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Editorial – Introduction to the Issues

Nnamdi O. Madichie,
Editor

This issue presents four papers examining diverse areas, from workplace behaviour and green consumerism to the impact of geopolitical events on retail and employee satisfaction in healthcare. Together, these studies offer insights into behavioural and environmental dynamics in organizational and consumer contexts, spanning various global regions and sectors.

The first paper, authored by Shehzana Kanwal, explores “Subordinate Counterproductive Work Behaviour on Supervisor Incivility” within Pakistan's IT sector. Using the Stressor-Emotion Model, the study investigates how subordinate behaviour impacts supervisor incivility, with supervisor hostile emotions acting as a mediator and subordinate prosocial behaviour as a moderator. Through a survey of 220 employees, findings indicate that counterproductive behaviours among subordinates are positively linked to supervisor hostility, with prosocial behaviours tempering this effect. The study concludes with implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

In the second paper, Aziz Ahmed Ali Mohammed's investigates the effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK's fashion retail sector, particularly during the holiday season. The study identifies challenges such as inflation-driven price increases, supply chain disruptions, and reduced demand. Additionally, it discusses how artificial intelligence (AI) could potentially address these issues. Through comprehensive data analysis, the paper highlights the significant impact of inflation on consumer spending and suggests AI as a potential solution to mitigate the adverse effects of geopolitical conflicts on retail.

The third paper, by Usman Gul, analyses employee satisfaction at the UK National Health Service's Queen Elizabeth Hospital in London. Using a quantitative approach, the study examines the influence of personal traits (problem-solving, integrity, and teamwork) and employee engagement on satisfaction levels. Findings indicate that while problem-solving and integrity significantly affect satisfaction, teamwork does not. The paper further reveals that employee well-being mediates the relationship between integrity and satisfaction. Recommendations for enhancing satisfaction through incentives and positive workplace culture are included, with suggestions for future research across multiple organisations and qualitative methods.

In the fourth and final paper by Simranpreet Kaur on social media's influence on purchasing behaviour reveals the substantial role digital platforms play in consumer engagement and sales conversion. For UK digital businesses, this indicates a need to prioritize strategic content creation, targeted social commerce campaigns, and collaborations with credible influencers. The implications extend to a global scale, suggesting that businesses everywhere can benefit from leveraging social media's interactive, visual appeal to enhance consumer trust and drive impulse purchases.

These studies collectively enrich our understanding of the factors shaping consumer, employee, and organizational behaviour across various industries and geographic contexts. The contributions also further our understanding of those critical factors influencing consumer choices, workplace interactions, and employee satisfaction, offering practical implications for businesses and institutions across various sectors.



Subordinate Counterproductive Work Behaviour on Supervisor Incivility: A mediating role of Hostile Emotions and moderating role of Prosocial Behaviour in the IT sector of Pakistan.

Shehzana Kanwal

Abstract

Based upon the concept of Stressor-Emotion Model, this study investigates the impact of subordinate counterproductive work behaviour on supervisor incivility in the presence of supervisor hostile emotions as mediator and subordinate prosocial behaviour as moderator, among employees of IT sector of Pakistan. Data were collected from 220 employees working in the IT sector using the convenience sampling method. The results show that there exists a positive relationship between subordinate counterproductive work behaviour and supervisor, and and hostile emotions mediate this relationship. Meanwhile, subordinate prosocial behaviour being a moderator weakens the relationship between subordinate counterproductive work behaviour and supervisor hostile emotions.

Keywords

- Stressor-Emotion Model
- IT sector
- Pakistan
- Subordinate counterproductive work behaviour
- Supervisor incivility
- Supervisor hostile emotions
- Subordinate prosocial behaviour

Introduction

Supervisor incivility refers to low-intensity negative behaviours that are directed towards subordinates by their supervisors (Shin et al. 2022). These behaviours are typically subtle, such as displaying a lack of respect, being dismissive or ignoring the subordinate, and are often ambiguous and unclear (Jawahar & Schreurs 2018; Shin & Hur 2020). In contrast to other forms of exploitation, such as harassment or bullying, supervisor incivility may not be immediately recognized as harmful, but it can still have a significant impact on the well-being, performance, and job satisfaction of subordinates (Yin et al. 2023). Although these behaviours may seem relatively minor, they can create a negative work environment and erode trust and morale among subordinates (Anjum et al. 2021; Shin et al. 2022).

Research has shown that supervisor incivility can have several negative consequences for employees (e.g. Liu et al. 2019; Kim et al. 2021). For example, subordinates who experience supervisor incivility are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and burnout, which can lead to increased absenteeism and turnover (Alola et al. 2018). Additionally, supervisor incivility can have an undesirable impression on subordinates' job satisfaction and performance, as it can lead to feelings of resentment, demotivation, and disengagement (Abubakar et al. 2017). Overall, supervisor incivility is an important concept in organizational research, as it highlights the negative impact that subtle; low-intensity negative behaviours by supervisors can have on the well-being and performance of subordinates (Liu et al. 2010). The research in this area has consistently shown that supervisor incivility is a major factor that causes subordinates to engage in counterproductive work behaviour (Hongbo et al. 2020; Han et al. 2021). While such argument implies that abusive supervision comes before subordinates' deviance, the proposed study claims that there may be another possible explanation for this relationship. Specifically, it considers the possibility that supervisors may engage in uncivil behaviours as a response to subordinates' CWB. Hence, it is very important to investigate about subordinate counterproductive work behaviour in IT industry of Pakistan to realize its impacts on supervisor incivility and overall organizational patterns. As by identifying and countering, this behaviour efficiently at workplace can help in nurturing the environment that promotes teamwork, enhances employee satisfaction and retains industry's competitive edge during the era of rapid technological developments. This study provides a theoretical explanation of how, when and why subordinates' counterproductive behaviour toward some people can lead to supervisor incivility. The study views CWB as a social strain and supervisor incivility as a type of unethical workplace behaviour, both linked through hostile emotions

experienced by supervisors. The study develops (and will later empirically test) a theoretical model based on the Spector and Fox's (2005) Stressor-Emotion Model to show that certain workplace social stressors, such as CWB-I, may trigger hostile emotions in supervisors, like fear or anger, which lead to dysfunctional behaviours, such as supervisor incivility. This study's use of the Stressor-Emotion Model to examine these relationships has great theoretical significance as it explicitly addresses how subordinates' CWB-I may provoke supervisor incivility, which is a concern raised by many recent scholars. The proposed study argues that CWB-I, which refers to behaviour that violates norms and harms organizational members, may be related to supervisor incivility through the mediating effect of supervisor hostile emotions.

Additionally, the Stressor-Emotion Model also explains the circumstances under which the relationship between CWB and supervisor incivility is less or more likely to occur. As per this model, individuals frequently evaluate their work environment to determine whether it is stressful, and it is through this evaluation process that they decide whether a certain situation is a stressor. Considering this, exploring potential moderators of this process is essential. The proposed study contends that subordinates may engage in different, opposing behaviours at the same time that together influence the level of supervisors' experienced hostile emotions and ensuing incivility. For instance, some studies suggest that engagement in CWB may co-occur with positive behaviours, such as prosocial behaviour. The proposed study posits that when a supervisor observes subordinates' CWB in combination with prosocial behaviour; they are likely to appraise it as less threatening, which lessens the intensity of their emotional and behavioural reactions toward the subordinate.

The study theoretically established and empirically validated a model explaining the relationship between subordinate's CWB and supervisor incivility through mediation effects of hostile emotions and moderation effects of prosocial behaviour. More specifically, it plans to analyse whether subordinates' CWB indirectly leads to supervisor incivility through supervisor hostile emotions, and whether this indirect relationship is moderated through subordinates' prosocial behaviour. The study formulated three research questions: Does subordinates' CWB directly cause supervisors to behave uncivilly? Does subordinates' prosocial behaviour lessen the impact of their CWB on SHE? Does subordinates' PSB lessen the indirect impact of their CWB on supervisor incivility through SHE? Based on the above questions, following are the research objectives that the proposed study sought to: determine the impacts of subordinates' CWB on supervisor uncivility, determine the mediation effects of hostile emotions between SCWB and Supervisor incivility, and determine whether subordinates' prosocial behaviour lessens the impact of SCWB on supervisor hostile emotions.



Literature Review

Overview of IT Industry of Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing nation with a population of around 220 million people. The IT industry of Pakistan is in its establishing phase and has been growing very rapidly since last few years. This industry has grown dramatically, instituting itself as one of the country's principal and rapidly growing sectors and has been contributing towards the economic development of the country as well. The IT companies are mainly operational in different chief cities of Pakistan including Lahore, Karachi and Pakistan's capital Islamabad. Additionally, this sector has employed over 300,000 professionals, which are contributing towards the success of this sector. Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) has reported that, this the IT industry is growing at a rate of 18% each year and the total revenue through this industry is expected to reach up-to \$7 billion by the year 2023 (Farooq, 2023).

Additionally, this sector contributes around 1% towards the GDP of Pakistan by crossing its benchmark of \$4bn until now, which is further expected to reach to around \$20bn by 2025 (Leghari, 2022). With this, IT sector has become a major contributor towards the economic uplift of Pakistan. Current Government is already taking several steps towards the standardization and promotion of this sector. There have been several enduring investments for the further expansion of this IT sector. Several developments and laws aligning with are encouraged as well in order to provide benefits to the people, IT industry and economy of Pakistan at a broader level. Due to rapid change in Technology and the growing importance of IT industry in Pakistan, this study has targeted IT sector to analyse the impacts of SCWB and supervisor incivility. As if such practices will be continued, it will not only hamper the performance of the company but will have sever effects on Pakistan's economy as well.

Stressor-Emotion Model (SEM)

SEM is a theoretical model that seeks to explain how environmental strains generate the adverse and undesirable outcomes that may lead towards the work behaviour that is against the workplace culture (Spector and Fox 2005). According to the model, there are probable chances that hassles at workplaces leads to provoke deleterious rejoinders, such as anger, frustration, or anxiety, which can then lead to the expression of counterproductive work behaviours, such as theft, sabotage, or absenteeism (Fox and Spector 2006). The model suggests that stressors are perceived and appraised by employees in terms of their potential impact on their goals and well-being. If a stressor is seen as threatening to those goals, it is likely to generate

negative emotions that can trigger a variety of work behaviours that are not according to workplace (Zhang et al. 2019). The model also acknowledges that individual factors, such as personality traits or coping strategies, can influence the way employees respond to stressors and regulate their emotions (Fox and Spector 2006; Fida et al. 2015). Overall, the SEM of CWB provides a useful structure for understanding the psychological processes that underlie the expression of counterproductive work behaviours in the workplace. By identifying the key factors that contribute to the emergence of these behaviours, the model can help managers and organizations develop strategies to prevent and manage them effectively.

Although different, the SEM of CWB aligns with Affective Events theory given by Weiss and Cropanzano's in 1996 as they both highlight the role of emotions in shaping human behaviours in the workplace. Both models propose that environmental events or stressors can trigger emotional reactions that, in turn, can influence behaviour in the workplace. In the case of AET, positive or negative events in the workplace can trigger specific emotions, which can lead to certain behaviours (Weiss and Cropanzano 1996). In the SEM of CWB, apparent stressors present in environment can lead to opposing emotional reactions, which can then trigger counterproductive work behaviours. Furthermore, both models recognize the importance of understanding how emotions influence behaviour in the workplace, and they provide an important framework for developing strategies to manage and prevent undesirable behaviours such as counterproductive work behaviours.

Stressor-Emotion Model of CWB and Supervisor Incivility

Even though past studies have conceptualized supervisor incivility as a kind of CWB, as far as the author's knowledge is concerned, no study till date has applied this affect-based model of CWB to imagine and describe the process of supervisor incivility. Martinko et al. (2013) are of the same view that the supervisor incivility research has not fully used the CWB's emotion-based theory to understand the underlying processes leading to supervisors' uncivil conduct, although it is theoretically possible. While researchers have recently started to study how work environment, subordinate actions and supervisor emotions with respect to supervisor incivility (e.g. Anjum et al. 2021; Im and Cho 2022; Dedahanov et al. 2022), exploration of the antecedents of supervisor incivility from the theoretical viewpoint of CWB is important to develop a thorough understanding of this process. Against this backdrop, the proposed study claims that supervisor's CWB (i.e. supervisor incivility) may be an outcome of some work-related environmental stressor (i.e. subordinate CWB) along with the hostile emotional responses of supervisor to this stressor.

Subordinate Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Counterproductive work behaviour refers to actions taken by employees that can harm or disrupt their organizations, colleagues, or customers (Baron and Neuman 1996). Subordinate counterproductive work behaviour toward individuals (CWB-I) refers to actions or behaviours that are harmful or detrimental to organizational members. Such behaviours can range from minor infractions such as tardiness or gossiping to more serious offenses like theft, sabotage, or physical violence (Spector and Fox 2006; Liao et al. 2021). Research on subordinate CWB-I is ongoing and has resulted in a variety of findings. Some studies have focused on identifying the causes and consequences of subordinate CWB-I (e.g. Eschleman et al. 2014; Perotti et al. 2022), while others have explored potential interventions to reduce or prevent it (e.g. Götz et al 2020; Schreurs et al. 2021). Overall, the current status of research on subordinate CWB-I suggests that it is a complex phenomenon influenced by a range of factors. Ongoing research is likely to continue exploring the causes and consequences of subordinate CWB-I, as well as potential interventions to address this dysfunctional behaviour in the workplace.

Hostile Emotions

Hostile emotions refer to negative feelings and attitudes that are characterized by anger, hostility, and resentment towards others (Turner 2007). These emotions can be directed towards a specific individual or group of people, and they often stem from perceptions of unfairness, mistreatment, or disrespect (Ihlebaek and Holter 2021). Examples of hostile emotions include anger, frustration, resentment, and contempt (Turner 2007). In a work setting, hostile emotions can have negative consequences for both the individual experiencing them and those around them (Navarro-Carrillo et al. 2018). Hostile emotions can lead to aggressive or retaliatory behaviour, as well as decreased job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. Additionally, hostile emotions can create a negative work environment that can impact the morale and well-being of employees (Lim et al. 2018).

Subordinate Prosocial Behaviour

Prosocial behaviour refers to actions taken by lower-level employees that are intended to benefit their organizations, colleagues, or customers (Graham 1991; Sun et al. 2019). Unlike counterproductive work behaviour, which can harm or disrupt workplace functioning, prosocial behaviour contributes to a positive work environment and helps organizations achieve their goals (Kelley and Hoffman 1997). Examples of subordinate prosocial behaviour include helping colleagues with work tasks, volunteering for



additional responsibilities, mentoring new employees, and offering constructive feedback to supervisors (Kang et al. 2020). Research on subordinate prosocial behaviour has shown that it can have numerous positive outcomes for organizations and employees (Podsakoff et al. 2009). For example, the study of Aydin Sünbül and Aslan Gördesli (2021) found that subordinate prosocial behaviour was positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived supervisor support. Other research has suggested that prosocial behaviour can enhance team cohesion and collaboration, promote knowledge sharing and innovation, and lead to better customer service (Al-Yaaribi and Kavussanu 2017). Overall, subordinate prosocial behaviour is an important aspect of positive workplace functioning that can benefit organizations and employees alike.

Subordinate CWB and Supervisor Hostile Emotions

Research has suggested with compelling evidence that there is a relationship between subordinate CWB and supervisor hostile emotions (e.g., Haggard and Park 2018; Jha and Sud 2021). Specifically, when supervisors encounter instances of CWB-I by their subordinates, they may experience hostile emotions such as anger, frustration, and disappointment. These hostile emotions can then impact the way supervisors interact with their subordinates, potentially leading to deviant workplace behaviour and other negative outcomes (Haggard and Park 2018). Furthermore, supervisors' emotional reactions to subordinate CWB can influence how they respond to these behaviours (Lam et al. 2017). For instance, if a supervisor responds with harsh criticism or punishment, this may exacerbate the problem by fuelling resentment and further counterproductive behaviour. On the other hand, if a supervisor responds with empathy and understanding, this may help to defuse the situation and prevent future incidents of CWB.

Subordinate CWB can trigger hostile emotions in supervisors for a variety of reasons. Supervisors often expect their subordinates to behave in a certain way and follow the organization's rules and norms. When subordinates engage in CWB, they violate this trust and may lead supervisors to feel a sense of betrayal, anger, or disappointment. CWB can also be seen as a threat to the organization's well-being, such as decreased productivity, financial loss, or damage to reputation (Bordia et al. 2008; Wang et al. 2019). This perception of threat can evoke hostile emotions in supervisors such as anxiety, stress, or fear. CWB can disrupt the smooth functioning of work routines and processes, leading to additional work for supervisors or other employees (Everton et al. 2007). This disruption can lead to frustration, annoyance, or resentment in supervisors. In addition, CWB can violate social norms and values that supervisors uphold, such as honesty, respect, or fairness (Wei and Si 2013). Such violations can trigger hostile emotions such as moral outrage,

disgust, or indignation. Besides, CWB can have a personal impact on supervisors, such as having to deal with a difficult subordinate or feeling responsible for the behaviour of their team (Wei and Si 2013). This personal impact can lead to hostile emotions, such as a feeling of guilt, shame, or helplessness.

Supervisor Hostile Emotions and Supervisor Incivility

Supervisor hostile emotions and supervisor incivility are closely related concepts. Research has shown that supervisor hostile emotions can increase the likelihood of supervisor incivility towards subordinates (e.g. Mullen et al. 2018). More specifically, when supervisors experience hostile emotions, they may be more likely to engage in uncivil behaviour, such as interrupting or ignoring their subordinates, making derogatory comments, or belittling their work. Following are some ways in which supervisor hostile emotions can lead to supervisor incivility. Hostile emotions can impair supervisors' self-control (Watkins et al 2015), making them more likely to act on their negative impulses and engage in uncivil behaviour towards their subordinates. Hostile emotions can make supervisors perceive their subordinates as a threat, leading them to respond with defensive or aggressive behaviour. In addition, hostile emotions can make supervisors more likely to violate social norms of civility and respect, leading them to engage in uncivil behaviour towards their subordinates. Furthermore, hostile emotions can spread from supervisors to their subordinates, creating a cycle of negative emotions and uncivil behaviour. Supervisors who are unable to regulate their negative emotions may be more likely to engage in uncivil behaviour towards their subordinates as a way of releasing their pent-up emotions.

Subordinate CWB, Subordinate Prosocial Behaviour and Supervisor Hostile Emotions

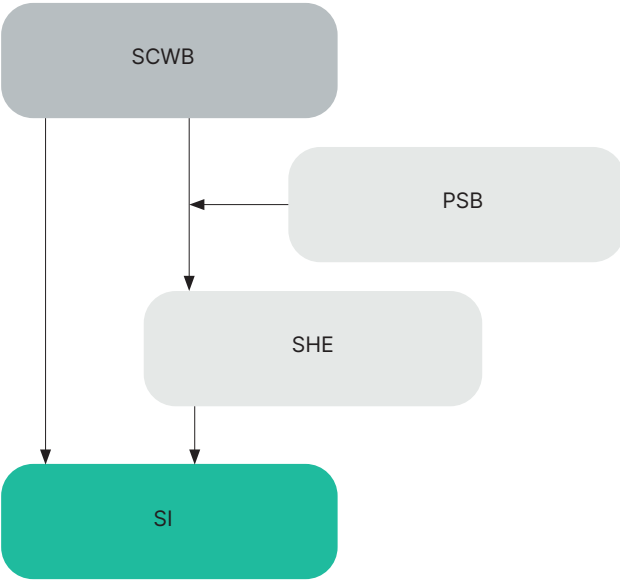
It is possible that subordinates' PSB will moderate the relationship between subordinate CWB and SHE. That is, when subordinates engage in prosocial behaviour, the positive behaviour may counterbalance the negative effects of CWB-and make it less likely for supervisors to experience hostile emotions. Subordinates' prosocial behaviour may positively reinforce supervisors, making them less likely to experience hostile emotions towards subordinates. When subordinates engage in helping behaviours, supervisors may feel more positively towards them, leading to less hostile emotions. Subordinate prosocial behaviour may also build trust between supervisors and subordinates (Brower et al. 2009), making it less likely for supervisors to experience hostile emotions towards them. In addition, when subordinates engage in organizationally-friendly behaviours, it creates a positive relationship between them and their supervisors, reducing the likelihood of hostile emotion and increasing goodwill.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the discussions in above sections, the study proposes the following research hypotheses which are also depicted in Figure 1:

- H1:** Subordinate CWB is positively related to supervisor incivility
- H2:** Hostile emotions of supervisors intervene the positive connection between SCWB and supervisor incivility.
- H3:** PSB of subordinates moderates the relationship among SCWB and supervisor hostile emotions.

Figure 1 Framework of the study



Methodology

The research philosophy of the study is positivism because the study's research questions aim to investigate objective reality or phenomena that can be measured and studied through empirical methods. This study also follows the deductive approach for several reasons. Firstly, there is a need to review the already existing literature for hypotheses development. Moreover, to accept or reject the hypotheses, primary data sources i.e., structured questionnaires are used for data collection. The population of the study entails people working in the IT sector of Pakistan. This sector is one of the principal sectors that contribute towards the economic development of Pakistan. For sample size, Kerjcie and Morgan Table (1970) will be used. For this purpose, an average population of the IT sector employees working in big cities of Pakistan was taken.

A convenience sampling technique was adopted to collect data from the workers of IT companies. It is one of the non-probability techniques. This technique

is used widely as it helps in collecting data from the respondents that are available easily like contact persons etc. The use of this technique helped saving time and enabled the gathering of data in assigned time. The sample size calculation followed Zikmund's (2002) formula and Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for choosing an appropriate sample size. Through both these approaches, the sample size turned out to be of around 300 individuals. Additionally, sample participants of the study included (i) managerial or white-collared employees of the IT Company and (ii) employees with 1 or years of tenure in the current company.

Data was collected through self-administered survey-based questionnaire method. The questionnaire were in English language and were consisted of four adapted scales. These survey based questionnaires were distributed through contact persons or email among the employees of IT companies like, Veevo Tech, Ikonik, united sol.

Structural equation modelling through SmartPLS3 was used to analyse data. PLS is a user-friendly software and have been used widely in social sciences since many years (Bhatti et al., 2023). Its use has been increased in different areas like HRM, management, accounting etc. (Ringle et al., 2020). By using SmartPLS, firstly measurement model was evaluated and lastly structural model was examined to test proposed hypotheses. Following the positivism research philosophy, this study applied quantitative research strategy and the primary data were collected using structured questionnaires from the employees of IT sector of Pakistan. Finally, the collected data were analysed using Smart PLS and the results are presented in the subsequent sections.

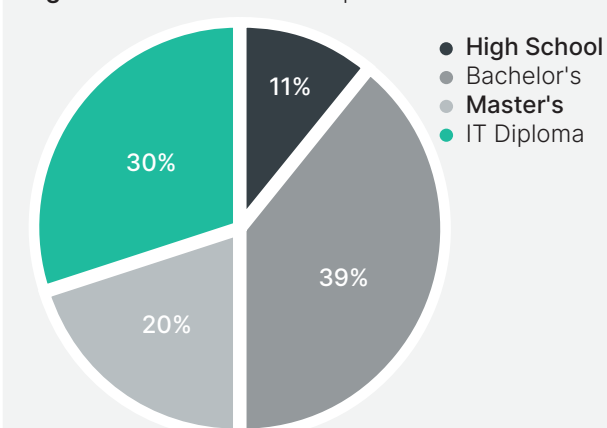
Findings and analysis

The sample size for this study was 300 employees. However, once the data were collected, few of the questionnaires were either not returned or not fully filled. So they were discarded and finally the data of 220 questionnaires were analysed which will be discussed in this section. This section includes frequency analysis, measurement model to check data's reliability and structural model for mediation and moderation analysis.

Demographic analysis

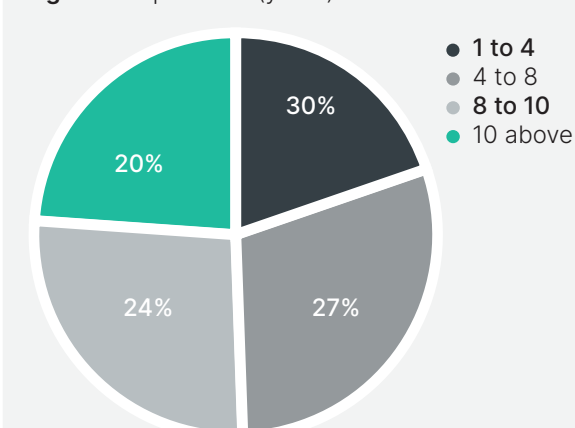
Demographic analysis shows a thorough impression of attributes of sample under study. It includes different demographic variables like, sex, age, qualification, experience etc. As this study's targeted sample was employees, working in IT sector of Pakistan, so the above selected variables fits best with it. Before data were collected, 100% privacy and confidentiality of collected data was ensured. Furthermore, all respondents were told about the reason of data collection as well. As the results show, 58% of the total population working in IT sector is male while 41% of them are females. Through this analysis, it can be referred that Pakistan's culture is still patriarchal. Although there has been seen a lot of improvements and the gender disparity has been resolved to some extents but still there are a lot of areas where females representation is still low. The other reason of this difference might be the job role affiliations with the gender and general perceptions says that females are not fit for doing technical roles. However, there has been a lot of improvement now which ensures that in future the situation will get even better.

Figure 2 Qualification of Respondents



After gender, respondents were asked about their level of qualification. As the study has targeted the people of IT sector. According to the results, 41% of the total population held bachelor's degree showing the appointments of the educated staff in IT sector. 24% of the total employees had IT diploma that means along with qualification, employees skills are also being valued and people with great technical skills are also given a chance. Furthermore, 8.6% had done their high school while 24% of the total respondents has Masters' degree.

Figure 3 Experience (years)



The analysis had shown that the progress of this sector is due to the perfect mix of skilful and qualified workforce. Following qualification was professional experience of the respondents. Results of the above graph has shown that a total of 29% employees had an experience of 1-4 years, followed by 27% employees with 4-8 years, while 24% were with 8-10 years of experience while 20% had 10+ years' experience. The reason behind asking experience was that the study has targeted sample were those who had at least

1 year of professional experience in order to better understand the variables and their observations at workplace. Most of the employees working have more 1 years of experience showing the behind the success of this sector. Lastly, job roes were asked, as the focus of this study included both supervisors/ managers/ team leads and the subordinates. Therefore, to have better clarification of each variable data was filled from the respective employees simultaneously.

Common method biasness (CMB)

As the data was against all the variables under study was collected through self-reporting survey questionnaires, there may be a chances of CMB. Harman's single factor test given in 1976 was performed as used in other studies (Bhatti et al., 2023). Threshold value for CMB is less than 50% and the results. The results obtained quantified 42.72% of the total variance i.e., less than the threshold value, presenting that there is no CMB issues in the collected data.

Multicollinearity statistics

Multicollinearity or Collinearity generally highlights the connection between predictor variables. Biasness in the data is checked using this statistics. It is found through VIF i.e., variance inflation factor and tolerance which found by using $1/VIF$ formula. Recommended threshold limit for VIF is from 1-5 (Ringle et al., 2020). Moreover, for tolerance the limit lies in between 0-1. According to Bhati et al., 2023, tolerance lower than 0.20 may result in biasness in the model.

