

**COVID-19 – LESSONS TO BE LEARNED OF E-COMMERCE DURING A GLOBAL  
PANDEMIC - A STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN IRELAND**

Aline Gnutzmann Silva  
Master of Science in Entrepreneurship  
National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2021

## **Abstract**

Globalization and technological advancements have brought revolutionary changes to the modern-day commercial ecosystem as the availability of technology, multilayer competitiveness, and the growing popularity of sustainability-conscious entrepreneurship practices, have all been shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and buying behaviors. In the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, uncertainties, fluctuating macro-environmental factors, and supply-demand dynamics alongside increasing scalability of e-commerce services are influencing consumers in Ireland. As e-commerce services are becoming a prominent and inseparable part of contemporary global society due to its enormous versatility, affordability, and eco-friendly credentials, the researcher has attempted to discuss key lessons learnt from the ongoing Covid19 consequences regarding consumer behaviours and purchasing decisions. This systematic empirical framework describes the notion and implications of e-commerce services and the context of consumer behaviour while discussing critical success factors, influencing factors, and macro-environmental factors. This primary qualitative research has considered focus group discussions and analysis methods to extract insightful reviews and responses from engaged participants alongside a wider recognition of previous argumentative opinions in literature, and theoretical perspectives. The impacts of Covid19 on consumer purchasing decisions and behaviors regarding e-commerce are also extensively discussed within this exploratory study.

# Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland  
Research Students Declaration Form  
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

**Name:** ALINE GNUTZMANN SILVA

**Student Number:** X18162665

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** MSc in Entrepreneurship

**Title of Thesis:** COVID-19 – LESSONS TO BE LEARNED OF E-COMMERCE DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC - A STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN IRELAND

**Date:** 18/08/2021

## Material submitted for award

A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself. X

B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. X

C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA. X

D. *Either* \*I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

*Or* \*I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

---

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below) X

**Signature of research student:** ALINE GNUTZMANN SILVA

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to dedicate this project first to my parents, who provided me with education and supported me with love in the most challenging moments of this course and made me believe in myself. Special thanks to my friend Laura, who encouraged me daily, with great patience. My sincere thanks to all my friends who showed me support, patience and a lot of affection so that I could carry out this dissertation. This project would not be possible without my supervisor Gemma Davis, who guided and supported me during the dissertation process.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	6
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 Background of the Study	6
1.2 Significance of the Research	7
1.3 Problem Statement	8
1.4 Rationale of the Research	8
1.5 Research Aim	9
1.6 Research Objectives	9
1.7 Structure of the Dissertation	10
1.8 Summary	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Factors Affecting Consumer Online Shopping Behavior	12
2.3 Conceptualization of Online Shopping	13
2.4 E-commerce Solutions and Their Implications on Purchasing Experience of Consumers	14
2.5 Role of Digital Marketing and Digitalisation of Customer Services	16
2.6 The influence of COVID-19 affects buying behaviour	18
2.7 Role of the Pandemic in E-commerce Industry	21
2.8 Theoretical Analysis	23
2.9 Literature Gap	25
2.10 Conclusion	25
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	28
3.1 Introduction	28
3.2 Research Philosophy	28
Justification for the Chosen Philosophy	29
3.3 Research Approach	30
Justification for the Chosen Approach	30
3.4 Research design	31
Justification for the Selection of the Chosen Design	31
3.5 Data Collection	32
3.6 Sampling Size	33

3.7 Data Analysis	34
3.8 Ethical Consideration	34
3.9 Summary.	35
Data Analysis	35
Introduction	35
Focus Group Interview	36
Discussions	51
Chapter 5:	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.1 Conclusion	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2 Recommendations	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.3 Linking with Objectives	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.4 Future Scopes	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Buying behavioural patterns are some of the most significant influences on a customer's decision-making process about the purchase of any given product. Therefore, by managing positive buying behaviours amongst their customer bases, the management teams of companies can positively influence the development and growth of their sales. Several factors influence the buying behaviours of modern customers, such as the social media presence of the companies, brand image, and search engine optimisation (Galanakis *et al.*, 2021). By presenting customers with attractive features, a developed and recognisable brand image, and by marketing the range of services offered in an enticing way that reinforces these buying behavioural patterns, companies can more easily attract customers towards their products and services. Thus, the management teams of companies are primarily focused on the management and sustainment of positive behaviour amongst likely customers of their respective companies' products and services.

Based on the research, it is noted that different methods are applied by the leadership and managerial teams of respective companies in order to attract customers toward their own specific service areas. The majority of companies are adding innovative features to their services and products areas to attract their specific customer bases. In many cases, companies are attempting to create exciting offers for their customers in order to add further value to their individual purchasing experiences. The managers of companies now have more opportunities to reimagine different factors of their business models in an effort to improve and maintain healthy communication with their potential customers, and this further helps in the managing of customers purchasing behaviour (Sarkis, 2020). Moreover, there are different kinds of consumer buying behaviour which all impact the eventual purchasing decisions of customers, such as habitual buying behaviour, variety-seeking behaviour, and dissonance-reducing buying behaviour. Thus, the complexities inherent within the buying behaviour of customers are noted as an integral part of how businesses understand, and respond to, consumer behaviour.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Based on statistical reports it is shown that The Irish Government have established a recovery fund within the entire economic structure of this country. This recovery fund was introduced by The Irish Government to manage a fast economic recovery for Irish businesses, and to reduce the losses they encountered due to the impacts of pandemic situations around the world and in a national Irish context. In this regard, the Irish government has made effective investment within large and small scale businesses in Ireland, in order to allow them to recover their processes of economic growth. E-commerce had grown at a rate of about 23% for the previous ten years around the world (Pan and Qian, 2020). However, the coronavirus pandemic has brought attention to the need for further digitization. Companies with a good e-commerce approach have had more mobility than their physical counterparts, making them more able to withstand a disruption to the distribution network in Ireland due to the pandemic.

Although it would be extremely early to project e-commerce development for 2020, given Covid-19 regulations banning retail in Ireland, digital purchasing is growing rapidly and may be set to surpass its 20% figure. Ireland's recovery fund has allocated €2 billion to large and small scale enterprises to help them manage their commercial business terms successfully by recovering the losses incurred by them due to the impact of the Covid19 virus in Ireland, and globally. During the era of Covid19, Irish companies have learned a lot regarding how best to do business during a pandemic situation, often by adapting how they manage consumer buying behaviours, and especially in an e-commerce setting, with many companies intensifying their online presence to compensate for the restrictions necessary during the Covid19 crisis.

## **1.2 Significance of the Research**

This research study has an active focus on the necessity of adopting, and putting into practice, knowledge obtained from studies about the impact of Covid19 on the world, and the global economy. It is hoped that a detailed understanding of this subject, and an adoption of appropriate practices and responses suggested by it, will help the e-commerce companies more successfully manage their business performance in a pandemic situation (Jin *et al.*, 2021). It is the intention of this research work to help inform the e-commerce companies of Ireland and other nations about how best to effectively engage with the Covid19 situation, and help them to develop strategies to more successfully operate and acquire commercial growth. Furthermore, this present research topic also focuses on the necessity for businesses to

effectively manage consumer buying behaviour in order to acquire predictable and projectable growth success.

Through an analysis of the results gathered by the study, based on the data collection method used, Irish companies both large and small will become aware of how best to manage consumer buying behaviour in a pandemic context (Daqar and Smoudy, 2019). This awareness will help them to add extra value to their businesses, and maintain a sustainable commercial position amongst their potential customers by acquiring and sustaining high rate of earning revenues.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Amongst companies, and especially amongst e-commerce companies, there has been a lack of understanding regarding the impact of the pandemic situation on business operations, and how best to successfully adapt to the changed economic landscape. During the early presence of the Covid19 virus there were no specific strategies available within most companies to allow them to continue their business activities successfully and efficiently. Consequentially, most business companies and e-commerce companies in Ireland faced issues trying to continue their businesses based on the developed sales graph. Moreover, a lack of knowledge and learning regarding Covid19 created hurdles for the e-commerce companies to manage effective purchasing behaviour amongst their customers (Brem, Viardot, and Nylund, 2021). Failure of those companies to shape the purchasing behaviour amongst their targeted customers served as a negative impact on their sales and the business growth of many companies in Ireland and around the world. Whilst Irish companies continue to try manage the consumer buying habits, issues persist due to Covid19 which create hurdles for e-commerce companies in their attempts to implement extra features to help maintain sales during the ongoing realities of the pandemic.

### **1.4 Rationale of the Research**

The crucial role the internet sector has performed during the pandemic crisis has underlined the urgent need to overcome the digital gap both within Ireland, and globally. Several long standing barriers to wider engagement in e-commerce operations still exist for local suppliers, merchants, and customers in developing nations, especially for those in the least-developed nations, with many of these issues having been exacerbated further by Covid19.

Lack of knowledge regarding the pandemic situation and its clear effects upon the global economy is noted as an issue for business companies around the world (Gao *et al.*, 2020). Several additional e-commerce related concerns have emerged or been intensified in Ireland as a result of the pandemic. Market manipulation, consumer health issues, misleading tactics, security worries, the requirement for more connectivity, or development concerns are among them. The Covid19 pandemic has resulted in a surge in the use of e-commerce in some sectors, and also e-commerce-enabling technology products, emphasising the relevance of electronic commerce in overall business practice. It also highlighted Ireland's ongoing economic issues and the essential significance of overcoming the digital gap. As the pandemic situation is present globally, this further creates hurdles for companies attempting to do business internationally beyond an Irish context. The current pandemic situation and lack of learning about its ongoing and longterm consequences on business practices, means that maintaining customer purchasing behaviours effectively remains a present issue for Irish business companies. This research paper seeks to convey the importance of managing consumer buying behaviour as part of the successful development of Irish business companies during pandemic situations.

### **1.5 Research Aim**

Within this research paper, the researcher aims to investigate the lessons that e-commerce companies have learned during the pandemic situation around the world. Therefore, this research also investigates the impact of consumer buying behaviour in the business operations of companies specifically in Ireland during pandemic situation caused by Covid19.

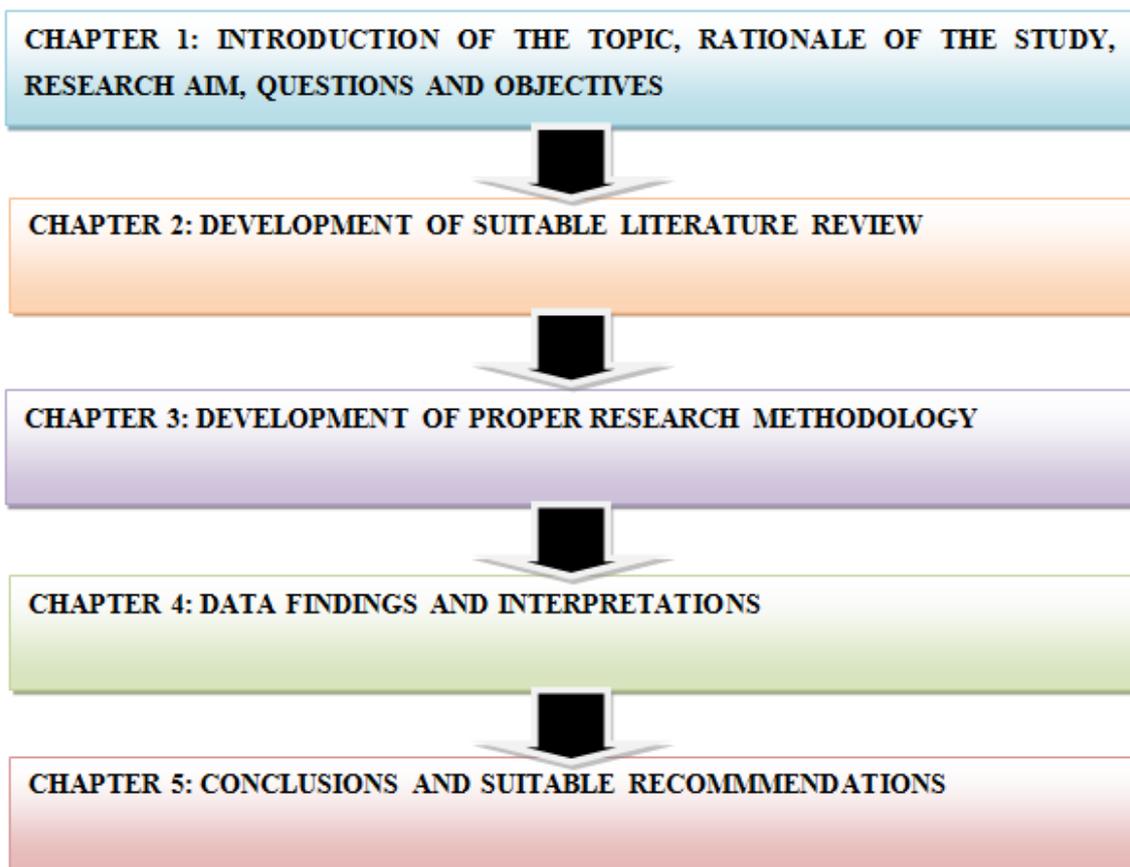
### **1.6 Research Objectives**

Within this current research paper, the researcher has selected some objectives to perform research work effectively and successfully. Objectives that are already adopted by the researcher are presented below:

