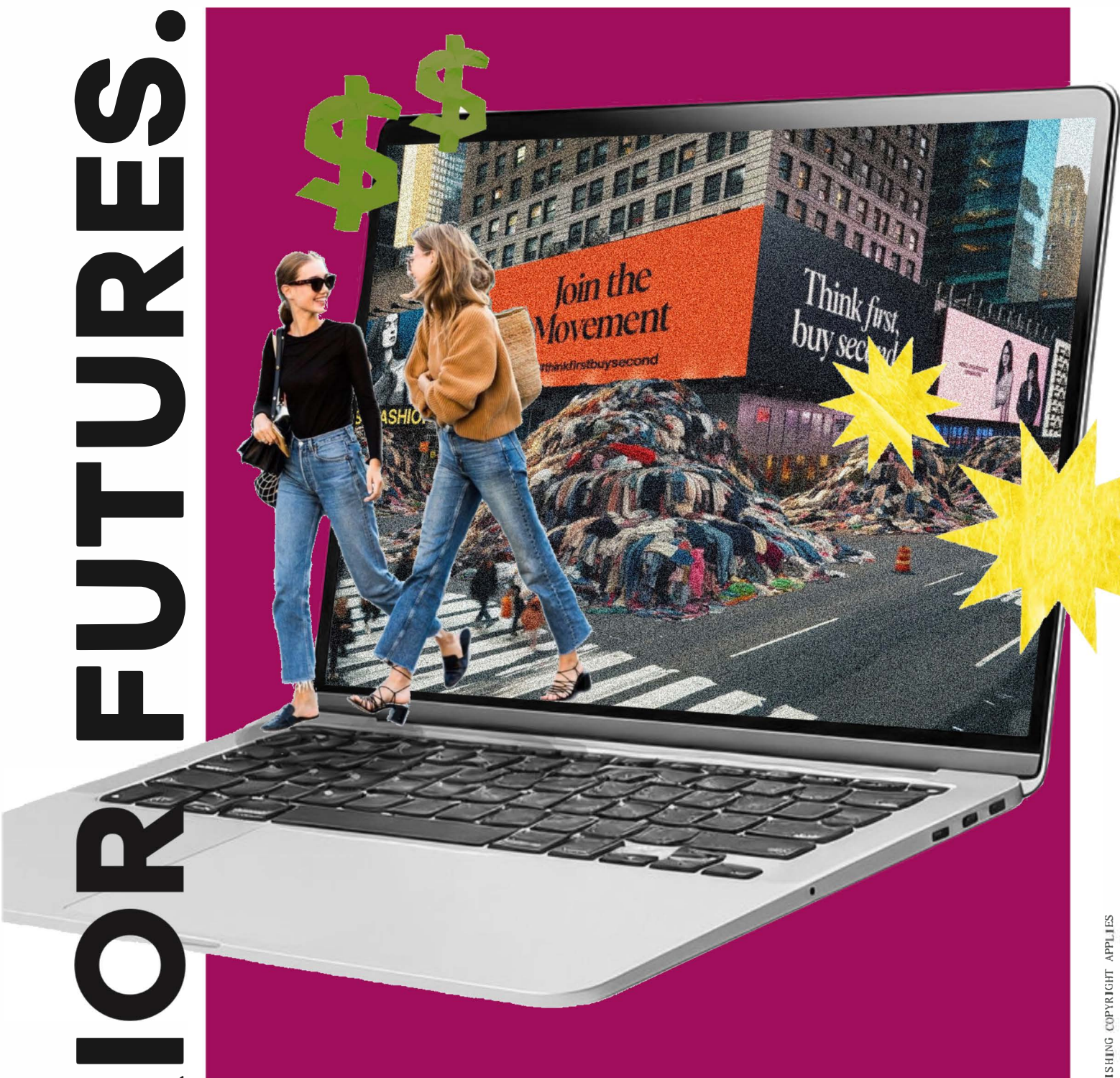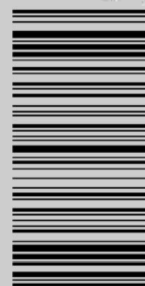# INTERIOR FUTURES.

Is the **Physical Fashion Retail** space needed in the context of today's instant **Online-Shopping** Experience?

Annika Shaill
BA (HONS) Interior Architecture and Design
Arts University Bournemouth
January 2025
Word count: 5006

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone who has supported me throughout this Project. Without their help, this work would not have been possible.

I am grateful to Monica for her time, thoughtful suggestions, and constructive criticism, which significantly improved the quality of my work.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my family for their patience, understanding, and constant encouragement. To my parents, my brother and to Joe, thank you for always believing in me and for providing the emotional support I needed to keep going, even when the path seemed difficult.

And finally, to Holly, thank you for your camaraderie, endless discussions, and the many tears shared throughout this journey. Your friendship has been a constant source of strength and comfort.

ABSTRACT.

This dissertation explores the relevance of physical fashion retail spaces in today's fast-paced online shopping landscape. With the rapid rise of online shopping, consumers have embraced instant gratification, raising questions about the need for traditional brick-and-mortar stores. The study examines whether physical retail spaces remain essential, emphasizing their role in providing sensory experiences, fostering social interactions, and encouraging sustainable consumption.

The literature review analyses consumer behaviour theories, retail design research, and the integration of digital elements in physical spaces. Despite the convenience of online shopping, a gap exists in understanding how experiential marketing influences sustainable purchasing. Methodologically, the study combines surveys targeting women aged 18-22 in the UK with secondary research from peer-reviewed sources.

Key findings highlight the importance of tactile engagement, with 80% of respondents valuing the ability to touch and try on products in-store. Physical stores also serve as extensions of brand identity, offering immersive experiences through elements like lighting, layout, and personalised services. The study highlights how physical spaces can nudge consumers toward more conscious consumption, a dynamic that online platforms struggle to replicate despite advancements like AR.

The dissertation concludes by evaluating the potential of blending digital and physical experiences, to enhance customer loyalty and sustainability. Ultimately, it argues that while online shopping will continue to grow, physical retail spaces provide irreplaceable benefits that contribute to more thoughtful and informed consumer choices.

CONTENTS.

Introduction

The emergence of online shopping has transformed the retail landscape. Over the past few decades, e-commerce has evolved from convenience to the primary method of retail consumption, offering accessibility and efficiency. However, this shift has significantly impacted traditional brick-and-mortar stores, leading many to closures and a redefinition of their roles in a digital world. Whilst online shopping offers convenience and variety, it lacks the sensory and social experiences unique to physical retail spaces. These are elements that shape consumer behaviour and encourage mindful consumption. To meet customers' requirements in recent years, the design of retail stores has changed dramatically, particularly in designing the retail experience (MacFarlane, 2018).

Consumption habits are deeply intertwined with climate change, and as one of the largest contributors to environmental degradation (Shah, 2023), the fashion industry reinforces the urgency of addressing

01

overconsumption and unsustainable production cycles. Physical stores provide opportunities to influence more rational purchasing decisions by creating immersive environments that educate and engage consumers in sustainable lifestyles. Unlike online platforms, physical spaces can evoke emotional and sensory connections, fostering greater awareness of the environmental impact of consumer choices.

This dissertation addresses the central question: **Is physical fashion retail space necessary in today's digital age?** To explore this, relevant literature focuses on behavioural science, retail design, and the integration of digital and physical experiences. Existing research highlights innovative approaches but reveals critical gaps regarding the role of physical retail in promoting sustainable consumption. This study evaluates the potential of physical stores to foster collective responsibility through small changes in consumer behaviour.

The research hypothesizes that physical retail spaces provide a better consumer experience than online shopping in promoting mindful consumption. 77% of Gen Z prefer physical stores to online ones, showing how brick-and-mortar retailing is still irreplaceable (Klanten et al., 2023). Stores can create curated environments that communicate brand values through design, storytelling, and in-store events. These help to deepen understanding of the environmental impact of their choices. Using a qualitative methodology, the study analyses consumer perceptions and retail design to assess their effectiveness. Due to time constraints, the research scope will focus on specific questions, providing targeted insights into this issue.

The dissertation is structured as follows: The next chapter reviews key literature, followed by a detailed methodology explanation. The findings and discussion address the research question, emphasising the implications for the future of fashion retail. Despite its limitations, the study aims to offer fresh perspectives on how physical retail can contribute to a more sustainable future.

