20%

Figure 27. A comparison of the online shopping process between Generation Z and Generation Y when shopping for clothes
Source: Primary data findings

When shopping online for clothes, 57% of Generation Z responded that they enjoy shopping online compared to 35% of Generation Y. The tendency to take their time and not to rush is 14% higher with Generation Z then Generation Y (Figure 27).

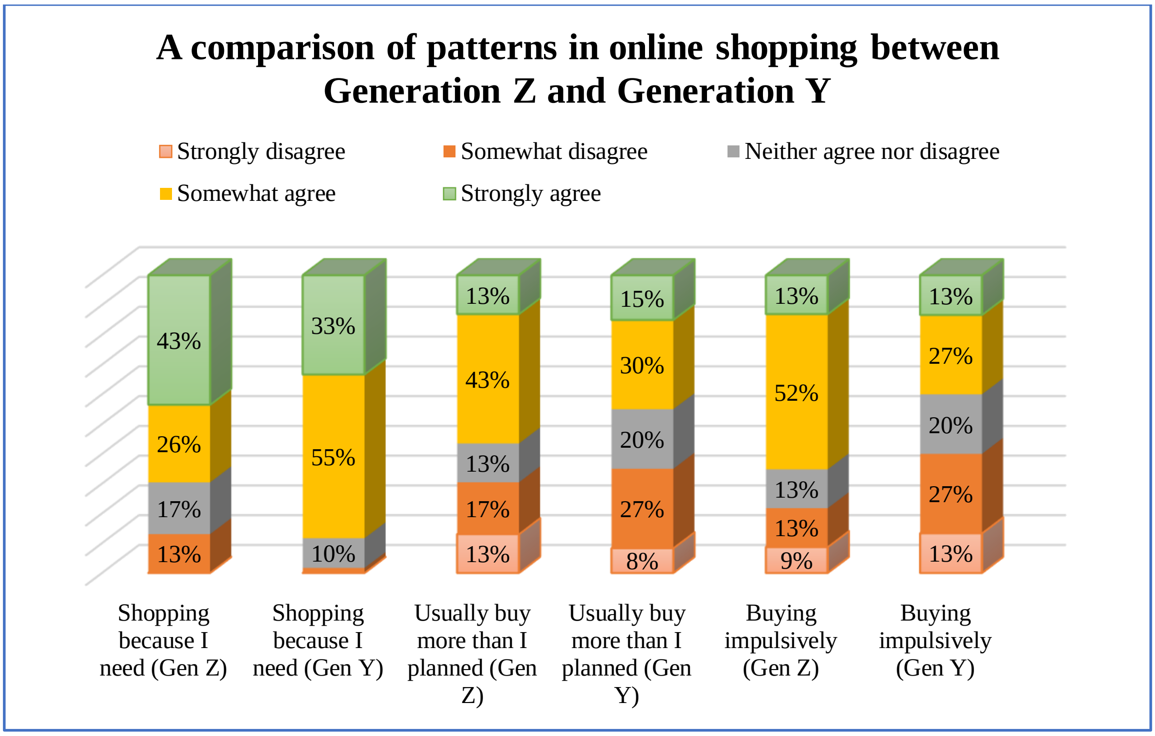


Figure 28. A comparison of patterns in online shopping between Generation Z and Generation Y when shopping for clothes
Source: Primary data findings

The tendency to buy more than they plan is higher for Generation Z than for Generation Y by 12%. Additionally, 25% more of Generation Z buy impulsively compared to Generation Y. In addition, 18% more of Generation Y than Generation Z shop because they need to (Figure 26).

Figure 29. A comparison between preferences of Generation Z and Generation Y towards online fashion retailers
Source: Primary data findings

Figure 29 shows that Generation Z (70%) is more likely to check a website with different clothing brands compared to Generation Y (53%). This may point to the fact that Generation Y need to have more information about brands and retailers before buying clothes. For Generation Y there may be trust issues with unknown brands.

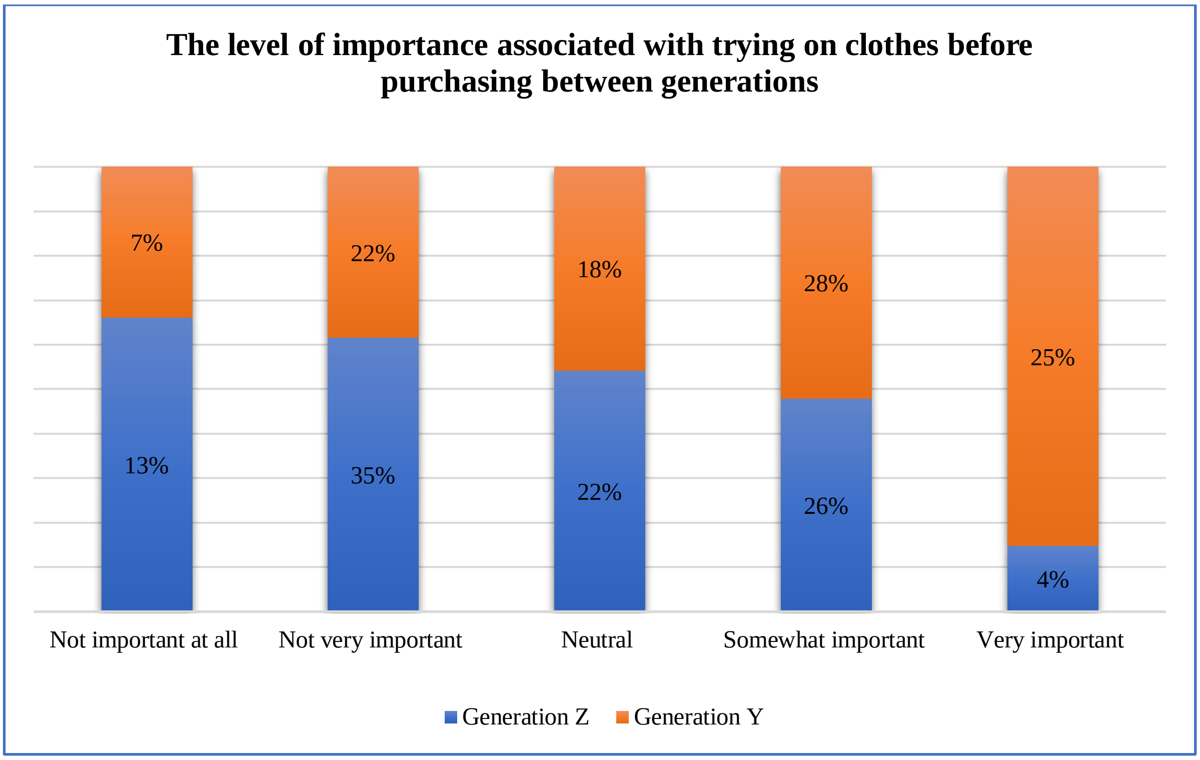


Figure 28. The level of importance associated with trying on clothes before purchasing between generations
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 28 shows that there is a clear distinction between Generation Z and Generation Y are their requirement to try on closes before purchasing. 25% of Generation Y said it is "very important" compared to 4% of Generation Z. In addition, 48% of Generation Z respondents stated it is not important compared to 29% of Generation Y.