Table 1. Collinearity analysis

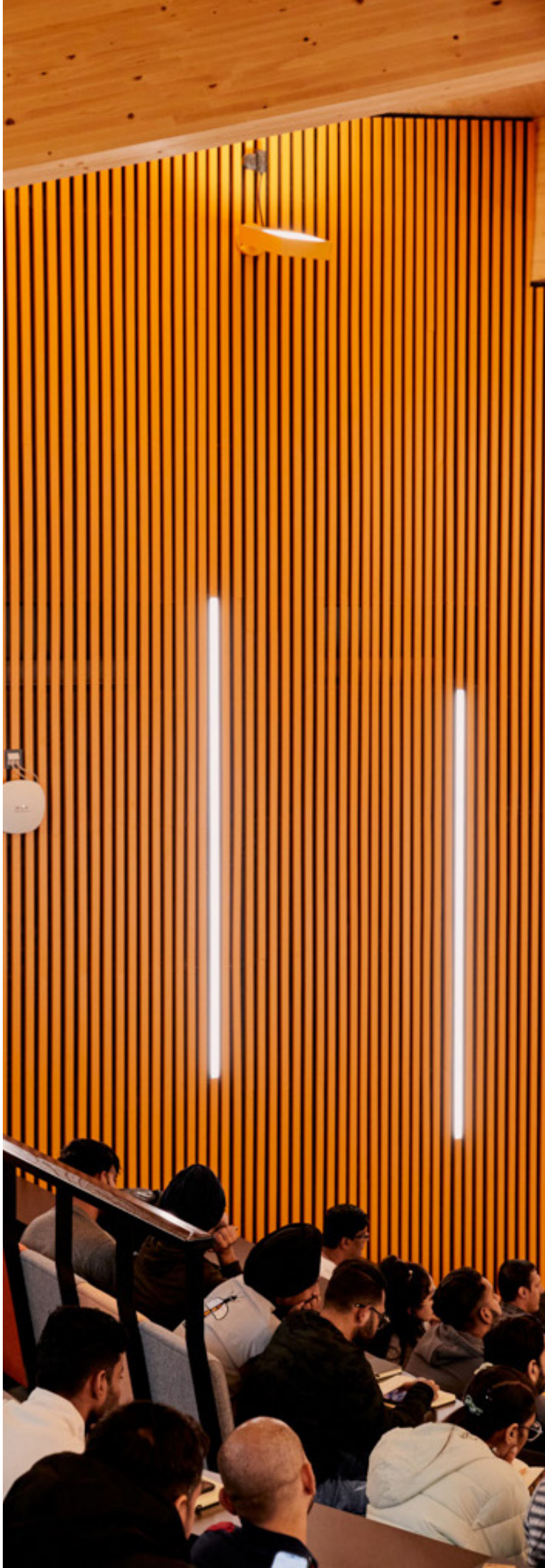
Variables	VIF	SPB
SCWB	2.693	0.371
SHE	1.753	0.570
SPB	3.240	0.308

According to the results in Table 1, all the values of VIF and Tolerance are in the recommended scale presenting no collinearity issues in the data.

Measurement model

Evaluation of the measurement model is first step of SmartPLS. It involves different steps where factor loadings are measured first and then constructs' reliability and validity are determined. Overall, through measurement model, the model fitness and normality of the data is checked (Ringle et al., 2015). As if the model is not good fit and the reliability is not there, then structural model analysis cannot be performed. Factor loadings (see Table 2) of each item for all constructs is shown in the table above. Its value ranges from -1 to +1 and values greater than 0.7 shows the greater fit to





the model (Tandon et al., 2021). The greater the value, greater will be influence on the construct. All the values attained in the table are above the predefined limit i.e., 0.7 which shows a good model fitness, showing that each item has a strong effect on the variables. Furthermore, the values of SRMR obtained were equal to 0.074, which is lower than the threshold limit of 0.1, depicting the good model fit. Likewise, NFI and RMS results i.e., 0.88 (threshold near to 1) and 0.12 (threshold near to 0) (Henseler et al., 2016) respectively also highlights the satisfactory model fitness.

Reliability and Validity

Once the data is collected, internal reliability and validity (Table 3) are checked through Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (CR). It helps in identifying that up to which extent the items are related to each other. For Cronbach alpha, the values should be greater than equal to 0.6 (Hair et al., 2017) whereas for CR's values should be above 0.7 (Djakasaputra et al.,2021). As shown in Table 3, the alpha and CR values are according to their assigned limits. Hence showing that data is reliable and can be used for further analysis. Additionally, AVE is also shown in the table. Through AVE, convergent validity is checked. According to Hock and Ringle (2006), the value of AVE should be greater than 0.5 but smaller than CRs’ value in order to be acceptable. All the values shown in the above table are greater than 0.5 but lower than respective CR values. Hence showing that acceptability of the model.

Structural Model

After measurement model, second step in Smart PLS is measuring the structural model through bootstrapping with a resample of n=5000. This model is used to check the proposed hypotheses. It include values for beta, sig value, t- value, Upper limit (UL) and lower limit (LL). The Direct effects show the linear relations among independent and dependent variables (Table 4). Results in the above table shows whether the proposed relations are accepted or not. As per the values, all effects have significant positive relationship. T values obtained are all above the predefined limit i.e., greater than +2 or less than -2. Additionally, the p/ sig. values attained are all within in the limit i.e., less than 0.05. According to these results, the proposed hypotheses are accepted. That means, if there is subordinate counter productive work behavior, then there is a rise in supervisors’ incivility. Hence, H1 is accepted. Furthermore, the results highlights that with the rise of SHE, supervisor incivility towards its subordinates also increases.

Table 2. Factor loadings

Constructs	Items	Loadings
Subordinate counter productive work behavior	SCWB1	0.721
	SCWB2	0.765
	SCWB3	0.781
	SCWB4	0.823
	SCWB5	0.784
	SCWB6	0.782
	SCWB7	0.888
	SCWB8	0.823
	SCWB9	0.781
	SCWB10	0.722
	SCWB11	0.729
	SCWB12	0.782
	SCWB13	0.890
	SCWB14	0.724
	SCWB15	0.744
	SCWB16	0.812
	SCWB17	0.910
	SCWB18	0.856
	SCWB19	0.746
	SCWB20	0.791
	SCWB21	0.832
	SCWB22	0.772
	SCWB23	0.792
Subordinate prosocial behavior	PB1	0.878
	PB2	0.816
	PB3	0.796
	PB4	0.687
	PB5	0.779
	PB6	0.881
	PB7	0.768
	PB8	0.876
	PB9	0.884
Supervisor Hostile emotions	SHE1	0.772
	SHE2	0.773
	SHE3	0.872
	SHE4	0.743
	SHE5	0.874
	SHE6	0.814
	SHE7	0.726
	SHE8	0.793
Supervisor Incivility	SI1	0.830
	SI2	0.742
	SI3	0.910
	SI4	0.789
	SI5	0.965

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
SCWB	0.675	0.693	0.597
PSB	0.745	0.797	0.603
SHE	0.721	0.816	0.598
SI	0.801	0.861	0.724

Table 4. Direct effects

	B	t	Sig.
SCWB SI	0.655	3.429	0.001
SCWB SHE	0.374	5.343	0.000
SHE SI	0.701	7.981	0.002

Mediation analysis

Mediation in general terms is defined as a causal change, in which one variable brings change in other, which in turn brings variation in the third variable. It is basically a chain reaction, in which one variable changes due to the change in other one. In this study Supervisor's Hostile emotions is used as a mediator between subordinate counterproductive work behaviour and supervisor incivility. The specific indirect results are shown in the table above. As per the results, there is an existence of mediation effects. In line with H2, the indirect effects between SCWB and SI via SHE are significant (beta= 0.076, p= 0.000). Additionally, the upper and lower limit involved no zero and (.223, .342). It means that, due to subordinate counterproductive behaviour at workplace, hostile emotions among supervisor arises which further results in supervisor incivility. Hence, H2 is accepted.

Moderation analysis

This analysis is performed to check the extent up to which the relation between independent and dependent variables varies due to the addition of moderating (M) variable. In moderation analysis, first of all an interacting term is created by multiplying IV and Moderator i.e., SCWB* Prosocial behaviour. The interaction term found was 0.108. the results attained had shown significant moderation effects i.e., B= 0.208, p=0.001. With this, it can be inferred that, there exist a significant impact of moderator between SCWB and supervisor hostile emotions. Therefore, H3 is accepted. Based upon the above discussion, Pakistan's IT sector is male oriented but female representation is increasing with the passage of time. As discussed already, it is one the major sectors contributing to the GDP of the country as it has skilled, experienced and qualified workforce. All the data collected was reliable and valid, as there existed no biasness as checked using different tests. Furthermore, all the hypotheses proposed in 2nd section are accepted as well.

Discussion

Based upon stressor-emotion pattern, this current study aimed at investigating the link the SCWB and supervisor incivility. Through this study, a putative model was developed to evaluate how hostile emotions among supervisors effects incivility in supervisors, which are generated due to existence of counter-

productive behaviour in subordinates. In order to test the proposed framework, a field study was conducted in Pakistan's context, where the data were collected from various IT organizations operating in big cities of Pakistan. Astoundingly, this study found the connection among SCWB and supervisor incivility was intensively dependent upon the participations of underlings' prosocial conduct. Added further to this means, managers exhibit forgiving attitude towards those subordinates that are although involved in such work activities that are opposing to the workplace, however, those employees demonstrate admirable abetting behaviours towards others employees at workplace. On the other hand, supervisors exhibit no forbearing to such employees who demonstrated CWB and were also discourteous and impolite towards their peers and other members. From this, it can be concluded that subordinate CWB makes supervisors to act on their negative impulses and engage in uncivil behaviour towards their subordinates. Hence, the first hypothesis of the study is accepted along with the fulfilment of the goal of the study i.e. To determine the impacts of subordinates' CWB on supervisor uncivility.

The results of the data provided valuable insights about the paradigms of the workstations. SCWB, which is termed as a stressor, have a significantly positive link with hostile sentiments of the supervisors. Through this, it can be inferred that when employees get involved in the CWB and participate in counter- work practices, their supervisors encounter spiteful and harsh emotions. In addition, this work further observed that hostile reactions among supervisors were related positively to their involvement in insolent behaviour (Mullen et al. 2018). This exhibits that if supervisors are discontented, they are more likely to treat the employees working under them uncivilly. Therefore, it can be inferred that in the presence of subordinate CWB supervisors become hostile and get engage in the uncivil behaviour. With this, the mediation hypothesis is accepted and the second of the study is achieved too: To determine the mediation effects of hostile emotions between SCWB and Supervisor incivility

In general, the results of the study provided robust support for the proposed model and had key theoretical and practical inferences. This research has put emphasis on understanding the function of emotions and their dynamics between supervisor incivility and SCWB. Furthermore, the study also put emphasis on the necessity of encouraging prosocial behaviour in order to extenuate supervisor's uncivil reactions. As when subordinates exhibits the prosocial

behaviour, the negative effects of subordinate CWB may reduce and may reinforce supervisors positively. With this a trust is built between supervisor and his subordinates that reduces the hostile feelings among supervisors. Hence, prosocial behaviour weakens the relation between SCWB and hostile emotions of supervisors. With this our third hypothesis is accepted too and hence the third objective of the study is fulfilled too i.e., To determine whether subordinates' prosocial behaviour lessens the impact of SCWB on supervisor hostile emotions.

Theoretical Implications

This study holds implications towards existing literature. Although the research conducted previously have shown that one of the basic reasons for employees to involve in opposing work behaviours are the uncivil supervisors. However, this study has focused on otherwise connection between both the variables. In continuation of it, this present work contribute significantly towards the already existing but segmented data on supervisor incivility.

Firstly, although there found an extensive literature highlighting the toxicity of uncivil supervisors at workplaces, there is a handful of data available where the forerunners of the uncivil behaviours were explored. Additionally, the scholars of supervisor incivility have recognized the absence of strong theoretical reasoning that may help in explaining the means resulting in supervisor incivility. To fill this void, the present study has added to the existing literature by highlighting the forerunners of supervisors incivility at workplace. By examining SCWB and hostile reactions of supervisors, this study is worthy in various aspects; it has recognized the need of destructive leadership meta-analyses and has explored the role of SCWB in generating uncivil attitude in supervisors. Therefore, based on its findings, this study supports that the opposing attitude of subordinates may be leading cause triggering towards incivility at workplace. In addition to this, this study has allowed to expand the work of Lian and its co-fellows conducted in 2014, by shedding light in SCWB and created its links with SHE and supervisors' incivility. This study is first of its nature that explored how hostile reactions affects the connection between SCWB and incivility by utilizing emotion based structure. Studies conducted previously, just sketchily attempted to gain understanding about how and why some emotions like anger, contempt etc. are linked with supervisor incivility. However, this study provided a detailed view and analytically investigated to provide clear and deep understandings about the role of hostile emotions. In continuation to this concept, this study provided an empirical structure in order to explain the role played by SCWB and supervisor incivility.

Secondly, this study also highlighted the subordinates' prosocial behaviour. By doing so, the existing literature of SCWB and supervisor incivility has been broadened further. To be more precise, this study debated that the supervisor- subordinate connection dictates a give and take paradigm as well. It means that supervisors' don not necessarily exhibit the uncivil behaviour towards all the employees working under them. Rather, it varies as per employee's behaviour. In addition to this, the study propose that CWB have damaging influences not only on organizations but on supervisors as well. However, the prosocial behaviour is productive. In comparison to the employees with low levels of prosocial behaviour, supervisors irrespective of their counter productive work activities favour those employees who represents the higher degree of prosocial behaviours. In previous research, the emphasizes was on forecasting employees' performance in the presence of supervisor incivility, the present study is the pioneer in studying the moderating role of prosocial behaviour among employees. This behaviour is considered to be an extra role performed by the employees which is beneficial in nature, and plays a crucial role in evaluating the effects of uncivility of supervisors.

Thirdly, the study of hostile emotions in this study has also contributed to the literature. As, in previous works, mostly hostile emotions among subordinates were studies. However, this study shed light on the hostile emotions of supervisors that are triggered by SCWB. In line with this, the study proposed that these emotions can be mitigated by employees if they represent a pro-social behaviour. Hence, this study not only added to SCWB literature, but also to other variables under study. Fourth, and lastly, the prior studies were conducted at generic levels or have targeted sectors like hospitality (Im & Cho, 2022) or tourism sector etc. However, rare literature is found in IT industry especially in Pakistan's context. Therefore, this study fill this gap as well and is a valuable contribution towards the context of Pakistan.



Practical Implications

Besides theoretical, this study holds several practical contributions as well. Although supervisor incivility influences the employees' mental and physical health adversely, still in not every organization, supervisor incivility is highlighted at a broader level rather it is dealt as a pressing issue. However, this study has examined this concept in relation to SCWB in IT sector of Pakistan and for this reason, this work has numerous practical contributions that are discussed below:

The basic agenda of the study is that employees' unethical behaviours at workplace whether small or big e.g., impoliteness, should not be ignored at any cost and should be provided timely solutions. As, they may seem to be unimportant or seems like such actions that do not need to be addressed, but avoiding these actions can foster such environment, which will ultimately push supervisors to get involve in incivility. Such issues can be addressed if companies include a clear and concise view of workplace ethics and norms, direct them to each employee on the very first day of their joining during introductory session. In doing so, new individuals at workplace may be provided proper assistance by highlighting what be expected from the employees and which attitude is discouraged at workplace. Nevertheless, just giving them directions may not enough and desirable results may not be attained until collective trainings are provided to them. These trainings are not restricted to any official handbooks and regulations rather they serve an aim beyond this in order to make sure that each employee has properly understood the information. This may involve any activities that are not relevant to any official tasks like group sessions, role- playing activities etc. so that SCWB may be pressed in timely manners. Therefore, in future, he/she may align their behaviours as per the required and directed behaviours. Therefore, in this aspect this study presents an important contribution. Because in this study the antecedents of supervisor incivility are discussed. Therefore, it can provide managers an insight about identifying such activities and addressing them on time in order to avoid further exploitations. Secondly, any activity or behaviours counter to workplace norms are to be confronted in order to have a positive work culture to foster productivity and overall profitability. SCWB may lead to have deleterious impacts on company's performance, as it lowers employee motivation and enforce them to engage into such activities that are against the organization's interests. There may be different strategies but one most impactful might be one, where the leaders give an ethical and moral training to its subordinates. Furthermore, managers must develop strategies that re in the best interest of the company as well as its employees. To do so, they must present themselves as a role model and should all the ethical standards of the workplace. In addition, effective management and implementation of the strategies must be ensured in a fair and constant manner. The basic focus of these

strategies must not to punish any employee rather to address their opposing behaviour. In doing so, managers should recognize employees for their ethical behaviour and may be given incentives in order to further foster ethical standards among them.

Thirdly, this study proposes that prosocial behaviours at workplace are given due importance. As, such people do not get themselves involved in any activity. This behaviour is imperative to the success of the company. So, based upon this study, the managers may be able to identify the paradigms of social politeness; this would help managers to foster a smooth environment. As these employees are recognized by supervisors in order to avoid any unethical activity. In conclusion, the basic idea of the study is that IT industry irrespective of its size should be proficient enough to recognize the subordinate CWB at workplace in order to avoid supervisors' hostile emotions and incivility. As, if this practice is not stopped, it will not only hamper the progress of the industry but the overall economic development of the country will be affected too. For all this, it is crucial to understand the antecedents of supervisor incivility at workplace and this study helps in providing a comprehensive understanding about this. Consequently, the present study holds both theoretical and practical implications and will be a valuable addition towards the existing literature as well for the future studies.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although the present study was carried, out carefully and holds noteworthy influences towards the existing literature too. However, this study is not error free and possess some limitations as well. Therefore, in this section, the study's failings are presented along with the future directions. Firstly, there lies a limit of generalizability of study because data from respondents was collected in one time. As the assigned period was very small, so cross-sectional design was adopted to have maximum response in one go. Although, the researcher manage to have maximum response rate but still in order to have generalizability, any other data collection technique may be applied.

Secondly, the potential for common technique variation is also one issue. The author did, however, take a number of measures to reduce this problem, including performing anonymous surveys, conducting a cross-sectional study, making sure that survey questions had no right or wrong responses, and obtaining multi-source data. In conclusion, although the present research has made significant contributions to the field, it is not without flaws, and further study is required

to completely comprehend the intricate connections among supervisor incivility, subordinate CWB, and hostile supervisor emotions. Additionally, the emphasis of prosocial behaviour in this study was only limited individual only also presents a limitation. As, this behaviour may have several other forms towards organization and its members as well. Although this type of prosocial behaviour is observed frequently in organization, still it is one of the least studied variable too. Therefore, the future scholars should look for different types of personal and organizational prosocial behaviour (such as interpersonal helping, and personal industry) along with different forms of CWB (such as production deviance) in order to have better know how of their impacts on supervisor incivility. Next, while the present study used emotion-based CWB model to explain the relation between SCWB and supervisor incivility. Although, this model explained the overall structure in a very proper manner. However other, frameworks like social exchange theory, self-determination theory etc. may be used by future scholars. As these theories may help in finding and explaining other paradigms of the relationship under study as well.

This study used prosocial behaviour as a buffer, in order to enhance the association between SCWB and incivility. At workplace, the conflict between the leaders and subordinates may lead to the creation of conflicts, which is not very easy to be resolved. As higher the opposing behaviour from employees, higher will be the hostility from supervisors. Therefore, the use of an appropriate moderator may have the positive outcomes. For this reason, the present study suggests the future researchers to investigate some moderators that are supervisor oriented rather than individual as already taken in this study. Therefore, other variables like equity sensitivity among the supervisor can be studied among the existing variables. As, if the leaders are sensitive and law oriented, chances to have CWB practices would be low whereas, any manager who is less sensitive,

there are intensive chances that CWB would be very high in such culture. Another limitations is the sector of the study, this study was limited to the IT sector of Pakistan only, further studies may be adopted to be conducted in other sectors like health sector or tourism sector etc. Additionally, the context of the study can be changed as well in order to have a clear picture of other contexts as well. Therefore, the same study can be carried out in any other country as well like the developed countries. Lastly, for this study all the data was gathered in one time period, that may lead to have biasness. So it is recommended for future researchers to collect data in different time periods, longitudinal approach about the existing framework.

Conclusion

Based upon the concepts of, CWBs' SEM to develop a theoretical basis, this study provides a unique and rigorous idea about the connection between SCWB and supervisor incivility. The findings of the study attained have shown that when subordinates engage in CWB, their leaders faces hostile emotions, which in turn may lead to unacceptable events like supervisor incivility. In addition to this, this research highlighted that importance of prosocial behaviour in order to find out whether supervisor incivility will be present or not. The findings fully substantiated the study's research model, showing how, when SCWB is likely to lead towards the incivility. With this proposition, the study did not that the model discussed in this work is the only mean to study the link between variables used in this study. As it is just a minor step and I hope that, it will help encouraging the future researchers in this area. As, today's business environment is competitive and it is the workforce that can help businesses to remain successful. Therefore, it is very important to understand the workplace practices and their careful management.



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Influence of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour in the UK Fashion Retail Sector During the Festive Season

Aziz Ahmed Ali Mohammed

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Russian invasion of Ukraine on the attitudes and behaviours of fast fashion consumers in the UK. Through an online survey it has been discovered that the war has changed the purchasing habits of UK fast fashion consumers. Most respondents declared that the UK fast fashion retail has been hampered by problems such as rising costs, declining product quality, and slow deliveries.

Keywords

- Business Confidence
- Russia-Ukraine War
- Supply Chain Disruptions

Introduction

The confidence of the business had been improving as lockdown precautions from the pandemic situation were relaxed but the war between Russia and Ukraine has dealt a harsh blow to the recovery. The level of inflation along with geopolitics has caused the officers of Chief Finance to declare a record degree of risk (Muschamp et al., 2022). Disruption of the supply chain, slow growth of the economy, and high rate of inflation generated because of the growing cost of energy, transportation, commodities, and lack of resources, seem to be the immediate effects of the war. As per the view of Balbaa (2022), the war between Russia and Ukraine increased the geopolitical tension worldwide, decreasing expectations from worldwide expansions because of the uncertainty around the effects of conflict, particularly on the worldwide supply chain.

According to Smith and Race (2022), there are concerns about the increasing cost of producing food because Ukraine along with Russia is the major exporter of grains as well as fertilizer. Over 90% of the wheat used in different nations is normally produced in the UK which is why analysts have warned that the battle may hinder the grain outputs, doubling the global prices of wheat (Smith and Race, 2022). This can result in major consequences throughout the globe because suppliers struggle to meet the demand for the food supply. According to Lederer (2023), in the light of persisting effects of stubbornly high inflation, and the crisis of fuel and food brought on because of the war condition in Ukraine, it has been predicted that the economic growth of the world will dramatically decrease by about 1.9 % in the year 2023 (Lederer, 2023). Aggressive tightening of money, increased uncertainty, and a high rate of inflation all point to a severe recession of the economic conditions globally. The 1.9% downturn in the global economy is considered to be historical which has also decreased about 3 % from the year 2022 (Lederer, 2023).

The condition of war between Russia and Ukraine has also impacted the fashion retail industry of the UK by influencing the purchasing intention of customers. The conflict has made an economic impact as the value of the Russian ruble has dropped significantly, making Russian-made items more expensive for customers of the UK. In the year 2022, the rate of inflation of the UK was 1.8 % and in the year 2023, this inflation rate decreased by 0.1 % due to the Russia-Ukraine war (Statista, 2022).

The economic impact has been particularly felt in the sector of luxury fashion, where high-end fashion items made in Russia have become expensive for the general population. Additionally, customers have been more worried about buying items from countries that have been affected by the conflict, whether directly or indirectly (Salonga, 2023). The economic uncertainty has caused a decrease in demand for fashion items as customers prefer to save money instead of buying new items and to manage their finances in the face of global



volatility. As a result, fashion retailers in the UK have seen a decrease in sales, especially during the festive seasons. Russia has seen a huge impact on the industry of fashion retailing. Major homegrown brands of fashion have ceased operations in the country. The clothing retailers like Zara and H&M have already ceased their operations in Russia while Nike has only stated that they are unable to promise the shipments of the items to Russian customers (Race and Hooker, 2022).

According to reports more than about 400 foreign companies ceased operations in Russia in the year 2022. The crisis of war seems to have had a tremendous effect on the fashion industry of the United Kingdom also because of the multiple restrictions that have been put in place. According to Husband (2022), the living cost within the UK has reached an all-time high, while the average number of consumers is suffering from a crisis of extreme living costs as a result of the high inflation rate due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. It has not been easy for the garment manufacturers of the UK to export as well as import the garments due to the increasing transportation expenses. The fashion retailers of the UK were forced to increase the rate of their fashion items. The consumers of the UK decreased their purchase of fashion items due to the high cost of living in the UK which caused severe losses in the fashion retailers of the UK (Race and Hooker, 2022). Moreover, the increasing rate of fuel in Russia because of their conflict with Ukraine has caused the shipment companies of the UK to increase their pricing, which ultimately impacts the retailers and garment suppliers of the UK.

From the above study, it can be stated that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has severely impacted the global inflation rate, along with the disruption of the supply chain that causes scarcity of food supply globally. This conflict has also impacted the fashion retail industry of the UK by changing the intention of their purchasing.

Problem statement

The war between Russia and Ukraine has had a significant impact on the global supply chain including a shortage of raw materials used in various industries (Noble, 2022). Moreover, the fashion industry has been badly impacted by the war due to the disrupting global supply chain and causing shortages of raw materials and increased logistics costs (Husband, 2022). This, in turn, has led to price increases for fashion retailers which may have affected consumer demand during festivals and events. Additionally, the conflict has led to economic uncertainty and job losses in some regions which have affected the disposable income of many consumers (Salonga, 2023). As a result, this has led to a decreased demand for fashion items as customers prioritise essential items over discretionary purchases. Furthermore, the conflict has created a sense of unease and instability that may have impacted consumer confidence and willingness to spend. This may have contributed to unprecedented cancellation issues for fashion retailers. Therefore, this present study is going to analyse the above-mentioned issues in order to implement potential strategies to mitigate them.

The present study has focused on the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on customer purchase-changing behaviour in the UK fashion market. According to Jagtap et al. (2022), the Russia-Ukraine war has had a significant impact on the flow of goods, availability of products, and increased costs of fuels which have led to disruptions in the global supply chain. The conflict has caused significant challenges to transportation infrastructure including delays and increased costs associated with alternative shipping routes (Levi and Haren, 2022). This has led to difficulties in the distribution of goods including fashion items and has caused disruptions to supply chains across industries. From the aforementioned information, it can be inferred that this research study has critically explored the research topic.

The aim of the research is to analyse the impact of Russia-Ukraine war on the inflation and underlying changes in the purchasing attitude of the customer in the UK based fashion retail sector during the festive season. The main objectives are to explore how Russia-Ukraine war caused inflation along with associated changes in the purchasing attitude of the customer in the UK based fashion retail sector during the festive season, recognise a suitable methodology by collecting data from customers of UK fashion retail sector to understand how Russia-Ukraine war impacted inflation and customer's purchasing attitude of fashion items during festive season, draw conclusion by eliminating challenges to revive the UK fashion sector after interviewing customers, and recommend feasible solutions to mitigate the challenges faced by UK fashion sector due to Russia-Ukraine war and inflation. The main Research Questions are four-fold – What was the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the inflation of the UK fashion sector? How has the Russia-Ukraine

war affected the purchasing attitude of the customers in the UK during the festive season in the fashion sector? What are the changes and challenges faced by customers due to inflation caused by the Russia-Ukraine war during the festive season? How to mitigate the challenges faced by customers due to Russia-Ukraine war and inflation?

Literature Review

The Russia-Ukraine war has shocked the global economy and enhanced the budget and supply of marketing initiatives in the UK retail sector. Here challenges and changes in the retail sector of the UK faced by consumers due to inflation which occurred during the Russia-Ukraine war are critically analysed. Moreover, relevant strategies to overcome the challenges in the UK retail sector are also evaluated in this part.

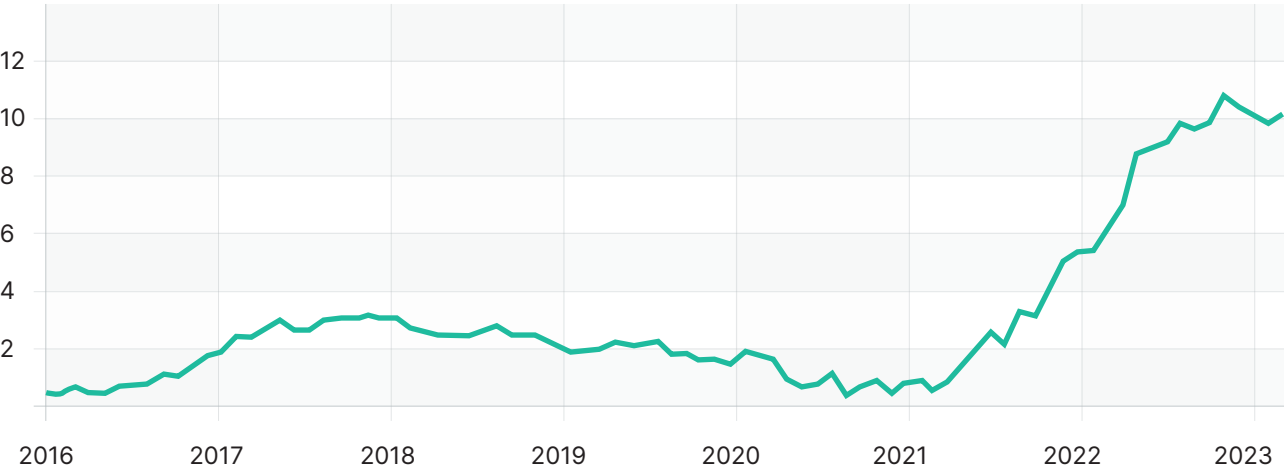
Impact of Russia-Ukraine war on the inflation of the UK fashion sector

Russia is one of the largest crude oil provider countries in the world which plays a major role in maintaining the global economy. As per the view of Maurya, Bansal and Mishra (2023), the Russia-Ukraine war has a significant impact on the retail industry of the UK along with other industries. On a similar note, Sweney (2022), stated that the inflation rate of the UK increased by 5.1% in August and 5.7% in September which has a significant impact on the economy of the UK. Moreover, food prices in the UK have increased by 10.6% during the Russia-Ukraine war due to the inflation rate. As mentioned by Krūmiņš and Kļaviņš (2022), the supply of raw materials in the UK has decreased due to the Russia-Ukraine war which creates challenges for the UK retail sector to maintain the productivity of retail products and impacts the marketing performance.