Literature Review

In today's climate, the instantaneous nature of Online shopping is why it has seen to grow exponentially. However, huge growth is offset by high levels of environmental degradation. This review explores whether the return of shoppers to High Street stores can mitigate this overconsumption and overproduction, aligning retail practices with sustainability goals. It is organised around three themes: theoretical perspectives on consumerist behaviour, experimental retail design case studies, and the integration of physical and digital experiences. The use of qualitative data provides an understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that are shaping modern retail.

2.2 Summary of Literature

Behavioural science concepts such as Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness. Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. (2008). and 'Nudge plus: incorporating reflection into behavioural public policy', Banerjee, S. and John, P. (2024) suggest that subtle environmental adjustments can influence consumer decisions through small subconscious changes. While comprehensive in explaining distinctions between behavioural strategies, existing research lacks practical evidence comparing reflective practices' impact against traditional nudges. Literature on consumption Roach, B., Goodwin, N. and Nelson, J. (2019). Consumption and the Consumer Society, offers a critical lens on the societal drivers of consumerism and their environmental repercussions. These studies connect psychological theories to policy development, suggesting that design interventions can create more conscious consumer behaviour. However, the predominant focus on Western, developed contexts, further limits the applicability of these findings across diverse cultural and economic settings. This gap highlights the need for broader, more inclusive research to deepen insights into global consumer behaviour.

Innovative retail designs are transforming physical stores into experiential hubs, as highlighted in Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). Think big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design. The book effectively illustrates how local contexts influence design strategies that redefine physical spaces. Likewise, MacFarlane, B. (ed.) (2018). Store design: experience-based retail examines how materiality, ambience, and narrative create immersive experiences. However, neither resource delves deeply into how these innovations impact consumer habits or contribute to sustainability. Furthermore, the scope is constrained by outdated technological references and insufficient statistical analysis. While these studies highlight creative approaches, their failure to connect design strategies to measurable sustainability outcomes, reveals a significant research gap.

Emerging technologies such as **AR** and **automated social presence** present opportunities for blending physical and digital shopping experiences. This integration has been shown to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction, yet the literature inadequately addresses how these advancements align with sustainability goals. The absence of a detailed examination of their environmental implications limits our understanding of whether these technologies can promote slower, more thoughtful consumption.

2.3 Evaluation of Practical Limitations

The reviewed literature illustrates the potential for physical retail spaces to encourage mindful consumption through innovative designs and technological integration. However, significant limitations persist, including a lack of practical data, cultural inclusivity, and progressive examination of upcoming technologies. By addressing these gaps, this dissertation aims to explore how high-street fashion retail can become a catalyst for sustainable consumption, fostering not only economic activity but also community engagement and environmental stewardship.

METHODOLOGY.

Data for this study were collected using both **primary and secondary** research, to explore consumer shopping preferences and the influence of Interior Design on their decisions. The primary research was conducted through a survey aimed at determining whether individuals are more inclined to shop online or in-store and why, as well as how elements of store design influence their choices. The survey gathered responses predominantly from **women aged 18–22**, thus making this demographic the primary target audience for the Final Project Proposal (FPP). Whilst most of this group was of British origin, this is only representative of the small group that participated.

3.2 Primary Research

Primary research was essential for providing practical evidence on the effectiveness of theoretical frameworks, such as nudge theory, in influencing consumer decisions within retail environments. The survey aimed to fill this gap by directly testing these theories and highlighting whether certain interior design features, such as lighting, layout, or digital enhancements, could encourage consumers to make more conscious and sustainable shopping choices. Qualitative questions were designed to gauge the importance of sensory elements, the role of atmosphere in decision-making, and the willingness to engage with digital or virtual features within physical stores. Secondary research was used to inform the nature of the questions and acted as a comparative benchmark for the findings.
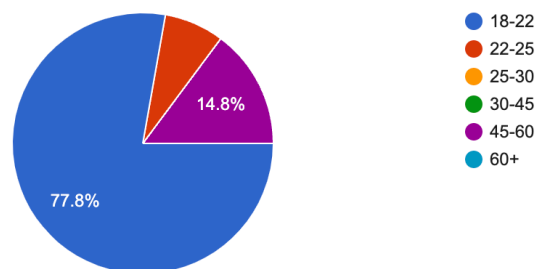
## 3.3 Data Analysis and Integration

The survey revealed that most respondents preferred physical stores due to sensory factors like the ability to touch and try on products, aligning with existing theories on the importance of tangibility. Lighting and music were identified as significant contributors to store success, further validating secondary research. However, contrary to prior studies suggesting growing interest in digital enhancements within stores, only a small portion of respondents expressed enthusiasm for virtual or digital features.
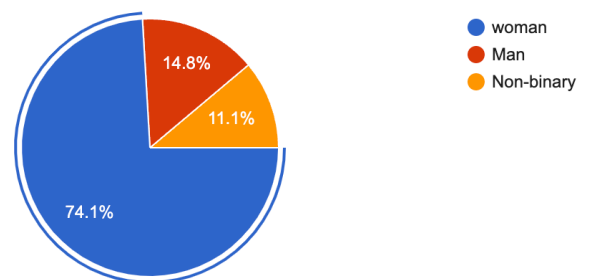
Age

27 responses

Legend:
- 18-22
- 22-25
- 25-30
- 30-45
- 45-60
- 60+

77.8% 14.8%

Online shopping vs Physical shopping- do we still need physical stores?- Google Forms (Shaill 2024)

Gender

27 responses

Legend:
- woman
- Man
- Non-binary

14.8% 11.1% 74.1%

Online shopping vs Physical shopping- do we still need physical stores?- Google Forms (Shaill 2024)

3.4 Conclusion on Methodology

The methodological approach successfully bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. By incorporating primary research, the study offered fresh insights into consumer behaviour and the practical implications of interior design strategies. This methodology also highlighted areas where consumer preferences diverged from theoretical predictions, offering valuable guidance for future research and retail design practices. However, due to time constraints, the research was collected from a small sample group and only a few broad questions. To gain a deeper understanding of physiological theory's impact on consumer behaviour, further studies need to take place.

DISSUCSION.

4.1 The Role of Tangibility in Consumer Psychology and Fashion Retail

Tangible product qualities, such as material, texture, fit, workmanship, and quality, are important evaluation criteria for consumers (Verhagen et al., 2016)and are often difficult to assess through visual or digital representations alone. **Tangibility** is crucial in shaping purchase decisions by providing sensory feedback that builds trust and confidence in the product. One of the primary reasons physical stores retain their relevance in a digital age is their ability to offer tactile interaction with products, a factor cited as critical by **80%** of survey respondents who highlighted the ability to see, feel, and try on clothes as their most valued aspect of in-store shopping. This sensory engagement fosters confidence in purchasing decisions, as consumers assess the visual appeal and the texture, fit, and comfort of garments. These elements tap into conscious and unconscious decision-making, underscoring the psychological benefits of physical retail spaces. Beyond the purely functional benefits, the sensory experience of shopping can evoke emotional responses that enhance brand loyalty, creating a deeper connection between the consumer and the retailer.

Psychological theories further illuminate the importance of tangibility in driving consumer behaviour. **Nudge Theory** (Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C., 2008), a concept from behavioural science, suggests that subtle changes in how choices are presented can significantly influence decision-making. Nudges appeal to our unconscious, emotional responses, leveraging social norms and heuristics to guide behaviour in a non-coercive manner. In retail, **Choice Architecture** (Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C., 2008) can be strategically employed to design environments that subtly encourage desired actions. For example, sustainable products can be highlighted through prominent placement, eco-labels, or visually appealing signage, drawing attention to environmentally friendly options without overwhelming the consumer. Research suggests that making sustainable choices simple and accessible, such as placing locally sourced items near store entrances, reduces decision fatigue and supports consumers in making environmentally responsible purchases, even if sustainability is not their primary goal (Olya et al., 2024). This approach aligns sustainability with ease and convenience, which is crucial in today's fast-paced consumer culture. For instance, offering biodegradable or reusable packaging as the default for purchases, while allowing an opt-out for less eco-friendly options, leverages psychological tendencies like loss aversion and social conformity. Consumers are often hesitant to deviate from a positive default, as doing so might evoke guilt or negative associations. This strategy ensures that sustainability becomes a seamless part of the shopping experience, appealing to both individual preferences and societal expectations.