- To identify the lessons that have been learned by e-commerce companies during the global pandemic caused by Covid19

- To evaluate the impact of consumer buying behaviour in the development of business in Ireland
- To analyse the effective impact of Covid-19 lessons on the management of successful business operations during a pandemic situation
- To recommend best practices for the maintenance of effective behaviour amongst customers who might purchase different products from Irish companies during a global pandemic

### 1.7 Structure of the Dissertation



**Figure 1: Structure of the Dissertation**

(Source: Created by the Author)

### 1.8 Summary

The current chapter of this present research work is associated with the entire performance of the research. Within the introduction part, the researcher introduces the subject of the research

study. Thus, the rationale, as well as the significance of the research, is also pointed out in this first chapter. Moreover, research aims, objectives, and questions are also identified in the discussion of this present chapter to continue the research work towards its completion.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Consumer behaviour is the study of how individual people or associations choose, buy, use, as well as dispose of, concepts, products, and services, in order to meet their wants and needs. It also pertains to the consumer behaviour within the marketplace as well, as the underlying motivations for all those decisions (Chong, Bian & Zhang, 2016). Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals and the mechanisms they use to select, consume, and dispose of goods, including services. It includes emotional, mental, and behavioural responses from customers (Karjaluoto, Mustonen & Ulkuniemi, 2015). Consumer behaviour incorporates concepts from various disciplines, including psychology, genetics, chemistry, and sociology. In recent times the increasing impact of Covid-19 has led to drastic changes in marketing and many other activities of commercial organizations, as well as cultural changes across the whole world. In this research study, an attempt has been made to analyse consumer behaviour factors, the effects of Covid-19 on buying behaviour, and the theoretical analysis of the situation. It is done to identify a sufficient research gap to further establish the need for the research work around the same topic.

### **2.2 Factors Affecting Consumer Online Shopping Behaviour**

The mysteries of the purchasing decisions of online shoppers are highly uncertain and it is difficult to predict individuals' perceptions and knowledge-oriented decision-making processes. As digitalisation and computerisation attributes are significantly bringing concurrent changes within marketing initiatives, online purchasing behaviours have become a sociotechnical phenomenon that is influenced by demographics, channel knowledge, and shopping orientation in Ireland. Knowledge of consumer behaviour is essential, in order for advertiser to be able to recognize what affects customer buying decisions in this way. Through understanding how customers decide on a commodity, advertisers will fill in the existing gaps and identify the products required and the goods outdated.

Studying customer behaviours often lets advertisers determine whether to deliver their goods in a way that maximizes customer effects. Online consumers perceive the web as a valuable tool for online shopping. Customers believe that shopping service, as well as products, would

boost their efficiency. The information quality accounts for the greatest effect on the desire of customers to shop online. When online shoppers view the internet as a valuable online shopping resource, they will embrace more shopping online (Hoffman & Novak, 2018).

However, as travel restrictions and Covid-19 consequences have imposed legitimate limitations on shoppers ability to access physical stores, and forced them to cope with monotonous lifestyles and financial implications, there are key factors that can substantially influence buying decisions. These factors include financial risks, product risk, convenience risk, delivery and return policy issues, and cultural and psychological differences at the individual level in Ireland. Financial risks are major concerns that are affecting buying decisions due to unusual uncertainties, increasing cybercrimes, and privacy and security issues. Lack of adequate tech-savviness amongst certain age groups, unavailability of secure payment gateways, growing digital crimes, confidentiality breaches, alongside uncertainties in employment and concerns raised regarding future purchases have all been affecting online transaction expectations and experiences. In contrast, limited product visibility and information, fluctuating expectations and profit-making pricing attributes also pose greater threats for shoppers to engage in e-commerce solutions. However, aggressive delivery and logistics services, home-delivery options, and online shopping convenience aspects are all fueling buying decisions alongside ongoing considerations about appropriate return and refund policy, ethical standards, and unbiased review mechanisms.

### **2.3 Conceptualization of Online Shopping**

Online shopping has been something of a new kind of retail quest. Not only in Ireland, it can also be said of anywhere in the world. Net sales, however, do not represent the increasing number of web users. Therefore, to understand how to stimulate customers' digital shopping behaviour in Ireland, some factors that influence their digital shopping behaviour need to be identified. According to Lumen, (2019) potential factors affecting shopping for consumer motives besides online shopping can be varied based on demographics, channel knowledge and shopping orientation which are highly influenced by financial stability, information availability, and the consumption criteria of individuals. Various proactive works are done to investigate the aspects that influenced the behaviour of customers in Ireland towards online shopping that can be used as a basis for finding substantively the elements that influenced the online consumer's purchase process. Also, understanding the models suggested by the various

interested investigators throughout the related research area would be helpful in Ireland (Bahl & Kesharwani, Jun 2018).

Shopping online has become more and more popular in Ireland. It was established with innovative ideas and offered many possibilities for consumers and online stores alike. From 2014 to 2019, the popularity of global web consumers increased from 1.32 billion to 1.92 billion people. Upwards of 2.14 billion people are expected to go shopping online globally in 2021. The growth in internet consumers is attributed to the increase in the acceptance of a wideband system developing with a shift in customer behaviour (Jara, Parra & Skarmeta, 2012). The internet has been the fastest-developing media over the previous century, and online shopping is the fastest-growing e-commerce sector. Millions of apps and websites for e-commerce are now being created, from around the globe, to sell products or services online to customers in Ireland. Online shopping has given more satisfaction to the customers who are searching for comfort today. Consumers can purchase goods and services before going to the retail store, thanks to e-commerce (Laakkonen, 2018).

#### **2.4 E-commerce Solutions and Their Implications on Purchasing Experiences of Consumers**

Advances in digital communication have probably updated the market efficiency and relations between companies and consumers. In Ireland, for example, the government has taken numerous efforts to equip the population with electronic devices to promote internet trade or e-marketing. Paying attention to the factors that affect the attitude of internet shopping is of paramount importance for advertisers in developing their business models and improving sales (Melancon & Dalakas, 2018). The World Wide Web had already propelled transformation in people's attitudes and behaviours around the globe to no limited extent. This great privilege led to the emergence of online shopping, which affected the daily lives of citizens. Consumers are still not very used to having to shop frequently on the internet (Mihart, 2012). The questionnaire indicates that consumers who buy online save time, and varieties of products or services are more accessible. Retail profitability can be impacted significantly by costs connected with the both closing delivery and returns. Since e-commerce has already grown in popularity, several companies have pushed consumers to select less expensive delivery options. Even women and men have had the same form of liking and despising behaviour; they enjoy home delivery facilities and hate being unable to wear comfortable products more. They obtain online

shopping details from sites, in particular from social networks, as well as buy clothing, often by cash on payment method delivery gadgets. Most consumers are worried about the transaction system's protection, and their customer happiness with online shopping is uneven in Ireland (Rahman & Islam, 2018). This study investigated the trends affecting the online purchasing attitude of behaviour of students and teachers from universities across Malaysia's Klang Valley region. The researches have shown that the individual basis of collectivist individual freedom is being. Past studies showed that individualism-collectivism tends to be the most commonly used approach throughout cultural consumer behaviour. This study looks at the respect and protection of progressivism individual freedom as a social context on the relationship between perceived as well as other considerations, including such risk profile, privacy, protection, even subjective standards. These findings showed that substantial moderation effects regarding the combination of behavioural intention and attitude, perceived threat, and many other variables, were significantly associated with consumer buying behaviour. In contrast, perceived risk was found to be negative throughout the perspective. Appropriately, the results of the study indicated that online stores must consider shopping online to improve their online retailing performance (Zendehdel & Paim, 2016). It requires less effort for customers to communicate with electronic stores via their websites rather than engage with them in a more traditional shopping experience, as online shopping is essentially easy to use, quick, and efficient for both customers and the business. Perceived behavioural control refers to how convenient online shopping is in Ireland. It is having a substantial impact on the consumer's relationship to online purchasing. Consumers are becoming more accepting of internet purchases as they find it easy to see a wide range of available products on e-commerce sites, and easy and quick to pay online. Multiple factors almost always impact customer behaviour as people are inherently complex and thus so are their respective buying behaviours. Therefore, marketers should study patterns of consumer buying and discern extant and developing trends amongst buyers. In most situations, marketers only manipulate customer behaviour with the items they can directly control, like how IKEA tends to coerce you into spending more than you expect to pay whilst visiting their shops and being surrounded physically by their products (Murray, Gao & Kotabe, 2011). Several other manufacturers, as well as retailers, even pivot their product offerings to suit the demands resulting from the Covid-19 crisis. Whilst a consideration for the immediate short-term requirements necessary to stay economically viable during the Covid crisis is critical for retailers, it is equally necessary for them to anticipate the retail landscape which will emerge in the aftermath of the pandemic. The latest habits embraced by retailers and customers during the pandemic will most likely

become integral longterm parts of the newly emerging economic reality. For example, retailers will likely rethink elements of their supply chains, production, and distribution systems. Comprehending how and why such changes made by retailers in these areas are successful, or unsuccessful, will be critical, as well as understanding whether there are any moderating factors that impact the results (Moriarty et al., 2015 d).

## **2.5 Role of Digital Marketing and Digitalisation of Customer Services**

Digital marketing has significantly changed the economic experiences of people globally, as well as having wider influences on our social and cultural attitudes towards commerce. The advent of the internet has also radically altered the conditions of doing business. The online product selling format is becoming popular in Ireland for example, because of its safety, efficiency, and speed. The impulse purchases now possible within a digital format are known as unplanned transactions, and these can be immediately carried out due to the rapid nature of online shopping. The numerous services provided by online retailers such as cash on delivery, gift deals, free delivery, consumer feedback, and other factors, play an essential role in online buying impulses in Ireland. According to various literature sources, the factors that affect online purchasing of impulses are highly influenced by user-generated content marketing strategies, systematic allocation of digital marketing resources, and creative abilities to provide detailed information to niche-specific audiences through social media platforms and target promotion advertising policies (Rasul, 2018). Digital marketing is highly affordable and sophisticated in nature to ensure higher consistency and reliability to connect with wider communities made up of different demographics and cultural backgrounds; it has substantially increased the potential for customers to make informed decisions in purchasing online goods. A structured questionnaire has been used to attain responses for several objectives, one which included a total of 106 respondents who have been surveyed using a convenient sampling method. The results of the study show that spontaneous buying is most influenced by the price discount by quantity discount, free shipping, cash on delivery, gift vouchers, seasonal deals, debit credit card deals, quick returns, and annual end sales. The least influencing factors include details of the company website, product descriptions, as well as email confirmation (Parmar & Chauhan, 2018).