The global supply chain was disrupted due to the aforementioned war which increased the price of raw materials and decreased production. Moreover, the cost of retail products also increased due to supply chain disruption and affected financial performance due to poor customer engagement. Based on the report of the Government of UK (2023), the cost of domestic gas increased by 129% in February 2022 and the domestic electricity price increased by 67% in the UK. The rising cost of energy in the UK creates challenges for the retail sector to maintain its marketing performance. The inflation rate in the UK reached 10.4% in February 2023 which affects the supply of raw materials in the country (see Figure 1). According to Izzeldin et al. (2023), the shipping process of retail products in the UK was also affected by the increased inflation rate due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The emerging demand for luxury products in the UK was impacted by supply chain disruption and insufficient raw materials decreased production and increased the cost of products.

Figure 1: Inflation rate in the UK during the Russia-Ukraine war, Inflation rate went up to 10.4% in February 2023

Annual percentage change in consumer prices (CPI)



(Source: Government of UK, 2023)

Based on the viewpoint of Yeoman (2022), the high inflation rate in the UK creates challenges for the retail sector to meet the demand of customers and impacts the customer satisfaction level. Therefore, it can be said that the retail sector of the UK faced huge difficulties in maintaining its marketing performance due to the high inflation rate and supply chain disruption due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Effect of Russia-Ukraine war on purchasing attitude of the customers in UK during festive season in fashion sector

The ongoing Russia Ukraine conflict is having a major impact on the global economy, including the fashion industry. The UK is considered as one of the most important valuable markets worldwide. This war has changed the way consumers shop during the festival periods. One of the biggest impacts of the Russian Ukraine war on the British fashion industry is supply chain disruption. As per the data of OECD (2022), the war between Russia and UK and the containment of Covid-19 in China threaten to further disrupt already stretched global supply chains in the form of delayed deliveries, rising fuel prices and looming commodity crisis. In this context, the European Union (EU), UK and US have closed airspace to Russian airlines and vice versa (BBC, 2022). This information indicates that due to the war the export and import facilities are disrupted between Russia and the UK. It can be evaluated that this has forced the retailers to adjust their purchasing and stocking strategies, which has also impacted on the availability of products and it also changed the purchasing preferences of consumers. In this context, uncertainty and instability caused by the war have led to a decline in customer confidence.

Prices have significantly increased as a result of this supply scarcity. For instance, natural gas prices increased by 120–130% and coal prices increased by 95–75% in the first six months following the commencement of the conflict (WEF, 2023). In addition, this increase affected the decision-making regarding purchasing goods or products and consumers played a conservative role in terms of spending money. This led to a shift towards more affordable and practical fashion items with customers opting for simple, classic pieces over trend driven prices. This war has also led to changing perceptions of certain brands and some customers are more aware about the ethical implications of their purchases and the war highlights the importance of responsible sourcing and manufacturing (DeTienne et al., 2019). Brands with a stronger ethical and sustainable stance are more responsible and customers may like it during the holiday season because it is perceived as trustworthy. Conversely, brands with questionable ethical performance can be criticized by customers and lead to lost sales (DeTienne et al., 2019). Last but not least, the issue has modified marketing and promotional plans and by focusing on value and affordability, many merchants have adjusted to shifting consumer buying habits.

Additionally, to encourage customers to make purchases, retailers use early bird discounts, package deals and other incentives, retailers strategically use promotions and discounts (Lo and Salant, 2016). This has caused a trend toward more specialized marketing that pays attention to customer needs and interests. In conclusion, the Christmastime war between Russia and Ukraine had a substantial influence on consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK fashion business. Conflict has a number of significant effects, including

interruptions to the supply chain, a decline in customer confidence, changes in brand perception, and adjustments to marketing and advertising strategy. Retailers need to be aware of these shifts and adjust their tactics accordingly.

Fashion industry of the UK also experienced the decreasing purchasing power of the fashion products by the customers due to the recent war crisis between Russia and Ukraine. The price of the necessary and required materials for the fashion industry is getting hiked and this tends to increase the production cost of the products in the fashion industry of the UK. The increase in the production cost due to shortage of raw materials tends to enhance the price of the fashion products comparatively. As per the perspective of Robinson (2022), demand for fashionable products also decreased among the customer Inuk due to this conflict. Effective supply chain of the materials which helps to increase the brand expansion of the fashion industry in UK also affected due to the decrease in the fashion items. Hence, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine helped to decrease the usage of branded fashion products and it also affects the total revenue generation.

Changes and challenges

Customers faced different changes due to inflation during the festival period in the UK caused by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Considering the fashion industry of the UK the global fashion industry has gone through an interesting period in recent times (Posner 2020). The clothing industry of the UK faced some major changes in an unprecedented manner due to the inflation in the fashion product. The conflict between the Ukraine and Russia which started from the period of February, 2022 not only affected the global fashion industry supply chain and it's also severely impacted on the Russian fashion industry. The operation of Zara, H & M, Marks & Spencer has been suspended in the country due to the shortage of required materials supplied for the production of the fashion products (Rozario 2022). The changes faced by the customers such as: Increase in logistics costs, supply and production related problems, enhancement in the demand of luxury goods, and the rise in digital fashion. As per the perspective of Loeb (2021b), the increase in the logistical cost helps to enhance the cost of production. The usage in crude oil during the production of clothing as a material also affected due to the rise in the price of the fashion product in the UK and also in the global market. Hence, these changes affected the preferences of the customers in the UK due to the rise in price of the product caused by conflict between the two countries.

Due to the rise in the price of the products, the fashion industry of the UK also faced some issues. These issues are based on things such as: supply and demand of the product, increase in fashion apparel prices, rising shipping costs, and cost of living (Magnusdottir 2020).

After the lockdown the customers of the UK fashion industry also affected due to the supply of the fashion products. Suppliers due to rise in the material cost and transportation cost and many other problems mainly unable to provide quality fashion products at a quantity amount (Magnusdottir, 2020). As per the perspective of Talay, Oxborrow and Goworek (2022), the increase in the supply chain issue tends to decrease the customers size to the industry. The decrease in the profit amount mainly tends to occur due to lack of involvement of the employees in the production of the fashion products. Due to the shortage of employee involvement customers did not get an adequate amount of fashion products in the fashion industry of the UK (Loeb 2021a). Increase of the fashion products due to the conflict of the two countries mainly tends to shift the usage of the branded apparels. However, the standard of living also affected due to the rise in the price of the fashion products.

Strategies to combat the identified challenges faced by customers due to inflation

Based on the above issues some mitigation strategies also proposed to control the problems in the fast fashion industry. According to the opinion of Majumdar, Sinha and Govindan (2021), strategic stock, revenue management, dynamic assortment planning and so forth are the significant strategies for the risk mitigation. Recruitment of the talented employees and retention of the experienced and efficient employees to increase the production rate of the fashion products in the fashion industry.

Maintenance of healthy and effective relationships of the customer regarding the product quality helps to enhance the improvement in the quality of the product. Supply chain issues of the product also mitigated with the help of building trust and collaboration work style among the suppliers and employees and customers (Morgan 2020). Customer collaboration is also considered as a risk mitigation strategy to combat the challenges faced by the customers in the fashion industry. The price of the apparels in the fashion industry is also considered as a severe problem to the customers due to rise in inflation. Implementation of technology and proper infrastructure tools helps to decrease the production cost of the fashion items (Casciani, Chkanikova and Pal 2022). Implementation of artificial intelligence, augmented variation technology helps to improve the production of quality fashion products and this helps the customers to bring comfort.

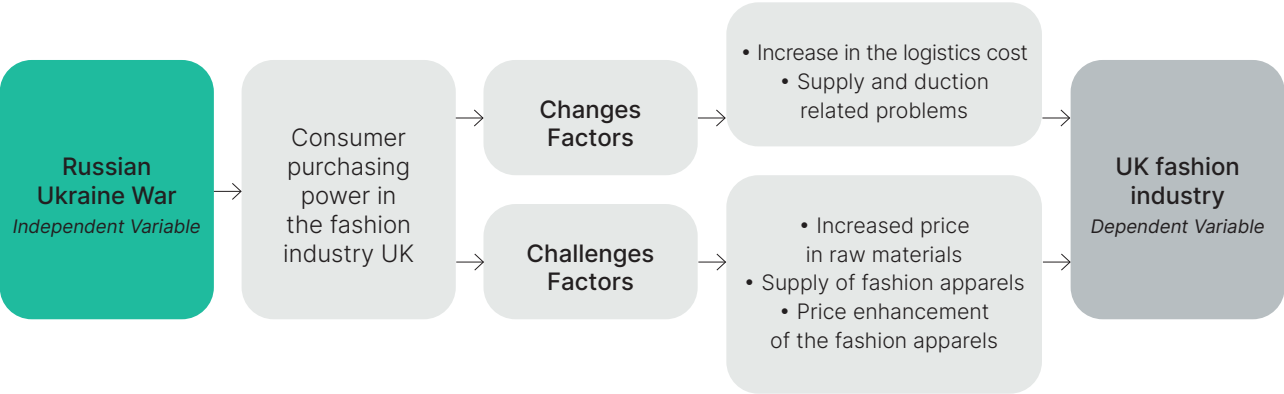
The customers also paid an affordable price regarding the fashion items in the fashion industry in the UK. As per the perspective of Wood, Watson and Teller (2021), proper price helps to increase the customer size of the fashion brand in the UK. Enhancement in the shipping cost also affected the business size and customer attraction in the fashion industry and the utilisation of

different transportation are the mitigation strategies. Proper planning and supply of the raw materials helps to increase the chance of delivery of the product to the customers. This tends to enhance the revenue generation of the fast fashion brands of the UK due to the inflation. As per the opinion of Moreno and Martínez Velázquez (2023), efficiency in the planning system helps to increase the quality product service to the customers. However, these are the significant mitigation strategies to combat the problems faced by the customers due to inflation in the fashion industry.

In the previous studies there is a lack of data regarding the Russia-Ukraine war effect on consumers. Hence, the present study concentrates on the

analysis of the impact of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the purchasing power of the customers in the fashion industry in the UK. Moreover, in the existing literature there is not adequate information present on inflation caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict (Moreno and Martínez Velázquez, 2023). Therefore, the focus further remains on analysing the inflation UK and its cause as a conflict between the two countries. This paper also reflects the effective changes and challenges faced by the customer due to the inflation in the prices of the fashion industry of the UK. Previous study does not include the information about mutation strategies regarding the challenges occurred due to the price hikes in the fashion industry.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework



The conflict between the mentioned countries mainly tends to decrease the customer size to the fashion sector as the industry. Additionally, the problems and mitigation strategies to control the issue in the fashion industries of the consumers are also discussed.

Methodology

This study has been conducted by utilising positivism research philosophy in order to gain detailed insights about the data of the research topic. Positivism in a research philosophy holds only information which is factual and derived from observation involving the measurement. The current research has been done by conducting an online survey of the customers of fashion retail sectors of the UK. Hence the primary quantitative research strategy has been utilised here in order to gather information regarding the research questions and to understand the research topic in an effective way. The study also collected data by conducting an online survey which is a primary mode of quantitative data collection techniques. A deductive research approach has been utilised in the study to analyse, gather, as well as interpret all the information regarding the research topic.

The study relied on a primary process of data collection like the survey of 100 consumers of the UK from the fashion retail sectors. The consumers of the UK fashion retail sectors have been contacted as well as persuaded to voluntarily participate in the study through various social media channels such as LinkedIn, and Facebook. The survey was carried out using a Google form to preserve the privacy of the participants. Before attending the survey all the respondents signed the sheet of information from the university to provide their consent to the survey procedure. The question of the survey was 15 close-ended in order to obtain the answers on the topic of the research from the respondents of the survey process. The reason behind the selection of the consumers of the UK fashion retail sector depends on the area of the subject which is the impact of the war between Russia and Ukraine on the buying behaviour of the consumer of the UK fashion retail sector. As a result, the consumers of the UK fashion sector have supplied detailed and significant insights about the challenges they have faced in purchasing from the fashion sector of the UK due to the war between Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, the data collected from the primary sources which comprise quantitative data has helped to obtain detailed knowledge to successfully satisfy the objectives and the goal of the current study.

Data analysis technique

Frequency analysis technique is considered as the chosen data analysis technique to complete the research in an efficient manner. The survey method with 100 participants helps to analyse the issues in the fashion industry by providing their responses in the Google form. Moreover, incorporating frequency analysis technique descriptive statistics has been done in Excel to gather mean, mode, and median of the responses regarding research questions. In order to acquire the survey-based data this data analysis has been considered and the identified data analysis technique also helps to analyse the primary quantitative data to acquire the importance of the fast fashion industry in the UK due to the rise in the inflation rate.

Finally, the study relied on collecting data from a larger population, and the survey respondents were selected depending on their availability on the platform of Facebook and LinkedIn. The survey process has targeted 100 customers from the fashion retail sector of the UK to obtain their perspectives regarding the topic of the research. The participants actively assisted the process of research in gathering information about the effect of the Russia- Ukraine war on the purchasing attitude of the customer of the UK. The survey form was provided to the participants through Google form after getting the consent letter from all the respondents. The inclusion criteria of the survey where the participants should be the consumers of the fashion retail sector of the UK. Any consumers from a different country as well as of different retail sectors were considered as exclusion criteria for conducting the survey of the current study.

Findings

The primary quantitative data is analysed with the help of frequency analysis. Moreover, the gathered facts and data are evaluated in the form of graphical representation which is helpful in order to understand the impact of Russia-Ukraine war on changing purchasing behaviour of the consumers. In addition, the current study virtually represented the data collected in the form of pie charts to interpret the information to meet the objective of the research. It has discussed the impact and issue in the retail sector due to change in perspective of the consumer due to the Russia-Ukraine war. In the end it also summarises all the key findings gathered from the survey questionnaire.

In Figure 3, it has been observed that consumers of the retail sector consist of people from a mixed age range; however, it mainly consists of 24-29-year-old people. It has been determined that the youth of the population mostly spend in the fashion and retail industry. The youth tend to be more cautious about their fashion sense and representation of their status through their wearables. However, it has been also observed that the customer that belongs to the 18-25 and 30-35 has been also contributing in the sales of the retail sector. Therefore, the main segment of the potential customer of the retail industry includes the youth as they are more concerned about their outer appearance.

Figure 3 also revealed that most of the customers of the fast fashion industry who purchased clothes frequently were students or working professionals. It has been seen that buying behaviour of customers majorly impacts the fashion industry even in the times of inflation due to the Russian-Ukraine war. Thus, it reveals the fact that consumers belonging to the corporate world and millennial are the most in need of clothes to keep themselves updated along with the changing fashion trends of the UK. On the contrary, entrepreneurs and homemakers do not have the need to keep themselves up to date with the changing trends, as a result their buying behaviour is not that frequent as compared to millennial and professionals. Hence, it is evident that buying behaviour of millennial and working professionals plays a huge role even during inflation in the UK.

Based on the above pie chart of Figure 5, it has been noted that consumers of the retail sector mostly tend to purchase clothes from the stores at least twice a month. People live in a society that has shown frequent change in the fashion trend, therefore, to keep up with the latest trend people purchase clothes frequently. Moreover, people interlink the frequency of purchasing clothes with the financial status of an individual, thus, to stay relevant people prefer to buy clothes often. On the other hand, it is also determined that customers of the retail sector also tend to purchase from the clothes stores after every month or sometimes after special offers.

Figure 3: Age Breakdown
Section 1: Demographic

Q1. What is your age?

100 responses

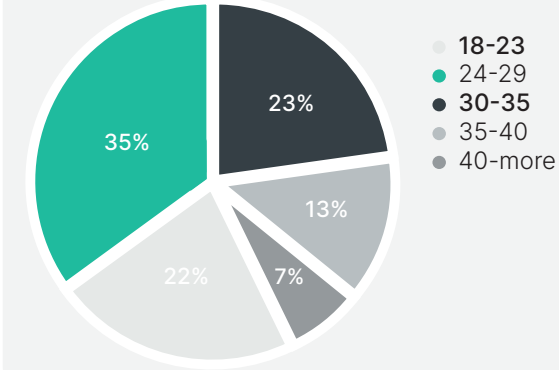


Figure 4: Professions of the consumers

Q2. What is your profession?

100 responses

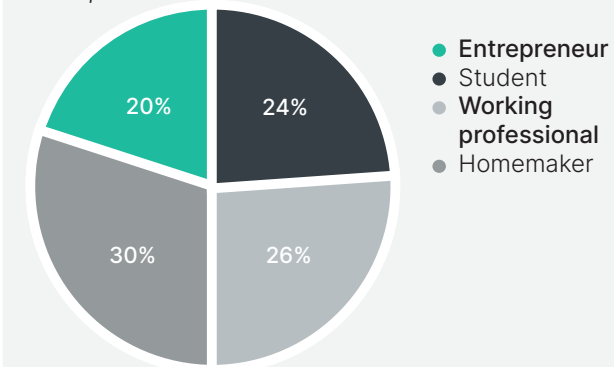
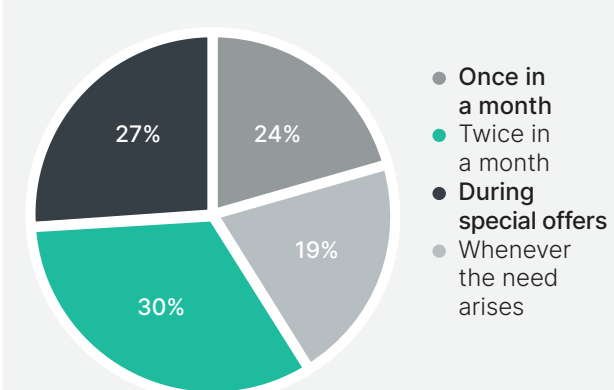


Figure 5: The frequency of the consumer buying clothes from the retail stores

Q3. How often do you purchase from clothing stores or online websites?



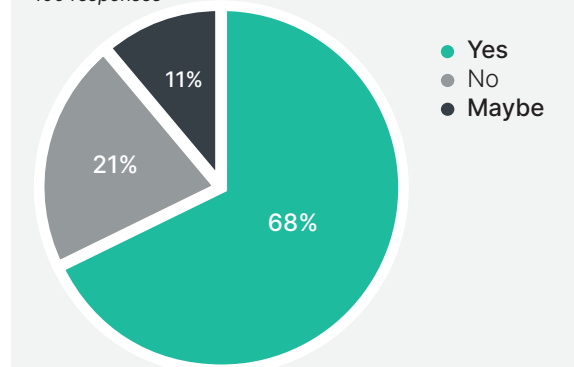
From Figure 6, majority of the customers supported the statement that in the fast fashion industry, the Russian-Ukraine war caused a rise in inflation rate during the festive seasons. However, inadequate management systems often affect the performance in maintaining the production speed which in turn affects the number of sales in a negative manner. Likewise, the number of sales reduces as the product prices go high due to less supply of raw materials which in turn decreases the profitability of the organisations of the fast-fashion industry during the Russian-Ukraine war in the UK.

Figure 6: Inflation rate during the festive season in UK

Section 2: Changes faced by customers due to inflation caused by the Russian Ukraine War during the festive season in the fast fashion industry.

Q4. Do you think the Russian-Ukraine War has affected the inflation rate during the festive season?

100 responses



All these factors are interconnected with the customer satisfaction aspects which can be considered to be the main reasons behind most of the customers agreeing to the issues faced by customers due to the rise of inflation rate in the UK. Following which, behavioural changes of customers are interlinked with the following changes in the existing market that involves high charges for product delivery, lack of quality in products, high price and technological glitches that leads to unfulfilled customers in the fast fashion industry. Furthermore, online platforms have been increased since the rise of inflation rate which in turn impacts the customers buying behaviour as product longevity and details are not known to a customer as compared to real-life experience. Hence, it is very clear that changes have affected consumer behaviours in a negative manner during the Russian-Ukraine war in the UK.

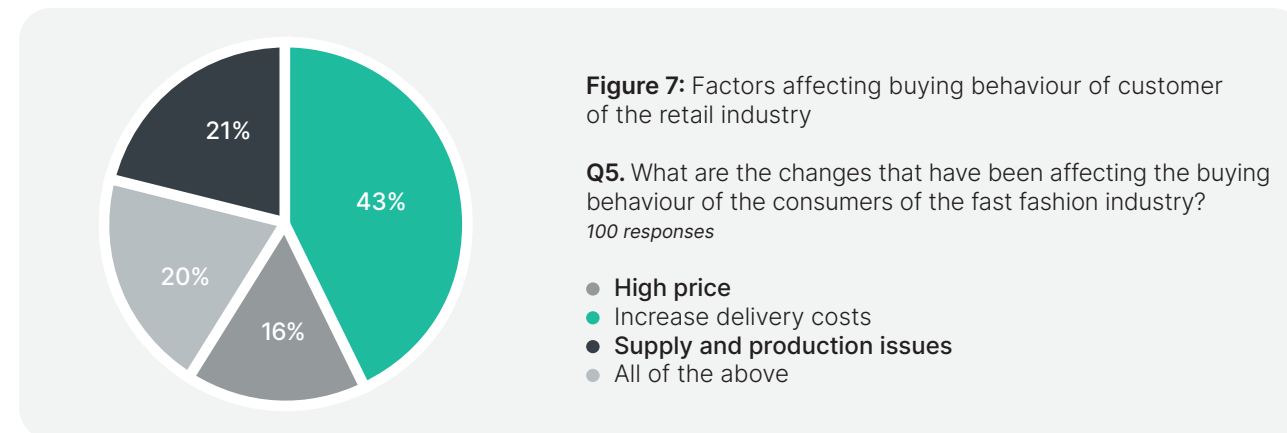
From Figure 7, it has been noted that the increase in delivery cost has affected the consumer of fast fashion the most. In modern days, the delivery chain includes multiple parties and the price of the shipping charge



ultimately increases. It is also noticed that sometimes the cost of the delivery enhances the overall product price tremendously that demotivates the customer to purchase the item. Moreover, online shopping has become popular in recent years due to an increasing trend in digitalisation and the delivery charges play a significant role in the matter of affordability. The increase in delivery fees increase the dissatisfaction among the consumer resulting in lower sales of the fast fashion. Furthermore, the people are becoming more

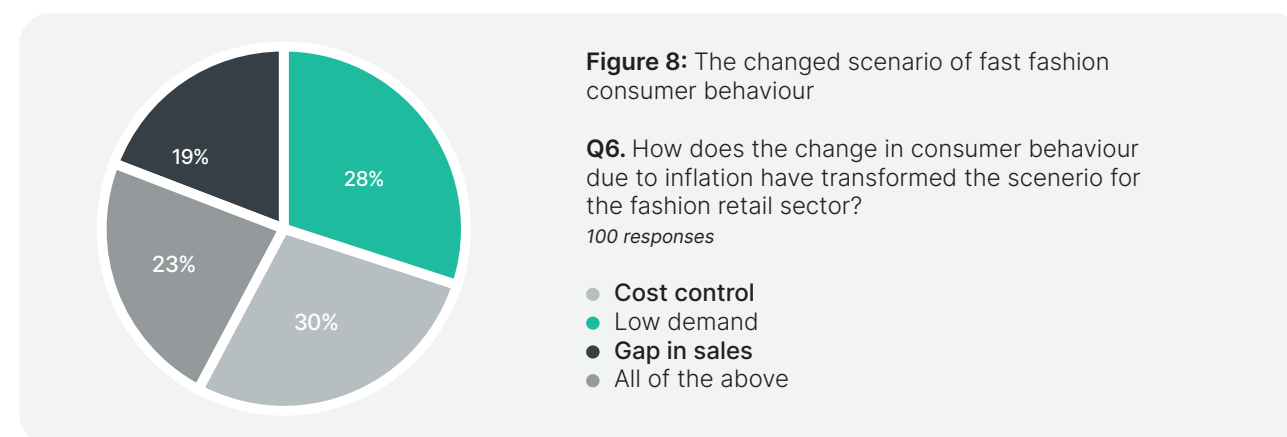
aware of managing the financial resources well due to high inflation, thus consumers tend to decline the purchase due to high delivery fees.

On the other hand, it has been also recognised that consumers of the retail sector have been negatively affected due to high production and supply price of the product. The production cost of designer clothes increases due to the high cost of the raw material, expertise and labour.



The high production cost eventually enhanced the price of the final product causing issues in the affordability of the customer. The other factor such as unnecessary high price of the product of the fast fashion has negatively affected the customer buying behaviour. Hence, it has been observed that the factors such as high production and supply cost are affecting the perspective of the consumer yet

increase in delivery affects the consumer mostly. Figure 8 is helping in analysing the percentage of behaviours of consumers towards adopting the changed scenarios of the fast fashion industry. It can be observed that most of the consumer behaviour changed due to rises in prices regarding apparels and delivery charges in the fast fashion retail sector during festive times in the UK.



Moreover, while reviewing the answers it can be justified that the apparel market has been low in demand since the Russian-Ukraine war that significantly affected the price of the products, brand popularity and quality of product. According to the majority of the consumers out of the total number of

customers, think that the pricing of the product is the key element and it affects the consumer behaviour directly that leads to negative changes in the retail market. Therefore, it can be said that the retail sector of the UK faced huge difficulties in maintaining its marketing performance due to the high inflation

rate and supply chain disruption due to the Russia-Ukraine war. Thereby, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine helped to decrease the usage of branded fashion products and it also affects the total revenue generation creating a gap in sales at the end of the financial year. Further, the war between Russia and the UK in China threatens to disrupt the fast fashion industries already stretched global supply chains in the form of delayed deliveries, rising fuel prices and looming commodity crisis. Thus, it is observed that consumers have faced a massive change while shopping during festive seasons due to high price, quality and delayed deliveries that resulted in a negative transformation in the fast-fashion retail sector in the UK.

From Figure 9, the graph shows that the Russia-Ukraine war has strongly affected the consumer purchasing power and it has been affecting the sales of the retail industry. The Russian-Ukraine war has started a global crisis that has ultimately increased the inflation rate resulting in a high rate of basic consumer products such as food and clothes. The cost of the raw material has increased tremendously due disruption in supply chain and import-export trading. The increasing rate of raw material has contributed to the cost price of the production and final product resulting negatively in the consumer purchasing power to limited financial resources. Hence, it has been determined from the analysis that the Russia-Ukraine war has affected the consumer negatively toward the clothes purchase.

Figure 10 defines the several challenges faced by consumers due to Russian-Ukrainian war inflation in the UK. It can be stated from the above graph that most of the consumers agreed that rising cost has been a major challenge that disrupted the buying behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion retail sector of the UK. In regards to this, it has been revealed that the Russian-Ukrainian war caused a massive disruption in the export and import facilities between Russia and the UK. Furthermore, it can be evaluated that this has forced the retailers to adjust their purchasing and stocking strategies, which has also impacted on the availability of products and it also changed the purchasing

preferences of consumers. In this context, uncertainty and instability caused by the war have led to a decline in customer confidence due to rising cost of fashion products and inadequate supply. However, the recent war crisis between Russia and Ukraine caused the prices of the necessary and required materials of the fashion industry to hike and this tends to increase the production cost and decrease the quality of the products of the fashion industry in the UK. Moreover, the cost of retail products also increased due to supply chain disruption and affected financial performance due to poor customer engagement. Thus, the emerging demand for luxury products in the UK was impacted by supply chain disruption and insufficient raw materials decreased customer satisfaction due to increased cost of products. Hence, it can be said that the Russian-Ukrainian war inflation affected the customer satisfaction and their buying patterns in a negative manner in relation to the fast-fashion retail industry in the UK.