The retail atmosphere, including the aesthetic, lighting, and overall flow, can be used with nudge theory to shape consumer behaviour. A survey responder highlighted how a well-designed store can encourage exploration and subtly direct attention toward highlighted sustainable products through "The lighting and the way the clothes are displayed." (Participant, 2024) This shows that nudges are particularly effective because they do not rely on extensive consumer education or regulatory enforcement. Instead, they make sustainability effortless and desirable, tapping into fashion's inherent role as a reflection of personal identity. When consumers perceive sustainable products as an extension of their values and self-expression, they are more likely to integrate these choices into their lifestyles (Roach et al. 2019). Nudges thus have the potential to drive gradual behavioural shifts, fostering long-term changes without resistance often associated with more direct interventions.

However, the use of nudge theory in retail is not without its challenges. Its subconscious nature has led some researchers to critique it as paternalistic or manipulative, particularly when consumers are unaware of the strategies being employed. Kuyer and Gordijn (2023) caution that the effectiveness of nudges, such as framing or default options, may decline if consumers perceive them as deceptive or if they fail to adapt to evolving consumer preferences and societal values. To address these limitations, "recent work in behavioural public policy suggests that a nudge could become more effective and legitimate if it incorporated an element of self-awareness and internal deliberation" (Banerjee and John, 2024) retailers must adopt a balanced approach, combining nudges with transparent communication, consumer education, and incentives to build trust and ensure long-term engagement. Nudges risk being seen as short-term tactics rather than sustainable solutions without such reflection.

In comparison, **70%** of survey responders identified online shopping to be convenient but lacked the sensory engagement critical to many purchasing decisions. Despite technological innovations such as **360-degree virtual try-ons, augmented reality (AR)**, and detailed product descriptions, these tools cannot fully replicate the tactile and emotional experiences provided by physical stores (Egon and Broklyn, 2024). This is evident in high return rates for online purchases (Verhagen et al., 2016), with consumers often dissatisfied with material, fit, or colour. While digital platforms are adopting psychology-based strategies such as gamification (integrating game-like elements), personalized recommendations, and user-friendly interfaces to emulate in-store experiences (Egon and Broklyn, 2024), they cannot match the multisensory immediacy of tangible interactions. Physical stores, therefore, remain indispensable not only for their functional value but also for their ability to evoke emotional connections and provide a more immersive and fulfilling shopping experience. By integrating digital innovations with the unique advantages of tangibility, physical retail spaces can strengthen their position in the evolving fashion ecosystem, bridging the gap between convenience and meaningful engagement.

4.2 The Role of Physical Stores in Creating Experiences

Physical stores play a pivotal role in crafting memorable brand experiences, acting as extensions of a brand's identity. "An Experience-based store is a space where the product is presented through an experience, designed for the potential customer inside a dedicated space"(MacFarlane, 2018). These stores have been seen to be successful as they are "designed for flexibility" (MacFarlane, 2018), meaning that spaces can interchange "around presenting the attributes of the brand and history." (MacFarlane, 2018). The idea is that the consumer goes through a journey of discovery of the product through storytelling (MacFarlane, 2018). Fundamental to telling the narrative are the lighting, materials, choice of furniture, colour and details (MacFarlane, 2018). The survey backed up this claim by revealing that lighting is often the first element customers notice upon entering a store. A well-lit space creates an inviting atmosphere and sets the tone for exploration. Following this, the store's layout guides customers through their journey, fostering a sense of discovery and engagement. Researchers have identified that "strong visual impact draws viewers into space" (MacFarlane, 2018). A survey responder highlighted that "Window displays like Selfridges" serve as eye-catching introductions to the store's interior, enticing passersby to catch a glimpse into the unique experience and, in turn, more "inclined to go in".

Figure 6: Selfridges window display (Burney 2023)

The survey highlighted that visually compelling stores keep customers engaged for longer periods. Brands like "Oliver Bonas" (Participant, 2024) have succeeded in creating environments that are "bright and colourful" (Participant, 2024) drawing you into the store but also making you stay to browse. Similarly, Gavello Nel Blu, a jewellery store in Mykonos, exemplifies how physical stores can integrate local culture and surroundings to create an immersive, location-specific experience. Situated in a picturesque Greek setting, the store reflects its surroundings in its design and atmosphere, depicting as if the user is swimming in a swimming pool. This clever technique enhances the shopping experience and solidifies its connection to the brand's identity, (Klanten et al., 2023) as it then becomes recognisable from the street.

Figure 7: Gavello Nel Blu (Klanten et al., 2023)

In contrast, many responses suggested that online retail often struggles to cultivate the same level of customer loyalty as physical stores. The internet offers the convenience of comparing products by price and quality across brands, which can diminish emotional connections. While tools like AI chatbots attempt to mimic in-store interactions, they lack the warmth and personal touch of human interactions. In physical stores, the survey highlighted "I would probably feel more connected to a brand in store if there was effective customer service such as helping with outfits or availability" (Participant, 2024). For example, Henne, a clothing store in Melbourne, uses its second area to host events, workshops, and dress fittings, offering customers personalised advice and an experience that starkly contrasts with online shopping's transactional nature (Klanten et al., 2023). By offering rich, in-person experiences, Henne creates a compelling alternative to online shopping. This not only reduces the environmental costs associated with shipping and returns but also builds a stronger connection with customers, encouraging them to prioritise quality over convenience. Customers then invest in quality, well-fitted garments rather than purchasing multiple items impulsively. This approach aligns with sustainability goals by fostering a mindset of responsible consumption and informed choices.

Figure 8 & 9: Henne, Melbourne (Klanten et al., 2023)

Additionally, physical stores can educate consumers about a product's origins, empowering them to make informed choices. For example, eco-labelling has been shown to influence environmentally conscious decisions (Roach et al., p. 26). However, while online platforms can provide detailed product information, they lack the immediacy and impact of an in-store education experience. The challenge for brands lies in linking physical store experiences to their sustainability goals without falling into **Greenwashing** traps. As Thomas P. Lyon (2015) explains, "Greenwashing encompasses a range of communications that mislead people into adopting overly positive beliefs about an organisation's environmental performance, practices, or products." This not only misguides consumers but also raises ethical concerns about transparency and accountability in corporate sustainability claims. Some researchers argue that the culture of consumerism is often seen as incompatible with environmental sustainability (Roach et al., p. 26). Manufacturing consumer goods frequently involves energy-intensive processes reliant on fossil fuels, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Additionally, globalised trade and the transportation of goods across long distances perpetuate this cycle, embedding unsustainable practices within supply chains.

Greenwashing exacerbates these issues by enabling companies to appear progressive without implementing meaningful or measurable changes, effectively delaying the transition to systemic solutions such as cleaner energy sources, circular economies, and sustainable supply chains (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015). This tactic diverts both corporate and public resources away from genuine environmental improvements, adding to the environmental degradation these initiatives claim to address. Moreover, by promoting misleading narratives, greenwashing fosters a false sense of accomplishment among consumers (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015), which could decrease pressure on companies to put in place substantial reforms. The consequences extend beyond corporate practices: greenwashed products and services often overshadow truly eco-friendly alternatives, reducing their visibility in the marketplace and undermining businesses that genuinely prioritize sustainability (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015). This could create a cycle in which the most ethically and environmentally responsible businesses struggle to compete with companies prioritizing image over impact, ultimately slowing progress toward a sustainable future.

Figure 10: Patagonia repair scheme (Patagonia 2024)

However, some brands succeed in creating emotional connections with consumers by embedding sustainability into their core messages. Interactive campaigns, immersive storytelling, and transparency about production processes can help customers feel part of a larger mission—for instance, **Patagonia**. Ultimately, creating a compelling brand experience in physical stores can inspire consumers to make more sustainable choices. By aligning the sensory, emotional, and educational aspects of the shopping experience with their values, brands can build trust and foster deeper loyalty. Sustainability must be fostered from the top down for it to become part of the ethos and retain its long-term impact.

4.3 Social and Experimental Aspects of In-store Shopping

Physical stores have now evolved beyond being transactional spaces to becoming **social hubs** and centres for leisure, offering consumers opportunities for **community** and **identity expression**. Researchers argue that consumption is deeply tied to social activity, often communicating personal identity and social messages (Roach et al., 2020). This is further backed up by **60%** of survey responders enjoy the social aspect of shopping with others, transforming it from a utilitarian task into a shared, experiential activity. This phenomenon aligns with the idea that shopping is not merely about acquiring goods but about reinforcing one's identity, social status, and wealth. For instance, consumers are more likely to engage with eco-conscious brands when those brands are associated with wealth or aspirational lifestyles, showcasing the intersection of sustainability and social prestige (Roach et al. 2019). The social dynamics of in-store shopping further amplify these behaviours, creating a ripple effect where observing others making sustainable choices can inspire similar actions (Roach et al. 2019). This peer influence encourages shoppers to adopt eco-friendly habits, as they perceive sustainable consumption as socially desirable and identity-affirming.