Online consumers choose the most accessible sites over more complicated ones. Long download times have been a major element contributing to the unfriendliness of some e-

commerce websites. If the format and design of the website is unappealing, or difficult to use, potential buyers may lose focus on, and interest in, their transactions. Such barriers reduce the sense of ease for customers in their online shopping experiences, which can result in internet shoppers developing negative views about online shopping and causing them to ultimately avoid online shopping in future (Ryan, 2016). Many customers say that it is safer to use the web to purchase products or services. Online retailers should also recognise the perceived user-friendliness factor when selling their goods or services online. Simple transactions are distinguished by the fact that the customer has very little interest in the category of the product or the brand. Imagine shopping at the grocery store: you go to the supermarket and buy your favourite type of bread. You show a normal pattern of consumer behaviour, and not a deep loyalty to the brand (Singh, 2012). Digital marketing helps to keep customers informed and connected, securing a higher level of trust and transparency through the seamless transition of information and goods. In Ireland, digital shopping is increasing at an exponential rate, primarily driven by large and extensive marketing campaigns. In the longterm, such an approach may not be significant, so it is necessary to discuss a real added value in this analysis. A survey was developed with the primary objective of studying the determining factors that influence the propensity of millennial consumers to buy online. The conceptual context comprises four variables that could trigger online purchasing behaviour amongst millennial consumers: market innovation, financial enjoyment, perceived risks, and mindset and intent (Sheth, 2018). The quantitative tests used are chi-square, ANOVA, regression, correlation analysis, as well as an overview of variables. Factors shaping online buying were evaluated from the findings of this analysis, although suggestive approaches are suggested for internet retailers (Sivakumar & Gunasekaran, 2017). In this context, trust refers to the willingness of the customer to follow online shopping and his or her expectation that the online store can provide fair pricing, the correct product or service details, protect user privacy, and securely handle credit card and transaction information. If a customer does not trust your e-commerce website, they will never purchase your goods or services. Online retailers and customers can not physically see each other, so building customer trust is very important for online retailers (Shiau & Luo, 2012). If trust is not strongly established, no one will buy a product from your website. The best online stores can safeguard the confidentiality of their consumers, and offer them excellent service as a result. Trust is undeniably one of the most significant factors affecting customers when shopping online. Perceived utility, perceived user-friendliness, and confidence, are the main factors that drive online customers to buy online. Online retailers such as Amazon and eBay were able to master these three factors to be successful. Recognising what

most impacts internet user in their online shopping experiences can help internet companies develop to be more efficient, effective, and attractive to consumers, ultimately helping them increase profits. In the space of several months the rapid expanse and influence of the novel coronavirus Covid-19 has changed the retail landscape enormously, and in some case permanently. The pandemic has already changed economic behaviours on all fronts, and caused major havoc to the world economy. Whilst Covid-19's long-term effects have yet to be fully determined, they have already left a noticeable and substantial impact on retail in Ireland. Multi-carrier transportation technology also guarantees that businesses have the correct mix of service providers in place from the start of their transportation strategy. The system collects and normalises shipment data from multiple providers so that businesses are aware if shipments to a certain location, consumer, or provider have been successful, helping to uphold service criteria. Commercial providers of vital products such as food, retail needs, and health care products, have experienced an expanded demand to provide services to customers at home, whilst facing inventory difficulties, challenges with supply chain management and distribution, and difficulties ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for their employees. In contrast, retailers of products deemed non-essential, such as clothing and footwear, face a major decline in revenue and have had to pursue new ways of attracting and engaging consumers who are shopping from home, in order to support themselves financially (Roggeveen & Sethuraman, 2020).

## **2.6 The influence of COVID-19 Affects Buying Behaviour**

Consumers are likely to get used to new ways of shopping, too. Online grocery shopping with home delivery, for example, will likely become more commonplace. Grocers would also need to decide whether online shopping can be made more conducive to in-person shopping in such a way as to promote impulse purchases. What's more, other customer habits and past experiences will shift. Consumers may become accustomed to working from home, subscribing to online fitness courses, and becoming more likely to purchase an exercise machine at home rather than working out at a gym. Consumers options for shopping have been limited due to lockdowns and social distancing. Working, learning, and buying have all changed and become more connected to, and focused within, life in the homespace. Additionally, customers may have become accustomed to accessing new movie releases in their residence and no longer

want to return to movie theatres. Therefore, prospective empirical research must seek to understand the contagion's short-term and long-term effect on consumer behaviour and to provide guidance about how retailers must cope with any of those adjustments (Wirtz et al., 2013). This research study concentrates mostly on the early stages of the pandemic, including the early emergence of Covid-19 throughout China, where most effected individuals opted to self-quarantine, initiative of the Chinese government. This fact led to significant interruptions to one of the most frequent retail market procedures: food retailing. Data throughout the online survey found that the outbreak caused significant levels of customer behaviour changes, with farmers' supermarkets losing much of their consumers. At the same time, local small independent stores reported the highest levels of consumer acquisition resilience. This study provides avenues for more research as well as policy-making about the effect this activity may have on the more vulnerable members of society from around the world, especially the elderly (Li & Hallsworth, 2020). The final outcome of the pandemic will be an inevitable new economic reality. Employment losses continue mounting, and economies around the world have been weakened. When job losses reduce consumer spending, this, in turn, causes many companies to fail and more citizens to keep their benefits in Ireland. This circumstance can succeed retailers offering value-oriented branded products and online sellers, at least throughout this economic downturn, even as a luxury but instead high-end retail stores are liable to incur. It will be crucial for retailers to understand what customers see as necessary and what they see as a luxury. Continuing to develop their brand and connect with consumers online is important for those companies working with non-essential products, including luxury retailers (Tiago & Manu, 2016). Although the long-term effects regarding Covid-19, have yet to be established, its undeniable impact on retail has been significant. Retail stores of essential goods such as food, grocery items, and health care, have been experiencing increased requirement opportunities to serve consumers in their residences, whilst simultaneously facing inventory difficulties, difficulties with supply chain management and distribution, as well as efforts to maintain a safe environment for their staff (Suki, 2010).

Some producers and distributors are also pivoting and adjusting their available products to satisfy the new demands resulting from the Covid-19 crisis. Spirit manufacturers, for example, have used the same alcohol ingredient to produce and sell hand sanitisers throughout the pandemic crisis. Whilst thinking about the immediate, short-term requirements of succeeding in this environment is crucial for retailers, it is equally important to predict what the consumer landscape will be after the pandemic as well. Any of the latest habits embraced by retailers and customers during the pandemic will most likely become the latest normal, and one which will

endure longterm. Retailers, for example, will probably radically rethink elements of their supply chain, production, and distribution systems, to cope with the new economic reality going forward. How will they become more effective in delivering whatever they want to customers whenever they want it? Knowing how and why improvements made by retailers in these environments are successful or ineffective will be necessary, and whether there are mediating variable factors that affect the outcome. Consumers may even get used to new ways of shopping (Stott, Stone & Fae, 2016). emerging. Nevertheless, potential empirical work will aim to recognize the pandemic's short-term and long-term effect on consumer behaviour, providing recommendations on where and how retailers can cope with such shifts. This pandemic will trigger new political realities too. Job losses are mounting, and economies around the world are contracting; this in turn has wider political implications for many nations. Employment losses reduce consumer spending and this in turn causes many companies to fail and many people to abandon livelihoods which are no longer viable. Retailers selling value-oriented products, as well as discount retailers, will likely benefit from this ongoing scenario of economic downturn. Additionally, retailers will need to understand what kinds of experiences customers are likely to value in a store after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, many consumer interactions in-store were focused on creating fun and entertainment, and emphasised communication. Consumers can assess a store after the pandemic restrictions have eased enough to allow freer instore retail experiences, based on how clean and hygienic an environment it is, and whether the store is spacious enough to encourage social distancing. They might need disposable menus throughout restaurants as well as substantial space, or perhaps even plastic barriers among tables (Sivakumar & Gunasekaran, 2017).

Retailers also need to consider the wellbeing of their employees. How does a company build an atmosphere wherein the frontline workers feel free and safe to work? Will the customers and employees be required to wear masks? Will retailers use more automated options to reduce the concerns of staff who need to engage closely with customers in frontline work? They are transitioning from the expectation of price rises for justice, to the perception of price decreases for fair goods traded. Excellent strategic resources are those obtained to assist farmers as well as local communities, and these goods are generally higher priced. Fair-trade goods advertisers indulge in sometimes lowering costs to shift items. Such price cuts, however, can be treated with suspicion, since the discounts take spending on social reasons (Wirtz et al., 2013). Many employees have largely been incapable of physically coming into the workplace during the pandemic. This situation was handled with a sense of urgency by the managerial elements of

most companies. Management has mainly focused on the innovations to workplaces made necessary in response to Covid-19. According to the 'Mere Urgency Effect,' individuals tend to allocate almost all the resources and energy to an urgent matter, irrespective of their importance. Selling, however, is an operational business block. Regardless of the pandemic, consumer spending was declining, except for a few market segments such as hand sanitisers. Forty-two per cent were concerned regarding revenue, as shown in a survey conducted of 304 businesses; however, many other managers have been taking a wait-and-see methodology rather than attempting to improve their respective commerce scenarios. Managers could expect sales to merely recover as demand rises after the passage of the pandemic. The pandemic has, nevertheless, had some enduring impact not only on the conditions of many different companies but also on consumer society as a whole. The outbreak of Covid-19 may have reshaped the structure of global markets, perhaps forever. In this paper, an examination was undertaken of how the pandemic has also influenced the digitalisation of the lives of consumers, and how can potentially adapt to digital sales. Business observations during the pandemic showed that the e-commerce market is changing rapidly. After Covid-19, the growth of internet shopping provides new ways to leverage performance (Li & Hallsworth, 2020). The paradox of personalization-privacy, which has been debated in marketing over the past few years, is likely to turn into a debate over health privacy. Would consumers be willing to give up their details and knowledge about their locations to help authorities monitor Covid-19 publicity? Will consumers accept having one's temperature taken before entering a retail outlet or service provider's property? Finding that consumers are more dedicated and engaged in fair trade, and therefore likely to be faithful to such goods, tends to call into question the price discount for those reasons. Whilst the price discount might indeed be viewed positively by consumers, which are less associated with fair trade goods. The idea is that promotions directed especially at customers involved will provide a rationale for minimizing their possible negative effects, which is an essential insight for marketing purposes (Sheth, 2018).

## **2.7 Role of the Pandemic in E-Commerce Industry**

COVID-19 has impacted the daily lives of all people globally, as millions of people around the world were asked to stay home to slow down the spread of the pandemic. Companies were vulnerable to significant changes as a result. Many enterprises' workplace operations were

transitioning into virtual settings within the context of Ireland. The effects on business innovation, productivity, as well as on corporate culture, have all been researched thoroughly. However, how Covid-19 influenced individual consumers and consumer society itself has received relatively little attention in comparison. Managers frequently take a wait-and-see approach to COVID-19's effect on sales. If and how many consumers will be returning after the pandemic passes is still unknown. Consumers are living through the pandemic, and even though the situation is easing, specific improvements may be long-lasting. Authors are looking at the virus outbreak as an accelerator of the markets of the world, influencing major systemic reforms in production and creating new technological innovations. Managers may respond to the digital transformation throughout the market to regain sales after Covid-19 or perhaps even increase them further (Singh, 2012). The previous study found that the two main reasons for shopping in physical stores rather than online shopping, are a sense of social connection, whereas online shopping appears to be considerably more convenient as well as economical (Rahman & Islam, 2018). Online shopping provides more versatility in terms of time, place, and the selection of items. One possible obstacle that makes many customers reluctant to accept online shopping may be the cost of learning involved. Consumers may have preferred shopping in physical stores due to a desire for immediate belonging, but mostly because they were reluctant to invest effort in learning how to buy online. The pandemic may be a catalyst in this respect that induces the late majority, which has been opposed to the modern way of shopping, to shop online eventually. The new ten percent of the user population who took online shopping because of the pandemic have already covered the cost and felt the ease of online shopping, now finding that it could be worthwhile waiting a few days for customer fulfilment. Whereas late purchasers are likely to be more cynical in testing new experiences, their online experience is likely to be positive, because it offers a reasonably secure way of shopping mostly during a pandemic, and so they are likely to continue shopping online after the pandemic disappears (Chen, 2013). As well as internet retailing, the retailing of luxury products has also trended upwards. Single-brand, as well as multi-brand luxury stores, have indeed been able to cater to the full range of high-quality consumers, particularly over the internet. Note that customers in stores nationwide prefer to indulge in more brand/comparison shopping as the stores have more significant assortments of products available compared to single-brand consumers in Ireland. Accordingly, they recommend that multi-brand luxury store managers will make greater efforts to encourage a physiological shopping experience amongst customers to make them less price-sensitive and increase store profitability. Online shopping offers better accessibility in time and location aspects compared to in-store shopping. Although, one reason some customers may

tend to shop in physical stores, might be that whenever they buy online, it is more challenging to handle information. When potential customers shop online, product specifications are often restricted to images and product descriptions that sellers provide. Managers may thus want to use the latest technology to help customers make decisions easier when shopping online. Consumers can now even virtually view a car, but instead of viewing the real interior, the use of patented 360-degree photo technology can give them a virtual look. Meanwhile, Amazon uses Augmented Reality (AR) technology to offer a virtual clothing-fitting experience. Virtual Reality (VR), as well as Augmented Reality (AR) technology are expected to open greater possibilities for custom shopping online in the future. The previous research further indicates that music in advertising increases the span of awareness as well as the perception of the product. Managers may want to deploy music in online stores to capture the attention of customers and trigger a positive mood when shopping online. Interconnectivity can also enhance memory as well as cognitive processing. Managers could be innovating a way to offer immersive online shopping experiences (Gillespie, 2015).

