

ONLINE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The study involves the value of e-commerce sites to improve business performance and profitability. E-commerce sites are the main platforms to ensure the relationship between customers and businesses. In the case of Ireland, it can be said that online business can be performed here as the rules of taxation favour the retailer in successfully carrying out the business. The research is based on the information that e-commerce services provide to increase traffic via the Internet. This study is carried out to investigate the factors that are responsible for the continuous growth of business in Ireland. The literature part of the study depicted that Dublin has become the most popular city in Ireland as the regional headquarters of some famous companies are located here. The rise of online business management creates a more transparent way of showcasing products that helps retain customers. 80% of the businesses believe that their customers increased after the use of the online platform, and the revenue increased by 150% for the businesses. The methodology is an important part of research that helps to determine different aspects of carrying out the research in a proper way. The methodology of research is an important part as it identifies the research design, approach, philosophy, and data collection method to carry out the research successfully. In this part, the method of data collection and analysis has been selected for evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	4
1.1 Introduction	4
Aims and objectives	7
Aims	7
Objectives	7
Research Questions	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
2.1.Introduction	9
2.2 Causes for the sudden rise of online business in Ireland	9
2.3. Advantage of using online business	11
2.4.Significance of online business in Ireland	13
2.5. Impacts of Online Business in Ireland	14
2.6. Strategies to take improve the online business management in Ireland	16
2.7.Theoretical underpinning	17
2.8. Chapter Summary	19
Chapter 3: Research questions	21
Chapter 4: Methodology	27
4.1. Research Onion	27
4.2. Research Philosophy	28
4.3. Research Approach	29
4.4. Research design	30

4.5. Data collection method	31
4.6. Sampling Techniques	32
4.7. Data Analysis Method	32
4.8. Ethical Consideration	33
4.9. Limitations	34
4.10. Chapter Summary	34
Chapter 5: Result	35
5.1. Statistical data analysis	35
5.2. Thematic analysis	42
Theme 1: Measuring the effect of entrepreneurial competence and social media marketing on small-medium enterprises' competitive Advantage: a structural Equation modelling	42
Theme 2: IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANADEMIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND BUYING BEHAVIOR OF ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPERS IN DUBLIN IRELAND.	43
Theme 3: How Beneficial Is Social Media for Business Process Management? A Systematic Literature Review	44
Chapter 6 : Discussion	46
Chapter 7: Conclusion	51
Recommendation	51
Linking with Objectives	52
Ethical consideration	53
Reference List	54

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Online business management is an important way to improve business performance and increase the profit of a business. There are several advantages to using online platforms for promoting the brand and attracting customers. In Ireland, the market for e-commerce has experienced rapid growth over the past two years. In 2021, a study suggested that more than 80% of businesses would experience growth after launching their online store in Ireland. However, the economic condition of Ireland has not stabilized and is growing slowly, which impacts the e-commerce business of this country. This study indicates the growth associated with online business management in Ireland.

The value of e-commerce businesses has risen significantly in Ireland, especially after COVID-19. It is reported from e-commerce that the value of Irish e-commerce was USD 4 billion in 2021, placing it in the 42nd position in the world (Su and Jin, 2022). There are many benefits to online platforms that help to raise an existing business as well as a new startup business. The most important factor is that it mitigates the problem of distance, and people can access products anytime, anywhere. Customers can personalize the platforms as per their choice and choose between different modes of payment. The data is secured by advanced technology, and the transactions done here are safe and secure. The barrier of time is overcome by the use of online platforms, and the use of those platforms also saves the time of the customer as well as the retailer. The barrier that is created between customers and businesses is removed by the use of online businesses. The online platform of business provides security in the online transaction process. No cash is required to buy the products, and people can use credit cards, debit cards, internet banking, or other online modes of payment to buy the products. Online banking is one of the most convenient ways to perform operations from anywhere. People can operate their bank accounts using internet services, and there is no need to reach the bank. Over the years, more people have become interested in internet banking, and the sales of their services are increasing significantly.

Online business faces several problems in Ireland, as the economy of this country is still growing and there has been a transformation in its economic condition. In Ireland, the e-commerce business

starts to reach its peak over time, and more than 15% of the businesses in Ireland attract about 84% of the customers. The increased rate of e-commerce provides businesses with a more transparent and convenient way to sell their products, which attracts more consumers. A report by the Banking and Payment Federation Ireland (BPFI) suggested that the value of contactless payments has risen by 48.3% to €13.6 billion in 2018 (Kalu, 2019). The online platform provides technology services to secure the data about customers and their online payments. It also reduces the cost of giving a salary to the employee, as businesses do not need to open their store for 24 hours. The tax strategy of Ireland provides the most favorable conditions to carry out a business there. Their tax rate of 12.5% is the lowest in Europe and 7% below the UK (Bandara *et al.* 2020). Even businesses do not pay any corporate tax if all their stores are outside Ireland. Yet there are several problems related to maintaining the e-commerce strategy. The economy of Ireland is still growing and is subjected to significant change that directly affects business. In addition to this, there are also problems with maintaining customers' demands, technological issues, and supply chain management problems that need to be solved to improve the business's performance.

This research is carried out to identify the factors that attract customers to online banking or shopping services. The study indicates the customer's retention factors as well as provides solutions to maintain the customer's demand. The purpose of this research is to utilize e-commerce services for positive change in terms of improving business performance and retaining customers' attention. People, especially the older ones, cannot go out to buy products for their daily needs and are facing a lot of issues meeting their daily needs. Moreover, employed people do not get enough time to shop from offline stores, which is why online businesses are important. The study also investigates the problems associated with the management of online platforms, especially the challenges of fulfilling customers' needs. From this study, a solution can be given for the user-friendly experience of the platforms. In Ireland, the demand for this e-commerce is increasing day by day as this country provides a business-friendly environment. This research indicates the cause of the shift of customers towards online businesses in Ireland.

There are several disadvantages to online business problems in terms of data breaches, improper supply chain management, and data security. There is an issue with poor internet connections and other technological issues. The lack of skills and expertise is also a problem, as the software related to the management of this technology must be managed with proper skill. The drawback of offline

businesses is removed here, and the retailers show much interest in selling through online platforms (Loonam and O'Regan, 2022). In addition to this, more staff is required to maintain the offline store, which is costly, especially for a start-up business. The use of online platforms solves the issue and is cost-effective. Through the use of online platforms, businesses can target the local market as well as the global market. Ireland is an ideal place for starting a business, as this country provides a business-friendly environment. Yet there are so many problems associated with using the internet for banking and shopping purposes.

The most identical issue is the technical problem while using online platforms. In cases of poor internet connections, the platforms do not work properly, which reduces the customer's interest in using them. Nearly 20% of the SMEs in Ireland stopped website development as they experienced poor internet connections. 14% of SMEs complain about poor internet connections. The banking sector also suffers from technological issues. The Bank of Ireland was fined € 35 million due to an IT failure in providing customer services. In addition to this, there is also the issue of a lack of skilled individuals to operate those platforms successfully (Soni, 2020). More than 32% of SMEs in Ireland reported that they cannot continue their e-commerce services for a lack of skills and expertise. There is a lack of training and knowledge required to operate online platforms. They admit that online websites and platforms are necessary to improve their business, yet they cannot develop and use those platforms due to those issues. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that attract retailers to set up business in Ireland through online marketing services (Sadowski *et al.*, 2021). It also denotes the significance of online banking services provided by the Bank of Ireland and how these services improve their performance, considering the problems or issues of online services. Internet banking services and online shopping are very popular worldwide, and in Ireland, more than 80% of people use the internet for banking and shopping, as per the report of "The Central Statistics Office" in the year 2022 (Ali *et al.* 2021).

An online business platform provides several advantages in terms of increasing sales, profit, and supply chain management. This study is investigating problems related to the management of businesses, especially in Ireland. The significance of this study is to provide solutions to those problems and the future of e-commerce in the field of online business management. This study is carried out to denote the significance of using online platforms in terms of maintaining good traffic online (Givan *et al.*, 2021). On these platforms, customers can personalize the products as per their

choices. For example, if a customer wants to search for a white T-shirt with a specific brand, he can search for it directly by choosing between different options. The online platform provides certain discounts in different seasons that customers can avail while purchasing the products. Customers can choose between different payment methods as per their wish, and the easy check-out process enables them to view the products easily, enlisting them in their wishlist or cart. In the case of banking services, people can operate their bank accounts from anywhere, anytime. Yet, there are so many problems, such as fraudulent cases, cyberattacks, and data breaches (Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). The significance of this research is that it gives a way to attract customers and retain existing customers, as well as find out the solution to those problems.

Aims and objectives

Aims

This research aims to identify the factors that attract customers to online banking or shopping services. The study also investigates the problems associated with the management of online platforms, especially the challenges of fulfilling customers' needs. From this study, a solution can be given for the user-friendly experience of the platforms.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are

- To investigate the reasons for the sudden rise of online businesses in Ireland.
- To determine the advantage of using online banking services.
- To identify the key issues related to the management of the online platforms.
- To provide solutions to identified issues for customer retention.

Research Questions

- What are the factors that increase the customer's attention to using e-commerce-based products and services in Ireland?
- What are the problems businesses face while operating online platforms?
- What are the solutions to those problems to retain customers and gain their trust in them?
- What strategies should be evolved to utilize online services more conveniently by the user?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Online business management is a useful tool in today's era, as it increases business sales and profitability as well as helps to retain customers. In Ireland, the growth of online businesses is rising significantly, and the strong internet access and usage of smartphones increase the market demand for online businesses in Ireland. Ireland holds the 44th position in the e-commerce market, with a revenue of US\$6,638 million by 2023. Yet, there are several challenges for online business management, such as a lack of expertise, data security issues, and the non-availability of user-friendly platforms. The business should improve the quality of its products and hire skilled individuals in order to manage its online platforms properly. In this portion, issues, solutions, and future strategies have been discussed to improve the business management strategy in Ireland.

2.2 Causes for the sudden rise of online business in Ireland

An increasing opportunity of the internet, an easy way of doing net banking transactions, a variety of products, and personalized offers make the scope of online business larger. Online business has plenty of benefits for the industry and its customers. In Ireland, especially in Dublin, the rise of online business has been increasing day by day. In 2021, the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion and was placed in 42 positions all over the world. According to Kabariya (2019), digital marketing can play a role as the marketing approach that is used for the online resources of businesses, as well as having the potential to increase brand value and market size. In the past 2 to 4 years, Ireland has steadily increased its online market, which has had a significant impact on the economy. In 2021, a study by "Wolfgang Digital" explored that 15% of the retail business in Ireland spent 84% on consumer demands, with 80% of business authorities considering that they became busier or more involved in the process after accessing online stores. The study also observed that online industry merchants have gained €20 million in revenue and increased revenue growth by approx. 150% after transferring their online businesses to Ireland. The rise of eCommerce provides a transparent and reliable way to grow the online business industry. It helps the business grow, including online transactions, influence customers to engage in online business through a variety of products, and customize the

products on public demand to reach success. In 2022, it is observed that the retail eCommerce business will have sales that are going to reach €7.435 million. In Ireland, the retailers have observed that most of the people in the community who are enthusiastic about the net transaction. According to the observation of "The Banking and Payments Federation Ireland (BPFI)," the percentage of online banking has been increasing by 48% to €13.6 billion in 2018. As per Owolabi's (2021) study, in the era of a digital world, the most potential technology that has been used by organizations to reach customer demand and satisfaction is digital marketing. Startup businesses have now used digital tools such as social media and search optimization to engage more customers, as they have found a new way to progress a business model (Veleva and Tsvetanova, 2020). Most retail businesses in Ireland have implemented digital marketing in their industry, as it is an innovative and quite time-manageable business process by which customers and industry authorities both get profits. The industries are looking for tangible solutions to fulfill customer needs and thus can provide better services, whereas they have jumped on digital marketing. Most business models in Ireland have used predictive analysis to provide a customized shopping experience, such as beauty, health services, and so on, based on the consumer's recommendation. Implementing an online method in business can improve the customer experience as well as bring more success.