The relationship between consumption, identity, and social context is further exacerbated by media influences. Historically, high rates of television watching have been linked to materialistic values, where individuals feel pressured to "keep up" with material possessions to fit within their social groups (Baudrillard, 1981). While this perspective may appear outdated in the age of e-commerce and social media, contemporary digital platforms arguably play an even more significant role in shaping consumption norms. Social media has blurred traditional social group boundaries, creating blended communities where trends and purchasing behaviours spread rapidly across diverse audiences (Wang et al., 2010). For local stores, this blending represents an opportunity to promote individuality through experiential marketing and local consumption (Klanten et al., 2023). By embracing vibrant, localized design elements and emphasizing uniqueness, such as offering locally produced goods or catering to diverse preferences, retailers can help consumers balance the human need for individuality with a sense of belonging (Roach et al., p. 39). local businesses have opportunities to address this deep-seated desire whilst upholding traditions worth protecting. For example, In Buenos Aires, Falcon sells original handicrafts from all over Argentina. Through its collaborations, the store supports remote communities and sustains local customs whilst drawing in customers from its distinctive selection (Klanten et al., 2023).

Experiential marketing plays a vital role in this evolution, transforming retail spaces into places of desire. Highly specialized stores, which focus on niche markets, demonstrate that prioritizing quality over quantity often defies traditional economic expectations but thrives, nonetheless (Klanten et al., 2023). Parisian boutiques, such as Officine Universelle Buly, exemplify how integrating cultural values with product specialization fosters customer loyalty and engagement. Founded in 2014, the French company embodies quintessential Parisian boutique interiors, with charming knick-knacks thoughtfully placed throughout the store. Offering everything from perfume to hair clips, the store's success has been so remarkable that it has since expanded to open another location in Japan (Klanten et al., 2023). They offer carefully selected, high-quality products that cater to a specific niche or audience as well as a compelling story or vision behind their brand. This level of curation allows them to stand out in a market saturated with mass-produced items and in turn, attract consumers seeking individuality and exclusivity.

In contrast, large department stores like House of Fraser and Debenhams have struggled to maintain relevance, with many closings due to their inability to compete with the convenience of online shopping. The rise of specialized stores reflects this shift, with independent retailers increasingly hosting custom events, educational workshops, or even incorporating in-house cafés and art spaces (Klanten et al., 2023). These unique experiences not only differentiate physical stores from e-commerce but also engage consumers in meaningful ways, in creating communities and collective responsibility (Klanten et al., 2023). For example, This drifter store in Uluwatu, Bali. Retailers that collaborate with local producers, artisans, or eco-friendly suppliers are successful at achieving more sustainable practices by supporting local economies which in turn, reduces the environmental costs associated with long-distance transportation.

Ultimately, physical stores serve as irreplaceable spaces where social interaction, identity formation, and sustainability converge. As consumers observe their peers participating in sustainability-focused activities within these spaces, they are more likely to adopt similar habits, reinforcing the notion that physical retail can inspire collective action toward environmental responsibility. As these retail environments offer experiences that online commerce cannot replicate, such as sensory engagement, community connection, and opportunities for self-expression, physical stores, therefore, remain vital components of the evolving retail landscape.

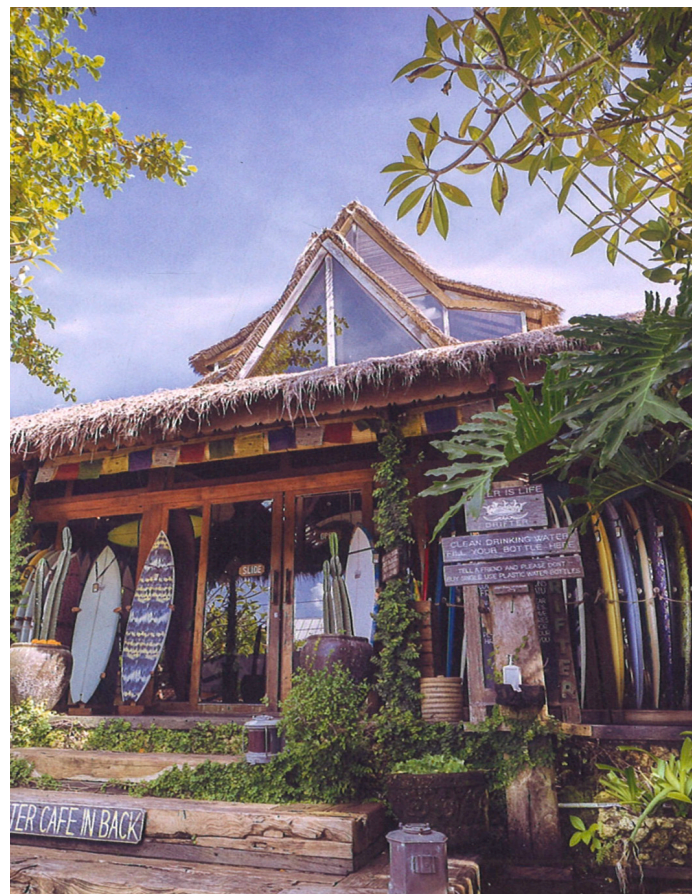Figure 11: Offinceine Buly, Paris (Klanten et al., 2023)

Figure 12: Drifter store in Bali, center for the sufing community (Klanten et al., 2023)

4.4 Integrating Physical and Digital Experiences

The emergence and rapid adoption of online commerce have led to the integration of omnichannel retail. **Omnichannel** refers to the "integration of retail channels like stores, online, and mobile into a single, seamless customer experience" (Von Briel, 2018). This approach addresses the growing consumer expectation for a unified brand presence that delivers consistent messaging, quality, and convenience. Researchers have identified that the need to integrate different channels will transform the fashion industry over the next decade (Von Briel, 2018), ensuring that retailers survive evolving trends.

Nike exemplifies the success of such strategies by blending digital innovation with physical retail environments, to enhance the wearing experience of its customers (Chen, 2024). Nike offers exclusive content, personalised product recommendations, and efficient order tracking through its mobile app, improving customer interaction beyond traditional shopping experiences. Furthermore, flagship stores incorporate augmented reality (AR) features, enabling customers to virtually try on products and provide in-store pickup options for online purchases. The Nike 'By You' customisation service extends this integration, allowing customers to design personalised items online and retrieve them in-store, bridging digital and physical retail seamlessly. Nike has always been innovative in digital marketing trends, which has helped it remain highly successful in changing digital landscapes (Chen, 2024).
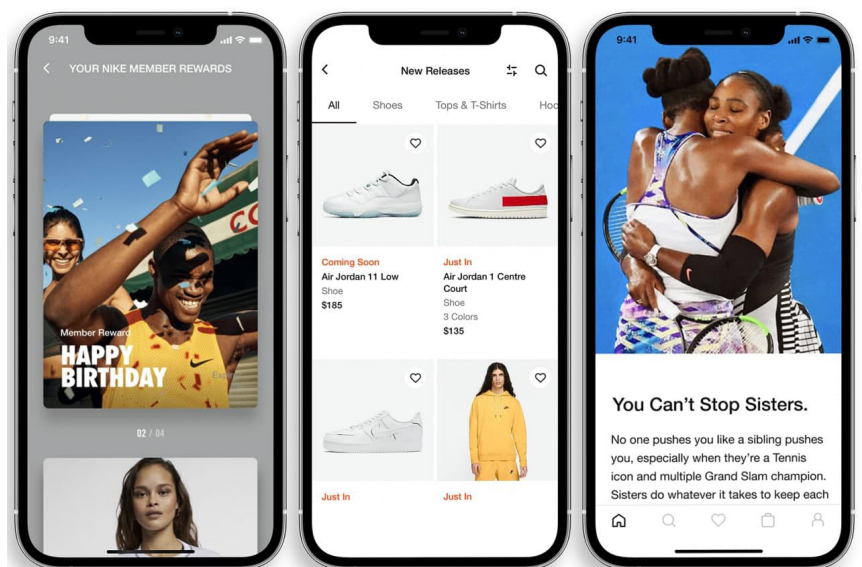

Figure 13: Nike App (Nike 2021).