4.3.4.2 Differences in device usage

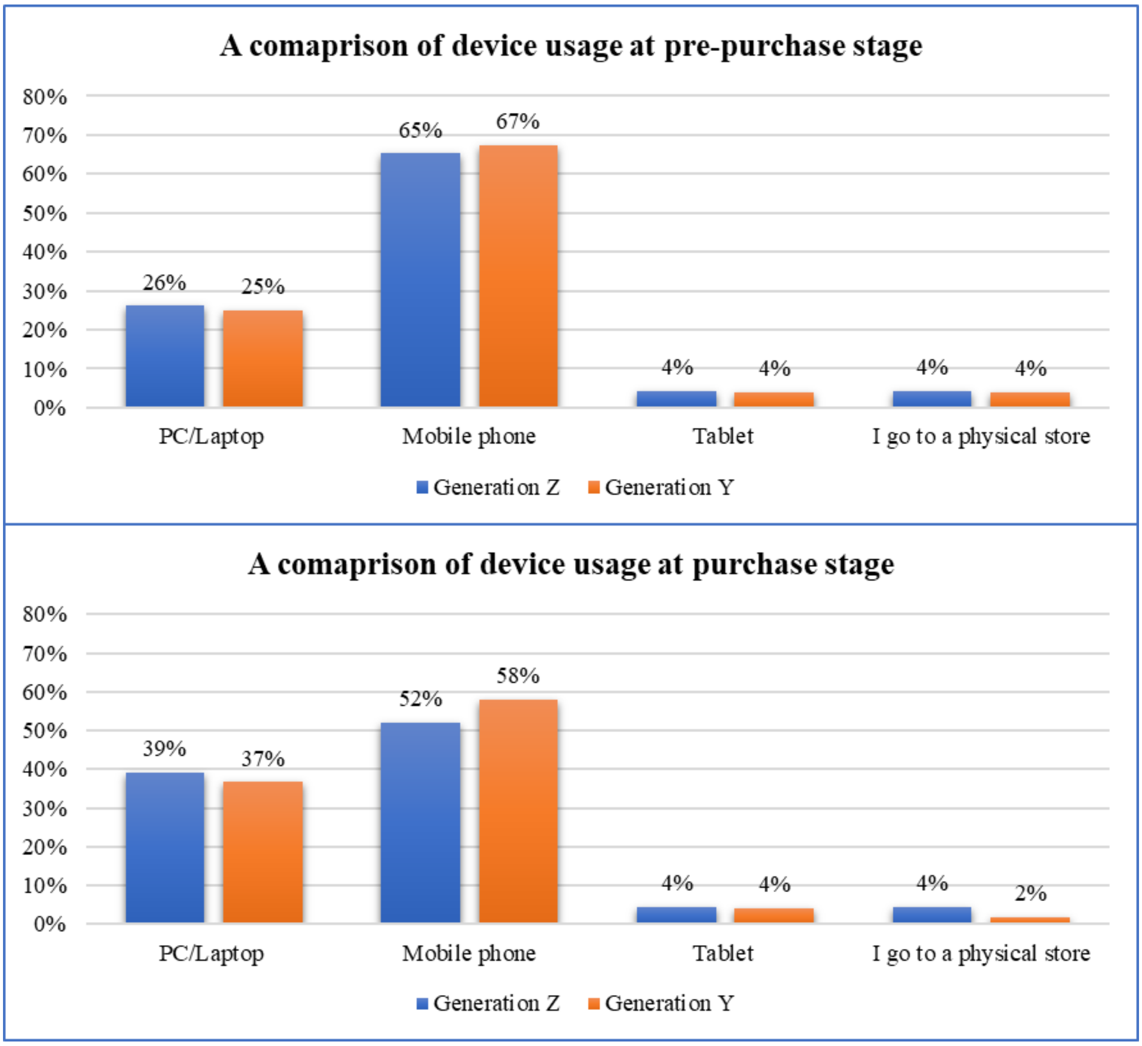


Figure 30. A comparison of device usage at pre-purchase and purchase stages between generation Z and Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

The findings show that a similar percentage of the two generations use mobile phone, PC/Laptop and tablets at the pre-purchase and purchase stages (Figure 30). The main difference that the data highlights is that Generation Z are less likely to switch from a mobile phone to a desktop at the purchase stage (13%) compared to Generation Y (24%).

4.3.4.3 Differences in channel usage

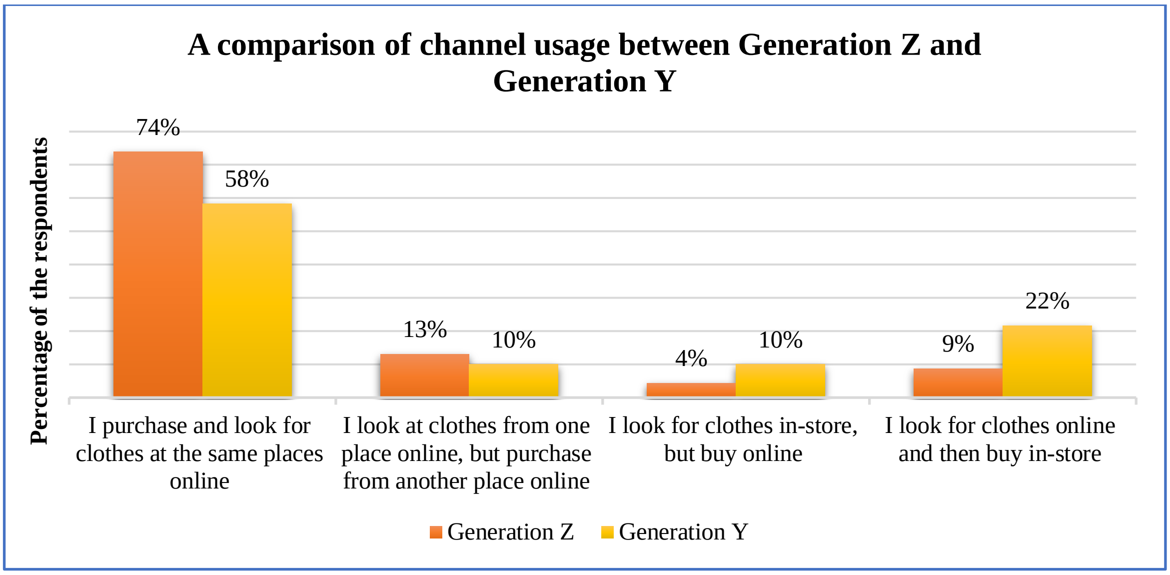


Figure 31. A comparison of channel usage between Generation Z and Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 31 shows that 96% of Generation Z respondents search for clothes online compared to 90% of Generation Y. The date also highlights that much higher percentage of Generation Y (22%) purchase clothes in-store compared to Generation Y (9%).

Pre-purchase stage

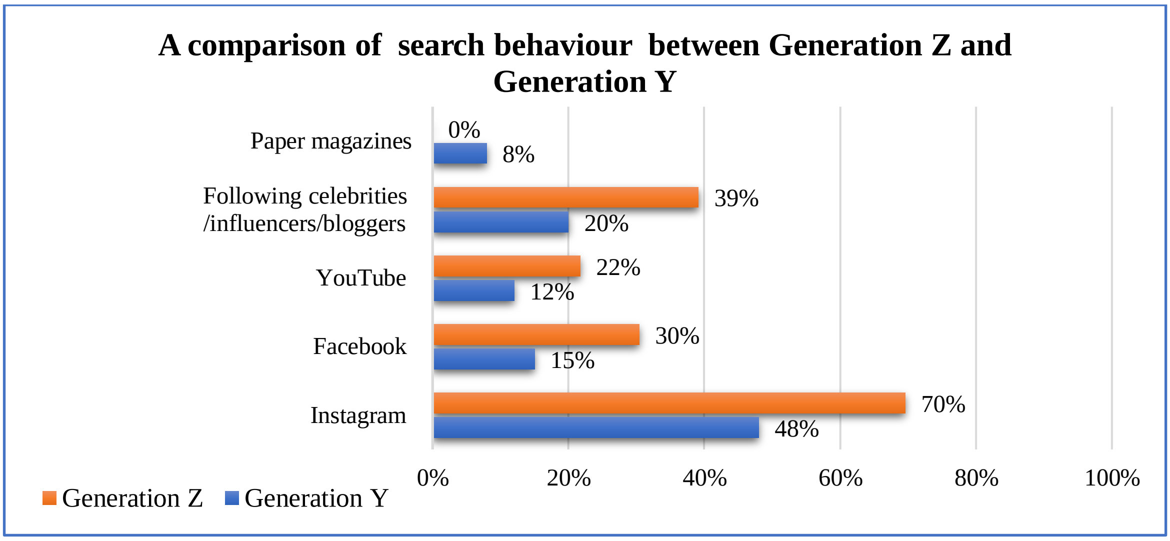


Figure 32. A comparison of search behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

The findings show that Generation Z is more active on social channels than Generation Y at the pre-purchase stage of their journey (Figure 32). Generation Z are more likely to use Instagram (70%) compared to Generation Y (48%). In relation to YouTube, Facebook and following celebrities/influencers/bloggers, Generation Z were more than twice as active as Generation Y on these channels. 8% of Generation Y still read paper magazines to find clothes they like, however no respondents from Generation Z found paper magazines to be important. Both generations read online magazines for clothing inspiration.