Figure 11 depicts the perceived key challenges faced by the fashion sector in the UK due to the impact of inflation and Ukraine Russia war. The observed data indicated the high price of raw materials to be considered as the most prominent issue. The data also revealed all the factors such as labour exploitation and high price of raw material along with raw material price hike together has a considerably low impact as a challenge to the fashion industry. The aspect implies the fact that a hike in the cost of raw materials would significantly impact the overall growth of the fashion industry of the UK. As an exemplification of the matter, the scenario of war has resulted in significant disruption in the supply chain and logistics.

The scenario has also enhanced tension among international countries thereby restricting beyond border trade for some countries. Inflation has been a significant response to the situation and the scenario has become more detrimental for the fashion industry sustainably. As a result, the high price of raw materials is being regarded to have the most significant impact on the fashion industry of the UK because of war.



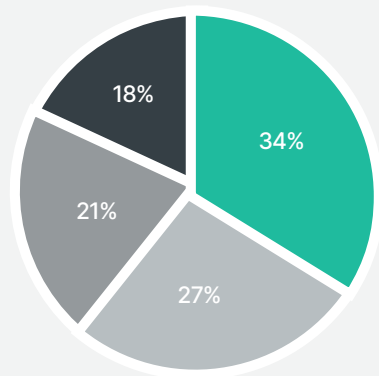


Figure 10: Challenges faced by consumers due to Russian-Ukrainian war

Q8: What are the challenges faced by consumers due to the Russian-Ukrainian war inflation?

100 responses

- **Rising cost of fashion products**
- Inadequate supply of the fashion products
- **Reducing quality of the product**
- All of the above

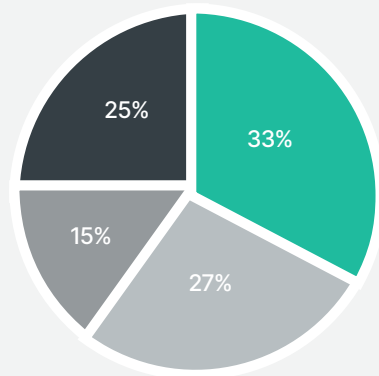


Figure 11: Challenges due to inflation and war in the UK fashion industry

Q9: What is the major challenge for the fashion industry in the time of inflation due to the Russian-Ukrainian war?

100 responses

- **Exploitation of labour**
- Difficulties in the supply chain
- **High price of raw materials**
- All of the above

Figure 12 shows ways to overcome the challenges faced by the fashion industry in the UK due to inflation and consequences of war. It has been observed that

retention of existing employees of the organisations is being considered as the most effective way to reduce impacts on fashion brands due to inflation.

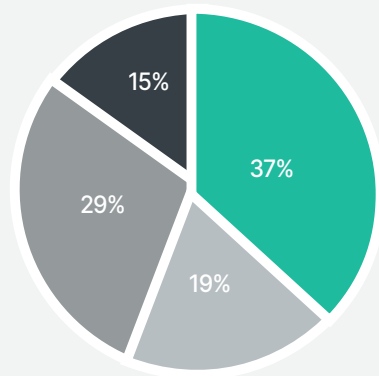


Figure 12: Ways to combat challenges faced in the UK fashion sector as a response of inflation and war

Section 4: Ways to eliminate challenges to revive the UK fashion sector after interviewing customers

Q10: What are the effective ways that c...enges faced by the UK customers due to inflation

100 responses

- **Recruitment of talented employees**
- Retention of existing employees
- **Maintaining healthy relationships**
- Implementation of artificial intelligence (AI)

On the other hand, Artificial intelligence (AI) implementation is being regarded as the least suitable method to combat inflation impacts. The situation of financial instability that developed due to inflation has had a serious impact on the sustainability of organisations. The effect is vividly evident in the

fashion sector due to its dependency on the customer purchase frequency, which has been significantly reduced due to inflation. The scenario also highlights the prime reason leading to rapid closure of businesses in the industry. In such situations, retention of existing employees would be effective to reduce the cost

of implementing new technology that would require additional investment on training and maintenance. Thus, employee retention would be effective to combat challenges faced by the fashion industry due to the rising inflation in the UK.

Figure 13 provides analysis on the scopes of growth in sales through collaborations of UK fashion brands with customers in the industry. The trend indicated, there is a high scope of sales improvement through collaboration of fashion brands with the consumers. Disagreement based on the aspect has been observed to be minimal indicating high customer expectations from fast fashion brands. Major fast fashion brands in the UK have faced the consequences of reduced sales as an impact of the war and resultant inflation.

The price sensitivity that was observed because of the situation might be considered as a major factor contributing to degraded sales. The scenario would be effectively handled considering the specific needs and

expectations of the consumers from the businesses. In other words, through collaboration with favourite fast fashion brands, customers would be able to directly participate in product development procedures of the brand. The factor would enhance the transparency of the brand and create scope of better understanding the key business goals and objectives. As a result, it would be possible for brands to enhance sales and ensure overcoming the impacts of inflation.

Figure 14 indicates the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in mitigating the challenges related to the purchasing behaviours of the consumers. It has been observed that most of the consumers of the UK fashion retail sector thinks that implementation of the AI improves the current situation. Implementation of AI would provide the ability to mitigate the challenges caused by the Russian-Ukraine War in the retail fashion sector. Moreover, the AI has the potential in creating better designs in the retail sector that helps the consumers of the retail sector to have a better design pattern for the products.

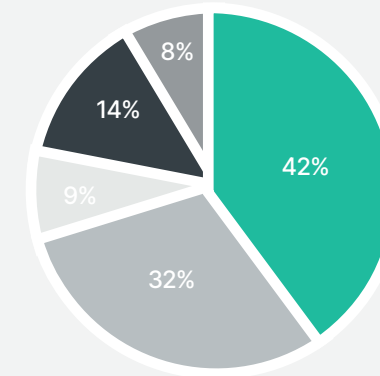


Figure 13: Understanding scopes of growth sales through collaboration of customers and fast fashion brands

Section 4: Ways to eliminate challenges to revive the UK fashion sector after interviewing customers

Q11: Do you agree with the fact that fashion industries collaborating with customers can increase sales growth of the fast fashion industry during inflation?

100 responses

- **Strongly agree**
- Agree
- None
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

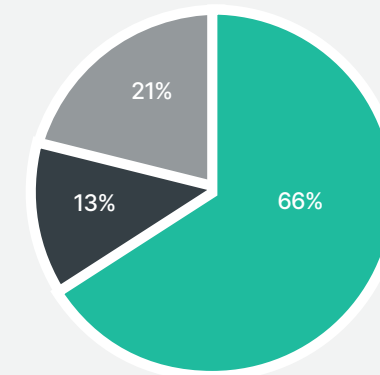


Figure 14: Role of AI in mitigating the challenges

Q12: As per your commencement, does implantation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) mitigate the challenges related to the purchasing behaviours of the consumers?

100 responses

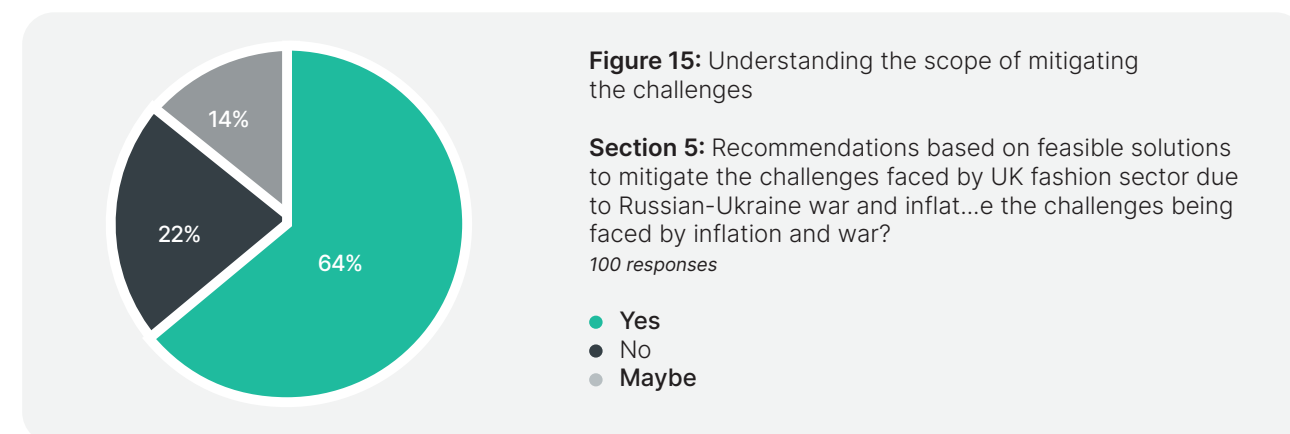
- **Yes**
- No
- **Maybe**

In addition, the implementation of the AI in the retail fashion sector would reduce the marketing costs of the product. Hence, it would help the customers to get the product at a lesser price and implementation of AI speeds up the process of buying for the customers. The AI has

the ability to understand complex data and provide an in-depth analysis about the trends of the products. Hence, implementation of AI helps in providing trend forecasting, analysis on the merchandising, development in design and product and providing more stylist products for

the customers. Thus, implementation of AI would be effective in order to mitigate the challenges related to the purchasing behaviours of customers. On the basis of Figure 15, it has been portrayed that most of the consumers of the UK fashion industry think that there is a scope to mitigate the challenges caused due to the Russian-Ukrainian war. There are challenges for the consumers such as increasing cost of fashion products, reducing the quality of products and insufficient supply chain. However, as per the opinion of the consumers

of the fashion industry, there is a scope to reduce the effects of these issues in the fashion industry. These issues can be eliminated by increasing the productivity and quality of the fashion products. Similarly, implementation of the AI in the fashion industry would benefit the consumer to get a better-quality product at a low cost. In addition, maintaining a healthy relationship with the employees and providing proper training to improve quality of product would be helpful for several fashion brands to mitigate these challenges.



In a similar way, implementation of the AI would help the fashion brands to recommend products as per the requirement of the customers. Hence, it improves the level of satisfaction for the consumers in buying products in the fashion industry.

Inferring from Figure 16 it can be observed that the majority of opinions have been inclined to the strong agreement that the government has been considering inflation and war impacts on the fashion industry as a potential threat. Twelve months after the Ukraine-Russia crisis began, the global apparel industry has suffered both directly and indirectly as many brands struggled with rising energy and raw material costs and closed their store networks in Russia.

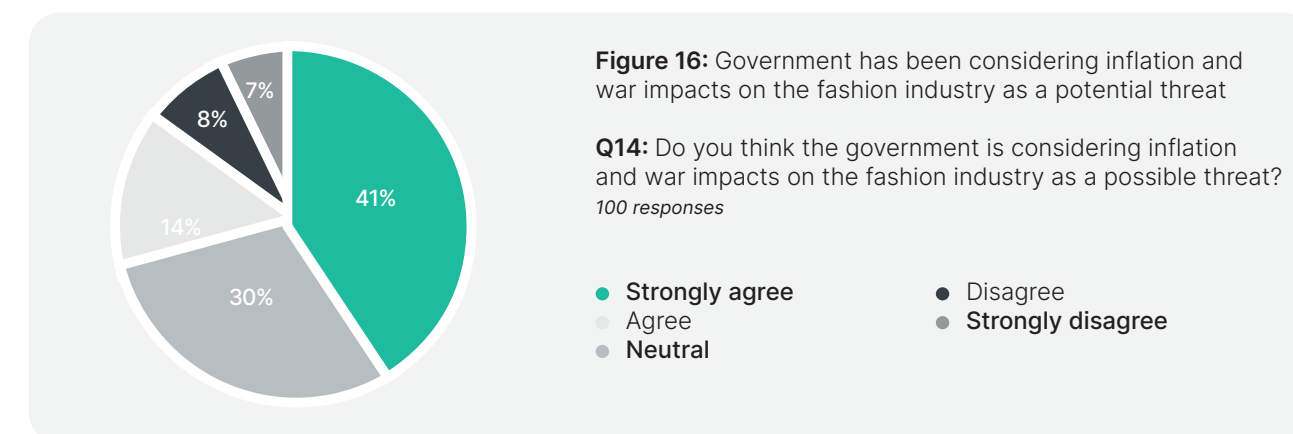
The Russia versus Ukraine battle has been showing its impacts all over the globe in many major industries, among which the fashion industry has been at a special highlight of catastrophe. The war did, in many ways, disrupt and dislocate the British fashion industry. There were few resources and raw materials available for civilian clothing. Fashion essentials like silk were no longer available and their prices highly increased along with it; there was introduced a purchase tax and clothing rationing. Many fashion brands may have to completely shut down due to the inflation that has been negatively impacting fashion industries. Smarter businesses will try to modify their operations to fit the shifting market dynamics, for instance, a clothing manufacturer may search for a smaller warehouse if it no longer needs a larger space.



Deducing from the above given graphical data, it can be concluded that most people have agreed to the fact that the capacities of an efficient planning system can aid to increase the quality of products and services offered to the customers during inflation in the UK. Supply problems are a contributing factor in inflation, but increasing productivity would help to address this. In order to accomplish this, governments can encourage investment by lowering taxes and creating regionally

specific strategic plans. Reduced unit costs and increased supply would result in lower prices if more goods and services were produced in a shorter amount of time.

There has also been a need for more lenient tax laws, such as extending the "super-deduction" that was implemented two years ago which can lower businesses tax obligations, in order to further encourage investment.



Utilising the universities as regional centres of expertise more effectively, in addition to encouraging businesses to invest and grow, the government and providing incentives for people to launch new businesses can aid for the same as some of the best strategic planning approaches. From the above analysis, it can be summarised that Russian-Ukrainian war inflation has highly affected the supply chain and the buying behaviour of the customers during the festive seasons in the UK. Furthermore, the majority of the consumers agreed that rising cost, quality of products and delayed deliveries has been a major challenge that disrupted the buying behaviour of consumers in the fast fashion retail sector of the UK. In a similar way, implementation of the AI would help the fashion brands to recommend products as per the requirement of the customers. Thus, in this way, it would be possible for brands to enhance sales and ensure overcoming the impacts of inflation in future in the fast fashion retail industry.

holiday seasons in the fast fashion sector. It has also been noted that the consumer of fast fashion has been most impacted by the increase in delivery costs. The modern delivery chain involves several parties, and as a result, the cost of shipping ultimately rises. The above data shows that there has been a little demand for apparel since the Russian-Ukrainian war, which had a significant impact on product prices, brand recognition, and product quality.

The information gathered suggests that the Russian-Ukrainian war significantly disrupted the export and import capabilities between Russia and the UK. The biggest problem that has been noted to be facing the UK fashion industry is likely to be the high cost of raw materials. Additionally, it has been noted that keeping retention of the current workforce of a business firm is thought to be the best way to lessen the effects of inflation on fashion brands. It has been inferred that cooperation between fashion brands and consumers has a significant potential to increase sales. The war and its associated inflation have had a negative impact on major fast fashion brands in the UK, resulting in lower sales. Most customers in the UK's fashion retail industry have been seen to believe that the use of AI will improve the current situation. AI would be capable of producing better designs in the retail sector, which would benefit consumers by giving them better product design patterns. The Government of the UK has also been observed to be quite cautious about the impacts of inflation thus being required to design and implement new strategies to encourage businesses to invest and grow.

Discussion of Findings

According to the aforementioned observations, consumers of the retail sector typically buy clothes from the stores at least twice a month. Frequent changes in fashion trends suggest that people buy clothes frequently in an effort to stay in trend. As it can be seen from the observations above, the majority of customers agreed with the claim that the war in Russia and Ukraine increased inflation during the

Identify the impact along with the causes of Russia Ukraine war in term of raising inflation and changing purchasing behaviour of the consumers in the UK fashion retail sector during festive season

Based on above findings, it has been observed that rising inflation due to the Russia-Ukraine war has decreased the purchasing behaviours of the customers to twice in a month. As per the opinion of Jaravel and O’Connell (2020), increase in the inflation rate impacts the consumer behaviour of the customers. In addition, increase in the inflation due to the Russia-Ukraine war has eventually impacted the shopping behaviour of the customers of the fashion industry in the UK. Due to high inflation, there has been a rise in the prices of the products of the fashion industry. Consequently, it has reduced the number of customers in the fashion industry of the UK and the first objective of the study was fulfilled.

Recognising the suitable methodology on how the Russia-Ukraine war has impacted the customer purchasing behaviour in fashion industry of UK

Based on the above findings, it has been known that the customer behaviour of the fashion industry of the UK was impacted due to the Russia-Ukraine war. According to a report of OECD (2022), due to the Russia-Ukraine war, the trading has been affected massively and the economy of several countries was disrupted due to this situation. As per the report of Elliot (2022), the UK has suffered a major hit in the economic sector due to the war. In a similar way, the war created a rise in the prices of commodities that created a huge pressure on the lifestyle of people in the UK. Moreover, the people of the UK have decreased their purchasing behaviours in the fashion industry due to the war and hence, the second objective of the study was met.

Identification of the potential challenges in reviving the UK fashion sector

Based on the above findings, it has been interpreted that there are challenges such as rising cost of fashion products, reducing quality of the products and insufficient supply chain in the fashion industry of the UK. As per a report of Seares (2022), the Russia-Ukraine war has increased the logistic cost and reduces the confidence of the consumers in the fashion industry. In addition, this war has created a massive disruption in the supply chain of the fashion industry of the UK. Consequently, according to Stanley (2023), the demand for fashion products has also been disrupted due to this war. Hence, it can be observed that rising cost and insufficient supply chain have

massively affected the fashion market situation of the UK. The third objective of this study was to identify the potential challenges due to the Russia-Ukraine war was achieved.

Recommendation of the possible solution to mitigate these challenges

Based on the findings of the consumers of the UK fashion industry, it has been observed that recruitment of the talented employees, maintaining healthy relationships within the organisation and more importantly implementation of Artificial Intelligence was regarded as suitable strategies for mitigating the challenges. As stated by Liang, Lee and Workman (2019), implementation of the AI in the fashion industry empowers the designing process of the fashion industry. Implementation of AI in the fashion industry of the UK would enable the customers to have a more advanced shopping experience. The supply chain management and the marketing procedure of the fashion industry of the UK would be improved with the help of AI. Similarly, providing training to the employees about the AI would make the customer more satisfied about their shopping. Hence, the fourth objective of the study has been met as implementation of AI would be a perfect recommendation for the fashion industry of the UK. From the findings and discussion, it has been clear that the Russia-Ukraine war has increased the inflation rate and negatively impacted the perspective of customers in the retail sector. Therefore, the supply chain management and the marketing procedure of the fashion industry of the UK would be improved with the help of AI. Hence, in this way, it would be possible for brands to enhance sales and ensure overcoming the impacts of inflation in future in the fast fashion retail industry.

Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, it has been concluded that rising inflation rates due to the Russia-Ukraine war created a massive disruption in the fashion industry of the UK. Increase in the Inflation rate has reduced the purchasing behaviours of the consumers of the UK fashion brands. As the prices of the products increased and disruption in the supply chain management reduced the number of customers in the fashion industry of the UK. Based on the above discussion, it was observed that the economic sector of the UK was one of most affected countries in the world. The war put pressure on commodities including energy, food and retail products and consequently, it caused the customers of the UK to change their purchasing behaviours due to these problems.

Challenges such as rising cost of fashion products, reducing quality of the product and insufficient supply chain within the fashion industry of the UK were

observed in the fashion industry of the UK due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The demand of the fashion brands in the industry was also reduced due to the challenging economic situation and insufficient supply chain of the products increased the problems for the fashion industry.

In order to mitigate those challenges, the most suitable mitigation strategy would be to implement artificial intelligence technology in the fashion industry of the UK. Implementation of the AI would stabilise the supply chain management of the industry and the designing process of the products would be improved with the help of the technology. The artificial intelligence in the fashion industry would as a whole improve the customer shopping behaviours and would provide a better experience in their products. However, providing training about Artificial intelligence to the employees of the fashion industry would be important for engaging more customers.

In the current study, it can be suggested that a secondary qualitative and quantitative data collection method needs to be used in the form of drawing out themes based on the impact of the inflation rate in the fast fashion industry of the UK. Therefore, the thematic analysis would help in gathering more in-depth information about the Russian-Ukraine war in regards to costs, government policies and economic inflation with special reference to the fashion products of the UK retail sector. Following which, thematic analysis can be beneficial as it allows collection of in-depth accurate data and there is a less chance of getting biased data, making the study more error free and in-depth with special reference to the fast fashion industry of the UK. Furthermore, it can also be recommended that incorporating a horizontal time frame can help in gathering more accurate information about the consumer behaviour of the retail sector as compared to cross-sectional. Meanwhile, The longitudinal time frame has no time constriction that allows exploring every area of the fast fashion industry that got affected due to inflation and gathering proper real-time data for future improvement of buying behaviour of customers in the UK. Additionally, it can be recommended that using primary qualitative data in the form of interviews can also help in getting more opinion-based information as well as more critical information in relation to the buying behaviours of customers globally that got affected due to inflation in an effective manner. Thus, in this way the primary qualitative method in the form of interviews would be an effective way for collecting data to get a better outcome to meet the objectives in relation to the fast fashion industry of the UK.

Limitations and Future Research

The current research of the influence of Russia-Ukraine war over the perspective of the consumer in the retail sector has conducted survey questionnaires to collect information in order to satisfy the objective of the research. The current study has not been able to collect enough resources and information due to lack of implementation of the secondary data. Moreover, the study has utilised the primary quantitative data to interpret information, therefore, there has been lack of descriptive criticism of the people regarding the current study. The overall information has been lacking the thoughts and perspective of the consumer on the effect of the Russia-Ukraine war in the retail sector. The interview of the customer would have given more proper insight on the subject matter of the research; however, due to lack of sufficient time the study was not able to conduct the interview. Moreover, there was a limited time frame set for the research project to complete, thus the resource and the collection of data and materials was limited. Therefore, due to shortage of enough resources and time frame the research has not been able to cover every aspect of the selected topic of the study. Hence, due to lack of secondary data and primary qualitative data the study could not gather sufficient resources and descriptive opinion of the customer.

This study would be quite beneficial in the purpose of learning about the diverse impacts that have been caused due to the war between the Ukraine and Russia. The impacts have been specially focussed by highlighting on its effects pertaining to the clothing and apparel industries operating within the premises of the UK. This study would be quite beneficial to be conceptualised by the different marketer and their teams as well as the shopkeepers, if the ideas that have been presented can be understood and implemented in their respective businesses. The potential challenges of the UK fashion industry as well as their sources have been identified and eventually mitigation strategies have been designed to overcome them. The study will also open doors to further study in this matter, which can be ensured to be done with more ease and efficiency if referred to the data presented in this work. In addition to it, there have been some potential challenges to the UK fashion sectors, which have been considered to be quite decisive for the success of the future operations. Thus, identifying the present issues and the future potential scope of challenges would guarantee to improve the current function of the fashion industry as well as enhance its future business operations to a remarkable level.

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Analysis of employees' satisfaction level of the National Health Service: A case study of Queen Elizabeth Hospital

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors affecting employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Data was collected from Queen Elizabeth Hospital employees by using a survey technique. The variables that were measured include employees' personal traits (problem-solving, behavioural integrity and teamwork), employee engagement, and employee satisfaction. It has been found that problem-solving, and integrity have a significant impact on employee satisfaction, while the impact of teamwork on employee satisfaction is not statistically significant.

Keywords

- NHS
- Employee engagement
- Employee well-being
- Problem-solving
- Behavioural integrity
- Teamwork
- Herzberger's two factor theory
- Employee satisfaction

Introduction

The National Health Service (NHS), in the last few years, come under enormous pressure due to their services and setups. In the recent global level crisis, the need for active and observant employees in the healthcare sector is becoming the need of the hour. The NHS of England, in this regard, has taken significant measures to enhance the resilience and capabilities of its employees. The government investment in this area also aims to improve the health care standards and guarantee a workable environment for the employees (Stoye and Zaranko, 2019). Therefore, numerous institutional or employee-level factors are integral to the study that is becoming the central part of contemporary debates. The UK, as compared to its neighbouring countries, is bridging the gaps in public spending on NHS, which is a positive sign for the NHS's future (Appleby, 2016). The trajectory regarding the pandemic also opened the room for opportunities in the post-pandemic world to improve human resource management in a better way. The lessons learned during the pandemic, therefore, emphasized the well-being of healthcare staff to maintain the decorum of the medical field.

Within the context of NHS in the UK, Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is one of the major military hospitals located in Birmingham. The respective hospital provides a wide range of healthcare services, including secondary services to local inhabitants. In the national healthcare system in the UK, QE hospital is well-known for being one of the largest healthcare centres related to organ transplantation and particularly renal transplant services. In addition, NHS Foundation trust-based Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn provides a comprehensive range of community-based services to individuals across North and West North folk. More than 4000 staff and volunteers worked in the respective hospital (Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn, n.d). However, despite the significance of the respective health sector in NHS, an evaluation by British Care Quality Commission (CQC) indicate a low level of employee satisfaction at the respective hospital. In the survey of NHS National Staff majority of the employees reported their un-satisfaction due to not being supported by supervisors (Ombea, n.d). In this accordance, this study tends to examine the impact of personal traits and employee engagement on employee satisfaction in QEH. Moreover, to provide a broader picture of employee satisfaction, mediating impact of employees' well-being is also considered in this study.

In this accordance, personal traits have a significant impact on analysing the effectiveness of employee satisfaction. The healthcare sector that focuses on personal traits and enhances the problem-solving skills of their employees resultantly can get more benefits related to the satisfaction of employees (Ayres and Malouff, 2007). Behavioural integrity at workplaces is another significant aspect of personal traits that have traditionally been regarded as an efficient and positive



factor related to workers' motivation and satisfaction. In view of Guohao et al. (2021), the integrity of leaders in a workplace can significantly impact the attitude and behaviours of employees, which motivate employees and encourage them to work more efficiently. Teamwork is also a notable aspect of personal trait which can be significantly linked with employee satisfaction as it improves the environment in an organization and assist the employees to efficiently achieve team goals (Mimiasri and Idris, 2019). Moreover, employee engagement enhances the symbiotic relationship between employees and the organization thus, it can be significantly linked with employee satisfaction (Bin and Shmailan, 2015). Besides all these determinants, employees' well-being is an important construct of employee satisfaction as it enables the efficient performance of employees within an organization (Abdullah et al., 2021). These determinants of employee satisfaction have rarely been discussed in existing studies within the context of the healthcare sector therefore, the prime aim of this study is to explore the impact of personal traits and employee engagement along with mediating impact of employee well-being on employee satisfaction in UK based healthcare sector particularly in QEH.

The previous debates on employee satisfaction and job retention took into consideration different factors that are crucial in an in-depth analysis of the subject matter. The turnover intention of healthcare employees is a serious matter of concern which provides a broader social picture of healthcare workers towards the working conditions. In the existing literature, Bimpong et al. (2020) examined the relationship between labour force satisfaction, salary packages, facilities, and retention rate within UK national healthcare services. Using secondary data sources, the in-depth evaluation of the factors over the years provides substantial insight into the notable factors and their relationship. All these factors collectively provide a broader picture of employee satisfaction and engagement in the NHS labour force. A similar study is performed by Powell et al. (2015) to analyse staff satisfaction and the organizational element through an NHS staff survey of the UK. The researcher also relied on secondary datasets to examine these issues within NHS. Kelly et al. (2022) identified some of the factors which are associated with staff retention in the acute NHS sector. According to him, the individual-level and the trust level factors are both important in determining the individual experience and decision. (Park and Johnson, 2019) highlights the personal perception of the work environment and the offered facilities, along with the employee's work intention, characterize employee satisfaction and engagement. It is also observed that the emotional and physical capabilities of the employees determine their involvement in the work, which consequentially decides their responsibilities and duties. The studies of Tahiry and Ekmekcioglu (2022) examine the association between supervisor support (SS) and career satisfaction (CS) within healthcare institutions.

Using the survey-based method the results of studies indicate that SS is significantly linked with CS in health-care sector. However, the respective study also observes some limitation as with only one determinant an entire picture of career satisfaction was not achieved. Even though these research studies focused on the NHS labour force however the methodological choices of the researchers were limited, which narrowed down the scope of their studies. In addition, a very limited studies have linked career satisfaction with both internal and external factors within the health care sector. Beside this no study has examined the impact of personal traits and employee engagement on employee satisfaction in QHE hospital. Grounding on these gaps, this study offers a significant contribution to the literature related to human resources in NHS.