One obstacle for digital sales is the mistrust of customers over making online purchases. 'Trust' is often a determining factor in explaining whether a consumer is likely to search in e-commerce or come back to buy again. Consumers are likely to like, be loyal to, and support, similar human characteristics for anthropomorphic products, such as showing emotions or demonstrating kindness. Managers may personify the brand through social media to build an emotional bond and communicate with customers. Online feedback can help reduce cynicism about making online purchases. The hotel industry, for example, makes 82 percent of its sales entirely online even though hotels are established products, and booking online accommodation entails a high-risk level. Consumers can also access hotels and efficiently mitigate risk by reading customer reviews that are available on certain hotel booking websites. Supervisors might allow online reviews as well as encourage consumers to provide feedback that helps reduce the adverse effects associated with making purchases online (Bahl & Kesharwani, Jun 2018).

## **2.8 Theoretical analysis**

Consumer behaviours and individuals' decision-making processes and capabilities vary widely, with variations possible within demographics, personal financial conditions, psychological aspects, and reactions towards the business models of distinct companies. Consumer buying

influencing factors are difficult to predict at individuals' level due to different complexities and vulnerabilities. However, various proactive theoretical perspectives including Consumer Behaviour Theory and Motivation-Need Theory are both significant in understanding human behaviours.

Online purchasing behaviour is a type of behaviour that customers show when visiting an e-tailer website to browse, pick, and purchase products and services to suit their needs and desires in Ireland. Online shopping is a form of electronic commerce that allows customers to purchase goods and services directly from a vendor over the web via an internet browser. The procedure is termed Business-to-Business (B2B) online shopping, whenever an online store is developed for a corporation, has grown to purchase from another company. Studying customer behaviour online is one of the most interesting research priorities in management information systems, including marketing research. However, online consumer behaviour awareness is indeed very limited, since it is a complex social-technical phenomenon and includes so many antecedent variables. Most previous studies in this area often provided inconsistently or perhaps even conflicting results because of the use of different simple research models to accomplish parsimony (Paul, Modi & Patel, 2016).

Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how, and where people purchase stuff or don't. It combines psychological, sociological, social anthropological, and economic elements. It seeks to explain the mechanism of purchaser decision making, both individually and in groups, in Ireland. It examines individual market factors such as demographics, including behavioural variables, to recognize people's wishes. The role theory viewpoint takes the view that most consumer behaviour parallels behaviours within a play. Like in a show, each customer has lines, props, and costumes, that have been required to put on an excellent performance, participants perform a lot of different roles, and often they change their choices depending on the specific "plot" at the moment. A customer is usually thought of as a person recognizing a need or desire, making a purchase, and then disposing of the product during the cycle of processing. Consumers reveal vast differences in the size and ability of different components of the commercial market. The consumer's purchasing cycle is affected by the financial condition of the consumer, temperament, tastes, group influences, social position, and sometimes even public opinion determined by the financial standing (Suki, 2010).

Marketing offers resources to achieve customer loyalty.

It also seeks to determine market factors from groups, including family, friends, comparison groups, and society at large in Ireland. The analysis of the customer behaviour is focused on consumer purchasing behaviour, whereby the customer performs the three separate positions of the user, payer, and buyer. Relationship marketing is an important tool for the study of consumer behaviour, as it has a strong interest in rediscovering the true essence of marketing by reaffirming the value of the consumer or consumer (Wirtz et al., 2013).

Knowing the effect of these principles on consumer behaviour would help marketers generate new product ideas and introduce customization for the core product, some additional features, and provide additional services all done to delight the customers. In this age of knowledge and abundance, internet marketing is becoming a new commercial reality. It is all the more important for marketers to build a suitable database that can help them to tailor-make and prepare goods to match individual tastes, preferences, and purchasing behaviours. When conducting consumer research, it was made apparent that even though fashions as well as fads were easily accepted, potential customers also had a preference for differentiation strategies that match their developmental disabilities, personalities, and lifestyles in Ireland. Thus, the value of market segmentation came into being. Therefore, the consumer preferences area will help support the product segmentation process.

## **2.9 Literature Gap**

The literature review has helped the researcher in reviewing many scholarly articles, however, it was identified that there are not many studies on the online shopping behaviour of consumers in Ireland. Furthermore, there is not a single study that talks about the influence of Covid-19 on the online buying behaviour of consumers of Ireland. As the consequences and spread of the coronavirus have imposed multidimensional barriers for individuals' ranging from personal and psychological wellbeing, to economic stability and sense of belongingness, unavailability of adequate scientific evidence regarding the impacts of such factors on purchasing behaviours has become a major problem for researchers to investigate the effects of e-commerce solutions on an individual level. Hence this research gap will be adequately filled by the researcher in the future.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

Consumer purchasing behaviours are complicated due to the presence of multilayer barriers, different patterns of positioning resources by e-commerce companies based on demographics, digital marketing strategies, and product distribution channels. This research paper is focused on a survey that is not a systematic or detailed view of the specific segment, and aims not to suggest action for a post-covid future, but rather strives to provide substantial insight into factors in shifting consumer buying behaviour due to Covid-19.

The purpose of this survey is to analyse behaviour that consumers revealed implementing in response to Covid-19. The research highlights changes in customer behaviour across a wide range of people as the nation went into government imposed lockdowns. It also states that some aspects of customer behaviour and marketing responses will have fundamentally changed. However, companies that understand difficulties before them, and plan for how best to address them, will emerge stronger from the disruption. The main aim of this paper is to analyse and summarize customer behavioural changes during Covid-19.

### ***Research questions***

For performing this present research based on the specific research topic the researcher has selected some questions. The selection of those questions provided a suitable scope of enquiry to the researcher, to help them collect relevant information associated with the topic of this research study.

The questions of this research work are as followed:

- What are the Covid-19 lessons that have been learned by the e-commerce companies during the global pandemic?
- What is the impact of consumer buying behaviour in the development of business in Ireland?
- What is the effective impact of Covid-19 lessons on the management of successful business operations during a pandemic situation?
- What are the best practices for the maintenance of effective behaviour amongst customers to purchase different products from the companies of Ireland during a global pandemic?



## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, to arrive at different conclusions which are to be taken as perspectives upon the related topic. The techniques of research are explained in this section to determine the best appropriate technique for obtaining the intended outcomes through the specific research. Different concepts and theories are used in research methodology to provide a broad and diverse examination of the issue of the research. There are mainly two types of research methodology (Alfonso, et.al 2021). These are quantitative research and qualitative research. The research methodology's application enables an understanding of the approach used to examine the numerous aspects that influence consumers in Ireland during this global pandemic. As a result, an inquiry will be conducted to evaluate current trends and upcoming expectations in commerce in Ireland, due to the pandemic, to help companies improve efficiency going forward. Since the proper performance of this research uses various methodologies, a satisfactory outcome is achievable only by using multiple research methodologies. Rigorous and methodical research for relevant facts and information on a certain issue is characterized as the research methodology. In some cases, the precise procedure of research methodology can frequently result in mistakes which can lead to research restrictions. Furthermore, the researcher has followed every step of the research methodology to assist in the study of lessons to be learned about e-commerce during this global pandemic coronavirus.

### **3.2 Research philosophy**

The evolution of the research experiences, research background, and its character, can all be considered the research philosophy. The research philosophy is a strategy for describing how relevant data for an event should be collected, compiled, and used. As a result, selecting a suitable philosophical technique is critical for the success of any investigation or research. The philosophical perspective is defined as a research philosophy, which is a certain manner of establishing some information based on facts, data, information, and knowledge (Bhatt et.al 2017).

This growth and comprehension of information is predicated on those expectations depending on the viewpoint of many researchers. An organized research philosophy is the evolution of logic and reasoning, into a system that blends present concepts with earlier discussed techniques of understanding. Contemporary research philosophy is informed by the philosophies of positivism, interpretivism, and realism. The first focus is on the methods of actual analysis, whilst the second method is used for reconsidering the global beliefs using philosophical interpretations. The use of research reasoning in an investigation technique aids in determining the best strategy to obtain delicate components of an investigation point. Many people believe that investigation rationale aids in explaining a professional's assumption method while presenting an evaluation issue. Moreover, because the methodologies for evaluating a given issue can vary, the investigation theory must be practical and in a good structure. Positivism, authenticity, and interpretivism are three common styles of philosophy which are pieces of ideas based on the concept of research methodology (Chang et.al 2021). There are multiple types of research philosophy, such as interpretivism, realism, and positivism that are useful in the use of various approaches in this study or research. Positivism emphasizes the necessity of conducting quantitative research, like conducting surveys, to gain a broader picture of a society that has been influenced by this global pandemic, and to identify various attitudes on the strategies of e-commerce that have been learned during the global pandemic; an example being an understanding of the association between economic performance and socioeconomic status and how these influence e-commerce factors during the coronavirus pandemic. Interpretivism, is an epistemological approach, which supports the concept of a complicated system, which is essential for an understanding of the societal realm of business and management, and e-commerce activities. Interpretivists claim that interpretative research aims to characterize things using legal system concepts and that it does so in part by obviating the need for formal methods (Dai et.al 2020). Aside from marketing, an investigator with interpretative focus successfully participates in interpreting the survey's material or after-effects to meet the report's needs. Finally, realism is a methodology that combines positivism with interpretivism, incorporating elements from both concepts. Here positivism is chosen over this approach as it is related to the pandemic which has affected e-commerce.

### **Justification for the chosen philosophy**

As applied in this context, positivism supports a more thorough analysis of the hidden facts, and information associated with the various elements of e-commerce arrangement during this

global pandemic, as well as their impact on the adoption of the lessons that are utilized during this global pandemic in Ireland which justifies the behavior of consumers (Kurniawat et.al 2020). As the study is time-limited, interpretative or authenticity research is discarded, as was the research reasoning conclusion. Furthermore, the researchers' role in managing or utilizing of data based on the facts related to e-commerce during this global pandemic is limited by positivist rationalism, which leads to a reduction in data problems.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

The research approach describes the process of developing and formulating research techniques that researchers can use, especially strategies to do research more efficiently and to more quickly reach results (McGeever et.al 2020). A methodology for a topic inquiry is needed so that the arrangement needed to guide the research may be discovered. A given research topic can be studied using one of two approaches: inductive and deductive. Induction and deduction ways are two approaches that are mainly dependent on the development of the organization or the company. When sufficient data on the chosen one is not available, the inductive technique is research that aids in considering an investigation point (Neill et.al 2020). The foundation phase in inductive methodology involves observation, which supports the accumulation of relevant information and in turn, creates the review process.

However, it should be noted that the inductive technique meets the demand for original hypothesis testing in any discipline (Pantelimon et.al 2020). Deductive methodology, on either side, is a technique that displays the rational application of the hypotheses focused on acquiring the content of the research topic. The goal of the deductive methodology is to build a hypothesis using additional specifics and concepts for data analysis. In either situation, the choice of research methodology is enhanced based on the survey's approach and research concept, which can assist in the analysis of the issue. Here the dependent variable is e-commerce and the independent variable is consumer behavior.