Purchase stage

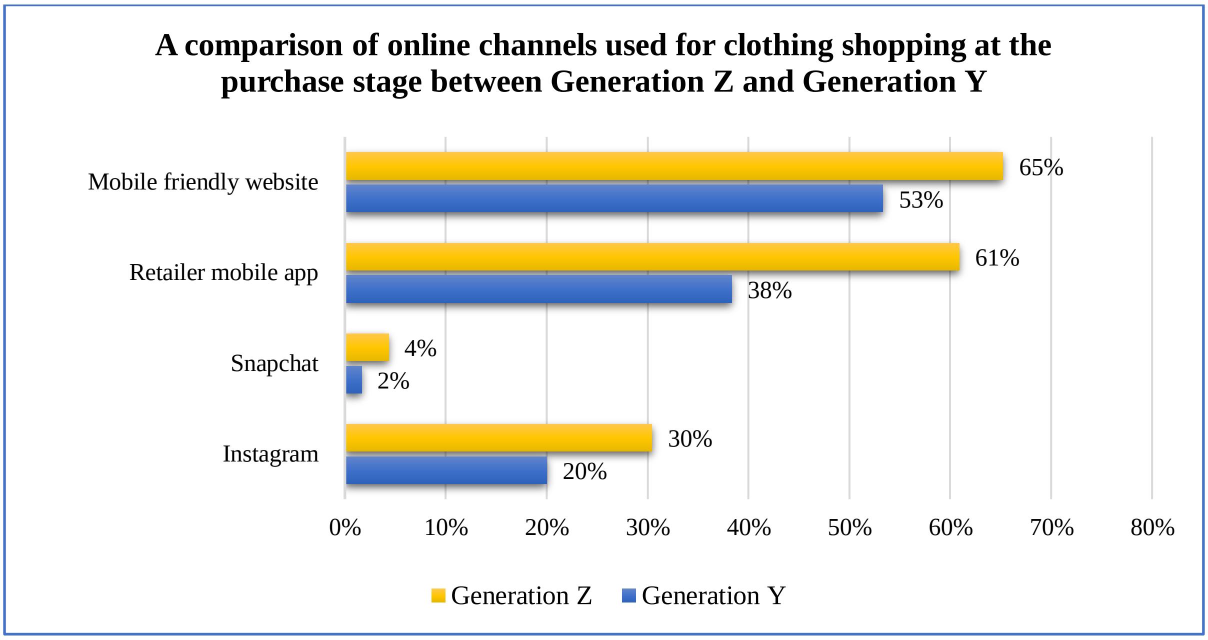


Figure 33. A comparison of online channels used for clothing shopping at the purchase stage between Generation Z and Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

Data shows that a mobile friendly website is less important for Generation Y (53%) than Generation Z (65%). Only 38% of Generation Y consumers said it is important for them to buy from the retailer mobile app compared to 61% of Generation Z. Snapchat was found to be twice as important for Generation Z (4%) than it is for Generation Y(2%). Both generations indicated that Instagram is the most preferable social media channel to buy clothes from (Figure 33).

4.3.4.4 Price and quality

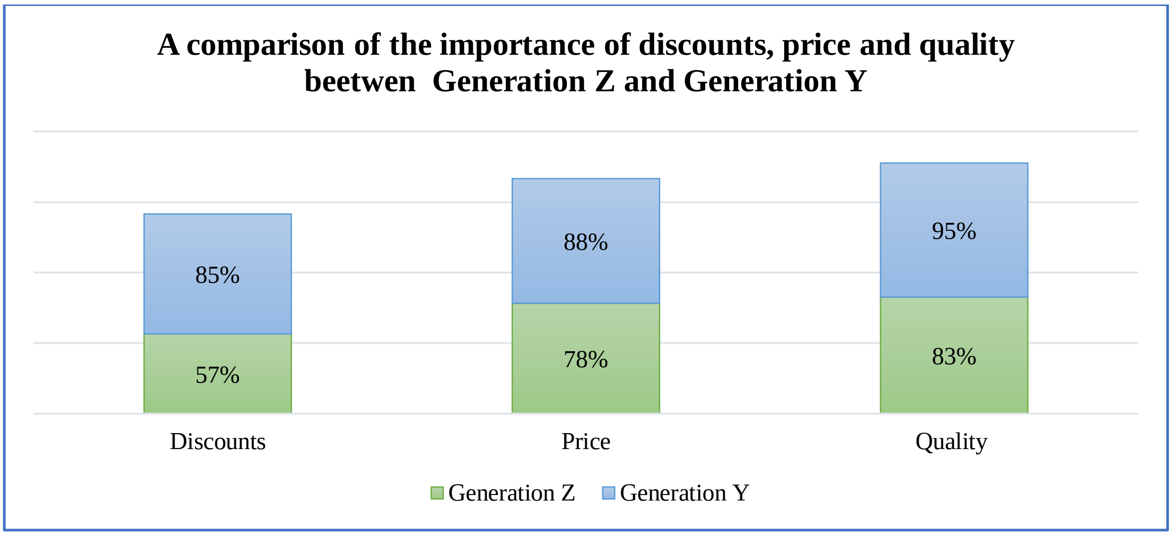


Figure 34. A comparison of the importance of discounts, price and quality between Generation Z and Generation Y.
Source: Primary data findings

Findings in Figure 32 show that discounts are more important to Generation Y (85%) than to Generation Z (57%). A reason for this may be that better quality products are more important for Generation Y and discounts are more applicable.

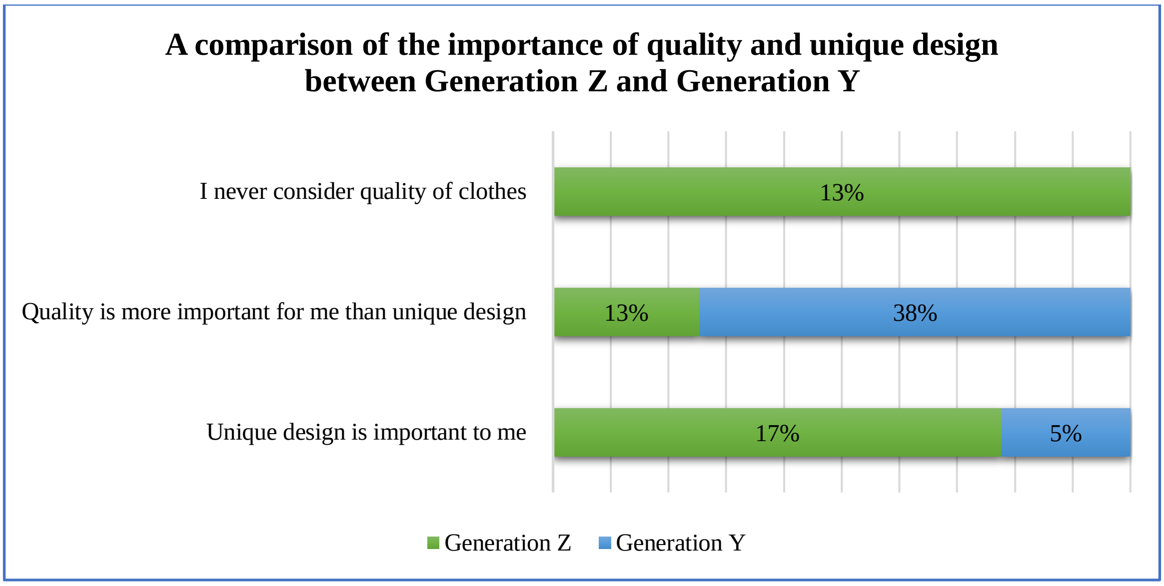
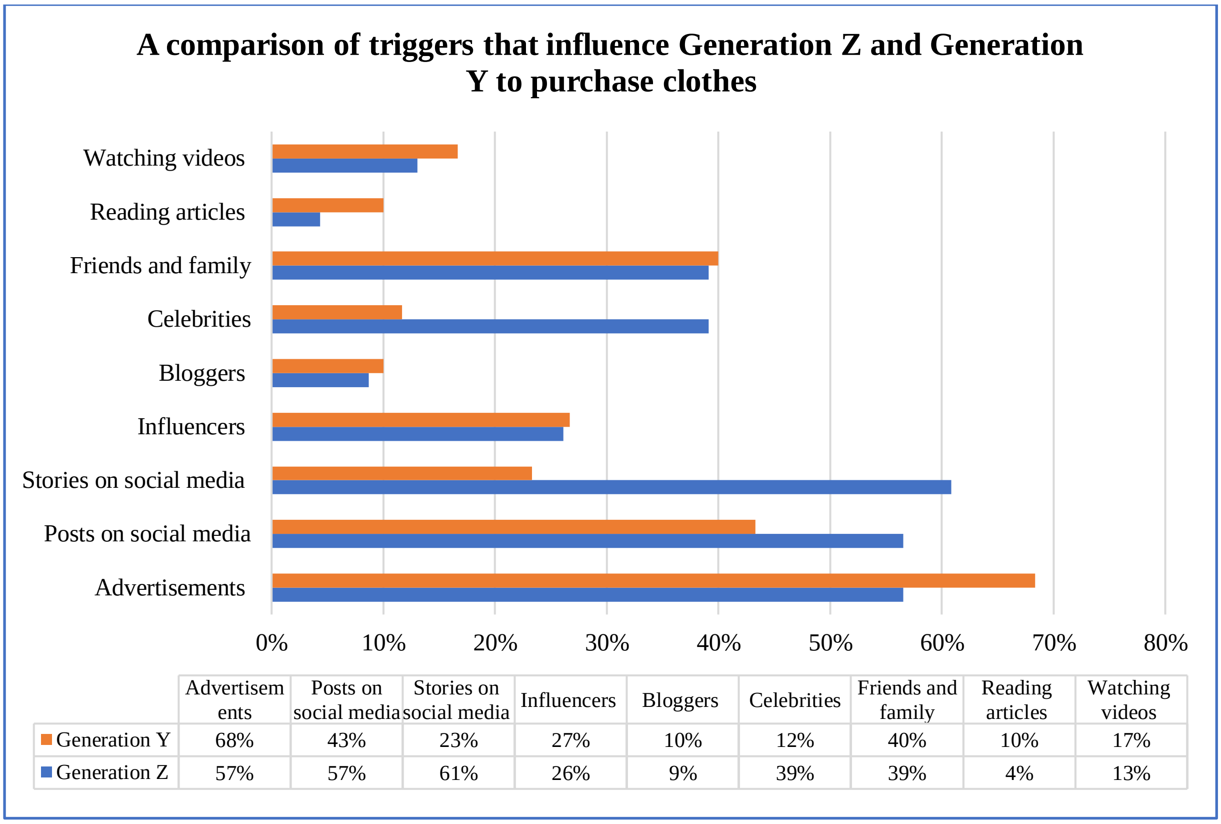