Empirical data underscores the effectiveness of these initiatives. For example, retailers utilizing AR technology report a 15% increase in sales, attributable to enhanced visual quality and interactive features that drive higher consumer engagement and purchase intent (Egon and Broklyn, 2024). However, despite its potential, the survey highlighted how AR/VR integration has elicited mixed responses from consumers. While it enhances accessibility for individuals who may struggle with traditional fitting rooms or store navigation, a significant portion of surveyed consumers perceive such technologies as "superficial or dystopian" (Participant, 2024), undermining the tactile and sensory advantages of physical shopping. To be successful, Ballantyne and Nilsson (2017) argue that "As organisations move to digital platforms, the constituents of the physical realm remain central to understanding the customer experience – indeed, they may act as a reference point." (Bolton et al., 2018, p. 9). Physical stores will then become key destinations for unique sensory shopping experiences, whilst omnichannel retail will improve operational productivity (Von Briel, 2018). This tension highlights a critical challenge for brands: balancing technological innovation with preserving the authenticity of the in-store experience.

The urgency for retailers to adapt is further magnified by the rapid growth of e-commerce. Global online retail sales are projected to reach **$8.1 trillion by 2026**, a **56%** increase from current levels, with the fashion industry alone contributing **$904.5 billion annually** (Shah, 2023). To remain competitive, brands must evolve their physical spaces into hybrid environments that merge digital and tactile experiences. From the survey responses, I have gathered that **Showroom-style** setups that encourage "try-before-you-buy" interactions, coupled with online purchasing options, represent a sustainable model for modern retail. Fewer returns mean fewer carbon emissions from shipping and less waste from discarded, damaged, or returned items that cannot be resold. Physical retail stores will become exhibition spaces that showcase the brand and products, helping consumers to make more mindful purchases rather than impulsive buying. This leads to reduced demand for disposable, fast fashion items and changes the focus to showcasing samples rather than holding large inventories. Therfore, this reduces the need for overproduction and minimizes waste from unsold stock.

By embracing omnichannel strategies, brands not only meet rising consumer expectations for convenience and personalisation but also position themselves to thrive in a market increasingly defined by digital-first consumption patterns. Retailers can significantly reduce their environmental impact while empowering consumers to make responsible decisions, which benefits both the consumer and the planet. To ensure long-term impact, designers must prioritise the environmental impact of these emerging technologies, such as the high energy consumption, and remain adaptable to evolving trends and consumer needs. While current technologies may address short-term solutions, staying relevant requires continuous innovation and the ability to embrace change. Therefore, designers must constantly explore new ideas and solutions, ensuring their work aligns with the ever-changing landscape to retain customer engagement over time.

CONCLUSION.

05

This dissertation has examined the continuing relevance of physical fashion retail spaces in an era dominated by digital commerce. Through primary research and theoretical analysis, it has been demonstrated that while online shopping offers convenience, physical stores provide irreplaceable value through tangible experiences, social interactions, and their potential to promote sustainable consumption patterns.

The research revealed several key findings. First, the tactile nature of physical retail remains crucial, with 80% of survey respondents emphasising the importance of touching and trying on products before purchase. This tangibility, combined with carefully designed environments that incorporate strategic lighting, layout, and atmospheric elements, will create a multisensory experience that online platforms struggle to replicate. Second, physical stores serve as vital social spaces where shopping becomes a shared, identity-forming experience. The success of specialised boutiques and experience-based stores demonstrates that physical retail can foster community connections and collective responsibility. Moreover, the study highlighted how physical spaces can effectively employ small behavioural changes, such as nudge theory, to encourage more sustainable consumer choices. Unlike online platforms, brick-and-mortar stores can create immersive environments that subtly guide customers toward mindful consumption through thoughtful design and product presentation. This ability to influence behaviour through environmental cues enables physical retail as a potential catalyst for sustainable fashion consumption.

Looking forward, the future of fashion retail lies in the strategic **integration of digital and physical experiences**. The emergence of omnichannel retail suggests that physical stores will evolve into hybrid spaces that combine the best of both worlds. These spaces will likely function as **brand experience spaces**, where consumers can engage with products in meaningful ways while leveraging digital technologies for convenience and personalisation. This evolution points toward a design response that prioritises **flexibility, authenticity, and sustainability** but preserves the essential human elements of shopping. This might manifest in modular layouts that can be easily reconfigured for events or exhibitions, interactive displays that enhance rather than replace physical interactions, and designs that tell **compelling brand stories** while educating consumers about sustainable choices. In terms of my final portfolio project, I will include all these features to make sure that sustainability is at the forefront of future consumer habits.

Ultimately, this research suggests that **physical retail spaces will remain indispensable**, not despite but because of digital advancement. Their role will shift from purely transactional venues to experiential platforms that facilitate meaningful connections between brands, consumers, and communities. By embracing this evolution while maintaining their unique ability to provide tangible, social, and sustainable shopping experiences, physical stores can contribute to a more conscious and connected retail future. The challenge for designers and retailers moving forward will be to create spaces that balance innovation with authenticity, convenience with experience, and commercial success with environmental responsibility. As the retail landscape continues to evolve, physical stores that successfully navigate these considerations will not only survive but thrive as essential components of the fashion ecosystem.

REFENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY

06

References

Banerjee, S. and John, P. (2024) *'Nudge plus: incorporating reflection into behavioural public policy',* Behavioural Public Policy, 8(1), pp. 69–84. doi:10.1017/bpp.2021.6.

Bolton, R.N., McColl-Kennedy, J.R., Cheung, L., Gallan, A., Orsingher, C., Witell, L. and Zaki, M. (2018). *Customer experience challenges: bringing together digital, physical and social realms.* Journal of Service Management. Vol. 29 No. 5. pp. 776–808 [online]. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-04-2018-0113 [Accessed 2 November 2024].

Chen, Y. (2024). *A Relevant Analysis of Nike and its Marketing Strategies.* In Elbagory, K., Wu, Z., Al-Jaifi, H.A.A., and Zabri, S.M. (eds.). Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Financial Innovation and Economic Development (ICFIED 2024). Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research. Dordrecht: Atlantis Press International BV. Vol. 281. pp. 426–434 [online]. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-408-248 [Accessed 8 January 2025].

Egon Axel and Broklyn Peter (2024). (PDF) *AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) APPLICATIONS WITH ENHANCED VISUAL PROCESSING.* ResearchGate [online]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386135961 AUGMENTED REALITY AR APPLICATIONSWITH ENHANCED VISUAL PROCESSING [Accessed 4 December 2024].

Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). T*hink big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design.* Berlin: gestalten.

Kuyer, P., & Gordijn, B. (2023). *Nudge in perspective: A systematic literature review on the ethical issues with nudging. Rationality and Society*, 35(2), 191-230
Verhagen, T., Vonkeman, C. and Dolen, W. van (2016). making online products more tangible.

Lyon, T.P. and Montgomery, A.W. (2015). T*he Means and End of Greenwash.* Organization & Environment. Vol. 28 No. 2. pp. 223–249 [online]. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026615575332 [Accessed 12 January 2025].

MacFarlane, B. (ed.) (2018). *Store design: experience-based retail.* Mulgrave, Victoria: Images Publishing.

Olya, H., Kim, N. and Kim, M.J. (2024). *Climate change and pro-sustainable behaviors: application of nudge theory. Journal of Sustainable Tourism.* Vol. 32 No. 6. pp. 1077–1095 [online]. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2023.2201409 [Accessed 13 December 2024].

Roach, B., Goodwin, N. and Nelson, J. (2019). *Consumption and the Consumer Society.*

Shah, R. (2023). *Ecommerce industry Statistics* (2024) [online]. Available from: https://upmetrics.co/blog/ecommerce-statistics [Accessed 4 December 2024].

Thaler, R. H., & Sunstein, C. (2008). *Nudge: Improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

Von Briel, F. (2018). T*he future of omnichannel retail: A four-stage Delphi study.* Technological Forecasting and Social Change. Vol. 132. pp. 217–229 [online]. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.02.004 [Accessed 11 November 2024].

Wang, X., Tang, L., Gao, H. and Liu, H. (2010). *Discovering Overlapping Groups in Social Media.* 2010 IEEE International Conference on Data Mining. pp. 569–578 [online]. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICDM.2010.48 [Accessed 7 January 2025].

Bibliography

Adamkiewicz, J., Kochanska, E., Adamkiewicz, I. and Łukasik, R.M. (2022). Greenwashing and Sustainable Fashion Industry. Current Opinion in Green and Sustainable Chemistry, 38(100710). doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogsc.2022.100710.