### **Justification for the Chosen Approach**

Through the use of various hypothetical data, the topic will seek to analyze the concepts associated with the acceptance of lessons that are learned about e-commerce during this pandemic which in result has affected many things in this research (Reardon et.al 2021). The deductive approach is chosen by the researcher as the data or facts are related to e-commerce during the global pandemic. The various elements of e-commerce that are learned during this

arrangement demanded the use of a methodology that may assist in a more precise and simple understanding. However, the inductive approach is not used in this case because does not emphasize any unique thoughts or hypotheses.

### **3.4 Research design**

The general policy employed to execute the research is referred to as the Research Design. It enables researchers in interpreting the study components of various procedures. It denotes the gathering of information that is useful in the process of the investigation. Many other types of research design are applicable – case studies, analytical, quantitative, and other research designs are a few of these concepts (Rizvi et.al 2021). It is stated that the research strategy assists in the clarification of the organization of the authorized people who assist in the selection of the collection and research design. A certain type of approach is linked to the data gathering process which assists in the improved presentation of the research approach. Explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory research designs are some of the different types of research designs that are used in this research. An exploratory framework enables the distinguishing of different types of ideas and concepts needed to complete research work. In either way, an instructive research design illustrates the occurrence of a series of events and also the consequence of the research. Information of basic aspects of an investigation becomes confined as a consequence of the essential clarity of conditions and final results connection. Finally, descriptive research is concerned with identifying places of attention to identify events clearly and properly. The research is based on the lessons to be learned e-commerce during this pandemic Covid-19.

#### **Justification for The Selection of The Chosen Design**

The research design has been eliminated since it promotes the concept of a continuous study, which is inappropriate for this research. Apart from the eliminated research design, a descriptive design could describe the point of view procedure required in the implementation of the lessons of e-commerce learned during this pandemic coronavirus (Villa et.al 2021), as it has effected the entirety of Ireland and every commercial field has been effected by this pandemic. There are many things that one can learn from the coronavirus situation. The research design is based on the things that can be known or learned about e-commerce during the global pandemic coronavirus.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data which is required for conducting this research will be collected in the form of primary data.

Primary data: Any form of data initially collected as information that is collected for the purposes of answering one's research question (Chen et.al 2016) (e.g. through experiments, surveys and observations).

Primary qualitative data will comprise personal interviews conducted with the officials in Ireland involved in e-commerce to know their vision about consumer behavior in Ireland. The sampling method followed whilst choosing the interviewees, is selective sampling, since the leaders and managers of the marketing department of different e-commerce will only know upcoming marketing strategies (Chen et.al 2016). Primary data is collected through focus group interviews with predetermined open-ended questions and semi-structured Interview methods.

Usually, questionnaires are the pertinent questions sent through the mail to informants to respond to, in a certain period of time, and to eventually return for data analysis purposes. The method is reasonably expeditious, cheap, and also useful in extensive inquiries. If there is no incentive involved then the response to the questionnaire is low in percent (Johnston 2017).

Google Forms have been used to conduct the online survey and send to participants over the internet. Ten close-ended questions have been included in the survey questionnaire.

Information is collected by trained enumerators through this method. Informants are assisted in making entries in the questionnaire or schedules correctly. You can get trustworthy information from this method when the enumerators are experienced, discreet, and well-trained. For large-scale organizational or governmental inquiry, guidance given by the enumerators works best. The use of this method is prohibited so that no institutions or private individuals can adopt this (Johnston 2017).

### **3.6 Sampling Size**

Sampling size is a type of market research in terms of defining the number of individuals involved to conduct the research. Researchers choose the sample on the basis of a few demographics, such as gender, physical location, age, company, status, post and education qualification. In order to generalize random samples and to avoid sampling errors whilst noting or restricting biases, the random sample is needed to be of a properly adequate size.

A random non-probability sampling method has been used to sample the participants. Thirty participants have been selected for the focus group. Probability sampling represents the descriptive statistics, which is considered to be the first step of analyzing the data. This analysis helps the researcher to find the pattern and helps in summarizing the data, which has been collected, basically quantitative data. Here voluntary response techniques are used. It is the same as the convenience sample; the voluntary response sample is also easy to access. The people should directly contact them instead of allowing the researchers choose the participants, such as by responding to the public online service, as some people will inherently volunteer because of this, the voluntary response samples are somewhat biased (Boddy 2016).

Close ended questions are said to be those type of questions that are ask to the respondent, who then have to choose from distinct sets of predefined responses, like “yes or no” or among the set of multiple choice (MCQs) type questions. Ten close ended questions have been added in the survey questionnaire (Nassaji 2015).

Data sampling is a statistical technique of analyzing, which is used to manipulate, select, and analyze, a subset which is the representative of data points, and which helps to identify trends and pattern in which the larger data set is being examined. The sample size reflects the number of responses obtained, it is not necessary that the number of questionnaires distributed in most of the social and management type of surveys will provide the same response rate; for e-mailed and postal surveys this is very rarely comes to be 100% (Nassaji 2015). Probably the most time effective and common way to ensure maximum sample response is to increase sample size by 50% in the first hand distribution of the survey.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The analysis of data has been an essential part of the study. The qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods are the two kinds of data analysis methods used. The quantitative analysis approach is used to analyse data gathered through primary data collection methods. The raw data was gathered by conducting an online poll with ten customers of non-profit organisations. The analysis was conducted using the Likert Scale, which has a range of 1 to 5. Data was entered into the Likert Scale, and charts, figures, and graphs were used to create outcomes and results. The evaluation of graphs, tables, and graphs has aided in sustaining an understanding of the impact of consumer behaviour in Ireland following the pandemic. Survey questionnaires have been utilised to collect data for analysis and the formation of conclusions. Controlled observation has been used to observe customer behaviour in reaction to specified acts. In comparison to other data gathering methods, the data collection procedure may take less time. For simplicity of giving data analysis results, certain attributes attributed to the survey study and questionnaire replies have been provided in statistical information.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

The ethical considerations that have been adhered to while conducting the research are as follows:

- Informed Consent: Only after accepting all the terms and conditions the participants and remaining interviewees were approached.
- Voluntary participation: The participants and the respondents who are associated with research on their own should take care that there should not be any immoderate forces exercised.
- Confidentiality: As per the pre-provided terms the respondents should maintain the confidentiality of their data.
- Anonymity: The anonymity of different entities interviewed and the personnel should be taken care of and the act should be in a professional outlook.

### **3.9 Summary.**

Data which is required for conducting this research will be collected in the form of primary data.

Primary data: Any form of data initially collected as information that is collected for the purposes of answering one's research question. (e.g. through experiments, surveys and observations)

Primary qualitative data will comprise personal interviews conducted with the officials of Ireland involved in e-commerce to know their vision about consumer behavior in Ireland. The sampling method followed while choosing the interviewees, is selective sampling, since the leaders and managers of the marketing department of different e-commerce companies will only know upcoming marketing strategies. Sampling size is a type of market research in terms of defining the number of individuals involved to conduct the research. The researcher chooses the sample on the basis of a few demographics such as gender, physical location, age, company status post, and education qualification.

A random non-probability sampling method has been used to sample the participants. Fifty participants have been selected for the online survey. Non-probability sampling represents the descriptive statistics, which is the first step of data analysis. This analysis helps the researcher to find the pattern and helps to summarize data, which have been collected – basically quantitative data collection.

Close ended questions are types of questions that are asked to the respondent, and they had to choose from a distinct set of predefined responses, like "yes or no " or among the set of multiple choice type questions.

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data, using analytical and logical reasoning and carefully examining the components of any data that is provided or collected. When a research experiment is conducted, there are many components involved, and steps that should be taken.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

In order to find out the factors which mainly influence online consumers, this study will focus on explaining existing studies with a deductive approach. By using the primary Qualitative

Method of data collection we have attempted to understand more specifically the characteristics of purchases by online consumers. These characteristics will make it possible for the proper segmentation of various consumer categories.

Open ended questions ID used to understand people's perspective and get feedback instead in the form of stock answers. Thirty people are chosen at random and divided into three groups which consist of ten members in each group. The method of Focus Group Discussion is used for the collection of answers for the respective questionnaire provided below. This is a good way to gather people of similar background and understand their experiences or perceptions on a specific topic of interest.

**Focus Group Interview**

1. What is meant by consumer behavior mainly in the field of e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
The online consumer behavior is a process by which it is understood how the consumer makes decisions to purchase products through e-commerce.	Consumer behavior analysis helps to understand the behavior of principal in which the consumption is done by a consumer.	Consumer behaviour in commerce is the way to understand the trend in which society is developing and influencing the purchase of the consumer depending upon various factors.

Since most of the consumer behavior theories have developed during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they mainly center around the traditional way of marketing but nowadays globally people are shifting towards online shopping and referring to e-commerce platforms more. The explosive growth of social media in the past decades has changed the nature of people’s consumer behaviour, and made people more open and enthusiastic about sharing their shopping experience with others. Digital marketing and online shopping platforms have further made it easier for customers to share their opinions of purchasing as a social activity in itself. Along with traditional consumer behavior, e-commerce consumerism has become more advanced,

interconnected, and socially expressed and shared, but at the same time plays a vital role in rationalizing the decision-making abilities of the customer.

2. How has the COVID-19 pandemic increased the percentage of online shopping in Ireland?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>During the pandemic the online consumption habits have changed significantly with the greater portion of the internet users starting to buy essential products such as beverages, cosmetics, foods, and medicines. Increases of online shopping during Covid-19 have differed from country to country with the strongest rise noted in Germany and Switzerland.</p>	<p>According to most news and surveys, communication platforms like Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp are single-handedly owned by Facebook. These online activities are most likely to outlast this pandemic.</p>	<p>It was seen that average monthly spending online for shopping has dropped. Consumers hate both developed and emerging economies which have postponed expenditure at a larger scale.</p>

Amongst all the Nigerian consumer companies, L’Oréal is one of the companies that boasts the highest exposure through online means, as it reached around 25% of the sales almost in just the first six months of the year, after looking into the sales online there are almost 65% just over a year period L’Oréal became the single out of the key, driving factor which is behind all expected growth of the market as the remainder of the year 2020. In the months of May and June, the sales of e-commerce were up by 75 percent and 82 percent respectively, which has been accelerating with every month, even though stores are beginning to physically reopen.

When looking into the medium term, the company expects that they should be able to derive half of their sales from the online world. In the last few years, there are some famous players

who have been investing a lot more into becoming more digitally savvy companies, refocusing their portfolios, and accelerating their innovation. Most of these companies probably would have come into the market during the pandemic prepared to a certain degree, as they have been prepared to change up their companies radically and pivot their commercial practices more towards the online world. For retailers, narrowing the range of their products, focusing on what matters most for their business, streamlining their products and brand so they can shift towards e-commerce, is key for both big and small companies.

3. How has e-commerce affected the industries of Ireland during this pandemic?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>The crisis of Covid-19 has accelerated the expansion of e-commerce business towards new forms, types of products, and customers. It has provided the customers with access to a significant variety of products from the convenience and safety from their homes and has enabled the forms to continue the operation in spite of the contacts restrictions and other measures to confine the public for minimizing contamination.</p>	<p>Despite the persistence of covid-19 across the country, it has dynamically enhanced the e-commerce landscape across the globe and has expanded the scope of e-commerce by help in the growth of new farms and consumer segments.</p>	<p>Some of the changes in the e-commerce landscape have happened quietly during the pandemic, and which are likely to be considered long-term possible problems with the occurrence of new waves of the virus. This has caused a convenient changes in the purchasing habits of consumers, helping them to understand the cost, efficiency, and incentives from the form to capitalise the investment through various sales channels.</p>

E-commerce Nigeria conducted the latest survey based on the impact of COVID-19 on e-commerce in the context of the second lockdown in Nigeria at the beginning of 2021. The

survey which was taken, was addressed towards the e-commerce Nigeria's national association members, as well as it counts a total of around nineteen countries, which highlights the current situation in Nigeria. The respondents were able to identify the fragmentation that has happened across the country regarding the definition of the basic store categories, as it compromises the level of playing that is filed within a single market and also causes uncertainty for the consumers as well as businesses alike. Such kinds of fragmentation have also been observed regarding the rules and regulations, and the solutions for click-and-collect delivery, where these kinds of services are allowed in some countries, or limited or even unavailable in others. In addition, regional fragmentation was observed in some of the countries in regards to the rules about click-and-collect services.