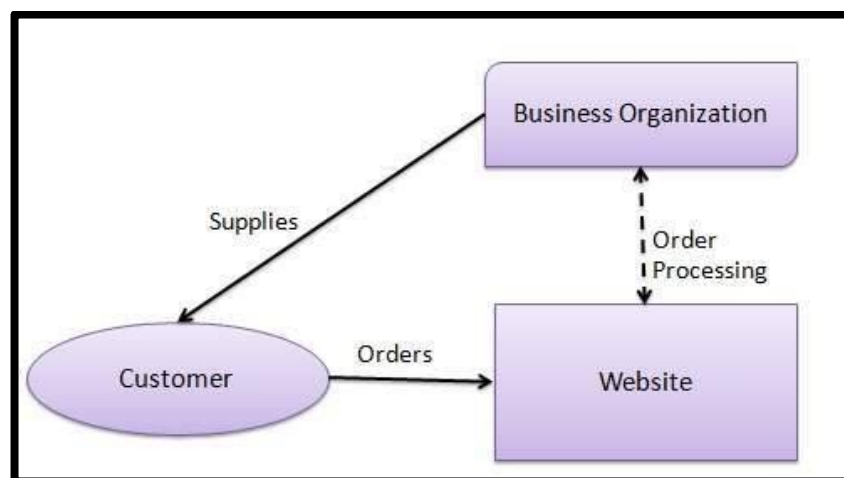


Figure 2.2.1: E-Commerce business model

(Source: Veleva and Tsvetanova, 2020)

2.3. Advantage of using online business

The increasing accessibility of the internet opens a new way to grow the economic infrastructure as well as changing the old format of traditional business. Nowadays, retail companies have been running their online businesses immensely throughout the world. The online method of business has several advantages, such as the fact that the organization does not need to invest heavily; however, many small industries have enhanced their share of profits through online marketing. Observing the latest economic circumstances in Ireland, it can be assumed that the online business market will continue to grow. Nowadays, eCommerce is growing rapidly, so most businesses in Ireland have taken it as an opportunity to grow their market value. The theory of the business model "**scientific management system**" proposed by "Frederick Taylor ", has explained the analysis and integration of workflows. This theory simply refers to the main objectives that can improve economic efficiency as well as productivity through implementing the science and technology of management. In this context, the theory's analysis can be supported for online business management, such as through the implementation of eCommerce, where digital businesses can grow their market.



Figure 2.3.1: “Scientific management business model”

(Source: Lestari *et al.* 2022)

- For the traditional business structure, the financial cost can be overhead whereas the online business investment is much cheaper. Online business management requires a domain name and the packaging materials or any web designers, and professionals if needed therefore it could save tax or rent costs in terms of traditional stores (Lestari *et al.* 2022).

It can be stated that online business is comparatively cheaper which impacts the economic structure.

- In terms of traditional business, there should always be a person in the store to handle customers whereas online business can be run from anywhere or anytime. This flexibility helps the authority to balance the work-life hence it can be generated from any less time-consuming location.



Figure 2.3.1: Advantages of E-Commerce for Customers

(Source: Peter and Dalla Vecchia, 2021)

- Online payment is another potential advantage of online business; thus, the payment can be done from a direct customer bank, which is beneficial for the customers as well. This online transaction process can save time, whereas global customers can also be involved in purchasing the product. The online business model is perfect for those who are looking to start a new startup business and have a very low budget; therefore, in digital marketing, a huge amount of investment is not needed.
- One of the significant advantages of online business over the internet is globalisation. According to Peter and Dalla Vecchia (2021), the study's digital marketing toolkit portfolio can represent an analytically competitive environment for traditional businesses. The online business with global consumers allows the delivery of the product without a

physical vendor in that location. This digital marketing method can enhance productivity as well as engage more customers in the business model.

2.4. Significance of online business in Ireland

According to Adam and Jadhav (2022), the online management of businesses helps small as well as large businesses effectively. In Ireland, the opportunities for online business have increased significantly, and it is reported that 15% of online businesses capture an estimated 84% of consumer spending. The sales of e-commerce in Ireland have shown growth, and they will reach US\$7,819 million in 2022. The market value of e-commerce activity has been expected to grow by 30–40%, which is approximately €7 billion (Coleman *et al.* 2019). The technological development of Ireland is one of the main factors in developing online business management. As 92% of people in Ireland can access strong internet, it acts as one of the driving factors for the increasing sales of businesses on online platforms. The people can access the products from anywhere, and they get informed about the products more accurately, which enhances the trust of the customers in that particular company. The Irish Government is also taking measurable actions to help those businesses increase their profitability. They offer an attractive package of support measures to develop sales online, and it is forecasted that the businesses will show a growth rate of 6% until 2025 (Krizanova *et al.* 2019). Over the past few years, especially after COVID-19, various businesses have developed in Ireland, and most of them have used online platforms to sell their products. The tax environment in Ireland is favourable, and the lower cost of online businesses can influence people to develop websites for their businesses. Businesses can access the market easily, and it can help them develop their products depending on the customer's demand. Online selling helps to remove traditional constraints such as a place for businesses and customer-facing staff, as well as allowing the business owner to invest in better marketing. A good digital marketing strategy helps to increase sales, attract customers to their products, and widen the market. It would decrease the required time to purchase the products as customers can easily browse their requirements online anytime, from anywhere. Maintaining the principle of scientific management theory, an integrated online business can reduce costs through the elimination of system inefficiencies that increase business resources. In addition to this, the cost of supply chain management has also decreased, as it helps to streamline supply chain management and its

distribution in Ireland. There is no requirement for a third party to sell the products of the business, thereby increasing the efficiency of the business. Moreover, online business management can also contribute to the economic growth of a country. Businesses can also get the advantage of using online platforms depending on their customers' reviews (Sihotanget *al.* 2020). They can answer the customers' queries and develop their products according to their demands. The supply chain can be easily managed through the use of online platforms. The real-time data analytics of the products and the customers help identify the most demanded products and provide information about the market value of the businesses.

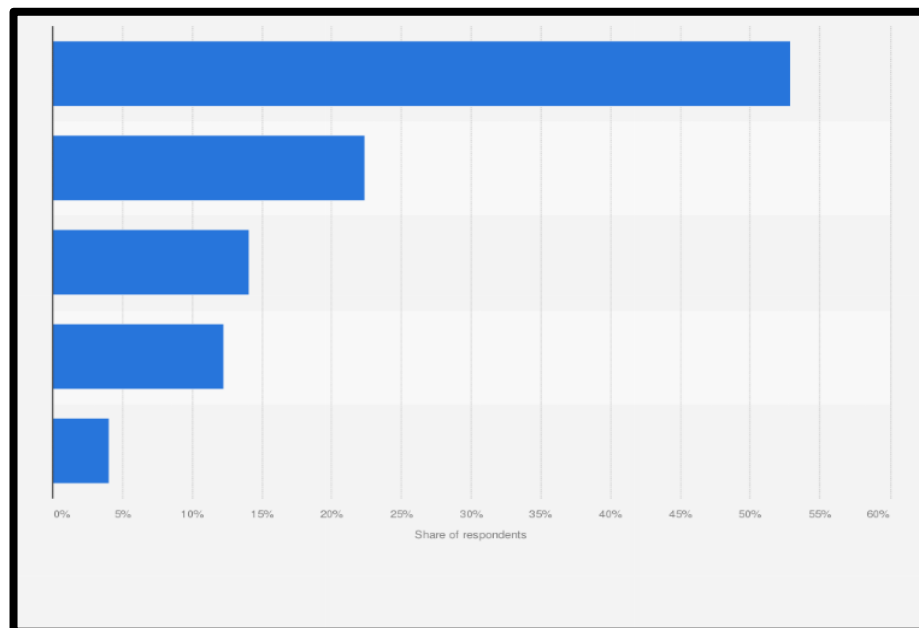


Figure 2.4.1: e-Commerce activities of Ireland

(Source: Sihotanget *al.* 2020)

2.5. Impacts of Online Business in Ireland

- The Irish market for online business management is expected to grow by 8.2% from 2022 to 2027 (Ali *et al.*, 2021). One of the most identical factors that help the growth of the e-commerce market is increased accessibility to the Internet, enhanced usage of smart devices and technology, and so on. The reason behind the significant growth of online business in Ireland is its feature of performing online transactions more conveniently. The secured payment method helps attract customers to their brand. Online retailers have

invested so much to develop their websites and make them more appealing and user-friendly. According to a report by the Central Statistics Office of Ireland, the sales of all retail businesses were 6.5% in 2021 in comparison to the sales of 2020, which were 5.8%. The sales of online businesses had shown a growth rate of 3.2% as per the report of January 2020 and 4.5% as of March 2020. The share of online sales was 12.4% in 2020 in Ireland, and in 2021 it leaps to 11.8%, which indicates the contribution of online businesses in increasing sales and profitability in Ireland.

- As per the article by Sufian *et al.* (2020), the market in Ireland is showing rapid growth, and the retailers have launched their mobile apps to increase the accessibility of their products to customers. Consumers can purchase their required products by clicking and collecting services. Most of the customers do not want to go outside with cash, and in that case, they prefer card payment for purchasing products. The Government of Ireland provides support for card payment drives and accepts the region's payments. The Irish Government has reduced the debit card interchange fee cap to 50% of the EU cap of 0.2% (Sakovi Jovanovi *et al.* 2020). These rules and regulations of the government influence customers to shop online, and businesses are also encouraged to invest a significant amount of money in developing their businesses online. As per the report of February 2022, the total online expenditure has increased by 11%, which is approximately EUR 3.1 billion (El-Ebiary *et al.* 2021).
- One of the most trending businesses in the online sector is the apparel and fashion business. The people in this region are significantly shifting away from desktop to mobile, which increases the sales of their businesses, and the trend is expected to grow over the years. According to a report from the Central Statistics Office of Ireland, the turnover percentage of the online apparel business was 8.1% in 2021, which leapt to 14.1% in 2022 (Salvi *et al.*,2021).
- The fashion industry in Ireland is significantly increasing as people associated with apparel businesses start to showcase their products online by creating fashion blogs. They use social media accounts to provide information about their products to customers. Business owners offer several discounts to consumers if they order products while watching live videos. The omnichannel platform in online business management plays a pivotal role in increasing the popularity of the brand.

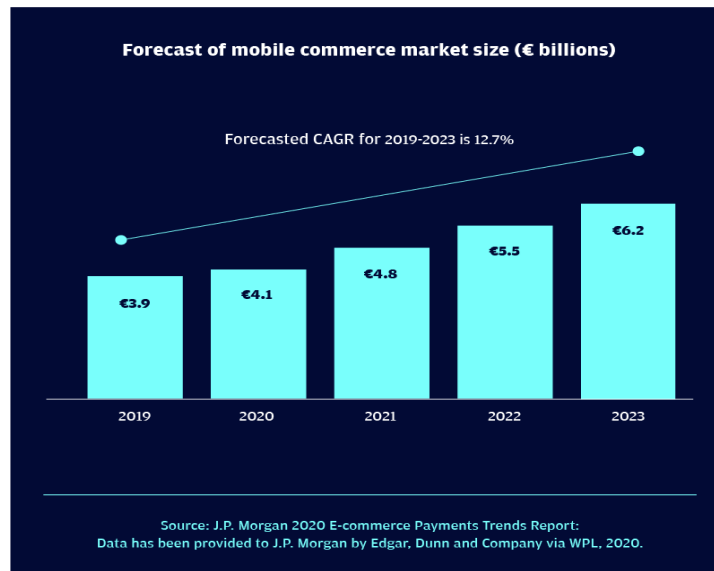


Figure 2.5.1: Trends of e-Commerce payment report

(Source: Salvi *et al.* 2021)

2.6. Strategies to improve the online business management in Ireland

Online businesses have been conducted electronically most of the time, and from product manufacturing to service display and order placement, as well as transactions, all activities are performed using the website or mobile application. Here are a few strategies to develop and maintain the online platform in order to enhance the brand's popularity.