Bargh, J. and Morsella, E. (2008). The Unconscious Mind. Perspectives on Psychological Science, [online] 3(1), pp.73–79. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00064.x.

Kucuk, S.U. (2016) 'Consumerism in the digital age', Journal of Consumer Affairs, 50(3), 515+, available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/joca.12101 [accessed 2 December 2024].

Philipp Tufel (2015). Holistic retail design : reshaping shopping for the digital era. Amsterdam : Frame Publishers BV,.

Thorpe, A. (2012). Architecture & Design versus Consumerism: How Design Activism Confronts Growth (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/97802031195

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Textitle Waste Gleisberg , L. (2024) Consumption research norway (SIFO), OsloMet. Available at: https://www.oslomet.no/en/about/sifo (Accessed: 16 January 2025).

Figure 2: Nike Store, NY (Yurkovich 2013) Philipp Tufel (2015). *Holistic retail design : reshaping shopping for the digital era.* Amsterdam : Frame Publishers BV,.

Figure 3 &4: Shaill, A. (2024). *Google survey statisitcs*. Available at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1 Z1p09O16nqGnEDzjTPVRs9WWhRYdpGPVJD0wlJ-mteA/edit#responses [Accessed 16 Jan. 2025].

 Figure 5: Fashion buyer shop, Beijing China (Ting & Jin 2017) MacFarlane, B. (ed.) (2018). *Store design: experience-based retail. Mulgrave,* Victoria: Images Publishing.

Figure 6: Burney, C. (2023). Selfridges Window Display. Available at: https://www.theindustry.fashion/selfridges-launches-its-latest-window-installation-in-the-spirit-of-celebration/ [Accessed 15 Jan. 2025].

 Figure 7: Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). Gavello Nel Blu, Mykonos shop exterior. *Think big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design*. Berlin: gestalten.

Figure 8 &9 Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). Henne, Melbourne. *Think big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design*. Berlin: gestalten.

Figure 10: Patagonia (2024). Patagonia Repair Scheme. [Online Image] Available at: https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/repairs [Accessed 15 Jan. 2025].

Figure 11: Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). Officine Buly, Paris. *Think big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design.* Berlin: gestalten.

Figure 12: Klanten, R., Strauss, M.J. and Friese, L. (eds.) (2023). Drifter store Ultuwlu, Bali. *Think big - shop small: unique stores and contemporary retail design*. Berlin: gestalten.

Figure 13: Nike (2021). Nikes new app launches. Available at: https://www.asiaone.com/digital/nikes-new-app-launches-southeast-asia-touting-exclusive-and-personalised-content [Accessed 15 Jan. 2025].

APPENDIX.

07

Survey Findings

Ethnicity	How do you think the rise of online shopping has in	What do you enjoy most about shopping for clothe	Is convenience a factor when deciding between sho	Have you ever made a purchase in-store that y
White British	makes it easier to access things instantly if need th	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	i prefer going to physical stores because if the proc	material and how it actually looked on me
white other	I personally don't feel as impacted because i would	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	yes, sometimes its easier to browse online if i know	Yes because i prefer to buy something in store
White British	If i need one item, its a lot easier to get it online tha	Browsing new collections, The social aspect of sho	Yes	Yes, usually in a charity shop, because its che
White British	It's not as needed anymore as you can easily get th	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	For me, it's more that going shopping is a fun thing	Yes as you can in the moment see if it suits yo
White British	People don't visit physical stores as often. I think pe	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Absolutely! Shopping in person can take hours out	The only time I may have done this is in stores
White British	I have always really disliked shopping on the high s	Being able to see/feel the fabric	Definitely	Yes, sometimes things look different in perso
Mixed	I have less need to go in	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Yes	Being able to try something on
White British	For convenience online is fine but I prefer to physic	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	If I'm in a rush or know what I'm looking for yes	Getting caught up with having the actual prod
White British	It's made online shopping much more accessible th	The social aspect of shopping with others	Yes	Yes. It was in H&M which I don't want to brow
Mixed	I would rather shop in person because trying things	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	Yes	Yes and trying them on
White British	Online shopping has made shopping more time effi	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Absolutely	Yes! There's often a case of seeing something
White British	I feel that my desire to online shop has increased a	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	Yes I think there is a convenience in shopping onlin	I always shop for bras and pants in-store as I
Mixed	visiting physical stores is much more inconvenient	Trying clothes on for fit and comfort, The social asp	yes	yes, being able to try things see how they are
White British	I still love going to physical stores over online shop	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	Yeah	Yes - jeans and swimsuits in particular, I liked
White european	I prefer physical stores as I prefer to try clothes on.	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	Yes - if needed immediately I would go to a store or	I recently bought a red mock leather jacket fro
White British	I love visiting physical stores, especially when shop	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Most definitely!	Sometimes the atmosphere and attention from
White British	i think that online shopping is more convenient how	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	yes	yes, spontanious
White British	I now only shop online	Being able to see/feel the fabric, The social aspect	Yes	Yes, the feel of the material influenced me
White British	I still desire and like visiting stores however I don't	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Yes, also some stores are only online especially sm	Mostly sizing and how the clothes fit, and view
White British	I still like to go to the physical store to look and feel	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Browsing new coll	Yes if I know what I want I online shop	Yes and that's down to seeing on the display a
White British	I still enjoy physically shopping however the ease o	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	timing and location effect convenience	immediate availability and fit tempt me to pur
White British	i dont feel as if i need to go to them	immediate availability of products	yes, as i can get what i need without having to go o	yes, because i needed it on the day
White British	Definitely don't visit physical shops as often. Online	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Definitely	Having someone with you that has encourage
White British	I prefer charity shopping, or Vinted. As online shopp	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Yes	Being able to try on the purchase, and if it wou
White British	it has lessened the need because of convenience	Being able to see/feel the fabric, Trying clothes on	Sometimes	Yes, being able to see stuff in person really ch
White British	Less likely to go to physical shops as shopping onli	Trying clothes on for fit and comfort, The social asp	Yes definately	Yes because I tried it on and it changed my m
White British	Far less likely to bother going to physical store unle	Trying clothes on for fit and comfort, immediate av	Yes	Electrical goods where I want to get advice an

h Does shopping in a physical store ever encourage y	Have you ever used online features (like virtual try-c	Would you be more likely to visit a physical store if	When you first enter a retail space, what aspects of	Do you find yourself spending more money or t
you have to physically go and look and buy it- mana	in-store pick up still means you have to go to the st	would be more of an experience/ tourist attracion		
a Yes, when i'm in store i have a chance to try things	No	No.	The layout of the store. If i think the layout of the cl	Not particularly.
c Yes, because holding the item and paying the mone	In store pick up is a very good option, because it me	No, if I'm already there, I want to try the actual cloth	Layout, pathways through the store, how easy it is t	If there is decorations on the walls and music p
probably not because i'm there and end up really lik	i have not	no	how the products are displayed and separated	it depends on products and price
l I slow down more online - in store it feels as if I hav		No I'd think of it as gimmicky.	The lights. Shouldn't be too bright or old Hollister, s	
a The only physical shops I go in are supermarket, gr	Yes, when choosing flooring and my kitchen.	Makes no difference to me.	The lights and temperature. If it's too hot or not wel	No
Yes because it takes more time and effort	No	Yes beautiful it had more entertainment	The size, because it can be overwhelming when it's	No
c Yes, seeing the product in real life with the price lets	Not that I can remember	No way that's dystopian as hell	Lighting usually, stores are often super bright so if	I like nooks and crannies, feels like I'm finding a
Yes. I have to get in a queue which can be dedicatic	No	Yes, because this sounds very cool	High ceilings and bright lights	No
Yes because of price and fast fashion	No	Yesss that's very interesting	Models or how it's displayed	
a Seeing stuff physically does make it feel more valua	I haven't	I still value needing to 'feel' a product for comfort so	Usually the lighting. I like to be able to clearly see w	Maybe not money, but certainly time. Places like HMV (again, sorry) just have a really
I feel it doesn't really if i'm in a physical store, I can	I have used in-store pickups before which is very co	I think it would be a fun idea but I would much prefe	I always look at the front window display to see if th	Oliver Bonas would be a firm example as it is su
i no	no	no	colour and shape sets the scene of the shop	no
r Yes	No	Maybe	The way the clothes and items are laid out and the	I like being in a calm store so I spend more time
I find all of the stores above calming because they	No - I wouldn't because if I am in a store I would pre	No - If it was AR/VR by visiting a physical store, then	how loud my shoes are on the floor! If I sound noisy	I like calming designs like farmhouse, rustic, ea
e Definitely! Shopping for clothing in a physical store	I use in-store pick up options often, as they're so co	I think so, as a more personalised experience can h	I always notice branding, lighting and colour schem	I'm not sure that interior design has ever directl
yes, physical movement	N0	Maybe, could save time	LIGHTS	maybe, but at the end of the day it's down to the
Yes being able to see products and try them on mal	Can't say I have	Yes because that is the main hindrance to online sh	The bigger stores with more to offer because they	Yes sports shops with modern interior design
n Yes as the physical item is right in front of you and	No I haven't	No, not a fan of it	Shelving and lighting	Calmer stores with less going on can make me
a Yes as you see different styling that you wouldn't no	Yes to get my size. I think that works well because	Maybe but I like the experience of shopping and VR	Lighting and if tidy. As these make the store look w	Yes, I go into the white company and the set up
e time to think over purchases and currently owned it		interactive displays on colours, materials, sizes and		
no	no	yes, its a new experience	the colours	time
You can try more options on.	No	Not really	How the clothes are set up.	Probably yes, again it comes back to what you
It makes me more selective and careful		No		
Yes, feel of the fabric and seeing the price tags	No	Yes, it would be a fun pull even if I weren't buying th	The lighting and the way the clothes are displayed.	Yes. Older architecture, less modern interior de
n Yes I take more buying time in a store	No	No	Colours and details	Yes
p Ability to compare more easily and take time trying	No	Possibly interactive displays eg would be great for	Space and light	Lots of space - easy to see items and browse. M