Figure 35. A comparison of the importance of quality and unique design between Generation Z and Generation Y
Source: Primary data findings

The respondents were asked to choose from a list of options which best describe their online clothing shopping habits. The biggest difference relates to Generation Y being more concerned about clothes quality (38%) than Generation Z (13%). 17% of Generation Z prefer unique design over all other options compared to 5% of Generation Y respondents (Figure 35).

4.3.5 Objective 5: To recommend effective ways of engaging with Generation Z and Generation Y in Ireland.

4.3.5.1 Motivational factors of Generation Z and Generation Y when shopping for clothes



	Advertisements	Posts on social media	Stories on social media	Influencers	Bloggers	Celebrities	Friends and family	Reading articles	Watching videos
Generation Y	68%	43%	23%	27%	10%	12%	40%	10%	17%
Generation Z	57%	57%	61%	26%	9%	39%	39%	4%	13%

Figure 36. A comparison of triggers that influence Generation Z and Generation Y to purchase clothes.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 36 shows that advertisements are the most effective way to influence Generation Y consumers (68%). For Generation Z the most influential channel is found to be stories on social media (61%), closely followed by post on social media (57%). In comparison, stories on social media only influence 23% of Generation Y while post on social media influence 43% of Generation Y.

Influencers and bloggers have the same impact on both generations, however, celebrities were found to have an influence on three times the amount of Generation Z (39%) than Generation Y (12%).

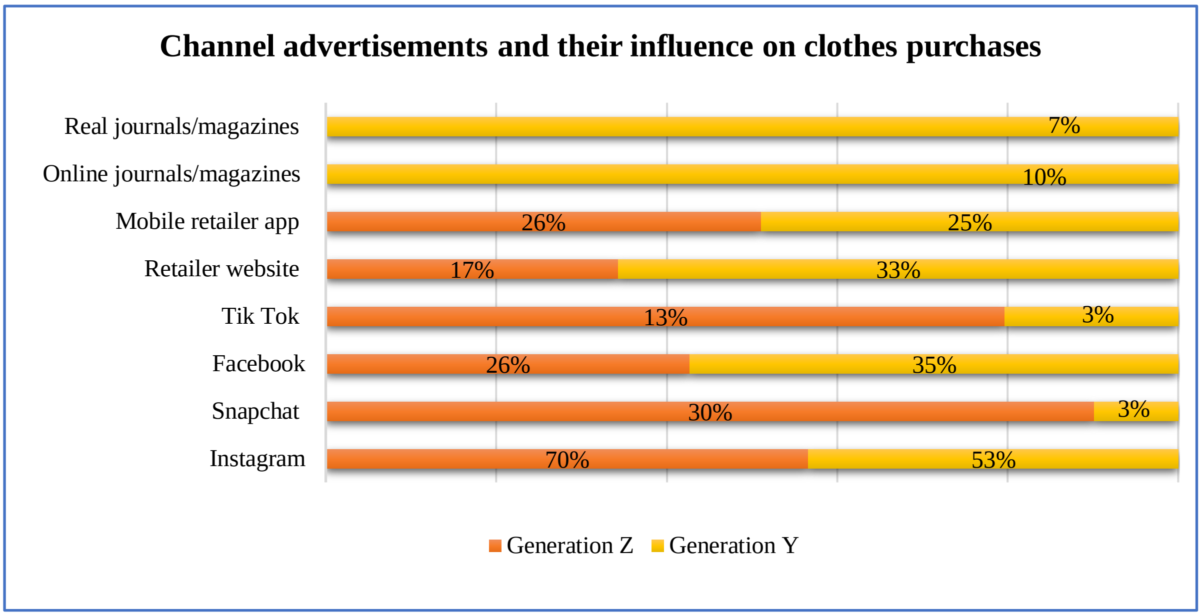


Figure 37. Channel advertisements and their influence on clothes purchases.
Source: Primary data findings

Data in Figure 37 highlights several differences between Generation Z and Y. The most noticeable difference in social media platforms is where advertisements are viewed. Both generations are influenced by advertisements on Instagram with 70% of Generation Z and 53% of Generation Y. In relation to Facebook 35% of Generation Y are influenced compared to 26% of Generation Z. However, only 3% of Generation Y are influenced by advertisement on Snapchat and Tik Tok, but it must be noted that these platforms have a much bigger impact of Generation Z - 30% and 13% accordingly. A higher percentage of Generation Y (33%) view advertisements on retail websites, while both generations are similarly influenced by advertisements on mobile retailer apps. No Generation Z consumers are influenced by advertisements on online papers/magazines or physical versions. However, 17% of Generation Y can be influenced through advertisements in paper magazines.