The above debate on the previous studies makes it evident that the past literature has covered these issues in a specified manner with limited findings. Moreover, the reliance on secondary data cannot meet the authenticity, credibility, and utility of the research works. The present study, therefore, identified the research gap and covered it by providing empirical evidence on the engagement and satisfaction determinants of employees. The researcher adopts a quantitative research method to address the research problem and to bring forth empirical traces in the present context. By developing a strong theoretical base, the researcher aims to examine the current level of employee satisfaction and the factors that impact employee satisfaction in Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Moreover, based on problem analysis, recommendations are provided to improve the facilities of the NHS labour force.

With the increased cases of employee turnover and job burnout, the matter was elevated to a higher research level. The novel and contemporary trends in employee behaviour and experience provided an in-depth insight into the problematic factors. The primary purpose of the research study is to examine the status of employees' job satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. To achieve this, the linkage of personal traits and employee engagement with employee satisfaction has been explored. Along with it, this association has also been viewed by examining the mediating impact of employee well-being. The rationale behind choosing this research topic lies in the frequent employee turnover cases at the hospital. It is observed that the medical staff working there is not satisfied with the NHS facilities and offerings. The absence of required privileges pushes them to look for alternatives in any other medical institute. The occurrence of such cases at the hospital is putting the reputation and services of the hospital under the worst cover. The situation, therefore, raises the need to identify and analyse the factors that are responsible for medical employees' experience and job perception. By analysing the problems, the researcher also aimed to propose recommendations

and strategies to improve the working conditions in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Despite the enhanced investment and attention given by the NHS, the complications at the employee's end are increasing every day. The previous studies (Elsafty and Ragheb, 2020, Steigenberger and Mirc, 2020) indicate that healthcare employees are more prone to exhaustion and retention due to the specified nature of the job. During the pandemic, it has been observed that the employees serving in national healthcare centres are confronting numerous complications in the workspaces. Even in the post-pandemic world, the issues regarding employee job satisfaction were not reduced. Observing the recent surveys and studies (Bimpong et al., 2020) in the UK, it occurred that the quality of patient care is hugely dependent on the employee's job engagement, involvement, and satisfaction. Job satisfaction and engagement thus hold significant importance in getting the desired outcomes of roles and responsibilities. The previous research debates also made it clear that job satisfaction is a key factor in regulating the overall reputation of the institutes and the quality of the services. Maintaining a quality experience in the NHS labour force is, therefore, necessary to ensure quality health services.

The case study of Queen Elizabeth Hospital is important on multiple grounds. The hospital is one of the large NHS hospitals which is covering multiple ranges of medical areas. The daily patient enrolment and medical activities demand highly qualified, active, and eager working staff. The NHS employers and HRM teams, therefore, hire the best talent for the maintenance of the hospital's reputation and services. However, the working system, organizational factors, and individual characteristics play a critical role in shaping the job experience of the employees. Employee turnover and job burnout are one of the negative factors which can put the reputation of the hospital at stake. The report of NHS Employeeers (2023) highlights the following concern about QEH: The morale of staff at QEH is low. The staff did not feel appreciated and motivated; and The issues of staff at QEH are not well listened or well addressed.

However, QEH is increasingly adopting efficient staff management strategies and trying to enhance its communication with staff. In this accordance, this study is significant to enhance the knowledge related to numerous aspects that can be considered to improve employee satisfaction at QEH. The previous studies (Moscelli et al., 2022, Ogbonnaya and Babalola, 2021) also dealt with the NHS employee factor. The present research is unique as this case study considered empirical evidence, which provides updated and current insights into the research problem. The study thus deviates from past research studies by defining detailed research aims to analyse empirical data related to employee job satisfaction and engagement at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The aim of this research is to analyse the level of employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and identify the factors that contribute to their satisfaction. To achieve this aim, this study formulated the following research questions:

RQ1: How does personal traits influence employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital?
RQ2: How does employee engagement influence employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital?
RQ3: Does employee well-being mediate between personal traits, employee engagement, and employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital?
RQ4: What are areas that require further improvement to enhance employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

Research Objectives

Based on the aim of this study following research objectives are devised for this study:
RO1: To critically review the literature on employee satisfaction at healthcare centres.
RO2: To expand existing literature on employee satisfaction by applying a survey to the staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
RO3: To recommend strategies for improving NHS services regarding employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Based on gaps identified in existing literature, this study offers novel theoretical and practical contributions. Within the context of QEH Hospital, no existing study has empirically analysed the determinants affecting employee satisfaction which indicates the novel approach of this study. Moreover, the other novel contribution of this study is the theoretical notions of Herzberg's two-factor theory in which this study assesses employee satisfaction with the perspective of both external and internal aspects, unlike previous studies that overview the respective construct only with external dimension.

In this accordance, the findings of the study contribute significantly to the current research stream on the NHS labour force in the UK. With the rapid increase in employee retention, it is necessary to evaluate the factors that are responsible for that. The study thus has valuable offerings for the different stakeholders. The healthcare management can utilize this information to improve the services and facilities, which negatively impacts the employee's perception and experience. Moreover, healthcare employees are the core of the medical institutes. The findings provided by the researcher will assist the medical authorities and management to ensure the facilities that project constructive work behavior and create a healthy working environment. For the external inspection or policy-making team, the findings are valuable in terms of enhancing employee engagement. The policies in favour of NHS workers can shape the experience and satisfaction of the employees working under this system.

Literature Review

This literature review will provide the reader with an extensive introduction to the chosen constructs of the study. The first part will provide insight into the theories related to the developed assumptions of this study; the maximum relevant theories will be provided that has a similar conceptual framework to this study and will give information and studies for the selected theory and the interconnection of the concept of the theory with this study. The second part will compare the definitions of employee satisfaction thus, followed by the headings thus, elaborating on the impact of employee engagement and personal traits (problem-solving, integrity, and teamwork) on the employee satisfaction level within the healthcare sectors. After that, the study described the role of employee well-being as a mediator between personal traits, employee engagement, and employee satisfaction, which is succeeded by the explanation of the research gap which has been pointed out by the researcher from the existing literature regarding the chosen constructs by providing an insight regarding the studied literature. In the last part of the chapter, the summary covering all the discussed concepts, research gaps, theories, and developed relationships will be enlightened between independent, dependent, and mediating constructs.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction has been a topic of research in the field of business as employee satisfaction has a strong relationship with job performance, and this phenomenon has been in the discussion of researchers since the 1990s. The first-ever definition of employee satisfaction was “ a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976). Employee satisfaction was defined in the 1990s as the sense of fulfilment and contentment they receive from their job as well-being and gratification (Hellriegel et al., 1999, McCusker and Wolfman, 1998). In the old school of thought, they have mainly linked employee satisfaction with the feelings the employees experience while doing their work; any external factors that can influence employee satisfaction haven’t been provided.

The school of thought of 2000, employee satisfaction, defined by another author as the difference between the perception of work and the actual importance and expectations of work (Comm and Mathaisel, 2000). Another author has defined employee satisfaction as organisation citizenship behaviour; the more satisfied employee will work more effectively and eagerly for the organisation, and the overall efficiency will increase (Özdevicioğlu, 2003, Aydin and Ceylan, 2009). This decade has focused on the employees and the aspect of organisation factors and employee satisfaction. Barakat et al. (2016) stated that employee satisfaction is a blend of emotions and one’s attitude toward their job, and the organisation can influence it. Employee

satisfaction is the sense of employee success and achievement directly related to job performance, productivity, and personal well-being (Dziuba et al., 2020). Hence, comparing the above-stated definitions of employee satisfaction it can be illustrated that employee satisfaction is based on the emotional state of the employee which should be positive and the sense of well-being that they receive from at their workplaces. In addition, employee satisfaction is also based on the expectations of the employees from the organisation and a well-satisfied employee will perform extraordinarily. Conclusively, it is the blend of employee emotions toward their workplaces.

Employee job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional concept, and many theories have reflections like this concept. The job characteristics model, social exchange theory (Yin, 2018), equity theory (Kollmann et al., 2020), Herzberg’s two-factor theory, Vroom expectancy theory, and Maslow’s need hierarchy theory are the few major theories used for the concept of employee job satisfaction (Patricia and Asoba, 2021). All these mentioned theories have different aspects related to job satisfaction; the best-fit theory researcher has chosen for this study was Herzberg’s two-factor theory. Herzberg’s two-factor theory was developed by Herzberg et al. (1959); m-h theory is comprised of two job factors; one set is based on the actual doing of a job [internal factors called motivators] and the other one on the environmental setting of the job [external factors called hygiene or maintenance factors] (Gardner, 1977).

Recently, a study investigated the job satisfaction of medical laboratory professionals with the M-H theory and explored which factors of this theory mainly influence job satisfaction (Alrawahi et al., 2020). Health, workload, and work safety as the hygiene factors reflected job dissatisfaction and relationship with co-workers and leaders, and professional training was shown as positively associated with job satisfaction from the data analysis. Rai et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study and evaluated the motivation factors, socio-demographic factors, and hygiene factors of M-H theory on the nurses of the hospital; the discussion of the study has narrated the strong correlation between the motivation of the nurses and the hygiene factor of the M-H theory.

This study has targeted the same sector and has provided the researcher with a positive perception of Herzberg’s two-factor theory, and all these mentioned studies have used Herzberg’s two-factor theory, raising its significance for the research of employee job satisfaction. This theory is related to the current conceptual framework, which has involved personal traits as an intrinsic factor and employee engagement as an extrinsic factor that will significantly enhance employee satisfaction in NHS in the presence of employee well-being as a mediator, which also highlights the innovation of this investigation.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Personal Traits and Employee Satisfaction

Personal traits have been characterised as the intrinsic factors that could be beneficial for enhancing the employee satisfaction level in NHS of the United Kingdom because it has been observed that if the employees thus working in the healthcare sectors have effective and efficient traits regarding their capability to cope with miscellaneous problems, they focus on integrity, and believe in teamwork by efficiently adjusting themselves in every situation with their coworkers are found to be highly satisfied by their job roles and the employees having these personal traits would be an exceptional asset for the NHS in the United Kingdom.

Personal traits are the characteristics and features according to which a person thinks, feels, and behaves (Diener and Lucas, 2019). The personal traits thus focused on by the researcher in the undertaken study are problem-solving, integration, and teamwork. It has been observed that healthcare sectors specifically rely on the teamwork capabilities of their staff. The reason behind demanding optimistic communication and teamwork within their staff is a crucial aspect of raising the satisfaction level of their patients (Janicijevic et al., 2013). Similarly, teamwork has also been characterised as a crucial aspect of improving the employee satisfaction level within the healthcare sectors (Costello et al., 2021) because it develops a sense of collaboration among the workforce, thus alleviating the percentage of burnout in the professionals of healthcare sectors (Barton et al., 2018). Consequently, a healthy teamwork environment within the healthcare sector considerably results in a happier workplace, an ultimatum for improving employee satisfaction. Consequently, the NHS sector in the UK should effectively promote teamwork among their professionals as it will create a sense of happiness in the working environment, thus promoting employee satisfaction in the NHS.

Integrity is another crucial characteristic for enhancing employee satisfaction in the healthcare sector. It has been observed that behavioural integrity is the most positive aspect for enhancing the performance of employees, specifically when the leaders within an organisation prefer to adopt integrity in their working styles. It improves the capability of employees to work committedly and actively at their workplaces (Guohao et al., 2021). Therefore, in the current investigation, integrity has been highlighted as a critical personal trait in leaders and employees because it positively influences their satisfaction. However, based on this evidence, the NHS sector in the United Kingdom should focus on the personal traits of their employees because the optimistic characteristics of the workforce will be a reason behind reducing the turnover intentions of employees and thus improving their satisfaction level at the healthcare sectors, which is the novelty of the undertaken study.

Moreover, problem-solving is another personal trait that could enhance employee satisfaction in the healthcare sectors in miscellaneous countries. The problem-solving nature results through effective communication and relation between the employees; thus, working within an organisation is also characterised as relational coordination (Havens et al., 2018). Moreover, it has been observed that relational coordination is positively associated with the satisfaction level of the employees within their workplaces because mutual communication and coordination among the employees of an organisation will be a way of sharing personal views regarding a particular problem which will enable the company to devise an appropriate solution for a particular problem (Bolton et al., 2021). The same is the case for healthcare professionals. A healthy and optimistic relationship between the employees will promote job satisfaction and be responsible for providing an effective solution to a problem, which NHS UK should focus on to achieve effective outcomes and employee satisfaction.



Personal traits significantly and positively impact employee satisfaction
Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

Employee engagement describes a person's optimistic outlook at work. Kahn (1990) initially proposed the idea of employee engagement with the intention of using the value of organisation members in their work roles. Further highlighting this aspect, (Kahn, 1990) stated that people use and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in the expression of engagement. Employees actively engaged in their work are energised and effectively connected to it (Kahn, 1990). They are also physically, cognitively, and emotionally engaged. According to Heslina and Syahrani (2021), there is a correlation between employee engagement and outcomes related to a variety of jobs, such as lower rates of burnout, low turnover intentions, low levels of work stress, and better productivity, job performance, self-efficacy, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is "an emotional state of pleasure produced by evaluating a person's work to achieve or promote its value" (Riyanto et al., 2021). Regarding influencing factors and methods for measuring employee satisfaction, researchers focus more on work satisfaction. The organisational and individual characteristics of the employees are widely regarded as the two main determinants impacting job happiness. Employee satisfaction (Job satisfaction-JS) refers to a person's emotional state regarding their employment (Ahakwa et al., 2021). The outcome of their labour is influenced by how satisfied they are with it, which is demonstrated by the amount of profit they generate.

The study by Vorina et al. (2019) investigated the connection between job satisfaction and employee engagement. People spend most of their time at work, and it is thought that motivation is a key component of performance at work. An important competitive advantage in the current economy is having enthusiastic employees who concentrate on attaining their organisations' objectives (Goestjahjanti et al., 2020). Kaur et al. (2020) affirm the impact of employee engagement on corporate performance. They came to the same realisation: "The more engaged the workforce is, the better operating results they produce for the business." Based on the results showed a positive and statistically significant link between employee engagement and work satisfaction (5% significance level) (Arifin et al., 2019). Additionally, the findings indicate no statistically significant relationship between gender and either work satisfaction or staff engagement.

Therefore, NHS in the United Kingdom should effectively focus on the factors that could be useful for enhancing the satisfaction level of their employees, which will ultimately reduce their turnover intentions and eventually mitigate the loss of desirable outcomes for the NHS in the United Kingdom. However, employee engagement will significantly impact the employee

satisfaction level in NHS, and the undertaken study has highlighted this perspective so that NHS could effectively focus on enhancing the commitment and engagement of their employees toward their job roles, an ultimatum for achieving required outcomes and improving the level of employee satisfaction.

Employee engagement significantly and positively influences employee satisfaction
Employee Well-being as a Mediator

Employee well-being is a broad concept if considered by definition (Abdullah et al., 2021). Employee well-being is the most crucial topic considered by the researchers because organisations are highly careful of working on the well-being of their employees as it will enable them to actively participate in their job roles (Tuzovic and Kabadayi, 2021). In addition, employee well-being is a perspective that affects the satisfaction of employees and healthcare at the national level. However, the present investigation has focused on employee well-being as a mediator because the researcher believes that if the NHS in the United Kingdom focuses on the well-being of their employees, they will significantly enhance the job satisfaction of employees, thus working in the NHS UK.

According to previous research (Russell, 2008), employee well-being is significantly associated with optimistic emotions and mood in the workforce, which include happiness, mitigation of depression, optimum desire to work, and a sense of satisfaction from their life (Sivapragasam and Raya, 2018). Furthermore, employee well-being is also effective for employee engagement at their workplaces, which highlights the well-being of the labour of an organisation explicitly enhances their performance by providing them with a committed and competent environment thus focused on their physical and psychological health, an ultimatum for enhancing the engagement of them toward their job roles (Radic et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be illustrated that the higher the organisation's focus on the well-being of employees, the higher the workforce's engagement toward their job role, which will eventually develop a sense of job satisfaction among the employees. Consequently, the NHS in the United Kingdom should prioritise achieving the engagement and commitment of their employees toward their job roles by considering their psychological and physical well-being, which will eventually enhance their job satisfaction.

Employee well-being significantly mediates the relationship between personal traits and employee satisfaction.

In addition, employee working capability within a team is also associated with employee well-being because when the employees are provided with an effective and feasible work environment within their workplaces, they are prone to work together like a team to attain

desirable outcomes actively (Ogbonnaya et al., 2018). However, the current investigation has also prioritised problem-solving and integrity as crucial personal traits that will elevate employees' satisfaction toward their jobs, where well-being is a critical aspect to enhance the association between personal traits and employee satisfaction. Moreover, the NHS in the United Kingdom should diligently focus on their employees' well-being, a critical factor for achieving the desired outcomes as it enhances their satisfaction level, which also signifies the purpose of the study undertaken within the context of the NHS sector in the United Kingdom.

The correlation between employee engagement and employee satisfaction is significantly mediated by employee well-being.

Research Gap

National Health Services has been mentioned as one of the best comprehensive health service sectors covering the entire population virtually, and this sector is maintained by the Britain Government (Britannica, 2023). The employees also manage such a highly significant sector covering the whole population; employees have been ranked as the main vital component to running any organisation, and only satisfied employees can meet the organisation's objectives (Varma, 2017). Employees not satisfied with their jobs can cause the organisation several hazards and losses in different aspects, so employee satisfaction should be a main focus of every business and organisation of any sector (Gregory, 2011). In the UK, the turnover rate of employees in the NHS

sector has been mentioned to risen very alarmingly from past recent years (Lacity and Carmel, 2022); they have provided a revolutionary idea to provide easy recognition of the healthcare staff and to improve the staff management and increase the positive thoughts and perceptions for their organisations, this was a supportive ideology for the organisations to reduce their turnover rate, but the employees were not targeted and addressed. Fasbender et al. (2019) conducted their study on nurses of the UK NHS. They targeted job stress, job embeddedness, and job satisfaction on job turnover retention, and their findings revealed the positive association of job satisfaction, job stress, and job embeddedness with turnover intentions. Still, this study only targeted the nurses and used only the job satisfaction concept in their study.

A recent study systematically reviews employee retention and the factors influencing employees to leave their jobs (Bimpong et al., 2020). This study has examined 31 articles on employee satisfaction, and they have summarised that in time payment of salary, increase in the wages of NHS workers, low job satisfaction, the environment at the job, training, and level of staffing negatively influences the job satisfaction which reduces the job retention of employees of NHS of UK. This study has asked future researchers to conduct studies targeting these summarised factors to view the employees' perceptions and find practical measures. Both studies were conducted in the UK, and both have targeted the NHS sector, reflecting an alarming situation for the employees of the NHS. There is an urgent call to target and address them to find the reasons behind their negative intention for their job. This study's main basic objective developed after these studies' results, suggestions, and recommendations.

Controlling worker productivity involves managing employee engagement, but there are discrepancies in how it is defined and measured. It is described as a happy frame of mind and a commitment to one's task that involves cognition, emotions, and behaviours. Highly engaged employees display high vigour, devotion, and immersion in their work. The construction of uniform metrics is, however, hampered by the lack of agreement on their definition. Organisational elements, job qualities, and individual variables influence employee engagement. The local level is more affected by changes in work satisfaction. The productivity a person produces reflects how emotionally invested

they are in their work, which is known as employee satisfaction. Higher productivity, job performance, self-efficacy, organisational commitment, civic conduct, and job satisfaction are all experienced by engaged workers, who also have decreased burnout, turnover intentions, and work stress. In addition, employee satisfaction is significantly influenced by personal traits in the presence of employee well-being. The researcher has proposed hypotheses regarding the nexus between the chosen constructs and how these variables are helpful for the NHS in the UK to enhance the satisfaction level of their employees, and the proposed hypotheses are prone to be tested further by applying several analytical techniques.

Methodology

Data for this study was collected quantitatively, interpreted the results according to the exact point of view of the respondents without any biases, and portrayed the outputs with complete authenticity and transparency. The study used Herzberg's two-factor theory as a broad foundation concept and has developed a specific association of personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being (Bimpong et al., 2020) on employee satisfaction (Lacity and Carmel, 2022). Herzberg's two-factor theory has provided the researcher with a strong base to investigate the specific variable concepts, and the researcher has designed the hypotheses and has combined all the assumed specific concepts into one empirical framework and has evaluated the role of employee personal traits and engagement with employee well-being on the performance level of the employees. The researcher has addressed this approach to evaluate the cause of the increase or decrease in employee satisfaction with the effects of personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being.

This has been highlighted and narrated as the benefit of using the deductive approach to investigate and numerically calculate the cause-and-effect relationship between variables. This study has developed a framework depicting the specific hypotheses based on the general ideology of the theory, that's why the other research approach got no approval to be used in this study (team, 2023) and has developed these associations with the help of some past studies which has explained these variables in their research using the same deductive approach (Ali and Anwar, 2021, Yu et al., 2021). In the inductive approach, the research pattern concentrates on reasoning. The inductive approach mainly covers generalized theory development from the logic of specific ideas. The reason is concluded with the generally applicable terms to focus, consider and control the particular issues (Azungah, 2018). This study has selected only specific terms and has no primary thought of investigating the reasoning of the addressed variables, i.e., personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being.

Research Strategy

This study has approached quantitative strategy and has measured the personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being like concepts numerically, and it has the aim to get a more generalized idea about the targeted phrases from a large sample of the population, that's why the quantitative approach has been preferred as the best strategy to achieve this goal (Goertzen, 2017). The study has used specific scales from the literature used by different studies to measure employee engagement, employee well-being, and employee performance, and the researcher has compiled all these scales together. After converting it into a questionnaire, the collected scale was used to access a large sample of the targeted population, and an adequate amount of data was collected. This method of conduction has helped the researcher to gain knowledge about most of the population's mindset regarding the questions asked and the variables. Further, the researcher has adopted this quantitative survey strategy after getting a preliminary verification for the appropriateness of the quantitative method for this study, (Choi, Yoon, & Kim, 2020; Yu et al., 2021) has evaluated the employee well-being, employee engagement and job performance using the same quantitative research strategy.

The researcher has not utilized the other research strategies like qualitative research and the mixed method, as the qualitative approach has a constraint of the limited number of participants to target, and the collected data can't be claimed as the generalized idea of the most of the population about the targeted concepts (Pathak et al., 2013). The qualitative research strategy has another limitation of the costly process in the time and money perspective, and the interpreted results are mostly not the actual representation of the collected data. The mixed method approach also has reservations and got an inappropriate title for this study. The mixed method strategy combines both quantitate and qualitative strategies, and it requires expertise in both fields and both ways; data collection reduces the respondent's focus for excellent response and lowers the value of the calculated results (Halcomb and Hickman, 2015).

The research design

The explanatory nature of the research has been prescribed as the phenomenon of the deep understanding of the causal relationships between constructs by the comprehensive explanation of the relationships (team, 2023). The researcher has focused on some benefits associated with using this research design and then selected this research nature and then selected this research nature and some studies have also used the same explanatory nature for the evaluation of the same constructs and has justified the accuracy of the selected approach

for the research conduct (Pongton and Suntrayuth, 2019, Yu et al., 2021, Al-Ali et al., 2019).

The first benefit of using this design; it has helped the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being. The second benefit it has provided is that it has empowered the researcher to get a more generalized idea about the relationships, and by using this design, the researcher has a way to explore the future outcomes that can emerge from the observation of the targeted specific relationships (Merkus, 2023). The explanatory research adoption for this study has eliminated the other designs to be used, and this limitation also has some reasons behind it. The descriptive design is mainly used to provide an extensive illustration of the selected variables without any empirical evaluation from any population, so this basic concept of descriptive analysis has removed this design from the criteria of this study (voxco, 2021). The exploratory design focuses on the root cause of any phenomenon and the procedure of how any phenomenon occurs, and it has a central devotion to developing something new for general recognition; this statement has caused this design to be unfit for this study's procedures (Sileyew, 2019).

Data Analysis

In the current investigation, the researcher has utilised positivism philosophy, a survey as a data collection process and the tool thus focused on gathering the desired data is a questionnaire. For gathering the data, the employees of the NHS sector were sent an email that will invite them to participate in the data collection procedure, and after that they will receive another email which will explain the research scope along with the questionnaire that has to be submitted by them as a response, which could be supported by a similar healthcare study regarding the impact of the COVID-19 on healthcare workers has incorporated online survey for data collection on the basis of questionnaires (Halcomb et al., 2020). The statistical software used for analysing the chosen constructs is SPSS because it will be feasible for generating generalised insights, as utilised in a similar study in the healthcare sector by Abdullah et al. (2021). On the other hand, the current investigation has also applied the KMO and Bartlett's test and Cronbach Alpha to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research model in accordance with the study undertaken by Alolayyan et al. (2020). Moreover, to evaluate the significance and validity of the deduced hypotheses where personal traits and employee engagement directly influence the satisfaction level of employees, and employee well-being significantly mediates the nexus between personal traits, employee engagement, and employee satisfaction, the researcher has applied the multiple regression tools available within the software.



Findings

The initial descriptive analysis procedure was used for the normality of the data, further in the next step, the association of the variables in between them was explored. In addition, the next step was the rotated component matrix which was conducted for the investigation of the reliability of the data. In the final step, the regression analysis was integrated for the elucidation of relationships between the variables addressed in this research. Consequently, in the end, a comprehensive summary of all the analytical procedures are explained in the subsections that follow starting with the demographic breakdown.

Table 1: Gender distribution

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	29	48.3	48.3	48.3
	Female	31	51.7	51.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Job position of respondents at Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Doctor	13	21.7	21.7	21.7
	Nurse	23	38.3	38.3	60.0
	Nurse practitioner	20	33.3	33.3	93.3
	Manager	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Position

Tables 3 and 4 indicate that 45% of employees have been working at the hospital for about 2-5 years and 41.7% have been working for 5-8 years. Moreover, 58.3% work in medicine related roles, and the remaining 41.7% work in administrative roles.

Table 3: Employment experience of respondents

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Less than one year	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	2-5 years	27	45.0	45.0	51.7
	Between 5-8 years	25	41.7	41.7	93.3
	More than 8 years	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Nature of Job of respondents

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Medical	35	58.3	58.3	58.3
	Administrative	25	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Demographic Analysis

The sample was based on 60 respondents and from these 48.3% were male and 51.7% were female. 38.3% were nurses, 33.3% were nurse practitioners, 21.7% were doctors, and 6.7% were managers, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Normality analysis:

In the first step of data analysis after initial data preparation protocols, the frequency test was applied for the screening and tracking of any missing values and outliers in the data. The frequency test revealed the data without any missing values and outliers in the data and ensured the data quality for further analysis procedures. Next, the mean value of the variables has

been computed, and the effective value of the mean value should be above 3, and all the table values have depicted that respondents have positive perceptions about the addressed concepts and favourable perceptions about the dependent variable after evaluating all the other variables. Table 5 illustrates the descriptive analysis of the data collected.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of the data:

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std.error
EE	60	1.00	5.00	3.6463	.72226	-.788	.309
EWB	60	1.00	5.00	3.6383	.74745	-.918	.309
TEAM	60	1.00	5.00	3.2833	1.10439	-.410	.309
PS	60	1.00	5.00	3.5125	.99514	-.542	.309
BI	60	1.00	5.00	3.8208	.67584	-.403	.309
ES	60	1.00	5.00	3.2417	1.05160	0.21	.309

This test was used for the investigation of the adequacy of the data about the sample size used in this study. The following table represents the KMO test, and the standard value for the confirmation of effective value is above 0.6 and less than 1 (Shrestha, 2021),

and the following Table 6 has shown the value of the KMO test is 0.762. The next test was Bartlett’s test to show the redundancy in the data, and the chi-square significance value has revealed that all the correlation coefficients have a null value.

Table 6. The test of sample adequacy and redundancy:

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling adequacy	. 762
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	approx. Chi Square
	Df
	Sig
	2307.883
	703
	.000

Reliability analysis:

The reliability of the items and derived variables was assessed using the Cronbach alpha value. Studies have mentioned that the Cronbach alpha value should be in

a moderate range but not above 1 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The following Table 7 shows the good figure of the Cronbach alpha values of the all the variables.