Optimizing the online shop

Customers notice the presentation as one of the first things they notice about the companies. The design of the website encourages customers' perceptions of the companies. Moreover, accessibility is a critical factor that determines the fate of businesses, and for that, the visuals should be good, as well as the platforms must be user-friendly. The developer should also focus on the search engine optimisation feature so that consumers can easily get the result of their search on the major search engine, Google (Sensuse *et al.*, 2021). There should be availability of all payment methods, and the business should provide contact details so that the customers can communicate with the business personnel regarding product delivery or any other issues.

Finding the target audience

Businesses must identify the audience that is interested in their products. It is not easy to understand the audience's demand, and as a solution, businesses can choose certain mediums such as Facebook, email, and LinkedIn to communicate with their customers. In Ireland, most young customers are available on Instagram, while middle-aged people are available on Facebook. The company can present its products with demanding features on those platforms that help to attract consumers (Mucowska, 2021). After analyzing the views and comments on their products, the company can understand their target audience.

Addition of customer testimonials

The reviews of the customers are a driving factor in developing the products according to market demand. Most customers go through the product reviews and feedback before purchasing. So, businesses should record the data and information of their most satisfied customers (Mangiaracina *et al.* 2019). The textual review as well as the image and video feedback can also be helpful for customers who are willing to purchase their products. The listing must be maintained by the companies in order to enlist their most satisfied clients. The long-term user can be beneficial for the company regarding the enhancement of the brand's utility and efficiency.

Maintaining superior customer service

The business must maintain connections with the customers even after the completion of the selling process. Maintaining the principle of *administrative theory*, each employee has to make efforts to ensure on-time delivery, which helps to gain the trust of the customers. The contact information should be updated and functional during business hours, and chat support can be provided for an instant response. On-site services can also be offered with the help of skilled technicians in the case of heavy-duty products. The return and replacement services should be there in case of any dispute regarding the order, and the money refund option should be there to enhance the reliability of the brand.

2.7.Theoretical underpinning

Scientific Management Theory

Frederick Winslow Taylor proposed a scientific management theory. Scientific management theory is the process of proceeding with the whole process of a business in a scientific way. The process includes three steps: observation, experimentation, and analysis. Considering the principle of scientific management theory, the problems of online business management should be identified first, and then the analysis of the problems should be done. The effects of the problems have been denoted, and then new strategies have been developed to solve those issues or challenges (Taylor, 2023). For example, issues related to the security of the data can be solved only after determining the problems after the observation. Measurable actions can then be taken to improve the data security problems, and it should be necessary to develop more alternate solutions for a particular issue. As per the experimentation phase of scientific management theory, all the proposed solutions should be tried to address the challenges, and then the most suitable actions should be selected as the solution to those particular problems. At last, the analysis following the thyroid phase of scientific management theory must be done in order to monitor the outcomes of applied solutions or actions.

Administrative management theory

Administrative management theory was proposed by Henri Fayol and defines the necessity of a well-defined structure in an organization. This theory underlies the principle of administration in order to increase the efficiency of the business and enhance its performance. According to Fayol, 14 principles of administrative management theory include division of labor, authority, discipline, and so on. As per the theory, the management of an organization should maintain the functions necessary to make its brand popular, and those functions are planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling (Schaffer, 2019). In order to start a business on an online platform, there should be proper planning that enables the business to forecast its goals for future conditions and set objectives according to the forecast. The strategies should be developed to maintain the objectives, considering that the planning should be flexible to changing conditions. As per the second function of this theory, the activities should be organized properly, and this phase includes the hiring of skilled individuals and the equipping and training of existing employees. All the employees should be monitored by the business management team to ensure proper supply chain activities. There must be coordination among all the employees, from the CEO of the company

through the manufacturer and retailer to the customers. Collaboration, as well as controlling the activities to achieve the goals, are necessary to attract customers to the brand.

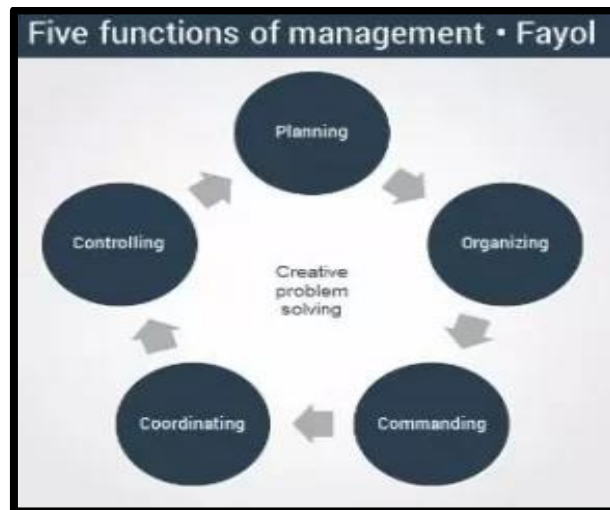


Figure 2.6.1: Administrative management theory

(Source: Schaffer, 2019)

System management theory

System management theory was proposed by Ledwig von Bertalanffy, and this theory states the importance of the total system in managing all the activities of an organisation. This theory helps the business plan strategically and manage change depending on the situation. As per the principle of this theory, the business should monitor the total efficiency of the business instead of looking at the individual's performance. The project should be managed after considering all the approaches of stakeholders and analysing their approaches after evaluating the goals and objectives of the company (Galliers *et al.* 2020). As per the theory, online business owners should focus on making plans that help the business as a whole. In this case, the business owner should focus on the customers' satisfaction regarding the delivery issue and product quality. As the business is all about the customers, taking measurable actions to fulfill the customers' demands can help to achieve success as a whole. Moreover, the business can incorporate new ideas, such as including new technologies, to present the outcomes to the customers in an attractive way. For example, new features can be added to the online platforms so that customers can easily be notified about new arrivals. Also, product diversity can be included in order to retain existing customers as well as attract new ones.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter covers the importance of online business management in Ireland as well as the impacts of online business on the economy of the country. The growth of online business in Ireland is significant due to the business-friendly environment of Ireland, such as its tax policies, reduced rates of fees on card payments, and so on. These advantages influence people to start their businesses, and customers are also influenced to continue their shopping with the use of online platforms. Yet, there are several issues, such as lack of expertise, data security and breaches, and the non-availability of online platforms. Customers often complain that their information is used illegally, which leads them to switch brands. For this, different solutions can be taken, such as recruiting skilled individuals, maintaining ISO standards to prevent data breaches, and communicating with customers by conducting surveys and interviews. The companies can also make their online platforms presentable and identify their target audience in order to increase their business sales and profits.

Chapter 3: Research questions

The below-mentioned questions have been chosen as they are considered the most important for online business management. The challenges must be identified in order to denote problems related to business, and the solutions are hence necessary to develop the situation.

Q.1. What are the problems businesses face while operating online platforms?

There are several disadvantages to using online platforms that deplete the management operations of the business and decrease productivity and profitability. The problems are as follows:

- **Lack of IT expertise**

The online platforms of businesses face severe issues with maintenance. This issue has a greater impact on online businesses in terms of productivity and profitability. Only a few people have enough knowledge about software and technologies. The advanced software needs IT expertise to install the technology modules. The maintenance of the technologies and reconfiguring them regularly are also necessary to increase and improve the connection with consumers. A report for 2021 from Solas stated that the shortage of talent in the software development industry is growing and 46 PC companies struggle to fill IT roles in their companies (Coleman *et al.* 2019).

- **Issues related to data security**

According to the author, Tawalbehet *et al.* (2020), privacy and data security are two of the most significant challenges of the IoT. This report stated that wrong device updates, unavailability of security protocols, and unawareness of the user are the causes of the data breaches that companies face most of the time while performing any operations. Security threats to online business management include financial frauds such as credit card fraud, false return and refund fraud, phishing attacks, and so on. The website is hacked by malicious activities, and they have sent a website link to the user. 20% of the companies in Ireland claimed to have experienced malicious external attacks. The customer's data is then available if they access the link. It is reported that more than 50% of Irish companies suffered a data breach in the past year.

- **Sustainability in customer retention**

The process of attracting and retaining customers is the most identical challenge of all. As per the study of Gil-Gomez *et al.* (2020), customer relationship management (CRM) is the key to

operating a business efficiently. It is suggested in this study that each component of CRM, such as sales, marketing, and services, must be maintained properly, considering the three main aspects of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. In many companies, individuals, both new and old, required training that connected the communities with the companies. Customer retention is the most challenging factor for a company. Lack of diversification of the products, poor customer service, and not providing a reward to the customers are the main factors that affect the retention of customers.

- **User-friendly platform and omni-channel experience**

Omni-channel is another factor that attracts new customers to a particular brand and increases sales for the business. The omnichannel experience provides customers access to websites regardless of the digital devices they use. Research showed that 73 online customers out of 100 use multiple channels while doing online business. However, the omnichannel business experiences several issues, including managing the customers' orders on different sites, supply chain management, and delivery of the order within the given time. Moreover, customers are more attracted to platforms that are user-friendly and easy to use.



Figure 3.1: e-Commerce challenges

(Source: Tawalbeh *et al.* 2020)

- **Competition**

Competition is one of the most identical issues in online business management, as it comes in many forms. Competitive pricing, products, and services should be maintained considering the

demand of the customers as well as the strategy taken by the other competitors. There is increased competition in online business in Ireland. The market volume of online business in Ireland is expected to grow by US\$10,158.4 million within the year 2027 (Tolstoy *et al.*, 2022). So, the competition in this market is increasing significantly in Ireland, and each company diversifies its product range and sets effective marketing strategies to popularize its brand. Moreover, the threat to small businesses is the development of online platforms for popular brands. The customers automatically shift to the products of popular brands from small business start-ups.

- **Customer Experience**

The customer experience of the business is one of the most important factors for businesses that sell their products online. The main factors in the customer experience issue are customer segmentation and pricing strategy. Sometimes the business does not monitor the feedback from the customers, and as a result, the development of their products does not meet the demand of the customers (Kwilinski *et al.* 2019). Moreover, the companies must offer some discounts or packages for their existing customers, and in the absence of these factors, consumers shift to other brands offering more attractive packages. The poor quality of the service provided by the companies also affects the customers' purchasing habits and decreases sales.

- **Return and refund policies**

One of the main drawbacks of companies operating their businesses online is a lack of well-developed return and refund policies (Sousa and Rocha, 2019). Customers always like to purchase products from companies that offer return product features in the event of a defect. Sometimes the companies do not communicate with the customers after selling the products, which leads them to choose other competitors. In addition, the consumers also complain that they cannot get a refund from the companies even after returning the products, which would discourage people from purchasing the products from the companies.

Q.2. What are the solutions to those problems to retain customers and gain their trust in them?

Yet, there are several challenges related to online business management; the use of advanced technology, proper management, and awareness can improve the situation.

- The lack of expertise can be solved by providing a clear overview of the operations to the community engagement software providers. The technology used in the business must not be maintained regularly by software professionals. Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) can be used to get the benefits without the headache of technology management. As Irish companies faced a shortage of skilled individuals, they launched new courses and initiatives to cover the skill gaps. The Irish Government introduced the "**Digital Ireland Framework**," focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country.