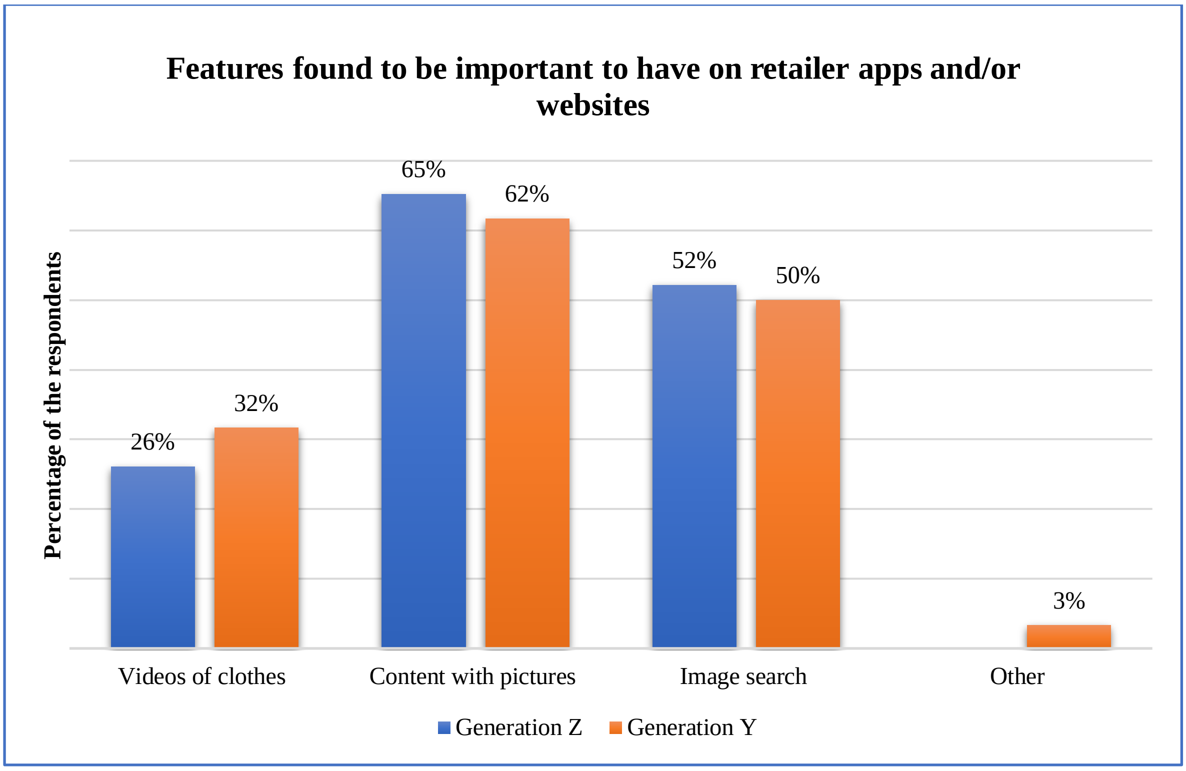


Figure 38. Features found to be important to have on retailer apps and/or websites.
Source: Primary data findings

The participants were asked to choose features that they consider to be important on retailer apps and/or websites when they shop. Data in Figure 38 shows that responses from both generations are quite similar with content with pictures of clothes (between 62-65%), image search features (between 50-52%) and videos of clothes (between 26-32%) are the most impactful factors. Additionally, participants from Generation Y commented that size charts and picture of the realistic product are important.

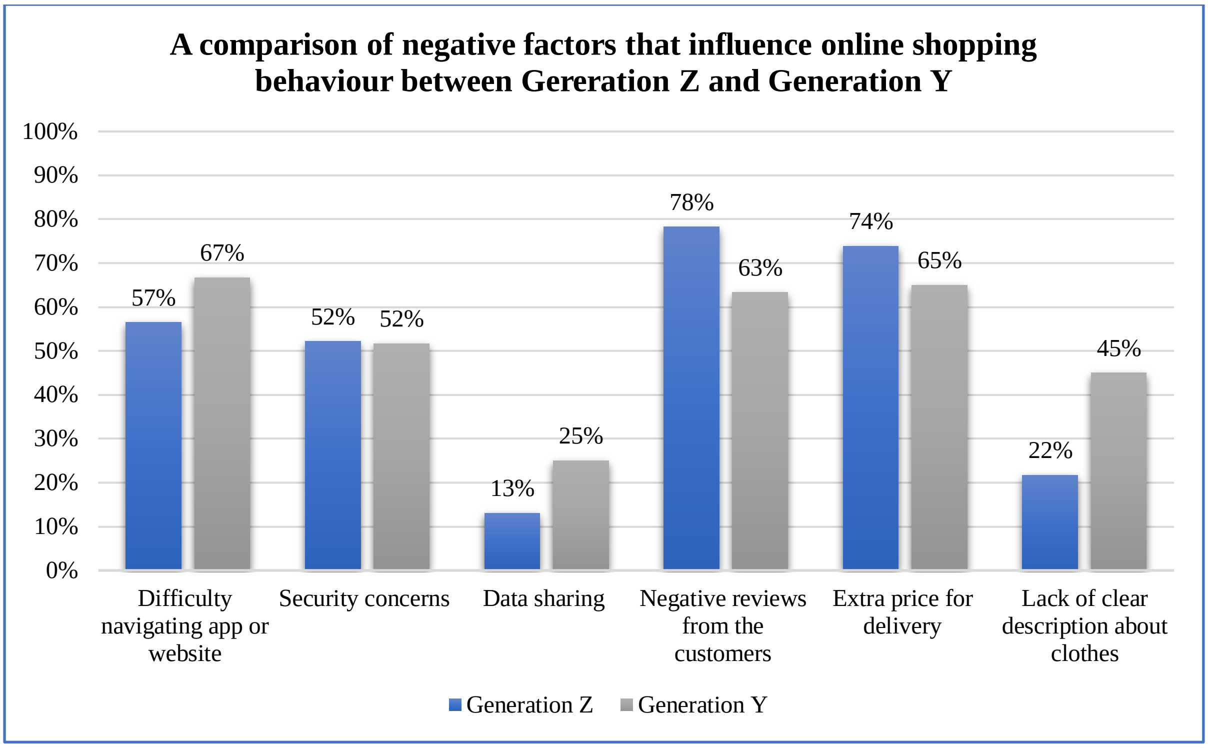


Figure 39. A comparison of negative factors that influence online shopping behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y.
Source: Primary data findings

According to responses from the web survey, Generation Y is less concerned about extra price for delivery and negative reviews from other consumers. They are more interested in the difficulty of navigating an app or website, lack of clear description about products and data sharing as opposed to Generation Z for whom this is not as important (Figure 39).

4.4 Conclusions

In order to answer the main research question, the responses of Generation Z and Generation Y were summarised and analysed separately and compared with each other. This was done to find the most important determinants for each generation and to understand the differences between the two generations. The set of objectives have helped to structure the findings so they will be understandable for readers.

The data findings have shown that there are more similarities between generation Z and Generation Y than differences. Generation Z was found to be more impulsive and to enjoy online shopping more compared to Generation Y. Some differentiating findings are surprising such as device usage at the pre-purchase and purchase stages. Although social media platforms are exceedingly popular channels at the pre-purchase stage, they are not as important when purchasing clothes. What is important for both generations at the purchase stage are mobile retailer websites and mobile apps. After these two channels Instagram is the third most important channel. The social media presence of online fashion retailers is twice as important for Generation Z than it is for Generation Y. Price and quality are more important factors for Generation Y, while unique design is more important for Generation Z. Important determinants for generation Y are return policy, positive online reviews, trust of retailer, brand name, variety of clothes and personalised ideas based on previous shopping history, while for Generation Z it is trust of retailer, positive online reviews, brand reputation, previous positive experience and variety of clothes.

The next chapter will in more detail discuss the main findings I and how they relate to the research hypotheses. After analysing the results, the hypotheses will be proved or disproved.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify if there is a difference in the behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y when shopping for clothes online from online fashion retailers. To identify this, primary data was collected from the relevant age groups who live in Ireland via an online survey from where data was gathered. The questionnaire was developed according to important findings from previous research (Chapter 2). Hypotheses were also formulated in relation to possible outcomes of the research, t therefore, they need to be proved or disproved. The three hypotheses of this research are:

H1: There are distinct differences between Generation Z and Generation Y online shopping behaviour.

H2: There are no distinct differences between Generation Z and Generation Y online shopping behaviour.

H3: There is a difference in attitude of Generation Z and Generation Y towards online shopping with online fashion retailers.

5.2. First hypothesis: There are Distinct Differences between Generation Z and Generation Y Online Shopping Behaviour.

Analysis of the research findings show that Generation Z is more online orientated at the pre-purchase and purchase stages of the online shopping journey compared to Generation Y. The data points to the fact that some percentage of Generation Y prefers to purchase clothes in-store, even when they search for clothes online.

A clear difference is seen between Generation Z and Generation Y who enjoy their shopping journey online. For instance, more than half of Generation Y consumers responded that they “buy what they need and when they need it”, whereas in terms of the shopping process, Generation Z were found to be much more impulsive and enjoying the process than Generation Y. Overall, this behaviour expresses Generation Z hedonic tendency. Furthermore, it is inconsistent with findings of Sundstrom, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon (2019) that shopping enjoyment and impulsiveness are inherent in clothes shopping. Whilst the same research identified that these factors are more relevant to in-store shopping, in this study the researcher presumes that Generation Y may experience these factors during offline shopping as the online shopping environment is less significant than it is for Generation Z. To support this statement - data from research shows that Generation Y is twice as likely to “try clothes before purchasing” compared to Generation Z. This research finding partly contradicts Thamizhvanan (2012), that all factors such as “impulse purchase orientation, previous online shopping experiences, and trust” are important for the young generation (Thamizhvanan, cited in SivaKumar and Gunasekaran, 2017). The main reason is that “positive previous experience” was found to be a more important factor for Generation Y than it was for Generation Z. Furthermore, before purchasing clothes, almost twice the number of Generation Z respondents read online reviews compared to Generation Y.