4. What are the different stages of consumer buying behaviour in Ireland?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>This is said to be the first stage of the buying process. The consumer will not initiate the process of purchase without any recognition of the wants or needs. When a consumer wants to buy a particular product according to his or her need, the customer will go for a purchase decision. There are some unmet needs or there are some problems which will be solved by buying a particular product that they need.</p>	<p>Till now the consumers have done complete research that they needed about the kind of product which will be able to solve their problems. The next step of this is to evaluate the alternative for the product that can be able to solve their problems. There are different points of information that have been gathered from various sources which are used to evaluate the alternatives.</p>	<p>After the process of buying a product, the customers used to compare the products with their expectations. This will have two outcomes : they either will be satisfied or dissatisfied. Consumers will be happy after getting the product that they buy and it satisfies all their needs or expectations. But in case where the products did not meet their expectation then the consumers will be dissatisfied and also the consumers can get lost even at this stage.</p>

Usually, consumers used to go through a group of sequential steps whilst purchasing a product. A buying process is known to be the steps of the sequence that a consumer takes while making the decision to purchase. A normal consumer used to make a purchase with some recognition of their individual wants and needs in mind. As part of this, there was a search for information which if followed by an evaluation of all other choices. Finally, the purchase is complete and there is an evaluation of the post-purchase which follows the purchase. Marketers have to take some time to understand all the five stages along with consumer buying behavior. Doing this will establish the marketing strategy which addresses every component of consumer buying behaviour.

5. What are the limitations of e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>People see you to provide their financial and personal information on E-Commerce sites even though there are several improvements to keep the data encrypted.</p>	<p>Computation of tax on products is a problem when buyers and sellers vary from state to state.</p>	<p>Lack of touch and feel prevents people from shopping online.</p>

Despite the advantages there are still cultural obstacles to e-commerce, such as increases in labor cost, and legal issues, which act as limitations on e-commerce for people who fear to operate in a faceless and paperless electronic world. Sales tax has become a big issue when the buyers and sellers are situated in different geographic regions, or nation states. Many websites do not provide high encryption to secure online transactions or protect the online identity of the customers, so security has become the biggest drawback. The culture of people differs from nation to nation, which begs the question: does culture create an obstacle for consumers and businesses? For example, cyber laws imposed by the government on e-commerce transactions are not very clearly defined from country to country. Some protocols are not standard

throughout the world. Electronic business costs more than traditional business hence the majority of retailers will not yet willingly accept online retailing.

6. How will you identify the consumer behaviour?

Group A	Group B	Group C
An example of consumer buying behavior is discernable when a consumer buys a particularly expensive product. For such a purchase the consumer will thoroughly research before committing to their investment.	Consumer behaviour is shown when a consumer has very low involvement in purchasing decisions in this case the consumer is perceived only a few significant differences between brands.	A consumer might display a type of purchase behaviour where there are visible differences between the products of the same brands but the consumer might try to buy similar products of various brands out of curiosity.

Based on the observations it is understandable that the purchase is more expensive and also more complex, which involves higher deliberation on the part of the customer. Consumer buying behaviour or decision making will be determined by the involvement level that a consumer is able to show towards their purchase decision. The amount of risk that is involved in purchasing a product will also determine the buying behaviour of the customer. The goods which are higher in price tend to be at higher risk, therefore there should be a higher involvement in the customer buying decision process. The buying decision of a consumer is completely dependent on the behaviour of the consumer. There are many differences in the behavior of a consumer between buying a car and buying chips, for example, one being an expensive investment whilst the other is cheap and requiring little deliberation. Marketers usually exercise judgment carefully in marketing products towards different types of consumer behaviour.

7. What are the advantages of e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>The cost that has been incurred on the communication and advertisement is less as the business uses email, social media, and online advertising channels, and also the cost that is incurred on human resources also seems to be less as most of the business processes are completely automated. The middlemen are almost eliminated to a considerable extent as it has a direct link between the consumers and the business.</p>	<p>The automation of a business process helps to streamline the business towards the operating process. An efficient procurement cycle will affect or reduce the delivery delays. The efficiency of the transaction can be rated when it is able to be done in a short period for the complete transaction.</p>	<p>All the business organizations are able to send messages throughout the world with the help of any electronic medium, exploring new markets and reaching a global audience which is low cost to achieve. E-commerce always tries to attract more customers and business clients throughout the world as the internet is a medium with a truly global reach.</p>

Generally, e-commerce allows the consumers to exchange goods and services electronically without any kind of barriers like time or distance, etc. Electronic commerce has expanded rapidly over the past five years and it is also predicted to continue at this rate or even accelerate. In just a few years from now, the boundaries between electronic and conventional commerce will be rapidly falling away, as there are more and more businesses moving sections of their operations onto the internet. The electronic commerce industry is an industry growing at a remarkable pace as there is a high involvement of the internet and other sophisticated electronic devices within its development, and the recent update about e-commerce is that the growth rate of this industry is increasing rapidly in every country. The merits of electronic commerce include: that they are a more time-saving option for companies, convenience, easy to find reviews, easy to compare with other brands, deals, and coupons, an increase of sales, the potential to increase their customer base, a 24/7 business reality potential, and also 365 days

annually of possible business, easy to expand the range of the business, recurrence of easy payment, and the ability to do instant and easy transactions.

There are many other challenges and problems on the path to fully becoming an online merchant. There are some factors like safety and security of online money and online transactions which have been the biggest problem of all, along with other problems which have stalled and prevented the smooth expansion of this online industry.

8. What are the disadvantages faced by consumers during online transactions?

Group A	Group B	Group C
It may be possible that due to some technical fault the company is not receiving the proper pay amount for the product.	Money deduction from the customer's bank account could happen twice in case of any technical fault.	Consumers could face payment issues and return of the payment instead of receiving the product.

Consumers are using other payment modes other than cash on delivery in the e-commerce website for buying a product that will allow the customers to use debit card, credit card, net banking, mobile wallet, etc. The main problem which is faced by online shoppers is the failure of digital payment. Sometimes due to bad internet connection or technical problems the amount could be debited from the consumer's bank but does not get credited to the seller's account. In some cases consumers get back their money due to any fault but the company does not receive any information regarding the refund and occasionally the information could reach the seller after the dispatch of the product. Sometimes online shopping requires additional charges whilst making the payment depending upon the bank account being used. The price of the product which has been displayed on the website is mainly without tax shipping charges and handling charges. When the payment is made those charges are added upon and the price goes up, hence more amounts of money are debited from the consumer's account and further issues happen between the seller and the buyers.

9. What are the security and safety problems in e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
It often happens that a consumer bought something from an online site and had paid for it but the seller could deny that the order has been placed, or that payment was made early.	Seller code also refused to deliver the good in this way  It may often happen that the consumer has placed the order and the product sent to the address is of someone else instead of the actual customer.	It is possible that the seller may not receive the payment but the customer could claim to pay for the product. To avoid such problems, providers should allow cookies which would send a received note to the consumer's respective email ID provided on the online shopping website.

From this discussion it is clear that data protection is necessary. Companies should involve technologies which would inform both the parties about the transaction or orders which have been placed. Appropriate care should be taken of customers' security details, to prevent the leakage of information of bank account information or similar. Within the use of online modes of transactions, safety measures should be imposed by the companies regarding double verification methods of orders made, and payments received. Consumer should also demand a proper receipt during the time of delivery and ensure no further problems arise on the side of the product seller.

10. What are the things that consumers are looking for during this pandemic?

Group A	Group B	Group C
Due to this pandemic consumers have become less enthusiastic about visiting stores . There has been a mass adaptation of digital based shopping in	During this coronavirus period contamination has been a big concern for people wearing gloves to the supermarket and most of them have moved	Consumer's worldwide head down towards the looming reception which has made a widespread shift towards spending money. More and more

the consumer behaviour starting from roadside pickup of groceries along with medical facilities providing products at the door. Modern consumers are switching towards e-commerce.	towards online shopping. Consumers are moving towards the trend of contactless payment such as e-wallets or tap to credit for payment, for more safety.	consumers are trying to shift towards the business of providing the necessary items at low cost or searching for discounted products.
--	---	---

The social distancing rules which have been a characteristic of the Covid-19 era worldwide have created a new search and demand for online shopping, as consumers have become concerned about the health dangers of the virus. For many customers, following the safety measures published by governments still informs their shopping experiences and intentions, and this is likely to remain the reality until the virus is completely eradicated. Many consumers have become more concerned and aware about how they are spending their own money, and how to get value for money during a time of pandemic-induced recession. Consumer behaviour has changed to strongly focus on cheaper priced products online, and products which would add value for their money expenditure. Consumer behaviour has also changed in terms of commercial travel, as people are still hoping to return to more normal travel possibilities, and when all pandemic restrictions are lifted many travel companies could, as part of their reinvigorated marketing initiatives, include an awareness of proper safety measures and integrate covid safety measures such as social distancing across their travel services to reassure and attract customers.

11. What is the consumer trend that was affected due to Covid-19 in Ireland?

Group A	Group B	Group C
With this catastrophe happening globally, companies have right size and optimized their cost	Companies should have tried to get digitized to reduce the cost to serve and meet the consumer	Work from home has made homes a mainstream setting for work, inflexible changes and need to be

<p>which is expected to add to the economic woes. Organizations should quickly understand the economic impact of covid-19 on their consumer base and identify the risks and opportunities and should appropriately respond to them for the retention of their customers.</p>	<p>demands in e-commerce. Managing cyber risk would simplify the products offered and would help the consumer to consider their brand distinctions from other brands.</p>	<p>done for a better presentation. Companies should try to see the ways to get into the community growth focusing upon the demand form you and essentials within the local customers such as homewares.</p>
--	---	---

From this level of discussion it could be understood that the companies should focus on the segment to help the customers to protect themselves from financial uncertainty, personal safety and risk. Companies should try to cut costs also. To keep their customer bases intact for the future, the role of digital marketing and e-commerce should be more influential in their business practice. Providing customers with products which would be useful after the pandemic situation changes at lower cost will influence customers to make repeat purchases. With an understanding of the evolving consumer behaviour of their customers in mind, retailers and manufacturers should adapt themselves and their available products to be more efficient and applicable during this ongoing time of global crisis.

12. How does customer service department related problems affect the consumers behaviour?

Group A	Group B	Group C
<p>Consumers in today's world mainly expect communication with the customer service department to be instant. If the service providers take a</p>	<p>A problem happens when the customers' difficulties are overlooked, which may result in the customer service agent being unprepared whilst</p>	<p>When a customer's call keeps getting transferred from one place to another in the department it ensures that the customer will never return to that business in</p>

long time to understand or to resolve the concern of the customer this can become a huge issue for the business.	attending to questions, providing inappropriate answers to the customers.	future as the service provided to them is not efficient and secondly this brings more problems for the customers.
--	---	---

From this survey it is evident that if the customer service problems are not resolved in a short time then the consumer is likely to approach another business service to get better results with their consumer needs and difficulties that arise with products and services. Is it therefore critical for service providers to listen to customers' issues carefully without interruption, and with genuine attentive consideration and respect. By ensuring a proper service, and proper advice about technological solutions for issues customers might have with already purchased products or services, companies can increase the likelihood of consumers being loyal to their business. Ending customer calls appropriately by thanking the customer and informing them that they can reach out again to customer care if further problems arise with their product experiences, is one way to provide proper care and communication to customers. Ultimately, customer service providers should be aware that behaviour – their own, and their consumers' – is the strongest way of keeping a healthy relationship between customer base and the business they represent.