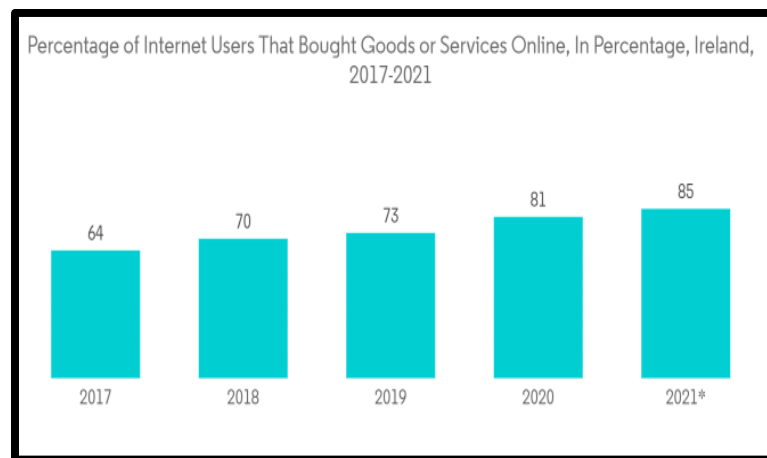


Figure3.2 : Ireland's online business market size

(Source: Gil-Gomez *et al.* 2020)

- The rate of data breaches can be reduced by maintaining the international quality standard **ISO 27001** (Ena *et al.*, 2023). It involves a robust platform to implement a management process to protect the data of the companies as well as the customers. The provider is selected based on ISO 27001 accreditation to establish trust for the future security of the platform. Global data privacy regulations should be maintained by companies to hold the top position. The "European Union's (EU) General Data Privacy Regulation (GDPR)" affects the data of all Europeans, and the companies that achieve the regulations show their dedication to data privacy and security. Data can be secured through the use of anti-

malware software, HTTPS and SSL certificates, a secured payment gateway, and creating awareness among the staff and clients of the companies.

- Retention of old customers is very profitable for companies, as attracting new customers is 25–25% more expensive than maintaining existing customers. Moreover, an increase in customer retention rate of 5% can enhance the revenue of the business by 25–95%. According to the authors, Cheng *et al.* (2020), customer loyalty is one of the most important factors for online business communities. This study suggested that social capital development and total information about the product can be beneficial for customer satisfaction. According to the human relations theory by Elton Mayo, companies focus on maintaining relations between all stakeholders and customers to increase the profitability of the business. The customer retention factor can be improved with the use of "**Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) surveys and "Customer Effort Score (CES)"**". It is reported that 61% of consumers would shift to a competitor of the company if they experienced a bad situation regarding customer service. 79 customers out of 100 would choose the company to purchase the products from based on the customer service experience.

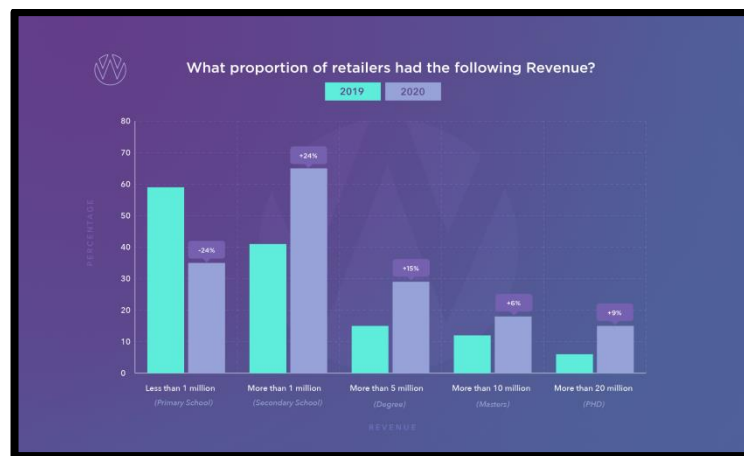


Figure 3.3: Irish Online Business Management Report

(Source: Cheng *et al.* 2020)

- In the case of implementing an omni-channel strategy, the companies should consider whether the technology is sufficient to meet the requirements for performing the operations. For this, the collaboration should be done with the right partners in terms of logistics, shipping, and delivery cases. Apart from that, the platform for the online business

should be easy to use. The platform should be designed in such a way that the post-update process is quick and there will be a discussion forum. The platform should include the feature of answering the queries of the customers, thus saving the businesses time, effort, and resources.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The methodology is an important part of research that helps determine different aspects of carrying out the research in a proper way. It is a combination of different techniques that helps address the challenges and provides the best probable solutions after analysing the data collected through primary and secondary data collection methods. Research methodology enables the researchers to determine the validity and reliability of the data in the context of the research topic. In this case, the research design, philosophy, and approach have been set to address the problem of online business management, and the data have been analysed to solve the problems related to online business management in Ireland.

4.1. Research Onion

The research onion was introduced by Saunders et al. in 2007 and demonstrates different stages of data collection methods in order to carry out the research process. The research onion helped to determine the research philosophy, research design, and data collection method for a better interpretation of the result of the research question. The research onion enables the researchers to illustrate different steps so that the study can be described properly and the obtained result can be analysed with the use of the best probable method (Soulsbury *et al.* 2020). The research onion helped detect more than **60% growth** in online business in Ireland. The research onion determined different research approaches and designs, and the data have been collected through primary as well as secondary collection methods. Almost **70% of individuals** believe that research onion offers different research approaches, designs, and data collection methods so that the researcher can select them according to the demands of the research topic.

In this research, both the research design approach and philosophy have been selected with the use of the research onion. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used in this research to identify the online business management problems in Ireland. More than 60% of the data has been collected through interviews as well as from online sources using research articles from authentic websites. The use of **Research Onion** ensures the proper analysis of the data in the context of the proposed research (Orth and Maçada, 2021). Utilization of each component of the research onion enables the researcher to denote each and every aspect of online business

management in Ireland, which showed a growth rate of **6.5%** in the *year 2021*. The reasons for the sudden rise of online business in Ireland have been obtained, and the approaches have been given after considering the economic, social, and other aspects of Ireland. The research onion offered a variety of phases to be included in the methodology portion that ensure the potentiality of 50% of *Ireland's* digital organization and provide a way to proceed with future research. The data and analysis obtained through the research process can be utilised by the **43%** of Irish companies to detect the challenges in their businesses that increase their profitability.

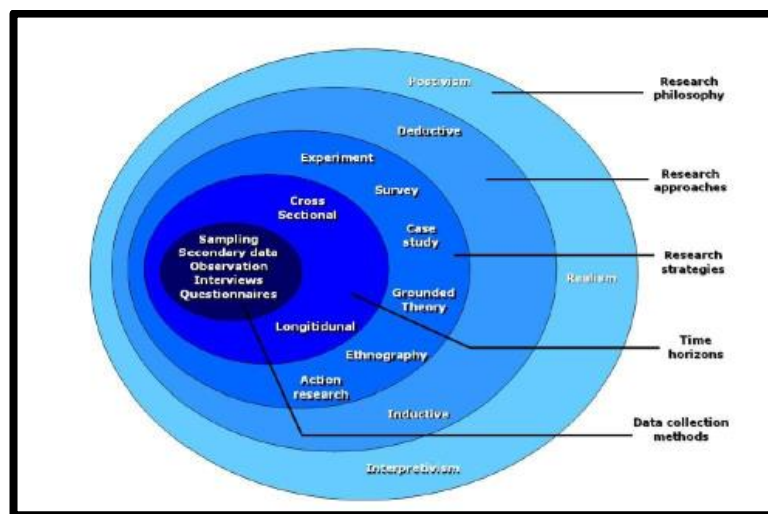


Figure 4.1.1: Research Onion

(Source: Orth and Maçada, 2021)

4.2. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a framework that involves a set of strategies to carry out the research process in a scientific way and deals with different aspects such as source, nature, and development of knowledge. Research philosophy mainly performs three functions: exposing and criticising unsustainable assumptions; informing the researchers about the knowledge of sales and business value in Ireland, which was more than **12.4% in 2020**; and finally, choosing the best methodology for a better understanding of the problems addressed by the proposed research. There are four different types of research philosophy: positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, and realism. The *pragmatism* research philosophy involves operational decisions based on the problems of the

research, and thus more than **50% of** researchers found the best solution that fits the research topic in a better way. In contrast, the **realism** research philosophy helped to identify the cause or mechanisms of the research and thus generate the phenomenon depending on the observation.

In this research, the **pragmatism** research philosophy has been chosen for the successful implementation of the data about the digitalisation of **50%** of Ireland's retained and online businesses and the research problems (Abdelhakim, 2021). The pragmatism research philosophy enabled the researcher to accept the consequences obtained through the analysis of the collected data, which depicts that the government has reduced the **0.2% value** after exchanging the debit cards. The use of pragmatism as a research philosophy ensures that research processes can be performed through the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data; therefore, it helps to find out the value of online expenditure (**nearly 12%**) by individuals in Ireland. As the pragmatism research philosophy is action-oriented, it helps the researcher be involved in the total research process.

4.3. Research Approach

The research approach is defined as the collection procedures and strategies that help make decisions about the overall research process. A suitable research approach helps to determine the data collection method and analysis techniques of the data and provides the best way of interpreting the result in accordance with the research objective. The inductive research approach is based on the data obtained through a set of observations, and it can be found that the online market value of Ireland was **\$3.2 billion** in 2022. The process determined the specific pattern of the observed data, which is based on the turnover rate of the apparel market in Ireland. As per the Central Statistics Office of Ireland, the apparel market's growth was more than **8.1%** in **2021**. This form of research approach enables the researcher to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data (Asadpour *et al.*, 2023). On the contrary, the **deductive** research approach involved a set of strategies that helped determine the validity of the existing theories. This principle of the deductive approach states that if the premises are true, then **60%** of the conclusions drawn from the research process must be true.

In this research, the **inductive** research approach has been chosen to proceed with the research processes on the most trending online business sector in Ireland, and in **2022**, the growth rate was almost doubled, at more than **14.1%**. The inductive research approach in this research involves the

observation of the problems of online business management by conducting surveys of 51 individuals. The pattern of the data obtained in this research approach can be utilized to provide the best solutions to those problems and a futuristic approach to online business in Ireland.

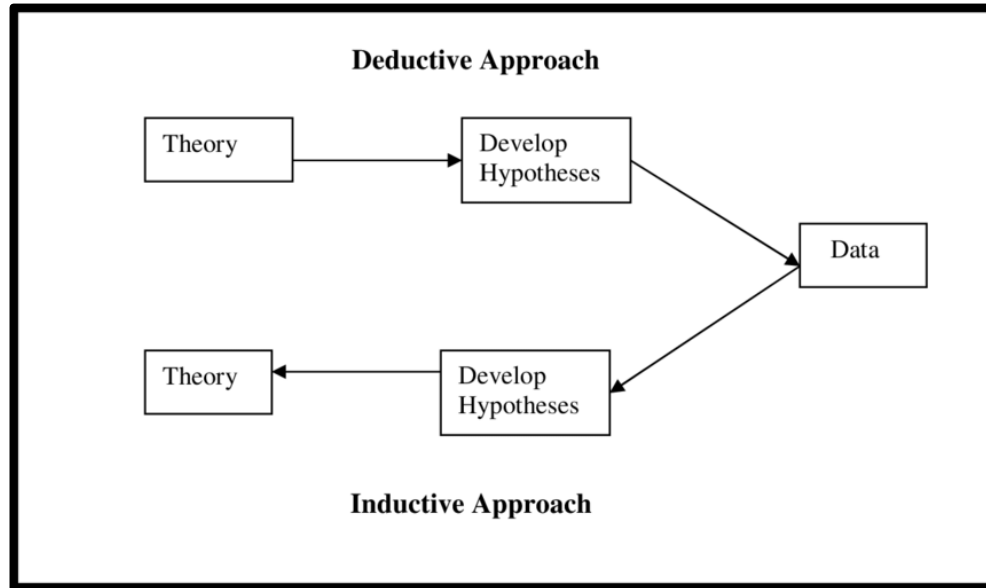


Figure 4.3.1: Research approach

(Source: Asadpour *et al.* 2023)

4.4. Research design

The research design is the overall strategy that incorporates different components of the research process in a logical way. The process of the research design provides a blueprint for the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data to explain the causes of the sudden rise of the online market in Ireland, and the yearly growth percentage is almost **4.2%**. There are different types of research design processes, such as exploratory research design, explanatory research design, causal research design, and others. In **exploratory** research design, the research process investigated the research objectives in depth that have not been studied previously and more than **48% of** researchers prefer it. The exploratory research design deals with both qualitative and quantitative data. **Explanatory** research design helped to provide an explanation of the limited amount of data, and it mainly denotes the reason for the problems or challenges that happened in Ireland's online market rather than developing new knowledge or solving specific problems (Mehrad and Zangeneh, 2019). This research design is mainly concerned with the identification of

a particular phenomenon of more than **84% of** consumers in Ireland and retail industrialists are mainly following the current trends.