Vajkai and Zsoka (2020) identified that fashion clothing consumers from Generation Z look for unique clothes design in order to express their personalities. The responses from Generation Z in this research have reinforced this point. It has been found that uniqueness of clothes design is the most important factor as opposed to quality for the younger generation. This is three times as much when compared to Generation Y.

The social media platform Instagram was identified as the most used channel while searching for clothes by Generation Z. This was almost double the percentage of Generation Y respondents. The same trend applies to the use of Facebook and YouTube. As stated by Yadav and Rai (2017), Generation Z likes interacting with other people and sharing information

Possibly for these reasons, a higher percentage of digital natives in Ireland are encouraged by reading positive reviews, compared to a much smaller percentage of Generation Y. In terms of Generation Y behaviour at the pre-purchase stage, almost half of respondents chose Instagram and a retailer website as the most preferable channels. This finding explains why the use of social media in general is not as important for Generation Y compared to Generation Z, meaning less of them can be influenced to buy clothes through these channels. In respect to this generation, it can also be added that many of them are using known for them channels and only half of them are trying to explore more ways of engaging with fashion retailers. In contrast, Hall and Towers (2017) found that social media channels were only used by one fourth of the 16 to 34 age group.

On the other hand, Generation Z use a variety of ways to inspire themselves and get new ideas. For instance, they follow celebrities/influencers/bloggers at the pre-purchase stage which is double that of Generation Y. In relation to the purchase stage, the second preferable online channel for buying clothes for Generation Z is a mobile retailer app, which is almost twice more than used by Generation Y.

5.3 Second Hypothesis: There are No Distinct Differences between Generation Z and Generation Y Online Shopping Behaviour.

Findings from primary data have not shown any particular differences in device usage between Generation Z and Generation Y. They both prefer to use mobile phones than PCs/Laptops at the both the pre-purchase stage and purchase stage. Moreover, there is a small number of consumers who switch from one device to another during their shopping journey. When asked for a reason, it was mentioned that the mobile phone is always with them, which makes it convenient to use. According to Rosy and McCormick (2018) convenience and enjoyment are the main reasons for using mobile devices for shopping.

The findings show that the second important area with no significant differences between both generations was in relation to price and quality. These two factors are important for both generations with a slightly higher percentage of Generation Y. Additionally, a similar percentage from both generations stated that they are not willing to pay extra for delivery and that difficulties with website navigation could stop them from purchasing clothes online. Such factors relating to fashion shopping were also investigated in the research of Sundstrom, Hjelm-Lidholm and Radon (2019).

The use of retailer websites for searching for clothes was found to be similar for both generations with a slightly smaller percentage of Generation Z using this channel. In addition, at the purchase stage, mobile friendly websites are the number one channels for both groups. Both generations responded similarly when asked to choose ways in which they expect to see products on retailer websites and apps. The most important features were content with pictures and image search, with videos of clothes option being less important. Only a small percentage of Generation Z and Y consumers said that videos of clothes actually trigger them to buy clothes. This is different to the findings of SivaKumar and Gunasekaran (2017) who identified that “search for reviews, videos, and product features” are what younger generations do when they shop online. Both generations stated that factors such as negative reviews, extra price for delivery, difficulty in navigating apps or websites and security concerns could have a negative impact on them and might prevent them from completing purchases online.

5.4 Third Hypothesis: There is a Difference in Attitude of Generation Z and Generation Y towards Online Shopping with Online Fashion Retailers.

A number of reports and studies relating to consumer behaviour have discussed the growing importance of sustainability for younger consumers (Rosy and McCormick, 2018; Mintel, 2020). However, findings of this research do not support this trend for either Generation

Z or Generation Y to the extent that it can influence their decision to choose one online fashion retailer over another. The research findings indicate that half of the respondents from Generation Z shop anywhere online and did not identify brand name as an important factor in their decision making process. In contrast, most of Generation Y respondents' shop with a maximum of 5 preferred retailers. The brand name is twice as important for them than it is for Generation Z. However, brand reputation is equally important for both of these groups. These are important factors especially for new online fashion retailers. Knowing what consumers expect can bring competitive advantages as well as helping to build brand awareness and improve engagement with existing target audiences.

Significant differences were found between preferred characteristics of websites where consumers shop. Generation Y has a preference to shop on "the website of a specific clothing brand", whereas Generation Z would rather shop on "a website with different clothing brands". As mentioned by Devderea and Toader (2018), Generation Z is aware of the advantages of online shopping and can easily switch from one brand to another if they do not find what they need. This behaviour of Generation Z is supported by primary data findings.

Trivedi, J. P. and Trivedi, H. (2018) research identified that Generation Y consumers are more likely to purchase from a mobile retailer app if they got a personalised experience. In this research a much higher percentage of Generation Y expect to get "personalized ideas based on their previous shopping history" through all channels they shop for clothes. This is important to consider by fashion retailers as Generation Y is looking for clothing inspiration on the websites whereas only a small percentage of Generation Z chose this option as being important. Only half of Generation Z consumers look at returns policy when shopping online compared to all respondents from Generation Y. Additionally, having a wide variety of clothes is important for both generations, but again this is much more important for Generation Y respondents. This study confirms finding of Rahman, et al. (2018), where the preference to shop online was based one ease of use and the variety of products. This is something that has to be considered by online fashion retailers if they want to attract the right audience and also to meet their expectations.

Having discussed the results of primary data analysis with regard to the reviewed literature, the researcher can conclude the following: the first and third hypotheses for this study were proven to be true and the second was proved false. Their testing allowed to positively answer to the research question that there is a difference in the online shopping behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y while shopping for clothes from online fashion retailers.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations in this study, which will allow for further investigation in future research. The behavioural nature of the research would benefit more from longitudinal study as it would provide stronger inferences. However, the researcher had time restrictions based on the master's dissertation deadline. In this case, the first limitation is that a cross-sectional survey was used for data collection, which means that data was collected at a single point in time. Thus, the ability to determine causal relationships toward the study variables are limited. Having said that, to identify changes in behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y further research has to be carried out over time. With regard to sampling techniques, convenience sampling was changed for quota sampling. Having the precise requirements to the sample of the research it allowed to include experienced, in online clothing shopping, respondents to this study. It gave valuable insights, which brought benefits to the findings.

Secondly, data was based on a sample and not the entire population. As the responses were collected mostly from people living in Dublin, the applicability of the research results to the whole population is limited. Findings may differ if responses from smaller cities and towns were included, as their behaviour may show different patterns while shopping online. In addition, the biggest weakness in this research is that of all responses received, only 26% were from Generation Z as opposed to 69% from Generation Y. For context, one response from Generation Z segment is equal to 4%, while one response form Generation Y segment - 1.67%. The higher percentage of "digital natives" might highlight some differences: firstly, in the overall behaviour of Generation Z and secondly, in findings comparing online shopping behaviour between chosen consumers groups.

Using the LimeSurvey Professional tool created issues to the overall responses' collection. Quotas that were created for the first "Limitation section" did not work, so participants who did not suit the research requirements could still access and complete the online survey. This made primary data analysis harder and more time consuming when choosing relevant responses. Future researchers need to make sure they check all parameters that are added in a chosen survey tool (if they work). However, the strength of this research is that the 83 respondents, who were chosen for data analysis met the requirements of this research in full. This means that all the responses are valuable and enabled the researcher to answer the research question. This is mainly, due to the fact that they all have previous experience in online clothing shopping with online fashion retailers. Another strength of this research is that an equal amount of responses was received from female and male respondents. This enables a better understanding of the generational behaviour also.

Thirdly, this research was concentrated on identifying differences in generations Z and Y behaviour with regard to online clothing shopping. As far as the researcher is aware, such research has not been completed in Ireland. Mainly, because this study includes different types of determinants and factors that are important for Generation Z and Generation Y while they shop online. It gives a good basis for future researchers to deep dive into some of the factors in more detail or chose them for creating a framework. Also, in this research data about shopping for children's clothes were not included and can be a scope for future research. The shopping behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y can vary if they shop for other products or services. Moreover, the researcher was interested in online shopping behaviour at the pre-purchase and purchase stages. Further studies can include the behaviour of consumers at the post-purchase stage.