Table 7. The Cronbach alpha values of the variables:

Variable	Items	Value
EE	9	.895
EWB	10	.916
TEAM	3	.929
PS	4	.930
BI	8	.890
ES	4	.733

The correlation between the constructs:

The correlation test was performed for the investigation of the association between the assembled variables in the model of the study. The best correlation analysis used to calculate the association has been named the

Pearson coefficient correlation (Schober et al., 2018). The researcher has also adopted the same technique and the following table 9 has reflected effective values of correlation between the addressed variables.

Table 8. The correlation between the variables:

		EE	EWB	TEAM	PS
EE	Pearson	1	.821**	.740**	.754**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60
EWB	Pearson	.821**	1	.740**	.701**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60
TEAM	Pearson	.740**	.740**	1	.823**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	60	60	60	60
PS	Pearson	.754**	.701**	.823**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	60	60	60	60
BI	Pearson	.698**	.684**	.671**	.592**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60
ES	Pearson	.582**	.624**	.705**	.592**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60

The regression analysis for the data analysis:

The SPSS software was used for the regression analysis and the regression analysis has been used for this purpose to decide the synthesized hypotheses acceptance or rejection. The regression analysis has revealed the fate of the developed assumptions about the variables and the pre-defined criteria for the acceptance of the hypotheses was based on the p-value which should be less than 0.01 or 0.05, in this regard, the analysis has shown a 0.404 value of regression with p-value: 0.003 for the proxy of personality trait problem solving trait as relationship between problem-solving trait and employee satisfaction and this hypothesis which has been developed in the literature as H1 was accepted. Next, for the association between behavioral integrity, the second proxy of personality trait, and employee satisfaction, the regression value was 0.317 with a p-value: 0.018 which was H1 in the literature, thus the developed assumption was accepted. The association between the third proxy for personality trait: teamwork and employee satisfaction has gained a regression value of 0.014 and a p-value: 0.910, so this hypothesis H1 was rejected. Further, the next hypothesis about the dependence of employee satisfaction on employee engagement has a regression value of 0.108 and p-value of 0.403 and this hypothesis H2 also got rejected.

The next hypotheses were about the mediating role of employee well-being between the problem-solving personal trait and employee satisfaction, and the regression value of this mediation was 2.606 with a p-value: 0.012, thus verifying the role of mediation as a significant variable and the acceptance of proxy of personality trait as problem solving developed in H3. The next mediation was about the employee well-being between behavioral integrity and employee satisfaction. This relationship has gained a computed regression value of 2.877 with a p-value: 0.006, so this mediating relationship was also accepted and approved the second proxy for personality trait in thus, H3 was accepted.

Next, the mediation of employee well-being on the relationship between teamwork personality traits and employee satisfaction was proposed in H3, and the regression value of this mediation was 0.056 and the p-value of 0.665. This p-value has caused the rejection of this hypothesis. The last hypothesis H4 was about the mediating impact of the employee well-being and the employee satisfaction which computed a regression value of 0.157 and p-value of 0.217 and consequently, this hypothesis was also rejected. The following displays the computed regression values with their level of significance in it.

Table 10. The regression analysis:

		Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized	Coefficients	Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(CONSTANT)	6.297	.843		7.467	.000
	EE	.142	.169	.108	.843	.403
	TEAM	.022	.195	.014	.113	.910
	PS	.427	.136	.404	3.137	.003
	BI	.493	.202	.317	2.445	.018
2	(CONSTANT)	6.703	.837		8.004	.000
	EE	.207	.166	.157	1.250	.217
	TEAM	.085	.195	.056	.435	.665
	PS	.355	.136	.336	2.606	0.12
	BI	.571	.198	.367	2.877	.006
	EWB	.348	.160	.250	2.169	.035

a. Dependent Variable: ES

Descriptive analysis was performed which has reflected the quality of the data by its skewness values within the threshold range, no missing values and outliers in the data. Then, the KMO test has justified the sample adequacy and redundancy of data with its significance value. Further the factor loading was calculated using the rotated component matrix and the factor loadings of all the items of the instruments have shown a normal required trend by falling in their respective columns and all values were within the prescribed range. After this, the reliability of the variables and their items have been computed and all the values have reflected that items used were sufficient for the variables and the

data has shown reliability trends. The correlation test was integrated for the evaluation of the association between the variables and all the variables have shown a desired level of association between them. Later in the last step, the regression analysis was conducted for hypotheses testing that has revealed the significant impact of problem-solving trait and behavioral integrity on the employee satisfaction by direct relationship as well as with the mediation of employee well-being. Meanwhile, the variables; teamwork and employee has shown no effect on employee satisfaction neither via direct impact nor through the indirect effect with employee well-being.



Discussions of Findings

Hypotheses

This chapter includes the discussion of the findings by comparing the results of this research study with the past studies to see whether the results are supported by those studies or not. It includes overview of the hypotheses of the study that were tested during the conduction of this research along with their results. A summary of past studies is also included in this chapter to show the highlights of those studies such as the Sources, Country of the study, Focus of the study, Understudy variables, Method of the study and the results.

Table 11 Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Statement	mediated by employee well-being.
H1	Personal traits significantly and positively impact employee satisfaction.	Result Problem Solving & Integrity (accepted), Teamwork Rejected)
H2	Employee engagement significantly and positively influences employee satisfaction.	Rejected
H3	Employee well-being significantly mediates the relationship between personal traits and employee satisfaction.	Problem Solving & Integrity (Accepted), Teamwork Rejected)
H4	The correlation between employee engagement and employee satisfaction is significantly	Rejected

Discussion

This study was conducted to analyse the level of employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and identify the factors that contribute to the satisfaction of the employees working there. The objectives of the study were to critically review the literature on employee satisfaction at healthcare centres, to expand existing literature on employee satisfaction by applying a survey to the staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and to recommend strategies for improving NHS services regarding employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The study was based on the Herzberg's two-factor theory which comprises on two job factors i.e., internal factors called motivators and external factors called hygiene or maintenance factors. The study adopted positivism as research philosophy, inductive approach as the research approach and qualitative method as the research method for this study. For this purpose, the data was collected from the sixty employees working in the NHS hospital of the UK through a questionnaire based survey. The data collected from the respondents was analysed by using SPSS and Multiple Regression Tools. Following is the discussion of findings:

Four hypotheses were tested in this research study to analyse the level of employee satisfaction at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and identify the factors that contribute to the satisfaction of the employees working there. Following table includes the results:

Effect of Personal Traits on Employee Satisfaction

H1: Personal traits significantly and positively impact employee satisfaction. As this study examined three personal traits i.e., problem solving, integrity and teamwork, after the analysis of data, based on the results and findings of the study it was proved that: The problem solving, and integrity trait has a significant and positive impact on employee satisfaction, but the teamwork does not have the significant positive impact. The results were similar to the study of Hendri (2019). The study was conducted in the West Kalimantan. The focus of the study was to examine how organizational learning can affect the employees' organizational commitment and employees' job. The variables under study were job satisfaction, learning organisation, organisational commitment, and employee performance. For the purpose of analysis, the study used Partial Least Square Approach. It observed that the learning activities might have a little effect on the employee commitment to the organisation. Moreover, the study discussed that integrity of the employee can increase the organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

The results of the study revealed that integrity is important to shape the employee performance and organisational learning does have a little effect on the employee commitment. It further stated that integrity of the employee can enhance the job satisfaction at workplace.

The results were also similar to the study of Bayona et al. (2020). The mentioned study was conducted in Colombia. The focus of the study was to analyse how different between knowledge characteristics are related to job satisfaction and job performance. The study also aimed to examine how work engagement can mediate this relationship. The variables under study were knowledge characteristics, education, age, occupational level, job satisfaction, job performance, organisational tenure, and work engagement. For analysis, this study used the Polynomial Regression and Time-lagged Design. The study discussed different knowledge characteristics such as job complexity, skill variety, problem solving, specialization and information processing. It further discussed that these characteristics of the employees help them to be more engaged in the work and increase the job satisfaction. The results of the study revealed that problem solving i.e., a knowledge characteristic has a great impact on the job satisfaction of the employee.

The results about the teamwork and employee satisfaction were contradictory to the study of Al Sabei et al. (2022). The study was conducted in Oman among the nurses of hospitals. The focus of the study was to analyse how inter-professional teamwork affect nurses and their intentions to leave their jobs, directly and indirectly. It also examined the teamwork and its impact on the job satisfaction of the nurses. The variables under study were interprofessional teamwork, job satisfaction and burnout. For the purpose of analysis, this study used Sequential mediation model and Logistic regression. The results of the study revealed that interprofessional teamwork has a significant impact on the job satisfaction of the nurses. Also, the results showed that the interprofessional teamwork helps the nurses to not leave the job as it reduces the job burnout and help them at workplace.

H2: Employee engagement significantly and positively influences employee satisfaction.

After the analysis of data, based on the results and findings of the study it was proved that employee engagement does not have a significant and positive impact on the employee satisfaction. The study of Goestjahjanti et al. (2020) showed dissimilar results to this research. The mentioned study was conducted in the automotive industry of Southeast Asian. The focus of this study was to find out about the effect of authentic leadership and talent management on the job satisfaction of the employees working in that industry. The study also focused on the mediating role of employee engagement in this relationship and checked the direct relationship of employee

engagement with the job satisfaction. It discussed that when employees feel engaged and valued at work, they feel more satisfied with the work and job they are doing. The results of the study revealed that employee engagement not only mediates the relationship but also job satisfaction of employees is greatly affected by the employee engagement directly.

The results of study conducted by Fute et al. (2022) also does not support the current results. This study was conducted in the education sector of China. The focus of the study was mainly to analyse how work values can affect the job satisfaction among Chinese teachers. It also examined the mediating role of work engagement in this relationship. It discussed about the job satisfaction of the teachers during the COVID-19 since due to pandemic the teaching methods and patterns were changed along with their responsibilities. Moreover, the chances of work engagement were reduced due to the work from home system. The study analysed the satisfaction level of teachers if the work value and work engagement is high among them. The results of the study revealed that work values can impact the job satisfaction of the employees. Also, the teachers' job satisfaction in Chinese education sector is positively affected by the work engagement.

The study also not supported the results of Chan (2019) about the relationship between employee engagement and the employee satisfaction. This study was conducted in Hong Kong. The aim of the study was to analyse how job satisfaction of employees, participative leadership and work engagement of employees are related to each other. It was observed by the researcher that the job satisfaction increases when the employee engagement at the workplace is high. The results of the study revealed that employee engagement strongly mediated the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction of the employees. As described by McDermott (2023), that the small sample size, while conducting a quantitative research study, might become challenging for the researcher since the results of the study might be contradictory or not generalizable to a larger set. So, as the results of current research study are contradictory to other research study whether due to small sample size or any other factor, the research recommends exploring this topic in the future to see what kind of results appear.

H3: Employee well-being significantly mediates the relationship between personal traits and employee satisfaction.

Personal traits (problem-solving, integrity, and teamwork) are associated with job satisfaction which is significantly mediated by employee well-being in the context of Queen Elizabeth Line London. After the analysis of data, it is proved that problem-solving and integrity are the traits which are significantly mediated by employee well-being and the employees are highly satisfied from their job roles. However, when thinking

of teamwork as a personal trait thus accompanied by employee well-being as a mediator it does not show significant correlation with job satisfaction. According to the research findings, the values thus obtained for the mediation of employee well-being between problem-solving, behavioural integrity, and employee satisfaction are 0.012 and 0.006, respectively, which have not surpassed the threshold limit, i.e., 0.05 thus entailing significant role of employee well-being and hence leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis. On the other hand, the value thus obtained by analysing employee well-being as a mediator between teamwork and employee satisfaction in the context of health sector is 0.665, which has exceeded the threshold limit and hence led to the rejection of the hypothesis.

According to research, personal traits are significantly associated with employee well-being, and job performance (Athota et al., 2020). However, this study is highlighting the direct correlation between personal traits and employee well-being and the current study has been focusing on the mediation of employee well-being between personal traits which include problem-solving, behavioural integrity, and teamwork and employee job satisfaction, which highlights the novelty of the current study and could be discussed in a manner that within the healthcare sectors employee well-being is a crucial aspect to enhance job satisfaction in the presence of problem-solving and behavioural integrity as personal traits. Despite this, research has also elaborated that behavioural integrity is significantly correlated with employee engagement (Swain et al., 2018).

However, engaged, and motivated employees are highly satisfied from their job roles and when this integrity is associated with the well-being of the workforce within the health sectors, it will substantially boost up their job satisfaction levels. In addition, it has also been opined that problem-solving positively influences the job satisfaction level of the employees by reducing their turnover intention (Mullen et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of problem-solving as a personal trait for enhancing employee satisfaction. However, when it is accompanied with the well-being of employees within the health sector as a mediator, it considerably enhances employee satisfaction level. On the other side, teamwork is a crucial part of healthcare sectors to improve the satisfaction level of their employees but within the current study, when teamwork is associated with employee satisfaction in the presence of employee well-being it does not provides the desired outcomes as compared to problem-solving and behavioural integrity. Hence, it could be illustrated that employee well-being is a significant mediator between personal traits and job satisfaction when focusing on healthcare sectors and is a crucial element to be incorporated in health sectors.

H4: The correlation between employee engagement and employee satisfaction is significantly mediated by employee well-being.

After the analysis, based on the results and findings of the study it was proved that employee well-being does not play a significant mediating role in the relationship between employee engagement and employee satisfaction. The results of hypotheses 4 were contradictory to the study of Abdullah et al. (2021). The study was conducted in healthcare sector of Pakistan among the nursing employees. The focus of study was to analyse the effect of ISQ on the job satisfaction, well-being, employee commitment and job performance of the nurses. The study also aimed to examine how well-being mediates this relationship. It observed that the when the employees have a good well-being, it strongly enhances the positive relationship between the job satisfaction and performance of the employees. The results of the study revealed that the effect of job satisfaction of nurses on the employee performance is positively mediated by the well-being of the employees.

Japura et al. (2023) also described the job satisfaction of the employees based on Herzberg's Two Factor theory which also verified the use of this theory for current research. It discussed how the different factors affect the satisfaction of the employees but at the same time there are factors may not satisfy the employee neither make them feel dissatisfaction such as work engagement, working conditions etc. Another research study conducted by Jia et al. (2022) showed the dissimilar results from this study. The mentioned study was conducted in the Academic sector of China. The focus of the study was to examine the relationship between ethical leadership, innovative work behaviour, work engagement and well-being. It observed that if the employee's well-being is the priority of the workplace, the positive relationship between the leadership and work engagement will be moderated highly by this. For the purpose of analysis, it used the Structural Equation Modelling and Smart PLS. The results of the study revealed that the relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement is significantly moderated by the well-being of the employees.

The results of current research also not supported the study conducted by Haque (2021). The study was conducted in Australia, and it was about the healthcare sector. The study used the method of extensive literature review to provide propositions about the healthcare sector. The focus of the study was to identify whether the well-being of the employees has an impact on the organisational sustainability and the job satisfaction of the health workers. The results of the study revealed that, it is very important for the job satisfaction and organisational sustainability especially in healthcare to have a good well-being in employees as they are the frontline workers. So, as the results of current research study are contradictory to other research study whether due to small sample size or any other factor, the research recommends exploring this topic in the future to see what kind of results appear.

Conclusions

This study has investigated the role of teamwork, behavioural integrity, and problem-solving nature as personality traits, employee engagement, and employee well-being in determining the employee satisfaction. This study has explored that problem-solving nature and the behavioural intentions have a facilitative role in increasing employee satisfaction with their job at the Queen Elizabeth hospital. Personality traits of teamwork showed no significance for employee satisfaction, employee engagement also revealed no significant influence on employee satisfaction. As far as the mediation was concerned, there has been found a significant mediating impact of employee well-being on the relationship between behavioural integrity, problem-solving nature, and the employee satisfaction. However, there was insignificant mediation between teamwork, employee engagement, and employee satisfaction. Lastly, the computed results have been discussed and their empirical evidence have been provided as well for their validation.

Overall, the study has provided the literature an insight into different personality traits and roles in defining employee satisfaction and has mainly enlightened the status of the level of employee satisfaction at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital by the preview of the targeted variables. The researcher

provided valuable insights into the existing literature and expanded the debate on NHS services and their impact on employees' well-being and job satisfaction. Further, the researcher has contributed to the literature by providing a clear picture of NHS hospital employees' status in the healthcare centres. Most of the previous studies dealt with the employees' issues regarding job perception and experience in healthcare. The present study identifies the research gap and covers it by taking into consideration the employees' mental health aspects i.e., their satisfaction, and their job experience in context of NHS services. The study also has insights for the practitioners. This study has provided the managers and the policymakers of the hospitals of NHS information and awareness about the current ratio and quality of the job satisfaction of their employees and has highlighted some factors that the hospital management should focus on and consider to further cause an increment in their employees' job satisfaction. The study will be valuable to the health sector management in identifying the issues that restrict the growth of employees. The considerate measures can be taken by devising strategic plans to improve the job experience of the employees. This study has preliminary knowledge for all the managers and policymakers of other sectors to pay attention to the addressed and justified significant concepts and improve job satisfaction among their employees for getting a more highly competitive advantage and profit.



Implications

Based on current findings, the researcher proposed few recommendations that can prove effective in dealing with the employees' issues at the NHS hospital. It has occurred through findings that the employee engagement significantly impacts the employee satisfaction. The hospital management and authorities should revise and reform their policies and offers that they provide to the employees at workplace. Increasing the incentives and advance reward system can improve the job perception and allow the employees to actively play their part and give dedicated services. It is also suggested that the institutional environment should encourage the cooperation and establish working culture that supports the working behaviours of each employee. Managing such culture nurtures the productivity and boosts up the morale of the employees leading to the job satisfaction and their well-being. The employee commitment should also be emphasized by the management. Employee commitment at one hand helps the organization to achieve the objectives and on other ensures the dedication and loyalty of the employees towards the organization. Maintaining the employee commitment thus significantly leads to job satisfaction and improved performance of employees.

Limitations and Suggestions for future studies

Every conducted research always has some missing points in its which researchers discuss as their limitations. So, this study has been completed with some limitations in it as well. Firstly. This study has used a case study-based quantitative approach and has targeted only one organization. The quantitative data collection restricts the scope of the study to the statistical data. Secondly, the researcher has only targeted a few personality traits for the evaluation of job satisfaction in NHS hospital employees. Thirdly, this study has used the employees of only one organization and has skipped all other hospital employees working under NHS, which arises the concept of generalizability of the addressed variables.

The study has provided some suggestions and some road maps for the continuation of the research journey in this line. Future researchers should focus on targeting employees from multiple hospitals for the generalizability of the addressed constructs. Further, Future studies can be carried out in other organizational setups like the manufacturing sector, multi-national organizations, agencies, and many other sectors. In addition to this, the future researchers should add some other personality variables that have a facilitative role in the job satisfaction among employees. The same research ideology can be conducted in different demographical and geographical locations to get a diverse viewpoint on this topic. In last, the researcher can use a qualitative research approach or longitudinal time horizon for getting a more comprehensive ideology about the discussed variables.



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Appendix: Summary of Past Studies

S/N 1	Focus	Variables	Method	Results
Source 1 Hendri (2019)	How organizational learning can affect the employees' organizational commitment, employees' job satisfaction, and employees' performance?	Job Satisfaction, Learning Organization, Organizational Commitment and Employee Performance	Partial Least Square Approach	Integrity is important to shape employee performance. Organizational learning does have little effect on employee commitment. The integrity of the employee can enhance job satisfaction at the workplace.
Country West Kalimantan				
S/N 2	How different between knowledge characteristics' are related to job satisfaction and job performance?	Knowledge Characteristics, Education, Age, Occupational Level, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, Organizational Tenure and Work Engagement	Polynomial Regression, Time-lagged Design	Problem solving i.e., a knowledge characteristic has a substantial effect on the worker's pleasure at work.
Source Bayona et al. (2020)				
Country Colombia				
S/N 3	How authentic leadership and talent management can have an impact on job satisfaction of the employees?	Talent Management, Employee Engagement, Authentic Leadership and Job Satisfaction	SEM Method, SmartPLS 3.0	Job satisfaction of employees is greatly affected by the employee engagement.
Source Goestjahjanti et al. (2020)		Work Engagement, Work Values and Job Satisfaction		
Country Southeast Asia	How can employee engagement mediate this relationship?			
S/N 4	How can work values affect the job satisfaction among Chinese teachers?	Work Engagement, Work Values and Job Satisfaction	SPSS 25, PROCESS	Teachers' job satisfaction is positively affected by the work engagement.
Source Fute et al. (2022)				
Country China	How can work engagement mediate this relationship?			
S/N 5	How inter-professional teamwork affect nurses and their intentions to leave their jobs, directly and indirectly. It also examined the teamwork and its impact on the job satisfaction of the nurses.	Interprofessional Teamwork, Job Satisfaction and Burnout	Sequential mediation model and Logistic regression	Interprofessional teamwork has a substantial effect on the nurses' job satisfaction. Interprofessional teamwork helps the nurses to not leave the job as it reduces the job burnout and help them at workplace.
Source Al Sabei et al. (2022)				
Country Oman				
S/N 6	What is the effect of ISQ on the job satisfaction, well-being, employee commitment and job performance of the nurses?	Job Satisfaction, Job Commitment, Internal Service Quality, Job Performance and Employee Well-Being	Structural Equation Modelling, Smart PLS	The effect of job satisfaction of nurses on the employee performance is positively mediated by the well-being of the employees.
Source Abdullah et al. (2021)				
Country Pakistan	How well-being mediates this relationship?			
S/N 7	How are the leadership characteristics related to the six-sigma success?	Behavioral Integrity, Authentic Leadership, Employee Engagement and Six Sigma Performance	Cross-Sectional Survey, SEM	Behavioural Integrity has a substantial effect on employee engagement.
Source Swain et al., (2018)				
Country United States				

An Evaluation of the Impact of Social Media on Digital Consumer Buying Behaviour in the United Kingdom

Simranpreet Kaur

Abstract

The dissertation has focused on exploring the impact that social media brings on consumer behaviour and purchasing intention in UK digital businesses. The study has been completed by using an online survey method including 50 respondents from the UK. The study helped in concluding that social media usage is frequent among the respondents as nearly half of them are engaging on these platforms several times a day. Most of the respondents further have made direct purchases through these platforms, showing the role of social media platforms in consumer purchases. Several factors are behind this shift of customers from traditional in-store purchases to social media purchases such as personalized advertisements, peer recommendations, and online consumer socialization. The study further explored the changing patterns of consumer behaviour within the UK digital businesses. It shows a shift from traditional ways of purchasing and the major factors behind this transformation include electronic word of mouth, ease of use, frequent use and easy access to information. Several attributes of social media content influence consumer choices and behaviour. Visual and interactive content helps not only engage consumers but also influences their purchasing decisions. Influencer credibility and consistent brand messaging through content are other aspects emerging from the study that influence consumer choices. The main recommendations for the digital businesses of the UK that have emerged from the study include strategic content planning, enhanced user engagement, consistent brand messaging, credible influencer collaborations, optimization for impulse purchases, and targeted social commerce campaigns. The limitation of the study includes potential self-bias and self-reported nature of the online survey and limited generalizability in a global context as the study focused on the UK.

Keywords

- Social Media
- UK Digital Businesses
- Consumer Behaviour
- Purchasing intentions

Introduction

The consumer purchase decision involves a process that begins with recognition of need, followed by searching for options, evaluating alternatives and concluding with selecting and purchasing certain products or services. The decision-making procedure involves several considerations such as what, when, where, which brand/model, budget, payment method and so on. The perception that consumers hold for the offerings of a firm and brand brings significant influence on their purchase decisions, shaped by past experiences as well as the ability of the product to meet specific needs. Marketers can influence buying behaviour by using advertising and promotional programs. The rise of online media channels in recent years, driven by improvements in information and communication technologies has a vital role in shaping the purchase decisions of consumers (Hanaysha, 2022).

The advent of social media platforms has evolved from being just networking tools to powerful channels through which information can be exchanged and customer engagement can be embraced. The digital platform created especially for community-driven contributions, interactions, and content exchange is known as social media. Different types of social media include applications as well as websites dedicated and aligned to social networking, social bookmarking, forums, and more. Social media platforms include, among others, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and others (SAHU, 2021). Social media utilisation is increasingly influencing and altering consumer behaviour and the procedures they adopt for making purchases (Jashari and Rrustemi, 2017). The enhanced utilisation of social media has brought transformation in how companies connect as well as engage with customers. Companies are forced to find innovative ways to use social media to reach a global customer base. The utilisation of social media for marketing practices has been enhanced due to technology and digitalisation (Godey et al., 2016).

The use of social media platforms for marketing has majorly enhanced in all industries and sectors since it helps in accessing a broad customer base on national and international levels. It gives opportunities to firms through which they can interact, communicate and connect with the wider customer base and that too in a time and cost-efficient manner. The various social media platforms help in making customers aware of the offerings of an organisation and hence help in targeting the audience as well as connecting with them through relevant content. Businesses get several advantages because of social media marketing such as enhanced awareness of the brand, customer engagement and uplifted market presence. Thus, the ability of social media marketing to offer global reach unlike traditional channels has enhanced its utilisation in marketing (Cartwright et al., 2021).

The modern era population is used to social media, mobile applications, technology and other connected aspects and this has become a part of their lives (Stephen, 2016). A study conducted revealed that social media users in the year 2023 account for 4.9 billion and this is estimated to increase and reach about 5.85 billion by the end of 2027 (Jain, 2023). By using social media platforms as channels for information search, people have started avoiding the use of traditional tools such as newspapers and magazines. The greatest advantage of social media platforms is that they can establish a dialogue between the two parties, offering consumers an opportunity for feedback. So, it has facilitated communication between consumers and brands (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

These increasing uses of social media have been serving as an encouragement for companies to use and move with the power represented by social media marketing in changing buying thoughts and habits among consumers. Besides, most businesses already make full use of social media and have learned much about consumers 'attitudes toward products or services to help them shape their marketing activities (Husnain & Toor. 2017). But in today's era of not only commerce but communication, the greater reliance on social media is effecting considerable change. Through social platforms, brands have transformed how consumers communicate with them and become even more deeply involved in purchasing products or services. The potential of social media to empower consumers to instantly enjoy access to a global network of opinions, advertisements and recommendations is reshaping their decision-making process along with their attitudes, behaviour and perceptions about the products and services (Cartwright et al., 2021). Social media platforms can have a substantial impact on initial product awareness and subsequent information-search abilities through various aspects such as user-generated reviews, influencer endorsements and targeted advertisements.

Consumers today often utilise social media when they want important information about a brand. The widespread utilisation of smartphones and wireless devices has made social media sites the go-to platform for brand searches. Marketers have also recognised the significance of these social media sites in gaining valuable insights about customer behaviour and this in turn helps in strategic marketing decisions. This trend has resulted in service providers investing their resources, time as well and marketing expertise in online communication relating to their offerings and the main aim behind it is to influence consumer purchase decisions (Hanaysha, 2022).

The influence that social media platforms are bringing on consumer behaviour goes beyond awareness and information, it has also altered the purchasing patterns. The advent of online shopping and personalised as well as interactive social media engagement is resulting in a shift in the preference of consumers for digital

storefronts. Consumers are increasingly relying on social media platforms because of the accessibility they provide for peer reviews, comparison tools as well and real-time feedback (Jashari and Rrustemi, 2017).

The study thus emphasises exploring the impact that social media has brought on consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns. This study emphasises how social media influences consumer behaviour and their purchasing decisions. Social media represents a shift in marketing, moving from traditional approaches to more relationship-based marketing aspects and strategies. Companies must comprehend the impact that social media brings on consumers' buying choices. This understanding is key for companies aiming to gain a competitive edge in the market (SAHU, 2021).

The purpose of the study thus is to comprehensively examine the profound influence brought by social media on consumer behaviour and their purchasing decisions. The study aims to analyse how exposure to social media content is altering consumer behaviour, various strategies of the decision-making process and hence ultimately their purchasing patterns. The study's purpose also includes highlighting the major influence social media has brought on the purchasing habits of the consumers, preferred shopping channels and hence the overall consumption patterns. Moreover, the study will also delve into the attributes of social media content and engagement that influence consumer choices. By attaining these objectives, the study has the ultimate purpose of contributing valuable insights into the dynamic link between social media and consumer behaviour. These can be helpful for businesses and marketers in forming more efficient social media strategies for varying the targeted audience in this era of intense competition. Thus, the marketers will be the major beneficiaries of this study as they will gain insights into how they can effectively utilise social media strategies not only to understand but also to influence consumer behaviour as well as purchasing patterns.

