

Abstract

The ongoing digitalization in the retail industry is a process that has been going on for many years. However, the outbreak of the novel disease Covid-19 fastened the digitalization process by forcing businesses to adapt to a needed digital way of operating within weeks.

This thesis aims to identify the influence of Covid-19 on the retail industry's digitalization process as well as how it affected the consumers' decision to shop online versus offline. An online questionnaire helped to understand to what extent the novel disease Covid-19 influenced the decision to shop online versus offline and how the participants' perception towards shopping online has changed. The researcher was able to receive 117 valid responses from the questionnaire. The received data presents the strong impact of Covid-19 on the participants online shopping frequency. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, most participants indicated a substantial increase in their shopping frequency.

Moreover, the data reveals critical motivating factors that influence the consumers to shop online versus offline. Convenience factors seem to be the most influential motivating factor to shop online. Additionally, the data presents factors affecting the decision to shop in brick-and-mortar stores, such as evaluating the desired products physically. Finally, the research further offers valuable information regarding the change of the preferred product category choices before and after the pandemic as well as the relationships between statements concerning the shopping experience in the Covid-19 times and demographic characteristics.