Do you find yourself spending more money or time	What kinds of design features make the experience	Are you more likely to make a purchase or engage	Do your design preferences change depending on t	H
		yes		e
Not particularly.	Organised and neat layout, Displays when you enter	yes	not really	II
If there is decorations on the walls and music playir	Sales, limited edition stuff/only instore stuff	yes	If I'm comfortable I'm happy	A
it depends on products and price	different sections for different kinds of things	yes	you would expect different designs in say a charity	it
	Pop-up events would be enjoyable or in-store disco	yes		H
No	Textures	Maybe	I prefer neat and tidy. Well lit. Not cramped. Friendly	I
No	Music and lighting	yes	No	F
I like nooks and crannies, feels like I'm finding a sec	To see interesting furniture that products are sold c	yes	Not really	II
No	Pop up events	Maybe	No	U
	All of those, preferably not bright white lights overs	yes		C
Maybe not money, but certainly time. Places like HMV (again, sorry) just have a really nic	Clear marking for where products are located and p	yes	I feel that if one tries to be the other it has a negativ An expensive item that doesn't reflect the store its i In the adverse, a casual store that feign high end ca	I
Oliver Bonas would be a firm example as it is such	Themed stores, interesting lighting, bright colours,	yes	I would usually buy basic t-shirts, trousers and jum|	N
no	all of the above	yes	no	i
I like being in a calm store so I spend more time the		yes	No	I'
I like calming designs like farmhouse, rustic, earthy	Similar clothes or collections/outfits put together -	yes	I feel like retail staff watch me like hawks if I am the	N
I'm not sure that interior design has ever directly im	Pop-up events and themed decorations in store, like	yes	I sometimes feel a bit out of place in very high-end	D
maybe, but at the end of the day it's down to the clc	pop up evenets	yes	not really, i'd rather shop in a shop that isn't too fan	a
Yes sports shops with modern interior design	Interesting lighting with a theme entices me more	Maybe	Yes the level of expectation changes for a high end	T
Calmer stores with less going on can make me be i	Lighting (not rgb), wall art, and levels within the sto	yes	Yes, more special the store the higher quality/exper	S
Yes, I go into the white company and the set up of t	Lighting, and having seasonal sections and I love d	yes	Yes I expect better design / visability on high end sl	I
				n
time	interesting lighting	yes	yes	it
Probably yes, again it comes back to what you knov	Good changing rooms and pleasant staff.	Maybe	No	H
				II
Yes. Older architecture, less modern interior design	Themes!	yes	Yes, I'm less focused on the store design if I'm goin	II
Yes	Pop up events , free bee products	yes	Yes	Y
Lots of space - easy to see items and browse. No c	Art; lighting; seating; pop-ups	yes	No stay the same although I expect more and bette	N

How do physical stores help you make better or mc	Do you ever enter a shop because of how it looks ra	What kinds of experiences in physical stores make	Do you think a memorable store design or atmosph	D
can show how it actually made/came from and env	exciting shop windows		selfridges	y
Online stores show the product well but don't displi	Not really	if i'm surrounded by people my own age i can see tl	To an extent, for example I'd rather shop in h&m tha	Y
I would say digital platforms make better choices b	Yes, cyberdog in camden, not my style but a very ex	Music	Yes, if i feel comfortable or excited in a shop im mc	Y
You can see and feel the clothes in person!!	I often go to the same shops but some shops look	the staff and trying things on	to me it's more about the products and price!	p
You're able to feel the clothes and know how they f	No, although there is and should be a correlation be		If the store is overwhelming (bright lights, unfriendl	I
I don't shop for clothes in store other than charity s	No	I don't shop for brands of any kind other than electr	I'm a sensory person. I am more likely to return to a	T
Being able to see the sizing	Yes like a Christmas shop for fun	The staff	Yes if they play good music I will go back	Y
You can try stuff in for fit, also second hand and vir	There's a tea shop in Bath that is so beautifully disp	Sale racks, in general I try not to connect to a branc	Yes subconsciously, if I can see effort put into a nic	Y
You are able to try items of clothing on before purc	Yes. Oliver bonas, I went in because they had a Rea	Unsure	Yes.	Y
Yes but sometimes I use online to look before I shc	Yes if it's a cool or interesting design different from	Collaboration with artists or musicians	Yes like brand name thing	Y
Seeing the items on the racks as a finite selection r	Yes There's this real nice clothing shop in Oxford (Varsi While I don't have a need for any of that, the shop it	I wouldn't say anything particular makes me feel 'cc	Yes! While not a clothing brand, HMV is a great exa	S
I feel like I can make a better choice in store throug	I would probably walk into a shop if they had a nice	I would probably feel more connected to a brand in	If there is a good atmosphere in a shop, I would be	I
it's not just a picture i can see it from all angles fee	yes, if a shop is decorated well i will go in	being able to have help with what i'm looking for	to a certain extent, harrods is a beautiful shop so i	r
I think more about what I buy	Yes, if it's cute like anthropology I'll go in even if I'm	A calm atmosphere	Yes, hollister has a terrible store design and I never	Y
Sales assistants usually wear the brand's clothes a	I love going into Hollister as it is quiet and dark con	Helpful and appropriate customer service; not feeli	Hollister, Ikea, Tiger, Typo, Uniqlo	I
Sometimes I might be less likely to pick up a clothir	I think that big shops like Harrods and Selfridges, tl	Something that demonstrates/represents their brar	I think so. If you feel comfortable in a store, you are	D
i can try on	yes, cool interior makes me want to see what's insic	deals	YES	y
Staff members on hand to help with different sizes	Yes, hollister with the dark lighting and beach them	Seeing advertisements with models I look up to	Can't think of any but yes	Y
Definitely	Sometimes, an example is a place in Australia wher	Obviously customer service and lots of items that f	Definitely, culture kings in Australia is hectic with m	Y
Seeing and feeling the product and also what items	Yes I am not a M&S shopper but I like the lighting/	I like that they use and display "real" sized clothes (	Yes displaying it well, having welcoming lighting. In	Y
variety of sizes, materials and fit as seen in store	good looking display windows will tempt me to ent		Zara always have attractive displays and that influe	t
i can see if i actually like them	yes, display windows in shops		yes	r
Being able to see the product in its full glory.	If the shop window looks good and catches my eye	Feeling special.	Yes because you feel comfortable with it.	Y
Creating a reliable wardrobe of pieces that can wor			No, I care more about pricing and quality	I
Easier to try on clothes without the hassle of payin(	Yes- Liberty's	Talking to a worker.	Yes, I will spend more time and actually want to go	Y
You can see quality of products and try on	Yes if the shop looks interesting/appealing I am mc	Kind staff , clean store , good clothes	Yes a good store layout/colours/ design impacts m	Y
Expert advice and ability to try before you buy.	If the window display looks appealing and I spot so	Ability to touch and feel. Space. Seating.	Apple Store e.g memorable imagery through examp	A

LO4 Reflection

For me, online shopping often feels overwhelming, and it rarely delivers exactly what I'm hoping for—whether it's the material, fit, or overall look. In contrast, visiting physical stores is something I always look forward to. Retail has always been more than just shopping; it's a space to connect with family and friends, to catch up, spend time together, and offer advice in a relaxed, natural way.