In this research, an *exploratory* research design has been selected to carry out the collection of data regarding the online business market in Ireland, and industrialists have gathered revenue of **€20 million** in 2022. The exploratory research design helped identify the problems based on the data obtained through surveys as well as from online sources. This research design also provided information on the **8.2%** increase in online business in Ireland and the best probable solutions to mitigate the addressed problems.

4.5. Data collection method

The data collection method mainly incorporated techniques and procedures in the research methodology in order to gather information from different sources to evaluate the advantages of using online business platforms. The data collection method can be qualitative or quantitative or both and the process can range from a simple survey to more complex experiments on the investment process of more than **75% of** retailers in Ireland. The main purpose of the data collection method was to gather data both from offline and online sources, considering the ethics of the research. Yet, there may be certain problems during the data collection phase, and due to the inflation in the market, the proper data on investment rate cannot be measured. However, the error rate is less than **0.5%** in the overall research, and it must be ensured that the data have been gathered to minimize the limitations of the process. There are two different data collection methods: *primary* and *secondary* (Roh *et al.* 2019). In the *primary* data collection method, the data has been collected through surveys, interviews, and other observations by the researcher directly to obtain the value of e-commerce in Ireland, which was **US\$7,819 million** in 2022. The primary data collection method ensures the reliability and authenticity of the data and denotes the present situation of the projected problems. In the *secondary* data collection method, data is also collected from different research articles, government documents from Ireland, or different books that involve the technological penetration rate in Ireland, which was **92%** in 2022. The secondary collection method is cost-effective and not time-consuming, reducing the longevity of the research.

In this case, both *primary* and *secondary* data collection methods have been used to identify the pattern of the research problem and its effect on online business in Ireland. The primary data was collected by conducting *surveys* of **51** individuals (Roy and Uekusa, 2020). In this survey, a set of *two demographic* and *eight variable-based* questions have been set up, and the respondents are asked to answer those questions as per their knowledge. In the *secondary* data collection method, the data have been collected from the research articles that predicted the growth rate of online business facilities up to 2025, which will extend up to 6%.

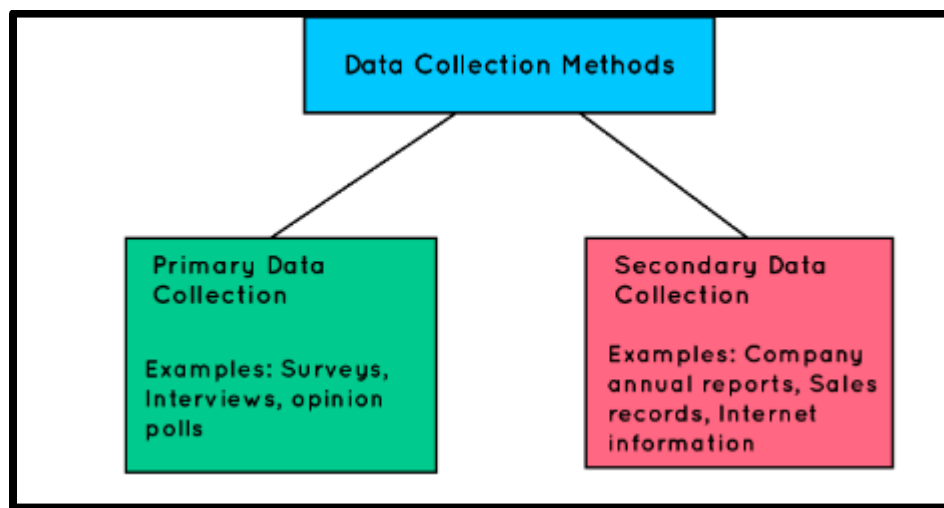


Figure 4.5.1: Data collection method

(Source: Roy and Uekusa, 2020)

4.6. Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique of the methodology involves the procedures of selecting a group of individuals that are actually used to collect the data about the research and more than **80% of** studies prefer the random sampling process. Sampling means the selection of a set of criteria to choose a particular group of individuals with a particular concern. The data collected from the group are quantitative types of data, and statistical methods have been used to provide inference and determine the characteristics of the population that are directly related to the implementation of *SaaS software* in the online business of Ireland. More than **25%** of companies prefer to hold on to old consumers, as they are the most loyal to them. There are different types of sampling methods, such as *random* sampling and *non-random* sampling methods. In the *random* sampling method, each individual in the population gets an equal opportunity to be chosen as a representative sample

(Bloomfield and Fisher, 2019). In this research, the *random sampling method* has been used to select **51 respondents** for the survey, and the data have been collected at their will and as per their knowledge.

4.7. Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is the process of applying statistical data and other logical techniques for the description and illustration of the data that shows that dissatisfaction can cause **61%** of consumers to shift from a particular brand to another. A proper data analysis ensures the proper interpretation of the pattern of obtained data about the online business of Ireland in the 4th quarter of **2023**, and the sales value is **\$6.64 billion**. The data analysis helps to provide the best explanation of the research problems and can be used to provide the best solutions based on the identified challenges. The method of analysis can be different for qualitative and quantitative data. In quantitative data analysis, different statistical methods such as correlation, regression, ANOVA, and t-tests have been used for the data analysis process that signifies the **11.23%** increase in sales volume in the online marketing industries in Ireland (Harris, 2019). Descriptive statistical methods such as mean, median, and mode can be used for the analysis of the obtained data.

In this research, statistical methods have been used for the analysis of primary data obtained through surveys of 51 respondents. The data have been analyzed with the use of different statistical methods such as *ANOVA*, *correlation*, *regression*, *t-test*, and others (Sileyew, 2019). This statistical method using *SPSS* helps to identify the pattern of the problems of online business management, and descriptive statistical methods such as mean, median, and mode have also been utilized for the data analysis process. The qualitative data was obtained through different Google articles and websites and has been analyzed through *thematic analysis* (Ross and Bibler Zaidi, 2019). The themes have been identified by the observation of the data in the previous articles that are associated with online business management. Both statistical and thematic data analysis help to address the challenges of online business management in Ireland and provide the best probable approaches to identifying the future market for online business in that country.

4.8. Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is an important part of the research that guides the research designs and approaches to be performed after considering ethics. The ethics of research mean the data collection process has been performed without causing physical or emotional harm to anyone. The data collection, especially obtained through surveys of *51 respondents*, has been performed with all ethics. The respondents have participated in the survey on their own accord, and the data they provided is the best as per their knowledge. In the case of the secondary data collection method, more than *90%* articles that have been used for the collection of the data are authentic and relevant to the research topic (Tamminen and Poucher, 2020). The websites that have been chosen for the data collection process are reliable, and in most cases, the data have been associated with online business management in Ireland. No articles have been chosen that are older than five years, and the publication year of all the articles is after 2019.

4.9. Limitations

The limitations of the research include all the factors that are mainly outside of the control of the researcher and have an effect on the research process. In the primary data collection method, small samples have been taken to reduce the longevity of the research process. Selecting large samples is time-consuming and also increases the budget for the research. In the secondary data collection method, there must be a question about the reliability of the data as the researcher is not directly involved in the data collection process (Mwita, 2022). There may be a lack of quality in the secondary data, and there is a possibility that the data cannot interpret the research questions properly. There is a chance of data bias in the secondary data. For this, all the research processes have been performed to minimize the limitations and their effect on the research.

4.10. Chapter Summary

The methodology of research is an important part as it identifies the research design, approach, philosophy, and data collection method to carry out the research successfully. In this part, the method of data collection and analysis has been selected for evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data. The data have been collected while maintaining the ethics of the research. All aspects of the methodology have been selected after considering the research limitations. The methodology portion ensures that the selected process ensures a better interpretation of the analysed data and the research questions.

Chapter 5: Result

5.1. Statistical data analysis

The primary data can be analyzed with the use of different statistical methods such as correlations, regression, and ANOVA, as well as descriptive methods such as mean, median, and mode. The statistical methods have been applied to the obtained data using the SPSS tool.

The descriptive method value indicates that the respondents in the survey provided the best data as per their knowledge. The mean value of 2.33 indicates that online business has increased significantly in Ireland. Most of the participants in the survey agreed that the market value of e-commerce in Ireland reached almost 3.7 billion euros and is expected to grow at a significant percentage by 2027 (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Maximum statistics of a value of 4 obtained through surveys of 51 individuals indicate that the Irish Government takes measurable steps to support online business in Ireland.

Descriptive Statistics									
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
3. "In 2021 the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around €3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?	51	0	4	2.33	1.506	-.270	.333	-1.425	.656
1. What is your profession?	51	0	4	1.78	1.419	.398	.333	-1.174	.656
"The Irish Government introduced the "Digital Ireland Framework" focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country." Do you agree?	51	0	4	2.75	1.481	-.732	.333	-.989	.656
8. "It is reported that 61% of the consumers would shift to the competitor of the companies in Ireland if they experience any bad situation regarding customer service." Do you agree?	51	0	4	2.86	1.400	-.929	.333	-.534	.656
9. "As 92% of people of Ireland can access strong internet it acts as one of the driving factors for the increasing sales of the business in online platforms." Do you	51	0	4	2.31	1.407	-.364	.333	-1.127	.656

Figure 5.1.1: Descriptive statistics

(Source: SPSS)

The mean value of 2.63 indicates that there is significant growth in online business in Ireland, and the value of e-commerce will reach US\$7819 in 2022. The median value of 2.31 indicates strong

internet access across all areas of Ireland, increasing the attraction for customers to continue their shopping online. Yet, there are several challenges to online business management in Ireland, such as data breaches, malicious attacks, and others. Most of the respondents who participated in the survey support the attack of malicious hackers on the websites of online businesses, and thus people are discouraged from starting their businesses online. The mean value of 2.31 points out the fact that online businesses have grown significantly over the past few years as there has been increased access to the internet by people over the years. With technological advancement, people are more actively using their social media accounts, and thus businesses can use those platforms to promote their brands (O'SHEA *et al.* 2019). Ireland is continuously evolving in terms of technology, which influences people to use online platforms for shopping purposes. The mean value of 2.82 indicates that, in spite of the different advantages of online platforms, there are increased risks of data losses due to the incorporation of hackers. Customers often use online payment methods, and for that, they provide their bank and card details on those platforms. The hackers use that data, which in turn results in financial losses, and they often break the technological barrier. The mean value of 1 also indicates that most of the individuals who participated in the survey agree with the fact that people are showing their interest in online businesses. Most of the respondents agree with the factors that data breaches can be reduced by maintaining international standards such as *ISO 27001*, which coincides with the mean value of 2.82.