5.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The researcher has found completing a study in relation to differences in behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y as particularly important. It relates to the fact that consumers between 18 to 34 years old are a significant target audience for online fashion retailers. They represent the biggest segment of those who purchase clothes online. As per literature reviewed and primary data findings of this study, the researcher has found a variety of factors that influence the channel choice for purchasing clothes for Generation Z and Generation Y consumers online or in-store. Although, this research relates to online shopping behaviour, the researcher decided that to comprehensively analyse differences in the behaviour of the two generations, such insights will benefit the study. These factors are mentioned below:

- Generation Y consumers (53% of respondents) still found it to be important to try clothes on before buying, compared to only 30% of Generation Z. This behaviour should be further analysed, as the Covid-19 pandemic may change this habits due to many shops being close for a prolonged period of time.

- Generation Z respondents enjoy shopping (57%) and take their time (74%) when shop for clothes, while 35% of Generation Y enjoy shopping, with 40% preferring to make a quick purchase and 60% taking their time. This can relate to shopping in-store as well as online. Additionally, the behaviour of both generations highlights the convenience of using a mobile phone which is always available. This facilitates an increase in online shopping usage at the pre-purchase and purchase stages. Primary data findings indicate that 87% of respondents from Generation Z and 68% of Generation Y purchase and look for clothes online. This information can be used by online fashion retailers to promote themselves in the most relevant way to their target audiences. Consequently, an effective online presence for fashion retailers is particularly important if they are to meet expectations of Generation Z and Generation Y.

- The online environment is extremely competitive, meaning consumers can easily check different brands or clothing websites. It allows them to choose the best available option and can even cancel a purchase after it has been made. Hence, fashion retailers need to understand the needs and wants of their target audience and know how to find them online. They also need to know how to talk to their audience and to continuously promote their brand. This information is supported by primary findings of the research. For instance, when respondents were asked to describe how they shop for clothes, 70% of respondents from Generation Z chose the option to "check a website with different clothing brands" over an option to "check a website with one clothing brand". In comparison, the results to these questions for Generation Y was 53% and 47% accordingly highlighting there is no significant difference between these two options. Brand reputation was found to be important for both generations 61% of Generation Z and 73% of Generation Y. Whereas, "brand name" was found to be very important for Generation Y (87%) but not so important for Generation Z (30%). Moreover, both generations compare prices for clothes: 96% of Generation Z and 97% of Generation Y, indicating that both generations are sensitive to price. Although, they have different preferences relating to quality and uniqueness of design, they both look for discounts in most cases: Generation Z (57%) and Generation Y (85%).

- This can suggest ideas to online fashion retailer in relation to attracting consumers to shop for clothes: be aware that many consumers shop on websites with multiple clothing brands, which can emphasise the importance of offering discounts along with presenting clothing items to different age groups.

- Other findings of this research highlight the influence of different online channels along with influencers/bloggers/celebrities on both generations when searching for clothes. It is important to understand that consumers can easily change their decisions while shopping online. This happens mostly during the pre-purchase stage when various factors can influence what fashion retailers or clothing items to choose. Online channels such as Instagram (70%) and retailer websites (43%) are important for Generation Z as this is how digital natives mostly search for clothing inspiration. There is a different mix of channels for Generation Y where both Instagram and retailer websites are equally important for them. The next most important factor is “retailer mobile apps” (27%), and this is similar for Generation Z (26%). In addition to channels, 39% of Generation Z are willing to follow influencers, bloggers, and celebrities to find clothes they like. If the same percentage of the Generation Z and Generation Y respondents are triggered to buy clothes by “influencers” and “bloggers”, the influence of “celebrities” is three times more important for Generation Z than for Generation Y. This analysis of the findings can be used by online fashion retailers when they are evaluating the usage of relevant channels and/or involving famous people as part of their digital marketing strategy.

- Interesting data was found in regard to device usage at the purchase stage of the online shopping journey. It shows that most of Generation Z and Generation Y consumers use the same device for searching and purchasing clothes: these are mobile devices (tablet and mobile phone) or PC/Laptop. Following on from what was discussed before, a “mobile friendly website” was found as the most used channel for purchasing clothes. The next most popular online channel is a “retailers mobile app”, which is important for 61% of Generation Z, as opposed to only 38% of Generation Y. Thus, online fashion retailers have to consider the importance of a mobile friendly website. Furthermore, if their target audience is Generation Y, factors such as “easy navigation of a website or app” and “clear description of clothes” are essential. If Generation Z is the audience, easiness of navigating a website is important for them. What can impede both generations from purchasing clothes are negative online reviews, extra price for delivery and security concerns.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of the Online Survey with Content & Information Sheet

Online behaviour of shoppers in Ireland while buying clothes from online fashion retailers.

This Consent & Information sheet allows you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If you agree with written below, you will need to click "Yes", to the question about consent, in the next section, so you can proceed with this survey.

Dear participant,

My name is Oksana Shevchuk. I am a current student at Dublin business school. You are invited to participate in research on modern shoppers' behaviour as part of a master's dissertation in Digital marketing course. The data you enclose throughout this questionnaire is being collected for the purpose of my dissertation only. Under no circumstances will this data be disclosed to any third parties except for academics at Dublin business school (Ireland) for supervisory and assessment reasons.

What is this project about?

The aim of this research is to understand if there is a difference in online shopping behaviour between generation Z and generation Y who live in Ireland when buying clothes from online fashion retailers. Examples of popular online fashion retailers are: Boohoo, Zara, Littlewoods, Everlane, H&M, Glamorous, eBay, PrettyLittleThing, or other you shop online. Upon analysing the data gathered from your responses, the results from this study will be able to recommend the best ways of engaging with modern consumers for online fashion retailers.

What are my rights while participating?

Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any given point. Please note that any information or data which is acquired from you during this research will be anonymous.

How long it normally takes to complete this survey and time commitment?

The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you decide that you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me at 10544449@mydbs.ie no later than the 9th of August 2020. After this date, it will be impossible to remove your particular responses from the overall dataset of the research.

What if I require further information?

If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please feel free to contact me: Oksana Shevchuk (current MSc student at Dublin business school in Ireland) | 10544449@mydbs.ie

Thank you for taking the time to read this Consent & Information sheet.

There are 26 questions in this survey.

Consent & Information sheet and possible limitations for the participants

If you will answer all 4 questions in this section as "Yes", you can proceed with the survey. If even 1 question answered by you as "No" in this section, please be aware that your responses will not be analysed. In this case, you are not or a target audience for this study, or just did not agree with consent.

Are you currently living in Ireland? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Is your age from 18 to 34? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Have you ever purchased clothes online? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Do you give consent to be part of this study? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

General information about the participant

In which age group are you? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ 18-20
- ◯ 21-24
- ◯ 25-29
- ◯ 30-34
- ◯ Other (please specify):

What is your gender?

*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Non-binary
- ◯ Prefer not to say
- ◯ Other (please specify):

What is your highest completed education? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Primary school
- ◯ Secondary school
- ◯ Bachelor's degree
- ◯ Master's degree
- ◯ PhD (Doctorate)
- ◯ Other (please specify):

An online shopping behaviour while buying clothes online from online fashion retailers.

By online fashion retailers, it is meant Boohoo, Zara, Littlewoods, Everlane, H&M, Glamorous, eBay, PrettyLittleThing or other similar brands or online fashion websites from which you shop for clothes online.

When shopping online, would you rather? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Check a website with different clothing brands
- ◯ Check a website of the specific clothing brand

When shopping online, please rate the level of importance to you from the matrix below.

*

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Not important at all	Not very important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
Trust of retailer	○	○	○	○	○
Previous positive experience	○	○	○	○	○
Brand reputation	○	○	○	○	○
The retailer's environmental sustainability	○	○	○	○	○
Price	○	○	○	○	○
Quality	○	○	○	○	○
Unique design	○	○	○	○	○
Availability and activity on social media	○	○	○	○	○
Having retailer mobile app	○	○	○	○	○
Speed of delivery	○	○	○	○	○

When shopping online for clothes, I normally shop with: *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○ The same online retailer all the time
- ○ 2 to 5 preferred online retailers
- ○ Anywhere online that I can get the item I want
- ○ Other (please specify): ____________

What device do you use most often when searching (not purchasing) online for clothes? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○ PC/Laptop
- ○ Mobile phone
- ○ Tablet
- ○ I go to a physical store
- ○ Other (please specify): ____________

What device do you use most often to purchase clothes online? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ PC/Laptop
- ◯ Mobile phone
- ◯ Tablet
- ◯ I go to physical store
- ◯ Other (please specify):

If you purchase clothes from a different device than you use to search for clothes, please specify why?

Please write your answer here:

Please mention why do you use a different device to purchase clothes (e.g. easier to navigate, better overview of the website, this device always with you, etc).