13. What is the thing that has deterred consumers or that deters you from buying products through e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
Consumers in today's world only rely on the opinion of others to get proper guidance for their purchase decisions and they have immediate access to those	Getting access to the details of the products and company information that we need to analyse before clicking on the button for the buying store. These informed customers in turn	E-commerce has given consumers access to more information and the ability to now shop from different devices and share their opinion with others about the products and the service

reviews through the internet.	change the role of sales people in companies.	they use, has completely changed consumers' expectations and shopping habits.
-------------------------------	---	---

According to the survey, consumers with a habit of frequent shopping have changed drastically in recent years and this is due primarily to the rise of, and possibilities of, e-commerce. Physical shopping stores were previously the predominant form of shopping experience but now online shopping has quickly become the preferred way to shop for many customers around the globe. This trend can be seen in the fact that 68% of internet users in Africa switched to online shopping in the year of 2018. Consumers are no longer referring to going out for shopping. Instead, E-Commerce has brought the shopping experience to the consumer's fingertips with the use of devices like mobiles and computers. This survey has explored the ways E-Commerce has been impactful and has radically changed consumers' shopping habits.

#### 14. What influences or motivates the consumer to buy products online?

Group A	Group B	Group C
With the rise of online shopping, retailers have come to a new era of online stores. Online retailers like ASOS, Ocado, and Net-a-Porter have grown in huge popularity prompting even more online stores to pop up, and prompting high street stores to provide their product offerings online.	This online movement has even transitioned onto smartphones in the form of contactless payment. Low interest rates and high credit card usership has moved consumers towards online retailers.	The younger generations, Millennials and Generation Z, were brought up in the digital age. Generation Z in particular can't remember a time before the internet and technology. They don't know any difference than shopping and browsing online.

They have categorized the e-commerce shoppers into various groups, around four groups based on the pattern of information collected about the consumers in order to their online motivation and concerns during the online shopping process. There is another typology that categorizes the online shoppers into four different groups – convenience shoppers, variety seekers, balanced buyers, and also store-oriented shoppers, as per the shopping motivation of the consumers. According to various authors, the online mode of shopping is more convenient and also it saves time and efforts in attempting to motivate shoppers to shop online. This classification of the online consumers is that they are not getting immediately motivated to acquire any products that they want to buy. In online shopping, there is a wider possibility to search and track different brands and products from various stores. It is easier to explore the product details online as there are a variety of consumers who are getting motivated towards the balanced buyers. Therefore the balanced buyers are different from various seekers as the balanced buyers plan typically towards the purchase of their products not like the other seekers who do not. Increased social interaction motivates the offline shoppers in how they come to desire and acquire products, whilst the possibility of the immediate acquisition of products is a draw for them.

15. What are the opinions of the consumers about e-commerce?

Group A	Group B	Group C
E-Commerce consumers are significantly more aware of and much more educated about the information around security measures during an online transactions than traditional consumers.	Consumers using e-commerce for shopping are significantly more willing to divulge credit card information at the time of the online electronic transactions than HR customers.	Most consumers who are not willing to give their credit card and form online transactions have security concerns about their details being leaked.

From this inferential survey, the results obtained confirm the expectations of both of these arguments . Generally, the respondents were not ready to give the information of their credit

card over the internet as they are more concerned about the safety of their personal information. The main hypothesis for this is because the argument about this matter makes the consumers true and strong even though they are not ready to give their credit card or other information during any online transaction or payment as they are still concerned about safety and hackers.

There is an expectation that Information Technology consumers are always willing to give or divulge their credit card details during any transaction or payments, compared to the Human Resource consumers but this view is found to be wrong. Everyone involved was interested in in-person shopping in physical shop settings, where they can be in a face to face environment, but many are unwilling to transition more to online shopping. Although the consumers prefer offline shopping, there seems to be a general lack of trust among the consumers regardless of whether it is in a face to face transaction or in an electronic transaction.

16. How does the Internet or Social Media influence the behavior of the consumers?

Group A	Group B	Group C
Social media have helped to build customer awareness about their products and services offered by their preferred brand.	Social media has the power to influence the customers potential regarding buying from the start till the stage of purchase and beyond.	Social media being informative and attractive have caused hype among customers to focus on content about their brands.

As a communication tool social media has occupied an important position in today's market. Globally people have started accepting social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook, as means to share their experiences about some products or services provided by companies. This study shows us that people rely mostly on information and reviews provided on social media regarding a product as guidance and planning for their future purchases. Social media has grown into an impactful research center for market growth. Social media provides content full of information regarding discounts, promotions, and visuals for brands. This also helps the company to attract their customers by using influencers to prepare

their products and has the ability to influence the buying behaviour of their customers. This review highlights that customers are influenced by social media and this could make them spend four times more money on purchase.

17. What made e-commerce famous in Ireland?

Group A	Group B	Group C
The market of e-commerce have started online sales of the physical goods to the private and users.	The idea of sitting at home and comparing features and prices of products has excited most of the users in Ireland.	E-Commerce has helped female consumers to buy the necessary items from chosen retailers easily from home, hence female purchases in online settings have increase more than male consumer purchases in Ireland.

### Discussions

Main goal of this research is to obtain a proper quantitative description of the quality of Internet shopping in Ireland and in order to explain the development of e-commerce and its impact on consumer behaviour.

These studies help us to focus mainly on the factors of the internet which affect consumers' online shopping behaviour. These mainly depend on the current status of development of technology and how the marketing background has changed during this recent pandemic situation, and how they have influenced the purchasing behaviour of the customers. This research also helps us to understand the difference between online shopping and physical stores. The factors that have been looked upon and examined have revealed the influence of online consumer behaviour. Online retailers have to enhance and improve their information support to provide more detailed product information, and should and should use internal search engines in order to increase their efficiency in terms of consumer's research.

Within the evolving reality of online commerce, consumers are thinking more about the reputation of a product on social media platforms, and are giving more to the payment security for the purchase. At the post purchase stage there are various factors which make a consumer concerned about their brand selection. This study shows that online shopping behaviour is influenced by net connectivity, attraction of the consumer towards the website, security, other consumers' experience, age etc. Studying the unique characteristics of online shopping and consumer behaviour would benefit the entrepreneurs and marketers to craft their strategies for growth in online market. Due to this pandemic, the thing consumers are most concerned about is price and quality of products, and there is more of a concern for value for money, and a preference of cash on delivery and contactless payment options. Best direction starts with the knowledge of availability to support the needs of the consumers.

Due to the dominant influence of e-commerce in the modern world, customer have started to expect more which could impact on buying behaviour going forward. Retailers selling online should carefully analyse the factors which may shape the buying behavior of customers and they should utilize the appropriate market communication to attract consumers' purchases and provide a push towards their decision making process.

The outcome of the current study, according to the theoretical foundation, shows that attitude remains the important variable in order to predict the occurrence of online shopping behaviour. On the other hand, further variables have direct effects on the objective of online purchasing, but their contribution seems to be significant, that is only through the attitude towards consistency and the shopping, increases the probability of the occurrence of the behaviour of online shopping. It states that the attitude is completely dependent on the strength of beliefs that are referred towards the attitudinal object and also has been understood as the subjective probability of any association between the attribute and the object. According to this study, the relevant beliefs have been represented in an evaluated model by the discern usefulness, the discern ease to use, and also the subjective norm is referred to a particular behaviour. These beliefs are used to refer to the attributes of online shopping, outcomes which are favorable for them, usefulness, easiness, and also it is evaluated by the other persons who are relevant to the subject.

This shows that communicating the merits of online shopping over the traditional channels will be able to contribute to creating the associations between e-commerce and the positive

attributes and also promoting the favorable attributes in performing the online purchase behavior.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

It is shown through the above research that digital marketing has become an important way for companies to reach new and existing customers and to develop their sales potential. New technologies have evolved with the rise of digital marketing developments. Digital marketing has numerous advantages for companies, and can help them improve their business strategies in significant ways. Digital Marketing has a lot of benefits nowadays as it helps businesses grow and develop and increase sales in ways unconceivable before the rise of the internet. Furthermore, Digital Marketing helps companies build deeper and more personalised relationships with customers, further increasing sales potential. Digital marketing can further help businesses to increase the number of customers attracted to their brand, thus boosting the longterm revenue of the business.

Digital marketing caters to online users. People all over the world use their cellphone devices to conduct research or browse social media. It can reach out to certain people through digital marketing. It can advertise the company with techniques that appeal to today's consumers. Digital Marketing improves the brand recognition. One of the ways that digital marketing further helps business to create relationships, is in how it conveys to customers how they can assist them regarding their requirements.

Digital marketing can give the business the chance to build rapport with customers in new ways. It also allows the customers to more directly seek out solutions for their personal needs and requirements. In comparison to traditional marketing, digital marketing helps create a higher revenue and higher return for the company and can allow them to reach customers around the world, giving a much greater scope for possible sales increases and heightened profits. Today's businesses rely heavily on digital marketing to remain competitive. Business will grow through the use of digital marketing, allowing them to expose their brand to a larger audience. As a result, any digital marketing agency seems to have a lot more potential than traditional marketing agencies.

Digital marketing seems to be a platform that allows all advertisers to engage on an equal basis. Consumers' purchasing decisions have evolved with the changing environment as their interests, needs, and lifestyles have. However, simply promoting business items on social networks will not enhance their profit.

Marketers are those who only promote products, but producers must also conceive of innovative ways to promote the sale. Online marketing is used within a digital marketplace where customers can purchase goods over the internet. This internet marketing technique is used by many retail business executives to enhance their company's revenue. If a retail shop employs the right individual, uses good advertising, and uses the appropriate strategy to promote the business, they may take their business success to new heights not possible before digitization.

Some of the major concerns with online marketing include the necessity for proper and effective use of social media networks and techniques involving social media, internet advertising issues, issues with internet services, and more. However, there are many significant benefits for both shops and consumers who avail of online marketing, including the saving of time, budgetary benefits, less labour efforts required, and the improvement of communication.

Because of technological advancements, the world has become more fully digital, and so as a result, everything is more connected to social networks, allowing social networks to be used as a tool for business development and giving small business owners an equal chance to compete. For internet marketing, the long-term viability of an organization and its strategic approaches are essential. The long-term viability of a company and its strategy approaches are critical for internet marketing. Small business owners especially can gain from effectively executing internet marketing strategies. Search engine optimization also helps in the promotion of online businesses that have relevant content.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The researcher has recommended these changes for e-commerce business

1. The business should identify the expectations of the customers and their perspective towards the brand. Also, their suggestions for improvement or what they felt was lacking in their buying experience, will help businesses to improve their offerings and help retail to better understand customer choices so that they can fulfill the demands of the customer.
2. It engages the prospectus with the aspirations of the customers and also has to explore the value of the relationship with their competitors. By more deeply understanding the

customer-retailer relationship, there is more potential for businesses to meet the needs and demands of buyers and thus improve their standing and reputation compared to their market competition.

3. It evaluates the process of the metric selection that changes the necessary info to check the effectiveness that monitors and tracks the behaviour and also responds to the changes of the consumer behaviour. It indicates the amount that the customer is willing to pay for that product from the brand.
4. The leaders who are guiding the employees and business activities within the company should be aware of, and aligning their activities with, their customer's perspectives, and they need to understand the customer expectations related to the product. The changing economic landscape needs to be discussed amongst management level so that they can effectively communicate the same to all employees and navigate through the process of getting employees working together towards the same vision of future commercial success.

### 5.3 Linking with Objectives

- **Objective 1:** The researcher has found and identified that the Covid-19 lessons that have been learned by e-commerce companies during the global pandemic will be broad, as the sale of goods and services online is emerging as a key pillar in the global fight against Covid-19. Online grocery shopping and telemedicine, for instance, are helping to avoid in-person contact and reduce the risk of new infections. Video chats, movie streaming, and online education make physical distancing measures more bearable (Veeragandham, 2020).
- **Objective 2:** To evaluate the impact of consumer buying behaviour on the development of a company in Ireland, firms must first recognize how customers behave when it comes to buying the products and services. Consumer behaviour research focuses on the products concerning different sorts of customer purchases, and also they need to anticipate their purchasing decisions. Understanding the ways in which consumers

acquire products and services will help businesses increase sale and profit potential, as business can better react to customer demands and needs.