In the contemporary era of marketing, the significant influence of social media on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions has become a central point for businesses. The shift from traditional marketing approaches to relationship-based strategies highlights the importance of understanding as well as leveraging the impact of social media (SAHU, 2021). Social media is becoming an important platform for marketing but the literature lacks significantly about the impact it brings on consumer buying behaviour among UK digital businesses. Social media utilisation is enhancing day by day and this trend further correlates with growth in unique users (Stephen 2016; Jain 2023). However, there is a lack of nuanced exploration into how the content and engagement on social media influence the decision-making processes and ultimately bring changes in consumer purchasing habits. This gap brings hindrance for businesses in context with the formulation of

targeted and effective social media strategies aligned with the evolving preferences and behaviours of their diverse customer base.

Hence, the central problem to be addressed through this study is aligned with the need for an in-depth investigation into the impact that social media platforms bring on consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns, especially in the context of content and engagement dynamics that drive these changes. A comprehensive study of this complex relationship is essential for businesses to upgrade their marketing approaches, uplift customer engagement and stay competitive in this era of social media marketing. The Research Questions include – how does exposure to social media content influence consumer behaviour in UK digital businesses? In what ways has the use of social media changed the purchasing behaviour of consumers in the UK digital businesses?

The study's main aim is to study the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour within UK digital Businesses. The objectives are aligned with the aim of the study. The main research objectives of the study are to examine the impact of social media on consumer behaviour, explore the impact of social media on changing consumer purchasing behaviour in the UK digital businesses, and to investigate the role of social media content in shaping consumer choices in UK digital businesses.



Literature Review

The literature covers the theoretical background as well as research findings in the selected area. Key terms definition, conceptual model and literature gap are also a part of this section.

Social media marketing

Tuten and Solomon (2017) stated that social media marketing refers to the practice of using social media platforms to interact with customers and hence build a brand, increasing sales and driving website traffic. There is increasing use of social media platforms not only for product promotion but also for launching products and connecting to customers.

Consumer behaviour

Lim et al., (2023) explored that consumer behaviour is related to the study of individuals, groups or organisations and the process often used by them while selecting, purchasing, utilising or disposing of products or services that can ultimately satisfy their needs. It is an in-depth study that aims and explore all the factors such as cultural, social, psychological and economic that have the potential to influence and inform the actions of consumers.

Consumer decision-making model

Stankevich (2017) examined that the consumer decision-making model comprises sequential steps that an individual often goes through while making any purchase decision and choices. The model is based on five stages. The first stage is known as problem recognition in which consumers get realisation about the need or problem. The next stage is information search in which the relevant information is researched by consumers relating to the product/service they want to purchase. The third stage is called evaluation of alternatives in which a comparison of all the choices available in context with the product/service is made based on factors such as price, quality, features and so on. The purchase decision is the fourth stage in which actual selection and purchase are made and the last stage is referred to as post-purchase evaluation in which the consumer often evaluates the purchased product/service.

Voramontri and Klieb (2019) suggested that the actual impact that social media brings on consumer purchasing decisions can be seen in the information search and evaluation process in which the consumer gets awareness about a need or problem and aligned to it relevant information is researched, alternatives are evaluated, and actual purchase is made. In all these stages the exposure to the user-generated content

and opinions of the influencers through platforms like Instagram, YouTube and product reviews shapes the initial perception and awareness of the consumers relating to the product, services or brand. Such content on different social media platforms not only informs and influence but also make consumers consider them as they often rely on the experience and recommendations of others.

Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT)

Condé Ricci Martinelli (2021) found in the study that Zero Moment of Truth is a model that highlights the impact that the digital age brings on the decision-making of consumers. It describes the influence that digital media is bringing in the changing consumer buying behaviour. The model suggests that in the modern era, before making the actual purchase, consumers often go through online research that includes watching videos, reading online reviews and exploring social media content, that ultimately inform their choices. ZMOT is seen as the most powerful moment in the consumer purchase journey. Biçer (2020) further added that social media platforms have become key touchpoints in ZMOT and they can influence consumers even before they physically meet the product/service. Consumers are becoming brand advocates in case of positive experiences since it often leads to positive post-purchase evaluation and feedback, and this is creating a loop.

Social influence theory

Lim (2022) stated that social influence theory is based on psychology and highlights how social surroundings play an important role in shaping the behaviour, attitudes and opinions of consumers. The theory suggests that action of others influences an individual. In the case of social media, the theory shows that the behaviour and choices of consumers are shaped by peer reviews, recommendations and endorsements done on the online networks that the individual is part of. Ifinedo (2016) examined that social media validation plays an important role in influencing the decisions of consumers where approval and suggestions given by others significantly inform their choices. The phenomena are seen in context with likes, comments and shares on social media that ultimately shape consumer behaviour.

Technology acceptance theory

Sagnier et al., (2020) explored that the Technology Acceptance model gives insights about the adoption of technology by users and especially digital tools. There

are two factors, ease of use and perceived usefulness that decide whether potential users will accept the technology or not. Weerasinghe and Hindagolla (2018) added that in context with social media, this theory examines the aspects that influence the readiness of consumers to use these platforms based on the two factors. The theory helps marketers in examining the motivating aspects that influence consumers to actively get engaged on social media platforms. It becomes easier to understand the key factors shaping consumer behaviour to participate and use social media while purchasing by evaluating the ease with which users are using social media platforms and the perceived usefulness for purchasing.

Impact of social media on consumer behaviour

A study conducted by Asanprakit and Limna (2023), revealed that the use of social media is not restricted to connecting with friends, content creators and celebrities but now has become an effective way through which consumers learn about new products and services. The study was conducted using qualitative methods via in-depth interviews and content analysis was further used for data analysis. The findings of the study suggested that social commerce plays playing important role in shaping the intention of consumers to use social commerce. Some social factors such as social support, social comparison, social norms, and social identity impact the willingness of consumers to use social commerce.

Voramontri and Klieb (2019) explored in the study conducted with the help of a quantitative survey that peer recommendations on social media are often seen as electronic word of mouth and are considered a more trustable source of information as compared to traditional advertisements and other marker-generated information. These opinions are somewhat like those of Mishra et al., (2020), which were obtained using a survey method. The study revealed that social media communication between peers can influence buying decisions, and this is because consumers are increasingly interacting with one another in online communities. In general, people have started to seek the endorsement of peers instead of their parents and families in making purchases. In this era of social media, shopping with friends and getting their approval has become common.

A study by Sundaram et al. (2020) based on secondary data shows that social media has a considerable role in allowing brands to provide consumers with personalised content and advertisements. Personalized advertisements have a higher ability to influence consumers and thus boost their likelihood of engagement and purchase. Through social media platforms, brands are getting the opportunities to engage with customers on a real-time basis and this not only results in positive eWOM but also brand loyalty.



Chopra et al., (2021) explored that influencer marketing is an aspect of social media that impacts consumer behaviour. This study used a qualitative research design using an in-depth interview method. The study added that the major impact that an influencer's post brings on consumers is seen in four major contexts namely increased brand awareness, subject matter expertise, brand preferences and preference. Successful influencers often can help customers with curated advice, stories and suggestions that in turn boost engagement with the audience. Another similar study conducted by Lim et al., (2017), using the survey method and structural Equalling Modelling (SEM), showed that consumers who connect with the influencers can interpret and transfer the brand meanings and thus can influence the purchase decision as well as perception that consumers often hold for a brand.

Mensah et al., (2021) found in the study that social media platforms are competent in influencing the post-purchase evaluation stage of consumers since these platforms have emerged as an imperative source through which consumers get access to relevant information. The study followed a quantitative research design, survey method and structural Equalling Modelling (SEM) and it revealed that the content that firms often post on their social media platforms influences not only consumer choice quality but also their post-purchase behaviour. The quality of choices made by consumers reduces the chance of post-purchase dissonance. This shows that when consumers get access to clear and moderate information on social media, consumers can make quality choices which negatively impact their post-purchase dissonance (discomfort and negative experiences associated with the choice made).

Impact of social media on changing purchasing behaviour

A study conducted by Erkan and Evans (2018) using a survey method has reflected that social media is impacting on purchase behaviours of consumers. The findings of the study highlighted that the ease of using social media platforms and the habits of using social media are the major drivers that are motivating shoppers to make purchases using social commerce. Another similar study was conducted by Goraya et al., (2021) and it revealed that the social commerce community and platform attributes highly shape not only the purchase intentions of the consumers but also their e-WOM intentions. According to a study using secondary data and the literature review method undertaken by Büscher (2018), trends in social commerce are impacting consumers' buying behaviours. People are becoming increasingly immersed in buyable posts or shoppable tags, appearing on platforms such as Pinterest or Instagram through which both product discovery ahead impulsive purchases happen at once.

Kudeshia and Kumar (2017) added that social eWOM has become an important factor in consumers' buying behaviour as well as intentions. The study was based on the survey-based empirical design and used Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) for analysis. This study shows that what people buy can be influenced by user-generated content like videos of opening products and reviews on social media. This kind of positive word-of-mouth from users has a big effect on what people want to buy. Lampeitl and Åberg's (2017) found in a similar study that the social media influencers themselves are quite fond of producing consumer-generated content, which in turn influences the consumers 'buying fitness. The study was conducted using mixed methodology using qualitative focus group method and quantitative survey method. It is found through the study that the user-generated content shared by social media influencers such as unboxing videos and product reviews are considered more relatable by the customers when compared with traditional channels and this is the reason, they trust them more for the reviews and suggestions and this in turn shapes their purchase intentions. Moreover, influencer marketing has had a higher ability to impact the willingness of consumers to post brand-promoting user-generated content as compared to paid social media advertising.

Pires et al., (2020) explored in the study that consumers are using different digital channels including social media platforms and it highly influences the decision-making procedure of the consumer. These platforms offer consumers micro-moments where consumers can use their smartphones for quick information access as well as decision-making relating to the product/service they want to buy. Such micro-moments supported by social media platforms have changed not only the research procedures of consumers about the product but also the way they look for information since now they are more towards looking at bit-sized information, quick comparisons and recommendations before making purchases and all these aspects are supported by social media platforms.

Aragoncillo and Orus (2018) examined in the study conducted using an online self-administered survey that social media platforms are highly capable of offering personalised recommendations to the consumers and this helps in aligning the offerings based on the needs and preferences of the consumers. This in turn results in impulsive behaviour amongst the consumers. This not only uplifts the shopping experience but also helps in tailoring the offerings of businesses based on individual tastes. Another similar finding emerged from the study of Hajli et al., (2017), using a survey method and quantitative design. The findings suggest that trust is an important aspect that results in impulse buying behaviour since the customers only will end up purchasing when they find that the social networking site, they are using is authentic and reliable enough to trust their suggestions and reviews.

Role of social media content in influencing consumer choice

Coker et al., (2017) examined in the study that videos have become an effective way through which brands interact with consumers. The study conducted using experimental design and survey method reflected that storytelling is an effective video execution style since it helps in connecting the brand emotionally with the consumers and thus enhances the chances of effective responses. Moreover, storytelling is an attribute of social media content that enhances shareability and greater positive word of mouth when compared with straight-sell videos. Thus, storytelling can even make the consumers brand advocates. Kujur and Singh (2020) found in the study using quantitative design and survey method that visual content in advertising has always been linked with consumer engagement and this has been enhanced with the help of technology and social media platforms. The visual element of content plays an important role in shaping the active engagement that the consumers have with the corporate Social Networking Site (SNS) pages. Moreover, such engaging video content helps in building trust and thus develops a sense of commitment for the organisations amongst the consumers. Creativity and entertainment in the videos are major elements that help in shaping consumer choices and creating a bond between consumers with the brands.

Arli (2017) examined in the study that entertainment, usefulness and informativeness of social media content are crucial attributes that help in shaping the attitude that consumers hold towards the brand. A paper survey was used as the method and the findings revealed that entertainment is the major aspect of social media content that shapes the attitude and perception of consumers and their choices, followed by informativeness and usefulness. All these aspects play an important role in shaping the loyalty, awareness as well as purchase intentions of the consumers.

Using the online survey method and Likert scale, Kwon et al., (2021) found that both credibility and utility of information on social media play major roles in influencing consumers 'cognizance-based attitudes toward content. The affect-based attitude of consumers is also influenced by aesthetics. The results make it clear that social media content needs to be relevant and genuine enough for consumers to connect directly with the image impressed by a brand.

Weismueller et al., (2020) through a survey-based quantitative search study affirm that only when consumers consider the influencers to be authentic upholders of truth and hence accept their sharing as reliable information and then only such content can impact on their buying behaviour. Only if the social media content generated by their influencers is trustworthy and credible then it can have a significant impact on consumer purchasing intentions. With

suggestions and content that is authentic as well as credible, the influencers thus help in creating a good relationship between brands and consumers. Schreiner et al., (2021) stated that social media content characteristics and emotions play an important role in behavioural engagement. The study was conducted by using the literature review method and the findings suggest that interactivity is a crucial aspect of social media content since it makes social media posts, stories and other content more appealing. Transformational content which is capable of directly addressing the needs or desires of consumers has a significant role in bringing consumer engagement. Similarly, the emotional appeal of content is important for connecting directly with the audience and thus bringing behavioural engagement that ultimately impacts consumer choices and purchase decisions as well. Moreover, original and authentic content is vital for shaping the behavioural engagement of the audiences as found in this study.

Appel et al., (2020) conducted a study using secondary data and qualitative research design and the findings suggested that it is important that the social media content must be personalised since it helps in engaging the consumers with the firms. Personalized suggestions, offerings and content on social media platforms help not only engage the consumers but also bring direct influence on consumer choices and intention to make a purchase. Pancer et al., (2019) conducted a study using a combination of field study and laboratory experiments and the findings of the study revealed that readability is an attribute of social media content that helps in not only engaging but also shaping consumer behaviour. Readability of social media content is important for processing fluency which in turn can ease processing as well as positive emotional responses is cultivated thereby making the consumers more engaged.

The literature review explored the impact of social media on consumer behaviour by including relevant pieces of literature. The key terms of the literature are social media marketing and consumer behaviour. The literature has covered the theoretical background of the study by including key theories such as the consumer decision-making model, Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT), social influence theory, and technology acceptance theory. The findings of the literature show that social media platforms have a huge influence over consumer choices and behaviour including the different stages of the decision-making procedure. The review also indicated that there are certain characteristics of social media content such as readability, emotions, credibility and so on that shape the choices of consumers. A conceptual framework showing the interplay between social media and consumer behaviour has also been a part of the covered literature. Based on the covered literature, it is found that a significant gap exists relating to the comprehensive exploration of specific attributes and social media and their collective impact on consumer behaviour. Addressing this gap through

primary data collection is a major aim of the study. From the covered literature, the researcher has been able to get an initial idea about the role that social media plays in influencing consumer behaviour and purchasing intentions. It helped in answering some of the issues around the research questions, the influence that social media is bringing on different stages of consumer decision-making and the role that social media content specifically plays in influencing consumer behaviour has been explored that further helped in answering some aspects of research questions. Initially, the researcher expected that the literature would only help in highlighting the general influence of social media, but it helped in finding the influence in different aspects such as influencer marketing, personalised content and peer recommendations. The aspects of social commerce were not expected but the researcher got an idea about the role it is playing in influencing consumer behaviour. Initially, it was expected that the general influence of social media content would be explored in literature but with a thorough investigation the different attributes such as credibility, readability entertainment etc also explored and concepts such as micro-moment emerged from the study that were also unexpected.

Methodology

The research philosophy adopted in the present study is positivism, a philosophy that suggests that reality is always stable and constant, and an objective viewpoint is important for describing and observing it. The philosophy is based on repeatable observations through which the relationships between the variables can be explored. In the present study, the two variables are consumer behaviour and social media. The main reason that motivated the researcher to adopt the positivism philosophy in the present study lies in its ability to use careful measurement and analysis of numerical data to further find the answers that the researcher is seeking. Measurable data and its subsequent data analysis help in identifying relationships that exist between the variables. Adopting positivist philosophy offers the benefits of using well-defined structures that encompass a set of rules that can be followed in a study to bring quality to the study by reducing the chances of errors. Moreover, as there are no subjective elements involved, the philosophy had no room for bias, and this helped the researcher come up with findings that are generalised and applicable (Park et al., 2020). It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of positivism philosophy and it is that it requires an individual to be objective but being a human, it is natural that some sort of subjectivity comes with it. Moreover, the philosophy faces the criticism of being descriptive and lacking in-depth insights (Park et al., 2020).

Research Approach

Aligned with the positivism philosophy, the researcher has adopted a deductive approach in the study and hence the focus of the study will move from more general to specific. Thus, the general theories relating to the aim and objectives of the study are being covered in the literature review and then they are tested with the help of measurable data. It is a top-down approach in which conclusions are logically drawn from the study (Nayak and Singh, 2021). The rationale for using the deductive approach in the study is that it helped the researcher with a structured approach based on which the covered (existing) theory (literature) can either be validated or rejected. It supported information of a clear research question and further helped in completing the study in a time-efficient manner (Pandey and Pandey, 2021). The findings can be applied to the broader context, and it has also been a reason for choosing the deductive approach. It also helped in identifying the causal relationship between social media and consumer behaviour and drawing evidence-based conclusions. However, the main disadvantage of using the deductive approach is that it can limit the scope of creativities and it often limits divergent thinking. There are further chances that it can suffer from

measurement inaccuracies or errors. The online survey method has been used as a search strategy and the questionnaire has been developed by the researcher only and has not been adapted, and further has been sent to participants for gathering their opinions and viewpoints. Social media platforms have been used for recruiting the participants a sample size of 50 is used and a convenience sampling method has been used (Story and Tait, 2019). Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that emphasises gaining information from participants who are convenient for the investigator to access. The main reason behind choosing this sampling method is that it is efficient and simple to implement (Etikan and Bala, 2017). The participants are social media users of the UK, and they were sent a questionnaire to collect their responses.

For developing the questionnaire in the study, the researcher has used the main aim and objectives along with a literature review, the ultimate focus of which was on exploring the impact that social media has brought on consumer behaviour. To ensure that every question used in the online survey is completely aligned with the aim and objectives of the study, the survey has been created exclusively by the researcher rather than adapted from other sources.

The questionnaire was divided into 4 sub-sections and the justification for each one of them can be explained as follows:

- **Demographic information:** this section of the questionnaire comprises essential participant information such as age and gender. The rationale behind including this section is that it helped in finding the potential differences in social media utilisation and its impact across different demographic groups (Brace, 2018).
- **Social media utilisation and consumer behaviour:** The questions added in this section were focused on exploring how frequently people are using social media platforms. It also consists of some questions aligned with finding whether there is an influence of social media content on the purchasing intention of the consumers or not. These questions thus ultimately helped in finding the impact that social media is creating on consumer behaviour.
- **Social media and purchasing patterns:** All the questions included in this section were focused on examining the buying preferences and habits of the participants. The questions aimed at finding the direct purchases that are made by consumers through social media. It also aimed to explore the preferences that participants have for physical and social media-based shopping, and it helped highlight the evolving buying habits of consumers (Brace, 2018).

- **Attributes of social media content and engagement:** This is the last section of the questionnaire that is aimed at exploring the specific characteristics that are influencing consumer behaviour. Questions relating to authenticity, visual appeal of social media content etc are included in the section to find out the content components that participants are most responding to. Questions about influencer marketing are also included in the section. Thus, an online survey has been used as the research strategy in the dissertation since it helped the researcher with wider accessibility and reach and thus helped in accessing audiences irrespective of their location (Story and Tait, 2019). Online surveys moreover are most cost-efficient when compared with paper and email surveys and are quicker in gathering the needed data. It also has made the data analysis process easier and has hence been used as a research strategy in the present study.

Research Design

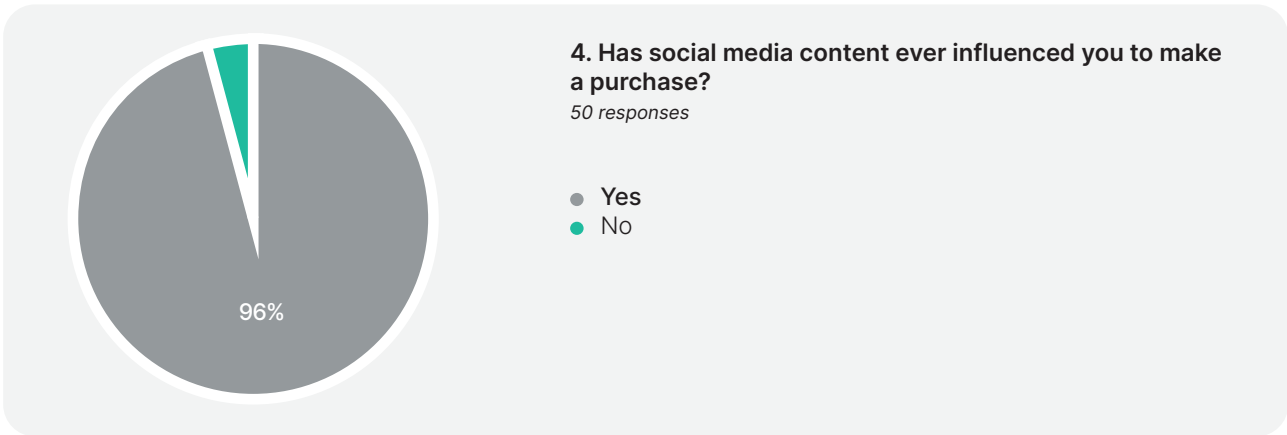
This study has been based on a quantitative research design and hence the numeric data gathered through the online survey method has been analysed further in context with the set aim and objectives of the study. The main reason behind opting quantitative research design in the study is that it helped in capturing numerical data relating to the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and this further helped in drawing conclusions that are based on facts and verifiable information. It also is a faster method of data collection and helps the researcher in gathering vast amounts of data in less time and resources (Melnikovas, 2018). However, the major drawback of quantitative research design is that the results are subjective to the interpretation done by the researcher, and it gives less detailed and in-depth insights. Primary data i.e. first-hand data for the present study has been collected by using an online survey as a research strategy. The major benefit offered by primary data collection is that it helped with the opinions and perceptions of the consumer relating to the impact social media have brought on their behaviour and purchasing patterns. Primary data collected through the 50 participants helped with the quantitative data required for the data analysis. Primary data collection using the online survey method has been time efficient and it moreover got completed with minimum resource requirements, adding to the benefits that the researcher got from it. However, the drawback of primary data collection was that it was difficult to obtain first-hand data and obtain their consent for participation in the study and that too in limited time (Pandey and Pandey, 2021).

Findings

This section of the dissertation is focused on discussing the major findings of the study in context with the primary data collected using an online survey method. It comprised 50 respondents and 14 questions. The survey was organised online, and it was divided into four major sections. The first question was about the age of the respondents, the findings of the survey as shown in the figure above depict that there were 32% of respondents belonged to 18-26 years, 26% belonged to 27-35 years, 22% belonged to 36-45 years and about 20% were above 45 years. Thus, people of almost every age group were a part of this study. The second question was regarding the age of participants, the gathered responses of the survey clearly show that the male respondents were slightly higher than females since 54% opted for male the remaining 46% selected female and no one selected the option of others. Thus, the perceptions of both genders were involved in the study.



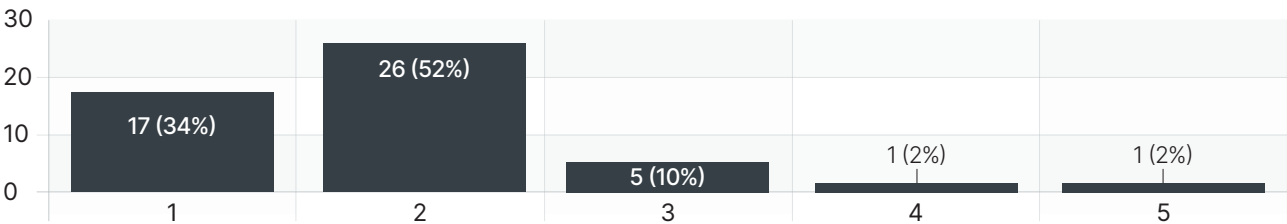
This question was asked to get an idea about the frequency of using social media platforms. The answers gathered show that half of the respondents use the platforms several times a day, 14% use them once a day, 26% use them a few times in week and the remaining only 10% use these platforms rarely.



The next question asked was intended to gain the opinions of the respondents about the influence of social media content over their purchases. Based on the answers gathered it is evident that 96% of respondents feel that their purchase decisions are influenced through exposure to social media platforms since only 4% opted for no.

5. User-generated content such as reviews on social media are useful while making a purchase decision

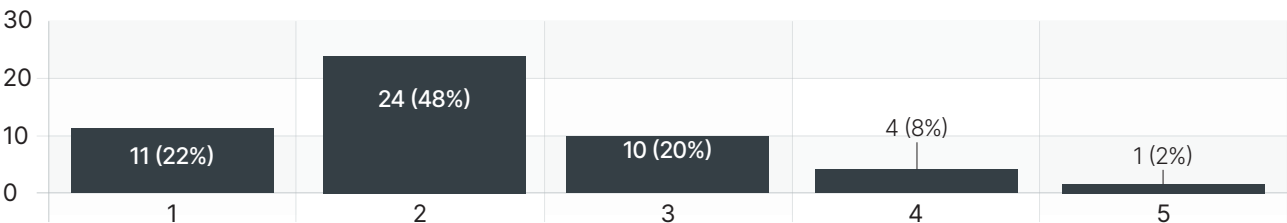
50 responses



Based on the answers gathered for this question, it is clear that 34% of respondents selected strongly agree, 52% i.e., the majority selected agree, 10% had gone with the neutral option, and only 2% chose the option of Disagree and 2% strongly disagree. This shows maximum responses favouring the statement that user-generated content such as reviews on social media makes a significant contribution while making purchase decisions.

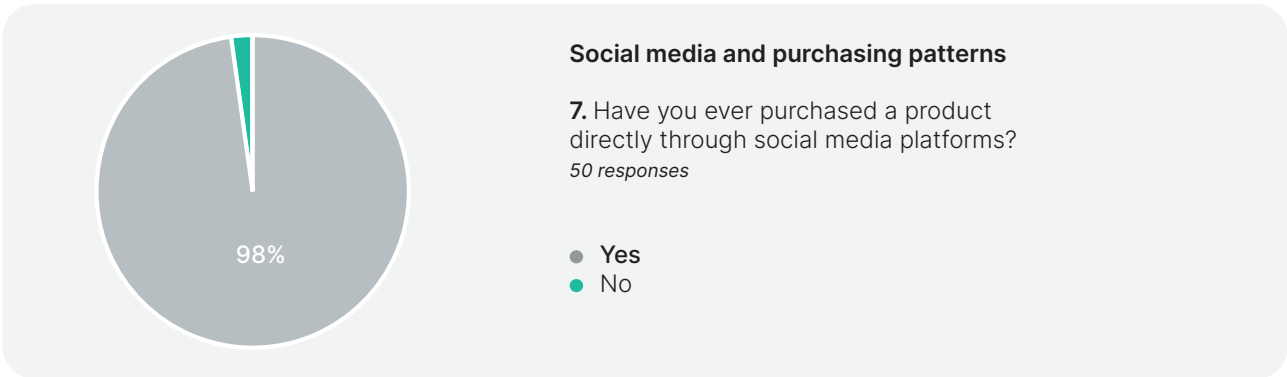
6. Social media content such as ads, posts and videos has influenced your perception for brands or products

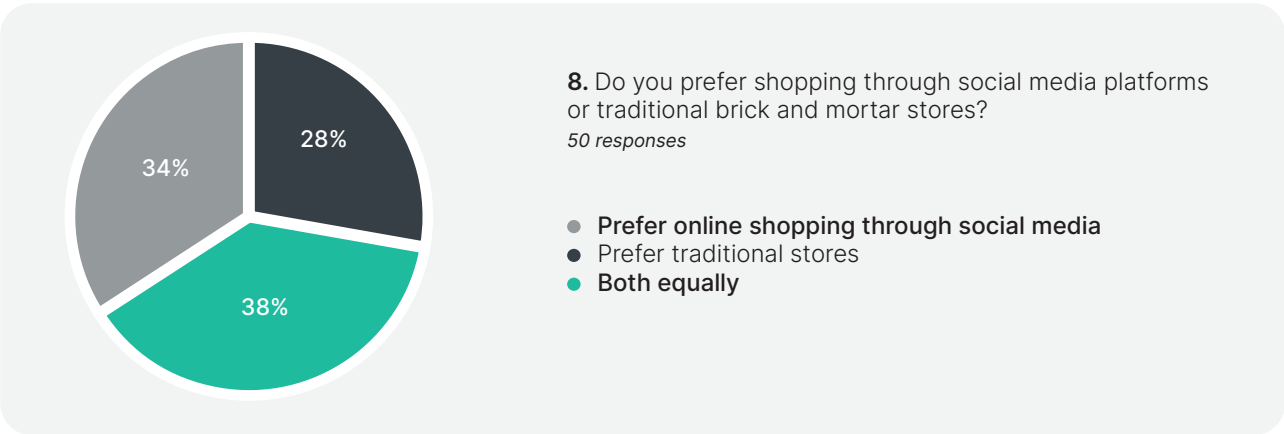
50 responses



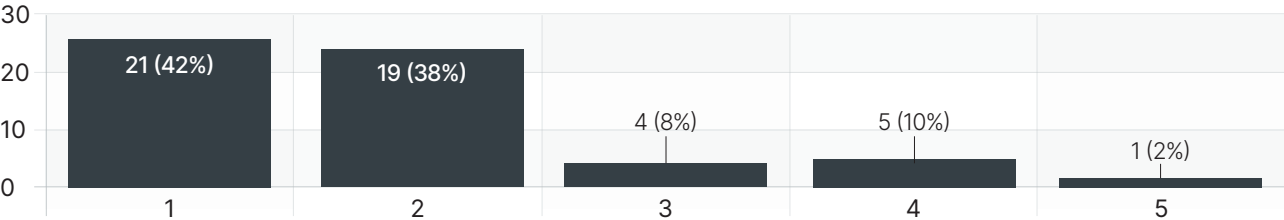
Based on the answers gathered for this question and as shown in the pie chart above, it is evident that 22% selected strongly agree, 48% selected agree, 20% had gone with the neutral option, 8% opted for disagree and the remaining 2% has chosen strongly disagree option. This also clearly reflects that most respondents have felt that social media content such as posts, advertisements and videos influence their perception of brands or products.