Please select the statement that suits your online shopping habits the most. *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ I always consider the quality of clothes
- ◯ I never consider quality of clothes
- ◯ Unique design is important to me
- ◯ Unique design is more important for me than quality
- ◯ Quality is more important for me than unique design
- ◯ Unique design and quality are both important to me
- ◯ Other (please specify):

When shopping online, do you compare prices with other retailer's websites? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Which of the following do you use when shopping for clothes online? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Buy from Instagram
- Buy from Facebook
- Buy from YouTube
- Buy from Snapchat
- Buy from a retailer mobile app
- Website with an easy navigation
- Mobile friendly website
- Other (please specify)::

When shopping online, is it important for you to be able to purchase directly from social media platforms? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- Don't care

To which extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Shopping because I enjoy the process	○	○	○	○	○
Shopping because I need	○	○	○	○	○
Usually buy more than I planned	○	○	○	○	○
Buy only what I need and when I need it	○	○	○	○	○
Buying impulsively	○	○	○	○	○
Take my time and not rushing	○	○	○	○	○
Making a quick purchase	○	○	○	○	○

How would you best describe your shopping habit?

*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- I purchase and look for clothes at the same places online
- I look at clothes from one place online, but purchase from another place online
- I look for clothes in-store, but buy online
- I look for clothes online and then buy in-store

To which extent is it important for you to try clothes on before buying? *

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Not important at all
- ◯ Not very important
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Somewhat important
- ◯ Very important

Where do you look for clothing inspiration when shopping online?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Retailers mobile apps
- ☐ Retailers websites
- ☐ Following celebrities /influencers/bloggers
- ☐ Online journals/magazines
- ☐ Paper journals/magazines

When shopping online, which of the following factors are important to you? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- ☐ Discounts
- ☐ Variety of clothes
- ☐ Positive online reviews
- ☐ Brand name
- ☐ Personalised ideas based on your previous shopping history
- ☐ Returns policy
- ☐ All mentioned above

When searching through retailer's websites and apps for clothes, which of the following are important to you? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- ☐ Videos of clothes
- ☐ Reading content with pictures
- ☐ Voice Search
- ☐ Image search
- ☐ Other (please specify):: ____________

Which of the following are most likely to trigger you to shop online for clothes? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- ☐ Advertisements
- ☐ Posts on social media
- ☐ Stories on social media
- ☐ Influencers
- ☐ Bloggers
- ☐ Celebrities
- ☐ Friends and family
- ☐ Reading articles
- ☐ Watching videos

If you ticked “Advertisement” in the previous question. Which of the following are most effective when advertising clothes to you online?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- [ ] Instagram
- [ ] Snapchat
- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Tik Tok
- [ ] Retailer website
- [ ] Mobile retailer app
- [ ] Online journals/magazines
- [ ] Real journals/magazines
- [ ] Other (please specify)::

From the following, what could prevent you from completing your purchase online? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- [ ] Difficulty navigating app or website
- [ ] Security concerns
- [ ] Data sharing
- [ ] Negative reviews from the customers
- [ ] Extra price for delivery
- [ ] Lack of clear description about clothes
- [ ] Other (please specify)::

Thank you for finishing this survey and taking part in my research.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 10544449@mydbs.ie if you have any queries relating to this questionnaire.

Appendix 2: The Research Log

Date	Notes
04.06.2020	The beginning of the Dissertation stage, first email to supervisor Aisling Duhy, I have started preparing first meeting presentation
05.06.2020	3 key readings research, preparation of the questionnaires for survey
08.06.2020	Searching for the best online survey platform and the way to collect data, reading literature, Email with the supervisor Aisling Duhy (sent proposal), Reading of the dissertation handbook
09.06.2020	Literature review readings and taking notes (mobile shopping, mobile shopping behaviour, behavioural intention, etc.)
10.06.2020	Meeting with Joan Colvin at 10 a.m. regarding literature review
11.06.2020	First WhatsApp meeting with supervisor Aisling Duhy at 2 p.m., First meeting presentation form submission by email and in Moodle dissertation page
12.06.2020	Literature review readings and taking notes (e-commerce and fashion retailers, online shopping, customer behaviour, purchase intention, factors influence purchase intention, etc.), Working on first meeting presentation document
15.06.2020	Literature review readings and taking notes, Working on first meeting presentation document
16.06.2020	Online shopping behaviour readings, (statistics from - Statista, Mintel reports), Working on first meeting presentation document, Zotero workshop (DBS), Organised a meeting with person who will proofread the dissertation chapters
17.06.2020	Readings, Working on first meeting presentation document, Listening to helpful for the dissertation topic webinar “Best practice customer centricity in the new retail world” organised by eShopWorld
18.06.2020	Working on first meeting presentation document, Online shopping behaviour readings
19.06.2020	Email and zoom meeting with Aisling Duhy in relation to finalizing changes to the research topic
22.06.2020	Readings about writing a critical literature review
23.06.2020	Reading about SPSS and SEM Download SPSS app
24.06.2020	Read “Analysing the Past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review”,
25-29.06.20	Literature reading (consumer behaviour, purchase journey, purchase intention)
30.06.2020	Finishing First meeting presentation, questionnaire development, additional reading
01.07.2020	Proofreading of the first meeting presentation document Attend an online webinar “The new normal of retail: Digital” (helped to

	Taking notes, separation as well as narrow down research topic in 3 parts
02.07.2020	Meeting with Debora Zorzi regarding questionnaire development Writing Chapter 2 of the literature review (introduction, part 2.2.)
03.07.2020	Meeting with Aisling Duhy (discussion about literature review) Meeting with Joan Colvin regarding writing literature review Writing Chapter 2 of the literature review (part 2.2., 2.3.)
04.07.2020	Readings how to critically evaluate existing literature, additional readings
05.07.2020	Readings how to critically evaluate existing literature and articles about Z and Y
07-08.07.20	Creating questionnaires according to readings
09.07.2020	Readings how to critically evaluate existing literature, Writing Introduction, Hypotheses formulation
10-11.07.2020	Meeting with Aisling Duhy (additional discussion about literature review) Writing Literature review with adjustments
12-20.07.2020	Creating questionnaires, searching for suitable survey tool, writing Literature
21.07.2020	Adding all questions to Lime survey free version
21-24.07.2020	Find participants for testing survey, sent test survey (30 item questionnaire), Got 12 completed responses and 6 unfinished
24.07.2020	Meeting with Aisling Duhy (questionnaire discussion for sending further) Discussion (learning) about doing statistic from Limesurvey tool Working on adjustment of a questionnaire
25.07.2020	Sending adjusted questionnaire to Aisling Duhy
26.07.2020	Get feedback with valuable suggestions, which were considered Learning about using LimeSurvey tool and SPSS software, the latter have been faced with difficulty
26.07.2020-09.08.2020	Buying LimeSurvey monthly plan, sent final survey (was online for 14 days), managed posts and stories on social media and involve relevant people as per snowball sampling. This time worked on Methodology chapter and additional reading about requirements of dissertation, so to include all necessary theory.
09.08.2020-10.08.2020	Beginning of primary data analysis, faced with issues towards quotas in the survey tool, which made me to check separately people who suited or not to this research limitations, further adjustments of the methodology with regard to this issue.
11.08.2020-15.08.2020	Writing Chapter 4 Findings and doing analysis of primary data, download primary data file, call with supervisor Aisling Duhy regarding this chapter, additional readings and requirements checking of Dissertation Handbook.
16.08.2020-20.08.2020	Working on Discussion Chapter (limitation, future research, implications of findings and applications for online fashion retailers), call with the supervisor Aisling Duhy, proofreading.
19.08.2020	Created a cover page and final document, reviewing Introduction, literature, methodology, discussion chapters and graphs, tables, proofreading.
20.08.2020	Finished introduction, proofreading, additional readings, and adjustments of the dissertation document.
21.08.2020	Working on Abstract, The Acknowledgements, Appendices, adjustments to literature, conclusions, proofreading.
22.08.2020	Final meeting with supervisor Aisling Duhy. Doing adjustments to Discussion chapter, Abstract (reducing word count), proofreading of results

	chapter, working on Poster presentation, working on table of content, headings, subheadings.
23.08.2020	Proofreading, finishing Abstract and Poster presentation.
24.08.2020	References and Poster presentation adjustments, proofreading, formatting
25.08.2020	Poster presentation adjustments, formatting, spell checking, proofreading, plagiarism checking