Statistics						
		1. What is your age?	4. "The sales of e-commerce in Ireland have shown growth and it has reached US\$7,819 million in 2022". Do you agree?	7. "The rate of data breaches can be reduced by maintaining the international quality standards ISO 27001". Do you agree?	5. "20% of the companies in Ireland claimed to experience malicious external attacks". Do you agree?	9. "As 92% of people of Ireland can access strong internet it acts as one of the driving factors for the increasing sales of the business in online platforms." Do you agree?
N	Valid	51	51	51	51	51
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.08	2.63	2.82	2.73	2.31
Median		1.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		1	4	4	4	3 ^a
Std. Deviation		.744	1.414	1.506	1.387	1.407
Skewness		-.128	-.536	-.894	-.607	-.364
Std. Error of Skewness		.333	.333	.333	.333	.333
Kurtosis		-1.146	-1.097	-.760	-1.025	-1.127
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.656	.656	.656	.656	.656
Range		2	4	4	4	4

Figure 5.1.2: Mean, median, and mode

(Source: SPSS)

The below-mentioned histogram shows that most individuals support the growth of online businesses in Ireland. It shows that 20% of the individuals agree that the sales of online businesses will reach US\$7,819 million in 2022 (Kumar *et al.* 2019). They agree with the fact that government initiatives also encourage people to begin their business online, which would result in significant growth in online business in Ireland. Moreover, the increased accessibility of customers to the Internet enhances the sales of businesses, and most of the respondents agree with these factors.

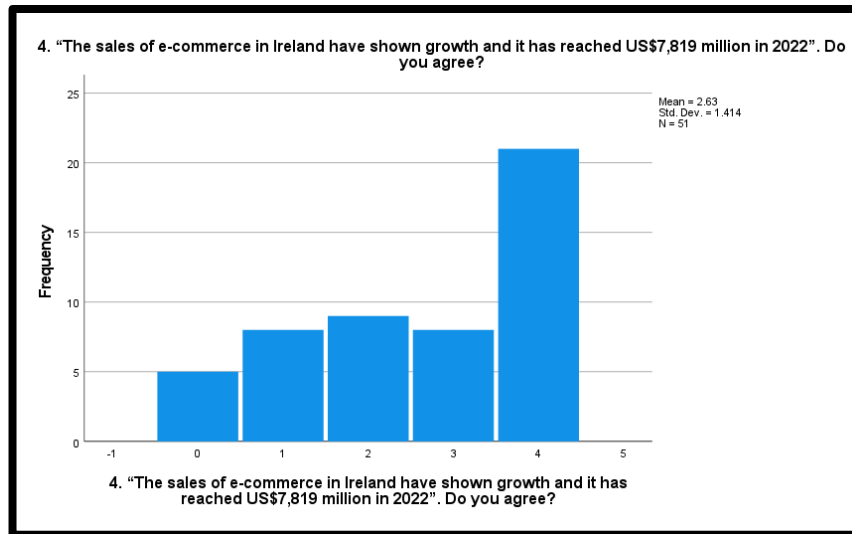


Figure 5.1.3: Histogram

(Source: SPSS)

Yet, there are several challenges to maintaining an online business in Ireland. Moreover, it has now become a prevailing issue all over the world in the context of online business management. Most of the participants strongly agree with the fact that companies experience severe malicious attacks in the management of online businesses (Ghadimi *et al.*, 2021). Most of the customers complain that their data has been breached while shopping online. The data of the customers has been used for other illegal purposes, and sometimes they experience financial loss. Companies should be cautious while developing their online platforms. Businesses should evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the technologies before applying them to their businesses. They must maintain the international standard ISO 27001 in order to secure the transaction methods performed on their online platforms and prevent data losses.

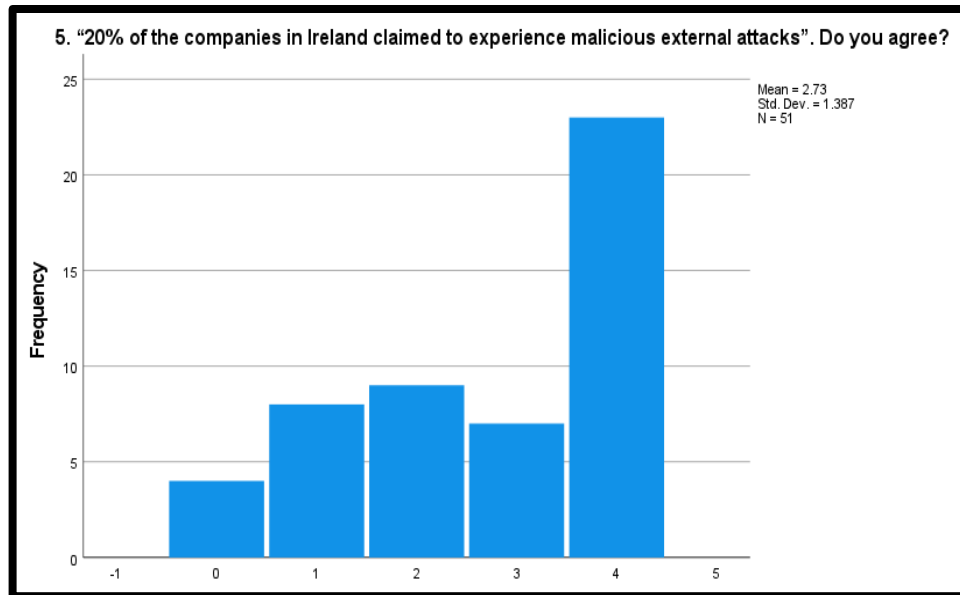


Figure 5.1.5: Histogram
(Source: SPSS)

A statistical method known as regression has also been used for data analysis purposes in this research. The R square value of 0.673 indicates that most of the respondents agree that online business shows significant growth in Ireland due to its features of convenience, omnichannel experience, and use of online transactions (Clohessy and Acton, 2019). Most people like to use the online platform as it is less time-consuming and can be used from anywhere, anytime.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.820 ^a	.673	.666	.855	.673	100.912	1	49	<.001

Figure 5.6: Regression
(Source: SPSS)

The regression value of 73.834 obtained through one-way ANOVA indicates that there is a strong future for online business in Ireland. The government also helps businesses by minimizing their tax rates, which creates a business-friendly environment. Most businesses should advance their online platforms, as this attracts customers the most. Businesses must include attractive features in their websites or online applications so that they will be easy to use and the browsing process can be performed easily. Businesses should develop their platform from time to time, and they must divide their products according to the categories. This feature enables customers to browse

their desired products easily. This will increase the customer base and make the brand popular, which completely coincides with the SS residual value of 35.852.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.834	1	73.834	100.912	<.001 ^b
	Residual	35.852	49	.732		
	Total	109.686	50			

a. Dependent Variable: "The Irish Government introduced the "Digital Ireland Framework" focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country."Do you agree?"

b. Predictors: (Constant), 1. What is your profession?

Figure 5.1.7: ANOVA

(Source: SPSS)

The coefficient value of 0.857 denotes that businesses should focus on developing their online businesses in order to promote their company. The government should support businesses that want to develop their businesses online. The company should maintain proper communication with the government so that they can avail themselves of all the advantages of the government's schemes and plans (Kotb *et al.* 2019). As the Irish Government has already taken certain measurable initiatives to help businesses, it creates a business-friendly environment that encourages people to set up their businesses in Ireland. Maintaining this type of professionalism would attract customers to the company and increase its sales and profitability.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.217	.194		6.283	<.001
	1. What is your profession?	.857	.085	.820	10.045	<.001

Figure 5.1.8: Coefficient

(Source: SPSS)

According to the sample T test, it can be stated that the t value is 11.068 and the df value is 50. These values signify the situation of Ireland's online market in 2021, which is valued a lot. In that

case, most participants believe in this value and also ensure that the e-commerce platform in Ireland has already upgraded its features. The standardized value of sample effect size was 1.506 and 1.529, which denoted the effectiveness of Ireland’s government sector in improving the browsing and transaction processes in the country.

One-Sample Test						
Test Value = 0						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
3. "In 2021 the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?	11.068	50	<.001	2.333	1.91	2.76

One-Sample Effect Sizes					
	Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower	Upper	
3. "In 2021 the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?	Cohen's d	1.506	1.550	1.137	1.955
	Hedges' correction	1.529	1.526	1.120	1.925

Figure 5.1.9: t-test
(Source: SPSS)

As per the correlation table, it can be observed that a total of 51 respondents from Ireland were selected for the survey purpose. Everyone has provided their valuable opinion about the upgrading framework of the online business model in Ireland. The correlation values are .905, .959, .969, and .895, respectively. These values are appropriate for this research, and also supporting that, the government has taken initiatives to introduce a new digital framework for the people of Ireland so that they can enjoy safe online transaction facilities.

Correlations						
		1. What is your age?	3. "In 2021 the "ecommerce DB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?	"The Irish Government introduced the "Digital Ireland Framework" focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country." Do you agree?	9. "As 92% of people of Ireland can access strong internet it acts as one of the driving factors for the increasing sales of the business in online platforms." Do you agree?	10. "The Irish Government has reduced the debit card interchange fee cap to 50% of the EU cap of 0.2%". Do you agree?
1. What is your age?	Pearson Correlation	1	.905**	.853**	.912**	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	51	51	51	51	51
3. "In 2021 the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?	Pearson Correlation	.905**	1	.945**	.969**	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	51	51	51	51	51
"The Irish Government introduced the "Digital Ireland Framework" focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country." Do you agree?	Pearson Correlation	.853**	.945**	1	.941**	.954**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	51	51	51	51	51

Figure 5.1.9: Correlation

(Source: SPSS)

5.2. Thematic analysis

Theme 1: “Measuring the effect of entrepreneurial competence and social media marketing on small-medium enterprises’ competitive Advantage: a structural Equation modeling”

Entrepreneurship is one of the essential processes for starting a business, and this process begins with an organization or individual. The use of different types of resources is essential to starting an entrepreneurial business. Every existing asset, whether intangible or tangible, plays a crucial role in providing service and increasing productivity (Munir *et al.* 2019). Every entrepreneur finds an opportunity to enhance their business, and they use a combination of resources to develop various types of new products and offer them to customers to purchase. Every entrepreneur faces various types of issues to grow their business, and the main challenge is a lack of resources and finance.

Marketing is essential for every entrepreneur's business because it helps the company efficiently increase revenue and mitigate competition to easily survive in a changing world. Different types of marketing strategies are used by this type of company, but online marketing plays an essential role in enhancing the marketing plan. Every start-up business tries to collect more information about the customer using this method. Entrepreneurs’ businesses developed various types of training and education programmes to motivate their employees, and this is the reason workers help the company increase its productivity. In the year 2022, almost 269,708 SMEs opened in Ireland, and most of the companies started their businesses with 1 to 9 employees (Clark, 2022). At that time, "medium-sized businesses" also grew, and these types of companies got some extra advantages because they did not face any kind of resource-related issues and were mainly focused on enhancing their presence in online business.

Shortly, every company depends on technology, and it is essential for entrepreneurs to create, develop, and combine every resource and find various types of ways to easily utilize networks to adapt to new technologies. Every entrepreneur is not only dependent on the business but also focused on various factors such as management, marketing, networking, information gathering, training, and many more. Internet use helps those companies easily manage every factor and increase their business presence online. Online business development helps every organization

provide services through the internet and improve their technology for the future growth of the business.