The next question asked was aimed at knowing whether participants have made actual purchases through social media platforms or not. The responses were one-sided as 98% of respondents selected yes and only 2% went with the option of no. The next question asked was aimed at knowing the preferences of shopping i.e., whether respondents prefer online shopping or traditional brick and mortar stores. The answers gathered as shown in the pie chart above clearly show that 34% of respondents prefer using social media platforms for shopping, 28% prefer traditional stores and 38% have a preference for using both social media and traditional stores.



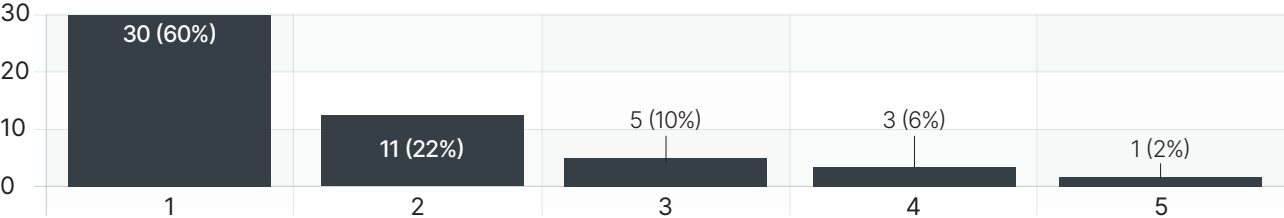


9. You can make impulse purchases due to social media content
50 responses



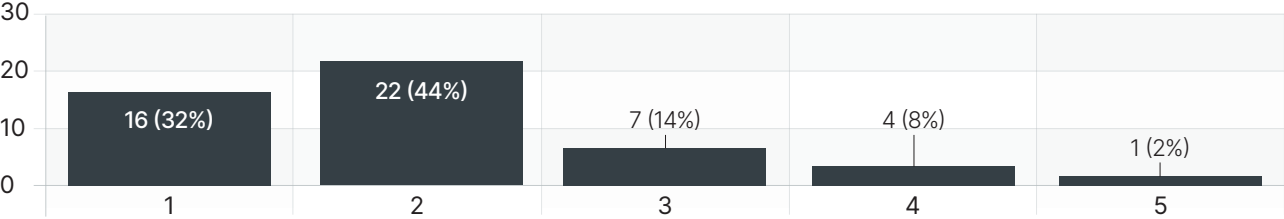
The responses to this question show that there was many respondents i.e., 42% had chosen very likely, 38% had gone with likely, 8% selected neutral, 10% had selected unlikely and only 2% had selected very unlikely. This shows that most respondents end up making impulse purchases due to exposure to social media content.

10. The authenticity of user-generated content impact your decisionof considering products.
50 responses



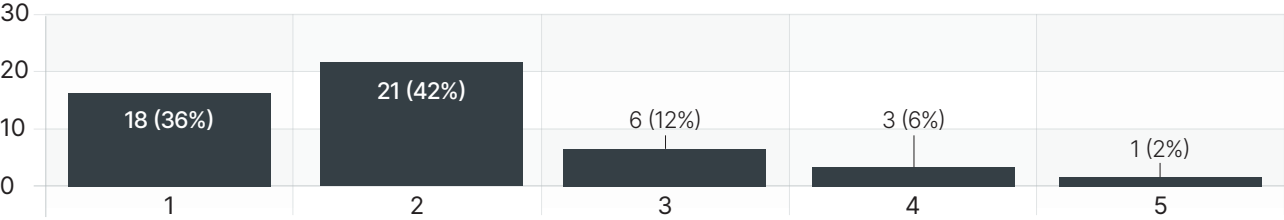
The responses gathered through a survey for this question show that there were 60% of respondents opted for very likely, 22% selected likely, 10% had gone with neutral, 6% selected unlikely and only 2% had gone with the option of very unlikely. This suggests that the authenticity of user-generated content plays a significant role in shaping the decisions of consumers while considering products or services.

11. The role of visual social media content in capturing your attention
50 responses



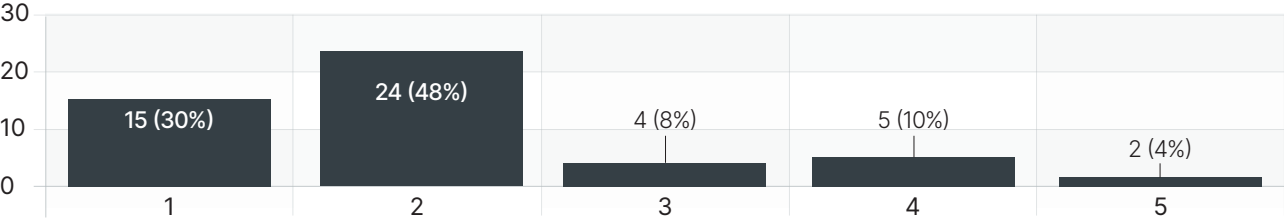
This question was aligned to gain perception about the respondents relating to the role of social media content in capturing their attention. The answers gathered as shown in the pie chart above clearly show that 32% of respondents have selected very important, 44% selected important, 14% selected neutral, 8% selected not important and only 2% selected not at all important.

12. The interactive contents such as polls and quizzes engage you and influence your choices.
50 responses



This question was asked to respondents to gain their opinion relating to the role of interactive content such as polls and quizzes in influencing their choices. The answers gathered as shown in the figure above show that 36% had gone with very likely, 42% selected likely, 12% opted for neutral, 6% chose unlikely and only 4% selected very unlikely.

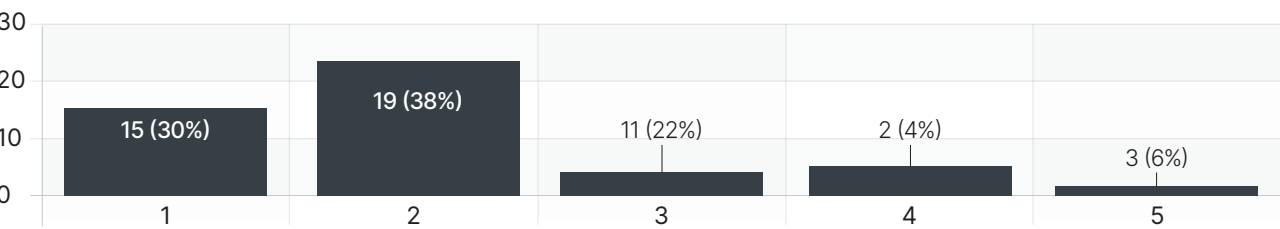
13. The consistency of brand messaging matters to you across divergent social media platforms.
50 responses



This question aimed to gain the perspective of respondents about the importance of consistency of brand messaging across different social media platforms. The answers gathered show that 30% selected very likely, 48% selected likely, 8% had gone with neutral, 10% selected unlikely and only 4% selected very unlikely.

14. You trust influencer credibility on social media while making purchase decision.

50 responses



This was the last question asked and it was focused on knowing the opinions of respondents about the role of influencer credibility in purchase decisions. The answers shown in the pie chart above depict that 30% of respondents selected very likely, 38% selected likely, 22% had gone with neutral, 4% selected unlikely and 6% very unlikely.

The survey thus investigated the role that social media is playing in influencing consumer behaviour in the digital businesses of the UK. The findings of the study show that participants belonged to different age groups and the male respondents were slightly higher than female. The findings of the study showed that most people use social media platforms and people using them multiple times a day were higher. Most of the respondents agreed that social media platforms influence their purchase decisions. User-generated content such as reviews influences the purchase decision of most respondents and most people also have made actual purchases through social media platforms. The preferences for shopping platforms varied amongst the participants and most of them preferred both social media and traditional stores. Social media exposure often results in impulsive buying behaviour and participants further give preference to authenticity of user-generated content and interactive elements while making purchases. Moreover, influencer credibility and consistent brand messaging also define the purchasing decisions of the respondents, as revealed by the study.

Discussions

The survey was focused on gaining the perception of consumers about the impact that social media is bringing on their behaviour and purchasing patterns. The respondents were from the UK digital businesses, and they were recruited through social media platforms. The findings are discussed in the section, and it is also compared with the covered literature. All the discussions are undertaken keeping in mind the main aim and objectives of the study. The examination of the findings and their broader implications is discussed in this section.

Demographic analysis

Based on the analysis of demographic-based questions it is clear that the study involved people of different age groups and both men and women were part of the study. The different age groups involved in the study brought diversity in the study and thus added to its quality and enriched the understanding of the consumer perspectives of different age groups. In context with gender, it is seen that male participants i.e., 54% were slightly higher when compared with the female participants as there were 46% women in the study. This distribution of gender among the respondents brought gender dynamics and thus helped in exploring the study by integrating the point of view that both men and women hold relating to the impact that the use of social media is bringing on their buying behaviour and purchasing decisions. Thus, the integration of demographic data in the survey helped to ensure that the data gathered was not from the same age group and same gender type and this brought diversity to the study.

Social Media utilisation and consumer behaviour

The first question of this section was focused on gaining an idea about the frequency of social media usage amongst the participants. Based on the gathered answer it is clear that the use of social media is growing among the participants as there were about 50% of respondents who use these platforms several times a day. Apart from this 14% use it once a day. This clearly shows that social media platforms have become an integral part of people's lives nowadays. These findings are aligned with the study of Jain (2023) who studied the growing use of social media utilisation amongst consumers as it is estimated that the active social media users will reach about 5.85 billion by the end of 2027. This growing use of social media platforms amongst people is the major factor that makes them aware of the different aspects of social commerce such as social support, social comparison, social norms, and social identity and their overall influence on the intention of the consumers as studied by Asanprakit

and Limna (2023). The role of social media thus is now not limited to connecting with friends, but it has become an effective way through which consumers get ideas about the offered products and services of an organisation. It is clear that the role of social media in consumer behaviour is increasing and it will also increase in future.

The next question asked to the respondents aimed at gaining their perception of whether social media content ever influenced them to make the purchase. The responses gathered were mostly one-sided since a massive 96% of responses were in favour of yes. This shows that social media holds significant power to influence consumers and make them purchase products or services through exposure to social media content. These findings are like the exploration of Voramontri and Klieb (2019) covered in the literature that suggests that electronic eWOM is an aspect of social media which has now been considered a powerful and trustable source of information by consumers and this influence on their purchase decisions and the reason can be peer recommendation. The findings of the survey also aligned with the opinions of Mishra et al., (2020) suggesting that there is a growing trend of online consumer socialization and peer recommendations that have become the major influencing forces driving consumers to make purchases using the social media platforms or through the exposed content they encounter on different social media platforms. Another reason for social media content affecting people's buying choices is personalized ads looked at by Sundaram et al. (2020) or it could be influencer marketing as founded by Chopra et al., (2019). So, from the results, it can be seen that social media sites do affect what people buy.

The third question was about what people think of user-generated content like reviews on social media when making a buying decision. The results show that most people i.e., 76% chose the options of strongly agreeing and agreeing. This shows that content generated by people on social media like reviews helps a lot in deciding what to buy. The results are the same as those of Sundaram et al., (2020) who suggest that personalized ads, along with content can both increase how much people buy or get involved on social media websites. Mensah and others (2021) found out that social media has influenced how people decide when they want to buy something. This is very important because it provides customers with all the data they need and that too with easy access. This makes them less likely to regret their decisions after buying things later on as they get the opportunity of thoroughly access needed information in less time. The findings also align with those of Lampeitl and Åberg (2017), suggesting that such user-created stuff changes what customers want to buy. People like user-made content such as unboxing videos and product reviews because it feels real to them. This also affects how they buy things. So, the results show that social media websites have a big impact on consumer behaviour and their choices.

The last question in this part was to find out from the people if content like ads, posts and videos on social media changed how they see products or brands. Most of the people asked to think that social media content has a big impact on how they see brands or products. About 22% strongly agree and another 48% opted to agree, showing the influence of social media content on brand perception. The findings when compared with the literature covered, resonate with the study undertaken by Chopra et al., (2021) which suggests that the posts of the influencers bring impact on the consumers and it can be majorly seen in context with brand preferences, subject matter expertise and brand preferences. Successful influencers can offer curated advice to consumers that often shapes the perception and opinions that the consumers have about a brand or product. Similar findings emerged from the study of Lim et al., (2017) that suggests that consumers who feel connected with the influencers can interpret and transfer the brand meaning and this in turn has a direct impact on their purchase intention and brand perception. Thus, a significant influence of social media content such as blogs, posts etc brings on the brand perception of consumers, as identified from the findings.

Social media and purchasing behaviour

This section of the survey comprises a of total 3 questions. The first question of this section asked respondents whether they have made any direct purchases using social media platforms to get an idea about the potential of social media in shaping their purchasing patterns and choices. The gathered answers were one-sided majorly since 98% of the respondents have opted for Yes. This indicates a change in the purchasing behaviour of consumers from traditional in-store shopping and a growing influence that social media is bringing on their purchasing behaviours. This signifies the growing digital businesses in the UK and the tendency of consumers to choose social media platforms for purchasing. On comparing these findings with the existing literature, it has been found that it resonates with the study by Erkan and Evans (2018) that suggests that the ease of using social media platforms and the habits of using them amongst consumers are the major factors that motivate them to make a purchase using social commerce, showing a shift from traditional purchasing behaviour. The findings also align with the opinions of Goraya et al., (2021) who state that social commerce platforms and communities not only drive and shape the purchase intention but also the electronic word-of-mouth abilities of the consumers. Such eWOM influences others such as peers and family members to choose social media platforms for purchase. The increasing influence of social media on consumer purchase behaviour as highlighted in the survey resonates with the study of Büscher (2018) suggesting that people are getting increasingly involved in buyable posts and shoppable tags which persuades them to purchase social media platforms.

The second question of this section was focused on gaining the perception of the respondents about their preferences for buying i.e., whether they prefer purchasing through social media, traditional brick and mortar stores, or both or neither of them. The gathered answers indicated that the highest preferences of respondents were for both in-store and social media purchases, showing a significant shift in purchase behaviour from traditional in-store shopping. 34% of people preferring social media platforms for shopping further supports this shift and indicates the role that social media is playing in influencing the purchase behaviour of consumers. The findings of the survey get align with the study of Pires et al., (2020) which suggests that consumers nowadays use different social media platforms that offer micro-moments to consumers i.e., they can use their smartphones for quick information access, and this has altered the research process of consumers and they have started looking for bit-size information, quick comparison and recommendations unlike the traditional decision-making comprising of 5 stages. All these aspects become the reason why consumers have started shifting to social media platforms for purchasing as these platforms have become more convenient and time-efficient since they offer quick access to information and save time of consumers. The findings also resonate with the opinions of Lampeitl and Åberg (2017) suggesting that user-generated content shared by influencers such as unboxing videos, posts and reviews are considered relatable by consumers when compared with

traditional channels and sources of information and this in turn makes them go with the suggestions of social media influencers. Thus, social media is shaping the buying behaviour of UK consumers and they have started using social media platforms for purchasing along with traditional in-store shopping.

The last question of this section was asked to gain the perception of respondents about the abilities of social media content in resulting impulse purchases. The analysis of the collected responses indicated that social media content does result in impulse purchases since 42% of respondents opted for very likely and 38% opted for likely. This shows that the consumers when exposed to social media content do end up making impulse purchases, supporting the digital businesses of the UK. From this, it is evident that the traditional 5-stage consumer decision-making procedure is no longer followed by consumers due to exposure to social media content and they end up purchasing without planning. On comparing these findings with the covered literature, it has been found that it resonates with the opinions of Büscher (2018) suggesting that social commerce has bringing direct impact on the buying behaviour of consumers and the exposure of buyable posts and shoppable tags on different social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest make consumer aware about the product and they often make an impulsive purchase. The findings also resonate with the perception of Aragoncillo and Orus (2018), suggesting that social media platforms offer personalised recommendations, which often result in

impulsive consumer behaviour. Similarly, the opinions of Hajli et al., (2017) support these findings by suggesting that authentic and trustable social networking sites often make consumers make impulsive buying decisions and this shows the shift from traditional buying habits of consumers. Thus, social media platforms do result in UK consumers making impulsive purchase decisions.

Attributes of social media content and engagement

This was the final section of the questionnaire, and it had 4 questions. The first question asked was aimed at gaining the perception of respondents about the role that the visual element of social media content plays in capturing their attention. From the gathered responses it was evident that most respondents, with 32% choosing very important and 44% choosing important, found that they often get attracted by the visual social media content that is being posted on different platforms. This shows the significant role that social media content plays in attracting and engaging consumers. The findings of the survey resonate with the perception of Kujur and Singh (2020), which suggests that visual content is an important aspect that makes consumers engaged and offering visual content easier with the help of technology and social media. Visual content assists in actively engaging the consumers on different social networking site (SNS) pages and this in turn influences their purchasing behaviour too. Engaging visuals-based video content posted on social media sites brings a sense of commitment amongst the consumers and thus shapes their choices. The findings also resonate with the perceptions of Coker et al., (2017) who explored that storytelling through videos is an effective way through which brands often connect with consumers on an emotional basis and this in turn makes the consumers brand advocates through eWOM. Thus, visual content plays an important role in engaging consumers and influencing their buying behaviour through social media platforms. This shows that findings are similar.

The next question of this section was aimed at gaining the perception of respondents about the influence that interactive content such as polls and quizzes plays in engaging and influencing their choices on social media. The answers gathered were mostly on the positive side as 36% of respondents opted for very likely and 42% chose the option of likely. This indicates that UK consumers when see different polls and quizzes on social media that are interactive, then it not only engage them with the product/service but also bring a direct influence on their purchasing choices. The findings aligned with the study of Schreiner et al., (2021) that has been covered in the literature, suggesting that interactivity is an important aspect of social media content as it helps in making the posts, stories and other content posted on social media more appealing and thus helps in grabbing the attention of

the consumers. Thus the findings or primary study in this context is similar to that of secondary study. Thus, social media content that is interactive plays an important role in not only grabbing the attention of consumers but also bringing a direct influence on their choices and decision-making.

The third question of this section that was asked to respondents was aligned with gaining their perception about the importance of consistency of brand messaging across different social media platforms. It is seen from responses that more than 3/4th of respondents i.e., 30% choosing very likely and 48% choosing likely, feel that they want brands to remain consistent with their content on different social media platforms and then only they can influence their decision-making and purchase intentions. On comparing these findings with the literature, it has been found that it resonates with the study of Chopra et al., (2021) suggesting that a consistent brand image is a crucial aspect that can engage the consumers and bring an influence on their choices. Thus, brands are required to remain consistent with their content on divergent social media platforms since only then they can influence consumer buying behaviour and decision-making. Consistent brand image makes consumers trust a brand and develops a consumer-brand relationship, a crucial aspect for the success of the business.

The last question asked to respondents in this section was aimed at gaining their perception of the role that influencer credibility plays in shaping purchase decisions. From the collected responses, with 30% going with very likely and 38% going with likely, most UK consumers trust consumer credibility and thus get influenced by their suggestions and posts that they put on social media platforms. This shows that consumers want the content posted by influencers to be credible and trustable and once they find such content, it can have a direct influence on their purchasing decision. On comparing these findings with the covered literature, it seems to be resonating i.e., similar with the perception of Kwon et al., (2021), suggesting that it is important that the social media content posted on different social media platforms must be credible since only then it can bring influence on the cognizance-based attitudes that consumers hold for the content. Credibility helps in establishing a direct connection between the brand and consumers. The findings also align with the opinions of Weismueller et al., (2020) suggesting that consumers trust influencers and their recommendations only if they found the content shared by them to be authentic and credible. Thus, it can be seen that credible content is crucial to be present in influencer marketing and this can bring direct influence not only on consumer-brand relationships but their purchasing behaviour and intentions too. It clearly shows the importance of authentic and credible influencer content since it directly brings trust among the consumers, shaping their attitudes and behaviours regarding the brand.



Practical Implications

Based on the study undertaken, there are certain recommendations for UK digital businesses which they can use to influence consumer behaviour through their social media platforms. The suggestions include the following.

Strategic content planning. The UK digital businesses can use strategic content planning that can resonate with consumer preferences such as user-generated content, influencer collaborations and reviews that emerged from the study. Businesses can use different formats of content on social media such as visual elements, interactive polls, consistent brand message-based content, influencer content and suggestions.

Enhancing user engagement. UK digital businesses can enhance user engagement by using interactive content on social media platforms. Creating interactive campaigns that can bring user engagement and participation is suggested as it will not only help in grabbing the attention of consumers but also gain insight into their perceptions and opinions.

Consistent brand messaging. It is suggested that the digital businesses of the UK must maintain a consistent brand image across its different social media platforms since it can help in building trust amongst consumers. The same customer experience across different platforms can be maintained by offering consistent brand value, visual elements and messages.

Credible influencer collaboration. Businesses can get into collaborating with authentic and credible influencers since it can bring significant influence on consumer choices and decisions. Transparent collaboration can help in building trust and credibility amongst the consumers.

Optimize for impulse purchases. From the study, it is found that social media content can result in impulsive purchases and hence businesses must optimize their social media platforms by including shoppable tags and buyable posts and an easy checkout process.

Targeted social commerce campaigns. Businesses must develop targeted social commerce campaigns by aligning the content and promotions with the demographics and targeted audiences such as specific gender or age groups. This personalized approach can increase relevance and resonance with different consumer segments.

It can thus be summarised from the section that the impact of social media on consumer behaviour in the UK digital businesses is significant and it can be seen from the results of the survey, and it also resonates with the covered literature. The use of social media platforms is frequent among the consumers of the UK, and it also has a direct influence on their purchasing decisions. The user-generated content has a significant

influence on consumer choices and the study shows a significant shift from traditional to online and social-media-based purchasing. Social media also results in impulsive decision-making and the findings also suggest that visual elements, interactive content, influencer credibility and brand consistency are crucial aspects of social media content that can influence consumer decisions and purchasing behaviour. Some practice recommendations for UK digital businesses emerged from the study including content planning, enhancing user engagement, maintaining consistent brand messaging, collaborating with credible influencers, optimizing for impulse purchases, and using targeted social commerce campaigns.

Conclusions

The study has been based on studying the impact that social media brings on consumer behaviour in UK digital businesses. The study has been completed using an online survey method for collecting the data. The main conclusion drawn from the study is discussed in this section. This section of the dissertation presents the conclusion of the study objective-wise as “To examine the impact of social media on consumer behaviour.” From the study, it can be concluded that social media is significantly impacting consumer behaviour amongst UK digital businesses. There is a trend of using social media platforms amongst consumers as half of the respondents were using it multiple times a day. This shows that social media have become a part of people's life and this growing use is the major factor contributing to social commerce. It can further be concluded that the influence of social media is evident enough as the majority of people have made purchases using social media platforms and the major reason is exposure to social media content, peer recommendations, online consumer socialization and personalised advertisements. It can further be concluded that user-generated content such as reviews on social media platforms is significantly considered by the consumers of the UK while making any purchase. Personalized advertisements, easy access to information and influential content such as unboxing videos are the major aspects that shape the purchase intentions of consumers. Also, it can be deduced that the content posted on social media platforms such as ads, posts and videos are potential to shape the perception of consumers about the brand and products. Influencer marketing is a major contributor in this aspect since they offer curated advice and recommendations that consumers often trust and this in turn shapes their behaviour.

The study further helped in concluding that social media has brought changes in traditional in-store purchasing behaviour and people have started relying on social media not only for gathering information but for making purchases too. 98% of respondents have made direct purchases using social media and this is evidence of the rising use of these platforms for

purchasing. The major reason behind it is the ease of using social media, frequency of usage, and eWOM that makes consumers engaged, and they end up making purchases. It can further be deduced from the study that the preferences of people are shifting from traditional in-store shopping, and they are equally preferring social media platforms for making purchases. The ability of social media to offer micro-moments, quick comparison, information access and recommendations is the reason behind these growing preferences. Moreover, it can further be concluded that social media content is resulting in impulsive buying behaviour amongst consumers in UK digital businesses. Buyable posts, shoppable tags, personalised recommendations, authenticity and trust are the major aspects that are the reasons behind it, i.e., “To investigate the role of social media content in shaping consumer choices in UK digital businesses.”

From the study, it can be deduced that social media content plays an important role in shaping consumer choices in UK digital businesses. Visual elements of the content not only help engage consumers but also influence their buying behaviour. The main reason is that such content brings a sense of commitment and connection amongst the consumers. Interactive content available on social media such as polls, ads and quizzes have a direct influence on consumer choices since it increases their engagement and is often appealing. Consumers of the UK often give preference to the brand which remains consistent with their content on all the social media platforms since it brings trust and thus influences the buying behaviour and choices. It can also be concluded that influencer credibility plays an important role in shaping buying behaviour and perception of UK consumers hence authentic and credible content is an important aspect for them and it shapes their attitude towards the brand.

Implications

The main contribution of the study is seen in context with the exploration it has undertaken about the impact of social media platforms on consumer buying behaviour. The study highlights the role of social media as an influencer, shaping the purchasing patterns, choices and brand perceptions of consumers. It provides insights to marketing professionals about the most influential social media aspects that can influence consumer behaviour. It includes user-generated content, influencer marketing, visual and interactive content, and uniform brand image. The findings can help marketers in shaping their social media strategies. As discussed in the previous section too, there are some recommendations for the digital businesses of the UK as it can help in shaping their social media strategies for bringing the most influential effect on consumer behaviour and purchasing patterns. It includes strategic content planning, using interactive content for enhancing user engagement and offering consistent brand messaging across all

social media platforms. The businesses are further suggested to collaborate with authentic and credible influencers to shape consumer behaviour and optimize impulse buying by offering all the needed aspects such as shoppable tags and buyable posts and an easy checkout process. Lastly, the businesses are suggested to use targeted social commerce campaigns to resonate with the audience and hence influence them effectively.

Limitations and suggestions for future studies There are certain limitations of the study too. The dependence on the online survey method might have brought selection bias and further, the self-reported nature of responses brings the risk of respondents giving socially desirable answers, and this can affect the quality and accuracy of responses. Also, since the study focused on UK digital businesses, the findings may not be generally applicable in a global context. Future researchers are suggested to include qualitative data by using in-depth interview methods and it can help in gaining a deeper understanding of consumer perspectives. It can also enhance the generalizability of findings. Exploring cultural variations and further studying different business sectors and comparing them also acts as an opportunity for future researchers.



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