Fashion and identity have been passions of mine since a young age. I've always enjoyed experimenting with colour, texture, and new styles or trends. Fashion is a powerful form of self-expression, a way to define yourself, whether that means standing out, blending in, or simply not caring what others think. Understanding your identity is key to knowing who you are and what you want to achieve, and I believe fashion is one of the best ways to showcase that journey. It's a visual representation of personal growth, confidence, and individuality—a way to tell your story without saying a word.

I find myself particularly drawn to shops with unique, engaging interiors, regardless of what they're selling. I believe that thoughtfully designed spaces have the power to influence how we view ourselves as consumers, shaping our buying habits both consciously and subconsciously. These spaces have the potential to create a more mindful and sustainable future.

While the speed and convenience of online shopping dominate today's world, the very immediacy of it is what makes it unsustainable in the long run. We need to rethink our consumer behaviours to build a more sustainable future. This realisation motivates me to pursue a career in retail and commercial design. I believe this field offers greater creative freedom, allowing me to design spaces that push boundaries and reflect emerging trends.

There's a growing need to bring people back into physical spaces. If everything moved to a purely digital world, the role of interior designers would become obsolete, and my career could vanish. By considering the broader context: how design connects with the future and sustainability,I aim to become a more thoughtful, well-rounded designer. I want my work to have a deeper impact, benefiting both individuals and society, and creating environments that serve a greater purpose rather than simply adding another design to the world.

Methodology:

From my research I have identified the lack of data on whether experiential retail design affects consumer behaviour or sustainability. In response I will develop a more nuanced approach using interviews, surveys, or observational methods to understand how consumers interact with and respond to physical store designs. I will also look at current retail technologies and sustainable retail trends such as greenwashing.

In my survey, I found that the questions were clear, precise, and generated well-rounded, comprehensive responses. However, I noticed that some of the more challenging questions received fewer responses compared to simpler or yes/no questions. In the future, I would include a broader mix of question types, balancing both qualitative and quantitative inquiries, to gather more diverse insights across the field.

Since I distributed the survey primarily to university students, as well as friends and family, the majority of responses came from a younger demographic. This results in a slight bias in the data. Moving forward, I would target under-represented age groups more specifically to ensure the data is more balanced and representative. For the FPP, I will focus on the 18-25 age range, as that is the demographic most reflected in my data, rather than speculating about the views of older generations who did not participate in the survey.

After consulting with tutors, it was suggested to emphasise sustainability in the title. However, I chose to leave it out, as my dissertation directly addresses whether physical stores are still needed in today's society. I argue that physical stores play a key role in supporting sustainability and achieving better environmental outcomes. Therefore, they are essential for the future in order to combat climate change and environmental degradation."

Overall:

This research will inform my Final Portfolio Project (FPP) by highlighting the importance of brand integrity and the integration of both physical and digital elements. My next step is to decide whether to focus on a high-street or high-end retail store, which will help determine the most suitable site and target users. Storytelling and narrative are crucial in influencing consumer engagement, and since my goal is to shift consumer behavior, I will need to develop a compelling narrative to achieve this. This narrative will be reflected in the design through an immersive experience, guiding users on a journey of discovery. The experience will not only showcase the products and brand but also educate customers on how to incorporate sustainability into their everyday lives. Ultimately, I aim to drive a shift in how brands approach store design, prioritising education and showroom experiences over profit-driven models focused solely on economic growth. The long-term goal is to influence the industry and create a new, sustainable model that other brands can adopt.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

BA (HONS)/MA/MRES

Student Contact info.

Annika Shaill
2201434@my.aub.ac.uk
07419312483
Level 6
2201434

Project Start and End date

07/10/2024 – 24/01/2025

Project Title

IAD662 Dissertation:
Is the Physical Fashion Retail space needed in the context of today's instant online shopping Experience?

Project purpose

Describe the purpose and the background rationale for your proposed primary research.

The project aims to see whether the behavioural theory and suggested research accurately describe today's consumers and whether physical stores are still needed within the high street.

Please describe any expected outcomes. Examples below.

· Observations will clarify user consumption patterns
· Responses will be used as practical evidence of theory suggested.

State the hypotheses/research questions that you will examine through your primary research.

The hypothesis is that while online shopping will continue to grow, and physical retail spaces provide irreplaceable benefits that contribute to more thoughtful and informed consumer choices
The research questions ask participants whether they shop more online or in-store. What factors are the factors that affect this? And what do they think would make them more conscious consumers?

Research Methods

What research method will you use (i.e. a survey, an interview)? Please describe how your primary research will be structured and why. Delete as appropriate.

· Online Survey/Questionnaire
Qualitative Questions on a range of experiences linked to online and instore shopping.

Recruitment

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between yourself (the researcher) and the participant(s).

· Email, cold email to university students.
· Social Media networks with links to the survey
· Online Survey, Google Forms

Please show any recruitment advertisements or messages used to your tutor before using them.

Consent

Describe the process that the investigator will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained say why. If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent. Some examples may include:

· Online survey project description, Text stating 'By clicking submit, I agree to give consent to take part'.

Please also email your tutor an **Interview Consent Form**, an **Activity Consent Form** or a consent statement that will accompany a survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Will participants be anonymous? (i.e. The identities of participants are not known to the researcher, and no identifying information is collected). Yes

Participants as subjects

Describe the type, number and important characteristics of your participants (e.g. age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc). Add detail or delete as appropriate.

· Friends
· Family
· Flatmates
· University students

Participant withdrawal

Participants have the right to withdraw at any time/up to the project end date (stated on page one).

By checking this box 'Y', I confirm that I will delete all forms of their data.

Y

Does the study involve:

'Y' = YES / 'N' = NO

Participation of people other than the researchers?	Y

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, crowd behaviour research).

Vulnerable groups, such as children and young people aged under 18 years; those with learning disability, or cognitive or physical impairments?	N
Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life)?	N
Risk to the personal safety of the researcher?	N
Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out?	N
Risk to animals?	N

Feedback

How will participants be provided with feedback on your study following the investigation. Some examples may include:

· Participants may be anonymous, so I will be unable to provide feedback.

Storage, Access + Disposal

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data. Some examples may include:

· Data will be accessible through my process book by myself, fellow students, tutors and external examiners.

Risks

Outline any potential risks to individuals including you, the researcher, research participants and any other individuals not involved in the research. Explain what measures will be taken to minimise any risks, and what plans are in place in the event of a mishap.

Risk examples:
. Data isn't representative of the wider population
. low response rates
. misinterpretation of questions

Mitigation examples:
. make sure the survey is accessible to all backgrounds
. send out to large sample size and continue to boost the survey a few times.
Make sure questions are clear, concise and give a few examples

Benefits

Outline any potential benefits to individuals including you, research participants and any other individuals.

Benefit examples:
· Insights gained for the researcher
· Help define the problem context for the researcher
· Increase in knowledge and awareness of the problem
. Positive behavioural changes for future users.

Declaration

I submit this form as an accurate and final description of the ethical considerations of the primary research I wish to conduct for the project. I understand that if the plans raise concerns with my tutors they will take my plans to the School Ethics Adviser or AUB Research Office for further consideration before I get approval to begin primary research.

Name   Annika Shaill

Date   06/01/2025

Student signature

Support by Unit Tutor

This project is deemed to represent:

- Minimal risk and approved   **Y** ☐
- More than minimal risk and approved   ☐
- More than minimal risk and has been forwarded to School Ethics Adviser for further consideration.   ☐

Name   Monica Franchin

Date   14/01/2025

Unit Tutor signature

Support by School Ethics Adviser

i) This project is deemed to represent:

- Minimal risk   **?**
- More than minimal risk   **?**
- Complex or sensitive risk and will be forwarded to Research Ethics Committee for further consideration.   **?**

ii) I believe that the ethical issues have been considered and appropriate measures have been taken and the project is approved.   **?**

iii) Comments/further work required before approval can be given:

(...)

Name   (...)

Date   XX/XX/20XX

School Ethics Adviser signature