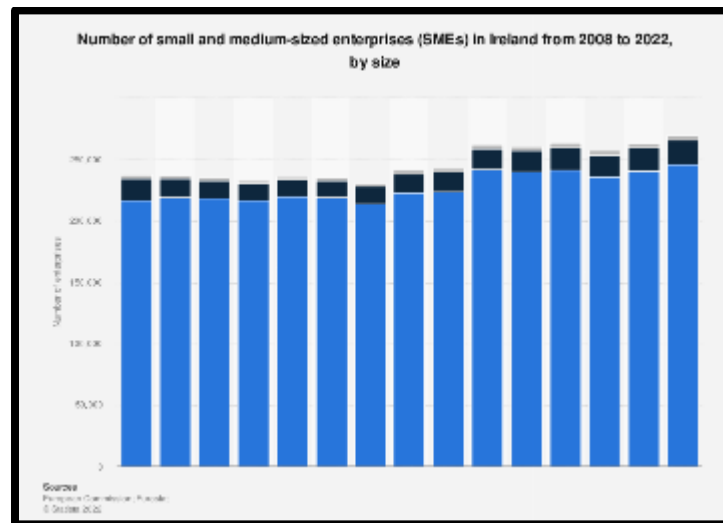


Figure 5.2.1: Number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ireland from 2008 to 2022

(Source: Clark, 2022)

Theme 2: “IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND BUYING BEHAVIOR OF ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPERS IN DUBLIN IRELAND”

Online businesses in Ireland affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic growth of the country completely face an unavoidable barrier to this situation. Many companies temporarily stop their production, and SMEs completely shut down. In Dublin City, telecommunication, e-commerce, culture, and business transport face various types of issues for this lockdown procedure, and the government tries to increase prevention to minimize the spreading of the virus (MacDonald, 2020). This has not only happened in Ireland but also affects the whole world. The supply of raw materials has almost stopped, and retailers are not able to produce any kind of product for lack of resources.

During the pandemic situation, online business is one of the most essential factors that plays a crucial role in the country’s economy. In the year 2022, almost 60% of countries in Europe influenced retailers to start online businesses, and this is the reason online sales in the retail sector increased (Chevalier, 2023). Almost 51% of Irish citizens prefer to buy any kind of grocery product

online because it is essential to protect them from the COVID-19 virus. Technology is essential for the company because it helps to provide proper customer satisfaction. In online shopping, people do not have any chance to bargain with the shopkeeper, and they decide to choose the product that is most needed for them.

Online business management plays an essential role in that time, and companies use digital marketing to enhance their businesses. Companies deliver every retail product to the doorstep of customers, and this is the reason customers choose to market in this way because consumers get any product in their comfort zone. Every business is different from another, and everyone tries to increase brand awareness. The target market of every company is not the same, and this is the reason they adopt various online techniques to promote the product (Makrides *et al.* 2020). Social media marketing is mainly used by companies in online business because many people use the internet to search for products and purchase them there. In Ireland, everyone needs grocery items in their daily lives. Online business helps them easily purchase every grocery product at a single time.

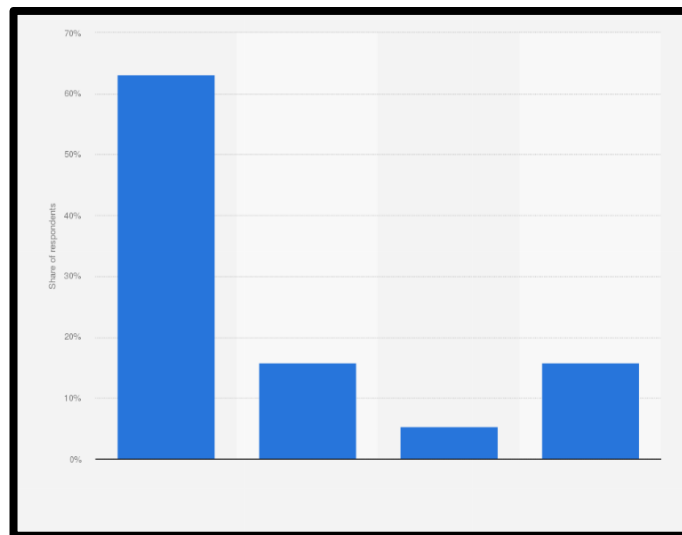


Figure 5.2.2: Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on retail stores' online sales in Europe 2020

(Source: Chevalier, 2023)

Theme 3: How Beneficial Is Social Media for Business Process Management? A Systematic Literature Review

In recent days, online business has played an essential role for the whole of society because this management helps every company improve its technologies, and modern technologies improve the quality of the product (Prodanova and Van Looy, 2019). Customer satisfaction is an essential part of this online business management process because, in this process, retailers and other service providers did not have face-to-face interactions with the customer, which is why they do not understand the real needs of customers. Modern technologies mainly provide various types of information for customers and help the company analyze the taste of a specific customer. After smartphones and the internet, the social media penetration rate increased, and this is why interaction between companies and customers was completed on social media platforms.

Social media is mainly used by companies to enhance the number of contacts, and various types of organizations use it to enhance their revenue. B2B, B2C, and C2C companies use social media to improve their marketing strategies and develop better relationships with customers (Wuisan and Handra, 2023). Social media is divided into various categories such as e-commerce, digital libraries, social review, entertainment, social networks, and bookmarks. Rating and reviewing are essential for every company because they help them identify the customer's demand and find the issues with the product. Social media triggered the sales of every company because, in the year 2021, almost 4.26 billion people per day penetrated different social media platforms, and it is projected that this number will reach approximately 6 billion in 2027 (Dixon, 2023). Online business helps every company increase business, and a proper presence online helps the company improve revenue. Various types of social media platforms are available online, but some essential online platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, and many more. Every process is beneficial for online business management.

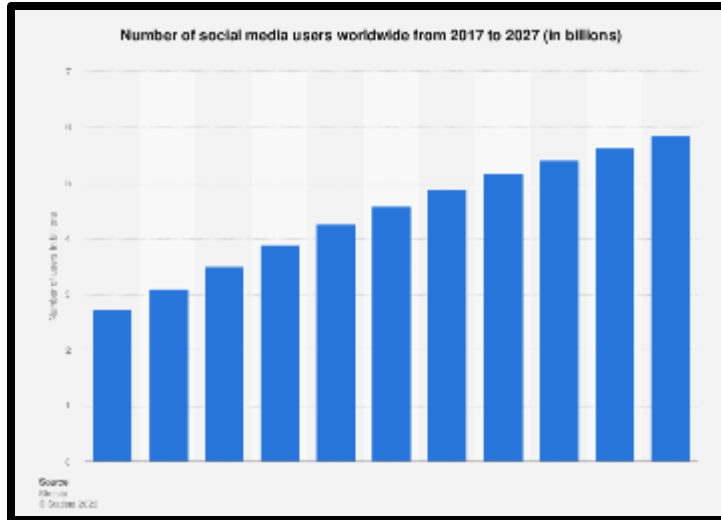


Figure 5.2.3: Number of global social network users 2017-2027
(Source: Dixon, 2023)

Chapter 6: Discussion

Online business is one of the biggest factors for every company because it helps every organisation improve its performance and generate revenue. Online platforms help companies develop their brand value and attract customers to purchase any kind of product or service from their organisation. In the last two years, e-commerce market growth in Ireland has increased a lot, and almost 80% of companies in this country have started online stores to provide various types of services for the citizens (Ramrez de la Cruz *et al.* 2020). After the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, every country faced various types of issues. At that time, the economic situation in Ireland was slowly growing and not stable. It directly affects the e-commerce business, and this is the time when online business management is promoted in Ireland and tries to improve the economic situation.

In the year 2023, the e-commerce industry in Ireland earned almost \$6.64 billion, mainly from online business, and the growth increased by approximately 11.23% from the previous year (Statista, 2023). Physical goods distributed via the digital channel are the main part of online business, and various types of products are purchased by companies through online stores. E-commerce companies in Ireland earned a lot of profit in 2021 and reached the top 42 positions globally. Online business gives lots of benefits, and the main benefit is that the distance between customer and company is minimised after this online shopping. Customers have a chance to personalise their products and choose various types of payment methods. This is essential for online business management to improve technologies because, in recent days, data hacking has increased and people want privacy from others. Every company improves their translation systems, and they collect payments from UPI, Nett Banking, and many more software programmes. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Ireland rebuilt their taxation system and gave various types of discounts to online retailers, which had a direct effect on the country's economy (Heald and Hodges, 2020). Online translation is one of the essential parts of online business management because many customers do not carry cash, and this kind of translation helps them easily buy any product from the company and pay online.

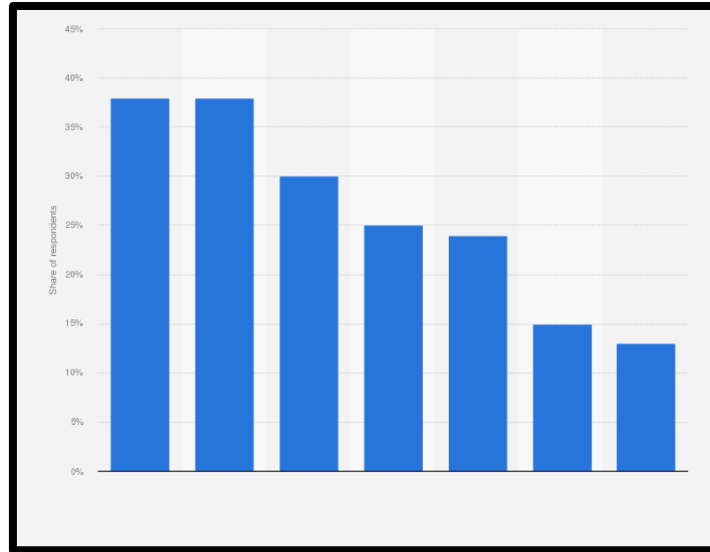


Figure 6.1: Ecommerce - Ireland

(Source: Statista, 2023)

Some limitations in Ireland create a barrier to completely transforming the e-commerce sector from offline to online. After the end of the pandemic situation, many companies tried to rebuild themselves, but the investment was very limited, which is why only 15% of businesses attracted almost 84% of Irish customers. Technologies in the modern era are much more expensive, and this is another limitation for SMEs that cannot afford to completely start online services and properly provide customer service (Qaim, 2020). Contactless payment increased by almost 48.3%, but many companies use their traditional cash payment system, which reduces their revenue.

Online business management helps companies improve technological issues and provide products as per customers' demands. Supply chain management is also essential for every company because it helps the organization improve its performance. Online banking systems solve issues regarding payment and attract the attention of customers. Older people mostly benefit from this online service because they face several issues going outside of the house to purchase items. Employed Irish citizens do not have enough time to reach offline stores, and this study helps every researcher find out the importance of online business management. Data security is essential for companies because the number of hackers has increased and they are trying to breach every customer's data (Solove and Hartzog, 2022). This is the reason companies try to recruit software management teams to improve the technology. Lack of skilled labor is one of the biggest concerns of online business management, and the availability of labor in Ireland is lower than in other countries

because the population is very low in that country. Every company uses online platforms to improve their online presence and transform themselves from a local company to a global company. Entering the global market is not an easy task because many companies have already established themselves in the market, and as a new company, it is essential for them to use innovative marketing strategies to grab the market. In the year 2019, only 76.8% of employment occurred in Ireland, and this number is not only in the e-commerce sector but also divided into other essential sectors (Nistor and Zadobrischi, 2022).