- **Objective 3:** To analyze the effective impact of Covid-19 lessons on the management of successful business operations during a pandemic situation. It takes care of the inventory management to production and then finally to the supply chain and logistics until the last-mile delivery to the users (Vidya,2019).
- **Objective 4:** To recommend best practices for the maintenance of effective behaviour amongst customers to purchase different products from the companies of Ireland during a global pandemic. Digital marketing seems to have had a tremendous influence on people's lives, and online interaction has changed the way businesses are conducted. Because of its reliability and quickness, the online sale format is gaining popularity in Ireland. Impulse buying is said to be an unexpected transaction that is completed right away(Štefko,2019). The importance of upselling and cross-sell on the E-Commerce websites are leading to an increase in the selling of low moving products and at the same time improving the margins as the marketing for extra added products in the cart was not done. There are a number of services offered by businesses, such as free delivery, vouchers, customer feedback, and other aspects, which influence online purchasing decisions in Ireland.

#### **5.4 Future Scopes**

The researcher has found that the future scope of the e-commerce business is gradually increasing day by day during the pandemic. The future is foreseeable and the e-commerce industry has confirmed the major tool for the sales of goods and services. Online marketing is the most popular and natural way of business and will become the most important form of marketing heading into the future. The future trends for the e-commerce business will have huge potential development and the growth in the increase of the sales and promotion of online marketing.

The researcher has also found that with the continuous growth in the e-commerce industry the consumer purchasing has likewise increased so they can buy a variety of products from online shopping. It also attracts the customer and increases the service that is available on the internet. The business should also pay more attention to good presentation and design.

Digital marketing helps to keep customers informed and also engaged, allowing for a better amount of confidence and accountability. Digital shopping has grown exponentially in Ireland, owing mostly to huge and elaborate marketing campaigns.

Digital marketing seems to have had a tremendous impact on people's lives, and technology has changed the way businesses are conducted. Because of its safety and quickness, the available marketing format is gaining popularity in Ireland. Impulse buying is said to be an unexpected transaction that is completed right away. Cash on delivery, gift offers, free shipping, feedback from customers, and other services supplied by online businesses play a significant role in shopping online impulses in Ireland.

E-commerce and marketing automation seems to be a rapidly expanding aspect of online marketing. It includes everything from digital marketing through warehouses and anything in between. The expansion in shipment and fulfillment facilities around the world is a slow-moving online development with huge potential. As more people shop online, fulfillment centers are needed to deliver and distribute their purchases in the shortest time possible so that it can help the business to grow fast. The future is truly bright for the e-commerce industry.

## References:

Alfonso, V., Boar, C., Frost, J., Gambacorta, L. and Liu, J., 2021. E-commerce in the pandemic and beyond. *BIS Bulletin*, 36.

Bahl, R. & Kesharwani, S., Jun2018. Factors Affecting Online Shopping Behaviour. *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System*, 10, pp.59-73

Bhatti, A., Akhter, S., Qurashi, A.H. and Shaheen, M., 2017 Coronavirus affects e-commerce globally. *Journal of Xi'an Shiyou University ISSN No, 1673*, p.064X.

Boddy, C.R., 2016. Sample size for qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.

Brem, A., Viardot, E. and Nylund, P.A., 2021. Implications of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for innovation: Which technologies will improve our lives?. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 163, p.120451.

Chang, H.H. and Meyerhoefer, C.D., 2021. COVID-19 and the demand for online food shopping services: Empirical evidence from Taiwan. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 103(2), pp.448-465.

Chen, L., 2013. *Online consumer behaviour: An empirical study based on theory of planned behavior*. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Chen, Y., Sadow, P.M., Suh, H., Lee, K.E., Choi, J.Y., Suh, Y.J., Wang, T.S. and Lubitz, C.C., 2016. BRAFV600E is correlated with recurrence of papillary thyroid microcarcinoma: a systematic review, multi-institutional primary data analysis, and meta-analysis. *Thyroid*, 26(2), pp.248-255.

Chong, W.K., Bian, D. & Zhang, N., 2016. E-marketing services and e-marketing performance: the roles of innovation, knowledge complexity and environmental turbulence in influencing the relationship. *Journal of Marketing Management* , 32(2), pp.149-78.

Dai, C., 2020, November. The Disruptive Effects of COVID-19 on the Aviation Industry, Food Industry, and E-commerce Industry. In *2020 2nd International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI2020)* (pp. 61-64). Atlantis Press.

Daqar, M.A.A. and Smoudy, A.K., 2019. The impact of consumer buying behavior on customer relationship management in the banking sector. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 9(4), p.39.

Galanakis, C.M., Rizou, M., Aldawoud, T.M., Ucak, I. and Rowan, N.J., 2021. Innovations and technology disruptions in the food sector within the COVID-19 pandemic and post-lockdown era. *Trends in Food Science & Technology*.

Gao, X., Shi, X., Guo, H. and Liu, Y., 2020. To buy or not buy food online: The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the adoption of e-commerce in China. *PloS one*, 15(8), p.e0237900.

Gillespie, K., 2015. *Global Marketing*. 4th ed. New York: Routledge.

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Human reproduction*, 31(3), 498-501.

Hoffman, D.L. & Novak, T.P., 2018. Consumer and Object Experience in the Internet of Things: An Assemblage Theory Approach. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(6), pp.1178-204.

Jara, A.J., Parra, M.C. & Skarmeta, A.F., 2012. Marketing 4.0: A New Value Added to Marketing through the Internet of Things. In *2012 Sixth International Conference on Innovative Mobile and Internet Services in Ubiquitous Computing*. 6th ed. Italy: IEEE

Jin, Y.Q., Lin, C.L., Zhao, Q., Yu, S.W. and Su, Y.S., 2021. A Study on Traditional Teaching Method Transferring to E-Learning Under the Covid-19 Pandemic: From Chinese Students' Perspectives. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.

Johnston, M.P., 2017. Primary data analysis: A method of which the time has come. *Qualitative and quantitative methods in libraries*, 3(3), pp.619-626.

Karjaluoto, H., Mustonen, N. & Ulkuniemi, P., 2015. The role of digital channels in industrial marketing communications. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30(6), pp.703-10.

Kim, M.H., Cho, W., Choi, H. and Hur, J.Y., 2020. Assessing the South Korean model of emergency management during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Asian Studies Review*, 44(4), pp.567-578.

Krosnick, J. A. (2018). Questionnaire design. In *The Palgrave handbook of survey research* (pp. 439-455). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Kurniawati, E. and Siddiq, I.H.A., 2020. Indonesian MSME E-Commerce among the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Kurniawati, E*, pp.267-277.

Laakkonen, V., 2018. EXPANDING THE E-COMMERCE SYSTEM SUCCESS THEORY: THE IMPACT OF ONLINE VISIBILITY - CASE GOOGLE. *INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY*, pp.8-68.

Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 4(3), 324.

Li, J. & Hallsworth, A., 2020. THE CHANGING GROCERY SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR OF CHINESE CONSUMERS AT THE OUTSET OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK. *Age*, 6(53), p.5.

Lumen, 2019. *The Role of Customers in Marketing*. [Online] Lumen Available at: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-introbusiness/chapter/the-role-of-customers-in-marketing/> [Accessed 16 May 2019].

McGeever, N., Sarchi, C. and Woods, M., 2020. *Irish company births and insolvent liquidations during the COVID-19 shock* (No. 13/EL/20). Central Bank of Ireland.

Melancon, J.P. & Dalakas, V., 2018. Consumer social voice in the age of social media: Segmentation profiles and relationship marketing strategies. *Business Horizons*, 61(1), pp.157-67.

Mertens, W., 2017. *Quantitative data analysis*. Springer.

Mihart, C., 2012. Impact of integrated marketing communication on consumer behaviour: Effects on consumer decision-making process. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 4(2), p.121.

Moriarty, S. et al., 2015 d. ADVERTISING'S ROLE IN MARKETING. In *Advertising: principles and practice*. 3rd ed. Pearson Australia. pp.54-56.

Murray, J.Y., Gao, G.Y. & Kotabe, M., 2011. Market orientation and performance of export ventures: the process through marketing capabilities and competitive advantages. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(2), pp.252–69.

Nassaji, H., 2015. Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis.

Neill, C., Sartaj, M., Holcroft, L., Hasan, S.S., Conway, B.R. and Aldeyab, M.A., 2020. Surveillance study of asymptomatic and presymptomatic coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in care homes in Northern Ireland. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, pp.1-3.

Pan, S.L., Cui, M. and Qian, J., 2020. Information resource orchestration during the COVID-19 pandemic: A study of community lockdowns in China. *International Journal of Information Management*, 54, p.102143.

Pantelimon, F.V., Georgescu, T.M. and Posedaru, B.Ş., 2020. The Impact of Mobile e-Commerce on GDP: A Comparative Analysis between Romania and Germany and how Covid-19 Influences the e-Commerce Activity Worldwide. *Informatica Economica*, 24(2), pp.27-41.

Parmar, G. & Chauhan, J., 2018. Factors affecting online impulse buying behaviour. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*, 8(2), pp.328-31

Paul, J., Modi, A. & Patel, J., 2016. Predicting green product consumption using theory of planned behavior and reasoned action. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 29, pp.123-34.

Rahman, M. & Islam, A., 2018. Consumer buying behavior towards online shopping: An empirical study on Dhaka city, Bangladesh. *Cogent Business & Management*, 5(1), p.1514940.

-Rasul, T., 2018. Social media's growing influence on relationship marketing and corporate culture. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 52(1), pp.261-68.

Reardon, T., Heiman, A., Lu, L., Nuthalapati, C.S., Vos, R. and Zilberman, D., 2021. "Pivoting" by food industry firms to cope with COVID-19 in developing regions: E-commerce and "copivoting" delivery intermediaries. *Agricultural Economics*, 52(3), pp.459-475.

Rizvi, S.M.A.R., 2021. BOOSTING DIGITAL ECONOMY AND E-COMMERCE BUSINESS: Amidst in Pandemic of covid-19 in Pakistan. *SHU Business Studies*, 1(1).

Roggeveen, A. & Sethuraman, R., 2020. How the COVID Pandemic May Change the World of Retailing. *Journal of Retailing*, 17.

Ryan, D., 2016. *Understanding digital marketing : marketing strategies for engaging the digital generation*. 4th ed. Kogan Page.

Sarkis, J., 2020. Supply chain sustainability: learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*.

Sheth, J.N., 2018. Impact of Emerging Markets on Marketing: Rethinking Existing Perspectives and Practices. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), pp.166-82.

Shiau, W.-L. & Luo, M.M., 2012. Factors affecting online group buying intention and satisfaction: A social exchange theory perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(6), pp.2431-44.

Singh, M., 2012. Marketing mix of 4P's for competitive advantage. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 3(6), pp.40-45.

SivaKumar, A. & Gunasekaran, A., 2017. An Empirical Study on the Factors Affecting Online Shopping Behavior of Millennial Consumers. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 16(3), pp.219-30.

Stott, R.N., Stone, M. & Fae, J., 2016. Business models in the business-to-business and business-to-consumer worlds – what can each world learn from the other? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(8), pp.943-54.

Suki, N.M., 2010. *Contemporary issues in marketing management*. Nova Science Publishers.

Tiago, M.T.P.M.B. & Manu, J., 2016. Digital marketing and social media: Why bother? *Business Horizons*, 57(6), pp.703-08.

Villa, R. and Monzón, A., 2021. Mobility Restrictions and E-Commerce: Holistic Balance in Madrid Centre during COVID-19 Lockdown. *Economies*, 9(2), p.57.

Wirtz, J. et al., 2013. Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities. *Journal of service Management*, 24(3), pp.223-44.

Zendehdel, M. & Paim, L., 2016. The moderating effect of culture on the construct factor of perceived risk towards online shopping behaviour. *Cogent Business & Management*, 3(1), p.1223390.

Veeragandham, M., Patnaik, N., Tiruvaipati, R., and Guruprasad, M., 2020. Consumer Buying Behaviour towards E-Commerce during COVID-19. *International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management*, 3(9), pp.78-82.

Štefko, R., Bačík, R., Fedorko, R., Oleárová, M. and Rigelský, M., 2019. Analysis of consumer preferences related to the use of digital devices in the e-commerce dimension. *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 7(1), p.25.

Vidya, M. and Selvamani, P., 2019. Consumer Behaviour Towards Online Shopping—an Analysis with Product Dimensions. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8(12), pp.511-514.