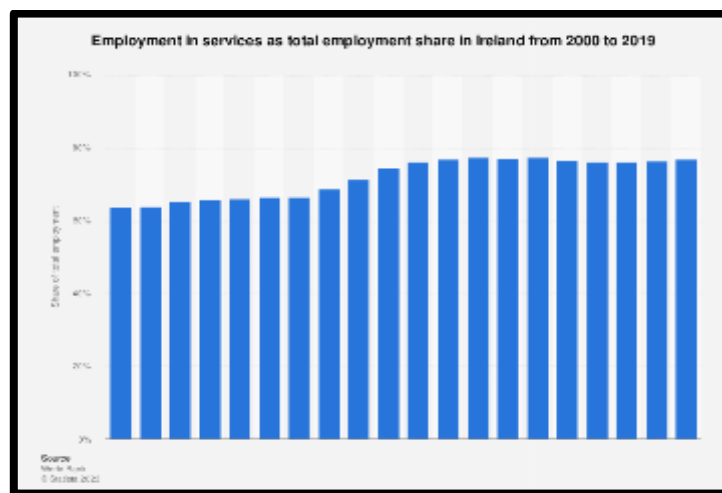


Figure 6.2: Services employment as a share of total employment in Ireland 2000-2019

(Source: Statista Research Department, 2023)

In Ireland, a huge number of people use smartphones and the Internet. This is the reason online business market demand increased, and the e-commerce market reached the 42nd position and earned almost \$6,638 million this year. Dublin is the most popular place in Ireland, and the regional headquarters of many companies are situated in this city. Approximately 80% of companies analyze that the online business is one of the big reasons behind the increase in customers, and almost 150% of revenue comes from this management (Melnychenko, 2020). The Internet is one of the biggest opportunities for the sudden rise of online business because net banking transactions are only possible through the Internet. In the year 2022, the e-commerce industry earned almost €7.435 million, and most transactions were processed online.

Start-up businesses use various types of digital tools for marketing, but the most important tool is social media marketing. This is one of the most essential tangible solutions to earning revenue, and this marketing is also the best-preferred marketing for customers. In this process, consumers customize their preferred products, and the cost is more effective than online shopping. Several types of advantages help the e-commerce market make more use of online business management. "**Scientific Management System**" is an essential business model, and "Frederick Taylor" proposed this model (Parker and Jeacle, 2019). Investment in online businesses is more cost-effective than in offline businesses. Online businesses handle customers from any place, but traditional businesses only handle customers from the store.

Almost 92% of Irish people are educated to use the internet, and this is one of the biggest factors in increasing online business (Petrosyan, 2023). Every customer who orders online orders various types of products at their location to enhance their trust in a specific company. On the online platform, companies offer various types of packages at a lower price, and this is an essential approach to attracting customers. Online marketing is very cost-effective, and every company can afford to use this platform as part of their strategy. Supply chain management is one of the big concerns for the retail sector because the performance of the company depends on it. In online business management, the third party does not need to sell products. Customers directly send the order details, and the company delivers that product to the consumer's location. Every company needs to know about the performance of the product, and it is essential for the company to use online business management to find out the customers' reviews. Review analysis helps every company improve the quality of its products and develop new ones based on customer demands.

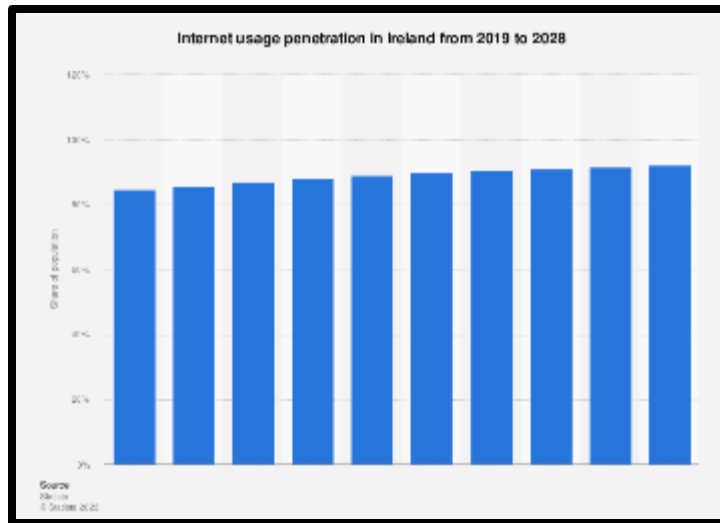


Figure 6.3: Internet usage reach in Ireland 2019-2028

(Source: Petrosyan, 2023)

Online business directly impacts the economy of Ireland because many people prefer to pay money through online transactions. Secured payment methods attract customers, and in the past year, 6.5% of retail businesses increased their use of online payment. Consumers use the "clicking and collecting" service to purchase their required product. The Government of Ireland reduced the charges from debit card payments and compromised almost 50% of taxes to improve online business. In the year 2022, almost 11% of total "online expenditure" increased, which is almost EUR 3.1 billion (Aparicio *et al.* 2022). The fashion business is one of the important businesses that grows faster online because the trending of clothes changes rapidly and people spend a lot of money to buy apparel. This business will earn almost 14.1% in 2022.

Online platform optimization is essential to attracting customers because a better-looking website attracts more consumers compared to an average website. This is essential to making a user-friendly website and recruiting a proper technology team to regularly develop the website's performance (Manko, 2022). Availability of all payment methods is essential to attract customers, and try to communicate with them to understand the product's performance. Several challenges also appeared on the online platforms, such as a lack of skilled workers. Ireland is a small, populated country, and only some people have knowledge about the use of technologies and software. Similarly, data security is also a big issue because hackers are waiting to collect data and try to maliciously attack the company's software. Data phishing is the most common cyberattack,

and in the year 2022, almost 300,000 cases of data phishing were initiated by hackers (Petrosyan, 2023). Online business increases competition because every company tries to appear in global business, and online platforms are the most common thing used by every company.

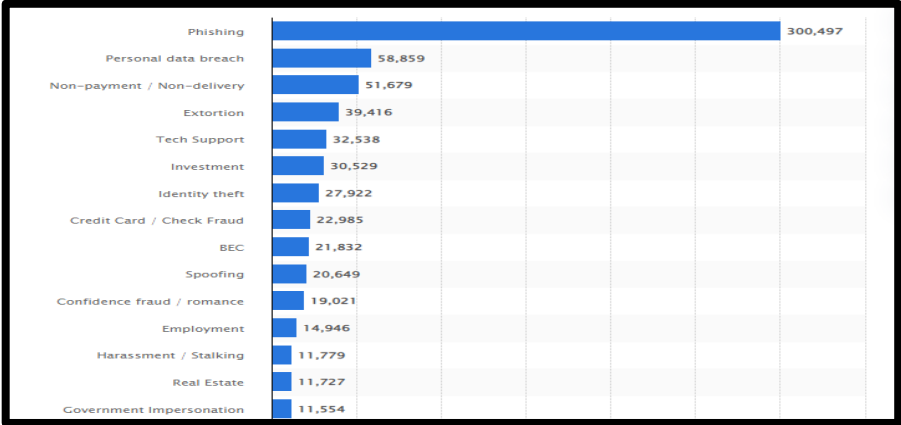


Figure 6.4: Most commonly reported cybercrime categories worldwide in 2022

(Source: Petrosyan, 2023)

Chapter 7: Conclusion

After the end of the complete discussion, it can be concluded that online business management plays an essential role in easily attracting customers because most people want to purchase their customized products without a visit to an offline shop, and this is a big reason behind the growth of online businesses. Comparatively, online shopping is more cost-effective than offline shopping because, in this business strategy, customers directly purchase various items from the company, and no third parties are involved in this purchasing method. Companies mainly prefer this online business to easily communicate with consumers and try to fulfill their demands based on the reviews.

Online customer reviews help every company get the proper idea to develop a new product and include it for other customers. Social media is one of the most important online platforms for retailers because a huge number of people deliberately use different types of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and many more. In Ireland, many companies prefer online business because it helps them easily increase their revenue and helps them develop their online presence. In the online business, online transaction is an essential part because, in recent days, people do not want to carry cash. They prefer online money transfers, UPI, and many other internet processes for transferring money. Every company has to prepare to improve its technology because data phishing increased during that time and customers felt insecure about providing data. The Government of Ireland tries to develop a friendly environment for business through various types of strategies. The respected government reduced card payment fees and restructured its tax policies to push online business. This is important for the companies to maintain the standard of the product and identify the target customers to increase revenue and sales.

Recommendation

For further improvement, online business management plays a crucial role in the different industries in Ireland, but e-commerce industries mainly use online platforms to earn more revenue. Several issues were found in the online business, and some recommendations are discussed below.

- A presence on social media is essential for every organisation because it helps the company make a presence in the global sector and provides every online business with a

proper platform to create an identity. It is important for companies to reach out on various social media platforms and share the details of their website. On the social media platform, many influencers are available, and I try to take their help to promote the product.

- Focusing on product pricing is essential because customers choose online shopping to purchase any product at a minimum price. There are a huge number of competitors available in this market, and they try to cut the cost of products. A wide range of product varieties helps the company easily attract customers, and various types of offers help the organisation increase revenue and sales.
- Retaining old customers is essential for business, which is why every company tries to improve their website to attract them and seduce them to purchase products from the online store.

Linking with Objectives

Objective 1:

Objective 1 demonstrates the sudden rise of online business in Ireland, and this is only possible with the availability of the Internet. In Dublin, the performance of online businesses rapidly increased, and the market value reached almost €3.7 billion. Digital marketing is one of the big reasons why online business is growing in Ireland. Social media is one of the most important digital marketing tools for companies. The Irish Government reduces taxation and influences every citizen to purchase a product online. The government also gives benefits to using the card at the time of transaction, and this kind of strategy easily fulfills the needs of customers.

Objective 2:

Objective 2 demonstrates the advantage of using online banking services to enhance Ireland's economic structure and change the traditional business process. In recent days, online businesses have tried to capture the whole world, and it has various advantages, such as being more cost-effective than an offline store because third parties are not involved in the online business and customers directly purchase various types of products from the company. Customers purchase products from any location, and less time is consumed to purchase that product. Online payment

is beneficial for customers, and global customers use this payment system for cross-border business.

Objective 3:

Objective 3 demonstrates the key issues related to the management of online platforms because this is a technological aspect and many people are not able to use online platforms. They prefer to use traditional business methods, and this negatively impacts their business. This management is based online, and data phishing is one of the biggest concerns of the customer because it directly impacts their privacy. Many consumers did not want to share their personal information, and this slowed the growth of online businesses. Many companies were not able to develop a user-friendly platform, which reduced customer retention.

Ethical consideration

In this research, essential data was collected from various types of sources in real-life phenomena, and each piece of data was accurately used to perfectly analyze the situation. All the sources used in this study are verified and collected from every article from the years 2019 to 2023. Mainly, Google Scholar is used to find out every article, and apart from the scholarly article, some verified news articles and journals are also used to collect data. All data was taken from public sources, and we conducted a survey among 51 participants to collect some critical information from their shared doctrines.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

In this section, a questionnaire has been formed to get information about the online business management of different sectors in Ireland. For this, a five-point Likert scale has been used to analyze the data. Here, 0= strongly disagree, 1= disagree, 2= Neutral, 3= agree, 4= strongly agree.

Demographic-based questions

1. What is your age?
 - . 21-30
 - . 31-40
 - . 41-50
0. What is your profession?
 - . Finance manager
 - . Software Developer
 - . Supply chain manager
 - . Department head
 - . Customer

Variable-based questions

Questions	Yes	No
3. "In 2021 the "ecommerceDB" reported that Ireland's online market was valued at around € 3.7 billion along with being placed in 42 positions all over the world." Do you agree?		
4. "The sales of e-commerce in Ireland have shown growth and it has reached US\$7,819 million in 2022". Do you agree?		
5. "20% of the companies in Ireland claimed to experience malicious external attacks". Do you agree?		

<p>6. “The Irish Government introduced the “Digital Ireland Framework” focusing on increasing the digital skills of the country.”</p> <p>Do you agree?</p>		
<p>7. “The rate of data breaches can be reduced by maintaining the international quality standards ISO 27001”. Do you agree?</p>		
<p>8. “It is reported that 61% of the consumers would shift to the competitor of the companies in Ireland if they experience any bad situation regarding customer service.” Do you agree?</p>		
<p>9. “As 92% of people in Ireland can access a strong internet it acts as one of the driving factors for the increasing sales of the business in online platforms.” Do you agree?</p>		
<p>10. “The Irish Government has reduced the debit card interchange fee cap to 50% of the EU cap of 0.2%”. Do you agree?</p>		